

St Mary's Church, Old Hunstanton

Address : Church Road, Old Hunstanton, Norfolk. PE36 6JS

Further details : See www.norwich.anglican.org or www.achurchnearyou.com

General Information

This handsome church stands just outside the entrance to the park of Hunstanton Hall, which was the home of the influential Le Strange family. Although the church is in essence a 14th century building it was heavily restored in the mid 19th century. The work being financed by Henry le Strange who called on the expertise of his cousin Frederick Preedy to effect the transformation. Although significantly remodelled the church has retained a number of medieval features including: five soaring late 13th century bay arcades, a selection of impressive le Strange family tombs and an early 16th century painted chancel screen.

Much of the stained glass was designed by Frederick Preedy the east window is particularly attractive and is generally adjudged to be his finest work.

East Window

Believed by many to be Frederick Preedy's greatest work the window was designed c1867 to commemorate the death of Preedy's cousin, Henry Styleman le Strange of Hunstanton Hall. Following a restoration in 2005 the glass was replaced in pristine condition allowing Preedy's work to be admired in all of its glory.

The apex of window contains the 'Crown of Glory' below which the tracery lights depict a heavenly host of angels holding banners and playing instruments.

In the main lights Preedy has used a device called typology, which was very popular in medieval times, whereby Old Testament events are seen as anticipating those of the New Testament. Thus for example he produces a scene from the Old Testament story of Abraham being ordered by God to sacrifice his only son Isaac which is clearly linked to New Testament scene of Christ's crucifixion. Similarly both Elijah and Christ are depicted ascending to Heaven. The following scenes are represented:

- **First column. Top to bottom:**
 1. The soldiers arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene
 2. Peter, James & John sleep as Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemene
 3. Jesus offers the cup of wine to his disciples during the Last Supper.
- **Second column. Top to bottom:**
 1. Jacob's dream at Bethel where he sees a stairway to Heaven
 2. Joseph is taken from the well to be sold to the Ishmaelites
 3. Moses makes a bronze serpent. Anyone bitten by a snake who looked at it was cured.
- **Third column. Top to bottom:**
 1. The Ascension
 2. The Resurrection
 3. The Crucifixion
- **Fourth Column. Top to bottom:**

1. Elijah, watched by Elisha, ascends to Heaven in a whirlwind
 2. Jonah emerges from the whale (large fish)
 3. Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac
- **Fifth Column**
 1. The meal at Emmaus on Easter Day
 2. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene in the garden outside the tomb
 3. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus lay Jesus' body in a new tomb.

South Chancel Window 1

Believed to be designed by Clayton and Bell c1890 the window is dedicated to the memory of Adolphus Waller vicar of the parish 1870 – 1890. The main lights contain images of the high priests Aaron and Zacharias together with St Stephen and St Paul. Angels carry banners extolling the reader to praise and magnify the lord.

Clerestory Windows

Designed by Frederick Preedy the windows contain the following images:

- South window 1: King Edward the Confessor holding a sword
- South window 2: St Edmund holding an arrow
- South window 3: St David with a dove on his shoulder
- South window 4: St Ambrose with a beehive at his feet and holding a scourge.
- South window 5: St George on a horse slaying a dragon.

South Aisle East Window

The window designed by Henry le Strange and made by Frederick Preedy c 1862 depicts the Jesse Tree which is a pictorial representation of the genealogy of Christ proceeding from the stem of his ancestor Jesse who was also David's father. In the words of Isaiah: 'A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesses, from his root a branch will bear fruit.'

South Aisle Window 1

This window depicting the Holy Family was installed c1928. It was a typical commercial design of the time.

North Aisle Window 3

This modern interpretation of the Annunciation was installed c1978. It is dedicated to the memory of Jack Friend (1903 – 1978).

South Aisle West Window

Possibly designed c1900 by the Powell workshop the window is dedicated by Norfolk's freemasons to the memory of Hamon le Strange who was their Grand Master for 20 years. It depicts the main characters in an allegorical play associated with the Freemason movement in which Hiram is presented as being the chief architect of King Solomon's Temple who is murdered during an unsuccessful attempt to force him to divulge the Master Masons' secret password. The story is presented as a lesson in fidelity to one's word, and in the brevity of life.

unsuccessful attempt to force him to divulge the Master Masons' secret password.^[6] It is explained in the lecture that follows this play that.

West Window

The central light is all that remain from a window originally designed by Frederick Preedy c 1860. The remaining panels depict biblical scenes.