

# St.Ippolyts Church History



**St.Ippolyts is located on a hill about 2 miles south of Hitchin in Hertfordshire. The church serves the villages of St.Ippolyts, Langley and Gosmore. While it is unclear who built the church, it is said to have been funded by grants given in 1087 by Judith, the niece of William the Conqueror who was attempting to make amends for giving evidence against a Saxon Earl who was subsequently executed. At that time, the church would have consisted of the nave, with no side aisles and with a chancel about half its present length.**

**By about 1320 the church had been enlarged to its present size with arches cut between the nave and side aisles.**

**The church underwent extensive rebuilding in 1878/9 and a number of the heads carved into the arches of the church are said to be images of those involved in this work.**

**St Ippolyts is named after Saint Hippolytus, but whether or not that was the historical St Hippolytus of Rome, a third century theologian or the legendary St Hippolytus of Pronto supposed to have been torn apart by horses or the equally legendary St Hippolytes of Rome, a soldier martyr is open to conjecture. The historical St Hippolytes was largely forgotten about by the Western church, only to be re-discovered in the 16th Century, so an amalgam of legendary St Hippolytus's seems more likely bearing in mind the Normans material interests. Although the Knights of the Temple owned land at Temple Dinsley there is no evidence any knights were ever stationed there, although it is a charming legend.**

**The legend also has it that as they left, they would take out their swords and carve a cross the stone work. Such a cross can be seen on a pillar on the south aisle at about the height of a mounted man**