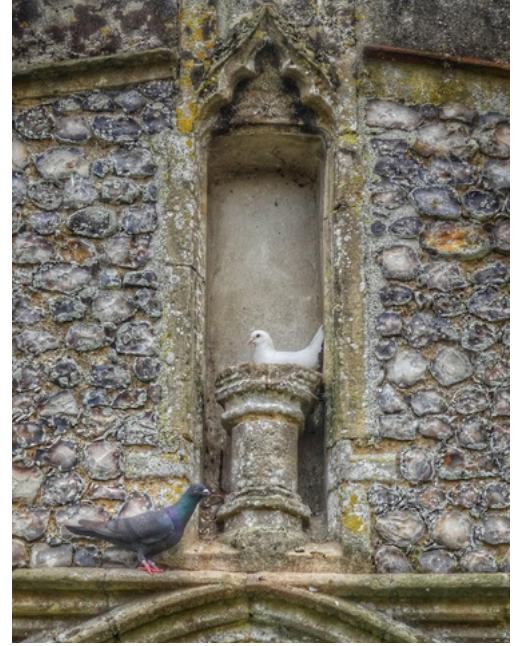


St John, Coltishall

If you approach the church from the north, you will most likely be greeted by a charming couple in the form of a white dove and a pigeon. Here is where the unlikely pair have taken up permanent residence in an empty niche above the north porch and where they build their nest every year. One can only wonder how much of their nesting material is handily obtained from the church's neatly thatched roof.

The church is entered through a door on the west side of the tower, beyond which is a small set of steps that lead down into the nave. To the right lies a simple Norman font that has been crowned with a striking red, green and gold cover.



St John's is one of those fortunate churches that have a delightful collection of beautifully embroidered prayer cushions which are proudly displayed on top of the pews. The bright creations bring a welcome splash of colour to the otherwise plain white interior and windows of mostly clear glass.

In the north nave wall there is an unusual configuration of three round windows, the larger of the three having been added in the 19th century. The two smaller windows, however, mark the oldest part of the church and date from the Saxo-Norman period. The main body of the church was constructed in 13th century and dedicated in the 1280s, with the tower and porches added much later in the 15th century.

The fine east window of the chancel was created by Powell & Sons as part of the 19th century renovations which took place between 1865-1877. Powell & Sons was established in 1834 when James Powell, a former wine merchant and entrepreneur, purchased an established glasswork in Whitefriars, London. It was, however, his son Arthur, who after his father's death began the production of stained glass at the works. The firm was well renowned for its innovation and development of new techniques and worked with many respected architects and designers of the day, including Edward Burne-Jones, Philip Webb and James Doyle.

Atop the east window are the symbols of a dove, an eagle and a lamb which represent the Holy Spirit, St John the Gospel Writer and St John the Baptist, respectively. The central panel depicts the ascension of Christ flanked either side by a host of angels and archangels, beneath which are saints and martyrs surrounding the scene of Christ's birth.



