

Castle Acre Religion *'The Past is All Around Us'*

St James the Great and the Nonconformist Burial Ground

For Secondary and Further Education Students

The Roman Catholic Church was the official religion of England throughout the Middle Ages.

The (Anglican) Church of England became the established church in England and Wales in 1534 as a result of the English Reformation.

Particularly from the mid-seventeenth century, forms of Protestant nonconformity, including Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers and, later, Methodists, developed outside of the established church.

Evidence in Castle Acre

Will of Thomas Chandler of Castle Acre – 1516

NCC Will Spurlinge 192

Will was made 9 September 1514

Soul to Almighty God, Our Lady St. Mary, and all the Holy Company of Heaven.
Body to be buried in the churchyard of St. James.

To the high altar for offerings forgotten – 20d.
To the master prior of Castle Acre – 20d.
To the rood loft light – 2s.
To Our Lady's perke – 12d.
To St. Nicholas' perke – 8d.
To the common torches – 3s 4d.
To the painting of the tabernacle of St. Catherine – 3s 4d.
To the repairs of Castle Acre church – 6s 8d.

He gave 53s 4d to the painting of the tabernacle of St Catherine on the condition 'of keeping a light in the bason before our Lady in the chapel, with 5 waxe candels to be light at ev'ry principal feste, in every dobil feste 2, and every single feste 1'

What is a tabernacle'?

How is it used in the church now?

Will of William Faxwell of Castle Acre 1519/20

ANW Will register Randes 24

Will was made on 31 January 1519/20

Soul to Almighty God.

Body to be buried in the churchyard of St. James.
To the high altar of St. James – 12d.
To the light of Our Lady called Rokkes – 8d.
To the common torches – 12d.
To the repairs of the church – 6s 8d

I will have a priest sing for my soul in the parish church for one year

Why was it so important to William Faxwell that a priest 'sing for my soul'?

Will of William Fuller of Castle Acre – 1523.

Will was made on 23 September 1523.

Soul to Almighty God, our Lady Virgin and all the Saints.
Body to be buried in the parish church of St. James in Castle Acre.

To Norwich cathedral – 20s.

To the high altar of Castle Acre – 3s 4d for the curate to pray for me.
To the light on the rood loft – 3s 4d.
To the light on the perk [beam] of our Lady – 2s.
To the light on the perk of St. Nicholas – 16d.
To the light of the common torches – 10s.

To have a secular priest sing for my soul and my father's and mother's souls before the altar of the Blessed Lady Virgin on the north side of the church for 20 years. The priest to be paid £5 13s 4d per annum. Sir John Pele is my preferred priest, and the mass to be sung after the gospel reading and during Lent between 6 and 7 o'clock.

To bear the cost of using freestone to make the corners of the west wall of the churchyard of St. James, except that the township [village] shall bear the expenses of the carriage of the stone, the levelling of the wall and the mortar.

To bear the cost of marble to pave the alleys in the church, viz from the chancel to the steeple [tower] and in the north and south aisles, except that township shall bear the cost of the carriage of the marble from the water to Castle Acre and to find a man to serve the mason.

To bear the cost of the repair of the buttress of St. James' church, except that township shall bear the cost of the carriage of the stone from the water to Castle Acre and to find a man to serve the mason.

From The History of Norfolk written by Francis Blomefield in 1734.

“At the bottom of the nave lies a gravestone,
Orate p. a'i'a. Wilhelmi Fuller, qui obiit duodecimo die mensis Octob. Ao. D'ni, 1523, cujus, &c.”

[Pray for the soul of William Fuller, who died on the 12th day of October 1523.]

What survives of the 'light on the perke' in the Lady Chapel and St Nicholas' Chapels?

Can you find any of the marble paving in the church ?

Can you find William Fuller's grave with its brass inscribed plaque?

Will of Henry Scottyng of Castle Acre 1525

NRO NCC will register Groundesburgh 160-163
Will was made 4 November 1525

Soul – to Almighty God, Our Blessed Lady and all the Saints in Heaven.
Body – to be buried in the chapel of Our Lady in Castle Acre church.

To the church of St. James for my burial – 6s.

**Is the 'Chapel of Our Lady' still in existence?
Can you find Henry Scotting's grave?**

John Scotting was churchwarden during the Reformation - he agreed to sell 'an old cross' for ten pounds to pay for whitewashing the church and mending the windows.

Before the Reformation, crosses were venerated and regarded as holy objects.

What has happened that 'an old cross' is being sold and why do the walls require whitewashing and the windows repaired?

Nonconformists

In Norfolk, 650 chapels were listed in the 1851 Census of Religious Places of Worship. Having a burial ground separate to that of the 'established' Church was welcomed by Nonconformists.

In conserving this burial ground in Castle Acre, it is being valued as a place for quiet reflection, as a green space, for its wildlife interest and most of all because it honours the lives and memory of those non-conformists who might otherwise have been forgotten.

The families buried here and the inscriptions on their gravestones:

Rose Family			
Harold Rose	died November 24 1849	aged 9 months	
Alfred Rose died	November 3 1861	4 years of his age	
Thomas Herbert Rose	died March 23 1862	4 years of his age	
Herbert Thomas their brother 1870	died March 11 1870	aged 2 years	
Alice Kate Rose	who fell asleep in Jesus July 6 th 1881	aged 19 years	<i>"Underneath are the everlasting arms"</i>
Minnie Rose	who fell asleep in Jesus March 11 th 1870		<i>"Into thy hands I commend my spirit"</i>
Thomas Rose	who fell asleep March 30 th 1892	aged 68 years	<i>"Ever with the Lord"</i>
Sarah Ann Emma Rose	<i>who passed away December 24th 1895</i>	aged 44 years	<i>"He giveth his beloved sleep"</i>
Sarah Ann Rose	who passed to rest 15 th June 1910 at 10 Merton Road, Walthamstow	aged 79 years	<i>O love that will not let me go I rest my weary soul in thee I give thee back the life I owe That in the ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be."</i>

Taylor Family			
Nellie daughter of Henry & Eliza Taylor	born August 24 1868 died May 18 1872	aged 4 years	Sacred to the memory

Harrison Family			
In loving memory of George the beloved husband of Frances Harrison	who entered into rest August 9 th 1910	aged 66 years	<i>Guide me O thou great Jehovah Pilgrim through this barren land I am weak but thou art mighty Hold me with thy powerful hand Bread of Heaven Feed me till I want no more.</i>
Frances, beloved wife of the above	died May 8 th 1941	Aged 93 years	<i>Safe in the arms of Jesus</i>

Curtis			
In affectionate remembrance of Thomas Curtis	July 15 th 1878	aged 65 years	<i>I know in whom I have believed. Blessed are those who die in the Lord".</i>
Mary Curtis	at rest April 19 th 1901	aged 78 years.	beloved wife of the above

Comer and Comer Skipper			
Mary Rose Comer	died in infancy 1857		
Isaac Comer			
Mary Comer			
Fred Comer Skipper	died January 24 th 1863	aged 3 years and 6 months	Sacred to the memory <i>Prepare to follow me</i>
Robert Comer Skipper	died December 7 th 1851	aged 2 years and 5 months	Sacred to the memory
Mary Ann Comer Skipper	died May 15 th 1857	aged 11 months	<i>It is well</i>
Willm Edwrd the son of Robert & Sarah Comer	died Febry 21 st 1847	aged 9 months	<i>Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven</i>

Reynolds			
William Reynolds	died February 19 th 1884	aged 70 years	
Catherine his wife	died May 20 th 1886	aged 77 years	

**How many children died before they reached the age of ten years?
Which families did they belong to?**

**Some of the quotations on the gravestones are from Nonconformist hymns.
Which ones?**

Nonconformists believed in personal contact with God, rather than having a priest interceded from them, as Catholics had done in the Middle Ages.

What are the words and phrases used in the gravestones which suggest this personal and direct link to God and Jesus?