

What's up above?

The Chancel ceiling

As you stand in the Chancel (the area near the High Altar), look up to the ceiling. All the carved angels were painted in rich colours when the ceiling was built in the 1470s.

John Gillyott's coat of arms is on a boss (the carving where the beams join) above the High Altar. He was Rector (a priest) here in 1469 to 1475.

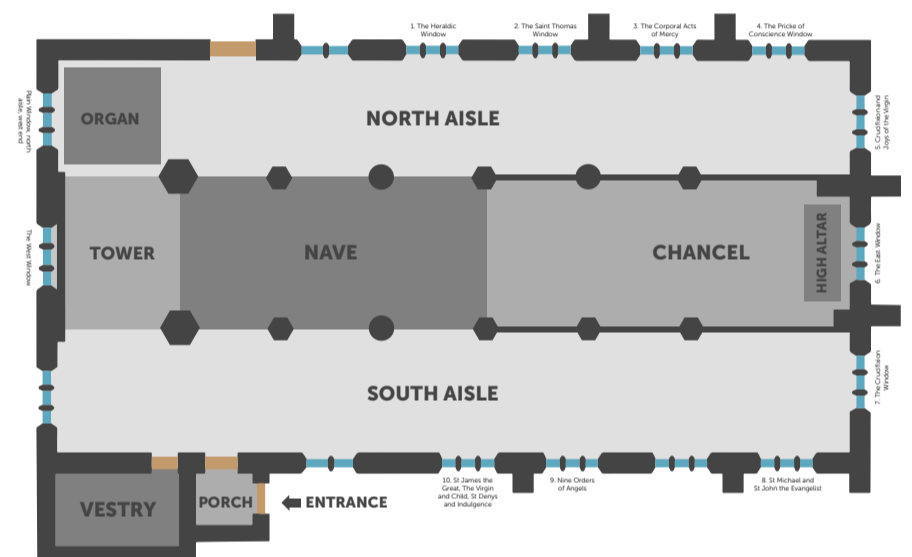
Why are the angels carrying instruments?

"Music drives away the devil and makes people happy; they forget thereby all wrath, unchastity, arrogance, and the like."

Martin Luther wrote this in the early 1500s. This German priest and professor of theology (the study of religion) believed in the benefits of music.

Who else is in the ceiling?

The Blessed Virgin Mary (mother of Jesus) is nearest the altar. Opposite her is the archangel Gabriel, bringing the news that she is to 'carry' the Christ Child. The human face with leaves growing around him is a Green Man. He is an ancient symbol of rebirth and here he represents Christ's resurrection and the rebirth of humanity.



Angels in action

The Chancel ceiling

There's so much detail to discover in this ceiling. Each angel offers a fascinating insight into life in the 1400s.

How is the church represented?

One angel is holding a model of this church. We can recognise it by the spire. This represented the angels protecting the church against evil. Another angel is swinging an incense burner (a thurible) on a chain.

Did you know...? The Devil hates laughter as well as music. Many of the faces in the bosses have their tongues sticking out to make you laugh!

What instruments can we see?

Look for the angels carrying these instruments to chase the Devil away:

- A cithern. It was simpler and smaller than a lute and easier to play
- A lute. A stringed instrument with a deep round back. It was played by plucking or strumming
- A viol. A stringed instrument played with a bow, a bit like a violin
- An organ. The angel is pumping the bellow with his left hand and playing the keyboard with his right hand

