

= St James ' Church , Stretham =

St James ' Church , Stretham , is an active Anglican church in the village of Stretham , Cambridgeshire , England . Founded in the 12th century , it was heavily restored by the architect J. P. St Aubyn in 1876 . English Heritage , a body responsible for preserving historical sites in the United Kingdom , assessed the church a Grade II \* listed building . The turret clock on the east face of the tower was also made in 1876 , by JB Joyce & Co of Whitchurch , Shropshire , and still keeps good time . The church has a ring of six bells hung for change ringing . Regular ringing resumed at the church in June 2011 after several years ' silence . St James ' is one of eight churches in the Ely Team Ministry .

= = History = =

St James ' Church stands in the centre of the small village of Stretham , which has a population of 1 @, @ 685 . The village lies 6 kilometres ( 4 mi ) south @-@ south @-@ west of Ely in Cambridgeshire , England , about 119 kilometres ( 74 mi ) by road from London . The earliest written record of this still active church is in the Liber Eliensis , a 12th @-@ century history of the Isle of Ely . In 1137 , during Bishop Nigel 's ( c . 1100 ? 1169 ) time , Anglo @-@ Saxon conspirators were said to have met in Stretham church . Fragments of the east chancel are known to be from about the 12th century , corroborating the record of the church 's existence in that period .

Lancelot Ridley ( d . 1576 ) , appointed one of the first Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral in 1541 and a rector of Stretham from 1560 , was buried in the parish . Mark Ridley ( 1560 ? 1624 ) , one of Lancelot 's sons , became the physician to the Tsar of Russia .

In 1751 , Francis Blomefield , in his Collectanea Cantabrigiensia , recorded St James ' as having a square tower , with four bells and a clock . The north aisle was leaded and there was a chantry chapel at the east end with a screen . He concludes this to be the Chancel of the Resurrection . At this time , the south aisle , nave and chancel were also recorded as leaded .

The church was restored very heavily in 1876 by the architect J. P. St Aubyn at a cost of £ 4 @, @ 400 ( equivalent to £ 373 @, @ 274 in 2016 ) . The north and south transepts were added at this time as well as the whole south aisle of the nave , the chancel , a clerestory and a new porch .

St James ' Church , Stretham , is an historic building protected by Acts of Parliament . Originally , the church was listed Grade A in a publicly available register on 5 February 1952 until a resurvey and regrading by the English Heritage on 19 August 1988 . Since then , it is listed as a Grade II \* building , which makes the church particularly important to the country 's heritage and warrants every effort to preserve it . The church records are kept in the County Records Office , Cambridge . Since 1990 , St James ' Church has had an ecumenical agreement with the Stretham Methodists .

St James ' is part of the Ely Team Ministry , a group of eight churches : St Mary 's , Ely ; St Peter 's , Ely ; St Leonard 's , Little Downham ; St Michael and All Angels , Chettisham ; St George 's , Little Thetford ; St James , Stretham ; Holy Cross , Stuntney ; St Peter 's , Prickwillow . The Prickwillow church was closed for worship in 2008 ; it is part of the parish of St Mary 's , Ely .

= = Architecture = =

= = = Exterior = = =

The building is mainly 14th century although the east wall of the chancel contains remnants of 12th @-@ century material , including two clamped buttresses . The ashlar @-@ faced tower is 14th century with angled buttresses north and south . The west window has three lights with flowing tracery . The clock on the east face of the tower , dated 1876 , is by JB Joyce & Co of Whitchurch , Shropshire , the oldest firm of tower clockmakers in the world ; it is wound weekly by the churchwardens .

The east wall of the chancery has one window with five lights ( stained glass panels ) with tracery

above in a Gothic style . The church floodlighting is supported by funds from the National Lottery church floodlighting trust

= = = Interior = = =

There is a lowered sill on the southeast window of the chancel for a three @-@ seat ( sedilia ) ; a cabinet ( aumbry ) is along the east of the north wall with an arched tomb recess to the west of it with an inscribed tomb lid which commemorates Nicholas de Kyngestone , late 13th @-@ century rector . A 1440 oak screen to the chancel is very finely carved . Lying in the chancel is a black marble slab that dates back to 1667 ; it is a memorial , commemorating Anne Brunsell , sister of Sir Christopher Wren and wife of the rector of the time . The pipe rack organ , built in 1886 by J W Walker and sons of London , is in a chamber built onto the south wall of the chancery . Paddy Benson of Norman & Beard , carried out a reconstruction and enlargement of the organ in 1907 at a cost of £ 350 ( equivalent to £ 33 @,@ 392 in 2016 ) ; it was converted to electric blowing sometime after 1937 .

= = Bells = =

Until 1952 , the church had a ring of five bells hung for change ringing ; and at this time , a sixth bell was added and one bell was recast , replacing a 1727 bell by Henry Penn of Peterborough . The oldest bell as of 2010 , is the 840 @-@ millimetre ( 33 in ) 360 @-@ kilogram ( 790 lb ) number four bell of 1796 by Joseph Eayre ; the newest are of 1951 by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough . This set of six bells are rung from a first @-@ floor ringing chamber above the recently constructed servery and toilets .

According to Canon K W H Felstead 's records , now maintained by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers , there have been 78 peals rung at St James ' Church , Stretham , since 1952 .

= = Rectors = =

Records before 1523 have not been confirmed ; they have been checked ( other than minor spelling differences ) with the painted board in the south @-@ west corner of the nave