



Skråbelev Church

The church is dedicated to the Patron Saint Nicholas and can house up to 200 worshippers. It is difficult to determine the exact age of Skråbelev Church, but its style and manner of construction indicate that it dates back to the 1100's. It was reconstructed in the late Gothic period, a number of interesting bas-reliefs have been preserved on the exterior of the Romanesque part of the church, amongst which is the model of a Viking ship in the South wall. The church bell was cast in the year 1509. We must remember that in the Middle Ages it was customary to name churches after Saints such as Saint Nicholas, certain of whose relics were in the possession of the church, and as we also know that King Erik Ejegod brought back with him relics of Saint Nicolas from a pilgrimage, which in 1098 he undertook to the Pope in Rome. It is an obvious assumption that Skråbelev Church has acquired some of these relics for safe keeping, in the reliquary of a newly built church and that then dedicated the church to the Saint. If this theory holds, the conclusion must be that Skråbelev Church is about 900 years old.

It is not quite certain how much of the present church originates from the first church, but the general opinion is that in the course of the 1400's a considerable extension was carried out, in that the chancel and the tower were added, and the original flat raftered ceiling was substituted by the present masoned 8-ribbed vaults. In 1933 the original porch through the tower was converted into a chapel. The years 1625-1763 and in 1831 inscribed on the South side of the tower do not, therefore, refer to the years of its construction, but rather to the dates of major repairs. In 1831 solid buttresses were constructed to support the North wall.

The church consists of a Romanesque nave (Romanesque style = Norman style in England), which in the late Gothic period (ca. 1500) was reconstructed in its present form with the addition of a chancel, tower to the West, vestry to the North and porch to the South.





The inscription on the bell “ANNA” is written in latin (translated)

“The year of Our Lord 1509, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Anna is my name. The parish of Skrøbelev had me cast, the Lord and the Lord’s Saints and Saint Nicholas, our Patron, be praised. Jens Frebiorgsen. Laurids Jyde. Amen!

In the Romanesque part of the Church we find a number of interesting bas-reliefs.

In the North wall there is a small female figure which originally could have indicated the womans’s entrance.



On the South wall there is a ship with dragon heads. Bare in mind that the Viking period is not far behind us. The ship is a fine model of a Viking ship.



In addition there are 3 lions, one biting its own tale and one biting a human head. Probably the symbol of the Biblical Satan, who roams like a ferocious lion trying to devour us humans. The third picture with the lion might be “Samson in the Lion’s Den”.



The grave of ” Annexgården ” was renovated in 2013. The grave dates from 1809 and one of the gravestones is of historical interest.





Altar Piece

The altar piece dates from 1957 with a triptych formed around a painting from the old Altar Piece from about 1590, painted on oak. The crucified Saviour is in the centre and on either side of him are the two thieves, of whom the one hanging to the right of Christ has his back almost turned to the viewer. At the foot of the cross are the weeping John, Mary Magdalene and

the Mother of Jesus, with the departing soldiers on the left of him, and Jerusalem in the background.

The Side Panels

The two hinged side panels are carved in oak by wood-carver Inger-Marie Jørgensen and have gold leaf applied by church painter Ejner V. Jensen. In this work the painter has used a technique that goes back to the Middle Ages. The laborious method of application renders a very fine quality finish.

The side panels represent the Resurrection and Ascension. Thus the three parts of the Altar Piece depict the whole of the Easter Gospel from Good Friday to Ascension Day.

Altar

The altar itself dates also from 1957. It is built of brick with a slab of Øland stone hewn from one single piece of rock. The two candle sticks on the altar are from 1594 and bear the coat of arms and monograms of the owners of Fårevejle, Erik Hardenberg and Anna Rønnow.

The old Chalice bears the inscription: "Hundstrup Church Chalice 1654" and it is known that it came to Skrøbelev Church in the 1660's after it had been recaptured from the Swedes, who had plundered all the silver from the church. It is not so strange, therefore, that the old chalice from Hundstrup is considered a beautiful and valuable treasure, which however is now used purely as decoration.

The 7-armed candle stick has been presented anonymously.



The remainder of the church silver such as chalice, decanter, communion bread box and communion plate were presented by Jacob and Aase de Neergaard og Fårevejle.

The mats on the table are lace and so is the serviette to cover the chalice. Both made and presented by Anne Marie Møller.



The Font

Is hewn from two pieces of granite and is as old as the church itself, even though it has not always stood in the same place within this church. There is a brass-plate with the words, in the Old Danish language. Let the small children come to me, do not prevent them, because for such ones is the kingdom of God.

The pulpit

The pulpit is the work of one of the carpenters from the Earl's estate.



The Organ

Is from 1957, and delivered by Messrs. Vilh. Hemmersam, Copenhagen. It is built as a mechanical organ with 12 voices on two manuals and bass pedals. It has been rebuilt by Messrs. Bruno Christensen & Sons, Terkelsbøl.



Lighting

In 1987 funds were bequeathed to Skrøbelev Church to be used for decoration and upkeep. Christian Pedersen, a former official at the Copenhagen City Hall, and his wife, Anne Emilie Pedersen, who were both born on Langeland, in Skrøbelev and Tullebølle parishes respectively, bequeathed their life savings to these two churches. So in 1991 Skrøbelev Church was able to acquire new chandeliers. They are fairly untraditional, but were designed especially for this church with the idea that characteristics of each particular time period should be allowed to set their own mark on the decoration of the church. At the same time this new style of lighting emphasizes the charm of the interior of this lovely church. The chandeliers were designed by the architect Ebbe Lehn Petersen, M.A.A. of Odense.

The Fresco Paintings

When restoration work started in 1956 nobody knew of the existence of these paintings – or rather drawings – and once the vaults were cleaned and many layers of whitewash removed it was found that here was something that would contribute considerably to a beautification of the church interior.

The Paintings

Date back to the late Gothic period probably the year 1500. It has been established with some certainty that it was the “wooden clog” painter from Gudme on Funen (so called because as his signature he used a wooden clog) who painted them. The frescos express a primitiveness – indeed a rustic style – the charm of which is well worth preserving. The one biblical scene, **the Saviours Crucifixion** shows large nails driven through the hands and feet of Christ with blood streaming from his naked body and from the spear wound in his side. High on the cross there is an additional cross beam with the letters: I.N.R.I. (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). On his left is the letter R with a leaf design cross bar that turns the letter R into an X, meaning Christ.



The **Unicorn** together with the letter M alongside symbolizes Mary and her charity. A number of beautifully drawn rosette crosses commemorate the day the church was re consecrated after the vaults were constructed.



The many small animals depicted have presumably had a special meaning to the painter, or perhaps they should simply be regarded as an expression of his pleasure in decoration? The remaining decoration consists of the ribbed edgings, the geometrical figure and the chain of clover leaves edging the vaulting. On the chancel vaulting there is a figure wearing a pixie hood.





Church Ship

The Church Ship was presented in 1991 by Gunhild and Alfred Sørensen, Spodsbjerg. The schooner "Agathe" of Rudkøbing was the model for Alfred Sørensen who had the idea of building a ship for Skrøbelev Church as it was the only church on Langeland which did not have one, and also because his own Parish Vicar, Annalise Bager, Longelse, also became vicar of Skrøbelev Church as a



result of the amalgamation of the parishes of Longelse, Fuglsbølle and Skrøbelev in 1990. He was assisted by Jørgen Mangor, Assens, and Andreas Hansen, Tåsinge.

Carved wood relief with applied gold leaf

Hand crafted by Markan Christensen, set up in 2010. "The ears of wheat", inspired by the parable of the Sower from the New Testament.



The Boards

The boards listing the vicars of the church dating back to the beginning of the 1500 century were designed and carved in 1993 by Johannes Bæk, Tåsinge. Henning Jensen, Møllemose has compiled the list. The boards are part of the churches heritage like the lightning.

Side wings from the old altar piece.

Restored in 2013, originally from around 1590 with the coat of arms of Erik Hardenberg and Anna Rønnow.

