

Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary



Top: St. Botolph's, Boston, Lincolnshire, shows one seat up and one down, *Below:* A carving of pigs at play beneath the seat of a misericord at Ripon Cathedral.

Misericord

Worshippers who spent long periods in prayer, such as the recitation of the Holy Office were grateful for the misericord, aptly called the “mercy seat.” It is a shelf beneath the folding seat in a choir stall that gave a measure of support to the user when the actual seat was required to be stored folded up but the person was expected to be in an upright position.

Misericords are elaborately carved underneath and are the subject of study by art historians. Several scholarly works have been published.

Exeter Cathedral has the earliest set of misericords in England dating from the 13th century.