

HUNGATE STAINED GLASS TRAILS: NO. 8

East Harling • Attleborough



Hungate
Medieval Art
www.hungate.org.uk



**EAST HARLING, ST PETER & ST PAUL. NR16 2NB.
TL 991 867. Normally open.**

This church has one of Norfolk's rare spires and it is this that one first sees. It dates from 1450, with battlements and eight flying buttresses around it, all standing on a tower 150 years older.

The battlements are elegantly carved and decorated with the Harling unicorns and other heraldic symbols. In a county famous for its sturdy towers, this is light, almost fanciful, and part of a total composition of tall windows and two-storey flushwork porch that is strongly vertical. The windows in the clerestory are tall and thin and surely as big as the main windows in many churches. Round the base of the tower there is splendid lichen growth, said to be a sign of an unpolluted atmosphere – could its gaudy yellow be nourished by fumes from the surprisingly situated whisky distillery just outside the village?

Much of the church is of the same c.1300 date as the tower but with substantial areas of 15th-century rebuilding. This we owe to Anne Harling's wealth and that of two of her three husbands, Sir William Chamberlain (d. 1462) and Sir Robert Wingfield (d. 1480). The nave's gloriously lofty hammerbeam roof, the clerestory – its angels calling for binoculars - the east window with its spectacular glass and most other windows date from this period. What they built serves a substantial village, complete with market square and many old houses. It had a market from 1475 until the 17th century.

The monuments present a history of design from 1435 to 1604, commemorating Sir Robert Harling, Anne's husbands and three successive Lovells, the family of her third and last husband. The base of the screen is now at the west end of the pews. It has a rare carving of the Tree of Jesse. There are carved animals on the chancel stalls, a Charles II royal arms, part of a faded Doom painting and other delicate woodwork in the south aisle parclose screens.

Its roof is decorated with the Lyhart bull and Harling unicorn badges. The 15th-century font has a cover of the 17th; the balustrade of the west gallery is also 17th-century. This is a church to take time over.

The Glass

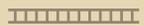
This is the most important collection of local medieval glass in a Norfolk country church. Most of the glass is now in the east chancel window, but none but a few fragments was made for that window. Fourteen panels from the Life of the Virgin Mary from the Annunciation to the Ascension of Jesus were originally in the east window of the south aisle in the Lady Chapel which contained the Harling chantry, established around 1460 by Anne Harling, the daughter of Sir Robert Harling (d. 1435), who had asked for its foundation in his will. A further scene of the Assumption of the Virgin was almost certainly in the south window of the chapel. This glass was made in the workshop of John Wighton, which by 1460 was under the leadership of John Mundeford and had provided most of the glass at Norwich, St Peter Mancroft.

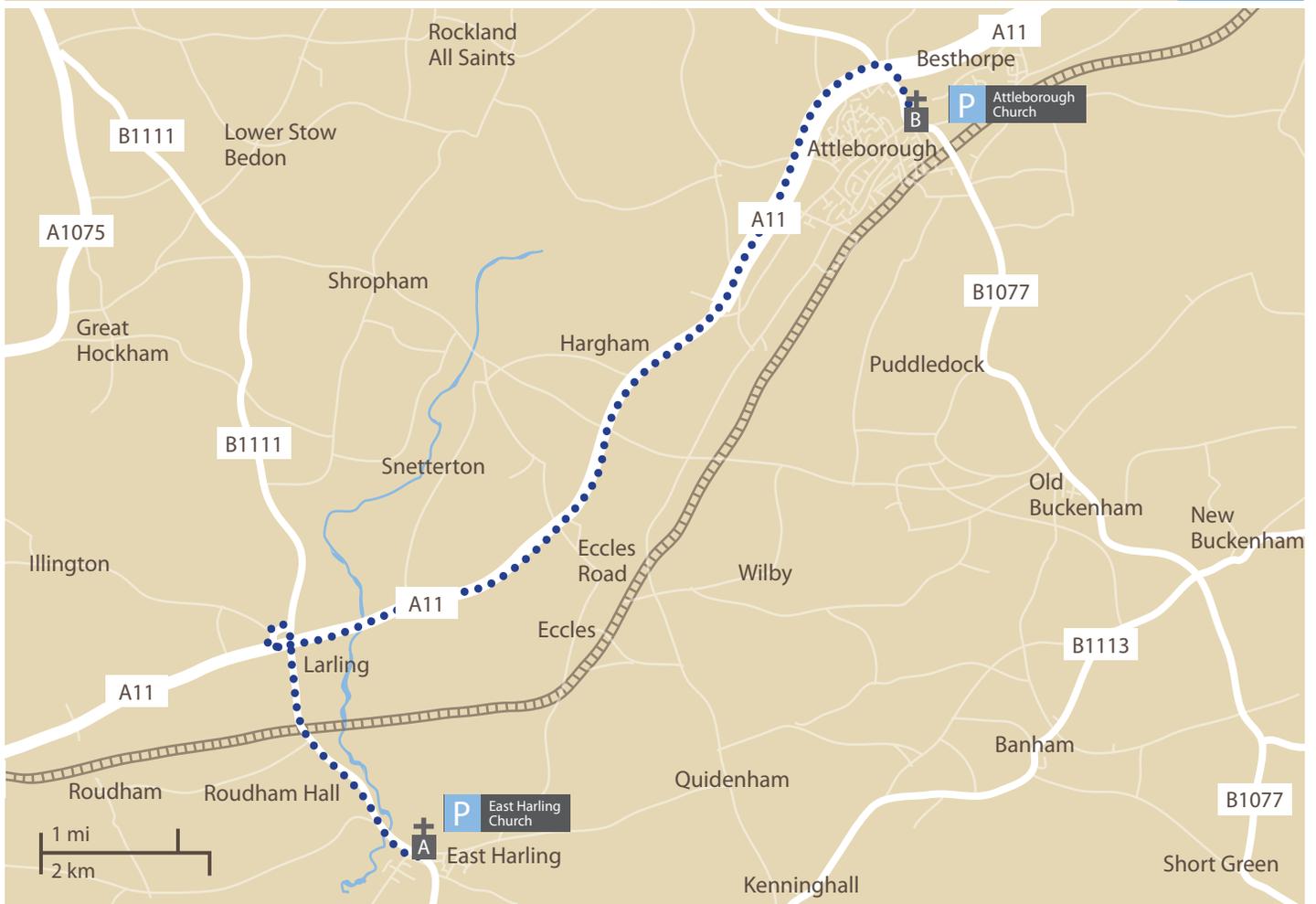
The two kneeling figures in armour depict two of Anne Harling's husbands, Sir William Chamberlain and Sir Robert Wingfield (see above). They come from the tiny chapel of S Anne on the north side of the chancel and were originally accompanied by two figures of Anne Harling herself. The figure of Mary Magdalene may be from the south east chancel window. Other glass is now in the east window of the Lady Chapel. The 16th-century shields of Sir Thomas Lovell come from the now demolished hall and one of the small angels is from the nave clerestory, which Anne glazed with a splendid array of heraldry and figures to memorialise her family, perhaps to compensate for her lack of children. Several other figures of angels are still in some of the north clerestory windows.

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		Parking	
Church		Railway	



ATTLEBOROUGH, THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. NR17 2AW. TM 045 950. Normally open.

Only the Norman west tower remains of the original church, destroyed in the 1540s. It now stands, unusually, at the east end of the largely 14th century building we now have.

The interior is particularly welcoming. The arcades are tall, the aisles wide and at the east end is the immense and intricate 1475 rood screen, nearly 20' high and 52' from wall to wall. It is very rare for so complete a screen to survive, let alone such a large one. Tall figures on panels show where the side altars stood. Above are the 17th-century emblems of all the English and Welsh dioceses and two improving texts. Above again, on the west face of the Norman tower, are large amounts of a high quality wall-painting of the Passion of Jesus, with an annunciation above. The vertical arm of the Cross was lost when the two Norman windows were opened up in 1845 but much remains: Old Testament figures, the Virgin, S John and angels holding the Instruments of the Passion. Binoculars help here and for the stained glass in the west window. There is a fine 18th-century pulpit, an unusual lectern and a medieval S Christopher over the south door.



The Glass

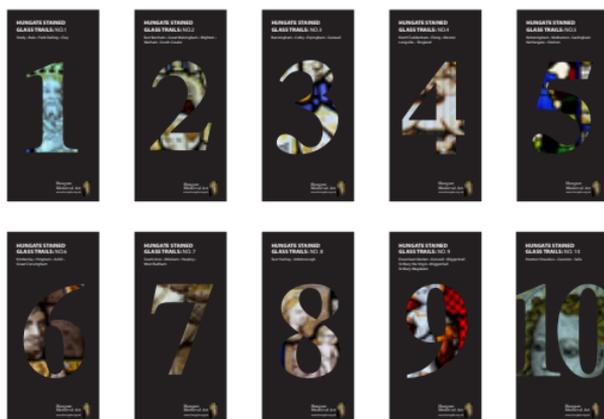
The surviving remains of an extensive series of windows in the aisles were arranged in the tracery lights and heads of the main lights of the large west window on the nave in 1845 by J. and J. King of Norwich. In the two large quatrefoils are two sets of winged Evangelist symbols: top left, the eagle of S John; top right, the lion of S Mark; bottom left, the bull of S Luke, and bottom right, the winged young man of S Matthew. Below is a row of angels alternately playing instruments (fiddle, harp and citole) and swinging censers and above in the centre is the kneeling figure of the Virgin Mary from her Annunciation, with Gabriel on the left and another angel on the right. The shields with the red cross of S George are new, but that at the top with two lions is for Roger de Somery. Other heraldry recorded in the aisle windows in the late 16th-century suggests that the glass dates from the 1340s or shortly after. Its rather sculptural style of figure painting is seen in other glass of this date in Norfolk, at South Creak and Frettenham, for example, and also in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral.

With only two churches in this trail, some may feel short-changed. A visit to Wymondham Abbey (TG 016 106, always open) will put that right. Two magnificent towers, Norman arcades, a Comper reredos glowing with gold, well-explained ruins of the other abbey buildings and a lovely setting are only a part of what it offers.

Opposite:
Stained glass at Attleborough church

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.

Collect the complete series:



Find out more by visiting the centre

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, David King and Rev. Gordon Plummer. Designed by The Click Design Consultants.

Hungate Medieval Art.
Registered charity no. 1125694

