



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

89 Fleet Street · London EC4Y 1DH

*Registered Charity No. 258612*

PRICE: £1.00



# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

WEST HARLING  
NORFOLK





THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION  
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO  
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH  
WEST HARLING, NORFOLK

Many years ago Christians built and set apart this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Here they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the holiness here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated; inspiring, teaching and ministering through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of more than 300 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1994, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its object is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received at the Trust's headquarters at 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH (Registered Charity No. 258612).

We hope that you will enjoy your visit and be encouraged to see our other churches. Some are in towns; some in remote country districts. Some are easy and others hard to find but all are worth the effort.

Nearby are the Trust churches of:

**FRENZE, ST ANDREW**  
1 mile E of Diss off A1066

**SAPISTON, ST ANDREW**  
7 miles SE of Thetford off A1088

**SHIMPLING, ST GEORGE**  
20 miles S of Norwich W of A140

**STANTON, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST**  
9 miles NE of Bury St Edmunds on A143

## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

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### WEST HARLING, NORFOLK

by SIMON COTTON

In the Middle Ages there were three parish churches serving the area of the Harlings: St Peter and St Paul's, East Harling; All Saints', West Harling and St Andrew's, Middle Harling. The place-name Harling derives from the place of Herela's people. East Harling has become the principal settlement, while Middle and West have suffered one the immediate, the other the long-term, effect of changes in agricultural ownership and management (see *Norfolk Archaeology Vol XXXVII part III, 1980*). St Andrew's stood near Thorpe Farm; an unsigned and undated document records its demolition in 1543. From about 1564 the Gawdy family owned the land but by the late 17th century it was in financial trouble, which was not helped by the fact that Sir John was both deaf and dumb. The estate was bought by Joshua Draper, who in 1725 demolished the old West Harling Hall and began to build a new house. This was completed in 1737 by Richard Gipps who had bought the estate in 1731. By 1821 it was the seat of Nicholas William Colborne MP and it later passed by marriage to Colonel Nugent. The Nugent family remained till the Hall was destroyed in 1931. All Saints was declared redundant in October 1974 and vested in the Redundant Churches Fund, now The Churches Conservation Trust, in January 1977.

### EXTERIOR

The church stands entirely on its own, across a field from the nearest track and with a forest background. It consists of west tower, nave and south porch, chancel and north vestry. The walls are of flint and rubble, partly coated with old lime rendering, and the roofs are tiled. The earliest part of the building is perhaps the chancel, which has a 13th century priest's doorway on the south side and a lancet window on the north; the two-light south window is of about 1300 but was renewed in 1902. The traceried three-light east window, which was reopened in 1844 after having been bricked up, dates from about 1330. The two windows in the north wall of the nave and one in the south are 15th century, as are both doorways with their old doors, but the walls themselves are older. The windows generally have stops to the dripstones carved into human and animal heads, and the kneeler stones to

the gables are likewise carved. The eastern end of the south wall of the nave was partly rebuilt in 1733, using the rubble of a small south aisle which is said to have fallen during repairs to the nave roof. The parishioners were granted a faculty excusing them from rebuilding the aisle. Into the new walling was reset the fine south-east window of about 1300, consisting of two lancet lights with a quatrefoil above and incorporating a piscina.

The tower, faced with flint, is 14th century and once had a spire. In the south wall outside is a beautiful niche for a statue. In 1726 Joshua Draper gave two bells which, with the existing three recast, made a ring of five; but in 1756 the spire was taken down and the bells were sold to Caston church. The very plain belfry windows and the brick battlements doubtless date from this time.

The vestry dates in its present form from the 19th century. It was formerly a burial place for the Crofts family. The stone dormer window lighting the organ loft is also 19th century. In 1902, two years into the incumbency of the Revd Hugh Harper, the whole church was restored by Sir Edmund Nugent. Bart.\* Repairs, especially to the tower, the vestry and the roof coverings, and redecoration of the interior have been carried out for The Churches Conservation Trust under the direction of Mr Neil Birdsall of Hingham.

## INTERIOR

In the porch, which dates from the 15th century, is a **holy water stoup**. The stops on the doorway are carved to represent a bishop and a lady.

The whole interior reflects the care and interest in their church of the 19th and early 20th century owners of the Hall, the Nugent family. A sensitive essay in woodwork and brass light fittings and ornaments, it presents a consistent ensemble of detail and design. The nave has a **hammer-beam roof**, the chancel a **barrel vault**; both are of oak and a part of the 1902 restoration. All the furniture, including the **choir stalls**, **clergy stalls** and pews, is of the late Victorian and early Edwardian period. The **pulpit** was presented in 1890. All are of oak and of fine craftsmanship.

At the west end are a beautifully handwritten **history of the church** in two frames, an ancient iron-bound oak **chest** and a stone **coffin** reputed to be that of Nicholas de Beaufo c.1330. The octagonal font is 15th century, its cover 19th century. The west window contains **stained glass** of 1850 depicting

\* An interesting account of Mr Harper's incumbency, during which he cycled 6,000 miles a year, is given in *Breckland Portraits*, edited by David O'Neale, obtainable from Taverner Publications of East Harling



William and Margaret Berdewell, 1508

(ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND)

ing the Entombment and Ascension of Christ in the upper lights and the Raising of Jairus's Daughter and Lazarus in the lower. In the tower are one undated bell by Lester and Pack of the Whitechapel foundry (1752–69), a set of eight tubular bells of 1890 by Harrington of Coventry and the remains of a bell-frame dating probably from the 17th century. The **hatchment** is for the first Lord Colborne, 1854; the **Lord's Prayer and Creed boards** were presented by Lady Colborne in 1851. The very fine 18th century **table** in the manner of William Kent probably came from the demolished Hall and was used at one time in this church as the communion table.

The Nugent family pew has panelling incorporating brass memorials to members of the family, and their coat of arms. Behind the pew is a beautiful **piscina** (where the priest washed the sacred vessels after Mass) dating from about 1300. It is incorporated in the side of a window with a finely moulded arch. The brass **eagle lectern** is 19th century. In the north-east

corner of the nave is a **stairway** that led to the rood-loft which ran across the chancel arch. Beside it is a **niche** which housed a statue in honour of the saint whose altar was beneath.

There are the following memorial tablets:

- Revd Charles John Ridley, 1854, by Ruddock of Lopham (**north wall**)
- Nicholas William Lord Colborne, 1854, and his wife Charlotte, by Gaffin of Regent Street, London (**north wall**)
- First World War memorial (**south wall**)
- Hon William Nicholas Ridley Colborne, 1846, by Ternouth of Pimlico (**south-east**)

In the tracery lights of the nave windows are jumbled fragments of 14th and 15th century and later **stained glass** including three figures, that in the north-west window being of particular beauty.

In the floor are three **brasses** and one indent. From the east these are:

- William Berdewell and his wife, 1508
- William Berdewell, c.1490, and his wife
- Ralph Fuloflove, priest, 1479 (in his Mass vestments)

In the chancel, the brass **communion rails** and woodwork are 19th century.

The sedilia (where the priest sat at Mass) is 13th century with some painting of a fleur-de-lis and a red pattern; and there is also a double **piscina**. The **tablet and bust** to Richard Gipps were sculpted by Joseph Wilton in 1780. In the north wall is an **aumbry**. The **reredos** of 1902 incorporates five 16th century carved panels from the Low Countries:

- The Annunciation
- The Nativity
- Christ being examined by the High Priests
- The Adoration of the Wise Men
- The Circumcision

In the floor are **ledger stones** to the Revds Nicholas, John and Henry Cressener, successively rectors here 1596–1730, and other rectors. In the east window are 19th century **stained glass** devices incorporated in the clear glass.

On the vestry wall are three brass **coffin plates** to the Crofts family. In the organ loft upstairs is a reed organ.



*The Revd Ralph Fuloflove, 1479  
(BRASS RUBBING BY JOHN BAYLISS)*

*Front cover: West Harling church from the south-west (CHRISTOPHER DALTON).  
Back cover: The chancel and Gipps monument (CHRISTOPHER DALTON).*

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