



**Chet Valley Churches**

**Welcome to**



**All Saints,  
Chedgrave**

Welcome to All Saints, the parish church of Chedgrave. Christians have worshipped here for well over a thousand years and, to this day, it is a living place of worship and prayer. On your visit please pause awhile for prayer if you wish. There is a prayer board at the back of the church if you would like to leave a prayer. We will then ensure that it is included in Morning Prayer which is said here every Wednesday and Saturday morning.

The present church dates back to the early 12<sup>th</sup> Century but the Domesday Book refers to a church worth 50 acres plus 5 pieces of silver: a huge sum when other churches around compared at only a few pence. There is also some archaeological evidence for Saxon origins: the base of the north tower has stonework which may well be Saxon.



You entered through the Norman **South Door**, of which more later, and you are standing near the octagonal **Font** at the west end of the **Nave**. This dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century and, according to Pevsner, came from St Julian in Norwich. It replaced an earlier square font, now lost but shown in this engraving from the British Library.

The **Nave** is Norman and forms the original part of the church. High in the west wall you will see a small window, which also is thought to be Norman in origin. The decoration throughout is whitewash over all the walls but in mediaeval times, and earlier, they would have been a blaze of colour.

At the end of the nave you reach the **Chancel** and you can see more clearly the details in the glass of the great **East Window**, which blazes with colour on sunny mornings. The Chancel and the window frame date from the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The glass is important, from a mixture of sources. The image of God at the top is English, fourteenth century in style but possibly dating to 1521. The rest of the glass has been identified as coming from at least two churches in Rouen, from the monastery at Steinfeld, and from Cologne. It was brought to Norwich by John



Christopher Hampp (1750-1825) a German cloth merchant who settled in Norwich and who traded a lot of continental glass into England and Wales. A full guide to the glass can be found at the back of the church.

From the chancel, through a small doorway, you gain access to the **North Tower**, which today is used as a vestry, and which gives the church its odd-shape. The tower is square and is thatched. In the east and west walls are small narrow windows in a typical early Norman style and in the south corner is a piscina (literally *fish pond*), used for washing communion vessels and usually situated near an altar.

This has led to the suggestion that the North Tower was originally a chapel which was later built up to form a tower. Support for this idea comes from the fact that the remains of a round tower at the west end of the church were discovered during the building of the Church Centre in 1993. The speculation is that the original Saxon church had a west tower and that after the tower collapsed it was found easier to demolish its remains and raise the northeast chapel into a belfry instead.



Some early wall paintings have been found under the whitewash coating in this room and fragments of them can be seen around the west window. The painting around the west window has been dated to the thirteenth century by Professor E W Tristram.

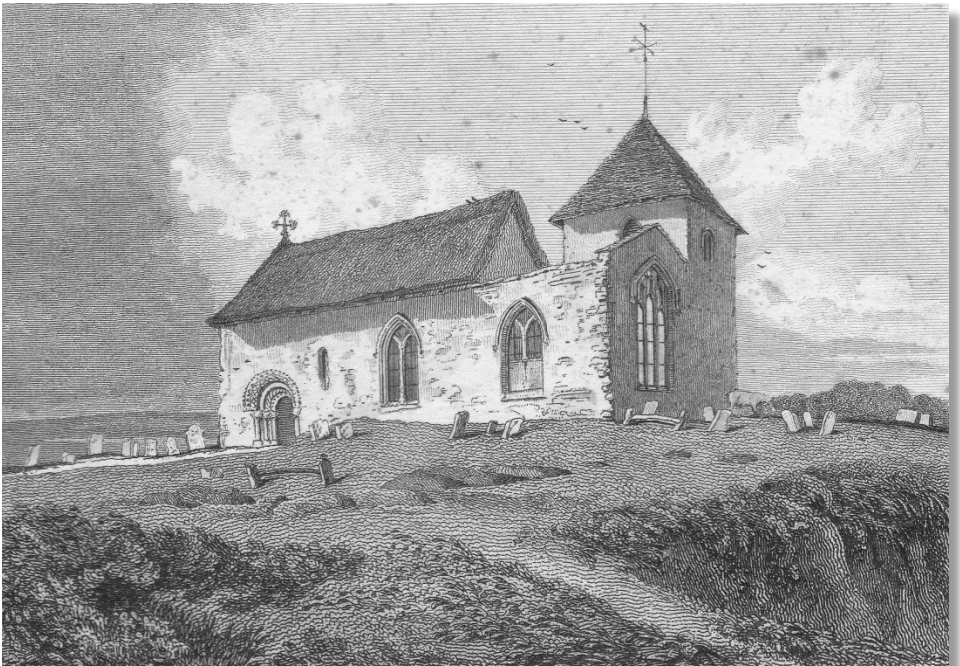
Leaving here and returning to the main body of the church you will see the **North Aisle**. This was part of major 'beautification' of the church carried out in 1819 by Thomas Beauchamp-Proctor who became vicar in 1817. Over the centuries many alterations will have taken place and the latest one was in 1993 to form the **All Saints Centre**, on the west end of the north aisle, which you would have seen when approaching the church. There are refreshments for visitors in the kitchen and the loo is also just off the lobby.



Standing once more at the font you will see the two Norman doorways. The **North Door** is quite simple but the **South Door** is a splendid example of the Norman masons' skills with some distinctive South Norfolk Romanesque ornamentation. Can you spot the three mass dials crudely

scratched into the stone, two on the right and one on the left?

You leave by the **South Porch**, erected in memory of General John Barrett, Indian Army, who died in December 1880. Thank you for visiting our church.



*The engraving above, from a watercolour by John Cotman, was made some time between 1810 and 1818. Today the church is almost hidden by houses but then it stood on top of the hill overlooking the small village of Chedgrave*