

**Commission:** Design & reproduction of Victorian Gothic Lectern  
**Client:** St. Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk  
**Specification:** English Oak

In 2002, thieves broke in through a window of St Mary's Church in Stoke by Nayland, Suffolk and robbed the church of a huge Victorian eagle and ball lectern. The parishioners were so devastated that they formed a Lectern Committee to discuss ways of replacing the unique piece, but with no funds available they secured a temporary replacement whilst they set about fundraising.

The old lectern whilst impressive had never complemented the perpendicular architecture and a decision was made to seek a new design rather than commissioning a replica. It soon became apparent that they would need to look further a field for a company that could provide them with the design expertise that totally understood the requirements and limitations. "We consciously decided that the new lectern should respect the styles that existed within the church", said Linda Clapham, a member of the project team.

N.E.J. Stevenson Ltd are well known for their work on many of the country's historic buildings working extensively with English Heritage, The National Trust and the Royal Household and their expertise in designing new elements to compliment existing interiors was a vital part of the groups decision to approach the company.

After an initial phone conversation with Neil and the submission of an outline sketch proposed from photographs of the interior, it was decided to appoint N.E.J. Stevenson to the project. "Neil Stevenson extensively photographed the church's interior and from those images created several sketches. We immediately thought his design ideas fitted perfectly with the rest of the interior features and the church itself," Linda added. "We were delighted with the result, especially as Neil and his team incorporated a number of personal touches, including the Howard/Tendring and Benefactor's arms."

The final design reflected the extensive Victorian Gothic woodwork in the church and captured the elegance and height of the perpendicular architect. Manufactured in English Oak and coloured to blend with the existing woodwork the individual carvings and delicate tracery have been much admired with many visitors assuming that it is contemporary to the rest of the interior.

Concessions have been made to technology with carefully hidden lights and microphone as well provision being made for the varied height of readers with a fold out step.



#### Specification

Manufactured in English Oak and coloured to blend with the existing woodwork

#### Contact information

If you feel we could help you with the design and production of your bespoke furniture requirements please contact me, Neil Stevenson, Managing Director, NEJ Stevenson on 02476 544662 or email me at [neil@nejstevenson.co.uk](mailto:neil@nejstevenson.co.uk)