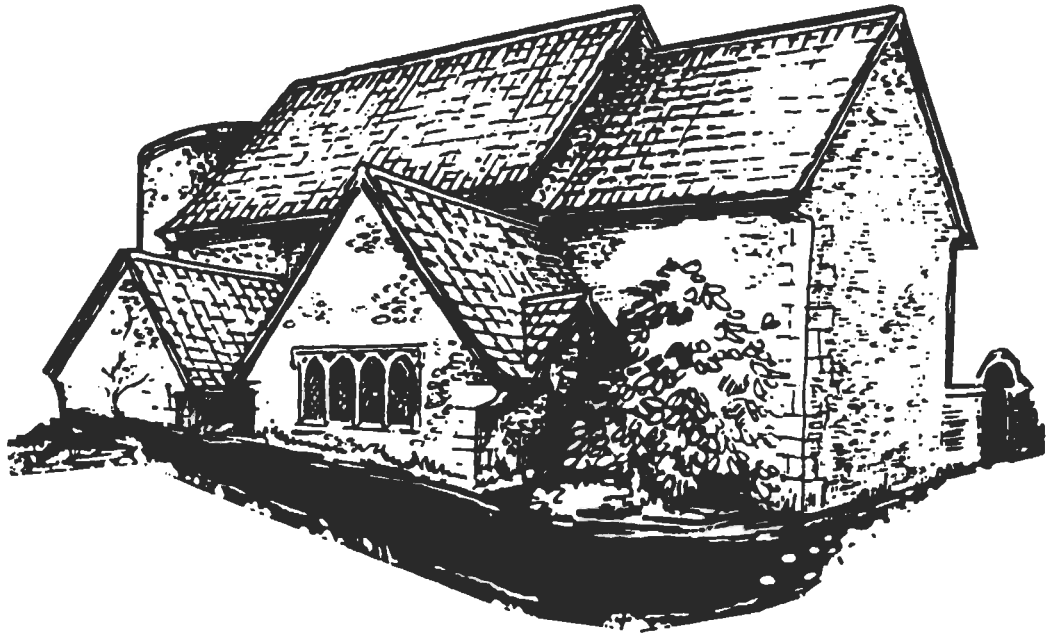


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ST. JULIAN'S
CHURCH
& Lady Julians Cell



A GUIDEBOOK

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THE CHURCH

THE DEDICATION

There are a good many saints who bear the name Julian, and it is not really known which is the patron of this church. Although Julian the Hospitaller has been favoured because of the Church's proximity to the river and so ferries, Julian bishop of Le Mans is more likely (4th cent.) Indeed it was in this name that the church was re-dedicated when rebuilt after World War 2. His feast day is January 27.

St. Julian's is now so closely associated with the great fourteenth century mystic that many people assume the dedication refers to her. The Lady Julian, however, almost certainly took her name from the building, and she has never officially been declared a 'saint', although she is now included in the Calendar of 1980.

THE FOUNDATION

There has probably been a church on this site since as early as 950, making it among the oldest foundations in the City. It has suffered many changes down the years, and what we now see dates almost entirely from 1953. During the Second World War the tower was hit by a bomb, and, falling inward, destroyed most of the fabric. The fragments which remain from earlier times, and the historical records, allow us to trace something of the past.

THE EARLY BUILDING

In 1004 the Danish invaders, led by Sweyn, attacked the City and the Saxon building was destroyed. Nothing of the early work can be certainly traced.

During the reign of Canute the church was rebuilt in flint, and, later on, stone from Caen in Normandy (such as was used in the Cathedral) and from Barnack in Northampton was used for various improvements.

In 1135 King Stephen gave the church into the care of the Nuns who had a House at Carrow at the South end of King Street. They had the South entrance made; its appearance is shown in a drawing by the nineteenth - century Norwich artist J S Cotman. The doorposts can still be seen in the vestry doorway opposite the main entrance.

The little thatched building stood at this time in open land with views down to the marshy area by the river and up to the Butter Hills and the City Walls above.

LATER YEARS

During the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries the building was in a sorry state, reflecting the increasing poverty of the area. Many of the fine Merchants' Houses of King Street, among them Dragon Hall, had been split into tenements, and the church now stood surrounded by the closely packed cottages and workshops which stretched up from the River to Ber Street (Rouen Road did not exist until the late 1950's). By 1845 no services were being held and there was a proposal to demolish the building. We read in the local newspaper for April 19th that year "on Monday morning about eight o'clock the end of the chancel fell in, and the noise greatly alarmed the neighbours". In the same year, however, restoration work began paid for by a sixpenny rate on the parishioners and subscriptions. The fabric was saved, but money ran out. Further work was done in 1871 and 1901.

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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1942 the church was very badly damaged in a wartime air raid and there was talk of pulling it down altogether. No fewer than four other churches stand within less than a quarter of a mile, and after the War the whole area was to be redeveloped. It was awareness of the importance of Julian's writing that led the rector Fr Raybould, with the support of the Community of All Hallows, to press forward with the restoration of the church as a place of prayer and pilgrimage.

The architect, A J Chaplin has created a sensitive, charming, and wonderfully atmospheric building, incorporating features from earlier times. And the best part is that out of the horror of war came the rebuilding of the Cell, which had been destroyed at the Reformation, on its original site.

FEATURES

The typically East Anglian round tower of Saxon origins, is now only half its proper height, being left incomplete in the 1953 work. The single bell which was blown out of the tower in the air raid has been re-hung in a turret surmounting the tower parapet. Recent archaeological evidence suggests that it might have been cast in the parish, c. 1490, making it one of the oldest in Norwich. It bears the mark of the Brasier family of bell-founders - a Norwich firm whose memorials can be seen in St. Stephen's. It carries the inscription: Ave Gratia Plena Dominus Tecum.

High in the North wall of the Nave can be seen the embrasures of two circular windows which may be Saxon, and the oblong-and-arch of a Transitional window.

The brickwork piers at the chancel entrance date from 1460 when the earlier Norman arch was cut away and a Rood Screen, Loft and stairs, were inserted. This Screen was removed in 1845 and replaced in 1871 by the very flimsy one which was destroyed in the air-raid.

Of the Early English and Perpendicular windows - some which had interesting Medieval glass no trace now remains. But the window between the Cell and the chancel is in the place where Lady Julian would have looked through towards the Sacrament hanging in a Pyx before the High Altar. This window now shows a picture of the anchoress and a 'Lily Crucifix', a popular fourteenth century design. The window opposite, also made by the famous Norwich firm of Dennis King, is a memorial to Father Paul Jevon Raybould, parish priest from 1925 to 1952.

The High Altar Reredos is of Oberammergau craftsmanship; it dates from 1931, being given by Geoffrey Chamberlain whose arms appear on the cresting. It survived the bombing.

The fine Norman doorway into the Cell came from the church of St. Michael at Thorn which stood in Ber Street and was destroyed at the same time as St. Julian's; of course there would not have been a door here when the Cell was used as an anchorage.

The Organ is a nineteenth century instrument in a 'Gothic' case. It stands on a gallery inserted in 1981 so that a new sacristy might be formed beneath, and the old sacristy freed to become an interview room. The Stations of the Cross in acrylic are by Irene Ogden.

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THE FONT

The finest thing in the church is the font indeed it is one of the great architectural treasures of the City. It belonged to ALL Saints Church, and when this was declared redundant in 1977 it was decided to bring it to Saint Julian's (the two churches had been pastorally linked at various times).

The original font was a pleasant Perpendicular one, with angels bearing shields on eight sides, it had been defaced in 1560 and again 'restored' somewhat violently - in 1845. It is now at Chedgrave.

The present font dates from about 1420, and the carving of the upper panels and the Vine motif is remarkably vigorous. The bowl shows, reading anti-clockwise from the East face: St. Michael & St. George, Saints Peter and Paul, John Baptist and John the Evangelist, James the Great and James the Less, Andrew and John, Thomas and Matthew, Jude and Simon, Philip and Matthias. Around the base are Saints Clement, Wulstan, Clare, William of Norwich (?), Christopher (?), Lawrence, Catherine (?), and Vincent, (all of whom, male or female, are dressed in the same way).

There is a certain amount of restoration, particularly in the heads, but most of it is in a remarkable state of preservation. There is a similar font in St. Mary Magdalene, Silver Road, which was once in St. James's, Pockthorpe.

THE CELL

This little room, now furnished as a Chapel, is built on the site where Lady Julian lived for probably over forty years. There are two pieces of flintwork near the ground which formed part of the early foundations.

The Cell had probably been used by other solitaries before Julian, and was also used by others after. Such a life was very common before the Reformation - and has been lived at all times of church history, right down to the present day. There were at least forty hermitages in Norwich in the Middle Ages.

The original floor-level is marked by the wooden platform on the left which now forms a 'shrine'. The memorial above it was on the external wall before the Cell was rebuilt.

When Julian lived here there would have been a window onto the street (which at that time ran on the South side of the church) so that she could counsel visitors, the window into the church already mentioned through which she could hear the Mass and receive Holy Communion, and a window or door into an adjacent room where a servant would live.

The stone altar was given by the All Hallows School in the post-war restoration. The modern candlesticks are by the potter Peter Lane. The benches in oak and credence shelf are by David Muff.

JULIAN

Of Julian's personal life little is known save what she tells us in her book and some fragments of information contained in wills held in the City archive.

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She was born in 1342 and died, we may gather, well on into the fifteenth century at a considerable age. With the advance of scholarship the tradition that Julian was a nun of Carrow Abbey becomes very hard to sustain, especially as she claims to be 'unlettered'. Indeed the burden of probability is that she was a widow and may have had children.

On May 8th 1373, during severe illness, she received the series of sixteen 'showings' of our Lord. She became an anchoress, a woman dedicated to religion, living permanently alone in a cell (which was often attached to a church as is the case here).

During twenty years Julian meditated on the visions she had received, and at length she recorded them and their meaning as: "The Revelations of Divine Love". This is the first known book written by an Englishwoman, and is now acknowledged all over the world as one of the great classics of spiritual literature.

Julian insists in her teaching that we should see God primarily as all-loving: "would'st thou know the Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. Love was His meaning". Through her own suffering, and the appalling sufferings of her time with the Plague, the Hundred Years War, social revolution, and religious ferment, she fulfilled St. Paul's injunction to be "sorrowful yet always rejoicing". Julian was convinced that "all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well".

Her cell is, today, a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world. Its silence speaks still to the hearts of men. May you find with them in this holy place, light, happiness, and peace. "Go on your way rejoicing: live gladly and gaily because of His Love".

SAINT JULIAN'S is one of the churches in the Church of England Parish of Parmentergate within the City and Diocese of Norwich.

The churches seek to provide today - as they have done for over a thousand years - four things:

WORSHIP - every day of the week the Holy Communion is celebrated with and for the people of the parish; prayer and praise are offered.

FELLOWSHIP - the church is a 'family' where people belong : the congregation will be very pleased to welcome you, and the parish staff to call on request.

CARING - the church will try to help in any way it can, in practical problems or spiritual ones, and the staff are available night or day.

TEACHING - advice on living the Christian Way or instruction in the Faith are always available.

PRAYER REQUESTS may be left at the back of the church. Books about Julian and cards are on sale in the Julian Centre next to the church (open 11-4 weekdays) where there is a library of books on spirituality.

Michael McLean Norwich 1979
Revised 1981, 1993 & 2002

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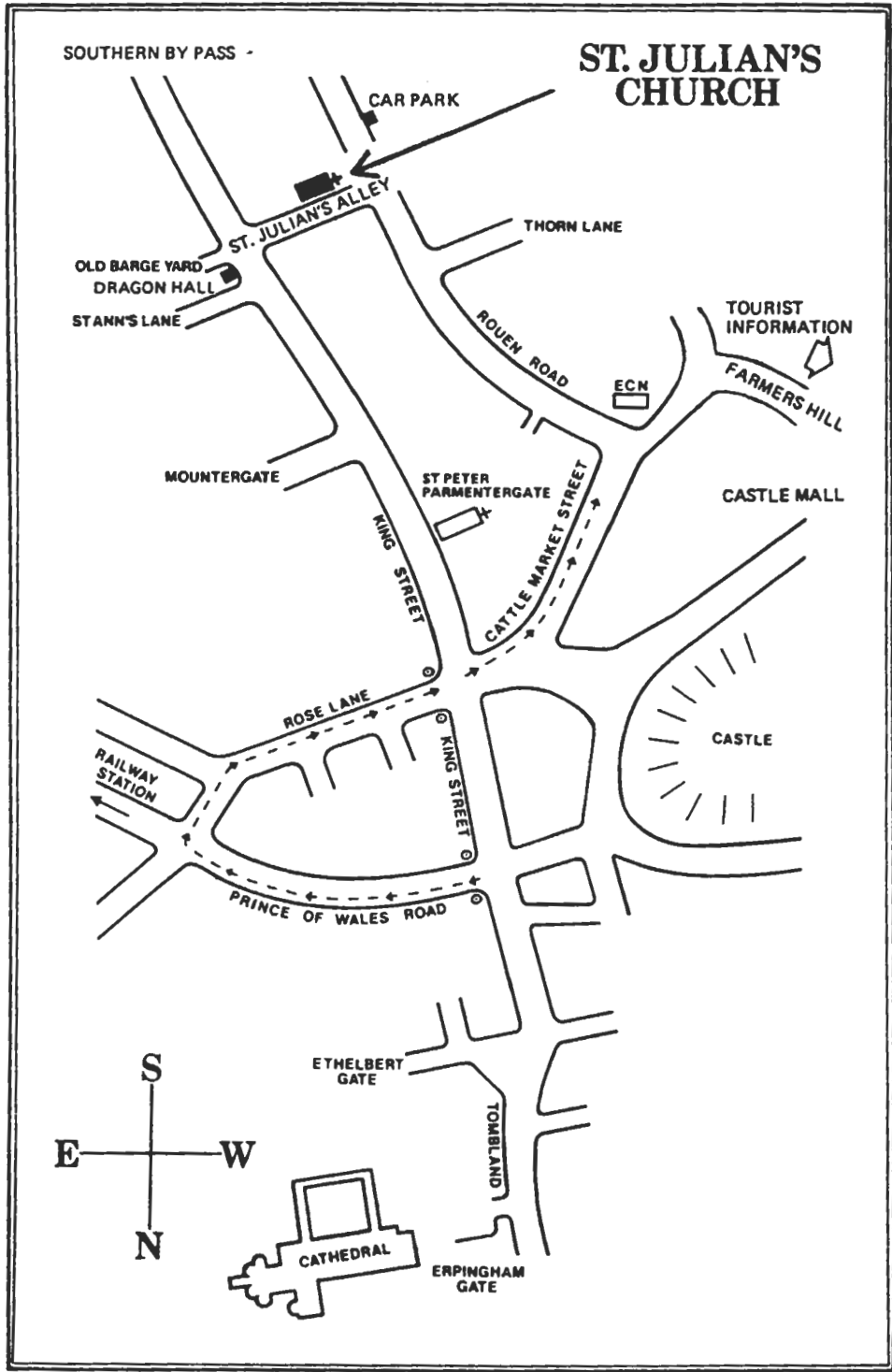
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