

Coates by Stow, Snarford and Hackthorn Churches

St Edith, Coates by Stow is tiny, surrounded by fields – our arrival startled a hare – and was still open past 6 o'clock. This gem has brick floors, poppyhead bench ends and a wonderful fifteenth-century screen complete with the only intact rood loft in Lincolnshire. The rood was painted on vertical boards set into the chancel arch, but the central boards were removed at or after the Reformation, along with the infill panels of the loft front. Both were replaced in J. L. Pearson's sensitive restoration of 1883–1884. He removed the box pews and



Several pews with poppyhead carving survive in the nave, the back rails of the seats crudely wedged through them, St Edith, Coates by Stow. *Photo Linda Hall.*



Rood screen and loft, the screen with very delicate tracery in the arches. The replacement boards in the chancel arch are clear, with faint traces of the original paint. The loft front has a canted projection in the centre, St Edith, Coates by Stow. *Photo Linda Hall.*

three-decker pulpit inserted close to the screen and restored a medieval pulpit 'rescued from a barn' according to the information boards, but whether local or from elsewhere is not recorded. An old drawing shows the royal arms of Charles I hanging from the rood

loft; extremely battered, it now hangs on the north wall above a fine seventeenth-century table, perhaps a former altar. A seventeenth-century family pew has more recently been moved from the (now very cluttered) west end to its original location in the chancel; its attractive



Mid- to late seventeenth-century table, St Edith, Coates by Stow. *Photo Linda Hall.*



Monument commemorating Sir George St Paul (d. 1613) and his wife Frances Wray, St Lawrence's, Snarford. *Photo Linda Hall.*



The west gallery/family pew with plaster royal arms behind and the poppyhead pews all date from the 1845 rebuilding, St Michael & All Angels, Hackthorn. *Photo Linda Hall.*

cockshead hinges, lunette carving and flat finials struggle with the adjacent stacks of metal chairs and a fire extinguisher. More worrying is the fact that the attached poor box mentioned in the Historic England website has vanished, along with the '15th century chest with

stylised foliage and panelled lid' and 'two small 15th century stools'.

St Lawrence's, Snarford, cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust, is another tiny church set among fields. The stunning St Paul family monuments dominate

the interior. Life-sized figures of Sir Thomas (d. 1582) and his wife Faith lie between the altar and the east wall, both clasping Bibles or prayer books, a sign of their strong Protestant faith, though Sir Thomas also has one hand on his sword. Their eight children, beautifully carved, are set around the top of the sumptuous six-poster tomb canopy. In the north chancel extension another massive monument commemorates their eldest son Sir George de Paul (d. 1613) and his wife Frances Wray, who lie uncomfortably propped on their elbows.

St Michael & All Angels, Hackthorn is an estate church rebuilt in spiky Gothick in 1845. It contains a nationally important Nicholson organ of 1869, an unusual flat font cover of mahogany, a very spiky west gallery serving as family pew and a set of interesting cane-seated chairs which members barely had time to study before we were ushered from the building – there had been crossed wires as to whether our visit was allowed!

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