

All Saints' Church, Great Braxted

Rectors of the Parish of Great Braxted from 1317

The earliest mention of a rector at Great Braxted that can be found is of one, Elias, who was rector some time during the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). After that a complete list to the present day can be compiled.

1317 John de Naynham	1638 Thomas Meighen
1326 John de Colne	1643 Richard Milward
1346 Richard de Pilardington	1680 Robert Rogers
? John Chekewold	1734 Robert Rogers Jr.
1389 Robert Gidding	1762 John Cott
1390 William Spaldwyke	1782 Job M Wallace
1390 John Brown	1828 Thomas Herring
1390 John Gower	1842 Henry Calthrop
1397 John Tovy	1875 W H Rowlandson
1398 William Wycham	1907 Edward Maxlow
1428 John Godson	1923 Arthur Outram
1433 William Appulton	1928 Russell E Brown
1437 Thomas Kirkham	1942 H D Neison
1438 Henry Craven	1947 Jack W M Vyse
1439 Thomas Swyft	1961 H T Wisdom
1439 William Malster	1965 Mark N Williams
1441 John Underwood	1970 John A Burley
1479 Thomas Bukton	1983 Walter G Gunn
1505 William Osplett	1987 Anthony Bickersteth
1539 Thomas Broene	1988 John A Pratt
1559 Thomas Barker	2004 Martin Fletcher
1570 Thomas Blage	2011 Anne-Marie Renshaw
1612 Nathaniel Bownd	



The church is a listed building of grade II*. It was constructed, it is believed, in 1115, in all probability by William de Sackville, then Lord of the Manor.

It is situated within the grounds of Braxted Park and the village, which was close to it, was moved by Peter Du Cane in the 18th century to outside the boundary of his land, which is surrounded by what is believed to be the longest brick wall in Essex. Du Cane was a director of the Bank of England and the East India Company.

The walls are of septaria mixed with flint, free-stone and Roman bricks, the dressings are of clunch and Roman brick, while the roof is tiled. It is possible that the Roman bricks came from the Roman site at Rivenhall but there may have been a Roman settlement where the church now stands, as oyster shells have been found there.

The nave and western half of the chancel are early twelfth century when the church ended eastwards in an apse. The apse was removed and the chancel extended to its present length early in the 13th century, possibly by the Lord of the Manor, Nicholas de Anesty. Shortly after this, the west tower was added but never finished at the time.

The south porch, added in the 15th century, has moulded and embattled tie-beams with curved braces forming four-centred arches, king posts, wall-posts, moulded brackets and carved stone corbels, two with angels and two with faces. The wall plates are moulded and embattled.



The chancel has three 13th century lancet windows in the east wall which are almost modern externally. The stained glass in these was inserted in 1889 by Percy Bacon and Bros at the behest of Sir Charles Du Cane. They were probably designed by the eminent architect and pastor, the Reverend Ernest Geldart who, as will be seen below, has had a major influence on the building. The break in the north and south walls defines the junction of the 12th and 13th century work. The 12th century part shows signs of an inward curvature suggesting the spring of the former apse. In the north wall, the two eastern windows are thirteenth century lancets and the westernmost early 12th



The reredos

century, with a round head of tufa. In the south wall the three eastern windows are 13th century lancets, restored internally, while the westernmost is in two parts, the upper a lancet light and the lower a square-headed “low-side” window, restored externally, probably 13th century. This last was used by the deacon or sub-deacon to ring the sacring bell. The aumbry in the north wall is 13th century, as is the piscina in the south wall, but this was enlarged in the 16th century and has a corbelled head, a shelf in the east jamb and a round drain. Five feet from the east wall there are traces of an altar

beam of the 13th century on which images and reliquaries were placed. This example of an altar beam is unique in the diocese. On the outside of the south wall is a scratch dial, used for telling the time for obits and masses and also evidence of a leper squint, which enabled them to receive the host during communion. The roof of the chancel is probably 17th century towards the east and 15th century towards the west, while the chancel arch was rebuilt at the same time as the spire and other restoration in 1883. The choir stalls and north transept pews were designed by the Rev. Ernest Geldart, in 1893. The reredos was constructed in 1919, again designed by Geldart and executed by Samuel Marshall of Coggeshall with figures by Nathaniel Hitch, whose work is found in cathedrals in Britain and abroad.



The Leper Squint



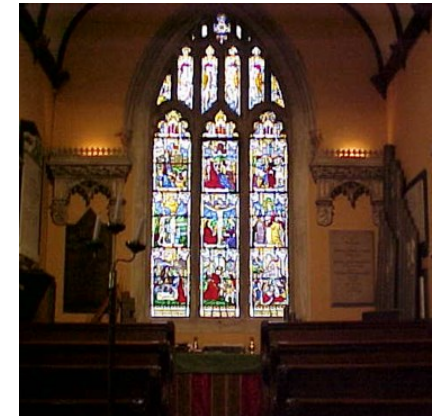
The nave

The nave has, on the south, quoins of Roman brick and a plastered north wall. In the north wall, the eastern window is twelfth century but was widened and altered in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. High in the north wall is a round patch, which probably indicates a former round window like those in the south wall. In the south wall are three completely restored windows in the lower range, except the 14th century splays and rear arch of the middle window. In the upper range are two round and sexfoiled windows, probably of the 14th century but with modern jambs. Above the second window of the lower range is the Roman brick head of another 12th century window. The late 15th or early 16th century roof of the nave is much restored and has three king post trusses with curved braces, traceried

spandrels and half-angels at the point of junction; the curved principals and central purlin are moulded.

The tower is 13th century except for the west buttresses and west windows, which are modern. It is surmounted by a timber belfry and a spire with a shingled roof which was restored in 1883 by the Rev. Ernest Geldart.

A faculty was granted to Peter Du Cane in 1761 to erect the north transept with a family pew and vault beneath. The present stained glass window, designed by Warrington, was erected in 1844.



The north transept

There is a monument to Robert Aylett LL.D in the West Tower dated 1654 with symbols of mortality – skulls, bones an hourglass and a shovel. In the North transept are Du Cane family monuments including Peter (1803 by J. Moore) and Sir Charles (1889 by Cox and Buckley). In the chancel there are floor slabs to Richard Millward D.D. 1680 and to Anthony Carew, 1705, now covered by the pulpit. The Vestry was added in the 19th century and was modernised in 2004, providing a kitchen and toilet facilities.