

A Short Guide

Welcome to St Mary Redcliffe. There has been a Christian church on this site since AD 1115. We invite you to walk around this lovely building, enjoy its peace and space, pray if you wish and use this guide to point out some of the building's features. More detailed guides and a children's trail are also available.

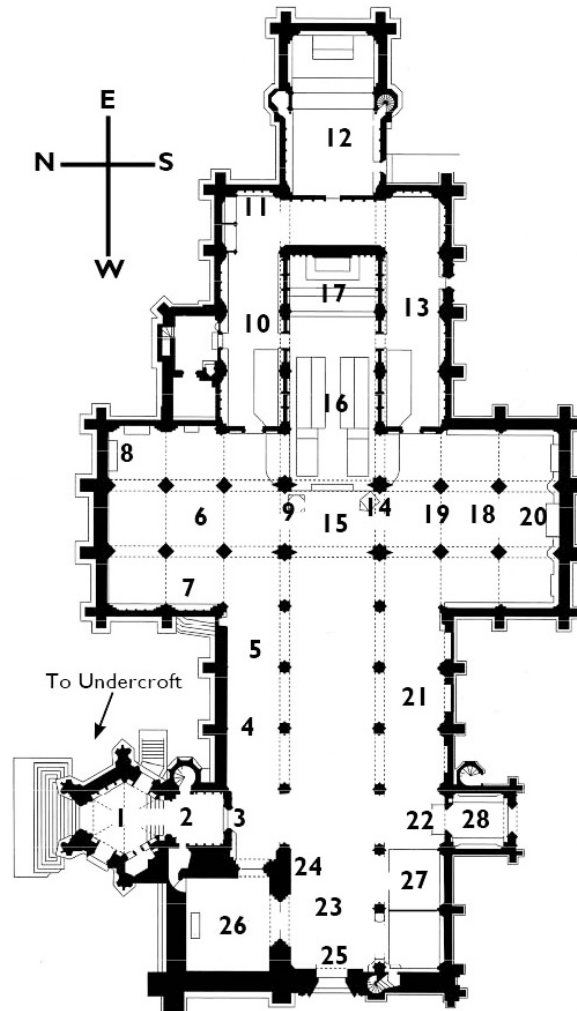
You possibly entered the church via the flight of steps into the **North Porch** (1). Built in the early 14th century, the porch has an unusual hexagonal shape and the outside is richly carved. The niches would have been filled with statues of the kings of England, standing on corbels depicting townsfolk. The present corbels are copies; some of the originals are displayed in the North Aisle. Tradition has it that sailors came to this porch to pray before an image of the Virgin Mary prior to their journey overseas. Within the porch look up at the fine early English vaulting.

The **inner porch** (2) is the oldest part of the church, which is Early English, dating from 1185. The columns are of blue lias and each carved capital is different. The carvings of faces to the right of the door are the earliest carvings in the church. The door on the left of the inner porch leads to an upper room where it is said that Thomas Chatterton found the parchments on which he wrote his pseudo medieval poetry.

Above the North door (3) is a model of the replica of the "Matthew", the ship in which Cabot sailed to Newfoundland. The Matthew

was built on Redcliffe quay, west of the church as was the replica 500 years later.

As you walk up the **North Aisle** (4), look up at the vaulting here and in the rest of the church. There are more than 1200 roof bosses, all different and covered in gold leaf. Look out for several 'Green Men' and the famous 'Maze' boss (5). The window in the last bay depicts the story of Noah.



In the **North Transept** (6) you will see The Chaotic Pendulum (7), part of St. Mary Redcliffe's Journey into Science project, challenging us to think about our universe. Also here, is the tomb of a knight (8) reputed to be Robert de Berkeley who laid a water pipe in 1190 giving the parish a water supply.

The Pulpit (9) was carved in 1856 by a local craftsman who also made the Nave pews. Around the pulpit are carvings of the twelve apostles each holding a symbol by which they can be identified.

The Organ, being one of the finest in the country, was built by Harrison & Harrison in 1912. It has 4350 pipes ranging from nearly 10 metres to 2 cms in length. During 2009/10 a major restoration of the organ is planned; please take an appeal leaflet.

Through the gate behind the great organ pipes you will enter the **North Ambulatory**. (10) Here, and in the South Ambulatory (13), are illuminated panels illustrating different aspects of St Mary Redcliffe and especially the people associated with this great Church over the ages. Straight ahead of you is the Handel Window (11), dedicated to Handel who was friendly with Thomas Broughton, Vicar of St Mary Redcliffe and whose memorial is below the window. On the left of the window is the Mede Tomb dating from 1475.

As you turn right behind the High Altar there is an opportunity to light a candle at the Pricket stand.

Enter the **Lady Chapel** (12) and take in the colour and splendour of the modern stained glass windows. This chapel is set aside for private prayer.

In the **South Ambulatory** (13) you will find the Cope chest, where many of the intricately embroidered vestments are stored, and two models of the church. The Lectern (14) is solid brass and was a gift to the church in 1638.

At the **East Crossing** (15) look up to the vaulting and you will appreciate the basic plan of the church being the shape of a cross with two transepts running south and north and the nave and chancel running west to east.

Turn towards the **Chancel**, which consists of the choir(16), with choir stalls on each side, and the Sanctuary beyond.(17) The Sanctuary is the most sacred part of the church. Eucharist is celebrated at the Altar when the congregation share in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine in remembrance of Jesus Christ. The East window above the sanctuary depicts the Crucifixion.

Now turn towards the **South Transept** (18). The black tomb (19) set in the floor is that of Admiral Sir William Penn, his memorial and armour are to be found high on the wall at the West End (25). The great South Transept Window depicts both Canynges and Cabot with his ship the "Matthew". Below the window is the tomb of William Canynges (20) whose generosity enabled much restoration to be done in the 15th century. To the left of the

tomb is an alabaster effigy of Canynges in the robes of a priest

Walk towards the West End of the church down the **South Aisle** (21) The stellate tomb recesses, found on the south wall are peculiar to Redcliffe, Bristol Cathedral and St David's Cathedral. Above the South door (22) are the Arms of Charles II

At the **West End** (23) stands the Medieval Font beside which is the Paschal Candle. Replica pennants have recently been installed on the Penn Memorial (24).

Look up at the great West window depicting Christ in Majesty. A mirror on wheels is available for you to study the splendour of the vaulted ceiling.

Stand at the Great West Door (25) and take in the wonderful proportions of the building as a whole. The architecture of the church from the Lady Chapel to the West End is perpendicular with the upper windows divided by flying buttresses.

Beautiful wrought iron gates crafted by Edney 1710 lead into **St John's Chapel** (26) and you will see the whale-bone on the wall brought back by Cabot in 1497 after he had discovered America. On the other side is a wooden statue of Queen Elizabeth I who is said to have described St Mary Redcliffe as the "*fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England*". The Chapel windows contain fragments of the only remaining medieval glass, the rest having been destroyed in the Reformation.

Feel free to browse in the **Shop** (27) where there is a wide range of guides, cards, souvenirs and gifts for you to purchase.

If you leave the church by the South door (28) and turn left you will find the grave of the celebrated church cat on the grass bank. The tramline embedded in the grass, was flung over the rooftops when a bomb exploded on Redcliffe Hill in 1941.

The 13th century tower with its restored spire of 1872 rises 292 feet above the 'red cliff' from which the Church and the District derive their name.

If you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to ask the Stewards or Verger on duty.

We hope you have enjoyed your visit to St. Mary Redcliffe. There is no entrance charge but the cost of maintaining this historic and beautiful building is enormous. We, therefore, ask you to give generously. Please place your donation in one of the boxes near the North or South door.

Thank You

The Undercroft Cafe, situated under the North steps, is open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday and toilets are also available there.

May God bless you.

PLEASE LEAVE THIS GUIDE IN THE CHURCH