

Castle Acre

'The Past is All Around Us'

Before and After the Reformation

St James the Great and the Nonconformist Burial Ground

For Secondary and Further Education Students

Before the Reformation, when England was a Catholic nation, a church contained:

- statues and chapels to the Virgin Mary and various saints;
- stained glass windows;
- rood screens;
- holy water basins;
- candles burning before all the statues and images;
- wall paintings with religious themes
- brightly-coloured decoration on wood and even stone.
- tombstone and memorial inscriptions that asked for prayers for the soul of the deceased.

During the Reformation, when England became a Protestant nation:

- statues were destroyed;
- stained glass smashed;
- wall paintings whitewashed over;
- candles burning in veneration or commemoration were banned;
- holy water basins were unused
- the Bible in English had to be placed in the church along with the Book of Common Prayer.
- the Ten Commandments had to be displayed so that 'people may best see and read the same'
- the Royal Coat-of-Arms had to be painted on a wooden board or on cloth and placed in a prominent position.
- fragments of the smashed medieval glass windows were incorporated in replacement windows.
- medieval features were re-used for other purposes.
- Inscriptions on tombstones and memorials emphasised the status of the deceased and their personal qualities.

In many churches, pre-Reformation features remain alongside those introduced to comply with the laws made during the Reformation.

In Castle Acre Church, see what you can discover:

Pre-Reformation Feature	Yes or No	Where in the church	What do you see
Statues and/or chapels to the Virgin Mary.			
Statues, chapels and paintings to various saints.			
Symbols associated with St James and other saints			
stained glass in all or nearly all the windows			
rood screens			
holy water basins in use			
candles burning before all the statues and images			
wall paintings with religious themes			
brightly-coloured decoration on wood and even stone			
the Bible in Latin			
tombstone and memorial inscriptions asking for prayers for the soul of the deceased (look at the small brass plaque by the steps into the church).			

Post-Reformation Feature	Yes or No	Where	What do you see
Evidence of destruction of statues and images			
stained glass smashed, knocked outwards so as not to fall within the building.			
wall paintings whitewashed over			
No candles burning in veneration or commemoration			
holy water basins were unused			
the Bible in English and the Book of Common Prayer			
the Ten Commandments displayed so that 'people may best see and read the same'			
the Royal Coat-of-Arms painted on a wooden board or on cloth and placed in a prominent position			
fragments of the smashed medieval glass windows incorporated in replacement windows.			
medieval features re-used for other purposes (in this church, remains of two rood screens and the font cover)			
Inscriptions on tombstones and memorials emphasising the status and qualities of the deceased.			