



**WALKING CHRISTMAS 2013
(BOOK 2)**



INTRODUCTION

As usual when I write I tend to do a lot more than I expect to and so this was to be the case again, but my aching knee and feet can testify that, as my journeys swing first across the town, then up into Suffolk, then back into the outskirts of the town. As things progress, I look likely to add to my tally of books in the next few days too.

FRIDAY 27th DECEMBER 2013



St Mary at the Walls, Balcerne Hill, Colchester

On Church Street, to the east of Balcerne Hill is St Mary-at-the-Walls, built against the Roman walls and overlooking the western suburbs of the town. First recorded in 1206, the church has a notable history. It is the site where 23 **Protestant martyrs** were **executed by burning** in the reign of the **Mary I**. In the **English Civil War** a **Royalist** army used the church tower as a gun emplacement, which resulted in its destruction by **New Model Army** siege batteries. The theory that the tower gave rise to the rhyme **Humpty Dumpty** is now probably **disproved**. The lower part of the tower is Norman; the upper parts were rebuilt in 1729 and the top in 1911. The rest of the church was rebuilt in 1872 to designs by Arthur Blomfield. **Philip Morant**, the Essex historian, was Rector 1737–70. There was a further major rebuild in 1872. In 1978 the parish was united with Christ Church in a new building in Ireton Road. The old church was made **redundant**; the bell was moved to St Leonard's in **Lexden** and the organ to **Brentwood Cathedral**. In 1980 the building was reopened as Colchester Arts Centre.



Society of Friends, Church Street, Colchester

The history of the Quaker movement in Colchester dates back into the middle of the seventeenth century. This was a time of tremendous religious ferment and change in the aftermath of the Civil War. **James Parnell**, a young follower of George Fox (the founder of Quakers), preached in Colchester in July 1655. Some of his hearers in this strongly Puritan town were convinced by his words although there was much opposition. Later he spoke in Coggeshall but was arrested for allegedly having caused a disturbance and spoken blasphemy. At his trial he was found not guilty but ordered to pay a fine, which he refused to do. He was returned to jail in Colchester Castle where he was ill treated and eventually died in April 1656.

Around this time Friends suffered considerable persecution for their beliefs, being prosecuted, beaten and jailed. Friends' goods were seized for non-payment of fines. A law called the Conventicals Act was passed to prevent premises being used to hold unlicensed acts of worship. Premises could be forfeited for disobedience. A member of the meeting set up a home and business in the meeting house to get around the law, as we could lawfully hold meetings in the "home" of a member. This practice established the presence of resident Meeting House Wardens in Quaker Meeting Houses, which is still common today.

Encouraged by letters from Parnell in prison, Quakers gained many followers; Meetings for Worship were held in Thomas Shortland's house until, in 1663, they purchased premises on the north side of St Martin's Lane (now Quakers Alley) to convert into the Great Meeting House. Religious persecution eased after the passing of the "Toleration Act" in 1689. Friends settled into a long, quiet period, worshipping in their own way and engaging in community work, education and the relief of poverty. In keeping with the Puritan spirit of the age, Friends were strict in their rules and observance of dress codes. It was not until 1871 that members could marry outside of the Quaker community without dismissal from membership.

The Great Meeting House was repaired, altered and partly rebuilt over the next two centuries until it burned down in 1871. Meanwhile St Helen's Chapel was also purchased in 1683 and used for smaller meetings. Adjacent land was used for burials until the Chapel was sold in 1800. Another Burial Ground was opened in Roman Road, which is still in use today. New premises were built in Rebow Chambers in Sir Issac's Walk in the town centre. Around this time there was a great revival of interest in Quakerism, locally and nationally. Local membership grew from a handful of family members to more than 100. Quakers engaged in a wide variety of public activities, including organising much-needed adult schools.

The Rebow Chambers premises proved too expensive to maintain and in 1938 a new Quaker meeting house was built in Shewell Road and was opened with much celebration. This building was in use until the early 1970s, but it proved inadequate and needed expensive repairs.

With the planning of the Culver Square shopping complex, it was decided to allow the demolition of the Shewell Road building. They acquired their present building in Church Street, St Mary's House (originally built for John Constable's lawyer in 1803) from the Post Office in a derelict state and carried out extensive renovation and alteration. Friends set up meeting in Church Street in 1974 and have been here ever since.



Colchester Buddhist Centre, Manor Road, Colchester

The Colchester Buddhist Centre was opened during 1998 to offer meditation and Buddhism to the people of Colchester and the surrounding area.

Classes are led by members of the **Triratna Buddhist Order** who are experienced in providing meditation instruction to people of all ages and of all backgrounds. **Introductory Classes** (Wednesday evening and Friday lunchtimes) are welcoming and informal and no experience is necessary - simply turn up!

Whether you are looking for a little more peace of mind and inner calm or, perhaps, you want to pursue an interest in Buddhism further, there are meditation classes, study groups, day and weekend retreats run by the Colchester Buddhist Centre which will support you.



St Leonard's, Lexden Road, Colchester

The site on which Lexden now stands was crossed by the fortifications of **iron age** Colchester, the remains of the earthen ramparts can be seen at Bluebottle Grove, Lexden Park and alongside Straight Road number of burial mounds or **tumuli** remain, notably **Lexden Tumulus** in Fitzwalter Road which is reputed to be the burial place of **Cunobelinus** or **Cymbeline**, the king of the **Catuvellauni**. The **Lexden Medallion** was found when the tumulus was excavated in 1924 and is now in the **Colchester Castle** Museum. Another tumulus is **The Mount** in Marlowe Way, in which some fragments of Roman pottery and tiles have been found.

The parish church was founded early in the 12th Century and a number of houses of medieval origins survive in Lexden Road (the A1124). Parts of The Sun Inn date from 1542 but it has recently become a private house. In 1648, Lexden was the headquarters of Lord-General **Thomas Fairfax** during the **Siege of Colchester**, and his army camped on Lexden Heath. A Parliamentary fort was built on Great Broom Heath (now called Hilly Fields) which overlooks the town. During the **Great Plague** of 1665 to 1666, the burial ground for Colchester was near The Mount.

During the 18th Century a number of large houses were built including Lexden Park on the corner of Church Road, and the Manor House was rebuilt. The main road became a **turnpike** in 1707 and a cottage used as a **toll house** survives. Lexden Heath was a large area of **common land** used for grazing, horse races and military camps; it was **inclosed** by Act of Parliament in 1821.

This enlarged the estate of the lord of the manor, the Reverend John Rawstorn Papillon, who was an acquaintance of **Jane Austen** and whose niece married Jane's brother Henry. Straight Road was created at this time to make a way across the new inclosures to the hamlet of **Shrub End**, which became a separate parish in 1845.

The small and decrepit medieval church of St Leonard was demolished in 1820 and a new church was built slightly to the south, designed in the **Early English** style by M. G. Thompson. A larger chancel was added in 1892. A **Methodist** chapel was built in Straight Road in 1859 and a mission hall (now Lexden Evangelical Church) in 1885.

A National Day and Sunday School was built in Spring Lane in 1817 and enlarged several times until replaced by Lexden Council School (now Lexden Primary) in 1925. Lexden Park House became the Endsleigh private school in 1955 and then the Endsleigh Annex of the Colchester Institute until 1990. The house itself was converted to apartments and the gardens became a local nature reserve. The Avenue of Remembrance was built in 1929 to relieve traffic on the London Road and as a memorial to the fallen of Colchester in **World War I**.



Christ Embassy, 2 Long Road, Lexden, Colchester



Kingsland, London Road, Colchester

Kingsland Church in Colchester was built in 1884 by some local Quakers and was known as Lexden village hall. It established itself as a place of worship and temperance hall and ran an adult school on Sundays and a people's bank. A full-time missionary was appointed in 1927. In 1971 it became the Lexden Evangelical church after Neil's predecessor was appointed. In the 1980's the church became much more vibrant, growing steadily as it adopted a lively, informal, contemporary worship style and became known as Kingsland Church.

In 1991 a second congregation was formed, Gosbecks' Christian Fellowship, which is now an independent church known as the Lifehouse. Gosbecks planted another congregation in Tiptree in 1998, which remains part of the Kingsland group. The growth in Lexden continued and in 1996 a congregation was established in Stanway.

A few years later we started a second Sunday morning service, and continued to grow and built our new building on the same site in 2005. In 2010 we moved again to much larger premises, to the top floor of the **Lexden Centre**, on the corner of London Road and Straight Road, above the Aldi supermarket. The new facilities includes a 400-seater worship area, large hall, seven meeting rooms, office accommodation and a large café area for the church and local community.

Kings Café is open Monday to Friday from 10am – 4pm, drop in for a coffee and chat, a light lunch or a piece of cake. It's a great place to meet friends!

Kingsland Lexden is an independent church in Colchester. They meet every Sunday at 9.15am, 11am and 6.30pm at **86 London Road Lexden, Colchester**. On the corner of Straight Road and London Road, Kingsland Church is on the first floor of the Lexden Centre above Aldi Supermarket. Parking for visitors and the disabled is available in the rear of the main car park and is clearly marked for Kingsland Church only, please do not use the Aldi parking area, this is reserved for shoppers only. We look forward to seeing you!

Kingsland Lexden is the oldest of their **congregations**. They are a lively, vibrant church with people of all ages and backgrounds; a community of faith, led by the Holy Spirit and growing in our relationship with God as we express our love for Jesus in all they do.

Come along and **explore the Christian faith** with them, join in the contemporary worship on **Sundays** and any one of the many **mid week discipleship groups** or **youth** and children's activities – sit quietly at the back or throw yourself into a lively, growing family!

Personal view:

If my memory serves me correctly, one of my former workmate left our firm and went and became a minister there, many years ago. His name was Neil Loxley.



Lexden Methodist, Straight Road, Colchester

The minister there is the Reverend Ruth K Ridge and the Lexden Methodist church belong to the Colchester circuit and the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire district.



Assembly of God Praiseway, Straight Road, Colchester

Sunday services are held at 1030am and 630pm and the message on their website said - *For God so loved the world, he gave.... John 3:16* This verse expresses the wondrous plan of the most generous giver of all: God the Father. The Creator God gives His Son to earth. And our gift arrives as a new born baby, not a warrior, king or astronaut. Why is our gift in this form? Non-threatening, powerless, dependent, our gift is the most attractive, tangible and beautiful 'presence' possible: a baby. Babies are naturally very lovable; people desire to care for, touch, feed and hold them close. They hold babies so close that they feel as one with them.

An all powerful God chooses to become a powerless baby. What can possibly be more astonishing? It gets better, more powerful and complex; more generous and wondrous.



St Teresa Lisieux Catholic, Clairmont Road, Colchester

They welcome to the parish those who have come home for Christmas, those who are visiting at this time of the year, and those non-Catholics who join them for their celebrations. A special word of welcome back to those who have found that they were unable to practise their Faith during the year for all kinds of reasons and they hope that the Holy Spirit will strengthen them in their resolution to respond to the Lord in the coming year as they are here to bring the joy of the Gospel (as Pope Francis says) in Word and in Sacrament. The centre of their lives as Catholics is our Sunday Mass where we gather together to celebrate the great gift to each one of us as they receive the Body and Blood of the Lord in Holy Communion and are united to Christ and to each other. In this way they build up community and they do invite you once again to join their parish life at St Teresa's and St John's as they enter a new year together.

May the light of the Child Jesus shine in your minds and hearts - Father Tom Lavin



Stanway Evangelical, Chapel Road, Colchester

The church is situated in Chapel Road, opposite the Doctor's Surgery. In 1878 a group of Christians were meeting in a barn that was situated in Warren Lane.

Attendance grew to such an extent that there was a need for a permanent building. This was built in Chapel Road in 1886. In 1955 the denomination became known as the Union of Evangelical Churches (U.E.C.). They are also associated with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (F.I.E.C.). The church premises were completely rebuilt during 1991 and it offers comprehensive facilities for the requirements of church members and the community it serves.



Church of the Latter Day Saints, Straight Road, Colchester



The Lifehouse, King Harold Road, Colchester

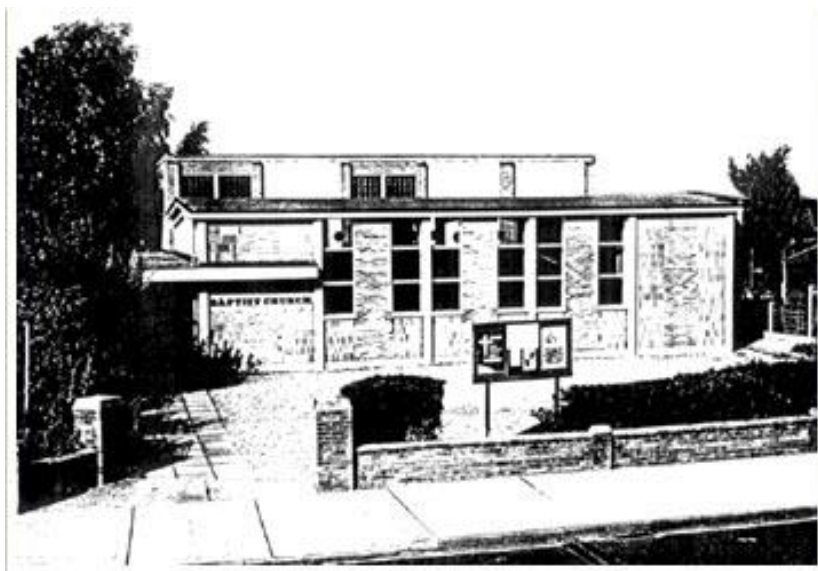
The Lifehouse is part of the Partners in Harvest network, and they are lovers of the river of revival which has been pouring out since 1994. In their Father's love they are truly alive ... being built together to be a safe place, where his presence can rest ... where the thirsty can be refreshed ... where the lost can find life...They love to laugh yet also to care for those who need a hug.

On Sundays they meet at 10.30am. They worship in a contemporary style and someone will share from the Bible for about 20 to 25 minutes. They often have a time of prayer for the nation or specific other needs, and they'll also sometimes have an activity that all can join in with. They love to pray for one another and will quite often have prayer for healing. The morning service is followed by refreshments. On the first and third Sundays they have a group for the younger children during the sermon. The last Sunday of the month is a little different. Their Worship morning is just that: a morning of worship- no message. They try to give room for the prophets to speak and enjoy the freedom of using various drums and flags to demonstrate our love to our Heavenly Father. Children are encouraged to be part of this and made room for.

On the second Sunday each month at 6pm they have "Oasis". This is a longer meeting, with some extended worship, teaching from the Bible, and opportunity for ministry. A chance to spend some time very close to God. They often have special guests for this.

In midweek they pray in various ways, run a soaking room, have small groups twice a month, and have two daytime groups called 'The Word' and 'Faith with Friends'. They run a Fire values course when there is demand. The key objective is to see their members walking in the Father's Love and giving it away in their daily life.

They've recently completed four months of building work which has transformed their building. To be honest it was a bit beaten up and somewhat cramped. They now have space, light, and great acoustics, making it a great venue for worship, for prayer and for soaking. When they have the money they have planning permission to add another meeting room and new toilets.



Prettygate Road Baptist, Prettygate Road, Colchester

Whether you are just looking into Christianity or are already a follower of Jesus Christ, you'll be welcome there. Prettygate Baptist Church is a place where ordinary people, of all ages, can discover and experience the love of a very real God. Together they are in the process of finding God's purpose for their lives and learning to live the sort of lives that Jesus described in the New Testament.

They aim to make sure their church is a place where people of all backgrounds and experiences can come with their questions and doubts and explore what Christianity is all about. They're working hard to be a church with clear and relevant teaching from the Bible, authentic worship and sincere friendships.

They put a high priority on being a place where they can hear the living message of God's Word, where prayer and genuine care are important, as is reaching out into the local community and beyond.



URC, Plume Avenue, Colchester

Plume Avenue Church is included as part of the United Reformed Church family of churches. The United Reformed Church combines its commitment to the Reformed tradition with a passionate belief that all God's people should be one. In keeping with this, Plume Avenue Church works in partnership with the other local churches in Prettygate and Colchester.



Revive Worship, held at St Cedd's Church, Iceni Way, Colchester

The message on their blog goes - They I like to start with the question, "what is the Kingdom of God?" For those of you who know the scriptures, you already probably said it out in your mind. But let me share it for those who are not sure. The Bible says in Romans 14:17 - "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

That's the short answer! Let me share my thoughts with you.

1. Righteousness - starts inside of you. you need to get your heart right with God by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. It starts inside and works out of you. You don't start by doing the right stuff as that might just amount to works.
2. Peace - how we need the peace of God today in the midst of all that is happening around us. Peace needs to filter through our mind, emotions, and our will. The peace of God that passes ALL understanding. Get His peace!

3. Joy - joy is the outward expression of what's inside. This is not a superficial joy, but a joy or revelation of the King who has your life in His hands. And that is what gives you strength to go through life.

If I can explain it another way; we are divided into the Body, the soul, and the spirit. Righteousness starts in your spirit man. Peace is what we need in our soul, and joy in our body (meaning it can be seen by others who our confidence is to be in) Stay blessed kingdom people !

SATURDAY 28th DECEMBER 2013

It was a planned day out to Woodbridge and in advance I knew there was to be a rail replacement service between Ipswich and Woodbridge. The best idea I had was to get the train ticket to Melton and then walk back to Woodbridge. As the bus left the town of Ipswich along the waterfront, several churches were seen, and I did my best later to identify these, but it did give me the idea of a return trip sometime in the near future to check out this magnificent old buildings.



**St Peters by the Waterfront, College Street, Ipswich
(Heritage and History Centre)**

St. Peter's is mentioned in the Domesday Survey in 1086, suggesting that there was a church on this site then. The current building dates from the 15th Century and was taken over by Cardinal Wolsey to become his College chapel and the parishioners had to either go to the neighbouring St. Nicholas' or St. Mary Quay. Wolsey ordered several improvements to St. Peter's but when he fell from grace the parishioners got their church back in 1537.

In 1801 the church experienced an Evangelical Revival under the talented preacher, the Rev Edward Griffin, who packed the church to hear him preach and he established one of the first Anglican Sunday Schools in this parish. In the latter half of the 19th century the church had a lot of restoration work done on it. The south porch was rebuilt having previously served as a coal cellar. In 1877 an ugly gallery which ran the entire length of the south aisle was removed and a new chancel arch was built. The north aisle was extended by two bays eastwards to be level with the east wall.

A new pulpit was installed. The lath and plaster ceiling was removed in the chancel, exposing the old roof which was found to be in excellent condition. In 1879 the church was closed for 9 months. The old box pews were removed, an organ chamber was built in the south side, and the arcade piers were rebuilt and underpinned with brick which was unearthed when the church interior was renovated in 2006.

The reredos was added in 1887 and in 1901 the clock was installed in the tower.

Many of these features can now be viewed in the church today which serves a dual purpose of a Heritage Centre and a Concert/rehearsal venue.

In the church today you can still see the Victorian pulpit, the reredos, the stone coffin that was unearthed when the vestry was added in 1904, the magnificent tournai marble font, the restored stained glass windows, numerous ledger stones, the Trotman hatchment and the Knapp brass. A more comprehensive history is available in a booklet (cost of £1.00) which was produced for the reopening in 2008.

The Heritage Centre

As the church received a Heritage Lottery Grant for the project, part of the remit was to open the church as a Heritage Centre. During the Summer months the church is open daily from 10am - 3.30pm, Tuesday to Saturday and manned by a team of volunteers. In 2010 over 3,000 visitors passed through the doors and a further 589 visited over the Heritage opening weekend in September.

St. Peter's is one of the oldest buildings in Ipswich. The present structure was built in 1460 on the site of a church that dates back over a 1000 years. The Tournai Marble font in the church is older than the current structure. This is one of the treasures of the church. The East window and pulpit date from the 19th century when the church was extensively renovated and extended. There are some magnificent stained glass windows on view, the medieval nave roof is quite unique and a surviving brass is on display. There is a lot of information about the history of the church and the parish on 8 display boards including the time when Cardinal Wolsey took over the church in the 15th century as part of his adjacent school. The surviving gateway still stands right next to the church on the south side in College Street.

Why do we have a stone coffin on display? The 19th century pulpit is on view as are two remaining choir stalls along with the reredos dating from 1887 which has been imaginatively used to create our green room and fill a hole in the wall where the organ manual used to sit. There is also lots to see on the outside of the church including two well preserved corbel heads in the south porch.



St Lukes by the Waterfront, Ipswich

St Luke's Church was built in the 1950's as a daughter church to St Clement's Church. After St Clement's was made redundant St Luke's became the main church in the Parish and is situated on the "Rivers" estate.



Holy Trinity, Cliff Street, Ipswich

In 1835 Holy Trinity Church was built (Frederick Hall - Architect) at the Ipswich Docks as a Chapel of Ease to St Clement's Church, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity by the Reverend John Thomas Nottidge, M.A., Patron and Rector of St. Clement's and St. Helen's Churches. This was the first Anglican parish church to be built in Ipswich since the Reformation and is one of the few churches in the whole country that was built during the reign of King William IV (the "Sailor King") and is very much a historic church. Holy Trinity Ipswich was built in response to the needs of the new industrial area at Ipswich Docks and Port. The hall was added in 1891 and the chancel in 1895 in similar style. The nave and the chancel have rusticated quoins and semi-circular arched windows. More details in the church history.



St Helens, St Helen's Street, Ipswich

The Parish Church of St Helen Ipswich is a place where people have worshipped for over 900 years. It was built outside the mediaeval walls in one of the suburbs to serve the people who lived around the road to Woodbridge. Very little remains of the mediaeval church since it was virtually rebuilt in the Victorian period but it is certainly a historic church in Ipswich worth visiting.



St Andrews Melton

Melton is a village in **Suffolk, England**, located approximately one mile north east of **Woodbridge**. The 2001 census recorded a population of 3718. The village is served by **Melton railway station** on the **Ipswich-Lowestoft East Suffolk Line**.

Melton was covered in the ***Domesday Book***. In 1774 a local Act established the Loes and the Wilford Hundred Incorporation at Melton. The House of Industry (workhouse) operated until 1826. From 1826 the building became the Suffolk County Asylum for Pauper Lunatics. Much altered during the 19th and early 20th centuries, in 1916 the asylum became known as **St Audry's Hospital**, which was closed in approximately 1993. The buildings have now been converted into some residential accommodation.

Melton was originally settled around the old church in the north east of Melton, later moving to Yarmouth Road, which is the old road between **Great Yarmouth** and **London**. The bestselling Victorian novelist **Henry Seton Merriman** died at Melton in 1903.



Methodist, Grundisburgh Road, Woodbridge

WMC is a Church with a mission: to serve Christ by meeting the needs, both spiritual and physical, of our local community and the wider world. Whilst a traditional Methodist Church in many senses, our worship seeks to encompass both traditional and contemporary styles. Children attend our services from time to time; they have well qualified and enthusiastic staff, who encourage young people to develop their faith, study the Bible and discuss challenging questions in their world from a Christian perspective. There is also provision for a creche. They'd love to have you worship with them !!

Everyone is invited to share light refreshments and a time of fellowship after the service. They are a Fair Trade Church. To support this cause, many Fair Trade items are available for sale each Sunday. At the heart of our congregation is the driving force of Christian living and worship in which faith is deepened, and where there are new exciting opportunities for experiencing a church life which offers a welcome to people of all ages and all backgrounds. We look forward to sharing this life and vision with you!

Personal view:

I paid my second visit there and again I was very welcomed. They serve drinks and cakes on a Saturday morning, and for a bargain £2, I had a good mug of coffee and a piece of fruit cake. On my December 2013 trip, I went twice and prior to leaving to return home, I went back for a second coffee and they have a scheme, of a “FREE REFILL” cup and the man serving who was a “Surrey” cricket follower would not let me pay.



Quay Baptist, Quayside, Woodbridge



St Mary the Virgin, Market Hill, Woodbridge

They are a parish church, dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, in the **Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich**. Their worship reflects the broad mainstream tradition of the **Church of England**, and, whilst emphasising the importance of liturgy within the catholic tradition, thy aim to be inclusive in their understanding and approach to spirituality, theology and pastoral care. Their Church is the heart of their worshipping and working life as Christian people. Here they come to concentrate on deepening our relationship with God, to break bread together, and to try their best to love all others.

Here is the springboard for their mission, articulated in the following statement: *"We are here for the glory of God; to be the body of Christ, broken and restored to reflect the Gospel in our lives."* The Domesday Book records in 1086 that in "Wodebryge" there was "A church with 19 acres valued at 2 shillings". The indications are that this was a Saxon church, built probably at the close of the tenth century, so that there has been a church on this site for nearly a thousand years. The present building dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century. A leaflet and a full guide are available in the church, and visitors are encouraged to discover the beauties and memories and inspiration for the future contained in its living history.

Externally, this is one of the great English churches. Its setting is superb, wholly urban, and yet conscious of its presence in an ancient space. It has a narrow churchyard which climbs away from it, surrounded on two sides by 18th and 19th century houses. To the north is the Market Square, and a stairway leads down from it to the great porch. The whole thing is just about perfect; the relationship between town and church expressed exactly.

The tower is one of Suffolk's biggest, bold and dramatic in the landscape, particularly when seen from the quayside. Close up, it is even moreso, because it rises from below the level of the graveyard, sheer up for more than a hundred feet, a stark, clinical job of the late 15th Century. St Mary has much in common with **Southwold St Edmund**, being only slightly smaller, and built all in one go over a similar period and timescale. However, the tower of St Edmund is a riot of flush work, and here the flint is sparer, cleaner, more precise. This only serves to accentuate the splendour of the great north porch through which you enter the church, past the dole cupboard of John Sayer, 1638. This bequest provided bread for the poor of the Parish, and was still in operation up to the middle years of the 20th Century.

Through the great doors is a fine, grand Victorian interior, the work of **Richard Phipson**. It is reminiscent of his rebuilding of **Ipswich St Mary le Tower**, although the nave here is not encumbered by that church's unfortunate heavy glass. Here, you find yourself in a wide, light space, a seemly setting for a number of fascinating medieval survivals. The greatest of these is St Mary's **Seven Sacrament font**, one of thirteen survivals in Suffolk. The panels show the **sacraments** of the Catholic Church, and are a reminder that our Medieval churches were not built for congregational Anglican worship. The panels are a little bit battered, but are all recognisable. Despite **Cautley's** doubts about the rayed backgrounds, it seems likely that it was a product of the same workshop as the fonts at **Denston** and **Great Glemham**. The butterfly head dresses of the women date it to the 1480s, making it contemporary with the other two.

The panels are, in clockwise order from the north, Ordination, Matrimony (the two sacraments of service), **Baptism**, Confirmation (the two sacraments of commission), Reconciliation, **Mass**, the Last Rites (along with Reconciliation, one of the two sacraments of healing) and, in the final eighth panel, the Crucifixion. This last panel, anathema to the Protestants of the 1540s, has been particularly vandalised. The survival of so much Catholic imagery, when we know that the 17th century puritans were particularly active in this area, may seem surprising. But, ironically enough, it is a result of the destruction of a century earlier.

During the early Reformation of the 1540s, Woodbridge was wholeheartedly Anglican, and the wrecking crew went to work with a vengeance. The destruction here probably took place in the Autumn of 1547, during the first months of Edward VI's reign, when there was a bit of a free-for-all in places like Suffolk. The easiest way to deal with the font was to knock off the more prominent relief, and plaster the whole thing over. When **Dowsing** and his Biblical fundamentalists arrived at this church almost a century later on the 27th January 1644, they found very little to do.

The Anglicans had also destroyed the **roodscreen**; in 1631, 13 years before the visit of **William Dowsing**, the antiquarian Weever lamented the fact that *how glorious it was when it was all standing can be discerned by what remaineth*, showing that its destruction had occurred before the Puritans were ever on the scene, despite decrees of the time that this should not happen. What survives is two ranges of ten panels, about a third of the original number, which have been placed in recent years on the west and south walls by the font. They are splendid, although their protective glass makes photographing them rather awkward. Part of the donor's description survives, but nothing above the dado rail.

The modern screen has been recently curtailed, and the surviving panels are in the aisles. They are actually pretty good, including attempted replicas of some of the medieval panels, the figures a bit like the same artist's work in the sanctuary at **St Mary le Tower**. Otherwise, there's a grand memorial of the 1620's to Geoffrey Pitman in the south aisle, climbing to heaven in tiers that seem rather extravagant for a town weaver and tanner, but a weaver in Suffolk might be the equivalent of a factory owner elsewhere. two hundred years previously, another Woodbridge weaver had donated the screen.



Personal view:

For my first visit, I mistakenly had tried to enter it from the college grounds and got a little lost trying to locate the entrance, so now I knew the town, I could approach it from the right road. It was a very impressive building and souvenirs were brought from it.



St John's, St John's Hill, Woodbridge

It seems that in the 1830's there was something of a revival in Woodbridge; the population of the country was increasing rapidly and Woodbridge was a significant town with a military barracks and a population of about 5,000. St Mary's church, which dates from the 15th century was drawing large congregations and in 1839, the church was overflowing with people coming to hear the preaching of the Rev Henry Hardinge.

A project was launched to build a new church in the town and when sufficient money had been raised, the Building Committee advertised for designs for a 'plain and moderately sized' building, to be a daughter church for St Mary's.

42 designs were submitted ! One of them, from the chief builder in Woodbridge at the time, Alfred Lockwood, who had as its motto, the Bible verse, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that built it". This design was then selected and tenders for construction obtained, again won by Mr Lockwood. However it was said that he made a serious final loss on the project.

The foundation stone was laid in 1842, unfortunately as part of a grand Masonic ceremony in the town, but they have no such links now. The building then took some years to erect but eventually the white brick building, complete with magnificent spire rising to 138 feet was complete and ready for its consecration on 27th August 1846.

The building was built to seat the surprising number of 800 people, with a gallery extending from the arrear along the north and south walls. An organ was situated at the back of the gallery, and the central focus of the apse was a three-decker pulpit. Truly a building for proclaiming the word of God !

At first the parish was not defined as a separate entity and there was no vicarage for the incumbent, but in 1853 the Parsonage House was built (now known to us as the old Vicarage), and in 1854 the ecclesiastical parish of St John was formed. From the first the ministries have been definitely evangelical, the benefice being in the patronage of the Church Patronage Society.

A religious revival in Woodbridge in 1876 is said to have been largely due to the running efforts of the then vicar Rev. Thomas Hyne Edwards. During subsequent years many physical alterations were made to the church building. In 1888 the three-decker pulpit was removed and replaced with a stone pulpit on the north side of the apse and other alterations were made in that area.

In 1896 the North and South wings of the gallery were removed, a new organ was installed in the South-East corner of the nave, and the choir moved from the gallery to the chancel facing the new organ. Seating was added in the gallery in space under the tower formally occupied by the organ.

Up until this time the flooring of the nave had been rough and primitive, and the seating comprised ugly benches and seats nailed together. In 1901-2 the flooring was redone, new teak pews were installed and new leaded windows fitted. Gas was laid on to replace the oil lamps and the interior repainted. Electric light was installed in 1925.

Problems with crumbling of the brick and stonework of the pinnacles of the tower became evident and in 195 the Diocesan Architect advised that they be lowered to half their original height. In the 1970's serious problems evident due to the corrosion and expansion of the iron reinforcement of the stonework supporting the spire and, regrettably, the structure was declared unsafe and the spire had to be removed.

For some time worship had to be undertaken in the church hall. In the 1970's they had a striking colour scheme, the east wall of the chancel area was dark brown and the apse featured an orange ceiling.

When redecoration became necessary in the early 1980's a lighter look was chosen; the brown and orange disappeared but the interior furnishings remained a while longer. Then in 1987-88 major changes were made at the front and the rear of the building. The pulpit and the choir stalls were removed to make way for a raised dais surrounded on three sides by a removable wooden communion rail. A lobby and vestry were added at the main entrance to the building.

Then in 1997 the most recent phase of internal change was completed with the objective of increasing the flexibility of the building for use in a growing variety of ways, both in worship and appropriate social events. The pipe organ was removed and replaced with a very convincing electric organ.

The pews were removed, the floor levelled and carpeted and stackable upholstered chairs introduced. The dais was extended to gain extra space for leading worship. A small servery was constructed under the balcony at one side and a small vestry under the other. The previous 'new vestry' added in 1988, became an additional toilet equipped for wheelchair access.

They praised God for the resources that have enabled these changes to be made, and the building which serves them so well. The church is of course the people and not the building, but we pray that the building known as 'St John's Church Woodbridge' will in itself speak to the community of the presence and accessibility of God.

Personal view:

On my first visit in 2012, I managed to get in and chat to ladies who were doing a flower arrangement, but sadly for my return in December 2013, the door was locked but there was music coming from the inside.



Salvation Army, Gobbitts Yard, Woodbridge



**Catholic Church of the Holy Family and Saint Michael
Main Road, Kesgrave, Ipswich**

The church was built in 1931 in memory of Squadron Leader Michael Rope and the 47 others, including the Secretary of State of Air, who died with him in the wreck of HM Airship R101 at Allonne near Beauvais on 5th October 1930.



All Saints, Main Road, Kesgrave, Ipswich

People have worshipped in All Saints, the Parish Church of Kesgrave, for at least 900 years and the building is still a living centre of Christian worship in Kesgrave of the third millennium, in regular use for the purpose for which it was first built.

Churches are like people – each one is unique and has its great own individual character, moulded over the years by a great deal of love and care, and sometimes a little rough treatment as well! All Saints, like most mediaeval churches, displays workmanship of several periods and architectural styles, as successive generations have altered and beautified it.

The Domesday Survey (1086) indicates that there was a church at Kesgrave at that time and it is likely that a place of Christian worship stood here in Saxon times, a major rebuild took place about 1280 and the core of the mediaeval nave and chancel dates from that time.

The original chancel windows survive; these are in the Early English style of architecture and are a rare survival of Early English work in this county.

About 1300 a flint tower was added at the west end, its west window having a 'Y' tracery, characteristic of the early of the early years of the Decorated period, c.1300. Maybe the tower was never finished or, more likely, it was completed and either collapsed or partially taken down a later date. The south porch was added a little later in the 14th century and has more advanced Decorated tracery, together with ball-flower ornament over the entrance arch.

During the 15th century the two-light Perpendicular window was placed in the north wall of the nave (also another in the south side); these windows allowed more light to enter than did the Early English windows which they doubtless replaced, and also gave better scope for artists in stained glass. To provide even more light, the small double windows were placed in the nave wall, just beneath the roof. This may have taken place when the nave received its fine hammerbeam roof.

The upper stages of the tower were constructed during the early years of the 16th century. Money was left towards the "reparation" of the church in 1535 and maybe the tower was being built at that time; the bell was cast about 1510, possibly for the new tower.

The interior by this time was resplendent with carving and colour, with murals on the walls, painted glass in the windows and a fine rood screen dividing the nave and chancel, above which stood the great Rood, showing Our lord on the cross, flanked by His Mother and St. John.

After the Reformation, the interior was greatly altered to meet the liturgical requirements. Many of its mediaeval adornments were destroyed in the 16th century and further desecration took place during the Puritan 'purge' in 1643. William Dowsing, the Parliamentary inspector of churches visited All Saints to search for "superstitious images and pictures". He "took down 6 superstitious pictures (in stained glass), and gave order to take down 18 cherubims (angels on the roof) and to level the chancel".

Throughout the 17, 18th and early 19th centuries the church was furnished with tall box-pews in the nave and chancel. A small Communion Table was railed off at the east end, above which hung framed tables of the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments. The square deal pulpit was an important feature at this time, when the emphasis was placed upon the preaching of the Word, with Communion for times per year at the most!

During this period the fabric of our churches was often neglected. When David Elisha Davy visited Kesgrave in 1807, he recorded that the church was not only unfit for worship but was also probably unsafe; the walls were covered with green mould. When he returned in 1843 however, things had improved. The walls had been replastered and the damp corrected. Also the base of the tower had been fitted as a vestry and a new stone font was being made to replace the wooden basin on an octagonal wooden pillar, which had served as a font for several years.

During the great wave of church restorations in the second half of the 19th century, All Saints was thoroughly restored and again altered. In 1873, the roof was repaired, a new roof was placed on the porch and other repairs were done to the fabric. In 1884, the interior was refurnished with new benches, altar, lectern, etc.

It is difficult to realise when we see the extent of Kesgrave today, with its population of about 4,750, that even as late as 1920 All Saints was quite a lonely wayside church, serving a parish whose population had barely risen above 100 souls in its entire history. The church, which (excluding the tower and porch) measured only 65' x 16.5', was then quite adequate for the population.

In 1980, to celebrate the seventh centenary of the church, the foundation stone was laid to mark the beginning of the southern extension of the nave and the new vestry complex to the west of it. It was providential that the south nave wall was in need of urgent restoration at the time and this provided an excellent opportunity for a major building programme. The Church in its extended and re-ordered form was the work of the architect Derek Woodley. He did a great work for the people of the parish – and it is also a sad thought that he recently died at his home in Felixstowe.

Along with valuable help from grant-making bodies, the people of the Parish themselves responded magnificently with direct giving.

The result is a tastefully furnished and spacious building, which is thoroughly adaptable and is well-suited to modern liturgical needs, with the old chancel, now screened off, providing a chapel for payer and for small services.



St Augustine's, Bixley Road, Ipswich

Until the Orwell Bridge was opened in 1982 (in effect the town's southern bypass), through traffic to or from Felixstowe and the docks came through the parish and past St Augustine's. Many people who used the road still remember St Augustine's for the lighted cross above the tower. It continues to be a local landmark.

St Augustine's was given by a local tradesman, Charles Howard Bantoft, a tailor with a business in Ipswich's Buttermarket. It was in thankfulness for God for a devout and pious mother. He chose to dedicate it to St Augustine of Hippo in recognition of the fact that Augustine attributed his reformation from a previously decadent lifestyle to the prayers and example of his pious mother, Monica. It could also be that he was influenced by, and named his church, a lost church that was called St Augustine's in the vicinity of St Mary at Stoke.

The land on which St Augustine's is then built was given by Lady de Saumarez of Shrubland Hall, a wealthy local benefactor. Further generosity is typified by the fact that the Architect also gave his services and a plaque commemorates this too.

Personal view:

Sitting on a bus did not make it easy to identify what they were but three more were seen on the last part of the journey into Ipswich, two in Felixstowe Road and another in Stokes Street, Ipswich.



St Michaels and All Angels, Myland

Mile End had become a separate parish by 1254, when the church was recorded, and presumably a settlement then already existed St Botolph's Priory held the advowson [patronage, or having the right to nominate a clergyman] of the rectory. The patronage remained with the priory until the Dissolution by King Henry VIII. In 1443 the living of St Michael's Church was vacant because of its poverty. In 1448 there were two churchwardens at St Michael's Church. Saxton's Map of Essex (1576) is small-scale but does show "Myle end", St Michael's Church, a wooded landscape and what was probably Chesterwell Wood. The Horkesleys are called Horseley magna and Horseley parva. In 1637 St Michael's Church held about 27 acres of glebe. In 1648 southern Mile End was said to have been used for fortified encampments for Oliver Cromwell's troops during the Siege of Colchester, one of the last campaigns of the Civil War.

One of Cromwell's forts, Col. Fothergill's fort, seems to have been sited a little to the north of the original St Michael's Church. *[In 2002, the occupants of 80 Mile End Road reported that their garden contained evidence of what could have been a fort from that era.]* It appears that the remains of another fort, Fort Rainsborough, may lie in front of the original St Michael's Church. According to a local newspaper dated 14 September 1909, St Michael's Church was damaged during the Civil War by fire from the town's batteries directed at Parliamentary encampments: "... the fire of the town batteries was drawn to this spot."

The church had suffered so much during the Civil War that a complete rebuild was necessary and this was accomplished in 1660. The original church was evidently much larger than shown in later records and pictures. The nave was 32 ft 9 ins long and 18 ft 9 ins wide with walls 2 ft to 2 ft 6 ins thick. From this extended a chancel with a width of 15 ft 9 ins.

The south wall was traced for 23 ft of its length and the east end lay at some point beyond. By 1660 the rebuilding of St Michael's Church was completed, using materials from the original church. The chancel of the new church was only 6 ft 10 ins long and this is the building depicted in old drawings and by a model made by Miss A P Strong which is in Hollytrees Museum.

Morant, published between 1763 and 1768, page 135, says of the rebuilt church: "The Church is of one pace with the Chancel, and very small: At the west end there is a little wooden Turret, containing one bell." The silver chalice and paten used in St Michael's Church date from 1660. The inscription on the chalice reads: "This cup was made in March 1660. Robert Root and Edward Springham being then Churchwardens of the parish of Mile End by Colchester." In about 1700 the eastern part of St Michael's Church's ruined chancel was demolished and a new east wall built. A western gallery and perhaps the wooden bell turret at the west end of the nave were built at the same time.

Bowen's Map of Essex (about 1760) shows St Michael's Church, High Woods (too far south), Mile End Hall (too far west) and the Broad Oak, a well known Mile End feature. Otherwise, little detail is shown. Chapman and Andres map of Essex (1777) shows a number of interesting Mile End features: St Michael's Church on its original site Very few houses, High Woods, Mile End Heath, which extended to Tower Lane (then Severalls Lane) in the north east, Rustic Farm and the Rosefields development in the west and marginally to the south of Mill Road. In other words, the present Severalls site but extended to the south and west. Mile End Hall (now St Helena Hospice). Severalls Hall in what is now Severalls Lane, demolished some years ago, Rovers Tye and Cock Common.

The road to West Bergholt which forked at Braiswick, the left continuing to Bergholt Heath and Bergholt (not West Bergholt) and the right passing through the northern end of Chesterwell Wood, across Black Brook, across Horsley (not Horkesley) Heath and on in the general direction of Little Horsley (not Horkesley), passing a little to the east of Wood House, Great Horkesley. Two windmills, one on or very close to the Dog and Pheasant site and the other (for corn) further east, on Mile End Heath in Mill Road. In the early 19th century two churchwardens, two overseers, surveyors, constables and assessors were usually appointed each year, presumably continuing an existing pattern.

Vestry meetings were usually held in the church but were sometimes held at the Dog and Pheasant and once at the Waggon and Horses on North Hill, Colchester. No vestry records survive for St Michael's Church before 1810. A map of 1846 shows the old St Michael's Church, High Woods, Mile End Hall, Severalls Hall, Mile End Heath, remnants of Chesterwell Wood, the Severalls, the Dog and Pheasant, Tubswick, Church Farm, Braiswick Farm and the Primitive Methodist Meeting House. Houses are shown in Nayland Road, north and south (both sides) of the Dog and Pheasant and at the western end of Mill Road (north side). The road towards Little Horkesley, branching to the right at Braiswick, is also shown. In 1851 the rector, the Revd A E Julius, started a subscription fund for a new church in order to replace the old one, which had comprised a chancel, aisleless nave, south porch, western gallery and wooden bell turret at the western end of the nave.

The Foundation Stone of the new Church of St Michael, Myland was laid on 1854.

The new St Michael's Parish Church was built in 1854-5, half a mile north of the old one. As a result, a village focus developed round the new church. It was designed by E Hakewill of Craig's Court, Charing Cross, London, in the Early English style of the 13th century and built on a site given by Thomas Philip Weddell, Earl de Grey, the patron. It comprises chancel, nave with north aisle, west tower and south porch.

Donations for building the new church totalled £2,143 14s 2d (£2,143.71p), of which Earl de Grey subscribed £500, the rector the Revd A E Julius £100 and the son of the previous rector, the Revd P Strong, £200. The church was to be built by Mr White of the Vauxhall Bridge Road, London.

Woodwork was by Mr S Grimes, Builder, of North Hill, Colchester. The church is built from Kentish rag stone with Caen stone dressings for the windows and porch.

The new St Michael's Church was consecrated on 18th May 1855. It was in the diocese of Rochester. The Revd Edmund Hall was appointed rector. White's Directory of Essex, 1863, it describes the old St Michael's Church as "a small ancient fabric, with a nave, chancel and wooden turret, but it is now disused." White's, 1863, also says that the rectory had 28 acres, 1 rood and 14 poles of glebe, written as 28A. 1R. 14P.

It adds: "The Rectory House is a neat mansion, erected in 1842, and having pleasant grounds, commanding fine views of the Colne valley." (Note: A rood is a quarter of an acre, or 1,210 square yards. A pole when used for area is 30¼ square yards).

The school for 137 children, with a teacher's house, was built next to the new church in 1871, using materials from the old church. The school opened on 30th January and 50 children were admitted on the first day. The weather was very cold and it snowed for much of the day. The opening ceremony was conducted by the Revd Hall. The (head) master and (head) mistress were Mr and Mrs George Freeman.

The first part of this edition of the history of St. Michael's, Myland, Parish Church is substantially the same as that published in May 1955 to commemorate the Centenary of the building of the Church on its present site. A few minor alterations have been made to the text and the final pages have been added to bring the story up to the "present day".

I am very grateful to Canon Bolsin for his help in preparing the last chapters; to Mr. Mark Davies, Deputy Curator of the Colchester & Essex Museum, for information with regard to the uncovering of the foundations of the Old Myland Church; and to all those people who, by their encouragement and support, have made this publication possible.

The Churchyard has been in use since the Church was built in 1854, and closed for new burials in 2005 as it is now full.



Mile End Methodist, Nayland Road, Colchester

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, made many visits to Colchester, usually on horseback, between 1758 and 1790. Methodists were active in the area from that time but it was not until 1895 that our present church was built. Since then it has undergone several refurbishments, the last being in 1989.

They are part of the Colchester 'Circuit' which has 12 churches and the 'Circuit' is in the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire District. Our Minister, Rev Catherine Bowstead, has charge over two other churches (Castle and Highwoods) besides ours. It is the normal practice for Methodist ministers to move Circuits about every five years.

We work closely with our local churches and some years ago formed a Covenant with St Michael's Anglican Church and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. As Mile End has developed we have tried to move with the times, but, whatever the time, we hope there is always a friendly welcome at Mile End Methodist Church !



Highwoods Methodist, Jack Andrews Drive, Colchester

The Highwoods Methodist Church is located in Jack Andrews Drive, Highwoods Estate Colchester and it is a modern building with extensive facilities used by several community groups.



St John's, St John's Close, Ipswich Road, Colchester



St Luke's, Highwoods, Colchester

Luke's is the Church of England on Highwoods. So where is St Luke's? The answer is, everywhere really! Every church is primarily about the people who are part of it rather than the building they happen to meet in, and that's especially true in St Luke's case. That's because, unlike most churches, they don't have a church building of our own – so really St Luke's is wherever the people who are belong to it happen to be. Since they began in 1992, they've always hired community buildings in which to hold services and other events, and that is still the case today. When St Luke's began, services were held at Highwoods Primary School, but now most of what we do takes place at St John's and Highwoods Community Centre (near Tesco's, and just behind Lighters newsagents and Dazzle dry cleaners). It's where their main service takes place at 10.15am every Sunday morning, but also where they run a range of other events and activities, which you can read more about on their website

St Luke's is a church made of people of different ages, different backgrounds, different experiences, and they aim to be a church that welcomes everyone. Their services are lively and informal, with modern hymns and songs and talks that are relevant to everyday life. If you'd like to give them a try, please join them any Sunday where they would love to meet to you. We structure our church life around 'Missional Communities.' The church is not just 'church' when it meets on Sundays, but is also 'church' when it meets in small groups at other times – which they call Missional Communities. Meeting in a community centre means that their focus is very much on the church as people – rather than a building.