

St Margaret of Antioch Church, Cley

Address : St Margaret's Church, Church Lane, Cley NR25 7TT

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

Simon Jenkins describes St Margaret's church as "a sea church stranded inland." The size and splendour of the church seems at odds with its beautiful village setting, but this is owed to its early wealth which was lost when the town was hit by the plague in 1349(which killed much of the population) and the subsequent silting up of its port.

The rebuilding of the church had begun early in the 14th century by the de Roos family who commissioned a Decorated style. Today much of the interior is now Perpendicular although elements of the Decorated style remain particular the south transept which contains "Norfolk's most beautiful and eccentric windows". (Jenkins) Other treasures in the church include: a seven sacrament font, a gallery of medieval carvings which adorn niches in the nave and imaginatively carved Tudor bench ends.

Although not a major feature of the church it does contain fine examples of both medieval and Victorian glass.

Chancel North

The window was installed c1927, in memory of Everett James Bishop, Rector of the Parish c1898 – 1922. It was made by the firm of AA Orr (a London firm) and comprises medieval fragments in the tracery and at the base together with two roundels made when the window was installed. At first sight the roundels seem relatively plain, however, when magnified the left hand panel depicts a sea scene (presumably representing Cley when it was a port), whilst the right includes a line drawing of the church itself.

North Aisle East

The window produced c1917 by J Powell & Sons is dedicated to the memory of Lt Raven Cozens Hardy (whose parents Arthur & Mary lived at Cley Hall), who was killed in action at Polderhoek. The "Arts & Crafts" design is a good example of the commercial glass being produced at the time.

In the tracery lights we see a pelican "vulning" or wounding herself. (The pelican became a symbol of the Eucharist in heraldry in recognition of her attentiveness to her young, to the extent that she provided her own blood when no other food was available) together with a "descending dove" who represents the Holy Spirit.

In the central main light Christ is portrayed in his Glory whilst an armoured figure kneels at his feet. Christ is flanked by St Michael & St George. The use of these images not only reflect the fact that Lt Cozens Hardy died in battle but also that he died for his country.

At the base of the windows are two wreaths one containing a Norfolk scene the other showing Christ dying on the cross.

North Aisle North

This window produced c1925 by J Powell & Sons is dedicated to the memory of Arthurs Cozens Hardy (1857 – 1925).

In the main lights we see Christ as the Good Shepherd flanked by Saints Francis & Hubert. The tracery lights above the respective saints contain scenes from their lives.

South Aisle East

Made c1923 by AA Orr (London firm) this window has a seafaring theme. In the central lights we see “Christ & the Fishermen. Christ is flanked by St Nicholas & St Margaret of Antioch.

At the base of the window we see panels representing HMS Irresistible & HMS Inflexible.

South Aisle 4

The tracery lights contain medieval glass. In the apex we see Christ wearing a crown of thorns with nails in his hands. To his right is a tiny musical angel.

In the lights below are the remnants of eight female saints believed to be (left to right): Agatha, Sitha, Unknown, Petronilla, Barbara, Faith, Agatha and Cecilia. St Petronilla was probably included in deference to Petronilla de Nerford whose husband William Owned Cley manor in the 13th century. It is unusual to see so many female saints together, they may possibly be here because there was a “Guild of Maidens ” in Cley. Stylistically the saints are similar in design to others found locally in Wighton & Field Dalling & also to glass now in the Burrell collection (Glasgow). This suggests the glass may be dated to the 1430’s although the historical evidence indicates they were made c1460(David King)