

The rood or chancel screen was the visual focus of the medieval parish church, separating the sacred space of the chancel from the more public nave. In East Anglia, many richly decorated screens survive as testimony to the impressive craftsmanship of medieval painters and carpenters and also to parish pride and patronage. These screens are a unique reminder of the engagement of ordinary people with the Christian Church and of their devotional preferences, representing one of the most important means of communication before widespread literacy. As a body, existing fifteenth-century rood screen paintings form the most significant corpus of late medieval English painting. This series aims to draw attention to some of these medieval treasures and to encourage visitors to explore the beautiful churches where these screens are to be found.

Remember that these painted screens are very old and fragile. Please do not touch the painted surfaces nor lean anything against them.

Collect the complete series:



Find out more by visiting Hungate:

St Peter Hungate Church
Princes Street
Norwich NR3 1AE

Opening hours:

Saturdays 10:00 – 16:00 Sundays 14:00 – 16:00
Entrance free

Written and produced by Hungate in collaboration with Sarah Cassell at the University of East Anglia as part of the 'Heaven's Gate: Medieval Rood Screens from Norfolk' exhibition. Hungate promotes the astonishing wealth of medieval art and artefacts still surviving in Norfolk. Designed by Brian Williams Korteling. Printed with support of the Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust.

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Many of the photographs in this set of rood screen trails are taken from the book "Norfolk Rood Screens" by Paul Hurst ARPS, text by Jeremy Haselock FSA, to be published by Phillimore's of London in December 2012.

HUNGATE ROOD SCREEN TRAILS: NO.14

Weston Longville • North Tuddenham • Mattishall



Hungate
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WESTON LONGVILLE ALL SAINTS.
TG 114 158. postcode - NR9 5JU
Normally open.

This was the church of Parson Woodforde, the celebrated diarist, who was rector here for the last decades of the 18th century.

The oldest part is the 13th century tower. The church itself is largely from the next century, with lovely tracery in the south windows and an elegant, later clerestory. The porch was paid for with money bequeathed in 1481. Note the original furniture for the south door. The wall-paintings on the north wall (of the same school as those at Little Witchingham, three miles to the north) and the figures of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist on each side of the chancel arch are also 14th century. There is some 15th century stained glass in the tracery of two of the south aisle windows.



On the western step of the font is a trace of a Saxon Calvary. There is delicate carved decoration above the sedilia, the seats for clergy in the sanctuary. Across from the elegant stair rail to the pulpit are box pews in which Parson Woodforde's more affluent parishioners would have sat.

The Screen

Weston Longville's church possesses a fine screen depicting the twelve apostles. Each apostle holds a scroll containing a sentence of the Creed which, according to popular legend, they were thought to have composed. The sentences of the Creed are no longer in order, so it is likely that the figure panels have been moved around. The screen also retains much of its original upper tracery.

In their present order, the figures are, from north to south: St Peter, St Andrew, St Simon, St Matthias, St Jude, St Matthew, St John the Evangelist, St James the Great, St Thomas, St James the Less, St Philip and St Bartholomew. The saints are identifiable both through their attributes and by the inscriptions of their names beneath.

A close examination of the screen shows that the figures are painted directly over the green and red background of the screen. Usually the backgrounds are painted round the figures, which are painted on a white ground or priming. The apostles were probably added over an originally decorative scheme, perhaps as funds allowed. The fragmentary inscription on the screen reads: Ricardi Lyon qui hoc opus fieri fecit [Richard Lyon had this work made here].



**NORTH TUDDENHAM ST MARY.
TG 056 130. postcode - NR20 3DH
For the key, ring 01362 637225.**

A little-visited church of great grandeur with its old rectory alongside and a strung-out village cut in two by the A47. The fine tower guides one there – approach it from the west, where one can park and also get the best view of its parapets, windows and buttresses. Then walk round to see the gargoyles and other carvings.



This is a rare opportunity to see medieval glass at eye level: the porch windows contain a jumble of what was left over when the main windows had been restored. Entering the church after that is a shock, for the interior has a vigorous Victorian scheme of stencils, tiles and stained glass. For a moment one wonders if the porch was what one had come to see but then (binoculars are essential here), one discovers an extensive collection of older glass in the tracery and especially the west window. Be sure not to miss the sheep grazing at the feet of St Margaret. Apparently it was bought for just over 50p from a builder's yard by the Revd. Robert Barry, the vicar for over fifty years to whom we owe the late 19th century restoration.

On the south side of the sanctuary are two 17th century Skippe family memorials, one of them delightfully bookish.

The Screens

North Tuddenham is fortunate to have parts of two figural screens; one is the original 16th century rood screen, the other was presented to the church in the late 19th century, after its purchase from a Norwich shop.

The rood screen has been cut down and now only the dado remains. Although there are twelve compartments, the first two on the north side and the last two on the south side are blank with modern painting. The eight saints which survive are: St Agnes, a bishop (probably St Augustine), St Dorothy, St Jeron, St Catherine of Alexandria, St Sebastian, St Etheldreda, St Roche.



Infra-red examination has revealed that the identity of two of the saints changed between the planning and the painting stages. Originally St Sebastian had been planned as an armoured saint, bearing a spear. He was probably intended to be St George. The bishop saint, who is likely to be St John the Evangelist. Infrared photographs reveal a dragon emerging from a chalice beneath the bishop's vestments. Changes such as these may reflect choices or changes in patronage. It is known from wills and from surviving inscriptions on screens that donors might sponsor a single panel. Equally, a surviving contract for a rood loft states that the parishioners would choose the imagery, and changes such as these may reflect consensus opinion.

The second fragment of screen can be found set into a screen in the tower and consists of four panels depicting St Matthew, St Mark, St Augustine and St Gregory. These saints constitute two of the four Latin Doctors of the Church and two of the Evangelists; half of each set is missing.

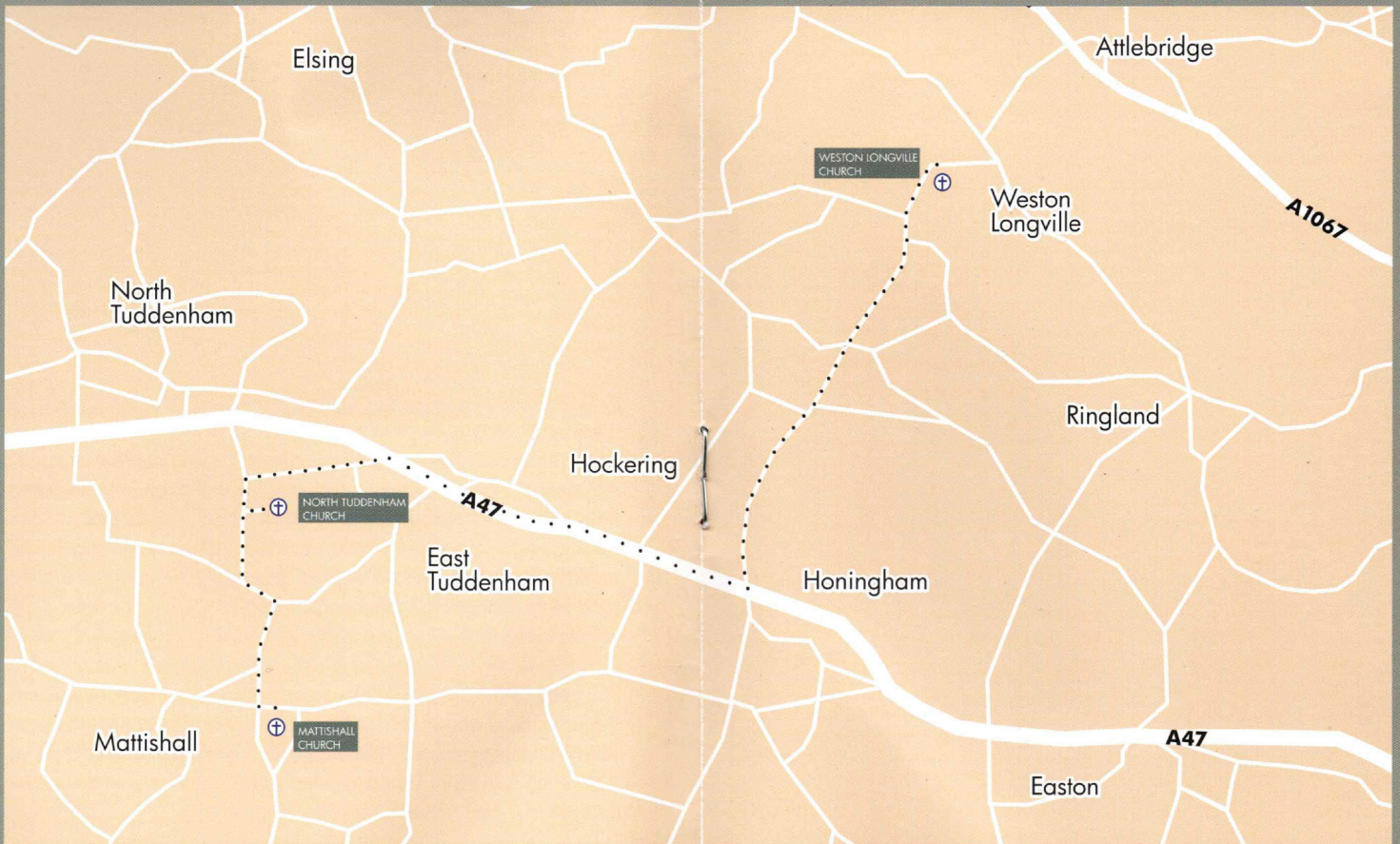
MAP OF THE TRAIL

Please note these maps are to be used as a guide. We suggest you use the postcode or co-ordinates on the information pages for more detailed directions

Key

Trail Route

Church ⊕





MATTISHALL ALL SAINTS.

TG 054 111. postcode - NR20 3QF

Key from the Victoria Stores to the south of the church – also the best place to park.

The village's centre has many pretty buildings, not least the shop with the key. There is a large churchyard with copper beeches and Scots pines, all a fine introduction to the church. This is a handsome example of Norfolk's 15th century spate of church building, unfortunately more harshly restored than many. It is important to walk round and look at the original north porch for its carvings. The Victorian south porch has its admirers.

As you go in, notice the charming ogee-shaped wicket door to the north porch, which is right opposite. A few old bench-ends remain, as does the 18th century pulpit and a George II royal arms. The great glory of the interior is its original roof, with hammerbeams, angels, saints and even, a rarity, painted panels above where the rood would have been. Probably they were too far up for the iconoclasts to reach them. The painted tie-beams are dated 1617. The north aisle roof is also original, as are the figures in the south aisle, where the roof itself with its pendentives is Victorian.



The Screens

Although Mattishall's rood screen has been cut down to the transom, it is worth a visit for the interest and quality of its carving and painting. There is also another medieval screen here, partitioning the chapel to the south.

The spandrel carving details are exquisite and the subjects involve a lot of fighting. There is a shepherd seeing off a wild boar with his crook, a man with a scimitar fighting a monster, a shaggy wild man and a lion and a hound attacking a stag. St George and the dragon and a much damaged Annunciation can also be made out.

The panels are unusually wide and each contains two painted figures. The saints depicted are the twelve apostles, and they are shown with excerpts from the Creed which they were popularly believed to have composed. From the north, they are: St Philip and St Bartholomew, St Matthew and St Simon, St Jude and St Matthias, St Peter and St Andrew, St James the Great and St John the Evangelist, and St Thomas and St James the



Less. Amusingly, St Peter, Simon Peter, has instead been labelled with what must have been a donor's name, Simon Baxter. The panels may have been moved from their original locations as the Creed inscriptions no longer run in the correct order.

The figure paintings here represent the second painted scheme on the rood screen. The screen appears previously to have been painted with a decorative design. The figures are painted directly over pre-existing red and green. The second scheme is characterised by the use of lovely raised gilded pastiglia decoration. This is a paste that can be applied rather like icing sugar.

Look up to see the painted celure panels which originally acted as a canopy of honour above the rood. Depicted are two angels with scrolls. The painted beam over the screen probably acted as the rood beam.

The parclose screen to the south side has been repainted, but its upper tracery is attractive. The monograms on the lower panels may reflect what was once here; it is quite usual to see monograms of this type on screens as well as ceilings.

More to see in the vicinity:

At Elsing St Mary the screen is badly damaged but the church deserves a visit for the superb Hastyngs brass, the font cover and the extraordinary width of the nave. More survives of the screen at Ringland St Peter, with its lovely roof and stained glass. Barnham Broom St Peter & St Paul has a particularly fine 15th century screen. On the north side is, among others, St Walston of nearby Bawburgh. Among the ladies on the south side are St Withburga of Dereham, St Ursula (with her martyred attendant ladies) and St Dorothy with her emblem of a basket of flowers.