

## Visit to Coxwold 2013



Externally, a charming medieval church with an unusual octagonal tower; internally, very much a protestant rectangular preaching house with royal and local supporting armorials where the “Doom” wall painting would have been, plus a wonderful example of a double-decker pulpit. What appeared to be the chancel/sanctuary was in fact a memorial gallery to

the local manorial family combined with a communion rail of a most individual design. Cranmer’s 1552 rubrics ordered the communion table to be set east-west in the chancel, the priest to the north side and the people gathered (even seated) round as if for a meal: Coxwold’s rail allowed this gathering, but kneeling, with the priest able to move between the communicants.



The organ was a joy. Sited on a west-end gallery which probably used to house the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century gallery singers and band and, later, the 21 stop Denman of York pipe organ in its “unusual case of very old oak with a good deal of bold and rough carving”, it had room to speak – and room to accommodate those eager to play its dark natural and white sharps!

The organist has a fine collection of Cartoons and printouts blutack-ed to the case[out of sight of the congregation!], including the well-known Hoffnung, but my favourite was “ . . . playing of Organs, wherein I have consumed vainly the greatest part of my life. John Merbecke. Preface to Concordance 1550.

The delight of the visit was most of a Bach Trio Sonata played from memory on this 8,4,III; 8,4,4,II; I6, tracker action, cedar of Lebanon cased masterpiece of the organ builder’s art.