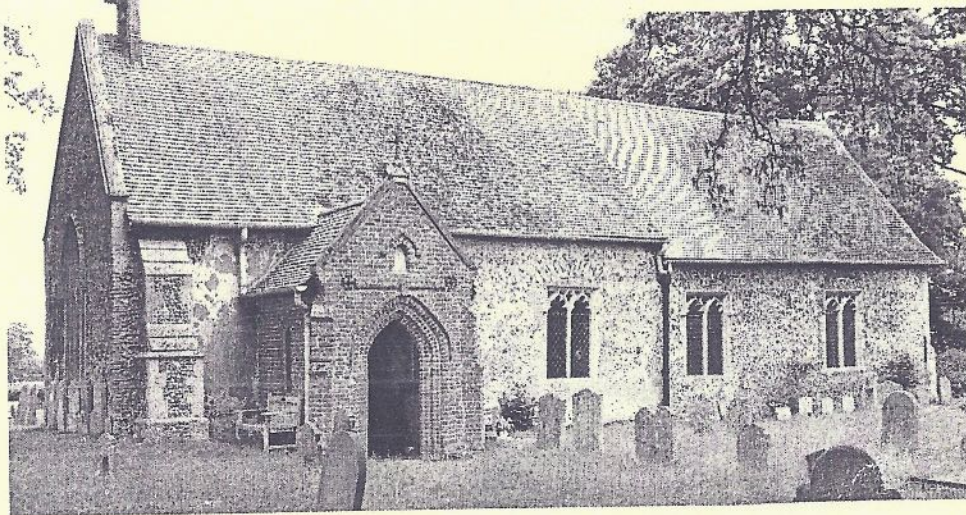


THELVETON



THELVETON ST ANDREW

The setting of this church is very quiet and peaceful as it appears to be miles from any habitation! The village has migrated towards the old main road taking traffic between Norwich and Ipswich. Towards the south-east is Thelveton Hall, an Elizabethan mansion probably built by Thomas Havers after he bought the estate in 1592. The estate was sold by the Havers Family to Thomas Mann in 1863. His son Edward became the first Baronet in 1905, and this family has been very supportive to this church throughout the generations.

This small church is generally approached from the north side, although there is a lych gate in its south churchyard wall, looking towards the Hall. The building could date from about 1300, though later windows have been inserted over the years, and with Victorian restorations in 1872, and again in 1887 when the chancel was renovated. On the north side of the chancel an organ chamber and vestry were erected in 1900. The organ chamber has its own gabled roof, but the neighbouring vestry has a cat's slide roof, a continuation downwards of the chancel roof. The west window, in Perpendicular style with three lights, was erected and the whole west end wall was repaired in 1953.

Originally there was a west tower, but this fell in 1757 damaging the two bells. It was replaced in 1761 by a bell-côte on the ridge of the nave, which

provides the hanging for the small replacement bell. Unfortunately there is no 1820s Ladbroke lithograph of this church, though this would have been too late to record the tower.

Fig. 1



The north nave has a blocked doorway, still showing its stone arch which seems to have a slightly pointed curve. The south doorway is Early English in style, protected by a fine 16C red brick porch, with moulded bricks forming the entrance arch with a niche above. The south side windows of the church, two for the chancel, one for the nave, are matching square-headed two-light ones, with spaced red brick relieving arches above. The only window on the north side, in the nave, has a conventional Perpendicular style for two-lights, while the east one is similar but with three lights.

The 15C font (Fig. 1) is an interesting one, which provokes much discussion. The panels of the bowl are fairly standard, with two robust lions, two Tudor roses surrounded by leaves, and four angels holding shields. From the east clockwise these shields show three chalices with wafers above, a normal Tau cross, the Trinity symbol of a shield with three linked circles at the corners and one in the centre. The outer circles would be named for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the inner one for God. The outer links would have "is not" painted on, but the inner ones to the centre would have "is", ie the Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit, but he is God. The remaining shield shows a cross moline, a cross with split ends, presumably the shield of the donor of the font. The bowl is supported by winged cherub's heads above a band of fleurons. The unusual part is the

stem which has four standing figures alternating with four seated figures. Three of the seated figures wear mitres, and the fourth a scholar's cap. These probably represent the Four Latin Doctors, those responsible for setting out the Christian doctrine in early times. These were Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory and Jerome. The first two were Bishops, Gregory was a Pope, normally shown wearing a papal tiara but he was also known as the Bishop of Rome, and Jerome is sometimes shown with a scholar's cap. The standing figures hold books (Gospels?) and have wings! These are probably the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, not normally shown with wings, but their recognised symbols would have wings, ie the lion for Mark and the bull for Luke.

Above the font, in the apex of the west window is glass showing the shield of the arms of the Mann family: *Argent, a chevron sable, between in chief two crosses moline, and in base an anulet gules*. The motto is "*Homme d'etat*" ("Statesman"). Also displayed at the west end are the slate Decalogue tablets, the Ten Commandments etc., in use until the Victorian restoration of the chancel.



Fig. 2

Above the south doorway is a fine set of **Royal Arms** (Fig. 2) with energetic lion and unicorn supporters, flamboyant mantling, winged cherubs either side of the crest, and the initials C R. These arms are probably for Charles II, rather than his father. The shield is surrounded by the Order of the Garter symbol with "*HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE*" and below is the motto "*DIEU ET MON DROIT*".

The old pews were removed in the 1970s and replaced with more versatile solid oak chairs, each named for the parishioners at the time and later. Against the north nave window is a panel of 19C glass showing the head of a young lady, which is a portrait of a Thelveton resident, who was bedridden most of her life. When her youngest daughter died this

glass was given to the church. Opposite in the south window are two **roundels** said to be glass rescued from the London blitz. One in monotone glass shows the head of the Man of Sorrows, probably Christ being scourged before the Crucifixion. The other in full colour is the head of a crowned female saint, probably the Blessed Virgin Mary.

There is no formal chancel arch, but in Victorian times the division between the newly refurbished **chancel** was marked by a boarded arch in the roof, supported on either side by two short pillars at eaves' level standing on an elaborately carved stone corbel.

The east wall is covered with a striking Victorian marble and mosaic work of 1879, with the central **reredos** having the chi-rho symbol (the first two letters of the Greek word *Christos*), with the alpha and omega letters either side (denoting God is the beginning and the end of all things). To the north and south of this are the Creed, the Ten Commandments, [I-IV on left, V-X on right], and the Lord's Prayer.

In the eastern reveal of the south window by the altar is a **pillar piscina** (Fig. 3). Its shaft is engaged as part of the wall, rather than free standing, and there is a small plain niche above the bowl. It possibly dates from about 1300.

The **east window** shows the Ascension, probably made by Heaton, Butler & Bayne in 1899. The **south chancel windows**, showing Jesus healing the sick and Christ knocking at the door, and the Good Shepherd and Jesus with the Children, were given in memory of Fanny Paulin in 1901. The Paulins and the Manns were both part of the London based brewery of Mann, Crossman and Paulin, Ltd., but made their homes in Thelveton. Between the windows is a detailed memorial for Thomas Mann, who purchased the Thelveton Estate in 1863, but was unfortunately killed in 1886, aged 64 years, when his horse fell.

The **organ** was built by Bishop and Sons towards the end of the 19C, and was erected here by voluntary contributions, with Edward Mann paying for the building of the organ chamber in 1900.

Fig. 3



This leaflet was compiled for Church Tours in 2013 by 'Lyn Stilgoe.