

In spite of its deep, rich colours, beautiful draftsmanship and fascinating imagery, stained glass is one of the most under-rated artistic legacies of the medieval period. A distinctive style and quality of craftsmanship has led to stained glass made by Norwich workshops being displayed in museum collections across the world but, largely unknown to visitors, medieval glass remains in over 200 of the county's parish churches. This series aims to draw attention to some of these medieval treasures and encourage visitors to explore the beautiful churches where these windows are to be found.

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Hungate Medieval Art  
St Peter Hungate Church  
Princes St, Norwich NR3 1AE

### Opening hours

Thursday to Saturday 10.00 – 16.00  
Admission charges: Adult £3, Concession £2.50

Written and produced by Hungate Medieval Art with David King (UEA) as part of the Stained Glass Exhibition. Hungate Medieval Art promotes the medieval art and artefacts visible across the county of Norfolk. Photos with thanks to Mike Dixon, David King and Rev. Gordon Plummer. Designed by The Click Design Consultants.

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## HUNGATE STAINED GLASS TRAILS: NO.2

East Barsham • Great Walsingham • Wighton •  
Warham • South Creake



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**EAST BARSHAM, ALL SAINTS. NR21 0LH.  
TF 916 337. Normally open.**

Beside the other grand churches in this trail, East Barsham is petite. It has lost its chancel, transept and tower, except for the porch that was at its base. One can still trace where they were.

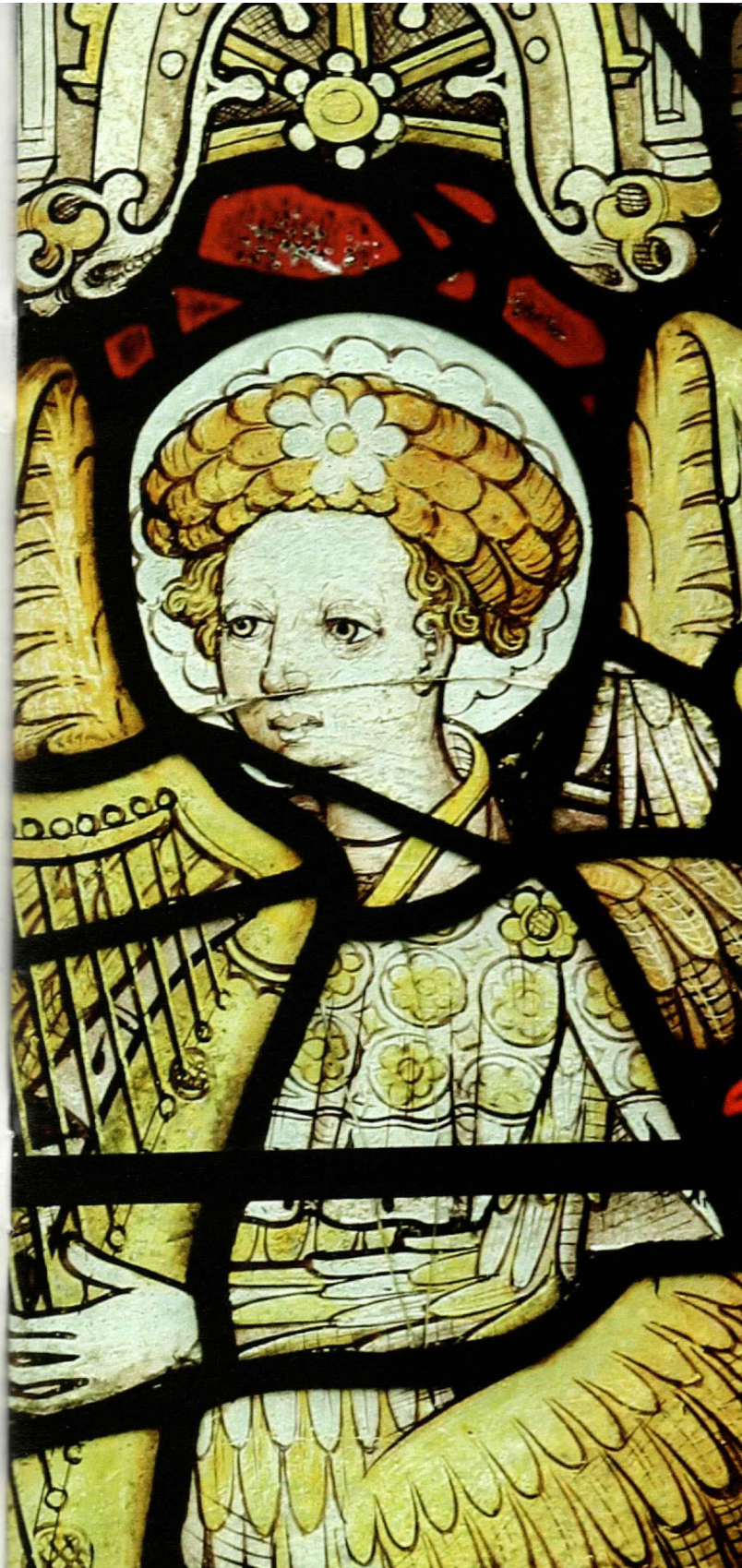
Basically Norman – you can see the evidence in the south wall – but now the church's four bays look 15th century. At the north-east corner time, repairs and the loss of some of the structure have left a lovely mixture of flint and red brick. Inside there are carved bench-ends and a lively monument by John and Matthias Christmas to Mrs Calthorpe (died 1640). There are Calthorpe memorials all over Norfolk but this is the pick, with its depiction of the resurrection of the dead

There is little else to East Barsham apart from the superb Hall and a handy and welcoming pub.

**The Glass**

A window on the north side contains beautiful 15th-century glass. In the two long central lights of the tracery are two female figures standing facing each other the pose and costume (the veil of the figure on the left) indicating that they represent S Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary. The subject is the Visitation, when the expectant Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist and sang the moving Magnificat (My soul doth magnify the Lord). This canticle was sung daily in the medieval liturgy as it is today. The musical angels in the lights either side provide an accompaniment to the song of Mary. That on the left plays a shawm, a type of early oboe, and the other a harp. They wear the feathered tights often linked with dramatic performances. This glass is an excellent example of the work of the John Wighton workshop which painted much of the glass at Norwich, S Peter Mancroft, and in many other places and dates from c.1450.

Opposite:  
Stained glass at East Barsham church



**GREAT WALSHINGHAM, ST PETER. NR22 6DW.  
TF 937 376. Normally open.**

It would be folly not to visit this church as part of the trail. It can be found down a lane by the school, on the right as you go out of town towards the coast.

S Peter's appears to be all of one 14th century build (with a later porch), including the bells. Within the beautifully delicate tracery of the windows remain tantalisingly few fragments of what must have been wonderful stained glass. Fortunately the complete set of 15th-century benches survives – repaired with the aid of the Pilgrim Trust – with their delightful carved bench-ends, which still preserve the initials of the original donors. The colours of faded roof-timbers, wooden benches and a fine mix of well-used floor tiles make up an unforgettable ensemble.

The chancel was demolished in the 16th century, but there is still much else to see here, as there is for pilgrims and non-religious tourists alike in the town – an entire trail on its own.



### **The Glass**

Several windows here retain fragments of the original 14th-century glazing, the most interesting being that at the east end of the north aisle. Its tracery glazing illustrates the problems caused for the glazier by the irregular and often rather small shapes of curvilinear tracery. Often foliage decoration was used (as in some windows here), but in this window grotesques fill the lesser openings and the two larger ones have the Coronation of the Virgin represented by only the heads and hands of the two figures. The scene would have been instantly recognisable to medieval eyes, being one of the commonest found in churches.

Opposite in the south aisle a pair of heads appear in the tracery, probably of Apostles, and another north aisle window has a small figure of Christ displaying his wounds. All the aisle windows retain vestiges of decorative glazing in the tracery and a variety of motifs is seen: oak and maple leaf and a hawthorn pattern, for example.

*“The differences in treatment indicate that more than one painter was involved here”*

The differences in treatment indicate that more than one painter was involved here, confirmed by the marked differences between the canopy tops in the first south window from the east and the ‘Coronation’ window. The former have much more coloured glass but little idea of perspective and would appear to date from c.1320-40. The latter have more white glass and side-turned buttresses giving spatial depth, and would appear to date from c.1340-60.

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Opposite:  
Stained glass at Great Waltingham church

## WIGHTON, ALL SAINTS. NR23 1PL.

TF 941 399. Normally open.

This is a flinty North Norfolk village with associations with the young Henry Moore and an excellent art gallery. The church is to the east of the main road, up a slope, so one does not at first perceive that the originally 14th-century tower is not centrally placed but aligned with the south aisle (where the earlier church was) – an engaging trompe d’oeil.

“Originally 14th-century” because the tower fell in 1965 and then something happened which every parish prays for: a visiting Canadian researching his forebears saw the ruined tower and paid for it to be rebuilt, together with five new bells. In the 1440s there must have been a similar benefactor, for James Woderofe, the master mason at Norwich Cathedral, is known to have worked on the chancel, roofed in 1449-50. It is a superb structure, wide and light as is the whole church.

The two-storey porch of 1494 looks odd against the lower aisle roof it abuts. Notice the carvings above the windows, one of them back to front. Inside, the aisles are not pewed but full of an interesting, if jumbled, collection of agricultural and religious objects, a mini-Gressenhall Museum totally appropriate to a barn-like church in a rural community.

There are an unusual, sloping royal arms, a font with well-carved instruments of the Passion and steps so narrow that many mothers must have feared for their infants as the priest ascended them, a Lord’s Prayer in fretwork, a massive organ and, inside and out, some elegant small monuments.

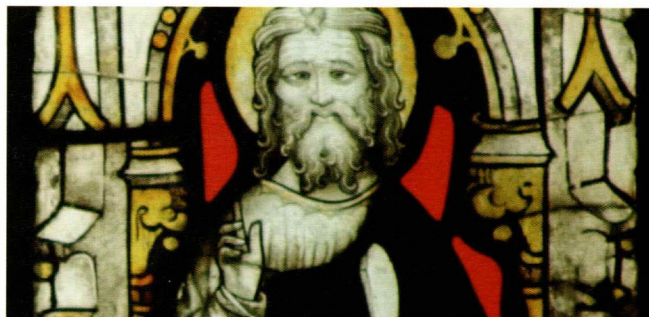
Outside the east end is a ruined vestry, an unusual arrangement but similar to the contemporary one at S Peter Mancroft in Norwich. Beyond that are the meadows of the Stiffkey river and a line of poplars – a lovely place.

### The Glass

The best medieval glass here is contained in two east and two west aisle windows. That in the eastern pair has received the attentions of a restorer whose work also appears at Martham. He has painted new heads and wings for the two angels holding texts in the central lights and new heads for the two central female saints in the south window. More significantly, John Wighton (see East Barsham above) probably came from this village where we know his sister lived.

The four female saints are difficult to identify. The well-preserved figure in the first light carries a sword or stake. The same figure appears at Cley, where there is set of female saints also painted by John Wighton’s workshop. The second figure as restored shows S Catherine, the third, with a devil on a chain, may be S Martha or S Juliana. The last figure, S Agatha, with a flesh-hook, is based on the same cartoon as the rather better version at Cley.

The four male figures in the north-east window are Apostles: Paul, Andrew, Bartholomew and Peter, and are also by the Wighton workshop. Here again parts are restored, including most of the architectural setting. The two western windows contain 15th-century figures of angels, those on the south playing rebecs, and those on the north, mere fragments, stand on wheels.






Above:  
Stained glass at Wighton church

## 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 
- Parking 



**WARHAM, ST MARY. NR23 1NR.  
TF 944 416. Normally open.**

This is the more westerly of the village's two churches. All Saints, across from the famous pub, is also well worth visiting to see an example of restoration by a devoted Victorian priest.

The lower part of the tower is Norman but above that it is 14th century, as is the rest of the building. Note the priest's door, to your right as you walk through the churchyard, with a buttress rising from it, an uncommon feature which can be seen again, for example, at S Botolph Trunch.

*"Look at the graining and how skilfully  
the nave pews curve into the chancel"*

The interior is something completely different. It was refurbished in the first years of the 19th century by another devoted priest, the Revd W.H.Langton. The 16th-century German and earlier English glass was collected and installed by him: and he was responsible for the box pews, font, three-decker pulpit and royal arms. Look at the graining and how skilfully the nave pews curve into the chancel.

On the north side of the chancel is the dark mausoleum of the Turner family – King's Lynn M.Ps. who were connected to Nelson and Sir Robert Walpole.

The churchyard contains the grave of another devoted preserver of churches. Lady Harrod, who is buried here with her economist husband, Roy Harrod, inspired parishes all over Norfolk to keep their churches in use, even if only as places where pilgrims of any faith or none can simply visit and be still in the atmosphere of hundreds of years of prayer. S Mary's is her monument, one of scores in the county.

**The Glass**

The foreign glass demands most attention, but do not miss the delightful collection of fragments of local glass leaded into a north window. These include, in rather brown 14th-century glass, the Angel of the Expulsion, Adam delving and Eve spinning. Most of the other pieces are 15th-century.

The most interesting of the foreign glass is in the east window of the chancel, where the tracery and the heads contain broken glass including part of a saint in armour identifiable as S Gerlachus of 1534 from the cloister glazing at Steinfeld in Germany. Five of the main-light panels are also from there: Christ's farewell to his mother, 1530-1; the Betrayal of Christ, 1540 (based on Dürer's engraving of 1511); the Descent from the Cross, 1540; the Transfiguration, 1530; the Entry into Jerusalem, 1530-1. The sixth panel, the Entombment of Christ is also German 16th-century work.

Some rather fragmentary French glass is in the south-east chancel window. The bottom left panel, however, probably came from the cloister of the Cistercian nunnery of S Apen in Cologne. The top and centre is missing, but there is evidence that this panel had the same design as glass in the cloister of Altenberg which depicted members of the Cistercian Order - monks and nuns kneeling under the protecting mantle of the Virgin Mary. Both cloisters had extensive series of the Life of S Bernard painted in the first half of the 16th century.

The west window has a splendid figure of David playing his harp (his head has been repainted) with the arms of Cuno von Vlatten and Anna von Velbrück. They gave a window in the church of the Cistercian Monastery of Mariawald, near Steinfeld, in 1514 of which this is part.

**SOUTH CREAKE, ST MARY. NR21 9LX.  
TF 855 363. Normally open.**

S Mary's – see the crowned MRs for *Maria Regina* in the flushwork above the door – stands imposingly in a lovely setting, with some of the long strung out village's older houses to the south and east, well back from the main road.

The chancel is of the 13th century, the tower 14th, the nave and clerestory above it 15th-century, the unusually large window in the east nave gable being typical of this date. Inside, it is full of light and colour, immediately welcoming and almost always with an abundance of fresh flowers. There is much to look at here, yet the dominant impression is of simplicity.

The nave roof is also 15th-century, its angels said to be associated with the 1415 victory at Agincourt. They were repaired in 1958 and very brightly repainted in 1970, when lead shot was found in them, supporting the popular myth here and elsewhere that Cromwell's troops had used them for target practice. Also 15th-century are the battered font and the wineglass pulpit, where restoration has led to the loss of almost all its original colour. There are two screens of the 15th century and an early 20th-century rood group imported from a redundant church in Ipswich.

*“Above all, feel the atmosphere”*

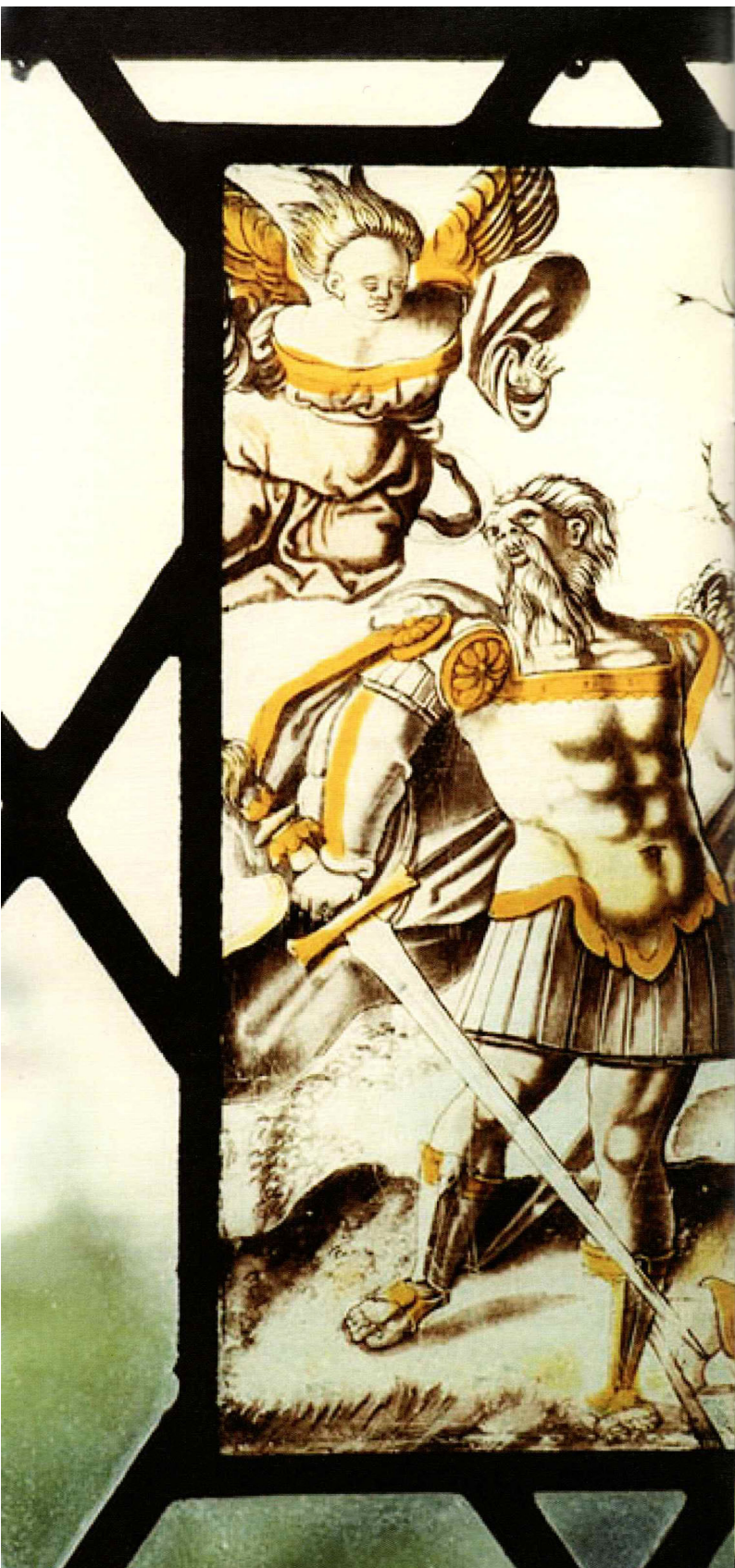
There are no pews, just chairs on the lovely pamment floors. Note the bier, the George II royal arms, the faces by the vestry door, and the commemoration of King Charles the Martyr, all demonstrating the breadth of opinion encompassed by the Church of England and, sadly, evidence of the presence of bats that have learned to defy incense. Only the damage to the font and the images on the screen remind one that, despite appearances here, the Reformation did happen.

**The Glass**

The glass here was rearranged in the last century and we cannot be certain of the original position of the extensive but rather fragmentary remains. The restorer has painted new glass for certain missing pieces, easily recognisable by its rather ghostly appearance. Panels of foreign glass have also been installed.

The west window of the north aisle has at its centre a good figure of Christ in Majesty of 1330-40. Most of the fragments, apart from a 14th-century wheel from below a seraph, are 15th-century glass, including small angels and patterned quarries. One or two pieces of this date in a tracery light have a border-piece fitting the curve of the stonework, indicating a 15th-century reglazing of a window a century earlier.

The adjacent window has 15th-century glass: a restored small Trinity in the top tracery light and made-up figures including an Apostle carrying a creed scroll; two more from this series are in the first light of the next window but one. That in this window bears the scroll of James the Less; the other two Apostles are James Major with his pilgrim's hat and staff and Andrew with saltire cross; both have their own texts. In the third light of the same window is a pair of female saints in the same style – S Helen with cross, crown and book and S Agatha, with breasts held by a pincer and a book. In the centre light is a mostly modern representation of the Holy Trinity above a pair of angels. Below is a kneeling female before a prayer desk. This may be the part of a window given by John Norton, who in 1451 left five marks to glaze a window on the north side of the church with an image of the Trinity.



The east window of this aisle has some good pieces of glass of 1330-40, including censuring angels and canopy tops and there is a fine 15th-century female head in the tracery. The central feature is a now rather bizarre Crucifixion with glass of varying dates. The east window of the south aisle has broken 14th-century fragments of censuring angels and other pieces of the same and the north clerestory contains several 15th-century demi-figures of angels. Other windows have some small panels of German and Flemish glass.

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Opposite:  
Stained glass at South Creak church