

Historical Background

**Welcome to our beautiful and historic church!
It is a modest building, full of light and colour,
with an atmosphere of peace and prayerfulness.**

Commissioned in 1840 by the Earl of Shrewsbury and the architect, A.W.N. Pugin, it started life as a school, but on November 3rd 1843, the feast of St Winefride, it was officially opened as Neston's new church. Only one other Wirral Catholic church - St Werburgh's, Birkenhead - existed at that time. In living memory the anti-Catholic penal laws were still in force, and only ten years had elapsed since Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

We owe the preservation of the Faith in Wirral to the heroism of two families, the Stanleys of Hooton and the Masseys of Puddington, who sheltered priest chaplains at their ancestral Halls. Fr John Plessington, the future martyr, was chaplain at Puddington Old Hall until his arrest and martyrdom at Chester in 1689.



Fr Ralph Platt, chaplain to the Masseys from 1790 to 1834, realising the need of a permanent church at Neston, began to collect funds. His vision became a reality nine years after his death. He was buried in Burton church cemetery in the grave thought to be that of the martyr.

A stained glass window (left) in the south wall of St Winefride's, erected on the 150th anniversary, tells the story St John Plessington's life.

Contacts for Parish Ministries

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To contact the different groups active in the Parish, please visit our website...

www.stwinefridesneston.org.uk

St Winefride's RC Church, Neston

**5 Burton Road, Little Neston, CH64 9RF
0151 336 4189**

Mass Times

Sunday

6:30pm (Saturday Vigil); 8:45am, 10:45am

Holy Days

7:30pm (Vigil), 9:00am, 7:30pm

Weekdays

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 8am
Morning Prayer 8:40am
Mass 9:00am (10am bank holidays)
Rosary after Mass

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays
11:00am - 11:30am; 5:45pm - 6:10pm

Little Church

Sunday 10:45am



A Tour Around St Winefride's Church

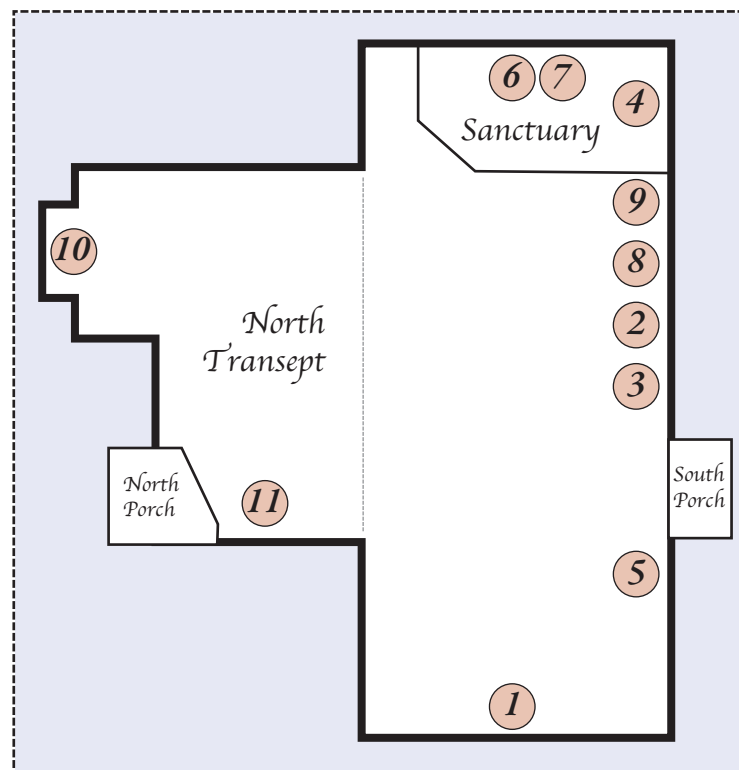
First proceed to the back of church to view the ancient Mass chasuble, ① brought from Puddington when the Hall was finally closed. Could the future Saint have worn it? Read the account of his defence of the Faith as he waited on the gallows.

Our church has seen many changes over the years - the last major improvement was in 1995-96, when a new north transept was created to extend the capacity of the church by about 100 places. At the same time the sanctuary was adapted for the Vatican Council's liturgical reforms.

"Light and colour" are major attractions. There are 17 vertical Gothic windows in the extended church space, of which only five have no stained glass. Seven of the twelve fall into two categories; the first are of simple roundel design eg. St Anne with Mary as a child ②; St John leading Mary away from Calvary ③; the Good Shepherd ④.



Five of the twelve are of full stained glass: the Plessington window ⑤, the two splendid windows dominating the sanctuary



(Our Lady and the Child Jesus, and St Winefride, pictured, left) ⑥ ⑦, St Joseph ⑧ and St Charles Borromeo ⑨ (pictured, right). The latter is perhaps the most artistic in colour and design, It was erected in memory of Charles Stanley of Denhall, owner of the coalmines under the Dee, and a generous benefactor. He is seen in prayer at the feet of the Saint, who is arrayed in the scarlet robes of a Cardinal. (Charles Stanley was the uncle of the 12th baronet, Sir John Massey Stanley, who funded the building of St Mary of the Angels church at Hooton).

The more modern window of Our Lady Star of the Sea ⑩ in the transept, and another Stanley window ⑪, near the north exit, are also worthy of mention. Don't forget to search for the Rood above the sanctuary, hidden by the roof rafters, a vivid reminder of the rood screens which dominated all our pre-Reformation Catholic churches.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS & CEMETERY

Another addition to the beauty of the church is the series of enamel Stations of the Cross of striking French design, funded by members of the parish and erected in the 1920s.

From its earliest days the grave stones in our peaceful cemetery speak eloquently of devotion to our loved ones. Former parish priests (not least Fr Gerry Courell) and priest chaplains from Puddington and Hooton (Fr Peter Baron and Fr Thomas Collingridge), mingle with their parishioners.

We must also mention the grave of Teresa Higginson, a focus of longstanding devotion; and the graves of two Bishops; Joseph Gray and Gerard Tickle.

**Thank you for your visit.
Keep us in your prayers.**

*Words: Monsignor
Christopher Lightbound
January 2014*

