



The current church of St Helena was built in the Norman era. It was built on the orders of John de Builli, the Lord of Bawtry and Austerfield, as a Chapel of Ease to Blyth Priory. Although Austerfield is in Yorkshire, the church has historically formed part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham.

It was restored and extended in 1897-8 when the north aisle was built in memory of William Bradford, who lived at Austerfield Manor. He was one of the Separatists who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620. He later became Governor of New Plymouth.

- PORCH** Above the Norman doorway in the south porch there is a tympanum which shows a **serpent-like dragon**. The tympanum may date from the 8th century, long before the rest of this church. The Synod of Austerfield was held in AD 702 and it could be from this time. The Synod was held to settle a dispute between Alfred, King of Northumbria and Wilfrid, Bishop of Ripon. It was also where discussions were held to settle the way that Easter Day was calculated, the method we still use to this day.
- FONT** The outside of the font is made of **stone**. The inside is lined with **lead**. **Water** that has been blessed (Holy water) is put into the font for baptism (Christening). It marks the baby's, or older person's, welcoming into the family of Christ's worldwide church. The Holy water is poured on the baby's head, because water is a symbol of cleanliness and purity.
The font is believed to be the original. It was restored at the end of the 19th century when it was found in a nearby farmyard being used as a water trough.
- PLAQUE** William Bradford was baptised at the font in this church on 19th March **1589**. William Bradford lived in the village and worshipped here in his early years. His parents died when he was very young, and he then lived with his grandfather at Austerfield Manor. It is believed he was a sickly child and spent much time reading, especially the Bible. He later started to worship at nearby Scrooby and subsequently became part of the Separatist Movement (a Pilgrim Father).
- WINDOW** The Mayflower carrying the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to **America** in 1620. This window was installed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of William Bradford's Christening. The middle panel shows The Mayflower. The first panel shows Bradford outside St Helena's and the third panel shows him as the Governor of Plymouth Colony in America.



- COAT OF ARMS** The main animals are a **lion** and a **unicorn**. You can also see a small **dog** in the middle. These are the royal coat of arms for **George II**. He reigned from 1727 until his death in 1760. Churchwardens were first required to arrange the display of the royal coat of arms during the reign of Henry VIII following the Reformation.

- ALTAR** A pair of **brass candlesticks**, **candles** and a **brass cross** stand on the altar. The long stick by the altar is a candle snuffer, used **to put the burning candles out** safely.
The altar is the table where the main Christian act of the Eucharist (Holy Communion or Mass) is performed. It is also called "The Lord's Table", "The Holy Table" or "The Communion Table".



- EAST WINDOW** The letters **INRI** can be seen above Jesus. They are the initial letters of Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, meaning Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. (John 19.19) The east window depicts the Crucifixion.
This window was made by Charles Eamer Kempe, the prolific Victorian stained-glass designer.

- 8 PISCINA** There is a **drain hole** in the piscina. The piscina is an arched niche near the altar with a basin for rinsing the communion vessels. The drain goes straight into the ground.
- 9 CHANCEL ARCH** The chancel is the most holy part of the church. The original Norman chancel arch here divides the chancel from the nave. There are two faces looking out from the tops of the pillars on either side.



The chancel was originally the area reserved for the clergy at the east end of the church and often divided off by a screen or steps. At one time the clergy were responsible for maintaining the chancel and the people for maintaining the rest of the church. Now the chancel usually contains benches or stalls for the choir and desks for the clergy.

- 10 PULPIT** The pulpit is so high **so that the preacher can be seen and heard easily by the congregation**. It is from this elevated and enclosed platform that a sermon (talk) is delivered during a service. There are **4** steps up to the pulpit. It is made of **stone** and **wood** with decorated panels.



- 11 LECTERN** The large red book on the lectern is **The Holy Bible**.

The lectern is a bookstand in wood or brass to hold the large Holy Bible or The Lectionary from which the lessons are read. Sometimes it is shaped like an eagle with outspread wings because eagles are thought to be the birds that can fly the highest and so nearest to the heavens. The eagle is often standing on a sphere which represents the world.

- 12 WAR MEMORIAL** **12** men from Austerfield were killed in World War One and **25** men were killed from Bawtry in World War One. More men were killed in **the First World War (The Great War)**. 3 men from the parish were killed in World War Two.



- 13 ROPES** The ropes you can see are **to make the church bells ring**. The bells were restored **in 1987**.

The western stone turret contains two bells. They are both hung in wooden headstocks provided during 1987 by local labour. Remember to have a look outside at the bells as you leave the churchyard.



ENDPIECE We hope you have enjoyed helping the children with this Trail. Perhaps you can use this time to congratulate the children on completing The Arts Society Trail of Discovery and discuss with them what they have learned about St Helena's, Austerfield. If you would like to find out more about St Helena's please visit the website of the Southwell and Nottingham Church History Project.

