

From the ruin towards the church entrance, you may be able to trace the outline of the nave wall nearest to you – it appears as a long strip of raised ground. Halfway along this wall stood a large south porch, built in the 14th century. It most likely collapsed with the nave around the 17th century and is almost entirely invisible today (it extends under the Hospitallers' Garden). The porch was excavated in 1915, when medieval floor tiles were discovered.

*From the South Porch, look up at the present West Front, above the entrance ⑨*

Documents in the later 17th century record that a large part of the nave had collapsed. In 1677, emergency repair work was carried out on the nave by the two churchwardens, Richard Herring and William Harfill. By the early 18th century, more permanent action was taken. No longer safe for services, and with limited funds, it appears that the remaining nave was demolished and some of the surviving stone, flint, brick and tile used to 'patch up' the present entrance. The four round columns near this entrance remain in place from the original nave (though now outside), but the carved pointed doorway appears to have been moved from either the south porch or the original west end.

*Finally, walk back inside the church and look up to the left where a lead plaque, put up in 1677, commemorates the repair work carried out on the Nave in that year ⑩*

*We hope you have enjoyed your visit to St Mary's Church.*

*If you would like further information on the history and architecture of St Mary's, please see the guide book on sale at the back of the church and visit our web site at*

[www.stmarydehaura.org.uk](http://www.stmarydehaura.org.uk)



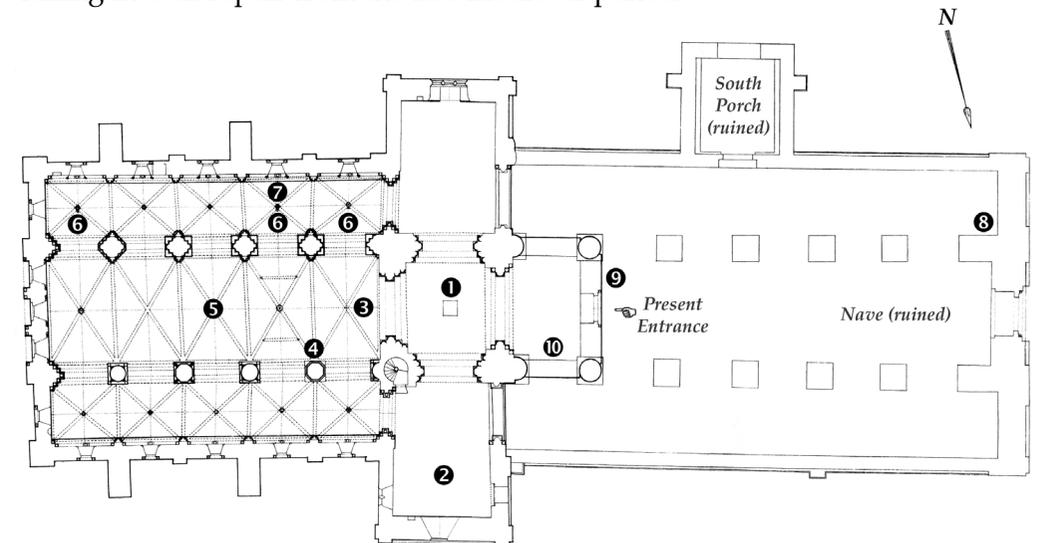
*Possible reconstruction of St Mary's with nave and south porch in medieval times*

## A WALK ROUND THE CHURCH OF ST MARY DE HAURA, NEW SHOREHAM *(St Mary's at the harbour)*

*This guide briefly describes the major aspects of the history and architecture of St Mary's Church. The numbered sections throughout correspond with key positions on the church plan below, which you may like to follow as you walk round the church.*

The year 2003 marked 900 years in the history of the Church of St Mary de Haura, New Shoreham. The church was founded by Philip de Braose, whose father, William, had fought with William the Conqueror at Hastings in 1066. As a young Norman baron, Philip probably campaigned in the First Crusade (1096–99) in Jerusalem. It is recorded that he had returned to England by 1103, when he presented the church to the Abbey of St Florent, Saumur (mid-west France). In the 15th century, the patronage passed to Magdalen College, Oxford.

The original Norman church of c. 1100 probably consisted of the lower stage of the tower, the transepts, an aisleless nave, and a chancel with an apsidal (semi-circular) end. Around 1130–40 the nave was enlarged by the addition of aisles. Of this original building, the tower and transepts have survived intact, the choir having been redesigned by the end of the 12th century and the nave falling into disrepair from the late medieval period.



Scale

100ft  
30m

Plan by Michael Norman

*The tour begins at the Font ❶*

The Norman font is carved with different designs on all four sides, and would have originally stood at the back of the nave. The font today is under the tower crossing, the four arches above you. These are part of the original Norman church of c. 1100 and are plain and without ornate carving; they support the huge weight of the tower above. The arch nearest the entrance is particularly impressive in both height and decoration, and dates to the extension of the nave, c. 1130–40.

*Walk into the Transept to your left ❷*

St Mary's was designed with two transepts, which were used as chapels in medieval times. They have small rounded windows at high level, characteristic of the Norman period. In 1947, the north transept was reordered as a Memorial Chapel. It is open daily for private prayer.

*Walk back to the Font and enter the Choir ❸ [on occasions when the gates are open]*

In the second half of the 12th century, the Norman choir was taken down and replaced by the present choir. This is much larger, consisting of five bays on three levels, and built in the Transitional style, between Norman (rounded arches) and Gothic (pointed arches). Both the choir and its aisles are vaulted in stone, supported by flying buttresses. These features are most unusual for a parish church. The crossing ribs of the choir vault date to c. 1200; the webs between the ribs, built of chalk blocks, were completely rebuilt during 2002–06, with a new central roof boss added to mark the restoration.

*Walk across to the first (octagonal) column on your left ❹*

Move along the pew nearest the column and look for an ornate cross carved into the stone. This is thought to commemorate a visit by the Patriarch of Jerusalem or some other important person at the time of the rebuilding of the choir.



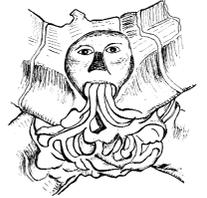
*Walk further forward into the Choir towards the High Altar ❺*

You may notice that the columns are different on either side of the choir. Those on your left are alternately round and octagonal (similar to the arrangement in

Canterbury Cathedral choir), while those on your right are of a more complex shape and uniform design. The capitals (at the top of the columns) on both sides are richly decorated with foliage, some as if blown by the wind.

*Turn right at the High Altar into the chapel and walk down the south Choir Aisle ❻*

If you look up into the vaulted ceiling of the south choir aisle, you will see at intervals three separate faces with branches coming out of their mouths. Known traditionally as 'Green Men', such carvings appear in medieval buildings throughout Europe and further afield, although their significance is still not fully understood.



*Continue up the south Aisle until you reach a pair of brasses on the wall ❼*

These full-length portraits depict a civilian and his wife in a style of clothes fashionable around 1450. Although their names are unknown, they appear to be among the wealthiest of New Shoreham's inhabitants, the man most likely having been a merchant in the town during the 15th century. They were buried in the choir where their grave was marked on the floor with these brasses.

*The tour now continues outside the present church. Walk to the standing ruin at the back of the churchyard ❸*

Between the 15th and 17th centuries, the town of New Shoreham diminished both in size and wealth. At this time, the sea advanced so far inland that more than half of the medieval town was swallowed up and destroyed. The River Adur was also becoming heavily silted, preventing trade vessels from arriving or departing from the port.

The ruin you see in front of you is all that remains of the back wall of St Mary's Norman nave. This part of the church was used by the town's inhabitants at services, and (unlike the choir) was their financial responsibility. It would appear that in the late medieval period, there were too few townsfolk to maintain their part of the church, leaving it to fall into disrepair.