



## St Nicholas' Church

On the modern day seafront there stands a memorial plaque to the early medieval church of St Mary the Virgin (known locally as one of the Sisterkirkes) which was lost to the sea, together with the old village of Withernsea in the 15th century.

Permission was granted in 1446 to build a new church further inland, once constructed it was dedicated to St Nicholas and consecrated in 1448.

By 1575 St Nicholas was reported to be in decline and the church later fell into disrepair when a storm tore the roof off in 1609. The church lay in ruins for over 200 years, but when nearby Owthorne church was claimed by the sea in 1816, a restoration appeal was launched to rebuild the ruin of St Nicholas.

The arrival of the Hull & Holderness Railway in 1854 brought change to the small seaside town of Withernsea, along with the building of a station and the Queen's Hotel by architect Cuthbert Brodrick. In 1858-9 Brodrick undertook the restoration of St Nicholas which involved a partial rebuilding of the nave, aisles and south porch, new window tracery and the addition of a new vestry. The works also included re-roofing, re-flooring and refurnishing throughout.

The church of St Nicholas served the people of Withernsea faithfully for many years. Today, its churchyard contains a collection of tightly packed memorials that tell the story of those who lived, worked and worshipped in the parish, including those who served in the First and Second World Wars.

On the 27th February 1987 St Nicholas became a Grade II listed building and it went on to continue to serve the community as a place of regular worship until 2013. However, rising maintenance costs forced the local congregation to move to the church of St Matthew on Hull Road and sadly the church of St Nicholas was closed in 2014.

## Churches Conservation Trust

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting over 350 historic churches at risk. All churches in the care of the Trust are listed, mostly Grade I and II\*, and some are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Although the churches are no longer used for regular worship, they remain consecrated and accessible to all.

Without the care of The Churches Conservation Trust, the buildings they look after might have disappeared entirely. Instead they are enjoyed as social, tourism, educational and cultural resources, kept open, in use, and living once again in the heart of communities.

## Access

Due to their age, historic church floors can be uneven and worn and lighting can be low level. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors can be slippery.

## Help us do more

To protect these churches, and others like them, we need your help. If you enjoy your visit please consider donating to support St Nicholas' Church during your visit, on our website using the QR code below or by text:

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- To donate £3, text 111 to 70331
- To donate £5, text 111 to 70970
- To donate £10, text 111 to 70191



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Photography by Peter Clegg



# St Nicholas' Church

Withernsea,  
East Yorkshire



1 In the Porch there is a graveslab mounted in the wall with an inscription to William Copeland †1491, it was relocated from the central aisle during the 1858/9 restoration.



2 The charming octagonal Font features a number of modest floral carvings and is topped with a simple wooden cover with iron detailing.



3 The Poor Box was used to collect money for charitable purposes. They can often be found in most churches built before the nineteenth century.

4 A total of seven bells reside in the Bell Tower at St Nicholas. A ring of six includes five by James Barwell of Birmingham (1894) and one by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough (1930). A service bell, also by John Taylor & Co dates to 1948.

5 War Memorial – A bronze plaque, bearing the names of 60 men lost in the First World War, was previously mounted on this spot on the wall of the North aisle. Sadly, only its simple wooden frame remains as the memorial was stolen from the church, its whereabouts remain unknown.

6 The Pulpit, by architect John Bilson, beautifully carved in oak features the figure of St Nicholas on its central panel. Created as a memorial its inscription reads:

*'To the glory of God and in undying memory of the men of Withernsea who gave their lives in the World War 1914-1918'*



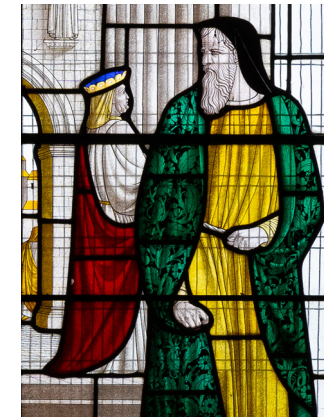
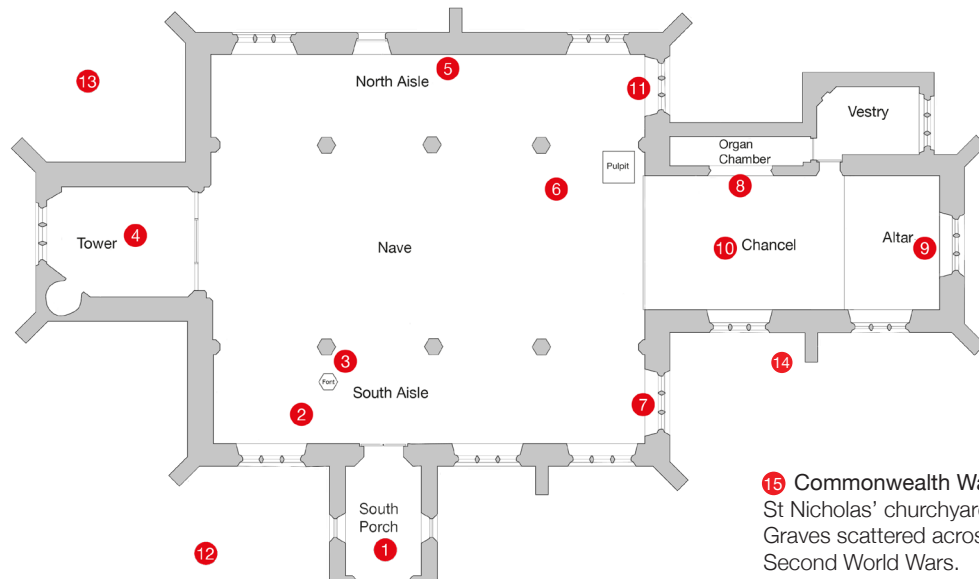
7 The North Aisle Window depicts The Crucifixion, the window was produced by Harry James Stammers in the late 1940's.



8 The Organ was installed in its current form by the Binns Organ Company in 1956. It replaced an earlier organ built in 1885 by Forster & Andrews of Hull.



10 The five bay arch-braced Chancel roof features carved bosses and corbels depicting angels holding shields, with the ceiling above the altar decorated to represent the heavens.



11 South Aisle Window depicting the Ten Commandments, produced by Harry James Stammers in the late 1940's.



12 Step outside and look up! Manufactured by Potts of Leeds, the Clock was installed as a memorial to members of the armed forces who lost their lives during the Second World War.

Unlike some public timepieces, the clock at St Nicholas only strikes the hour. The Withernsea Town War Memorial Clock Trust cares for the clock. It was restored in 2000.

13 Limestone gablette. Situated to the north east of the church, this piece of masonry is thought to be from the medieval church of St Mary that was lost to the sea in the fifteenth century. It is believed that fragments of stone from the church were later re-used in the building of St Nicholas.

14 Florence Mary Scott Cavell (d.1950) Sister of Edith Cavell, the famous British Nurse executed by the Germans in the First World War. Florence was Matron of the nearby Hull & East Riding Convalescent Home & Sanatorium (formerly the Queen's Hotel). Her gravestone is situated to the north of the church in the left corner of the churchyard.



15 Commonwealth War Graves St Nicholas' churchyard contains some thirteen Commonwealth War Graves scattered across the site, all casualties from the First and Second World Wars.