

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 (morning visit)

St. Mary's Parish Church, Haddington, East Lothian (guided tour)

Event leader: Richard Blake, President (07483249749)

Book your place at: https://bnc_haddington.eventbrite.com



St. Mary's Parish Church (CC 2.0)

Meet: at the main entrance to St. Mary's at 10-45 am: NT518736; w3w ///exit.exile.neck . A guided tour will commence at 11 am.

Directions: St. Mary's is situated adjacent to the B6368 road out of Haddington towards Gifford.

Parking: there is free on street parking.

Public Transport: there are bus services to Haddington but no convenient train stations. Car sharing is encouraged.

Accessibility: there is level access to the church and the toilet facilities. There is a level path from the public road through the graveyard to the entrance door.

Seating: there is plenty of seating in the church.

Refreshments: there are numerous options for refreshments in Haddington.

Cost: there will be no charge for this visit but donations to the church will be welcomed.

Booking: there is no limit on numbers and guests are encouraged. Places should be reserved on **Eventbrite** by following this link:

https://bnc_haddington.eventbrite.com

History of St Mary's



St. Mary's Parish Church (CC 2.0)

The earliest reference to a church in Haddington dates from 1139. In addition to the parish church there were monastic establishments, all of which suffered at

the hands of Edward 111's army in 1355 in a campaign known as "The Burnt Candlemas".

Within a few years, work on the present building was started. The title "Lamp of Lothian", which referred originally to the choir of the Franciscan Friary a few hundred yards down river, has since passed to the present building, now restored 'for the solace of the whole community'.

Founded as a Collegiate Church in 1380, and taking over one hundred years to build, the church was largely ruined during the mid-sixteenth century Siege of Haddington. This was after the Rough Wooing by Henry VIII the siege of Haddington taking place in 1548-49.

At the instigation of John Knox, born in Gifford Gate across the river Tyne, the Town Council repaired the Church in 1561 "frae steeple to the west end". A barrier wall was built and the enclosed nave served as the parish church for over 400 years.

Many improvements were made in that time, notably the heightening of the galleries in 1811. The outline of the original arches is visible. The rib vaulting of the aisles was replaced by plaster.

By 1892, further radical changes had taken place during the ministry of the Rev. Robert Nimmo Smith. The floor was lowered and red pine blocks laid. Plaster was removed from the walls, and two new galleries, east and west, were built. A new organ was installed in the East Gallery.

The last and greatest restoration took place in the early 1970s. It came about as the culmination of cooperation between the Kirk Session and the newly formed Lamp of Lothian Collegiate Trust.

Inaugurated in May 1990, the Lammermuir Pipe Organ built in nearby Oldhamstocks, is of traditional design. It is housed in the North Gallery.

The church contains the early 16th century Lauderdale Aisle, the chapel of the Maitland family, set aside and protected by trust deed for ecumenical worship by the mainstream churches.

The church is well supported and visited and hosts concerts during the Lammermuir Festival.

Afternoon visit

We have arranged a visit in the afternoon to nearby Lennoxlove House, the seat of the Duke of Hamilton. Places are limited and must be booked separately on Eventbrite.

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