

## **The Church of All Saints' Frostenden - some notes for visitors.**

Frostenden is one of a number of parishes in north east Suffolk which has a round tower to its church, most being found near rivers and estuaries. Here, the ditch seen on the approaches to the church shows the route of the river which, although silted up here at an early date, remained at the old harbour at Frostenden as mentioned in the Domesday Book - a unique entry as an inland harbour. There are various points of view on round towers, but a shortage of large stone in the vicinity may be one of the main reasons.

In AD937 a law required the local Thane- Lord of the Manor- to erect a bell tower. The construction of the tower here is in two stages or periods. Domesday noted 2 churches and a saltpan in the village.

The CHANCEL here dates from c. 1220 and the East window contains work of the Early English period, the moulding and dog-tooth ornament and two slender pilasters (inner tracery renewed). The PISCINA near the altar rail (for washing Holy Communion vessels) repeats this moulding. Adjacent is the SEDILIA, a seat for priests. The two windows on the North wall are c. 1440, the two on the South side having been renewed. The open ROOD STEPS can be seen behind the PRAYER DESK which incorporates two of the 15th Century poppyhead bench ends (there are others in the church). The two stained glass windows in the chancel are memorials to a former Rector and his wife (The Revd Edmund Lovegrove & Mrs Hannah Hickling), the other being to his parents. The Nave windows are renewed Perpendicular.

In the SANCTUARY are memorial tablets to three former Rectors, Thomas Pretyman, Edmund Hickling and David Lloyd Brereton D.S.O. The ALTAR CROSS is to R.W. & H. Burleigh, the parents of Mrs Hickling. The PROCESSIONAL CROSS in memory of Mrs Marjorie Brereton, wife of the former Rector. SANCTUARY PRAYER DESK is in memory of Miss Mabel Hickling, voluntary organist here for over 50 years (d. 1957). The LECTERN in memory of two former residents, the Revd. James Carlos & his wife Lydia Louisa. She left money for a parish charity.

Memorial tablets on the wall and floor are several to members of the GLOVER family who owned the Frostenden Hall estate from 1626 to 1769 (together with framed translations), to their successor, Roger Mainwaring; to the Barker family, including a former Rector, William Bell Barker, and to Christopher Smear, another Rector.

The Victorian restorers were at work here (c. 1873-1888), and the present pulpit given by the Hickling family as part of the improvements. Fortunately, we have some panels from an earlier PULPIT incorporated in the ALTAR FRONTAL CHEST in memory of a former churchwarden, William Rous Blowers, and his wife. The care and restoration of this church, during the incumbency of the Revd. J.N.F. Ewen, was much praised at the time. The PERPENDICULAR FONT with Tudor roses and blank shields has a cover (c. 1480) thought to have been reduced from a much higher one.

The SOUTH AISLE with arches of the late Decorated period was added c. 1380 and contains a further stained glass window (in memory of Frances Elizabeth G. Vincent). The windows renewed in the Decorated style. The ORGAN was obtained secondhand from London in 1893 and finished its journey here by horse and waggon from Brampton Station. Electric blower added (1962) in memory of Lt Col. C.L. Hickling D.S.O. and his sisters (children of the former Rector). Electric lighting installed 1956 utilising the old handwrought brackets, lamps and shades. Panel heating (1967). The organ is now in its 3rd position in the church! A renewed HOLY WATER STOUP is seen near the alms box by the door. The plaque showing ownership by the church of 10 acres of marshland records land sold in 1957 when drainage costs vastly exceeded rents. The small capital sum is invested but brings in a very small yield.

There are three BELLS, treble 1450, another 1639 and the tenor, undated (suggested date c. 1430). BRASS EWER in memory of Hannah Hickling 1904. There are lists of churchwardens, Rectors (including photographs), those who served in World War I and who died in World War II. The VESTRY CLOCK came from the School upon closure in 1972. Note the spelling on the old hand bier of 1733 and also the wheeled bier given in 1925 to "avoid coffins being carried long distances or needing the use of a farm cart".

The ROOF was restored in 1936 (cost £803). Tower rendered, porch & groining and south aisle roof repaired 1981-4 (roof now covered in sharp stainless steel replacing the lead). Note the "Pelican in her piety" - central boss in porch. The BOOKCASE is in memory of Charles Spore, much valued church clerk (1934-1954). The 18th C. SUNDIAL over the porch door reflects the message down the ages "Vigilate et Orate" (Watch & Pray). Weekly services are held here to which you will be warmly welcomed. See the ends of two mortars (for grinding corn) in the base of the tower.

Paul Scriven (revised July 1997)