

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Wiggshall

Further details : See www.ely.anglican.org

General Information

St Mary Magdalene Church is situated in the middle of Wiggshall and is listed by Simon Jenkins' as being one of England's thousand best churches whose "atmosphere derives from its lofty proportions, lightness and profuse woodwork" Luckily it escaped a heavy Victorian restoration and retains a range of medieval features including : painted panels, pews and an aumbry and panels of stained glass probably dating from the 15th century.

The glass is unusual in that it includes depictions of largely unknown saints including : St Callistus, St Britius, St Leger & St Romanus. David King suggests that the selection of saints is based upon those listed in the Litanies of the Sarum Breviary. The Sarum Rite was popular in the 15th century and the representations of the saints would have provided an illustration of the litany. It is believed that the glass would have provided the focus for the prayers of the congregation whilst it was being sung. It was restored in 1924/5 by Samuel Cladwell, who was responsible for the medieval glass in Canterbury Cathedral. (*Details extracted from Church Guide Book*)

North Aisle Window 5

The medieval saints depicted in the tracery lights are understood to be :

Upper Row (left to right)

St Callistus : Pope c217 until he was killed by a rioting mob c222

St Hilary : Bishop of Poitiers and an outspoken opponent of Arian heresy who died c444

Lower Row (left to right)

St Britius : Bishop of Tour. Died c444

St Aldhelm : First Bishop of Sherborne (Dorset) who "would clown and sing to win men's ears and then their souls." Died c709

St Sixtus : 3rd century Pope, who was one of the most revered martyrs of the early church

St Sampson : Abbot & Bishop of Dol in Brittany, who is believed to have led the colonists to Brittany and to have evangelised Cornwall and the Channel Isles. Died c565

St Germanus : Bishop of Auxerre who was instrumental in combating the Pelagian heresy. Died c448

St Cuthbert : Bishop of Hexham, who was renowned for his holiness and love of people. Died c 687

North Aisle Window 4

The medieval saints depicted in the tracery lights are understood to be :

Upper Row (left to right)

Panels 1- 3 : Unknown

St Hippolytus of Rome : 3rd century theologian. Believed to be the most learned man of his time.

Lower Row

St Ledger: Bishop, who was blinded and killed by his enemies. Died c697
St Botolph: Abbot, who founded a monastery in an unidentified place called Icanhoh. Died c680
St Lambert: 8th century Bishop, who was murdered at Liege and was particularly popular in Belgium.
St Prosdecimus: First Bishop of Padua, who lived in the 1st/2nd century
St Giles: Believed to have been a 9th century hermit near Arles
St Romanus: Archbishop of Rouen. Died c639.

North Aisle Window 3

The medieval saints depicted in the tracery lights are understood to be:

Upper Row

St Benedict (?): Founder of the Benedictine order of monks

Panel 2 : Empty

Panel 3 : Contains a white rose with a star which is the badge of Edward IV, suggesting that the glass may be dated to the period 1461 – 83.

Unidentified

Lower Row

St Medard : Bishop of Noyon. Died c545.

St Julian : 3rd century Bishop of Mans.

Unknown

St Swithin (?) : Bishop of Winchester. Died c862.

St Alban : the first martyr of Britain who sheltered a Christian fleeing from persecution in the 3rd century.

Main Light

Unidentified Bishop

North Aisle Window 2

The medieval saints depicted in the tracery lights are understood to be:

Upper Row

St Victor: Probably the Pope (Died c 201) or could be 7th century St Victor of Troyes.

St Sylvester: Pope for 20years and was one of the first non-martyrs to be made a saint. Died c335

Unidentified

St Desiderius: Martyred with St Januarius. Died c305

Lower Row

St Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles who was murdered in 1st century Rome under Nero's persecution

St Peter : Apostle and Evangelist

Unidentified

St Thomas: Apostle

St Edmund: 9th century King of East Anglia who was murdered by the Danes

Unidentified

North Aisle Window 1

The medieval saints depicted in the tracery lights are understood to be:

Upper Row

1 – 3 Empty

St Felicianus : Martyred in Rome in the 3rd century

Lower Row

Empty

St Cornelius: Third century Pope, believed to have been beheaded .

Empty

Unidentified

Unidentified

Empty

East Window

The window contains figures of St Helena, who holds a cross, and a female saint with a palm, symbolising she was a martyr.

The other figures are from the nine orders of angels and include: Thrones, holding scales; Cherubim, whose feathers are painted with eyes; Angels, holding a spear with an alms box on his belt.

South Clerestory Window

19th century patterned glass

