



**WALKING IN IPSWICH
(BOOK 2)**



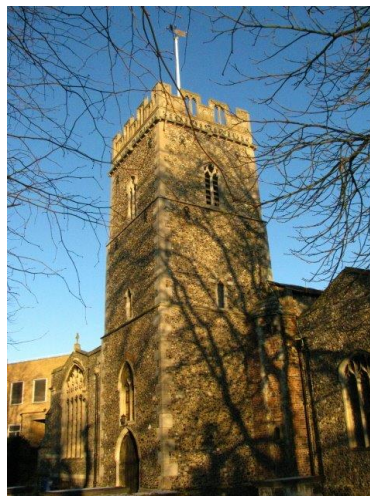
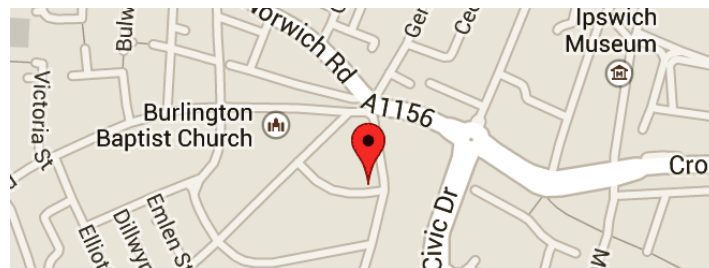
INTRODUCTION



Personal view

On a dark and dampish morning, on Saturday 25th January 2014, I was heading Northwards again to Suffolk to visit Ipswich and after a coffee at M and S, it was the start of another church walk. It was the return to where I had been just two weeks before. After a very stressful and busy few weeks at work, and not being in the best health in the last few days, I elected to get out and do a tour of the town that I missed last time. When I went there two weeks before I started in the centre, moved to the east, then tackled the South of the place, this time, after an 8.04 train from the Colchester North Station, I then got the 66 bus into the Old Cattle Market Bus Station. Normally I head off to Subway, but with a £10 voucher to spend, I went on a cut through to locate Marks and Spencer, having remembered from the past experience, roughly where it was. I thought it best to get there early, as it tends to get very busy by mid morning.

Having drunk and then shopped, I left and went back to the main street. As I headed down Tavern Street then Northgate Street, I managed to miss the intended targets and the first I saw was St Matthews which I saw across the busy dual carriageway. Also in sight beyond was the Burlington Baptist.



St Matthews, Portman Road

In the 1960s, Ipswich went mad. Town planners devised a scheme whereby the population would rise towards half a million, and the existing town centre would be encircled and crossed by urban motorways. They didn't get very far before the men in white coats came and took them away, releasing them into the wild somewhere like Croydon or Coventry; but the towering Civic Centre, the brutalism police station and court buildings survive as evidence of their ambitions, and the four lane Civic Drive cuts across what was the Mount residential area, the little terraces all demolished to make way for the 20th century.

Now, the Civic centre, the courts and police station are all themselves to be demolished. The new Ipswich plan designates this whole area for residential use, and the civil servants have all moved down to the river. This new plan, if it emerges, can only serve St Matthew's well, sitting beside Civic Drive as it does, and cut off from the town centre by it.



St Matthew's is perhaps, less well-known than the other working town centre churches. Partly, this is because it is the only one of them which is kept locked, but also because it is such an effort to get to if you are a visitor. Because of this, many people don't realise that it contains a treasure of national importance. It is the font, which is quite unlike any other in Suffolk.

Before we come to it, the church building itself is worth examining. This must once have been quite a small church, but is now a big one. Its core is 15th century, including the lower part of the tower. Nothing else is. Its 19th century expansion can be explained by the proximity of the Ipswich Barracks, for this became the Garrison church. This resulted in the huge aisles, as wide as the nave.



The chancel was also rebuilt, but retaining its medieval roof. Until 1970, the church was hemmed in to the east, but the construction of Civic Drive opened up this view, which isn't a particularly good one, particularly from the north east. It comes as a surprise to find the west end on Portman Road quite so pastoral, but the hidden graveyard surrounding the tower is quite beautiful, and would once have been the familiar view. Ancestor hunters will be horrified to learn that the greater part of the graveyard was built over in the 1960s, with the construction of a church school to the south. All those graves are under the playground now. The part of the graveyard to the east fell foul of the road, and those immediately beyond the chancel were turned into a garden, now the preserve of homeless drinkers. A footpath runs along the north side, which will take you through to the main entrance, the west door, under the tower. You step into a broadly Victorian interior, and find the font in the north aisle. East Anglia is famous for its Seven Sacrament fonts, 13 of which are in Suffolk. These show the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, and are rare survivals; so much Catholic iconography was destroyed by the Protestant reformers of the 16th century, and the Puritans of the 17th century. Here at St Matthew, we find an even rarer survival of England's Catholic past; a series of images of events associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Before describing it, I have to make the point that this really is one of the dozen most important and significant medieval art survivals in Suffolk, and one of the finest 15th century fonts in England. There is nothing as good as this in the Victorian and Albert Museum, or in the British Museum. I make this point simply because the lovely lady who showed the group around did not seem to realise quite how important the font was, and gave the impression that the parish, though they care for it lovingly, also did not realise what a treasure, what a jewel, they had on the premises. Of the eight panels, two bear elaborate fleurons, but five of them depict events in the story of Mary, mother of Jesus. These five reliefs, and a sixth of the Baptism of Christ, are amazing art objects. They show the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin, The Adoration of the Magi, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the Coronation of the Queen of Heaven, and the Mother of God Enthroned.



Burlington Baptist, London Road



Wolsey Theatre, Civic Drive

A 400-seat theatre in the heart of Ipswich, Suffolk's county town, The **New Wolsey Theatre** was established in 2000, building on the foundations of the regional repertory company that had opened the theatre in the late 1970s. The New Wolsey also co-produces and collaborates with leading UK producing theatres and companies and engages extensively with a wide range of people through its creative learning work.

In 2007, The New Wolsey won an Edinburgh Festival Fringe First with Hoipolloi for their co-production of Story of a Rabbit which went on to tour nationally and internationally. More recently, physical theatre company Gecko has relocated to Ipswich to become a New Wolsey Associate Company.





St Mary at the Elms, Blackhorse Lane

St Mary at the Elms is an Anglican parish church in the heart of the commercial centre of Ipswich. The church serves a lively congregation and provides daily a place for contemplation, prayer and worship for anyone visiting or working in the area. Their Anglo-Catholic tradition values the sacramental life of the church, adhering strongly to doctrine such as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the continuity of the apostolic orders of Bishop, Priest and Deacon. A significant stress on liturgy and worship - performed in order to maintain the beauty of holiness - makes worship in an Anglo-Catholic church an experience which is intended to appeal to one's whole person - to heart as well as head, to senses as well as intellect.

The church is affiliated to Forward in Faith and the PCC has passed resolutions A, B & C. These resolutions make provision for those who have theological reservations about the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate within the Church of England. They ensure that a male priest will always preside at mass and puts the care of the parish under +Norman, Bishop of Richborough and Honorary Bishop of the diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich.

At 8.30 am on Saturday 25th July 2010 a fire broke out in what was then the Walsingham Chapel at the base of the tower. The contents of the chapel and the first floor of the tower were lost and the nave suffered smoke and heat damage. Renovation work - including the rewiring and redecoration of the church, rebuilding the interior of the tower, and the refurbishment of the organ and the C16th tower clock - was completed in August 2012.



The new screen installed at the base of the tower includes a re-designed memorial to the parishioners who died in the two world wars, replacing the WWI memorial lost in the fire. A thanksgiving service, attended by some of those who worked on the church renovations as well as many friends and supporters of St Mary at the Elms, was held on Saturday 9th November 2013 with Bishop Norman presiding.

Personal view

I then found St Mary at the Elms in Blackhorse Lane and I managed to get in and there was person in there in quiet prayer and a clergyman at the front. I did not stay in there too long in a building which had a Catholic feel, but as I discovered from their website, was in fact, a Church of England one, but did adopt an Anglo-Catholic style of worship..



Personal view:

As I swung left it was Museum Street and a familiar firm name of Scrutton Bland the Accountants (who I had worked for over 43 years). Here was I, an Essex boy seeing our Suffolk friends building with offices on both sides of the road and how noisy it must be with buses rumbling down the road on a regular basis, mind you, my own office in Colchester does have the busy A12 buzzing past the windows.



Personal view:

Further up the road it was the Methodist building which I was to discover had entrances in this road, Museum Street and the road behind, Blackhorse Lane



Methodist Chapel, Museum Street



Present site in Museum Street purchased for £1300 in March 1860.
Foundation Stone laid by Mr. William Pretty 20th June 1860 with a silver trowel (on display in Church).

Wednesday 27th March 1861 opened for worship.

Church Organ gift from Mr. William Pretty came from the St. Lawrence Church in Dial Lane, Ipswich.

A Minister's House was erected at rear of Church and is still in use as Church Circuit Office with a flat on first floor.

Many improvements have been made since the Opening in 1861 notably the transformation in 1959 when the whole body of the Church was reversed and a new stained glass window was installed. Chairs have since replaced the pews.

150 years of methodism has just been celebrated with various events.



Methodist Circuit, Blackhorse Lane



Tavern Street shops

Personal view:

However between the two sightings, there in Westgate Street, it was a familiar face, that I stopped and chatted to, it was a gentleman that sits behind at the cricket ground in Chelmsford.



Personal view:

After the Methodist Church was photographed from both ends, I then retraced my steps and headed for Tower Street and St Mary-le-Tower. This was where I had my best success.



St Mary-le-Tower, Tower Street

The **first** church, endowed with 26 acres and probably built of wood, flourished in the time of Edward the Confessor as recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. Holy Trinity Priory was founded in about 1177 and for 360 years its black-habited Augustinian secular canons served the Tower church and parish. By 29 June 1200, when King John's Charter was received in the churchyard, the **second** Romanesque church shown on the Borough Seal had replaced the former Saxon building. St Mary le Tower has been the town's civic church ever since.

Turstan, a canon in 1220, is the first incumbent whose name we know. In 1325 the Merchant Guild of Corpus Christ was founded. Its processions, plays and feasts were held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Miracle play props were stored in the church. Each Maundy Thursday the feet of 13 poor men were washed in the chancel. The Chaplain of the Guild taught the sons of members, probably in the south aisle: this was the beginning of the town grammar school.

By 1450, the Romanesque church needed rebuilding and William Gowty's will of 1448 left 'calyon stone for all the new church being built in the churchyard of the same church'. The north and south nave aisles of this **third** church were built then.

In 1479, Robert Wimbill, notary public, ordered a memorial brass (under chancel carpet) with a prayer to the Trinity across his breast: *'My hope lies in my bosom; Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy on me.'*

1512 Thomas Drayll, mercer, MP, died and was buried under a Norwich-made bracket brass laid in the north nave aisle chapel to St Katharine which he had endowed already. 1525 Thomas Baldry, mercer, MP, was buried with a brass showing his first wife Alys and second wife Christian. He left £20 to 'the new making of the steeple'.

1537 Holy Trinity Priory dissolved. Thomas Peacock, displaced chaplain of Edmund Daundy's chantry of St Thomas of Canterbury in St Lawrence church was the last canon incumbent. From that time, the parishioners elected their own ministers and paid church rates for their support.

1540 Thomas Manser's will ordered that the south aisle be extended to the east end of the chancel and that his tomb be like that of Edmund Daundy at St Lawrence, thus dating the south chancel two-bay arcade. 1561 Queen Elizabeth, visited Ipswich and found the ministers serving the churches much inferior to the canons of the priories her father dissolved.

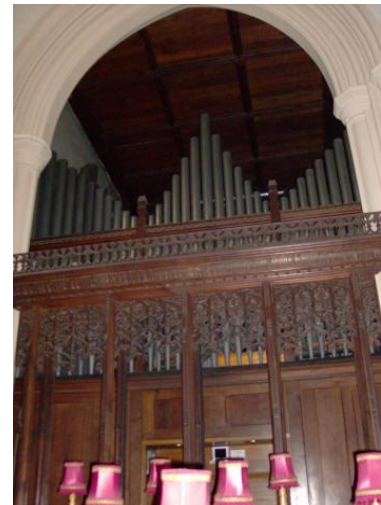
The Corporation agreed to appoint one Town Preacher for sermons at the Tower on Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whitsunday and Michaelmas, to be attended by all Portmen and Councilmen robed. 1570 The Corporation Seat was built on the north of the nave so that the members could sit comfortably through sermons as long as three and a half hours.

1599 William Smarte, MP, died and his memorial oil-painted on board has the earliest panorama of Ipswich at the foot, acrostic verses of high quality and portraits of William and Alice [Scrivener] his wife. He left books and manuscripts, at first kept in a chest in the vestry for a preacher's library.

1605 Samuel Ward, the most celebrated of all Town Preachers was appointed. He preached every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and took charge of such charities as schools and almshouses. His working library was greatly enlarged. A strict Puritan, he fell foul of Bp Matthew Wren at Norwich and Archbp William Laud at Canterbury. When in 1635 he was banned from preaching for life for encouraging emigration to New England there were riots on the streets of Ipswich. The Corporation refused to replace him and paid his stipend for life, then supported his widow and eldest son who could not work. His floor slab of 1640 is now in the choir vestry.

1643 As the Civil War loomed, the church was firmly in Puritan hands. Churchwarden Jacob Caley arranged that when his friend William Dowsing arrived to cleanse the church of superstition, the saints in stained glass had already been replaced by clear windows. The spire (shown on Smarte's memorial) was blown down in a hurricane on 18 February 1661. A legacy of 1716 towards rebuilding it was swallowed up in Chancery. 1664 The Corporation Seat was enlarged and refurbished by the direction of Robert Clarke, Town Clerk. 1700 The present pulpit was built and carved by Edward Hubbard to sit above the desks for lecturer and sexton facing the Corporation Seat.

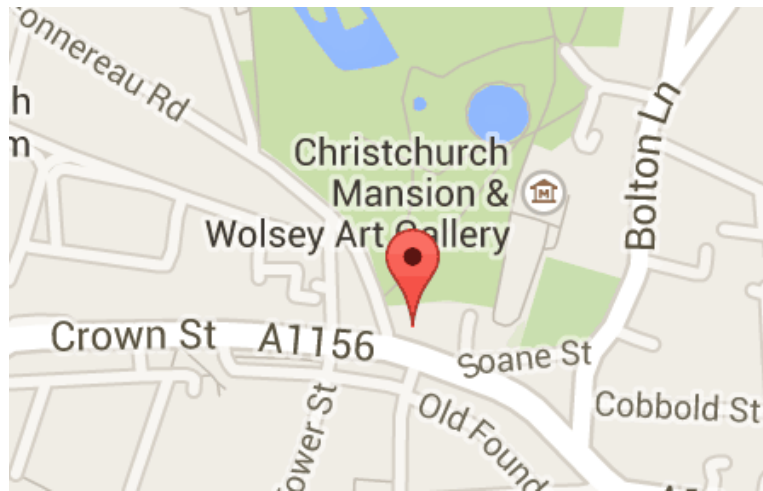
1832 The 16 year-old Samuel Read painted a view of the interior showing how dark and gloomy the many galleries had made the building. The organ, originally built by Renatus Harris in 1680, was at the west end. The 18th century organist and composer Joseph Gibbs was buried near the organ stool. The present **fourth** church was almost totally rebuilt in phases beginning with the chancel in 1850-53. The two-bay south chancel arcade was retained. In the 1860s the nave and aisles were tackled, again retaining the arcades. The whole campaign was paid for by George Bacon, banker and philanthropist, and the architect was Richard Makilwaine Phipson. Ipswich was from the 17th century a Puritan stronghold, in early-Victorian times Evangelical, but the vicars who oversaw the rebuilding of the Tower Church were Tractarians and the furnishings and ornaments suited the ritual they favoured. A tradition of choral services and sacramental teaching still exists, but the churchmanship has never been extreme.



Personal view:

After the Methodist Chapel was photographed from both ends, I then retraced my steps and headed for Tower Street and St Mary-le-Tower. This was where I had my best success and I was able to buy here, a book, magazine and some postcards. Then I went a bit further northwards and it was the Tower Ramparts shops and bus station, and I managed to cross the busy road and went up to the corner of Fonnereau Road.





Bethesda Baptist, Fonnereau Road



Bethesda is an Evangelical Baptist Church fellowship made up of around 200 people who meet in a landmark building in the heart of the Ipswich Town centre.

Personal view:

As I turned into Fonnereau Road, on the corner was the Bethesda Baptist church. Going up the hill to the right was Christchurch Park and to the left was The Quakers Buildings. Two doors up was Christchurch House.



Quaker Meeting House, Fonnereau Road



The meeting house is in central Ipswich. There is car parking at the meeting house for about 7 cars. From Ipswich railway station take corporation bus to Tower Ramparts - meeting house 4-5 minutes walk. The Old Cattle Market bus station for country buses is 6-7 minutes walk. **Meeting for worship:** Sundays 10.30-11.30 am in the Meeting House and Wednesdays 1.00-1.30 pm in the Library. Children are always welcome, especially on the first Sunday of the month.



Personal view:

As I walked, it was another sighting of St Mary-le-Tower and to date my progress had been excellent I then went left and it was St Margaret's which was locked. As I took a photo, a lady hovered behind, afraid of getting in shot and she said that she was going to sit in the churchyard in the quietness. She said the church was rarely open, maybe once a month for coffee mornings.



St Margaret's, St Margaret's Street

The present organ, by J W Walker & Sons started life as a two-manual organ installed in 1859 at Holy Trinity, Bedford. It has been modified since then and was purchased by St Margaret's Church in 1981 and installed by Bishop and Son, Ipswich.

The oldest part of St. Margaret's Church dates back to the end of the 13th century, and was built by the Priors of Holy Trinity Priory to house the growing town population which could not longer be accommodated in the nave of the Priory Church. The nave arcades, doorways and the windows in the north aisle are all that is left of that first church.

About 1450 the nave walls were cut away to put in the clerestory windows, and the double hammer-beam roof was constructed. The roof panels were painted towards the end of the 17th century and have recently been restored. The decorative scheme in this roof is unparalleled and therefore of national importance.

In 1800 twisted iron stays were introduced to prevent the walls from splaying out under the weight of the roof. The south elevation and the rebuilt, higher tower are Victorian alterations and additions. A small extension was added in 2005 with toilets and kitchen area and the chapel area was re-furbished in 2007.



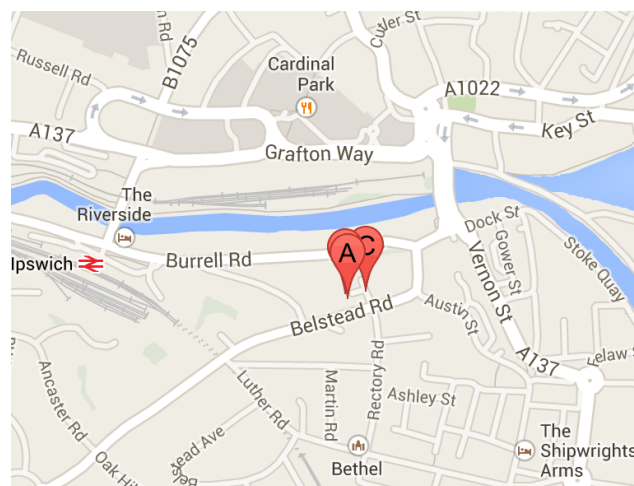
Freemasons' Hall, Soane Street

In the 19th century the street was named for Sir John Soane (1753-1837) the noted architect and collector. His remarkable home, Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn, London is open to the public and is crammed full of his eclectic gatherings of architectural details and features. Soane's career took off after patronage from friends in Ipswich and at Nos. 4-8 Soane Street is the Freemason's Hall, now on the Borough's list of Ipswich Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Soane, a convinced Freemason, has been said to have had a hand in designing the Ipswich Freemason's Hall. However, Dr James Bettley (author updating the Suffolk Pevsner volume, who has contributed information to this website on the Carr Street

Co-operative store, Scarborough's shop and Museum Street) tells us: "I have established that the Masonic Hall in Soane Street was designed by Henry Luff, an Ipswich builder (and freemason) and opened in 1879 (Ipswich Journal, 22 April 1879). The addition to the right is by G. H. B. Gould, 1911. I don't think you could really claim a Soane connection. The masons moved to Soane Street from St Stephen's Lane, the old hall now the Conservative Club (by Edward Ingress Bell, 1865 – and I agree, those ceramic nameplates are wonderful)." Our thanks to him for the clarification.



Buddhist Centre, Friars Bridge Road





Stoke Hall, Burrell Road

Stoke Hall was a large mansion house built by the wine merchant Thomas Cartwright in 1744/45. Cartwright also excavated beneath Stoke hill a vast series of wine cellars. In 1892 the Hall was up for sale following the death of the owner Robert James Ransome of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies, engineers, whose works were quite close. The auctioneers described it as a "Fine Old Mansion" boasting three reception rooms, billiard room, six principal bedrooms on the first floor, seven more bedrooms on the second floor, with kitchens, offices, greenhouse, stabling, pleasure and kitchen gardens, all standing in 1 acre three roods of land and adjacent to the church of St Mary-at-Stoke. Written in the margin of the auctioneer's notices of 1892 are details of (what appear to be) subsequent owners including Dr Elliston, Miss Battersly of Cauldwell Hall, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who sold it to the Ipswich Freehold Land Society in July 1914.

During its time in the ownership of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners it was under consideration for use as the residence of the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, being next to the church and with the Hall having its own entrance to the churchyard. The house in its decayed state was pulled down in 1915 at a cost of £50, but the cellars remained. Stoke Hall Road was created with a row of houses which still remain there today. The stables of the Hall were not demolished and continued to be used – latterly by a local removals company then a motor repair shop. We must be careful to distinguish between Stoke Hall and the mansion and grounds of Stoke Park, which was not far away. This is probably on, or near, the site of the new Asda supermarket on Stoke Park Drive.



Saint Mary at Stoke, Hawthorn Avenue

Saint Mary at Stoke is a Grade I listed Anglican church in the Old Stoke area of Ipswich on the junction of Stoke Street and Belstead Road in Ipswich, Suffolk. The church stands in a prominent position near the foot of a ridge, just south west of Stoke Bridge and the town centre. Its parish was a small farming community which saw a great increase in population with the coming of the railway to this part of Ipswich. It was once governed by Ely, a fact lightly made much of by a politician of Stoke. In 1995 its parish was subsumed into the South West Ipswich Team Ministry in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.



The building is made up of a small medieval church and a large Victorian extension designed by William Butterfield in 1872. A church has existed on this site since the 10th Century. It is probably one of the St Marys mentioned in the Domesday Book.

The original nave (now the north aisle) has a medieval single hammer beam roof, with moulded wall plates, angels with shields at the ends of the hammer beams, and figures underneath. The angels are Victorian replacements for those destroyed by iconoclasts. The church was visited by William Dowsing. There is a medieval piscina.

OTHER VIEWS OF IPSWICH SEEN



St Peter's Project, Star Lane



Tower Ramparts Shops



Old Cattle Market Bus Station



Star Lane



Buses in Museum Street



Civic Drive



Ipswich Rail Station