

Hidden History

In the “ancient world” there was a philosophy that things on Earth were pale and imperfect reflections of what was in Heaven. Certainly, the tiles of The Lady Chapel floor are not perfect - some say that beauty is found in imperfections.

However, this ancient philosophy is taken a stage further, in that there is a deliberate mistake in the pattern of tiles on the Altar Step (though hidden by the Altar - perhaps itself symbolic of the fact that God “hides” our imperfections?). The Altar, which used to serve as The High Altar, before the modern one was built, Is Tudor - probably dating from the reign of Queen Mary. This would make it a few years older than the Elizabethan Commandment Boards in the St Nicholas Chapel.



The Tiles - what do they mean? All the tiles in the Lady Chapel are “modified Trans-Pennine Group tiles” mad about five hundred years after the previous ones. The light and dark tiles represent the cosmic battle between Good and Evil. Those on the Altar Step contain an image common in our windows - the flower, is a Rose, representing The Virgin Mary, while the three-fold cross represents The Holy Trinity. The Victorians are said to have found a whole section of flooring in the South Aisle of these tiles. At the intersections of the lines of light coloured tiles are “M” tiles. These are monograms of Maria (Latin for Mary). However, they are backwards, because one should not tread upon sacred symbols - but the remind us of the symbol. (Look for the backwards “R” in the design). They are found in some Southern Churches, carved in Limestone, and picked out in split flint built into walls. In the walls, they will not be walked upon, so they are found the right way round!

On the floor of the Chapel are “Roundels”. These contain images of stags, dogs and Lilly flowers. The Lily, only ever recorded in our building, represents The Virgin; the Stag represents Christ - medieval man believed that



Stags could kill snakes. The snake in the Garden of Eden represent The Devil / Evil - the could Stag get rid of Evil, therefore represents Christ. The little dog with some of the stags, represents the Faithful People in medieval Art (you and me). This is why dogs are sometimes call (generically) Fido—from the Latin Fides, meaning *Faithful*. The “Hornby Train track” - this is a picket fence separating The Garden of Eden, or Paradise, from the rest of the world. (In the Abbeys of Yorkshire, this fence is much more elaborate. The tile-works, probably the base from which the tilers went out to the monastic communities based in the countryside, was in our Parish, where the Maltings Public House by Lendal Bridge is. Perhaps they tried out designs in their Parish Church, first? Then, outside the fence are birds in Oak branches. The birds are doves, representing the Holy Ghost / Holy Spirit spreading out into the world. Why Oak—the English saw this as a symbol of Holy Communion / Mass - sometimes even drawing grapes on the branches, rather than acorns. The oldest of our Windows have the Oak-leaf pattern in the boarders (though acorns rather than grapes).



The Lady Chapel Before Work Began

Before work began, there was a fibre-glass statue of the Virgin, on a wooden table, and the floor was a mixture of wood and stone, with Victorian pine pews of the 1860's. The floor sloped significantly, left to right. Underneath the blue carpet at the East End was a large limestone slab, laid on sand above a huge slab of mudstone. The former was found to be an Altar Top from one of the five medieval Altars recorded in the building - chamfered underneath on three sides, it had clearly been fixed against a wall, as per the Archbishops directions of 1215. The Mudstone was the top of a large tomb.

The Shrine and Parish Church of All Saints North Street, York

Free Quarterly NEWSLETTER

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Rare view: The tower stairs, looking down. The spiral staircase to the first floor of the tower turns but one and an half times in exactly thirty feet to the first floor, just below the apex of the Nave Roof. The stairs are almost vertical, each one overhung by the one above. The stairs are built in the thickness of the wall, and displace the West Window slightly to the South. Climbing, what amounts to a stone ladder, is necessary for maintain the bells, and checking the structure. From the lower (windowless) belfry, it is necessary to climb over the bell-frame to reach a ladder mounted above it, to the upper belfry at the base of the Octagon. Here one climbs over the wooden bell-frame of three more bells, to reach a ladder to the top floor, halfway up the Octagon. From here a very ancient ladder leads to a doorway onto the balcony of the spire—only three people have climbed this last, tall, ladder in the last fifty years. There are no floors in the Spire.

Diary of Services and Events

May—July 2026

May 2026

Saturday 2	St Athanasius	10.30 am	Little Paws Children's Club
		4.00 pm & 5.15 pm	Visiting Bell Ringers
Sunday 3	Easter 4	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 7	St John of Beverley	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>Born in the late 7th century at Harpham on the Yorkshire Wolds, he became a monk at S. Hilda's monastery at Whitby and then Bishop of Hexham, where he ordained the Venerable Bede. He was subsequently Bishop of York (bishops of York were not 'archbishops' until 735). He founded the monastery at Beverley and died there in 721. As bishop his special concern was for the poor and handicapped, those who required the most patience.</p>			
Sunday 10	Easter 5	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
		6.45 pm	Vestry Meeting
		Followed by Annual Parochial Church Meeting	
Thursday 14	Ascension Day	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
		7.30 pm.	Sung Mass
Sunday 17	Sunday after Ascension	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 21	St Helen	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>St Helen, the mother of Constantine, who made her joint Empress, has been described as "the most powerful woman ever to walk on planet Earth". She found the True Cross (with the help of several thousand soldiers.</p>			
Sunday 24	Pentecost (Whitsunday)	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 28	In Whitsuntide	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
Saturday 30	Robert Sharpe	12.30 pm.	Organ Recital
		3.30 pm.	Philip Moor in conversation with Robert Sharpe
		4.00pm.	Choral Evensong
Sunday 31	Trinity Sunday	5.30 pm	Sung Mass



JUNE 2026

Thursday 4	Corpus Christi	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
		7.30 pm	Sung Mass, Procession & Benediction
Saturday 6	St Norbert	10.30 am	Little Paws Children's Club
	York Festival of Ideas	2.00 pm	Dr Hollie Morgan Talk
Sunday 7	Trinity 1	10.30 am	Mass <i>(to be confirmed)</i>
		5.30 pm	Asperges and Sung Mass
Wednesday 10	St Margaret of Scotland	12.30 pm	Walking Tour For York Festival of Ideas
Thursday 11	St Barnabas	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>St Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus and a companion of St Paul on some of his journeys. He was martyred, probably at Salamis in Cyprus.</p>			
Sunday 14	Trinity 2	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 18	S. Ephraem of Syria	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>4th-century hymn writer in Mesopotamia and Syria, who was hugely influential in the development of singing in the Liturgy and its importance in encouraging faithfulness to the Christian tradition. He had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.</p>			
Sunday 21	Trinity 3	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 25	feria	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
Saturday 27	Cyril of Alexandria	12.30 pm	Organ Recital by Jack Oades , (St Giles Cathedral Edinburgh)
<p><i>Saint Cyril of Alexandria</i> was instrumental in the Church's doctrinal statement that there is one person but two natures in Christ.</p>			
Sunday 28	Trinity 4	5.30 pm	Sung Mass



JULY 2026

Thursday 2	Visitation of BVM	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
Saturday 4	feria	10.30 am	Little Paws Children's Club
Sunday 5	Trinity 5	10.30 am	Mass <i>(to be confirmed)</i>
		5.30 pm	Asperges and Sung Mass
Tuesday 7	SS Cyril and Methodius Apostles to the Slavs	12.30 pm	Fr Andrew Horsman: The York Gradual
Wednesday 8	feria	12.30 pm	Stephen Devine Concert
<p><i>York Early Music Festival</i></p>			
Thursday 9	SS. John Fisher and Thomas More	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>16th-century English martyred Bishops executed by Henry VIII in 1535 for refusing to accept him as supreme head of the Church of England</p>			
Sunday 12	Trinity 6	5.30 pm	Mass
Thursday 16	Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>The feast-day of the Carmelite Order, founded in Palestine in the 12th century.</p>			
Saturday 18	feria	2.15 pm	Tea Followed by Evensong & Benediction
<p>Bishop of Beverley Provincial Festival</p>			
Sunday 19	Trinity 7	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 23	S. Apollinaris	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass
<p>Martyred in 185 for defending the Christian Faith before the Roman Senate</p>			
Saturday 25		12.30 pm	Organ Recital by John Hosking , (Blackburn Cathedral)
Sunday 26	Trinity 8	5.30 pm	Sung Mass
Thursday 30	feria	11.00 am	Coffee
		12.30 pm	Mass