



Walsoken Church from Watson's publication "History of Wisbech" (1827)

The church is a handsome edifice, dedicated to All Saints, and has a nave, and north and south aisles, with a chancel covered with lead. At the west end is a handsome ornamented tower, with a spire of freestone. The nave of the church is divided from the aisles by seven handsome semi-circular Saxon arches on each side, ornamented with the chevron. Over the pillars is the like number of windows, with emblems of the twelve tribes of Judah underneath. The roof is supported by carved work, decorated with figures of angels placed in the niches. A very beautiful and elegant pointed Saxon arch separates the nave from the chancel, which is about forty feet in length, over which arc the royal arms. The aisles extend the whole length of the church, to the extremity of the chancel, though separated by a screen on each side, where the arch, dividing the chancel from the nave, commences and there were formerly several guilds in the church, it is not improbable but the chapels or chantries were held within these divisions. One of such guilds was called

The two side aisles at the east end are divided from the chancel by two elegant Saxon arches on each end similar to those in the nave of the church, ornamented with the chevron.

In the chancel, over the communion table, is the Decalogue, with the creed Lord's Prayer, and in the centre is a painting of Moses holding a wand within the rails is a mural monument with the following inscription.

"Near this place lye interred the bodies of John Hering M.A. thirty-six years rector of this parish, aged 75, buried 2nd June 1717, and of Martha, his wife, daughter of Thomas Potts, of the parish of St. Gregory's, London, aged 44, buried 3rd January 1704."

"This monument is erected in grateful memory of his excellent patents, by their only son, Thomas, Lord arch bishop of Canterbury, 1750"

Without the rail of the chancel, on the pavement, is a slab to the memory of Dorothy Wright, who died in 1691, and whose daughter married John Twells esq. who died in 1691. Also of John Wakefield who died in 1777; besides which are four other slabs, so defaced as to set any deciphering at defiance.

In the north aisle is a mural monument to Ann, wife of Henry Ferrour, who died in 1692. In the middle aisle are several ancient slabs, having formerly had brass effigies, now disrobed, and the inscriptions obliterated. More recent ones record the memory of Peter Wensley, son of Robert Wensly, clerk, who died in 1711; and the Assumption of our Lady, another Saint Thomas, The martyr; also others dedicated to the nativity of our Lady, the Nativity of Saint John, and of the Trinity.

At the cast end of the north aisle, within this division, was the chapel of our Lady, a slab to the memory of William Honyter, who by his will desires to be buried by his brethren in the chapel of our Lady, ascertains the fact, by his internment in this spot. There are two other very ancient monuments on the floor of this chapel, on one was "Orate p aia Thome Honyter qui obiit "Apr1505" on the other "Orate p aia Tho Mey et "Katerine Uxtor suae".

Another stone is fixed against the wall in the shape of a coffin, within an arch, which seems formerly to have been a door way, opening into the church yard, it is inscribed to Frances, the wife or Henry Hunston, who died in 1685 and in the wall opposite is a large recess, probably used for holy water. This part of the north aisle, not being at present required for the accommodation of the parishioners in their attendance on divine service, is now used by the churchwardens as a place for laying up any heavy articles belonging to the church, and in depositing coals,



At the east end of the south aisle, within the screen, are two raised monumental tombs, one to the memory of John Old man and his wife; he died in 1733, and she in 1727 ; the other is to Edward Wignall, who died in 1763; with three monumental stones on the floor, to the memory of the family of Edwards, of whom Thomas died 1679, William in 1682, and Stephell in 1709 and at the east end of the chapel is a table of gifts to the poor, adjoining to which is the vestry, separated there from by a wall. Another of Thomas son of Edward. Southwell, who died in 1692, and intermarried with a Wensley; another to Elinor Juett, who died in 1715, and James Welch, in 1766.

In the South aisle is interred Elizabeth, daughter of William Scales, who died in 1694; likewise Esther and William Pratt. The font is curiously ornamented with imagery work of many saints, our Saviour's passion, and the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome;

round the foot of it, "Remember the soul of S. Honyster, and Margaret, his wife, and John Beforth Chaplin".

Against the wall of the steeple, within-side, is the effigy of king Solomon, sitting on a chair or throne, in royal robes, projecting from the wall, and on each side of him a large piece of painting, representing the history and judgment of that king on the two harlots, and underneath, that of king David with his harp. A gallery for singers has also been erected at the west end.

In the church yard is a handsome monumental stone, on the South side, to the memory of Elizabeth, wife of the Rev. Thomas Sheepshanks, M.A. and last surviving daughter of John and Judith Garland; she died in childbed 20th April 1782, leaving an only daughter. There are other grave stones to the memory of the Wensleys, and one to Thomas, son of Edward Southwell, grandson to Robert Wensley, who died in 1692.

A stone cross also stands on the south side of the church yard, having three steps. It was not unusual formerly to set up crosses in places where bodies were buried.

There was formerly a chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity, standing at a place called the Staythe or Stave Dyke, in which was a guild, with a custos or master.

Several of the popes granted to the brothers and sisters of this fraternity, and to all who were benefactors to it, surprising indulgences. On 3d October 1491, an indulgence of forty days was granted to the believers of the hospital of the Holy Trinity of Walsoken, which was again renewed in the following year. On its dissolution King Edward VI granted it to Mary, duchess of Richmond and Somerset. Soon after this, Robert Balam held it, from whom it came to Charles Balam, who died seized of it in 1591, leaving Robert, his son and heir aged twelve. The site of this chapel is well known lying about three quarters of a mile in an eastern direction from the church, near what is called the Gull.