



All Saints
NETTLEHAM PARISH CHURCH



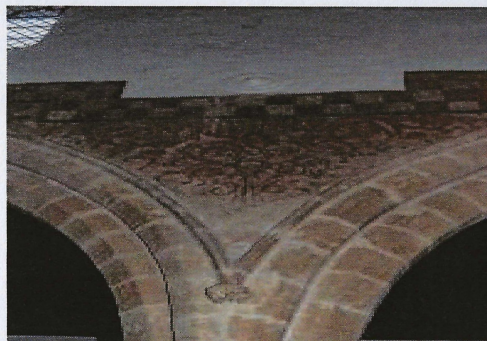
A small history

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Anglo-Saxons to the Reformation

In Anglo-Saxon times, the manor and church of Nettleham were owned by Queen Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor. After the Norman Conquest, William 1 gave the church to the Abbot of Evroult in Normandy, as a thank you for giving him funds for the invasion of England. The church income paid for a curate to take services, while the King kept the manor!

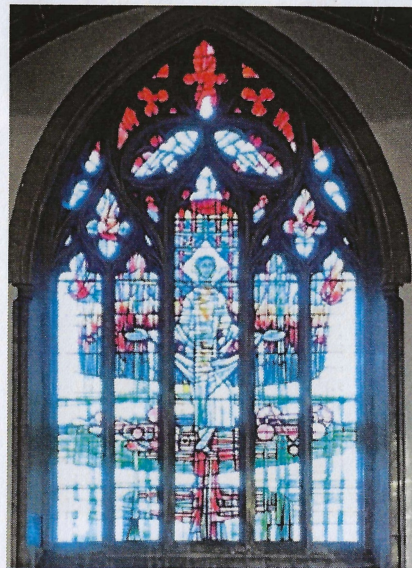
In 1101, Henry I gave the living from the manor to the Bishop of Lincoln, but we have to thank Bishop Hugh of Wells for restoring the church to the village in 1219, when he appointed a rector to take charge of services. In 1425, the church was given to the Chancellor of the cathedral, when it reverted to being run by a curate. We didn't get our own vicar until 1865, but that's another story!



The Saxon church, then called All Hallows, was only a tower, a nave and a chancel, but Hugh of Wells completely altered it when he extended the chancel and added the two aisles and the clerestory. Hugh was responsible for much of the work on the cathedral and it looks as if some of his masons worked on the improvements here. For instance, the capitals on the columns in the nave have stiff leaf decorations and one of the columns even has a mason's head carved on it!. The columns nearest the tower have different, plainer capitals, so either the money ran out or there was a later (or different) set of masons. The 13th century also saw the addition of the wall paintings, but there's little evidence of further structural developments in the next 200 years, until the late 15th century, in fact. At that time, the roof of the nave was raised and the present clerestory windows installed. With the exception of the part near the tower, the south aisle was widened, the roof raised and typical windows of the period installed. The corbels that supported the original roof are still visible in place today. Various descriptions of the church say there were also side altars, a number of monuments and a rood screen, whose entrance can still be seen behind the pulpit.

The Reformation to the 1800's

The split from Rome in the 16th century led to a major simplification in the type of services and the decorations in the church and it's believed that this is when the ancient altar was buried in the church doorway, to stop it being broken into pieces! Changes continued into the 17th century, when a three-tier pulpit and some box pews for the 'notables' of the parish were installed. However, the most important change was the demolition of the chancel in 1697 and its replacement with a much smaller one, only extending as far as the present altar. The extended part of the south aisle against the tower was removed between 1791 and 1808.



The 1800's to the present day

The next big changes took place in the 1880's, when Mr. Synclair Hood of Nettleham Hall and his family commissioned a major redevelopment scheme, undertaken by Bodley and Garner, who reconstructed the chancel, extended the north aisle and dramatically changed the roof interior. The new chancel was the same size as the original Saxon one, but, following the trend of the times towards Anglo-Catholic practices, it included a series of steps up to the high altar, positioned under the east window and backed by an ornate reredos. The window showed Christ in majesty, flanked by 4 saints. The organ was in the north side, with the choir stalls on each side, leading up to the altar. A rail across the chancel step allowed communicants to kneel to receive the host.



This all changed on 8th September 1969, when a fire destroyed both the organ and the east window, as well as doing considerable damage elsewhere. Now was the opportunity to modernize worship!

The present altar, rescued from the doorway, was placed in a central position in the chancel, allowing the priest to face the congregation during communion. The choir was rehoused in the north aisle but now sits in the south aisle, while the organ is over the tower arch. The new east window was commissioned from the eminent stained-glass artist and designer, John Hayward (1929-2007) and is one of the most striking features of the church. Most of the other stained-glass windows are late 19th century and are connected to the Hood family. The west window under the tower shows the tree of Jesse, while on the north wall, two boards dating from the late 18th century tell the story of the parish charities then.

Further modernization took place as part of the millennium celebrations, when a kitchen and toilet were added at the west end of the north aisle and the Millennium Tapestry installed under the tower.

With grateful thanks to
Pearl Wheatley; April 2025