

St Peter and St Paul Church, Salle

Address : St Peter and St Paul Church, The Street, Salle, Norwich, Norfolk NR104SE

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

General Information

This beautiful church was rebuilt in the early 15th century. Now its size seems totally out of proportion to its location but when it was erected it was financed by the wealth of local wool merchants. Paid for by Uffords, Mautebys, Morleys and Brewes it is both huge and magnificent.

Unlike many rural Norfolk churches, which are built with cheap local flint, St Peter's & St Paul's benefactors brought in costly Barnack stone from Peterborough. The interior remains impressive with its arcades rising and falling towards the chancel arch. Its treasures include: a seven sacrament mediaeval font, a chancel roof which is upheld by 160 angels together with roof bosses which would not look out of place in a cathedral, a contemporary 15th-century wineglass pulpit and original choir stalls and misericords.

Much of the original glass has been destroyed nevertheless some interesting panels remain including remains of the Nine Orders of Angels together with various patriarchs, prophets and cardinals. There are also some very attractive late 19th century windows.

East Window

The figures in the tracery lights are the remains from a series of the 'Nine Orders of Angels' attributed to the 15th-century school of glass painters.

Originally each order would have been represented as a pair. The following remain:

- Archangels: Only one figure survives, although the head has been replaced. The angel is dressed in red and white, sports a pair of green wings and points to a book. Above stars twinkle in the sky whilst at the base of the panel is a building which recalls the words in the 'Golden Legend' (a medieval collection of writings on the subject of holy figures): 'And some be deputed to the governance of a multitude of a city, and they be said to be archangels.'
- Principalities: Here two figures hold sceptres, they wear coronets and blue robes, with richly decorated tippets. Kings kneel at their feet.
- The next pair are somewhat fragmented. It is just possible to make out a pair of red demons holding golden sceptres, which originally would have been part of a depiction of the 'Fall of the Rebel Angels'.
- Powers: The pair wear armour and carry a birch in one hand and a chain in the other, which they would use to subjugate demons.

In the main light canopies, small feathered angels hold shields representing the heraldry of the Delapole, Bardolf and Beaufort families.

South Chancel Window 1

The tracery lights contain 15th century representations of:

- St Margaret of Antioch, portrayed slaying a dragon with a cross
- St Catherine carrying her symbolic wheel.

Below we see medieval representations of patriarchs/ prophets. Together with cardinals Originally they would have stood over images of kings, popes and archbishops of Canterbury clearly illustrating local support to King Henry VI, whose fortunes were suffering in the 1440s when the glass was made.

North Chancel Window 1

The tracery lights contain a selection of prophets, patriarchs and cardinals. The latter are clearly recognisable by their large red hats. Similar to the South Chancel Window originally they would have stood over images of kings, popes and archbishops of Canterbury clearly illustrating local support to King Henry VI, whose fortunes were suffering in the 1440s when the glass was made.

North Chancel Window 2

The tracery lights contain 19th century glass.

South Aisle South Window 4

The tracery lights contain glass dating from c1411, the oldest in the church. Two figures of God the Father, from the 'Creation of the World' are just discernible.

South Transept East Window

The tracery lights contain medieval figures dating from the mid 15th century. These include a kneeling Thomas Briggs who wears a blue robe and has yellow hair. Thomas financed the building of the transept c1444. Images of his wives, both called Margaret are also depicted kneeling and wearing robes of the same blue.

Fragments of a figure of St Thomas of Canterbury, wearing red robes can be discerned together with a crowned Virgin Mary and the remnants of a feathered angel.

South Transept South Window

The tracery lights date from the late 15th century when the son of Thomas Briggs (who originally financed the building of the transept) remodelled the transept. The surviving panels include representations of St Catherine, St Margaret and feathered angels playing instruments.

South Transept West Window

Contains fragments of 15th century glass.

North Transept East Window 1

Around 1896 the main lights were redesigned by Herbert Bryans assisted by Ernest Heasman in a light 15th century style. It is dedicated to the memory of Adela Mockton Jodrell. Here we see large figures of Saints: Helen, Constantine, Nicholas and Catherine. All are named and are accompanied by their appropriate emblems.

The tracery lights contain 15th century glass. The central figures have been heavily and erroneously restored. They now show the Virgin Mary and the Angel Gabriel in an Annunciation scene. It is believed that originally the figures were part of a representation of the coronation of the Virgin Mary. They are flanked by two censuring angels.

North Transept East Window 2

The tracery lights contain very heavily restored (in many areas replaced) glass dating from the 1440s. It represents the Visitation i.e the occasion when Mary pregnant with Jesus visits her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist. It is accompanied by personifications of the meeting of Mercy & Truth and Justice & Peace. It illustrates Psalm 85 verse 10, the text of which is on the scrolls the figures carry.

The main lights date from c1888 and constitute a Jesse window. Again designed by Herbert Bryans assisted by Ernest Heasman it is dedicated to the memory of Lady Jodrell. The Tree of Jesse is an artistic interpretation of what is basically Christ's family tree. It rises from Jesse of Bethlehem the father of King David and is a schematic representation of Christ's ancestors. The subject is often seen in Christian art and was particularly popular in the medieval period. The oldest surviving complete Jesse tree depicted in glass dates from 1145 and can be found in Chartres Cathedral.

North Transept West

Designed c1882 again by Herbert Bryans, assisted by Ernest Heasman, this window is dedicated to the memory of Edward Jodrell.

Similar to the north transept east window 1, Bryans has adopted a light 15th century style. It depicts people associated with the history of the church including: Richard & Alice de Brewes and Thomas Briggs.