

Discovering Broadland's Churches

12 mile route from Cawston to Wood Dalling

Cawston St Agnes

St Agnes is a huge, impressive church at the centre of the village of Cawston.

Much of the building was provided by Sir Michael de la Pole,



Second Earl of Suffolk, with money derived from the very successful local sheep farming and wool industry. The tall, gaunt tower has an unfinished look - the death of Michael de la Pole at Marfleur in 1415 meant the end of the building campaign. The tower stands an enormous 119 feet over the village and its bells could be heard in all parts of the parish. The church has an impressive wooden hammer beam roof, supported by standing angels with outspread wings. At the east end of the nave is a figure of St Agnes holding a lamb - her emblem - which is appropriate in light of the church's strong connection with the wool industry. St Agnes was burned to death in Rome for refusing to marry as she wished to devote her life to Christ. Also note the colourful painted screen which was made in 1460 and restored in 1953, and the 17th century poor box. Altogether a grand church with much interest to the visitor.

Oulton St Peter and St Paul

A simple but pretty church in the heart of Norfolk - fairly remote as it

is a mile from the main street of the village. The



church has had many extensions and repairs through the ages. In the 1200s the arch between the nave and chapel was raised, a large screen was placed in the archway, and transept chapels were built to the north and south of the nave. These were paid for by local guilds - mediaeval trade unions. Only the arches of these two chapels remain. In the 15th century the tower and porch were added. Unusually the tower was not placed centrally. There were substantial repairs in 1898 and 1905. Money for these was raised from local donations. Opposite the main door is a small wall painting of a fish, uncovered quite recently, originally part of a larger painting of St Christopher carrying the Christ Child. The windows are all plain glass, making the Church very bright. There is one bell left from the original three, and over the entrance is a sundial which would have replaced statues of the two saints, at the Reformation. Note the stones and brass plate - memorials to local families such as the Bells, Pitmans, Gays, Hunts and Cookes. The crypt is under the floor in the nave and was used for burial of well known families. Local legend has it that some of Cromwells men were buried in the churchyard. This lovely church has always been important to the small rural community it serves. In 1603 the rector wrote that of the local community there were 70 churchgoers and no 'recusants' (those who did not attend church).

Heydon St Peter and St Paul

This beautiful church stands proudly overlooking the village of Heydon. It was almost completely rebuilt during 'modernisation' in the new perpendicular style in the late 15th century and the walls in the nave were raised to make room for a large clerestory. It contains memorials to the Earle and Bulwer families who were residents of the Hall. The Bulwer family have their own mortuary chapel of 1864 on the north side of the chancel.

The beautiful screen, donated in 1480 by John Dynne, whose son Henry built Heydon Hall, retains much



original colour. Notice too the 15th century pulpit with its rare 'wineglass' stem, and the mural showing three kings (symbolising life), with three skeletons (symbolising death), probably painted as a reminder that death makes no distinction between people. This had been covered by a coat of whitewash and was only discovered in 1970 when the wall was cleaned. The church is a peaceful, tranquil place, where sheep have been known to graze in the graveyard in summer.

Wood Dalling St Andrew

The earliest part of the church was built in the 13th century, but it was gradually enlarged by the addition of the west tower, aisled nave, north and south porches, and chancel. Much of the 15th century building work was made possible with money from bequests in wills. The tower took over 100 years to build. Note the use of flint to decorate the battlements. Only one bell remains from the original five - the other four were sold to Drayton Church in 1966 to provide metal for new bells. Inside the church is a Victorian font and the pews have their original 15th century 'poppyhead' ends. Note the many memorials to local families - especially the Bulwers and Athills. There are also brasses, including one to John Crane (1507) who left £6 to the church. In the north isle is a recumbent effigy of a priest carved in stone. The head and shoulders were recut in the late 19th century into those of a woman. The church is large for such a small community and is obviously a very important feature of the area.



Cawston to Wood Dalling

Directions

The tour begins in Cawston, North West of Norwich. From the Norwich outer ring road take the A140 Cromer Road northwards. As you leave the city outskirts turn left onto the B1149 road signed Holt. After 7½ miles turn left signed Cawston and follow the road into the village. Turn left after the Bell Public House into Church Lane and the first church we visit is on your right.

1 From the church take the same road out of the village back to the B1149 and turn left at the roundabout signed Holt.

2 Continue for just over a mile then turn right signed Oulton Street. Follow the road through Oulton Street.

3 At the next crossroads turn left signed Oulton. After a further mile our next church is on your right.

4 From the church continue on this road for almost a mile, going over the old railway bridge.

5 At the junction turn left continue for just over a mile.

6 Turn right signed Heydon.

7 After 1½ miles at the crossroads turn right into Heydon village. The next church is straight ahead by the green.

8 From the church take the same road out of the village and at the crossroads turn right signed Wood Dalling.

9 Continue for 1½ miles then take the second left turn signed Reepham. At the end of this road the next church we visit is directly in front of you.

This is where our tour ends. From the church turn right then immediately left signed Corpusty. At the end of this road turn right signed Cawston and follow for 3½ miles to its end. Turn right signed Norwich B1149 and follow for 9 miles to its end. Turn right signed Norwich, A140 for 1¾ miles back to the Norwich outer ring road.

