

Nes kirke, Ringsaker (English)

Nes Church (Ringsaker, Hedmark) is believed to have been built just before 1250 a.d. and replaced a stave church from about 1020 a.d.

Nes kirke is built of limestone in a kind of Anglo-Norman Gothic style and was originally a single nave church i.e. a hall church. It was extended to become a cruciform church at around 1700. The north transept was completed in 1697 and the south transept in 1704. The stone used in these extensions were from the (sacked) cathedral ruins at Hamar. The earlier church did not have a tower. However, the old wind vane showed the year 1651. The church tower sits above the vestibule. The sacristy is on the north side of the choir.

The church has survived many ravages of time. There were fires in 1663, 1770 (a lightning strike) and in 1888 (accidentally lit by burning embers during repairs to the church tower). The church was affected by major floods in lake Mjøsa in 1789, 1808, 1827, 1860, 1927 and 1995. It is said that during the flood "Stor-Ofsen" of 1789 one could row over the cemetery wall; a bridal couple were married standing in a boat (the water was 16" deep above the church floor); and that the sexton drowned in basement.

In the fire in 1888 both the altarpiece, pulpit and organ were lost, but the church silver and some other fixtures were saved. The church was then rebuilt in neo-Gothic style according to plans by the Swedish painter Törner (most probably Carl-Erik Törner) and Gothic style windows were installed.

The church was also refurbished in 1933.

The church was extensively restored in 1962-1964 according to the plans of architect Bjarne Hvoslef.

Many of the Gothic arched windows were then replaced with round arched ones. You can see traces of this in the outer walls. The pointed arched windows were left intact in the sacristy, in the choir and the east wall of the tower. Today's interior and ceiling derives from the 1960-63 refurbishment. As is the new organ gallery in the north transept. The base of the tower has the function of an armoury but is not separated from the church space with walls. The church seats 320 people.

Two of the church's altarpieces were lost in fires. After the reconstruction of 1889 a two-meter high figure of Christ was used as an altarpiece. This (gypsum) masterpiece was created by the sculptor Mathias Skeibrok who for a while resided at Nes.* At first, the figure was placed on the altar, then on a plinth behind it. In 1963 the statue was moved to the vestibule, leaving just a simple cross on the altar. The Chancel wall behind the altar has three arched windows with stained glass.

The pulpit was replaced in 1963 and is a basic octagonal shape with a canopy. The decorated panels depicts the Evangelist and a carved Dove of the Holy Spirit underneath the canopy.

The baptismal font was made by the famous Furnes wood carver Lars Pinnerud in 1732. As many of the baptismal fonts from the 1700's it takes the shape of a cherub carrying the font with it's brass dish. It is supposedly modelled on the baptismal font in Stange church, which was made by Pinnerud's brother Erik Kolstrup. Pinnerud also made the Confessional (or Bishop's chair) in the choir.

Nes kirke has two church bells both made in Germany. The largest was cast in Hildesheim in 1890, the smaller in Meiningen in 1879. The organ has 22 pipes and was built by the Norwegian Organ and Harmoniumfabrikk in 1963. The organ pipes are in the north gallery, but the console is on the lower floor of the church.

* It is worth noting that Mathias Skeibok was the tutor of the famous Gustav Vigeland,

Sources and further reading;

Gunhild Kolstad: *Kirkene i Nes Sogn på Hedemarken* (Published by Nes historielag 2012) This book is for sale at Infoteket.

Egil Enemo og Trond Røhnebæk (red.): **Kirker i Ringsaker** (Brøttum, Furnes, Nes, Ringsaker og Veldre historielag, 1995), s. 37-42 (v/Gunhild Kolstad)

Anne-Marit Bækkevold og Nils Røhnebæk: **Kirkene på Nes** (Skolehefte utgitt i 1992)

Alf Henry Rasmussen: **Våre kirker. Norsk kirkeleksikon** (Vanebo Forlag, 1993), s. 637