

Early History to the Building of the Norman Church.  
By Peter Latham

Pre-Christian period: Large Roman villa on site of Vicars' Court; bath complex excavated 1959; ceiling painting found, now in South Quire aisle; note Cupid, two fishes, possibly turtle. Mosaic floor under bread pews probably made from tesserae taken from ruins of villa. Villa may have had pagan shrine, perhaps re-dedicated as Christian shrine in 4th cent. Could have been beginning of Christian worship on this site. No proof, but Christianity present nearby at Ad Pontem; lead font with Chi Rho symbols found there, now in Newark Museum.

410AD Roman legions withdrawn from Britain. Soon Anglo-Saxons invaded and settled. Dark Ages begin.

627AD According to Bede, Paulinus, missionary from Rome, baptized believers in Trent near Littleborough, by Retford. (See Victorian window near font).

956AD King Eadwig gave land to Archbishop Oskytel of York; charter now lost but scribe made copy and this now in White Book, a valuable archive. See Philip Lyth's book on Southwell Charter. (available in town library). Early 11<sup>th</sup>, probably pilgrims coming to shrine of St Eadburgh here.

1050 Archbishop Kinsius gave bells to Southwell Minster. Even one bell would have been a significant gift; we therefore now have a church of importance. His successor, Ealdred, built refectory and established prebends ["Prebend" = portion of land or revenue from it granted as stipend to canon or member of chapter. "Prebendary" = one who receives it. Minster governed collectively by college (group) of secular (i.e. not monastic) clergy] - therefore a collegiate church. This system remained at Southwell until 19th cent.

1108 Archbishop Thomas II initiated fund-raising: letter to parishioners, marks beginning of rebuilding of Saxon church. Started at E end. Short Quire.

All in Norman style (Romanesque = copied from Roman buildings still standing in Gaul). Cruciform church with nave (from navis = ship = the Ark), Clerestory (Clear+Storey) at top to let in light. Triforium (three-sided) a structural necessity, not a gallery. Transepts (transverse arms) at crossing, choir (often archaic "quire" is better if possibility of confusion) and apse at E end. Normans built main entrance on N side; unusual, but community lay to the N. All in Mansfield "white" sandstone.

1230 approx. Decision taken to replace quire with larger one with transepts. Style now Early English Gothic, arches now pointed. Quire screen built in 14th cent few further major alterations.

Nave floor laid by Ewan Christian (architect to Church Commissioners) late 19th cent. Nave ceiling also designed by him.

Christus Rex 1987, wood covered with copper and gold leaf, by Peter Ball, given in memory of Mrs Mabel Lockwood. Two striking nave altar frontals made by Revd Leonard Childs of Buxton to complement Christus Rex - Given in memory of Honor Redman.