

HUNGATE ROOD  
SCREEN TRAILS: NO.10



## GOODERSTONE ST GEORGE.

TF 762 022. postcode - PE33 9BY

Normally open.

This is an immaculately kept church, with its well-displayed children's area (and, if you are lucky, marmalade on sale). It has an excellent example of full pointing around its clerestory windows and their brick arches, grainy with a few flints, more as time erodes, just showing through. It is a good church to walk around first.

Turn right and look at the 14th century tracery in the east window of the south aisle, the stone which seems to have been poured molten into a mould. In contrast, with the chancel and its thin lancets, one steps back a century. Then forward again for the huge Tudor windows of the north nave and back again even further for the apparently Norman base of the tower. There are more elaborately carved windows in the porch.



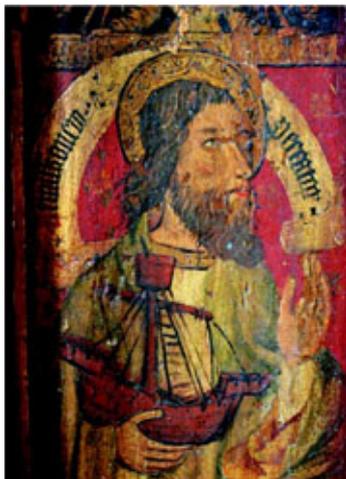
The nave inside is a mass of old benches, probably around 1500, with poppyheads, backs with tracery and arm rests whose figures have been carefully sawn off, presumably for commercial rather than religious reasons. The roof was originally of the same date, renewed in the 1600s. The pulpit is Jacobean. In the chancel, severely linear rather than curvilinear, there are old stalls backing onto the screen and in the sanctuary a double piscina with a moulding running above it and westwards over the priest's door and an aumbry. Two more aumbries are, as might be expected, in the north wall.

In the south aisle is what was once the chapel of a local guild, with an unusual carved piscina and credence shelf, some medieval glass in the windows, together with a later, simple communion rail.



## The Screen

Gooderstone has an elegant and lofty screen which retains its doors. The brackets which jut out of the upper tracery are rare survivors. These may once have held statuettes or candles, either of which might have been used to honour the rood, the great Crucifix originally positioned at the top of the screen.



Gooderstone's screen also retains much of its painting, although the varnish is now much darkened. Fancy floral motifs decorate most of the surfaces. Shown on the panels of the dado and on the doors are the twelve apostles and four Latin Doctors of the Church. The apostles' scrolls carry phrases from the Creed which the apostles were popularly believed to have composed.

On the north side, the figures are in turn: St Peter, St Andrew, St James the Great, St John the Evangelist, St Thomas, and St James the Less. The doors show: St Jerome, St Ambrose, St Augustine and St Gregory. The apostles on the south side are St Philip, St Bartholomew, St Simon, St Jude (inscribed Thadeus), St Matthew and St Matthias.

There is some debate over the identification of the apostles. The set square held by the figure in the last compartment on the south side is sometimes used as an attribute for St Thomas, yet Thomas is shown with a spear on the north side. Equally, both St Matthew and St Matthias can be shown with axes. St Matthias usually holds an axe or hatchet, but a longer axe or halberd is often depicted as the attribute of St Matthew.

The order of the apostles' Creed, though fragmentary, indicates that Matthias is indeed the final figure. He holds the words at the end of the Creed 'vitam aeternam' (life everlasting). As the last appointed apostle, replacing Judas, Matthias was traditionally believed to have contributed the final words.

## FOULDEN ALL SAINTS.

**TL 765 990. postcode - IP26 5AA**

**Normally open. Under repair late 2012.**

The tower fell in the 18th century – a double shame as it would have been a welcome guide among the muddling roads in this area. Major grant aided repairs begun in 2010 have been extended due to structural problems.

The recessed tomb squashed into the south wall may be that of the church's 14th century founder, Sir John de Crake. He employed excellent masons, as one can see from the flowing tracery of the windows, the tall arcades and the chancel arch. One of the best windows, close to his tomb, is at the east end of the south aisle, cut into by the later stair to the rood loft. Another very good one, easily missed, is in the south porch.

The chancel windows and roof are later, 15th century, but the walls themselves and the delicate piscina seem to be earlier. There are 15th century benches with carved ends well worth exploring, despite the varnish, and a pulpit of the same period. Against the east wall is Jacobean panelling and in the aisle 18th century box pews. In the chancel there is a large monument to Robert Longe, a contrast to the simplicity all around and underfoot, with brick floors such as one might see in an unimproved farmhouse of the same date.

## The Screen

The screen at Foulden has lost all its upper tracery, but it does retain its doors, on which the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are painted. A particularly lovely detail is St Mark's friendly, big-eared lion.



Sadly, most of the figures on the screen are covered in brown paint, but much of the original decoration lies underneath, even on the north side which looks like wood. This original decoration is especially visible on the south side where the uppermost layer of brown paint, known as graining, has been removed. Several of the saints can be made out through the fog of paint. In particular, St Catherine can be discerned with traces of her wheel. St Jerome's red cardinal hat can also be made out and he is accompanied by a bishop saint, probably St Augustine or St Ambrose with whom he is generally depicted in his role as one of the four Latin Doctors of the Church.

The saints of the south side, with their characteristic red ochre arched eyebrows, are very stylistically similar to those found on the screen at Binham Priory. The same artists can also be seen at work elsewhere in Norfolk, at Foxley, Sparham and Elsing.

### **THOMPSON ST MARTIN.**

**TL 930 970. postcode - IP24 1QD**

**Normally open. Car park.**

This is one of Norfolk's undiscovered stars, with a spacious car park to reward those who have found the Thetford battle area blocking their preferred route.



The church dates from the early 1300s and a college of canons was established here in the Black Death year 1349 to pray for the souls of the Shardelowe family who built it. The sturdy tower has flush-work at its base and a lovely window above the door. The tall porch has good quality carving and the door is old, typical of the excellence of the masonry and woodwork throughout.

None of this prepares one for the impact on opening the door. Above there is a fine scissor-braced roof. Below is a superb collection of benches with poppyheads. There is a box pew for the lord of the manor and a three-decker pulpit, with the clerk's desk made up of re-used parts of other furnishings. Much of the rood stair remains and beside it, behind the organ, is a locally painted list of the Ten Commandments, 1828. All of this is combined by a harmony of colours of wood, walls and stone that only time can reproduce.

In the chancel there are stalls for the canons, some still with misericords, with a 1648 roof above. The Laudian communion rails have a wooden bolt to close the gate and a lip thought to be there to catch any consecrated crumbs that fell when communion was administered.

It is in the chancel that the best of the stone carving is to be found, in the piscina and sedilia with Green Men peeking out, in the aumbry and the large blocked windows above. The church is wonderfully light, with its large windows and the gentle colour of the limed oak of its benches.

### **The Screens**

Thompson's chancel screen is a rarity, a 14th century screen which retains its original painted scheme. As is the case with the few 14th century screens which survive, the lower panels are painted with a floral diaper pattern rather than with the figures of saints. The construction of the screen, in the decorated style, is also different from the vast majority of Perpendicular style East Anglian screens, dating from the 15th and 16th centuries.

The simple elegance of the screen is noteworthy and its outline striking, especially the crocketed archway over the central doors and the wheels in the upper tracery.

Also of interest is the rood loft door to the north side of the chancel arch, although it is hard to envisage now how the rood screen and loft combined together. To the south side, behind the pulpit, it is possible to make out an elevation squint. This cusped circle was put here so that the priest officiating at a side altar could see to elevate the Host at the same time as the priest at the high altar.

The south aisle is partitioned with a 15th century screen, of which only the dado now remains. This screen has been stripped of its paint, but comparing it with the chancel screen goes to show how much design changed within about a hundred years.

## Attleborough The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

**TM 048 955. postcode - NR17 2AH**

**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 otherwise largely 14th century building.

The interior is particularly welcoming. The arcades are tall, the aisles wide and at the startling east end is the immense and intricate chancel 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. Above are the 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, St John and angels holding the Instruments of the Passion. Binoculars help here and for viewing the stained glass in the



west window. This was originally part of a large series of stained glass in the windows of the aisles dating from the 1340s. What survived here in 1845. In the centre are the kneeling figure of the Virgin Mary and the Angel Gabriel. There are the symbols of the Evangelists – the eagle of St John, the lion of St Mark, the bull of St Luke and the winged young man of St Matthew - and other angels swinging censers or playing musical instruments.

There is a fine 18th century pulpit, an unusual lectern and a medieval St Christopher over the south door.

## The Screen

Attleborough's screen is one of the largest and most complete, retaining its loft, figural nave altarpieces and decorative lower scheme. There is good evidence, from its design and from what is known about one of the screen's donors, (a Thomas Cove, rector of Attleborough Minor from 1424 to 1446) that the screen dates from the early 15th century.

The large panels to the north and south used to form the backdrops to two altars. On the north panels, St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist look towards the Virgin and Child in the centre. The south side depicts an archbishop saint, possibly St Thomas Becket, and St Bartholomew who flank the Holy Trinity in the centre.

Attleborough's church housed a college of secular priests and so the screen here had a special function, separating the parishioners' nave from the chancel which was used as a chapel by the college of priests.

The coats of arms on the front of the loft are 17th century in date, although they may cover earlier paintings. If so, it is likely that saints, perhaps the apostles, were shown here. The wide panels beneath the nave altars are decorated with diagrams which relate to the Eucharist and Crucifixion. They are unlikely to be medieval in date as these parts of the screen were previously behind altars. They may, however, be Marian in date.

Remarkably, the whole screen was moved to the back of the church in the 19th century, returning to its present and original location after narrowly avoiding sale and destruction.



## 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 

