

*The Church of St Catherine,
Ludham, Norfolk*



Welcome to St Catherine's Church

We are proud of our church, for the beauty of its architecture, its place in the history of our village, and for its continued mission to our community. In this booklet we should like to share with you a little about the past and the present. We begin with the interior of the church.

THE FONT

We start our tour at the font which dates from the 15th century. It bears the symbols of four saints: the winged Angel of St Matthew, the winged Lion of St Mark, the winged Ox of St Luke and the Eagle of St John. The font also has the carved figures of a woman carrying a child and of two clerics, one with a mitre and crozier which we believe relates to the Abbot of St Benets and another holding a rosary.

These symbols and carvings are not unexpected features of a font but less than usual are the two larger figures of a man and a woman wearing animal skins and carrying clubs. They are known as 'Woodwoses' or wild men; semi-humans who featured in Roman and Greek mythology. The book of Isaiah (13, 2) in the old Testament, makes mention of such 'doleful creatures and satyrs' and in medieval times it was widely believed that such creatures of the imagination lurked in the dark woodlands covering England.



ARCADES & ROOF

We now move to the Chancel. Move along the main Aisle, noting the octagonal columns supporting the 15th century arcades. Take the time to study the fine hammer beam roof with pierced and traceried spandrels, some containing the wheel of our patron, Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

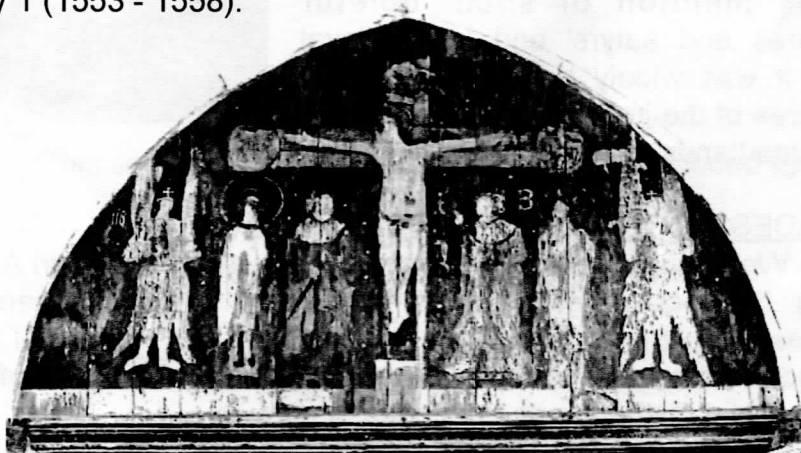
THE SCREEN

The screen is one of the best in Norfolk. Formerly vaulted, the upper tracery is typical of many screens, but the base is very distinctive. The middle rail has a folded leaf inscribed; "*Pray for the soule of John Salmon and Cycyly his wit that gave fourteen pounds and for ale other benefactors made in the year of owed Lord God 1493*"

The twelve painted panels are very good and depict from left to right: St Mary Magdalene with a box of ointment; Stephen the first martyr, with stones; St Edmond, King of East Anglia, with arrow; King Henry VI; St Augustine; St Ambrose; St Gregory; St Jerome; King Edward the Confessor; St Walstan;, patron of farming, with scythe; St Lawrence with gridiron and St Appolonia, patron saint of dentists, with forceps.

CHANCEL ARCH

The chancel arch has carved caps supporting a coloured rood beam filled with a wooden covered frame known as a Tympanum. On the west side is Christ on the Cross, St Mary and St John. This was probably painted during the reign of Queen Mary 1 (1553 - 1558).



On the east side is a canvas with the arms of Queen Elizabeth 1 (1558 - 1603) with the inscription "Non me pudet evangelic Christi" (I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ) "Vivat Regina Elizabetha"



The boards of the Tympanum and the canvas lay hidden in the blocked up staircase leading to the Rood Loft until discovered in 1879 by an archaeological society on a day out.

CHANCEL

The Chancel is of earlier work than the Nave with mediaeval pews. Note the finely graduated 14th century Sedilia, or seats on the south side of the altar for ministers at the Eucharist. The canopied niche called a Piscina dates from the same period and was used to cleanse the chalice after celebration.

The ornamental altar screen, or Reredos, is Victorian. A past incumbent, the Rev. J.F. Gratton Guinness, disliked the colour and symbols on the screen, and for the duration of his ministry the Reredos was hidden by plywood templates.

PROJECTING HAND

As we leave the Chancel, look for the projecting hand by the side altar in the South Aisle. It was found when the squint was unblocked in 1898. The hand has a vertical hole through it which was probably for a Sanctus Bell rope; a Sanctus Bell being rung at the more solemn parts of the Mass.



ALMS CHEST

Near the organ, you will notice an iron bound Parish Alms Chest believed to date from the 15th century. Another ancient chest, has a lid made from the trunk of a tree.



BELLS

There are five bells hanging in the tower which are in use today. These dates from 1619, one from 1637 and another from 1825.

EXTERIOR OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

TOWER

The exterior of the church is dominated by the 14th century tower. The north side is enhanced by the brightly coloured clock which dates from 1762. The original mechanism of the clock was replaced in 1895, the hands being lengthened to fit the new works. The Victorian clockmakers, Thwaites and Read of Clerkenwell, have served us well and the clock remains in service to this day.

PORCHES

The porches date from the 15th century and protect the 13th century door arches which are two of the oldest features of the church. In 1889 A new oak door was fitted to the north porch, whilst retaining the old lock and hinges.

SCRATCH DIAL

On the south side of the chancel, on the buttress on the right of the priests door, is a scratch dial, with the aid of a pointer inserted in the central hole this was probably used to indicate the time of the next mass.

CHURCH ROOM

The church room, situated in the north-west corner of the churchyard, is the old school room which was built in 1841. 55 boys and 50 girls crowded into the building to daily classes in 1846 - 47. Looking at the church room it is hard to imagine how they managed to squeeze them all in, especially when you consider the current building also includes the old schoolyard.

CHURCHYARD

We have some interesting tombstones around the churchyard. There is an example of an 18th century tombstone "in memory of Sarah the daughter of John and Judith England who died 14th of January 1788 aged 15 years." Perhaps the most elaborate is the angel in the north-east corner under the trees, which stands over the resting place of Arthur Dashwood Howard MD. Another to the north of the tower captures a moment in history when Victor Alexandre Dennis was drowned when the Transylvania was hit by a torpedo on 4th May 1917.

WAR MEMORIAL

Near to the main gate of the churchyard, the memorial stands as a further testimony to human sacrifice in war, but further to the rear of the Memorial is a newly planted yew tree, which points very much to the future.

THE YEWE TREE

The church of St Catherine, like many others, has planted a yew tree taken from one of 32 trees believed to have been living at the time of Christ. The tree is a witness to our past and our hopes for the third Christian millennium. A commitment to our faith and the environment in the preservation of the world created by God.

CONSERVATION

At St Catherine's we have a policy of trying to balance the needs of tidiness with the important task of conserving the wonderful variety of wildflowers and plants that are all too sadly disappearing from the countryside, but are still to be found in the churchyard. We aim to conserve wildflowers as they appear and take special care of the rarer species.

THE MAIN RARITIES:- Wall pellitory, Black spleenwort, & Pignut.

Other plants of interest are spared where possible when mowing or strimming. The south side of the churchyard is cut less often to benefit plants and the periphery is kept longer to give protection to field voles and insects.

PLANTS TO LOOK OUT FOR:- Cow Parsley, White & Red Deadnettle, Dandelions, Creeping & Bulbous Buttercup, Daisy, Yarrow, Common Hawkbit, Germander Speedwell, Forget-me-not, Dog Rose, Red Campion, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Rosebay Willow Herb, Ground Ivy, Bluebells, Pignut, Elder, Cuckoo Pint, Primrose, Celandines, Yellow Archangel, Blue-eyed Mary & Jack-by-the-Hedge.

In 2000, St Catherine's Church was joint winner of the Barclays / Norfolk Wildlife Trust Churchyard Conservation Award.

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

St Catherine's is part of the Waterside benefice along with the parishes of Catfield, Hickling and Potter-Heigham. It is served by a vicar and three Lay Readers. As part of a new diocesan initiative, we have recently appointed our first Authorised Worship Assistants. We gather for services every Sunday at 9:30 am. All our parishes, and especially St Catherine's, have strong relationships with our neighbouring Methodist chapels and we worship together several times each year.

LUDHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER

Together with High Street Methodist Chapel, and with Roman Catholic representation, we seek to serve the needs of the village. Hundreds of people have attended our Computer Club; and over the first two years of it's existence, more than 800 journeys were made by the volunteers of our Ludham Car Scheme and every month a good number gather at our Village Cinema. Ludham Churches Together also sponsors an annual Lent course and supports the Vidiyal Trust working for dignity and development in needy parts of South India.

CHOIR

We have an active choir that takes part in worship at St Catherine's church and at other Benefice Services. The choir leads the singing in the services and also sings anthems and other sacred works during Christian festivals. A highlight of the year is the annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. The Choir meets at 6:15pm on Thursdays in the Church Room.

FLOWER ARRANGERS

The Church benefits from a dedicated band of Flower Arrangers who decorate St Catherine's throughout the year. Special displays are prepared for festivals.

BELL RINGERS

St Catherine's has the second heaviest set of five bells in Norfolk. The bells ringing in the New Year and are also rung for most services. That Bell Ringers belong to the Diocesan Ringers Association.

THE FRIENDS OF ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH

The Friends Association was founded in 1994 to assist in the maintenance of the fabric of the Church and Churchyard for the benefit of the public. The Friends is a registered charity (No-10418950). In addition to other fund raising activities, every other year The Friends organise an Open Garden Day which also includes a Classic Car show and other attractions. The Open Gardens Day is a highlight of village life, drawing people from a wide area and regularly raises well over £5,000. We are particularly grateful for all that the Friends do to support our ancient and beautiful Church and for all the considerable sums they have raised to maintain and restore it's fabric.

*This second edition free Church Guide is produced by
St Catherine's PCC, Ludham*

First edition artwork was by Martyn Harrison

Acknowledgement :- Joan Snelling

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**This free Church Guide is produced by St. Catherine's PCC,
Ludham**

**Thank you for visiting our church. We have a visitors book by
the door if you would like to record your visit.**

Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord