

Welcome to St Andrew's, Irnham. You may be here for prayer and contemplation, but I hope you will take time to walk around this beautiful church and try, as I have done, to understand the developments over the years which have produced this monument to both God and those whose skills or wealth have influenced the building we now see.

You are probably stood just inside the main entrance that is to the North side of the church. If you turn back to look at that doorway you will note it is of Early English style. But take a second look and there is evidence of a second more rounded arch, possibly of Norman or Transitional Norman period. Now glance upwards and note the Early English triple lancet windows that have been blanked off. Why are they there? Was the porch originally grander than now with a room above where a Custodian kept money or arms and even slept? If the porch was previously larger than now, the North wall of this aisle must have been higher also. Could it be that this was originally the North wall of the nave and not an aisle? The existing porch appears to be circa 1250 and yet it overlaps the adjacent window of the North aisle, and those windows are likely to have replaced earlier windows.

Now move into the nave and turn to face the Chancel and the Sanctuary beyond. Observe the arcade of three arches to your left. They appear to be Early English, possibly circa 1200, but there was previously a South aisle, the outline of the arches and the corbels being visible. If you turn to your right to look at the West most corner of the nave you will see the abacus of a capitol jutting from the stucco. From the little that is visible it appears that this arcade was more slender and hence slightly later than the North arcade, which is not usual. This, plus the presence of the porch on the North side, indicates that the larger part of the village has previously been to the North of the church.

We don't know what happened to the South aisle, but the doorway and the windows in that wall, were probably moved from the South aisle, as they are of the same period, circa 1250. Compare those with the windows in the North aisle, the South wall of the chancel and the East window, which are all late C13 to mid C14. While you are here, just turn around a little further and face the

belfry arch at the base of the tower. This is a semi-circular arch springing from foliated capitols, typical of the Transitional Norman period.

The clerestory above the nave was added, as was commonly done, during the Perpendicular period. Aisles and/or buttresses normally absorbed this additional weight.

Whilst remembering the detail of the arcade in the South side of the nave, walk down the nave, through the chancel arch (noting the way it is leaning towards the South which is probably due to there being no support from a South aisle) and make a comparison with the arcade to the North side of the chancel. It appears to be of the same period, circa 1300, as does the chancel arch. So what has happened? I surmise that a delay has occurred between the construction of the North arcade and the commencement of further works, which probably included the construction of the nave, the South aisle, the chancel and the chantry chapel.

Still in the chancel, look at the South wall where you will note a small priest or sanctuary door, possibly added in Tudor times, a trefoiled canopy (partly renewed) over the tomb of a founder, Sir Geoffrey Luttrell* who died 1345 and the sedilia



(seats for priests) which are also circa 1300. To the left of the altar is the aumbry, a cupboard used for the storage of sacred vessels, again circa 1300.

The present altar is a wooden table, but an altar stone, which was removed during the Reformation, can be found in the floor hidden by a kneeler to the left of the sanctuary steps. Five crosses identify it, one at each corner and one in the

centre. Also in the chancel floor is a small brass of a knight circa 1450, the legend to which has been lost.

Go through now to the chantry chapel. Although the arcade dividing it from the sanctuary is circa 1300, it's East window is Perpendicular and the windows in the North wall are early Tudor. Observe the C14 monument that is thought to be an Easter Sepulchre. This is said to have previously been in the chancel and thought to have been for an effigy of Christ for Easter celebrations. It comprises three bays with nodding encrusted ogee arches with crowned finials that merge with the crenellated top. Look into the canopies and you will see that the vaulting is open enabling you to see beyond. Robert Luttrell, Rector of Irnham-1262 – 1315, probably commissioned this extremely fine specimen.

Also in the chapel is a brass to Sir Andrew Luttrell, who died 1390.



You will note another priest's door in this chapel and a door to the rood turret. Access was gained to the rood loft that would have run along the top of the rood screen set within the chancel arch, via a wooden gallery. An extract from 'Peacocks Church Furniture' states that *'Item the rood loft taken down by harrie drourie and sold to him for VI s which he haith broken in peces and put to prophane use'*.

If you now leave the church via the main entrance, turn left out of the porch and look up at the tower. A single

light replaces a coupled lancet belfry opening. This is repeated on three sides of the tower, although two are blanked off. Above this level are four belfry openings from the Decorated period, topped by a crenellated parapet and crocketed pinnacles from the Perpendicular period. As you continue round you will see the late Norman West doorway with zigzag ornament and to the South side you can now observe the South entrance and the windows that I suspect were moved from the South



aisle. The crenellated parapet, which continues around the entire perimeter, is typical of the Perpendicular period.

I hope you have found this brief tour of our church to have been stimulating, even though it may have raised more questions than answers.



Architectural Periods: -

Norman	1066 - 1189
Transitional Norman	1145 - 1189
Early English	1189 - 1280
Decorated	1280 - 1377
Perpendicular	1377 - 1547
Early Tudor	1500 - 1547



** About 1325, Sir Geoffrey Luttrell commissioned the production of his own psalter. This contains not only the usual illustrations from the bible, but also the most detailed and realistic pictures of everyday life to have survived from the Middle Ages. This has given historians vital information on what life must have been like for ordinary people in Irnham at that time. Now you can, through a computer-based interactive system, 'Turning the Pages', examine the Luttrell Psalter for yourself by visiting the John Ritblat Gallery within the British Library at St Pancras, London.*

Produced for St Andrew's, Irnham by Andrew Crow

SAINT ANDREW'S CHURCH

IRNHAM



A brief guide to make your visit more enjoyable

Please be so kind as to make a donation of £1 or more towards the upkeep of the church fabric

Thank you