

## **History of St Peter & St Paul, Exton**

The church of St Peter and St Paul is an early English two-cell church (c.12<sup>th</sup> century), but as regularly said of old churches, "it is believed that an earlier church existed on the same site!" The church is built of flint and mortar. The church was greatly altered in the 1840's, since when further changes have been more cosmetic.

Situated within the East Hampshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the church is in the centre of the village conservation area. It stands within a well-tended churchyard bounded on all sides by a flint wall, with large chestnut and other trees enhancing the view of the church and surrounding countryside.

Exton church is unusual in having a "weeping chancel", with a distinct angle at the junction with the nave. Again unusually, the chancel weeps to the south and this feature is readily seen from the back of the nave.

Of particular interest is a stencilled wall painting on the east wall behind the altar. This was designed by Charles Spooner in the mid 1890's at the same time that he designed the stained glass windows. It depicts a stylised "Tree of Life" and was discovered by chance in 1995 when the newly painted east wall began peeling a few weeks after redecoration. Its existence had been unknown to any of the current congregation as it had been covered up in the mid-1920's as a result of damp. This wall painting has now been restored to its former glory. An inscription surrounding the quatrefoil window is the first verse of the Benedicite....

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord  
Praise him and magnify him for ever.