

ST MARY'S CHURCH ROYAL GIFT

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Many local people will remember that early in the twentieth century Goldsborough was a royal village, however it may not be known that St Mary's treasures a superb royal gift. This is a magnificent cardinal red altar dressing comprising a heavily embroidered silk damask altar frontal and matching superfrontal. These were gifted on the occasion of H.M Queen Mary's visit to Goldsborough in August, 1924, following the birth of a second son, Gerald, to H.R.H. Princess Mary, having been commissioned to be worked by "The Soldiers Embroidery Industry" based at 42, Ebury Street, London, SW1. It was subsequently discovered that H.M. Queen Mary had been Royal patron of the Society, founded in 1919, and formally known as Friends of the Elderly, and the frontal bears a label stating 'made by the totally disabled'.

This fact is all the more amazing when examining the exquisite and intricate hand embroidery which would be a challenging task for the skilled and able-bodied.

The work on the frontal features three large, beautiful gold motifs, appliqued and edged with couched gold cord. The central motif depicts a stylised cross, while either side, an enhanced pomegranate is worked in graduating shades of gold thread and gold cords defining the sections of the fruit.

The matching superfrontal has seven original gold thread motifs appliqued to a new wool and silk damask replacement, when it was found in 1993 that the silk damask fabric of the original had become too badly worn.

Unfortunately the regular use and movement of these items does cause the delicate silk and gold threads to fray and become damaged, but thanks to a dedicated team of experienced volunteer embroiderers who regularly work to repair these marvellous pieces, they can long be admired by many.

These are used to celebrate Palm Sunday and during Holy Week, and again at Pentecost.