

St Mary, Gunthorpe

Address : St Mary, Off Hall Lane, Gunthorpe, Norwich. NR24 2NX

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

General Information

Despite an extensive 19th century refurbishment this attractive church retains a number of its medieval features including the 14th century Decorated tracery in the east window and its 15th century nave windows, tower and font.

In 1863/4 Canon Sparke (rector from 1831 – 1870) oversaw a complete rebuilding of the chancel, which saw it acquire marble and alabaster decorations and a Te Deum reredos. It is believed that the architect of the work was Frederick Preedy who was also responsible for designing four new stained glass windows in the church described by Birkin Haward as “outstanding”.

East Window

Designed by William Warrington c1854 the strong bright colours and exuberant images contrast and with the more subtle appearance of the later windows produced by Frederick Preedy.

The window is dedicated to the memory of Henry Sparke, son of Canon Sparke (rector from 1831 – 1870) killed at Balaclava on 25th October 1854. The individual panels depict Christ’s last days from Palm Sunday to the Ascension:

Top Row (left to right): “Scourging”, “Crucifixion”, “Entombment”

Middle Row (left to right): “Betrayal”, “Judgement”, “Crowning with Thorns”

Bottom Row (left to right): “Entry to Jerusalem”, “Last Supper”, “Gethsemane”

In the tracery lights we see Christ on his throne flanked by angels.

Chancel South 1/ South 2, Nave South 1 and West Tower

All four windows were designed by Frederick Preedy (1820 – 98) who was born in Worcester, where he designed glass for the Cathedral. In 1860 he moved to London where he took over the Baker Street workshop vacated by George Hedgeland (who designed Norwich Cathedral’s west window). Although his work was influenced by Butterfield, with whom he worked in the 1850s, he developed a very individual style with colour preferences for purples, blues & magentas – which are clearly evidenced in these four windows.

South Chancel 1, designed c1865 the window depicts four biblical scenes : “Raising Lazarus” (top left), “Marriage Feast at Cana” (top right). “Temptation of Christ” (bottom left) and “Christ’s Baptism” (bottom right)

South Chancel 2, designed c1865 the window depicts four biblical scenes : “Slaughter of the innocents” (top left), “Flight to Egypt” (top right). “Christ’s presentation in the Temple” (bottom left) and “The Adoration of the Magi” (bottom right)

Nave South 1, is dedicated to the memory of Agnes Sparke who died 30th July 1871. The six main panels illustrate “Corporal Acts of Mercy”. In the tracery are a selection of musical angels

West Tower designed c 1880 the six main panels depict scenes from the story of the Good Samaritan.