



St Peter, Crostwick

When I first ventured out to find this church I mistakenly took an overgrown little chapel that sat nearby in the grounds of the local Scout HQ to be St Peter's. It wasn't until much later when I looked at Google earth and could see there was, in fact, a much larger church hidden amongst the trees at the back of the common. Even when I had finally worked out where St Peter's was, it still wasn't that easy to find. Duly following the track through the ferns, I came across a gate beyond which lay a path buried in leaves and enclosed by an overgrown avenue of trees. The trees had become so thick that it wasn't until I reached the end of the path that I got a glimpse of the church for the first time.



The Surrounding churchyard was also somewhat untamed and, unsurprisingly I found the church locked and seemingly no longer in use. My suspicions were confirmed when I managed to balance precariously on a nearby stone to look through a window. Through the glass I saw a bare looking nave, bereft of the all the usual paraphernalia that give the indication of a well used and loved church.

It was real a shame as there looked to be some nicely carved pews and an interesting tiled border around the walls. From other reports I have seen, the church is also noted as containing a 15th century wall painting of St Christopher and some nice examples of 19th century glass in the chancel, including a window by William Wailes. Wailes was the last in a long line of glass makers employed and subsequently dismissed by Augustus Pugin. Pugin commissioned Wailes to produce the glass for his beloved St Giles in Cheadle before he finally took on the permanent services of Hardman & Co of Birmingham. Wailes was originally a grocer and tea merchant by trade but, after studying stained glass production and design in Germany under Mayer of Munich, he established his own firm in 1841.



Unable to go in, I thoroughly explored the outside and discovered a curious pair of doors, now blocked, on the south wall. It turns out that this odd configuration was once part of a stair turret, of which only a few remnants now remain. The church tower predates the nave and the chancel and was constructed in the 15th century. On each corner, a shield bearing angel looks down upon the surrounding common.

One day I hope to come back to St Peter's and find it has gained a new lease of life, with grounds that are well tendered, and the door is once again left open for visitors to enjoy the delights that lay within but in these uncertain times it is hard to know if this will sadly ever come to fruition.





