

Welcome to Fleet Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene.

This guide celebrates the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II fifty years after her accession on the death of her father King George VI on 6th February 1952

In the Bible St Luke tells us that Mary of Magdala was among those who went with Jesus “ *through every town and village preaching and telling the people the good news of the kingdom of God*” and she “*had once been possessed by seven evil spirits*” (*Phillips*). Mary Magdalene stood with others at the Cross on Good Friday and on the first Easter Day found the empty tomb with the risen Christ. Her closeness to Jesus made St Mary Magdalene a much revered figure in the early church, giving rise to a widespread medieval cult. Her feast day is July 22 when a pilgrimage used to be made to Castle Acre in Norfolk.

Tradition holds Fleet church was built by the monks of Castle Acre. Records show the church already existed, its gift to the Cluniac priory by Fulk of Fleet confirmed by his son, Joscelin/Joce, who settled his affairs before setting off for Jerusalem in the 12th century. About 1160 Joce’s son, Richard, tried unsuccessfully to claim back his lost inheritance. Little remains of the original building. Despite eighteenth century renovation Brandon found ruins in the nineteenth century; Victorian rebuilding attracted Pevsner’s scorn. For those who enjoy brainteasers, it is an intriguing puzzle. For those who desire peace and tranquillity, Fleet church is a serene haven ‘far from the madding crowd’.

Inspired by the Eucharist, servants of the church have witnessed their Christian faith in nameless dedication through the centuries. Their story is told in the ancient stones worn by nearly a thousand years of prayer, in the sound of bells, and in the beauty of flowers inside and outside this holy place.

Please spare a thought for those whose labours surround you and for the Love that sustains all who worship here and is offered freely to all who ask.

With thanks to Prof C Harper-Bill of UEA

