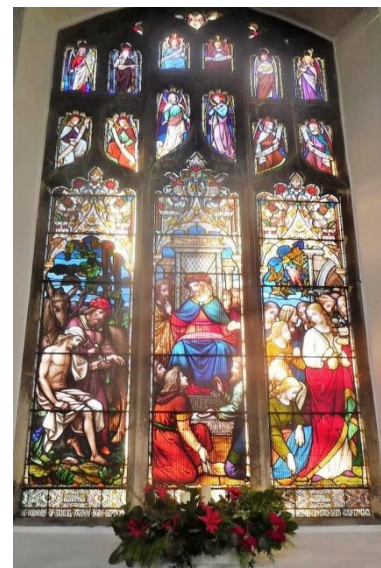




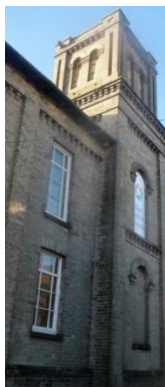
**CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED  
(17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 6**



Continuing with St Mary the Virgin in Diss



**St Mary the Virgin, Diss, Norfolk**



**Baptist Church, Diss, Norfolk**





**Travel advice:** Arriving from Colchester exit the station by going left and at the end of this road turn right. Keep walking for around ten minutes and you will reach the town as the road swing around to the right.

**TUESDAY 3rd JANUARY 2017**



**St John the Baptist, Roman Catholic Church, Icen Way, Colchester**

The church is served from St Teresa of Lisieux, in Clairmont Road, Lexden and is their sister church, holding services normally on a Saturday evening only. It has a looped in system for hearing aids, as is found opposite the Shrub End Square shops. The priest in 2013 was the Reverend Thomas Lavin.

**Personal views 2013** - It is a church that I have visited several times, having been there on Good Friday Mornings, as we have shared joint services with them.



THURSDAY 5th JANUARY 2017











**St Mary's, High Street, Wivenhoe**

This is a middle of the road Church of England with a diverse range of services and a great musical tradition and it is located in the old part of Wivenhoe.







### St Leonard's, Hythe Hill, Colchester

The Medieval door of this old port church still bears the holes made by troops to put muskets through during the English Civil War. Over the nave is an elegant 16th-century hammer beam roof and the north aisle roof is seven older. The 18th- and 19th- century screens and furnishings, the 1901 mural decoration over the chancel arch, and an array of saints in stained glass create a handsome and devotional interior.



### Mariner's Chapel, Rowhedge

They are a Christian church (Independent Evangelical) in Rowhedge, just South of Colchester. Some people have known Jesus as their Saviour for many years, others more recently and some just looking. All know that they have much to learn. The church belongs to a network of village churches supported by an organization called Rural Ministries.

Though non-denominational, they practice adult believers' baptism and Communion is open to all who know Christ as Saviour. The communion is held once a month within the Sunday morning service.





### **Old Heath Congregational, Fingringhoe Road, Colchester**

Old Heath Chapel was erected in 1869 as an outreach mission for Lion Walk Congregational Church. It is largely of corrugated iron structure and was known locally as the 'Tin Tabernacle'.

The chapel was enlarged in 1888 and again in 1898. In the 1980s when Lion Walk became a United Reformed church, Old Heath became independent and retained its congregational status.

<b>FRIDAY 6th JANUARY 2017</b>
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### **Our Lady and St Joseph Church, Mill Road, Stock**

This is a Catholic church which has wheelchair access.



### **Christ Church, Stock**

This is a vibrant worshipping community of God's people situated in the heart of the village of Stock, which is South of Chelmsford. They welcome people from all denominations and backgrounds meeting for worship on Sundays. They are a very family oriented church with a thriving Junior Church including a crèche.















### **All Saints Church, Stock**

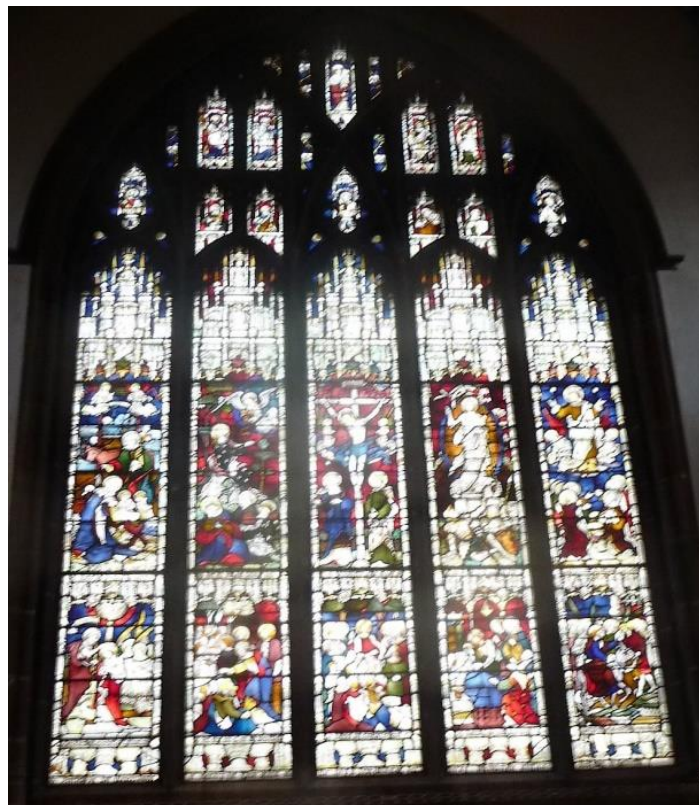
This is a Grade 1 listed building and sits beside a large churchyard, a garden of remembrance and a glebe – which is a field used for the midsummer weekend dinner dance flower festival and fete that is one of the biggest events in the village calendar. The first evidence of the church is in 1232 and it is reasonable to suppose that a church, consisting of a nave and a chancel, was erected there in the early Norman period.

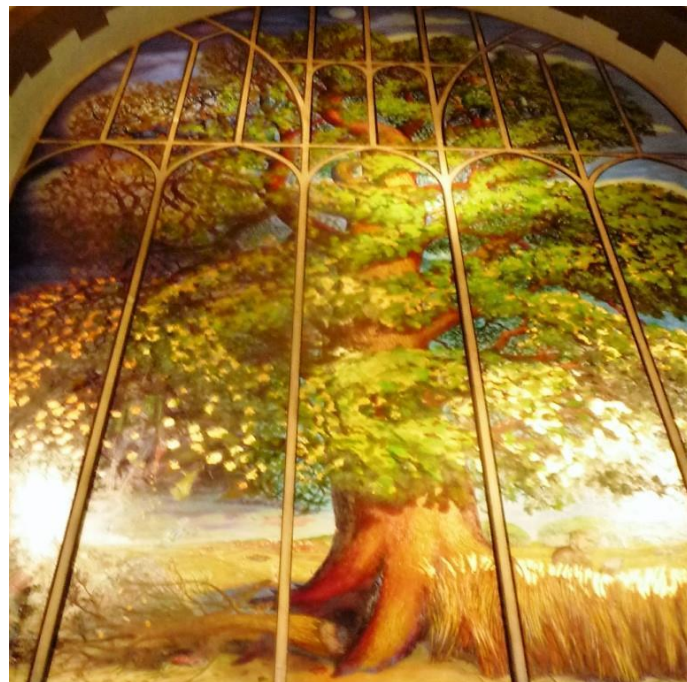
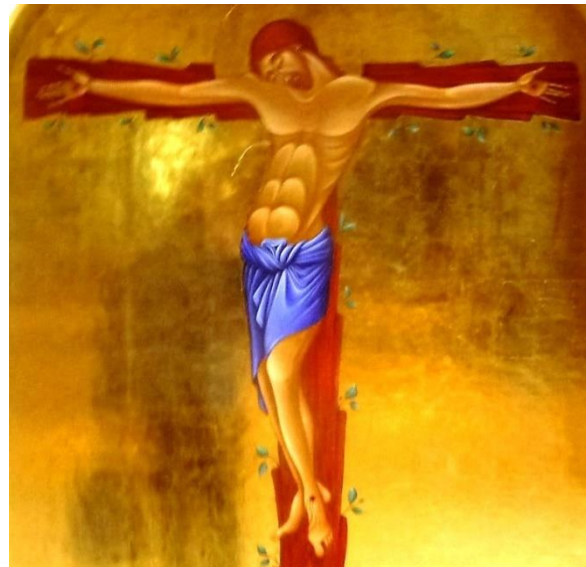
The building and the generations of Christians that have worshipped there for hundreds of years, witness to the timeless truths of the Gospel. Christ is as present with them today as he was present when All Saints was first built and the villagers first worshipped within its hallowed walls. The village is about a mile North of Billericay and six South of Chelmsford. It used to be called Stock Harvard and the parish ecclesiastical parish is still known by that name.

All Saints is the village parish church where Christians of different backgrounds from the village and surrounding area come together in the company of all the saints to worship the living God. They stand within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England and at the heart of their life is the celebration of the Mass.









**Chelmsford Cathedral of St Mary, St Peter and St Cedd**



Christianity was brought to East Anglia by St Cedd in the seventh century. The increase in population east of London led to the creation of the Diocese of Chelmsford in 1914, this parish church having been chosen as the Bishop's seat. In 1983 and again in 2000, the interior was refurbished and the Cathedral today is a thriving community building in the heart of the City. A new window was installed in Chelmsford Cathedral to celebrate the Centenary of the Cathedral and Diocese of Chapel. The engraved window depicts St Cedd and the chapel that he built in 654 AD at Bradwell. It has been designed and made by Mark Cazalet, who painted the Tree of Life in the Cathedral North Transept in 2004.







### **All Saints, Maldon**

This is unique in England in having a triangular tower, dates from around this period. While the precise building date is unknown, the church existed by 1180, the date of the foundation of nearby Beeleigh Abbey A Charter of Richard 1 of December 1189 confirms "certain grants to Beeleigh Abbey, including the Church of Blessed Peter in Maldon and the Church of All Saints' in the same town".

There were strong urban traditions, with two members elected to the Commons and three guilds which hosted lavish religious plays until they were suppressed by Puritans in 1576. Then, until 1630, professional actors were invited to perform plays, which were also stopped by Puritans. From 1570 to about 1800 a rival tradition of inviting prominent clergy to visit the town also existed. In 1629 a series of grain riots took place, led by the wife of a local butcher.

In Maldon's parish church of All Saints is a memorial window to George Washington whose great-great grandfather, Lawrence Washington, is buried here. Unveiled by an American diplomat on 5 July 1928, the window displays Saint Nicholas with the Mayflower, St George and Saint Joan of Arc in the centre. At the top are the arms of the Washington family and the arms of the USA, England, Scotland and Wales. At the bottom are depictions of George Washington, the landing of the Mayflower, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the statue of Liberty.







MALDON TOWN  
COUNCIL



EDWARD BRIGHT

## St Peter's Churchyard

Edward Bright, Maldon's gentle giant, died at the age of 29 in 1750 weighing over 44 stone. He lived in Church House, High Street, adjacent to the churchyard. A tomb surrounded by railings, belonging to the Bright family, can be seen near to the churchyard's boundary next to Church House.

When Edward Bright died, it took twelve strong men to lift the specially constructed coffin, 6ft 7in long and 3ft deep. A triangle and pulley was made to lower the coffin into Edward's final resting place in a vault at the west end of the Nave of All Saints' Church, where visitors can still see his memorial slab.

Maldon's famous preacher, Reverend Joseph Billio, was the first minister of the United Reformed Church, Market Hill, which was built in 1800. His fiery, enthusiastic sermons and the good work that he did, led to the saying 'to go at it like billio'. A Blue Plaque on the church commemorates the preacher.

The wood sculpture in the rear of the garden, carved by Peter Leadbeater, depicts a Carmelite monk. The monks were known as 'White Friars' because of their long white cloaks. Old stones, believed to be remnants of the Carmelite Friary, can be seen in a walled garden behind the town's new library in White Horse Lane.



EDWARD BRIGHT

**St Peters, Maldon**



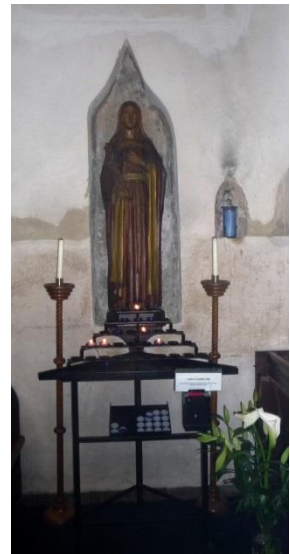
At the top of Maldon hill, you will see the impressive Maldon library. In the seventeenth century Thomas Plume started off the Plume Library, the house to over 8,000 books and pamphlets printed between 1487 and his death in 1704; the collection has been added to at various times since 1704. The Plume Library is to be found at St Peter's Church. Only the original tower survives, the rest of the building having been rebuilt by Thomas Plume to house his library (on the first floor) and what was Maldon Grammar School (on the ground floor).















### **St Mary's, Mundon, Maldon**

The history of St Mary's, Mundon is typical of many small Essex churches. The manor of Mundon was taken from the Anglo Saxon Godwin, a Kings thane and given to Udo Dapifer at the Conquest. For over 400 years it was part of the estates of St Johns Abbey, Colchester until, with the Dissolution, it was passed to Thomas Cromwell and after his execution the building passed to the Duchy of Lancaster which held the right of presentation to the vicarage until this century. The farmland was passed into lay hands. The church is built within the moat of Mundon Hall, a sign of early, possibly Norman foundation. Although the earliest feature in the stone nave is the 14th century north-west window, the font (now removed) has been dated to c.1200. In early Tudor times (the 1500s) the timber West belfry was erected, together with a chapel to the south and the fine north porch, but after that the church was not well looked after.

By 1684. the church had fallen into disrepair. It was not rebuilt until the early 18th century, using brick on the original foundations. It is probable that the box pews and painted texts on the walls are of this period. The church was to serve the people of Mundon, although the heart of the village gradually drifted away from the marshland to be centered around the area of the village inn (now the White Horse) post office and later the village pump.

With the rural decline came neglect of the structure and damage by the blast from a nearby v-weapon during the war; fewer parishioners proved willing to make the journey to the isolated unheated and barely lighted church. Services were held in the Parish Room in West Chase, (demolished in 2004) and although the church was rededicated in 1949 after repairs, the church was virtually abandoned to its fate.



The last burial was in the 1950s and by 1957 the graveyard was overgrown and the roof and nave open to the elements. The parish was then amalgamated with Latchingdon and demolition seemed certain.

In 1974, the parish was transferred to St Mary's at Maldon and the following year the church was adopted and made safe by the efforts of the Friends of Friendless Churches who now lease the property and keep in repair as a Historic Monument.

<b>SATURDAY 14th JANUARY 2017</b>
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**All Saints, Brightlingsea**

The older of the two churches in the town and this one is about outside of it. This is set on a low hill. It begun around 1250 though it incorporates parts of an earlier Norman church. It incorporates even more than that, for Roman bricks can easily be spotted in the walls., particularly in a round headed recess by the South door. The town was associated with the cinque ports and the building is used as a meeting place to elect the Deputy of Brightlingsea.

The most external feature is the embattled tower, built of local flint in the last years of the 15th century. The tower stands 97 feet high in three stages with a minstrel gallery built into the lowest stage. The tower really is quite remarkable with one of the finest examples of diagonal buttress bracing in East Anglia. Under the tower is a baptistery housing a tudor font carved with roses within a quatrefoil. Considerable traces of gilding and colourful paint still cling to the stone surface.







**St James, Victoria Place, Brightonlingsea**

**TUESDAY 31st JANUARY 2017**



**Trinity Methodist, Pier Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea**

This is part of the Trinity Methodist Circuit which is covering Manningtree, Harwich, Brightlingsea, Elmstead Market and Clacton-on-Sea.





### **Pier Avenue Baptist, Pier Avenue, Clacton-on-Sea**

In 1901, a small group of Christian workers, under the leadership of Mr Oatley, conducted evangelical services on the beach at Clacton-on-Sea. The town was growing rapidly, and several Free Churches had already formed, including Trinity Methodist Church, and Christchurch Congregational Chapel.

That autumn, about thirty of these workers met for prayer and fellowship at the home of Mr Horace Smith in Pier Avenue. Towards the end of the meeting, someone asked whether they would be interested in further such gatherings. A lady, (name unknown), then suggested that perhaps a Baptist Mission might be started in the town, as several of the group were Baptist by upbringing.

From such small beginnings, history grows, and the seed of what became Pier Avenue Baptist Church was sown. The meeting passed a resolution to form a committee to look into the possibility of starting a new 'Baptist' fellowship.

Further meetings were held that autumn. By the end of 1901, it has been agreed to form a 'mission' in the town. In January 1902, it was decided to establish a 'Church', and on 24th January 1902, four of the Church's founder members were baptised in Christchurch's baptistery (kindly lent for the occasion) by Rev. J E Martin of Erith. Later that same day, Mr Martin officiated at the formation of the Church, when seventeen founder members committed themselves to the new cause.

For the first chapel, soon, a plot of land in Pier Avenue was purchased. It was agreed to build a chapel as soon as possible so that regular worship could commence. This would be a small brick building, which (it was envisaged) would be replaced by a larger one in due course.

On 20th March 1902, a stone-laying ceremony was held at the site, followed by a Public Meeting at the town hall in the evening. The first chapel, seating 100, was completed by June. The opening services were held on 4th June and were conducted by Rev Thomas Spurgeon (son of the famous Baptist preacher C H Spurgeon of the Metropolitan Tabernacle). This original building is still in use as our 'Fellowship Hall' today. For several months in the summer of 1902, the Church was served by Percy Clements, a young student minister from Spurgeon's College in London. Mr Clements was to become the Church's first minister, and was formally inducted to the pastorate on 5th April 1903.

The Church's minutes record that the cost of the building scheme, including the purchase of the site was £1,830. This represents approximately £100,000 in today's money – a tremendous step of faith for such a small fellowship! Within months, however, the Church began to grow numerically, and the debt was soon reduced. Baptisms were held regularly, and the membership grew under the enthusiastic ministry of Percy Clements. During the summer months, when visitors flocked to the town, the Chapel was too small for Sunday services, and Evening worship was held at the Winter Gardens Hall in Wash Lane.

**Personal view:**

The church have a refreshment shop and it was where my late parents went on their visits to Clacton, and indeed took me there too when I went with them. On a visit there in 2012, I went for a coffee too, and kindly after my marathon walk in the summer of 2013 from Clacton to St Osyth, despite me arriving late, they found me a drink. Next time I went in October 2013, I did my best by arriving a lot earlier. Back there again in January 2017 on a Tuesday and it was a day when they were open for coffee once more.

**WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY 2017**







### **St Stephen's Church, St Stephen's Lane, Ipswich**

Like all medieval towns, Ipswich entered the last few decades of the 20th century with a surfeit of Anglican churches. This is partly the fault of the Victorians it must be said, who rather overstretched the Church of England with the building of massive new churches in the suburbs, and the enthusiastic restoration of the medieval ones. Unfortunately, their work began to wear out at pretty much the same time as the congregations began to melt away, and in any case Ipswich had been less successful than most towns at encouraging people to live in the town centre.

By the 1970s, the population of this parish was probably in single figures. When St Stephen's church was declared redundant in 1975, it was lost in a sea of rundown shops, overlooked by a redundant factory. It wasn't a pretty sight. The author of the article first visited it in 1987, when it was being used for performances of TS Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. It was ideal for this - high, dark, shabby. When the area became the location for the new Buttermarket Shopping Centre, various plans were made to include St Stephen in the complex.

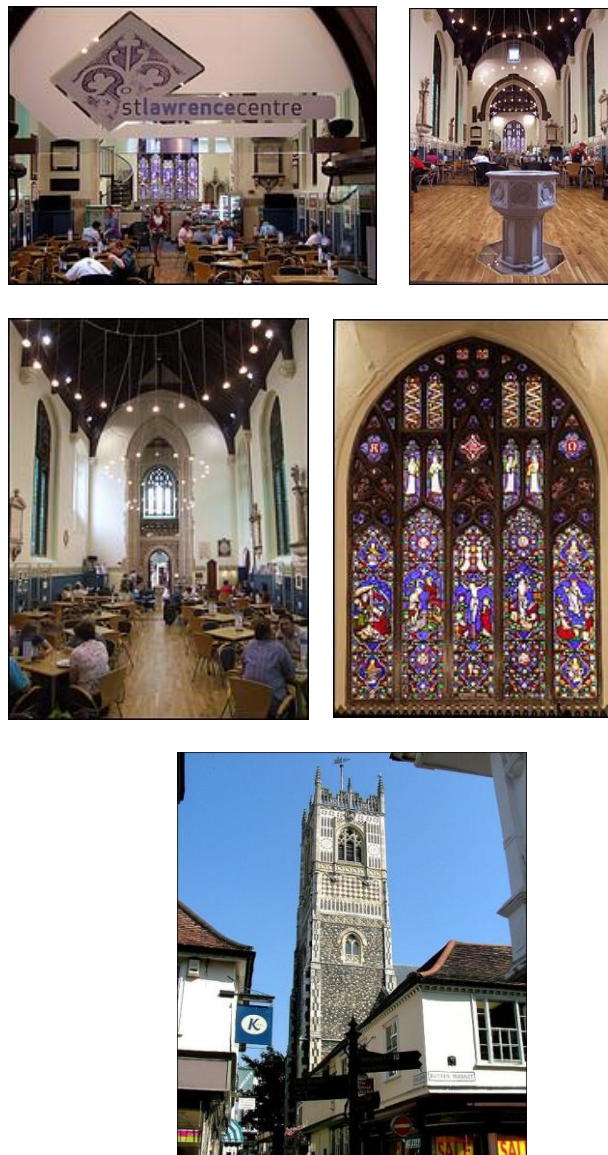
All the buildings around it were quickly demolished. And then, the recession set in, and St Stephen stood high and dry for several years, looking rather more prominent than it probably wished to be. The church suffered heavily from vandalism in the early nineties, and several of the great tomb chests in the churchyard were disrupted.

But in 1994, St Stephen became the new Tourist Information Centre for Ipswich. It was thoroughly restored inside, its former shabbiness cloaked in brilliant white. All the fixtures and fittings were sensitively showcased, and you still enter the fine west doorway with its flanking niches and stoup, past the font.

The fine 16th century roof has been cleaned, the monuments stand out splendidly from the whitewash, and the holy end has been sensitively preserved as an exhibition space, and was for a while still used by the parish of St Mary le Tower on St Stephen's Day each year.

From the outside, the extent to which the church was restored in 1866 and again in 1881 is clear, although it must be said that the brick makes it rather distinguished at this distance, echoing the red-brick tower of St Mary Elms. Internally, this is the most interesting of the six town centre redundant medieval churches. It is one of only two of them to have found a new use, in this case the local council. Ironically, it was Ipswich Borough Council who took possession of the redundant churches from the diocese in the first place.

**Personal view** – one thing of interest for sale were fridge magnet, heraldic crests of people's surname, but neither of the ones I wanted.



**St Lawrence, Dial Lane, Ipswich**



This is a Grade 2 listed church. It let to Realise Futures and is open daily to provide moderately priced refreshments and since 2008 has proved a popular town centre venue, warm and welcoming. The belfry is clearly visible from the nave (the church lacked aisles) and the ring of the five bells is the earliest in Christendom.

On the ninth of September 2009, the bells of St Lawrence were returned to their tower for the first time in a quarter of a century. The bells rang out over the rooftops of Ipswich, and there were emotional scenes, because these five bells, all cast in the 1440s, are the oldest circle of five bells in the whole world.

Anyone visiting St Lawrence church today, particularly if they are a visitor to Ipswich, may not realise quite what an extraordinary journey this church has been on over the last 130 years, and particularly in the last couple of decades. For this, above all others, is the Ipswich church which was nearly lost to them, but which has come back from the dead.

In 1846, Thomas Dugdale's *County Views* series showed Dial Lane in Ipswich (*above*) lined with old shops, some of which survive today. Above them towers a fine 15th century tower, its windows outlined in brick, curious little 18th century urns topping the corners of what is otherwise a typical Suffolk church tower.

In 1882, the London firm of Barnes and Gaye were commissioned to rebuild the upper part of the tower of St Lawrence's church. They produced one of the most extraordinary confections to grace any Suffolk church, more noticeably so because of the rarity of Victorian towers in Ipswich in particular and Suffolk in general. Angels, flowers and mystical symbols interleave amongst geometric flint work designs.

Since the tower was cleaned in 1996, the variety of materials used has become apparent, from brilliant whites and soft pinks to the yellow of the stonework and iron grey of the flint. St Lawrence has a more enclosed site than any other Ipswich church, perhaps more so than any other church in Suffolk, and, as a consequence, this wonderful tower constantly disappears and reappears from behind buildings as you walk around Ipswich town centre. Each side of the tower is different; each view and each perspective have something new to offer.

This is not just an important part of the townscape, but has become a symbol of Ipswich itself. At the base of the tower, the west door opens into Dial Lane, an intimate access familiar from City of London churches. The base of the tower also contains north and south doorways, a processional archway beneath the tower exactly like that at the town church of St Mary's in Diss in Norfolk.

Through these arches the blessed sacrament would have been carried in state on its journey through the medieval town; you can see something similar in Suffolk at Combs and Stanton St John. To stand outside the west door of St Lawrence is to get the beginning of a sense of the meaning and role of churches such as this in times past. Uniquely, the Victorian restorers left the church with no central aisle, in an attempt to defeat the introduction of High Church practices. However, beautiful towers and aisle less naves are then not enough to attract parishioners.

By the early 1970s, there was no one left living in the parish, which was a severely small one, sandwiched between St Stephen's and St Mary le Tower and no more than 20m across in places. St Lawrence was closed, declared redundant, and, once the Diocese had washed their hands of it, entrusted by Ipswich Borough Council to the care of the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust, with no doubts that a new use could easily be found for such a central, beautiful and useful landmark building.

But this did not happen, and St Lawrence was soon in big trouble. By 1995, the floor had become so unsafe that it was not possible to walk across it. By the time the author of this article, visited it in 1998, the side floors had been removed, and the inside (apart from the sanctuary) was now little more than a shell. On a visit in 1999, the church floor was littered with rubble, and was being used to store furniture and garden ornaments. Parts of the bell frame and bell wheels, which had once supported a completely pre-Reformation ring of five bells, were stacked against the college-style pews along the walls. Above, the Victorian stenciling was still readable: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ... You can see the photographs he took on that occasion. Thereafter, it became much too dangerous for public access, and the building was closed permanently.

Many plans were put forward for the use of this building. But it had no electricity, no running water, and the costs involved for any non-commercial organisation would be prohibitive. IHCT hoped that a use could be found which would preserve the integrity of the building, as has happened at [St Stephen](#) 80m away. But by the time St Lawrence had been shut up for more than a quarter of a century, the effects of neglect and decay were overwhelming.

In the Spring of 2000, planning permission was obtained to convert this building into a pub and restaurant. This was about the time he first wrote an account of the church, and he observed then that, despite the long years of neglect, the liturgical integrity of this building would not be saved. I noted that it was not hard to judge that the Churches Conservation Trust might have been a better custodian. St Lawrence could have been kept permanently open, a place for private prayer and a refuge from the busy shopping streets. And at least it would still have a floor. Shortly after this, in December 2001, he received a letter from John Blatchly, of the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust. He wrote that *The developer interested in St Lawrence has withdrawn his original planning application prior to submitting another.*

*They have agreed to extend the period during which we give him priority over other interested parties. The mural memorial there to James Thorndike, several times bailiff of the town in the early nineteenth century, fell from the wall and smashed into many fragments when its fixings perished. Its repair will be expensive, drawing their attention to the need to check the secure mounting of all the monuments in their churches. It will shortly be back in position, and he has found Thorndike's portrait which he shall offer with a press release. This is the real problem church. Town centre, but difficult to service and no parking very close at hand. If this developer, who would be prepared to spend a great deal on the fabric, does clinch a deal, the building will be infinitely improved in condition and given a useful future. The use must be carefully chosen, but it will have to be fully commercial.* He wondered at the time how turning a church into a pub/restaurant constituted a change of use which was carefully chosen.



And, as you may imagine, nothing eventually came of the application and the developer, the JD Wetherspoon chain, withdrew completely, not least because of the seven figure sum which would have been necessary to restore the interior to use. The *other interested parties* that John Blatchly mentioned also seemed to vanish into thin air, and the church continued to decay in the years after.

Without wishing to appear smug, and realising that hindsight has powerful eyes, he must recall that at the time of the 2004 entry for this church on the Suffolk Churches website, he mused that there was no reason why the use had to be *fully commercial*. Britain is a rich country, he wrote, much richer than it had been in the 1970s when St Lawrence was declared redundant. And Ipswich was a thriving town. This church's tower is a landmark, and it was hardly to the credit of the Borough of Ipswich, who took possession when the Diocese declared it redundant, to have a derelict landmark at its heart.

Light-heartedly, he suggested that perhaps they should take it back from the Historic Churches Trust, bang a few pennies on the council tax, and do something useful with it.

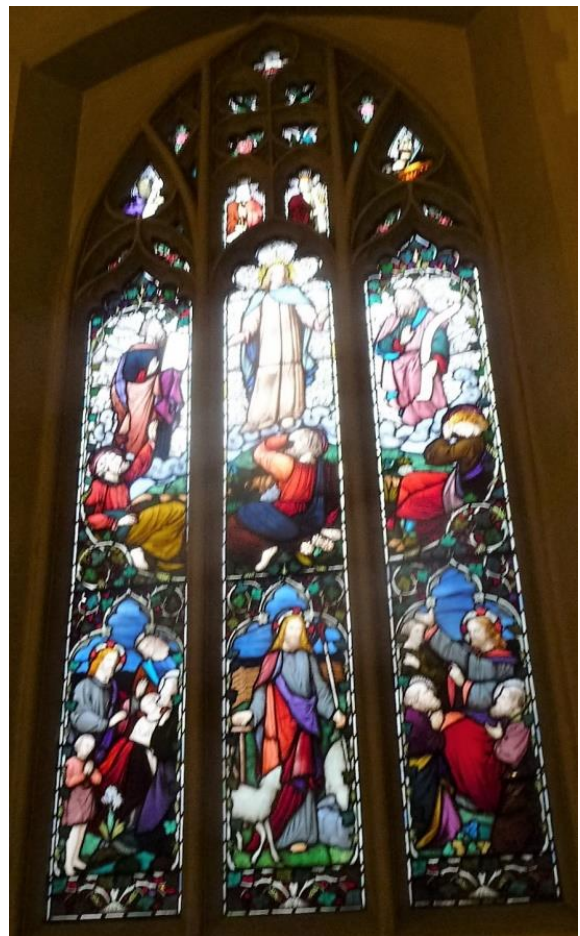
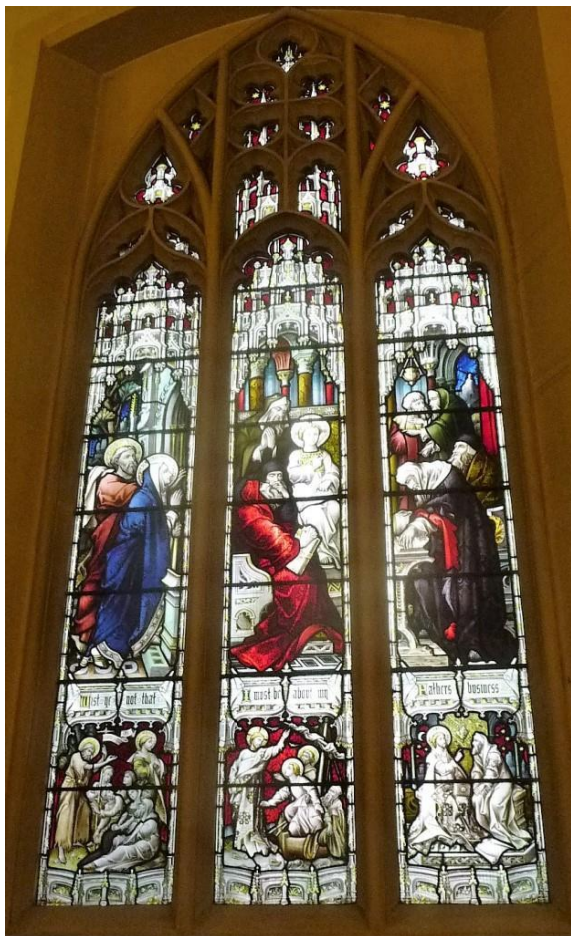
Rather extraordinarily, this is exactly what has happened. In 2006, it was announced that the Borough Council and Suffolk County Council were then to help develop St Lawrence as a community resource - not a *fully commercial* use after all. Involved parties included Age Concern, who had previously had a café in the Town Hall, and the project was co-ordinated by Whitehouse Enterprises, an Ipswich-based 'progressive social enterprise' which enables adults with disabilities to find work.

Their two main activities are catering and furniture production, both of which have contributed to the reinvention of this church as the St Lawrence Centre, effectively a community restaurant and gallery. It was opened to the public in July 2008.

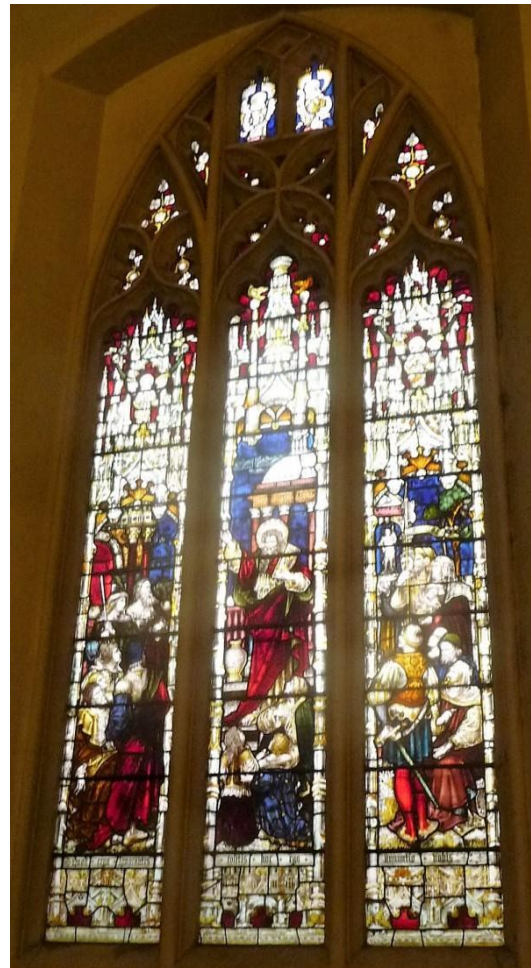
The fabulous cost of 1.2 million pounds for the restoration came entirely from the public purse. £400,000 was provided by the council tax payers of Ipswich, the rest coming from central government. In the end, it would not have been possible for a commercial organisation to justify these costs, and so it was that the Borough *did* do something useful on it, although the cost to council tax payers was more like £10 per household rather than the 'few pennies' I had suggested.

Whatever you think about that, there is no question that this is a very happy outcome for the building itself. Since there are no internal partitions, the liturgical integrity has been broadly retained, with kitchens and serving area in the chancel and the nave full of tables and chairs. All the memorials, glass and stenciling have been restored and are still in situ. As at St Stephen a few yards away, you still walk in through the west door past the font. The lights in great circles above and the light wooden floor below create the feel of a space that is at once modern, and yet mindful of its past.

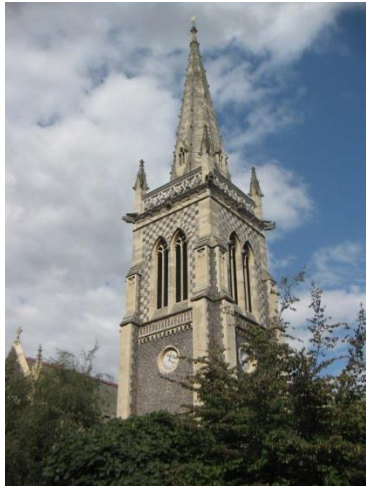
The overall effect is splendid. This means that, for the first time in the quarter of a century since most of them were declared redundant, all of Ipswich's six town centre churches are now being used again - although, of course, none of them is in any sense commercial. And what does that matter, as you stand and listen to those wonderful bells?











### St Mary le Tower, Tower Street, Ipswich

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.



**Christchurch, Tacket Street, Ipswich**



They are an inter-denominational fellowship which comprises Tacket Street United Reformed Church (formerly Congregational) founded in 1686 and Turret Green Baptist Church founded in 1842.

The first service of the two churches worshipping together as Christ Church took place in March 1978.

In 1686 a few Christians united and hired a building which stood in Green Yard in the Parish of St Peter; these Independents who had previously worshipped with a group of Presbyterians broke away and they formed the nucleus of the church later to become Tacket Street Congregational Church. The first minister was Rev John Langston. His portrait hangs in the Langston Hall adjoining the present church.

Land for a new Meeting House was purchased in Tankard Street (now Tacket Street) in 1718. The new Meeting House opened in 1720 seating 800 people. Rev William Gordon (later Rev Dr Gordon) came in 1754 as assistant minister to Rev William Notcutt and later succeeded him as sole pastor.

Later on he went to America espousing the cause of the Americans in the War of Independence and the British Government placed a price on his head. He was allowed to return to England after the signing of the peace and later resettled in Ipswich. He died in 1807 and is buried in the graveyard at Christ Church.

In 1801 the first Sunday School in Ipswich was established at the Tacket Street Meeting House. In 1795, the year that the London Missionary Society was founded, a member of Tacket Street, Daniel Howell, went overseas; he was killed by natives in 1799. The LMS is now part of the Council for World Mission.

The last services were held in the Meeting House in April 1857. The pulpit was transferred to the present Christ Church building, which was completed in eight months and opened in January 1858.

It was built in the grand Gothic Revival style and designed by Ipswich architect Frederick Barnes, and seats 1,150 people. It is built of Kentish Rag with Caen stone quoins.

Originally two spires topped the turrets flanking the main entrance, but they were removed in the 1960's when they were considered to be unsafe. A feature of the building is the large rose window over the main entrance, its delicate tracery filled with coloured glass. The large organ is one of the finest in the Ipswich area.

The later Turret Green Baptist Chapel building opened in 1893 (now demolished) in Silent Street, was a very large brick building consisting of nave, chancel and transepts resembling a building of the established church.

This had in turn superseded the Chapel built in 1842; the latter was retained as the Church Hall until recently. It still stands today situated in Turret Lane.

Turret Green Court Sheltered Housing and Serenus Court, an Abbeyfield Residential Care House now occupy the site of the former Turret Green Church.