

Map of the archaeological sites in the Nene Valley.

Historic Castor.

Castor is known internationally among archaeologists as the centre of an important Roman settlement along the Nene valley west of Peterborough. The Roman palace (c. 250 AD) or praetorium was the second largest Roman building in Britain. The church is built on the site of the Roman courtyard. The palace included a temple in the area of the garden of remembrance. Some of the foundations of the Roman palace can be seen beside the road (Stocks Hill) East of the church

The nearby Roman market town of DUROBRIVAE was on the South bank of the River Nene opposite Castor. The whole area between Castor and Chesterton was the site of a sprawling Roman industrial site where distinctive pottery known as 'Castor Ware' was made.

The Roman palace was first excavated by Edmund Artis, agent to Lord Fitzwilliam (of nearby Milton). Many tessellated pavements were found, as well as Roman baths found in the area of the present Castor school sports-ground South of the church.

The Palace ceased to be inhabited about 450 AD. In 650 AD St Kyneburgha, a daughter of King Penda of Mercia, founded a Saxon Convent among the ruins. Parts of the convent were excavated in 1957. It seems possible that it was sacked by the Vikings between 850 – 1000 AD.

Castor and Ailesworth are mentioned in the Domesday Book, as is Milton Park, which since 1502, has been owned by the Fitzwilliam family.

The religious parish of Castor and Ailesworth is in the same benefice as Sutton, Upton and Marholm, all of which are Norman churches. Sutton and Upton churches were originally chapels-of-ease for Castor. Marholm church contains some fine tombs of the Fitzwilliam family. There are many lovely walks in the area, along the Nene valley, and beside the Nene valley railway (preserved steam railway). There are three pubs in Castor, the Prince of Wales Feathers, the Royal Oak and the Fitzwilliam Arms.

Services.

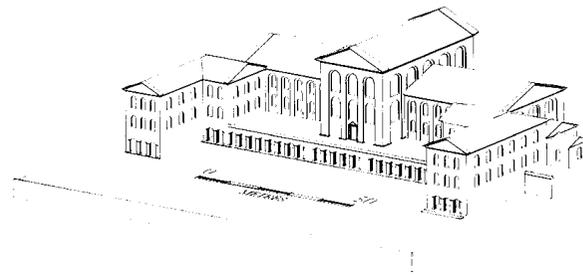
Services at the church of St. Kyneburgha at Castor are as follows:

SUNDAYS: 10.15am Sung Eucharist
6pm Angelus & Evensong –
Book of common prayer (BCP)
DAILY: 7.30am Angelus & Mattins – (BCP)
6pm Angelus & Evensong – (BCP)

For more information, baptisms, weddings, etc, write to:

The Rector,
The Rectory,
5 Church Hill,
Castor.

Telephone:
01733 – 380244



A reconstruction of the great roman building.

Wayfarer, hold in mind thou art also a pilgrim in this life. Pray for us here, living and departed, and pray for thyself

DATA BASE REF: C/C 1002



CASTOR CHURCH



SAINT KYNEBURGHA



1 – Porch – a late Saxon carving of ‘Christ in Majesty’ in the gable above (pictured left).

2 – The Door – leading into the church dates from 1372.

3 – Peter’s Pence Box – oak alms chest – pre

Henry VII (1485 AD).

4 – The Roof in the Nave – angels with instruments – 15th century oak.

5 – Wall Painting – showing scenes from the life of St Catherine – note wheel – 14th century.

6 – Base of a Saxon cross.

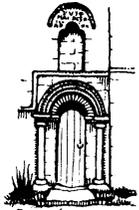


7 – The altar of St Kyneswitha – she was a sister of St Kyneburgha. They were both buried here until their bodies were moved to Peterborough in the 11th century. The screen dates from 1330 AD.

8 – Next to Kyneswithas’ Altar – a Saxon carving of an Apostle, this was part of the shrine of St Kyneburgha – 8th century.



9 – Tower Capitals – the carvings show a ‘green man’, hunting scenes, a man fighting a lion and St Kyneburgha being chased by ruffian soldiers (pictured left), 1120 – 1124 AD.



10 – Priest’s Door – on a semi-circular frame of stone, over the Priest’s Door in the south wall of the Chancel, is the following inscription: —

XV. KL.
MAI DEDICA
TIO HVI ECCL’E
A.D. MCXXIII

In full this reads:

Quinto decimo Kalendas

Maias Ecclesiae
Anno Domini MCXXIII

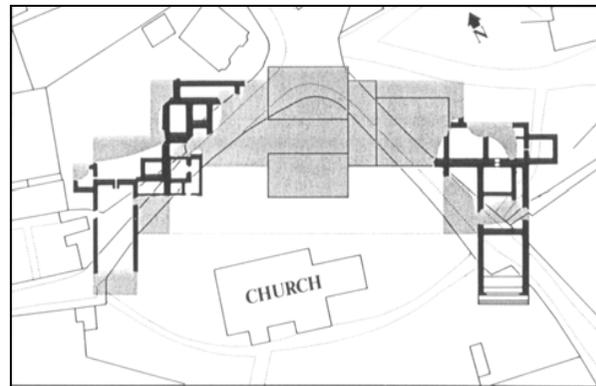
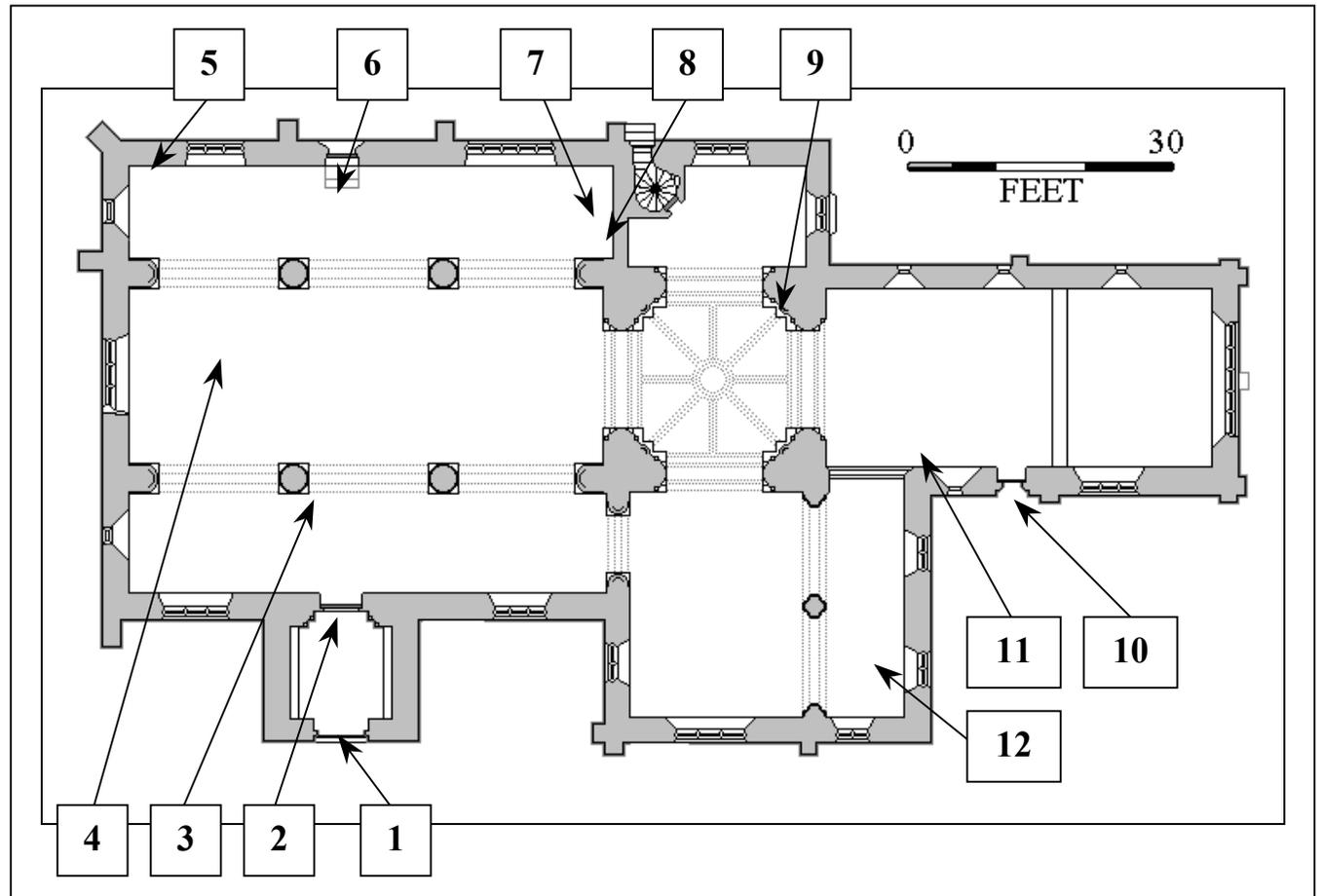
Or

The dedication of this Church was on the

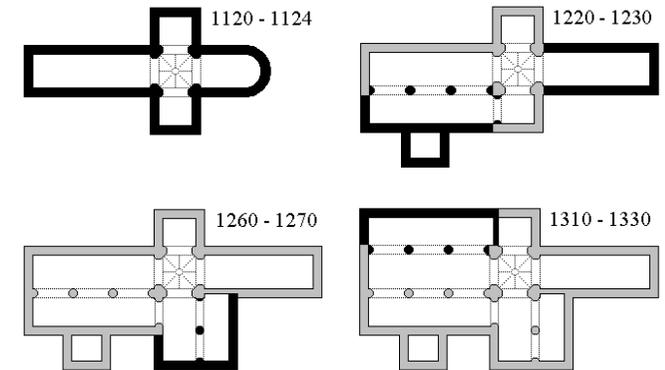
17th April 1124.

11 – The Chancel – note the tomb of Virgilius, an early Rector – c. 1228 AD

12 – The Lady Chapel – this was rebuilt in c. 1260 AD, and is dedicated to Our Lady Mary, the Mother of Jesus



A reconstruction of the great Roman building showing the probable outline (grey toned area).



The development of the church. Some of the Saxon church can be seen incorporated into the Norman church. The Priest’s room above the North Transept was added between 1310 and 1320, and the Spire was added to the tower in 1350.