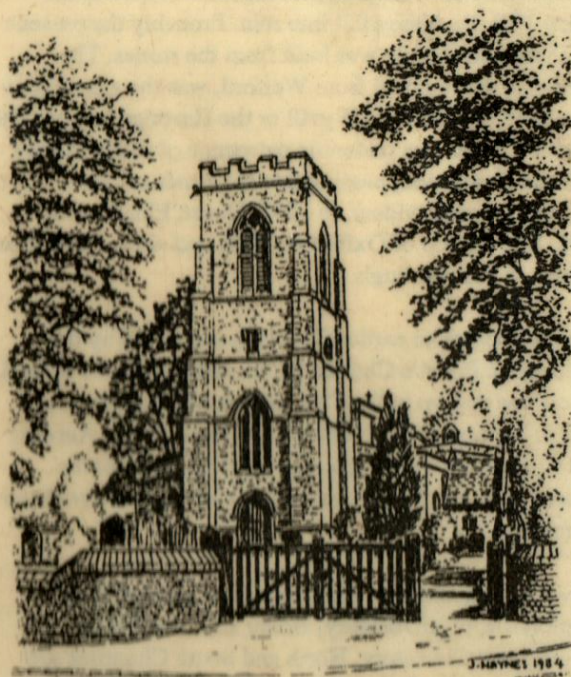


# St. Mary the Virgin Welford



The Church of St. Mary the Virgin  
Welford

Welcome  
to our  
Parish Church

## A SHORT HISTORY

The Parish Church of Welford, Northamptonshire, is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, and dates from the 13th century. There is a tradition of a still earlier Church (circa 1100) in connection with a small religious house which is said to have started here, but which moved to land between this village and Naseby and was known as Sulby Abbey. After the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII the Abbey fell into ruin. Probably the present farmhouse on the site was built from the stones. The reason for the removal from Welford, was the granting of more land by either the Wyvill or the Hastings family. The present Church was under the patronage of Sulby Abbey until the dissolution; passing into the hands of one Dorothy Dayrell, widow, in 1557, Queen Elizabeth in 1561, The Bishop of Oxford in 1629, and since 1890, The Bishop of Peterborough.

The tradition of an earlier Church is supported by the finding of a Priest's Chalice, (12th. century) made of lead, which was dug up in the Churchyard, and is now to be seen in a recess in the North wall of the Church. Another tradition speaks of an underground passage from the Church to Sulby Abbey, but nothing of this has ever been discovered.

As we see the Church today, the oldest portion is the South Aisle, (13th. century, Henry III). The Nave, Chancel and Clerestory, North and South Chantries are 14th. and 15th. century, (Edward II to Henry VII). Very little remains of the 14th. century North Aisle and Pillars. It was rebuilt in 1872 in 14th. century style. At the same time the Church was re-seated with the present oak pews, the South Porch was added and a gallery at the West End removed.

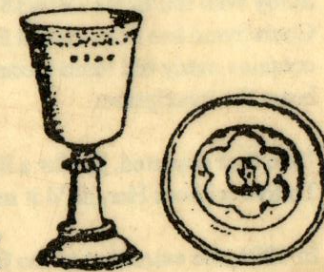
The North and South Chantries are divided from the aisles by carved oak screens of the 17th. century. There is a similar screen across the Tower arch. The South Chantry, which is now used as the Vestry, is of the 14th. century and the North somewhat later. The North Chantry was restored in 1921 by Major and Mrs. Guy Paget in memory of the 101 men of Welford and Sulby who fought in the 1914/1918 war, 27 of whom were killed. A tablet also

commemorates Frederick des Voeux, Mrs. Paget's brother, who fell during the war.

The Tower is of the 15th. century, is embattled, and in four stages. It is a very good example of many of the same type in the locality, probably by the same hand. It contains eight bells, dated as follows:- Nos. 1,2 and 3 - 1933, No.4 - 1699, No.5 - 1859, No.6 - 1633, Nos.7 and 8 - 1638.

The Church possesses a silver gilt paten, date circa 1330, said to be the only piece of pre-reformation plate in the county.

There is a silver gilt chalice, of 1568 (Queen Elizabeth) a silver flagon of 1760, a silver paten of 1843, a silver paten of 1844 and a silver chalice of 1861 given by T. Guy Paget, Esq., in 1914.



Chalice  
1568

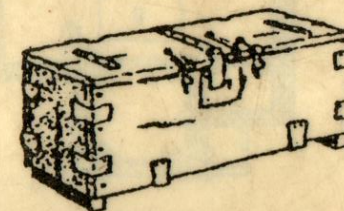
Paten  
1330

The registers date back to 1561.

## THINGS TO NOTICE

### 1 South Aisle.

- + The ancient pillars, especially the first one on entering the South Door, which is illustrated in many architectural books.
- + The Font, 13th century. The cover is modern.
- + The window on the left of the South Door, the stonework of which is only very slightly altered from it's original 13th century state.
- + The Piscina, 13th century, in the South wall.
- + The Medieval Parish Chest, used by travellers staying overnight in one of the coaching Inns in Welford, to deposit their valuables. The Vicar and two Churchwardens would be summoned, each to open one of the three locks with his key and witness the placing of the valuables. When the traveller was ready to resume his journey,



Medieval Parish Chest



the Vicar and Churchwardens would re-open the chest.

## 2 Screens.

- + Carved oak screens, 17th century, to the North and South Chuntries and the Tower arch.

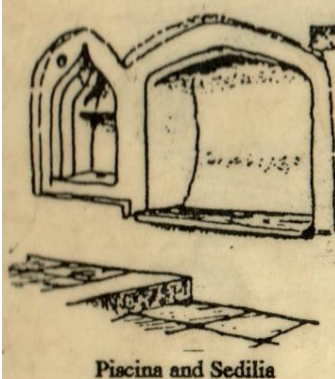
## 3 South Chantry (Vestry).

- + The stone and brass monument to Frances Saunders, 1583, his three wives and nine children, who lived at Welford Manor, now known as the Talbot, in the High Street.
- + The large heads carved on the arches.

## 4 Sanctuary.

- + The Reredos of alabaster, 1888, in memory of the The Rev.G.A.Poole, Vicar of Welford for 33 years.
- + The Piscina and Sedilia, 14th century, discovered in 1953.
- + The East Window.

This is a good example of it's type. The glass is modern (1868).



Piscina and Sedilia

## 5 Chancel.

- + The shields on the walls, showing the crests of people who in earlier centuries have benefitted the Church.
- + The old pew ends, now forming the sides of a desk, one of which has the name "Lovet" and a dog carved on it. This is interesting, for it shows the appropriation of pews in earlier times.



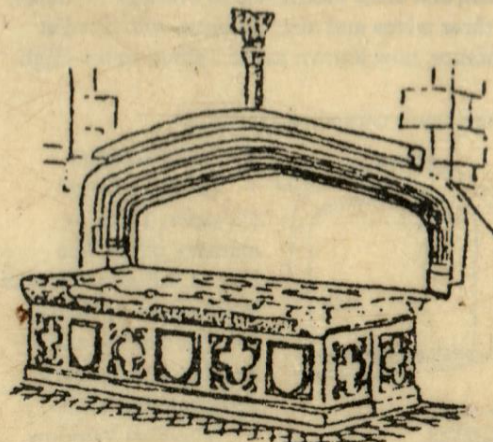
"Lovet" Bench Ends

## 6 North Chantry.

- + The stone monument to Eleonora Temple, 1661.

## 7 North Aisle.

- + The Priest's Chalice, 12th century, in a recess in the North wall.
- + The Table Tomb, 15th century, with carvings of an unknown man and his wife. It is said that the mutilated edges of the tomb were made by Cromwell's soldiers sharpening their swords before the Battle of Naseby.



15th Century Table Tomb

## 8 Organ.

- + Originally built by Wordsworth and Maskell of Leeds in 1875, the organ was re-built by Messrs. Tailor of Leicester in 1904, when the pneumatic action was installed. The organ was at this time situated in the South Chantry. In 1963/4 the organ was completely dismantled, overhauled and moved to it's present position with several tonal improvements and a standard pedal keyboard. Also, the electric stop key action was fitted. This work was carried out by Messrs. J.W.Walker and Sons Ltd., of Ruislip, Middlesex.

## Outside.

- + Belcot, 14th century, on the roof of the South Chantry. The present bell was given by the school children as a Memorial after the 1914/18 war.
- + Carvings on the Tower (drain outlets), and carvings of heads on the windows.

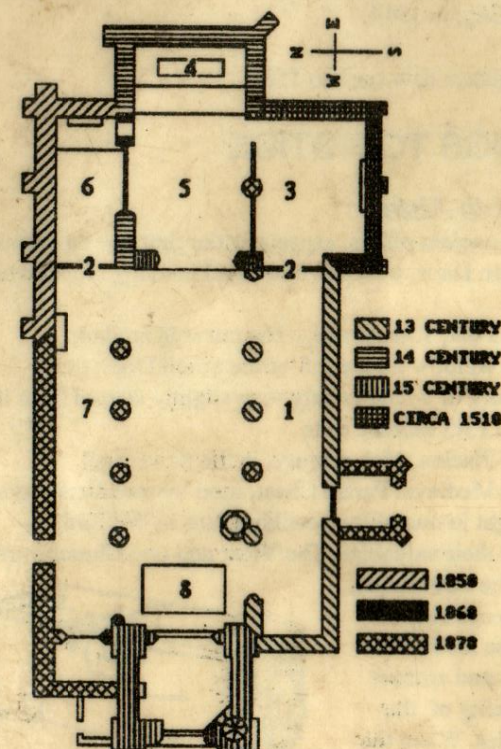
- + The clock was installed in 1872 at a cost of £74. A clock is known to have been on the Church in 1624 because there is a record of the Vicar providing a sundial to help the clock keeper set the correct time!

## The Churchyard.

- + The Memorial Calvary is to the 34 men of Welford and Sulby who fell in the 1914/18 and 1939/45 wars. The Churchyard has been closed for burials for many years. It contains many old tomb-stones, one of which, dated 1729 bears the inscription:-

"She first departed, He for a little Try'd  
To live without Her, lik'd it not, and dy'd."

In 1894, the extension to the Churchyard on the opposite side of the road was consecrated. It has since been enlarged.



GROUND PLAN