

The Nave

The central main section of the Church is called the nave, a word which derives from the Latin *navis*, or ship. If you look vertically upwards, you can see, in the beams and planking of the roof, the resemblance to the ribs of a ship.

The nave is arguably the oldest part of this stone-built church, and although rebuilt and altered several times in its history, is probably much as the first Rector saw it in the early years of the 13th century.

At the start of the major restoration of the church in 1852 – a restoration which lasted four years during which time the congregation ‘moved out’ to the Kenton Theatre in New Street – the nave was cluttered and depressingly dark; high box pews filled the whole area, and the central aisle was filled with benches and, in the middle, the font. Galleries on cast iron pillars filled the two side aisles. Rectors and Churchwardens influenced by the Oxford Movement with its stress on liturgy and the visual appeal of churches removed much of this clutter and made many needed structural repairs. Here, the plaster was removed from the ceiling, revealing old and rotting beams; the clerestory (the upper part of the nave, with the stained glass windows of the saints, prophets and martyrs) raised the height of the nave and a fine crafted oak tie-beam roof was erected. Handsome oak pews replaced the pine box-pews and the font was removed.

The result is a light and spacious interior, gracious, and with a particularly fine acoustic.