

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 apply: 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 and David King. Designed by The Click Design Consultants.

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HUNGATE STAINED GLASS TRAILS: NO.3

Banningham • Colby • Erpingham • Sustead



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**BANNINGHAM, ST BOTOLPH. NR11 7DY.
TG216 295. Normally open.**

What one sees first is the tall slender tower. Walk round it to see the flushwork in the base course and then the texture of the porch walls – John Piper would have loved it. A wonderful mixture of materials has been used for repair at various dates. The galleting – flakes of dark flint – on the north wall of the chancel momentarily looks like a flock of starlings.

Inside, the tall and narrow nave is chalky white, blending well with the bleached timbers of the roof and the scrubbed pammments under foot. There is a variety of patterns in the spandrels of the hammerbeam roof, with censng angels, one in a boat, in the easternmost pair.

The lay-out is unusual and attractive – benches down the middle, box pews in the aisles – the chancel through which one enters bare and seemly. Above the north arcade are a S George and dragon and what remains of a S Christopher, recognisable by his feet in the water. Note the delicate font cover, the George II royal arms and the ironwork on the south door. In the porch beyond are recesses divided by columns, not unlike sedilia, the seats for clergy often to be found in a chancel. Everywhere is evidence that the church is loved and cared for.



The Glass

Parts of a colourful and well-painted series of the Nine Orders of Angels are in the second window from the east in the south aisle. The first tracery figure is labelled Seraphim and wears purple feathers, and the next is a Cherub, again clothed in feathers, which here have eyes on them. In the first main light are fragments of an Archangel holding a box containing flowers – an unusual emblem for this order.

“The easternmost north aisle window is 15th-century glass the rest is modern restoration”

Although the emblems given to the orders vary widely, the identification here is assured by the surviving labels. The other two tracery figures, probably in their original positions, represent two of the Four Evangelists, of which only the second is identifiable as S John. A figure of the same Evangelist at Ashill is painted from the same design but in a different, more linear, style. Notice also the pod decorations from small tracery openings, very common in Norfolk and paralleled in manuscript illumination. Other fragments leaded into the main lights include pieces of 14th-century leaf patterns on *grisaille*, parts of a 15th-century donor inscription, parts of a Crucifixion and Ecce Homo, and an interesting detail of a church with a belfry, of the same date.

The easternmost north aisle window has some 15th-century glass in the upper part, but apart from the figure of Gabriel in the Annunciation, pieces of censng angels, and the central canopy top, the rest is modern restoration.

Opposite:
Stained glass at Banningham church

COLBY, ST GILES. NR11 7EE.

TG 221 313. For the key, ring 01263 768393.

Lovingly repaired and cared for, the church glows with welcome from its big south side windows. Perpendicular in style, they contrast, but do not conflict, with the round 1749 windows in the brick north wall – the foundations of a demolished north aisle can still be seen. The porch, with its flushwork, has carvings of S George and S Michael in the spandrels above the arch of the doorway and old timber in its roof; the room above was once used as a schoolroom. Just inside is the font with carvings of the Evangelists' symbols, of Mary and Jesus, S Giles and the font's donors. At the east end, beside the altar, are late 17th century paintings of Moses and Aaron, originally from Gunton, the next church to the north – and also well worth a visit.

The Glass

The medieval glass was collected in the east window by the Rector, in 1825. At the top, a pelican pecking her breast to feed her young with her own blood – a symbol of Christ's Passion, indicating, that the subject below was most likely the Crucifixion. The other tracery figures are parts of a series, or possibly, two, of the twelve Apostles. We can recognise Peter, John the Evangelist, Jude, Andrew and Matthew or Thomas. The main lights contain part of yet another series (also from tracery lights) of slightly better quality: top left and right, Ss James Major and John the Evangelist, and bottom centre, S Peter. The remaining figures are of Christ, from a Coronation of the Virgin, the Virgin Mary from an Annunciation and two angels standing on wheels. There are also two canopy tops, a rayed sun, an eagle and a *rose-en-soleil*, the badge of Edward IV. In view of the early 19th-century intervention we cannot be certain that all the glass came from here. Its style suggests a date in the first half of the 15th century.





Opposite:
Stained glass at Colby church

MAP OF THE TRAIL

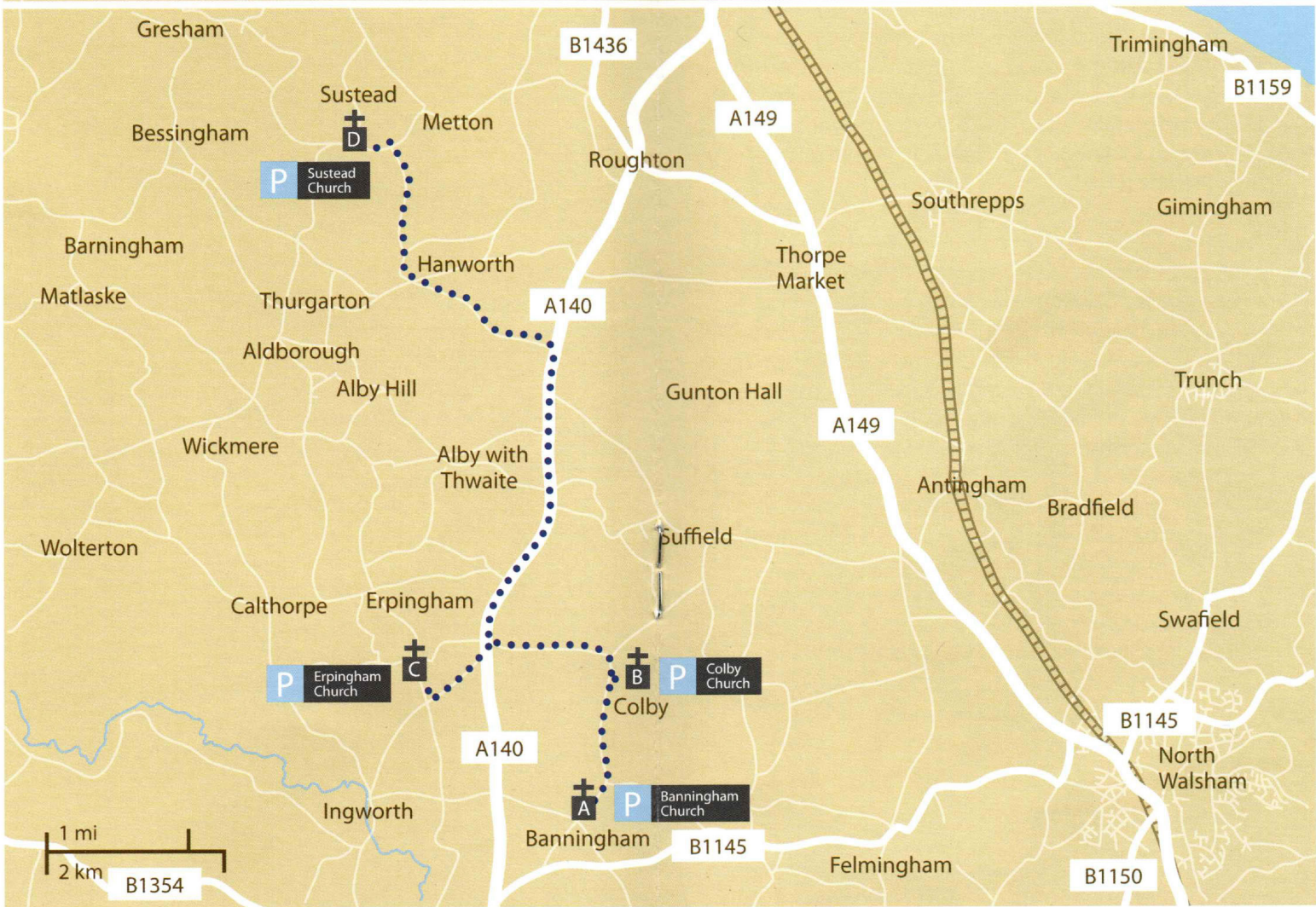
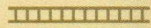
Please note these maps are to be used as a guide. We suggest you use the postcode or co-ordinates on the information pages for more detailed directions.

Key

Trail Route 

Church 

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**ERPINGHAM, ST MARY. NR11 6PL.
TG 198 314. Open at weekends and all day
March to October.**

Very grand in its isolated situation, with its tall tower and, inside, a great sense of space; for this is the Erpingham family church. Sir Thomas fought at Agincourt (earning a Shakespearean role) and was a major benefactor to Norwich's friaries and Cathedral. The Erpingham Gate at the entrance to the Cathedral Close is named after him. His father's brass is in the south aisle. Their name is inscribed on the tower battlements.

There is notable carving everywhere: on the base course round the tower, the corbels, the piscina in the chancel and the squint giving a view from the doorway of where the sacrament is reserved in an ambry behind the altar. The font is a survivor from the bombed S Benedict's in Norwich. Above it is a fine medieval roof.

The Glass

In the east window is what appears to be a series of high-quality German and French panels from the late 15th and early 16th centuries. In fact these are excellent copies made in the 1990s when the original glass was returned to Blickling Hall from whence it came in 1955. The original glass in the bottom two registers are from the monastery of Steinfeld in Germany. In the bottom row, left to right, the Nativity of Christ, Christ appearing to Doubting Thomas, Christ and the Three Marys at the tomb, and the Rest on the Flight into Egypt. In the middle register is a collection of standing figures of saints and above, in the third row, an unidentified scene, two scenes from the Infancy of the Virgin Mary, all French, and a German scene of the Massacre of the Innocents. If you want to see the originals, Blickling Hall is not far away.

Opposite:
Stained glass at Banningham church



**SUSTEAD, ST PETER & ST PAUL. NR11 8RU.
TG 184 370. Normally open.**

The thin round tower can be seen from some way off as one approaches from the south. Closer up one encounters a wonderful mix of building material: old render, flint, brick, quoins of dark carr stone, flushwork letters 'M' for the Virgin Mary on the porch, three colours of tiles and pantiles on the roof, and brick-shaped white flints in a diaper pattern on the red brick of the rood staircase, with its tiny window.

*"Those who look after this church
have an unobtrusive gift for making
the visitor feel welcome, and are
a model for others."*

The south windows in the chancel and at the west end of the nave have particularly fine tracery, and there is a pretty ogee arch over the blocked north door. The 17th-century pulpit comes from North Barningham – nearer by for crows than cars – and look at the windows, indeed everywhere, for more delicate carving. Beside the elegant porch is a biblical fig tree.

The Glass

Here is a good example of one of the frustrations of looking at medieval glass in England, for we have here the shattered remains of what must have been quite high quality work. Only the tracery of the two south nave windows retains any original glazing. Easternmost window: a female saint carrying a book – her flared cuffs were an early fifteenth-century fashion – and a figure of S Catherine with her usual wheel and sword. This window probably contained a series of female saints, earlier by a decade or two than those at Cley and Field Dalling. The westernmost window had a series of musical angels. Still to be seen are one playing a lute, with delicately-drawn sound hole, and plectrum, and another playing the bagpipes. The latter is a delight – note the rich, intricately painted drapery and the lion's head at the join of pipe and bag. Although generally speaking the amount of coloured glass used in a window was governed by economic factors, such glass having to be imported from the continent, in the 1430s and 40s we find high quality glass like this with little colour, both here and on the continent.



Opposite:
Stained glass at Sustead church