



**Church of St John the Evangelist,
Corby Glen**

- 1 Coat of Arms, George I (dated 1729), above tower arch
- 2 14th century font; medieval fragment of stained glass showing St John the Evangelist, originally in east window of south aisle; early 15th century wallpainting, *Vierge de la Misericorde*, showing St Michael weighing souls in a balance, and souls being protected under St Mary's cloak (the only surviving example in England of this Cistercian motif)
- 3 Early 14th century wallpainting of St Anne teaching St Mary to read overpainted in 15th century with St Christopher (halo and flowering staff); in window to right, fragments of medieval stained glass: crowned head of St Mary, medieval halo (with a modern head of Jesus), Pecche family shields (Sheep Fair)

- 6 Early 15th century doom painting above arch (Heaven on left, Hell on right); the red painted arches probably framed figures on the rood screen. On the left, 20th century pulpit; original rood loft door behind
- 7 Early 15th century clerestory wallpaintings: Christmas Story 1 (shepherds and Herod); continuation of doom painting, including a poacher's fate
- 8 Early 15th century clerestory wallpaintings: Christmas Story 2 (wise men and Holy Family); continuation of doom painting, with virtuous souls being raised from the dead
- 9 Chancel: organ; prayer desks (one in memory of WW1 soldier)
- 10 Sanctuary: 17th century altar rails; east and south windows of Victorian stained glass in memory of children and wife of the rector of the day; early 20th century chairs carved by churchwarden; 20th century altar

- 4 Early 14th century wallpainting of St Christopher, overpainted in early 1400s by a depiction of the Seven Deadly Sins with a *Pieta* (St Mary grieving over the body of Jesus after the Crucifixion), as a warning against swearing (*Zounds!*); the small niche probably once held a statue of a saint
- 5 South Chapel: 14th century Tree of Jesse wallpainting; later painted text of Lord's Prayer; 14th century piscina; original Victorian high altar, moved here in mid 20th century

A brief tour of the Church of St John the Evangelist

For almost 1000 years, the Church of St John the Evangelist has served as a physical and spiritual landmark for the people of Corby Glen and beyond as they journey through life.

This leaflet will guide you in your own journey as you explore this remarkable building. Start your exploration of the interior at the tower archway [1], looking east into the nave and beyond.

In the 1100s (the 12th century) the building covered an area little more than the current nave. There were no aisles, and the church went only just beyond the chancel arch [6]. The stones jutting out of the current arch are from this earlier, narrower Norman arch. This would be the church contemporary with the instigation in 1238 of Corby Sheep Fair.

During the 1300s (the 14th century) the side aisles were added, including a Lady Chapel in the north aisle before 1319. A porch and a short tower was built, and the chancel enlarged. The walls and pillars were brightly painted and the windows were filled with stained glass [2–5]. In this same period, the Luttrell Psalter (c1320-1340) was commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, lord of the manor of the neighbouring village of Irnham.

The early 1400s (early 15th century) saw a massive rebuild. The nave roof was raised, as were those of the aisles, and a clerestory added to give more light. The new chancel arch [6] was filled with a carved wooden rood screen, and there may have been a small organ. The north aisle was extended to create another chapel (now the vestry area). The tower was made higher. The porch was replaced and a priest's room, where visiting clergy would be accommodated, built above. Further wallpaintings were added [2–8].

With the 1500s (the 16th century) came the Reformation and the establishment of the Anglican church. The pictorial wallpaintings were whitewashed over, and painted texts in English, for example of the Lord's Prayer [5], replaced them. In 1588 the churchwardens had the rood figures burned and later sold the screen [6].

Two of the tower bells date from the late 1500s, and two more from the 1600s. An original wooden bell frame, for four bells, is still in the tower and bears the date 1671. The wooden altar rails in the sanctuary [10] were also added in the 17th century, part of controversial reforms introduced by Archbishop William Laud, the religious adviser to Charles I during the 1630s. In all churches, the altar had to be against the east wall and railed off to stop dogs getting in.

In the 1700s (the 18th century), the coat of arms above the tower archway was placed [1]. There was a west gallery and, judging from three music manuscripts dating from around 1755 to 1820 (now in the Lincolnshire Archives), an active choir. The box pews in the north and south aisles include wood from this period.

During the Victorian era (the 19th century) a great deal of restoration work took place. The 14th century font moved to its current position [2]; similarly a 14th century piscina [5]. A vestry replaced the chapel in the north aisle extension. In the 1860s the chancel was rebuilt and two memorial stained glass windows commissioned [9, 10]. The west gallery was demolished in 1865, and box pews added in the nave.

The church building continued to be developed in the 20th century. New wooden furnishings were carved by a churchwarden. The pulpit was replaced; the organ too. The wallpaintings were rediscovered in 1939 after the removal of layers of whitewash. In the 1970s a new steel bell-frame was added to the tower, enabling the peal to be increased to six. A new altar was placed in the sanctuary, and the previous one moved to the south chapel.

And in the 21st century...?

The church building is full of history, but it is not a museum. It is a living building, still used daily for prayer and worship. Do join us as we continue its mission to serve the community and beyond.