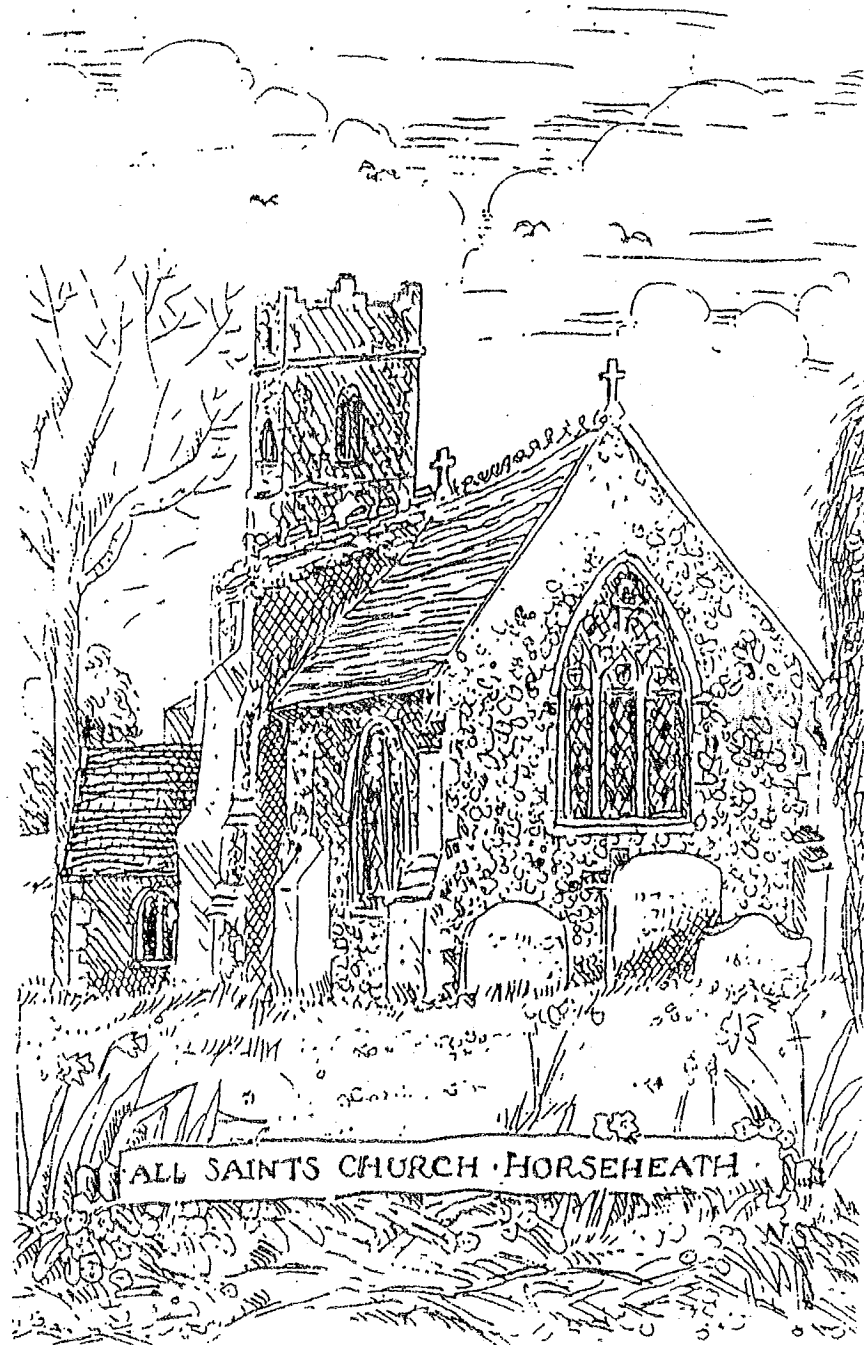


'All Saints' Church'

Leaflet *by Rev. W.N.C. Girard, 1997*

Rev. Bill Gerard was the Rector of Balsham with responsibility for Horseheath 1985-1996, who did a tremendous amount of work to get grants to repair the Church.



HORSEHEATH VILLAGE.

How far back do we go? The Northern Parish Boundary is the late Roman Road (Wool Street or Via Devana) that begins (or peters out) in a field near the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk boundary and runs through Cambridge to Godmanchester where it joins the older Ermine Street. There are traces of a Roman settlement just south of that road and North of the Church.

The Parish of HORSETH appears in the Domesday Book (1086). This was a taxation register so its other information is limited. In Norman times land was held by the de Vere family, Earls of Oxford, and further sub-infeudated into a number of Manors. In the Parish Church is the brass of William Audley (died 1366) and from 1397 onwards his lands, and almost all the others, were gradually acquired by the Alingtons (1397-1700). They were succeeded by the Bromleys (Lords Montfort) 1700-1776, and the Batsons (1776-1925). When the Batson estates were broken up land ownership fragmented but in recent years there has been consolidation into two large farming units, the remainder in smaller parcels.

Until recently the Village has been almost entirely agricultural with an economy and fluctuating population to match. Mediaeval population figures are difficult to determine for they are gauged by taxation returns - Domesday refers to 29 households'. 1377 saw 121 adults paying the Poll tax; in 1624 there were 36 taxpayers. Its highest population figure has been the 578 in 1871; now, all told, it is over the 400 mark.

HORSEHEATH CHURCH.

Most of our present Church dates from the 1300s but look carefully and you will see in the walls, both inside and outside, pieces of stone with a chevron » pattern and this is evidence of a former Norman Church; the tower is slender and could just even be of late Saxon origin. Like most Churches, ours has 'grown' over the Centuries.

Apart from the Chancel monuments and changing styles of furniture, our Church today looks little different from what it did prior to the Reformation. This Guide is not a detailed study of the Church (there is a 1905 monograph now out of print) or else look up the Victoria County History for Horseheath in a Library) but it will lead you round; there may also be a leaflet about the Alington family and Church Monuments.

Stand by the FONT which is from the 1400s. Look around its edge and you will see two small "stone repairs"- pieces of stone let into the rim. This was where the iron staples were that once held the lid down; the iron rusted; the stone cracked and had to be repaired.

Look UP at the ceiling. Timbers are from the late 1400s when the roof was flattened (The Tower wall outside shows the old roof line); walls were raised to accommodate new large two-tier windows and brick parapets built; repair dates of 1764 and 1951 can be seen on the timbers. The roof was recovered again in 1993. Lower side stones of the windows may be from an older era which could account for 1400s graffiti in some places. Look to the FRONT (East) and in the Chancel wall, high up on the left and down on the floor by the pulpit are two of the » chevron design stones, more are on the outside of the walls.

Walking into the CHANCEL pass through the mediaeval wooden screen (repaired in the 1880s; traces of old paintwork are still visible on some of the lower panels). A staircase used to lead through the doorway in the wall on the left to a gallery or Rood Loft across the Church with a crucifix on top. On the floor are what look like pieces of the mediaeval stone altar (one piece has a Cross).

On the Chancel floor is the knightly brass of William Audley died 1365. Notice high in the tracery the two angels, still in their original place and very like the one on the floor brass. These glass fragments, and the armorial bearings of de Burgh and de Vere are from those days. The monumental pieces, now mounted on the wall, are part of the dismantled upper section of the double monument on the South side. The Chancel was repaired (the south wall completely rebuilt) in the 1880s and scratched on the glass of the North side window are the words "John Pendle, Linton, May 16, 1883. Forget me not, glazier."

On the Chancel walls are monuments to former Rectors and a BROMLEY tablet (there is a Bromley vault beneath the floor). When the Lord Montfort of the time became bankrupt he was followed by the BATSONS whose tablets are in the Nave (notice the heraldic bat whose living relations also inhabit the Church!). Stanlake Batson bred and trained the 1834 Derby winner "Plenipotentiary" at Horseheath Lodge and that is why the Horse is painted on the village sign.

The Nave windows were re-leaded and repaired in 1982 and 1989 when the memorial inscriptions were inserted. On the North Jack Webb is recalled with a horse (for he was a noted horseman) and a sheep (for his ancestor: the agriculturist Jonas Webb, a noted sheep breeder); small fragments of mediaeval glass gathered into this window are all that are left of a Church full of stained glass. Much glass and statues survived the Tudor era but some was destroyed by Wm. Dowsing in 1643 and then later 'restorations' removed some in the 19th. Century. On the South are recalled the Marshall family of Cambridge and Horseheath; prominent in the Aircraft and Motor Industry for most of the 20th. Century, Maud Borrer, daughter of a one-time rector, and Thomas Sutton, 17th. century founder of the Charterhouse who bequeathed his advowson, or right to appoint a Rector, to his Foundation who still

exercise that right to this day within the present team Ministry arrangements. The Organ was brought to Horseheath in the 1870s, once it stood in a gallery at the West end; after removal of the Gallery it migrated to beside the Chancel Arch on the South side, after restoration in 1989 it moved again to the back of the Church. The Royal Arms above the door have 'GR III' on them - this is an overpainting of the III and they began life as 'GR 1721.'

High on the Church Porch gable outside is a sun-dial dated 1566. A small clump of stones is all that remains of the mediaeval stone Churchyard cross demolished about the 1570s. When first there was a Tower Clock is unknown. The present one, now electrically wound, commemorates Queen Victoria's 1897 Jubilee and keeps good time. Recently the Nave Roof has been replaced, the Tower completely repaired and new wiring installed. The cost (over the years 1981-6 has been £263,000). There are four Bells, presently unringable; but we live in hope. Outside the Churchyard, set it into the roadside wall, is a tablet commemorating the review by King George V of Army Manoeuvres in 1912.

Before you go say your prayers, for yourself and your loved ones. Remember us also who regularly worship here, and the many others who pass through these doors: whether in life or death, joy or sorrow. And may God's peace enfold you on your way.

If you can make a donation it would be gratefully accepted. An old Church is a wonderful privilege, and a financial nightmare, and so is the security of the offerings box which is cleared by the Churchwardens regularly lest it be 'cleared' by others.

WNCG July 1997.