

The southern aspect of the nave, showing the porch and south transept, above them the unbroken row of windows of the clerestory with their carved figures, some almost hidden from view by the transept. One might wonder why they were put there.





Gargoyles on the south transept - The “bellman” or “tollman”.

The western of the gargoyles on the parapet of the south transept. This almost life-size figure was carved in great detail, with clappers in his bells and buttons on his coat. His robust, jovial appearance suggests perhaps an invitation to the market rather than a religious intent.



A boy's face on the window of the south transept.

Gargoyles on the south transept - The “alewife”

The eastern gargoyle: again, there is considerable detail, despite the centuries of exposure to the elements. She has a bowl in one hand, a jug in the other. Dating from the 15th Century, she may be announcing the church-ale.



A benign face on the window of the south transept.



Exterior of the Clerestory

The clerestory appears to have been constructed later than the tower, perhaps around the middle of the 15th Century, ostensibly to let more light into the nave. It comprises two east-west walls topped by parapets and pinnacles built above the nave arcades. The clerestory windows form close-spaced series in both these walls, eleven on either side, grouped into five pairs, corresponding precisely with the arcade arches beneath them, and an odd one at the eastern end to accommodate the greater width of the transept arches. Each pair shares a single internal mullion, but between the pairs the mullions are separated, allowing space for a slender column of masonry which carries the external down-pipe. On the inside, these broader spaces are used as the locations for the corbels that support the low-pitched wooden roof.

Both the north and south walls carry internal and external arrays of figurative carvings. The external ones, both north and south, share a style and content that set them apart from the internal carvings. These latter, again both north and south, comprise two sets of carvings, one consisting of demons, wise men, angels and strange carvings rather like bouquets of flowers, located at the springers within the pairs of window arches, the other being the roof corbels located between the pairs of windows and carved as angels holding banners and shields. It seems likely that three different masons or sets of masons were at work here. Together, they created work of high quality.

Looking first at the external clerestory carvings, it quickly becomes clear that from the ground you can't in fact see them properly. They are hidden by the



The head of a bearded prophet on the southern side of the clerestory.

aisles unless you stand back at a distance, and even then the transepts conceal some almost completely. On both the northern and southern elevations there are essentially two rows, one above the other. The lower



On the south clerestory, one of two dragons that gaze down as though in anticipation of rich pickings among the sinners below.

consists of figures located at the springers of the window arches, both within and between each pair of windows. The upper row consists of gargoyle figures set in the base of the parapets between the pairs of windows where down-pipes emerged. In fact, none of the rows are complete, either because figures have

fallen (or been removed) or were never put there in the first place. Nevertheless, there are more figures in the lower rows than in the upper, and it is in the lower rows that the best work is seen. Both rows are carried on to the eastern corners of the clerestory walls, where additional figures are located.

The overall scheme of carvings is shown in the table below, in which their positions are numbered sequentially from the eastern end of the clerestory. The intention is to see if there is any correlation between the carvings on either side of the clerestory. However, it is apparent from this table that there are both differences and correspondences between the schemes on the northern and southern sides. On the northern side is a queen, three examples of carvings in which a man is accompanied by a dragon, and three semi-human figures referred to here as the ‘pig-like man’, the ‘bird-man’ and the ‘scaly devil-man’: none of these are seen on the southern side, which is distinct in having a prince, a prophet, a priest, a man raising his hands, and a bear wearing a bridle.

A table comparing the positions of the grotesques on the clerestories on either side of the nave.

Position	North side lower row	North side upper row	South side lower row	South side upper row
Eastern corner	dragon	paired man and dragon	man in head covering	winged bird-man
1	pig-like man	nothing	man in head covering	nothing
2	paired man and dragon	scaly devil-man	broken dragon	bear in bridle
3	dragon	nothing	man holding hands up	nothing
4	broken	nothing	priest	lutanist
5	dragon	nothing	dragon	nothing
6	paired man and dragon	bird-man	broken figure	broken
7	king	nothing	king	nothing
8	non-figurative	nothing	non-figurative	nothing
9	queen	nothing	prince	nothing
10	piper	harpist	dragon	broken
11	dragon	nothing	prophet	nothing
12	dragon	nothing	dragon	nothing

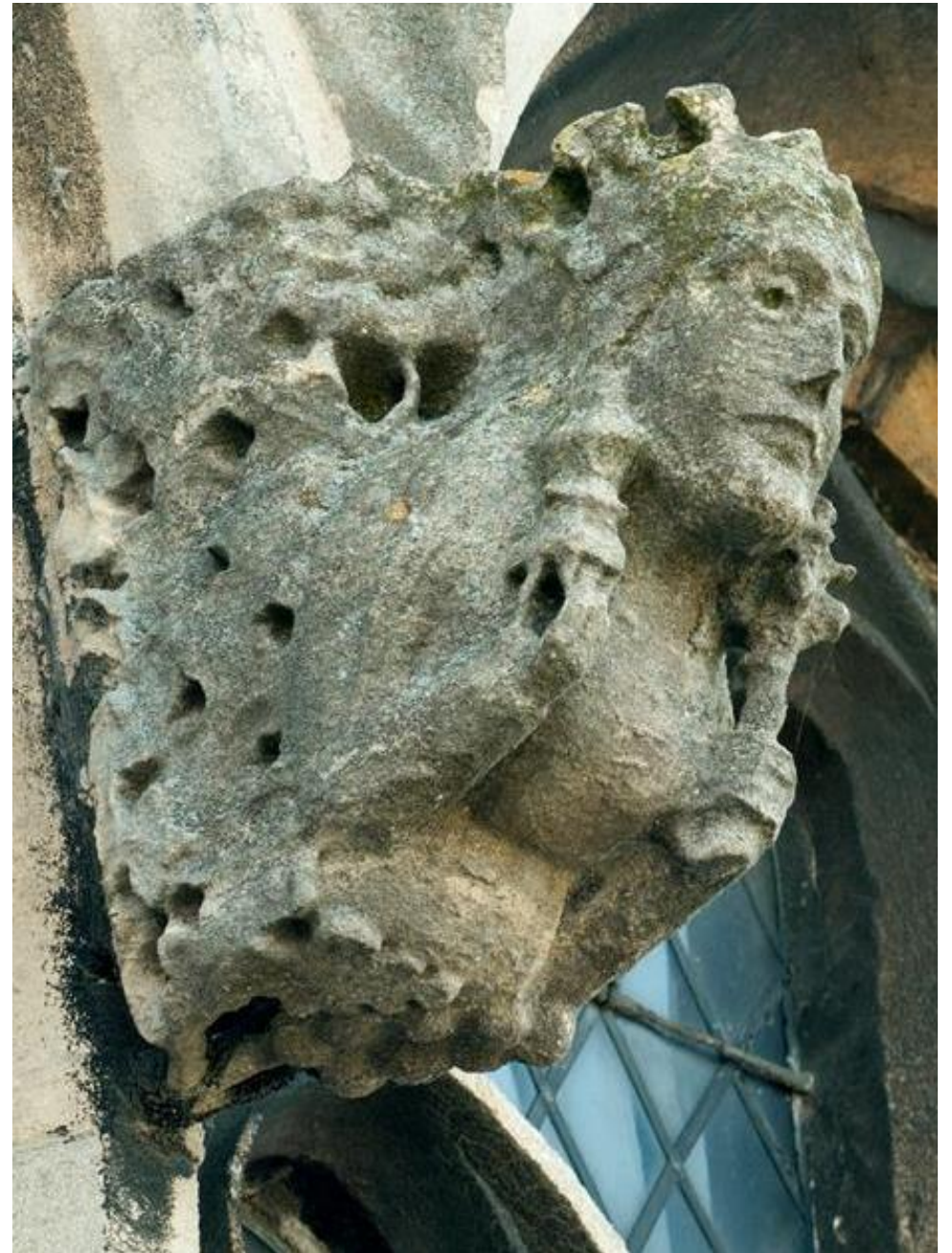


What the two sides have in common are a king (at the same position on both sides), musicians (a piper and a harpist to the north, a lutanist on the southern side) and several winged dragons. The north-side king has a long thin face with a forked beard and bushy moustache, a sword in his right hand, a possible mace in his left, a crown on his head. His southern counterpart has an orb in his left hand, a sword (lost) in his right, and a crown on his head. They are not copies, and may represent particular monarchs. The queen holds a censor in her right hand, a mace in her left, a crown on her head, her long hair merging with the carved foliage. The prince is clean-shaven and fresh-faced, crowned, holding a large book (probably the Bible) open in his hands. Again, he seems to represent a particular person, but who this might be is conjectural. All these carvings are of high quality, many in good condition despite their years. The head of the prophet is especially attractive. Many are carvings worked in single blocks of stone that are structurally part of the window arches. Two of the dragons on the southern side appear to have been put in place slightly later, but all the others are integral to the structure, as are the figures of ordinary people, such as the musicians, the priest, the man in a close-fitting costume with rows of buttons (is he a jester?) holding up his hands, fingers stretched, as though imploring someone to go no further. Some of the figures jutting out from the parapet appear to depict dual human-animals, as if showing a man as we see him alongside his true base nature.

A dragon carving on the northern side of the clerestory.



On the southern side of the clerestory, a prince and a king. Their identities are not recorded.



On the northern side of the clerestory, a queen and a king (a different king from that on the southern side of the clerestory, depicted in the preceding page).



On the south clerestory, a winged dragon, and a hooded man, perhaps a fool or a jester, holding up his hands as though giving a warning.



A bagpiper, on the northern side of the clerestory.



A double carving, showing a bearded man with his arm around a pig-like demonic figure, perhaps his alter-ego, on the northern side of the clerestory .



Two figures located on the eastern corner of the southern side of the clerestory. The lower one is a bearded man wearing a cloth head-dress. This is not a king, but his dignified, bearded face and garments suggest a prominent person, perhaps a judge or a nobleman. The upper is a winged creature with scaly legs ending in paws or clawed feet, and a human face.



Two views of the upper carving at the eastern end of the northern side of the clerestory, depicting the double figure of a man, apparently holding a sword in his right hand and a small, circular shield or drum in his left, accompanied by a winged dragon-like creature bearing its fearsome teeth.



The man, with a strangely bulbous chin, looks anxious, but the dragon appears to be smiling. In Medieval theology the Devil was likened to a dragon because he was the worst of all serpents. This carving can be interpreted as showing a sinner who seems to have been ensnared by the Dragon/Devil.



A figure with dragon's wings, folded human-like legs and a dog-like face, the lower carving on the eastern end of the northern side of the clerestory.



St Mary's church and graveyard, seen from the northeast.