



**CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED
(17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 9**



THURSDAY 13th APRIL 2017



Artillery Street Evangelical, Artillery Street, Colchester

Artillery Street Evangelical Church has been in Colchester a very long time – over 170 years. Back in 1839 a small group of Christians (calling themselves Primitive Methodists) decided to buy some land and build a church. The land they bought had some barracks built on it which were at that time being demolished. There were few, if any, houses in the area and the track to “Barrack Ground Chapel” became known as Chapel Lane. In later years as the area developed and the streets took on names with historical connections, Chapel Lane became Artillery Street.

However from an historical viewpoint, this church is most famous for being the place where Charles Haddon Spurgeon – a very famous Victorian preacher – was converted in January 1850. As a lad of 15, he was struggling up Hythe Hill in a snow blizzard one Sunday, trying to get to another church in Colchester. He realised that he was not going to make it and turned into this chapel in Artillery Street. Here he heard the Gospel message from Isaiah 45:22 “Look to me and be saved”.

His life was changed that day forever; he gave his and life to the Lord and trusted him for forgiveness of his sins. Like many today who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Spurgeon found peace with God and experienced a personal and meaningful relationship with him. Right up to the 1900’s Colchester grew around the chapel. Paxman Engineering relocated to a 13 acre farm known as “Stonehouse Farm” on Hythe Hill. Many Paxman engineering employees lived in house near the works. This tightly packed terraced housing still surrounds the church today. But by the 1930’s, there was sadly little doctrinal difference between Primitive Methodists and General Methodists and in 1934 the two denominations combined.

The chapel in Artillery Street had now lost its strategic importance as the main Primitive Methodist chapel in this part of East Anglia, and attendance declined. From the second World War until the present day, the church has had a chequered history. On 30th November 1956 the trustees agreed that the chapel would close after the evening service of 24th February 1957. The building was sold to a business man.

However he never really used it and in August 1959 a music group called the Gospel Aires started leading it as a place to practice. Some local people decided to join the group for a Sunday evening service and later a morning service and Sunday School was added. A trust called Datchett Evangelical Fellowship became interested and received money to buy the building in 1965. Three later a pastor was called who served the church for thirteen years.

By July 1989 however the church gone down to three faithful members and again there was pressure to close the church. The church called another Pastor (Derek Hales) in 1991, and the work was strengthened and established once again. In 1999 Derek contracted cancer and passed into glory later that year. The church struggled in until Jeff Avery became Pastor in 2007, but his ministry ended in 2009. The present Pastor, Peter Millist, commenced in January 2010.



Wimpole Road Methodist, Wimpole Road, Colchester

Wimpole Road is a substantial Gothic style Methodist Church erected in 1904. The New Town area of Colchester was developed from 1878 and within four years the Colchester Wesleyans had started the search for a suitable site. By the turn of the century the first Trustees had acquired a prominent corner site immediately next to the former Military Parade Ground and then (and still) a Recreation Ground. Total costs including the land were about £4,500.

The Church when opened contrasted with the small plain country Chapels in the surrounding villages. It had a tower and a spire, although these were of no practical use. It was clearly a Church and not a Chapel. It did not however follow that because the Church and its premises were large that the congregation were affluent. Early records show that although the congregations were good, the people “mostly if not altogether of the Artisan class” were of limited means and “were unable to grapple” with a great and long lasting debt. Three years after opening the debt was well over £3,000 and the balance at the bank was £33.00. The work however was “a decided success”.

The Church flourished between the two World Wars. As was the fashion, pews were placed in every part but, it is said, the Church was full for both morning and evening services. The Sunday School was very strong numbering several hundred children. After the second World War other Methodist Churches in the district closed with members transferring to Wimpole Road. Membership peaked in the 1960s. Substantial renovations took place in 1979 and the premises have now been subsequently updated.

Today they have an attractive Church with modern facilities and with an active caring family membership. They have served the New Town area of Colchester for over a hundred years and have every intention of doing so in the years to come.



St Stephens, Canterbury Road, Colchester

St Stephen's was originally founded as a daughter church of St Botolph's towards the end of the 19th Century. At this time, the area known as New Town was being developed and the parish of St Botolph's foresaw the need to provide for the spiritual requirements of their growing population. A 'temporary' building was thus erected in 1894, subsequently going on to serve as the parish hall for over a century. A more substantial brick building (the former church) was opened in 1905. It was not until 1953 that St Stephen's became a parish in it's own right. Then, in the mid 1970's St Stephen's, together with the neighbouring parishes of St Leonard and St Mary Magdalen became part of a Team Ministry. This was later reconstituted to create the United Benefice of New Town and the Hythe. The present Church Centre opened in 2001, is designed to build on the hopes and aspirations of the past and in providing greatly improved facilities for the whole community, is consequently well-placed to meet the challenges of the future. Their aim at St Stephen's is thus to serve and respond to the needs of this continually evolving and growing part of Colchester.



**St John's Russian Orthodox Church,
formerly Garrison Church, Military Road, Colchester**

Built in Military Road in 1855 to hold services for soldiers going to the Crimean War, this large Grade II* listed timber church has space for a congregation of 500. It is now St John's Russian Orthodox Church. St John's Orthodox Church certainly has the 'wow factor' according to its many visitors. Situated 15-20 minutes' walk from the town centre on an acre of land at the highest point in Colchester proper, this white, wooden, colonial-style church is unique in this country.

Over 150 years old and formerly Colchester Garrison Church, in 2008 it was bought by the 164 million-strong Russian Orthodox Church. Since then it has become the natural centre for the whole Orthodox Christian community in Essex and Suffolk, gathering over 500 people of more than twenty different nationalities.

Inside may be seen the widest icon-screen (20 metres/70 feet) in this country, huge, colourful frescoes of Orthodox Christian feasts and saints and some 500 icons.

Apart from the main church, there is also a chapel dedicated to all the Saints of the British Isles and Ireland, a hall, side rooms, toilets and baby-changing facilities. Outside in the gardens the community has erected an Orthodox memorial cross in memory of the 469 soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars who are buried there.



St Barnabas, Abbots Road, Colchester

Built on the site of a Victorian church, St Barnabas was built in 1949 to replace the original church which was in a state of disrepair. A small and friendly church, it has various services and masses during the week including a Parish Sung Mass on a Sunday Morning at 10am.

Old Heath is the parish to the south east of Colchester and is bordered by the River Colne and the Mersea Road.

At its' southern boundary is Rowhedge and Fingringhoe and from the north it is approached along Military Road or Mersea Road. The Village of Old Heath (originally Old Hythe) has existed since Saxon times though it has largely lost its' village look now. Nevertheless there is a good community atmosphere and they are 'steeped' in history. A book published by Father Richard (The Vicar) and Patrick Denney (Local resident and historian) is worth a read and is available from Fr Richard, from the Post Office or from Red Lion Books in Colchester High Street.

The stream known as Bourne Stream which flows from Bourne Mill upper pond down to the river Colne marks the parish boundary between Old Heath and New Town St. Stephens.

The Saxons created the first Port for Colchester in a meander in the river between what is now Haven Road and Quay and the boundary with Rowhedge. What we now call 'The Hythe' was formerly known as 'the New Hythe' signifying the fact that Colchester's Port had moved up river.

The Parish Church (On Abbot's Road) was first established back in 1874 having previously been served from St.Giles which is near the Town Station. The old church was demolished in 1949 having been declared unsafe and the new church built. It is, to say the least, plain outside but undoubtedly beautiful inside and serves as a real centre for the community. Bourne Mill sits on one boundary and Distillery Pond (so called because a Malt Distillery was located there from 1812) with its historic associations is firmly within the parish.

They have a Post Office, a Pub, a number of convenient shops, a thriving school, a Senior Citizens' Activity Centre, and three sheltered homes for the aged and a Community Centre. In addition to the parish Church (Church of England) there is a small Chapel known locally as the 'Tin tabernacle' which is a Congregational Chapel. Housing varies from the early developments in the 18th and 19th centuries to the developments along the Old Heath Road which are largely 1920's -1940's structures. A later housing estate grew up on Speedwell Road and further developments along Abbot's Road and now down by the Quay have increased their population to in the region of 6,000 people many of whose families have lived here for generations.

A large Industrial Estate provides employment. It is a good safe place to live and they are surrounded by the Military Ranges and open spaces and so keep their distinctive existence whilst being firmly and proudly a part of Colchester.



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.



United Reform, Chapel Road, Tiptree

The area around Tiptree has long been associated with what became known as the English Dissenters; Christians who separated from the Church of England in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The sad account of the martyrdom of men from nearby Wigborough in 1555 is recorded in Foxe's Book of Martyrs. Most of the Puritan ministers were driven from the Church of England following the Uniformity Act, 1662, and it is understood that in this area, ejected clergy resorted to preaching in local woods.

Following these developments, the first Tiptree non-conformist church was founded in 1664, with the first church building established in 1750. Other buildings were added in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the present church building being erected in 1864 as a Congregational Chapel. The year 1972 saw the establishment of the United Reformed Church (URC); the union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales, and the Presbyterian Church of England. It united with the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ in 1981. Relatively recent additions to the Tiptree church complex include a new hall and a manse which were added in 2004

Their congregation comes from the community of Tiptree and surrounding area generally. They think of ourselves as not just a group of disparate Christians that happen to attend the same church, but a 'family' whose members support each other. Some of our folk have lived in the area and worshipped here for many years. Others have joined us more recently, having moved to Tiptree or the nearby villages from further afield, either for work or to retire. Our 'family' embraces all ages, from small toddlers to senior citizens, and those in between; working parents and the happily retired.

The Rev. Ken. Thom was formally inducted as the new minister for Tiptree URC on 13th October 2012. Under the overall oversight of Ken Thom and the serving Elders, all members are involved in some way in the various activities, fulfilling roles and exercising their gifts to continue the ministry of the church in the community.





St Luke's, Church Road Tiptree

"That the Church of Saint Luke, Tiptree Heath should be appropriated and used as the Parish Church of the new district, and should be included in the Deanery of Witham, in the Archdeaconry of Colchester and the Diocese of Rochester". In 1855 the first stone was laid on a twelve acre site donated by the Earl of Verulam and the church consecrated on Friday 17 October 1856 at 12 noon by the Bishop of Rochester. It was built by Mr Wells of Bermondsey to a design by Mr Ewan Christian at a cost of £1,850. It was designed to sit 500, the whole of the seats were open, four-fifths being free. No incumbent was appointed until 1859 when the Rev'd Henry Frend, who had been nominated in 1857, took up the post and moved into the newly completed parsonage.

The new parish of Tiptree Heath was created mainly from parts of the parishes of Inworth, Messing and Tolleshunt Knights. The incumbent of Tolleshunt Knights was of the opinion that too much of the population of Tolleshunt Knights was included in the new parish. However on 29 June 1858 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were able to serve the formal notices on the Patrons and Incumbents of the parishes affected and on 11 November 1858 the new 'Parish of Tiptree Heath, formally came into existence, being effective from 24 June 1858, the date of the publication of the order in the London Gazette.

Union with Tolleshunt Knights

In 1955, the year after he became incumbent, the Rev'd Christopher Temple Chandler was asked to hold the living of Tolleshunt Knights in plurality with Tiptree. This meant that each parish would elect their own PCC and churchwardens, but that the incumbent would be Rector of both parishes, this arrangement existing until the incumbent changed. In 1960 it was agreed that there would be a union of the parishes whereby only one set of wardens and one PCC would be elected, the arrangement to continue in perpetuity. The formal order in Council was signed in February 1961.

Union with Great Braxted

In 1986 the Rev'd Anthony Bickersteth was approached by the Archdeacon to take on the Parish of Great Braxted, Great Braxted retaining its own PCC and churchwardens. The scheme was formally confirmed by the Privy Council and took effect from 1 August 1987



St John Houghton Catholic, Church Road, Tiptree

This is a Christian congregation serving the Tiptree community and seeking, engaging, and encouraging others through a life-changing Christian journey. **St. John Houghton** at Tiptree, Essex seeks to be a loving, friendly community that worships God, and serves others. We place a high priority on teaching from the Bible and following the example of Jesus. Our vision is to impact and renew Tiptree, Essex and beyond with the transforming message of Jesus Christ through words and actions. Everyone is welcome. Come as you are - we'd love to get to know you.

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| SATURDAY 15th APRIL 2017 |
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Methodist, Ashlyns Road Frinton-on-Sea



Free Church, Connaught Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea





Old St Mary's, Frinton-on-Sea



St Mary's, Old Road, Frinton-on-Sea

MONDAY 24th APRIL 2017



Church, near Liverpool Street



All Hallows, near the Tower of London

All Hallows-by-the-Tower, also previously dedicated to St Mary the Virgin and sometimes known as All Hallows Barking, is an ancient Anglican church on Byward Street in the City of London, overlooking the Tower of London.

Founded in 675, it is one of the oldest churches in London, and contains inside a 7th-century Anglo-Saxon arch with recycled Roman tiles, the oldest surviving piece of church fabric in the city. (St Pancras Old Church in King's Cross has been a place of Christian worship since the sixth century.)

All Hallows-by-the-Tower was first established in 675 by the Anglo-Saxon Abbey at Barking and was for many years named after the abbey, as All Hallows Barking. The church was built on the site of a former Roman building, traces of which have been discovered in the crypt. It was expanded and rebuilt several times between the 11th and 15th centuries. Its proximity to the Tower of London meant that it acquired royal connections, with Edward IV making one of its chapels a royal chantry and the beheaded victims of Tower executions being sent for temporary burial at All Hallows.

The interior

The church was badly damaged by an explosion in 1650 caused when some barrels of gunpowder being stored in the churchyard exploded; its west tower and some 50 nearby houses were destroyed, and there were many fatalities. The tower was rebuilt in 1658, the only example of work carried out on a church during the Commonwealth era of 1649–1660. It only narrowly survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 and owes its survival to Admiral William Penn, father of William Penn of Pennsylvania fame, who had his men from a nearby naval yard demolish the surrounding buildings to create firebreaks. During the Great Fire, Samuel Pepys climbed the church's spire to watch the progress of the blaze and what he described as "the saddest sight of desolation".

Restored in the late 19th century, All Hallows was gutted by German bombers during the Blitz in World War II and required extensive reconstruction, only being rededicated in 1957.

Many portions of the old church survived the War and have been sympathetically restored.^[5] Its outer walls are 15th-century, with a 7th-century Saxon arch doorway surviving from the original church, which is the oldest piece of church material in London. Many brasses remain in the interior. (The brass rubbing centre which used to be located at All Hallows is now closed). Three outstanding wooden statues of saints dating from the 15th and 16th centuries can also be found in the church, as can an exquisite Baptismal font cover which was carved in 1682 by Grinling Gibbons for £12, and which is regarded as one of the finest pieces of carving in London. In 1999 the AOC Archaeology Group excavated the cemetery and made many significant discoveries.

The church has a museum called the Undercroft Museum, containing portions of a Roman pavement which together with many artefacts was discovered many feet below the church in 1926. The exhibits focus on the history of the church and the City of London, and include Saxon and religious artefacts.

Also on display are the church's registers dating back to the 16th century, and notable entries include the baptism of William Penn, the marriage of John Quincy Adams (which is the only marriage of a U.S. President that occurred on foreign soil), and the burial of Archbishop William Laud. Laud remained buried in a vault in the chapel for over 20 years; it was moved during the Restoration to St John's College, Oxford.

The altar in the crypt is of plain stone from the castle of Richard I at Athlit in The Holy Land. All Hallows-by-the-Tower has been the Guild church of Toc H since 1922. The church was designated a Grade I listed building on 4 January 1950.

The Church also has a Carillon which was brought back to working order in the 1970s by Philip Blewett, then a priest at the church, and Desmond Buckley over many weekends.

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| THURSDAY 27th APRIL 2017 |
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Old St Mary's, West Bergholt

St Mary's Old Church was built over one thousand years ago. As the centre of the village moved away from the Church, the New St. Mary's Church was built in 1904.

The Old Church was declared redundant in 1975 and the Churches Conservation Trust is now responsible for the preservation of this and 345 redundant churches in England.

The Friends Group is open to anyone who is interested in helping to take care of this historical old building. The Friends aim to keep the Church open for visitors and a rota of volunteers open and close the building most days. During 2013 four weddings took place and there have been a further two wedding in 2014. The latest visitor count showed that 1,907 people visited between 1 January and 31 March 2014.

Excavation has shown that the oldest part of the church is Saxon, its north wall dating from about 1000. At this time there was an apse at the east end, but this was later converted into a square-ended chancel. The chancel was extended in about 1300. During the 14th century the south aisle with its three-bay arcade was added. When the bellcote was added in two phases during the medieval era, timber originally from the west end of the church, was used in its construction.

During the following centuries there was a population shift, and by the late 19th century most people were living at a distance from the church. Due to this, and because the fabric of the church had deteriorated, it was decided to build a new church, also dedicated to Saint Mary, nearer to its congregation. This was dedicated on 12 August 1904. The old church was declared redundant in 1975 and was vested in the Churches Conservation Trust the following year.

Queen Elizabeth I had to step in twice to sort out problems with the village vicars. The first troublesome vicar was Reverend Edmund Tarrell, who was noted for spending too much time in the public houses and not enough time in the Church. The Queen has to intervene after it was reported that the vicar had failed to turn up to evensong and failing to give a woman her last rites as he was in a Colchester pub and could not be found.

The most serious offence, which he managed to escape, was not reading out King Henry VIII's latest religious doctrine, which carried the penalty of death. Later in 1581 it was reported to the Queen that the village's vicar, Reverend Richard Kyrby, refused to conduct the service in English after the introduction of her new Prayer Book, which he claimed should remain in Latin. Sixteen years later the Queen stepped in and had him removed.

In 1650, Reverend Gregory Holland was called before the *Committee for Scandalous Ministers* for preaching Royalist sermons during the Civil War, along with drunkenness and swearing in Church. The result of this hearing was that he was allowed to continue in his post as vicar at Bergholt, but that the parishioners elect him a curate, who would pay him the majority of his stipend.

It was not only the vicars that were in trouble, but in 1556 a member of the parish, Agrees George, was out of favour with Queen Mary, for refusing to attend church until the service was no longer conducted in the Roman Catholic tradition. She was then tried before the Bishop of London, Reverend Edmund Bonner, along with 12 others. During her time at Newgate Prison she wrote a letter attacking the Pope for being the Anti-Christ and that she was baptised in Christ's Church not Rome. She was burned at Stratford before 20,000 people.

James First's Royal Coat in St Mary's Church

Later on, in order to remind all the villagers who was king, King James I had his royal coat of arms painted in the Church. This coat of arms can still be seen to this day if one stands in the gallery and looks towards the altar. The motto on the arms reads "Exurgat Deus Dissipentur Inimici", this is the opening line of Psalm 68 (Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered). Opposite James' arms is a set of Hanoverian arms acquired in 1816.

Architecture

The church is constructed in indurated conglomerate and has tiled roofs. The porch is of timber on a brick plinth. Romanesque carved stones have been re-used in the walls of the present church. Its plan consists of a three-bay nave with a south aisle and a south porch, a chancel, and a bellcote at the west end. The windows in the chancel have Y-tracery, while the tracery in the windows of the south aisle is curvilinear. Internally the roof is supported by massive tie-beams, and the ceilings are plastered. At the west end is a gallery on two Ionic columns, with a panelled front and an entablature with triglyphs. In the southeast of the aisle is a piscina with a trefoil head. The font consists of a cylindrical bowl on a square stem. There is also a royal coat of arms from the Jacobean era.⁴

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| SATURDAY 29th APRIL 2017 |
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St Leonard's, Southminster

The parish church was seen from the bus enroute to Burnham-on-Crouch. Its nave shows 3 distinct heights of building, 12th century septaria, rubble and Roman brick, 15th century flint clerestory, 19th century gault brick over. West tower base 12th century of septaria and rubble, raised 15th century, repairs of red brick, flint flushwork with gables. 15th century north porch, flint with stone dressings circa 1820 Chancel, sanctuary, north and south transepts rendered brick. Bomb damage 1940. 20th century concrete pantiles. Full height Chancel, sanctuary, north and south transepts. Dr. Alexander Scott, a former naval officer. Symmetrical. 5 angled gables, 2 light ogee windows, moulded 2 centre arched heads and labels to 2nd and 4th angles. Left and right corner turrets with slanting roofs. Transepts gabled to north and south with 3 stage angle buttresses. 4 cinquefoil lights with reticulated tracery over, moulded 2 centre arched heads, label over. Doorway to west wall of north transept, sunk chamfered segmental pointed arch, sunk spandrels, flat head, label over. Small plastered lean-to extension to east wall of south transept. Nave, 2 north wall 15th century clerestorey windows of 3 trefoiled lights, under square heads.

East window of 2 cinquefoil lights, tracery over under a square head, label over. 15th century north doorway, moulded jambs, re-set 2 centre arched head, label with headstops. 4 similar clerestorey windows to south wall, all partly restored. 3 windows to south wall, those to east and west of 2 cinquefoil lights, tracery over, under square heads, labels over. Between western and central windows part of a large red brick 12th century round headed arch is visible. Central 15th century window, 2 cinquefoil lights, tracery over under 4 centre arched head, label over. West of this window is the early 12th century doorway with plain jambs, imposts and round head. 19th century sundial and medieval scratch dial adjacent to east of doorway. To the north west of Nave is a stair turret with 2 small loop lights and lean-to roof. West tower of 3 stages, only the upper stage visible externally. 15th century moulded cornice with carved ball flowers, flint flushwork to shallow north and south gables. Iron ties to east and west walls. 5 stage buttress to south west angle. 2 stage buttress to northwest angle. West door, 15th century restored, double chamfered jambs, 2 centre arched head, label over. 19th century vertically boarded door with strap hinges.

15th century restored window above door. Of 2 cinquefoil lights under a square head, label over. Clock over north face stair turret. Second stage of south face has a 15th century window with trefoil head, much eroded. Band and 15th century partly restored windows of 2 trefoiled lights under square heads to each face of the bell chamber. 15th century 2 storey north porch. Crenellated, moulded band, moulded plinth. 3-stage buttresses to left and right. Each return wall has 2 windows of 2 cinquefoil lights, moulded labels. Those to ground floor with segmental arches, first floor, with square heads. Gargoyle to left return. 2 centred outer archway of 2 moulded orders, the inner resting on shafts with moulded capitals and bases. Moulded label with head stops. Above the archway are 3 niches, each with buttressed jambs, cusped, crocketed and finialed canopies and moulded cills carved with 3 heads, angels or shields. The 15th century north doorway with moulded jambs, 2 centre arched head and label. A stoup to left of this door with cusping, ogee head and round drain. Interior. North porch. The ground. floor vaulted stone ceiling springs from angle shafts with moulded and crenellated capitals and moulded bases. Moulded ribs, carved bosses of the Trinity, Half Angels and foliate motifs, some eroded.

The first floor with timber cambered roof, is approached by stone stairs with central newel from a small 15th century doorway with hollow chamfered jambs and 2 centred head, in north wall of Nave, 15th century door of overlapping battens with strap hinges, similar entrance doorway to first floor room. Nave, Chancel, north and south transepts and transept crossing, vaulted ceilings, plastered and ribbed with bosses. 20th century plastic tiled floors throughout. Chancel, reredos 19th century carved stone, double left and right panels, crocketed and pinnacled pilasters, figures of SS. Cedd and Alban left and right of central cusped and illuminated panel, pointed head over, illuminations of 12 Apostles, central red marble crucifix, carved stone symbols of Crucifixion to soffit.

Incorporated stone sedilia of 13 cusped and crenellated bays, one to right with marble shelf. 20th century wrought iron posts and moulded wood altar rail. Traceried timber panelling to choir and organ. Front 15th century poppy head choir stalls, the rest 19th century copies. Moulded 2 centre head Chancel arch. A chest, table, glass fronted cupboard, looking glass and iron box fireplace, known as The Nelson Relics and reputed to have been brought from H.M.S. Victory by Dr. Alexander Scott, are in the transept vestries. Nave. 19th century brass eagle lectern.

19th century carved timber octagonal pulpit, 2 light tracery to panels, saints to angles. 19th and 20th century stained glass and glass fragment margins and quarries to ground floor windows, clear glass to clerestory. Memorial board relating enlargement dated 1819. 2 consecration crosses, formee on splay of south doorway, the upper probably 12th century, the lower probably 15th century when the church was extended by Vytoner, Abbot of St. Osyth, Essex. Font 15th century. Octagonal, moulded edge, quatrefoils with flower centres to panels. Stem with quatrefoil and cinquefoil headed panels. Quatrefoiled base with square flowers, 19th century carved timber cover. 15th century 2 centred west tower arch of 3 chamfered orders, blocked round headed arch over. High up on east wall probably 12th century carved stonehead. South wall, 12th century blocked window. North wall, chamfered 2 centred arched doorway.



St Mary's, Marsh Road, Burnham-on-Crouch

Christian worship has been offered here on the site of St Mary's Church for over 800 years. We know there was a church on this site in 1155 and the earliest visible craftsmanship to be seen is the font, which survives from the 12th century.

The Church has changed a lot over time with major taking place in nearly every century. The most significant change was in the 18th Century due to damage from a major storm in 1702, when the tower was severely damaged, and in 1774, when the body of the church caught fire.

The interior of St Mary's is distinctive. It is long and low, which creates a tunnel-like effect, due to the continuous plaster ceilings, which cover an unbroken length of some 93 feet and date from 1774 – although the south side roof was renewed in 1979. Extra light is given by the plain and rustic windows in the nave roof. At the centre of the nave hangs a fine chandelier, believed to be 17th century, which hangs from a pretty plaster pattern. The chandelier was converted from candles to gas lamps and subsequently to electricity in 1935 and in the late 1990s reverted to candles.

The aisles are divided from the nave by arcades of nine bays. This is a remarkable number for the size of the church. The arcades are a dominant feature of the church and they stretch for its entire length.

Following extensive renovation work in 2008 the west end of the north aisle has been converted into a vestry/meeting room, which is named after the Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. The guardians of the Shrine are the patrons of the living and the Parish has enjoyed close links with the Shrine over many years. Included in the room is a beautiful niche which has a mass of 14th century stone-carving, including leaves and flowers. Access to the tower staircase is through the toilet by way of a mediaeval door which is bound with iron. This leads to the bell chamber in which six bells hang, the oldest of which dates back to 1415.

There are a number of notable memorials in the church including plaques on the walls and ledger-slabs on the floor. One commemorates the fire of 1774 and is made from 18th century roof lead. Also in the north chapel is a tablet to members of the family of Rev'd Alexander Scott, who was Curate of Burnham for many years from 1808 and, during the time of an absentee Vicar, was also Vicar of Southminster. He was Chaplain on board H.M.S Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, and Lord Nelson died in his arms.

Amongst the plate held by the church is a cup and cover, also a paten, made in 1638, an 18th century flagon, also some tasteful 19th and 20th century plate, including a ciborium given in 1977.

The registers of the church date back to 1559 and are held by the Essex County Archives.

MONDAY 15th MAY 2017



St Magdalen, High Street Billericay

St Mary Magdalen Church in the High Street, Billericay re-opened in 2007 after many months of restoration and refurbishment and entered a new era of community use, while still retaining its all-important role as a spiritual haven at the heart of the town. The building is equipped to serve the community in a variety of ways. A heated, tiled floor was laid and wood-framed upholstered church chairs added; similar to those in Chelmsford Cathedral. In addition, a kitchen and new toilets were installed and the heating renewed.

St Mary's is now much more comfortable and flexible. It is an ideal setting for concerts, exhibitions and a wide range of public events and community occasions - as well as for some religious services.

The majority of the cost of the refurbishment was raised from generous contributions from local charities and from local support. The remaining amount was borrowed to complete the work and clearly any contribution we can raise from towns-people to preserve St Mary Magdalen at the centre of our town we shall welcome.

TUESDAY 16th MAY 2017



St Michael's, Braintree

THURSDAY 18th MAY 2017





St Peter's, Church Green, Coggeshall



Methodist, Coggeshall

FRIDAY 2nd JUNE 2017

It was a trip to London and although I did not venture inside, I do include two of the major churches seen on the day.



St Paul's Cathedral, London

For more than 1,400 years, a Cathedral dedicated to St Paul has stood at the highest point in the City.

Frequently at the centre of national events, traditions have been observed here and radical new ideas have found expression under the iconic dome. In many cases these events have left some physical record as well as echoes in the intangible memory of the building.

The present Cathedral, the masterpiece of Britain's most famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, is at least the fourth to have stood on the site. It was built between 1675 and 1710, after its predecessor was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, and services began in 1697.

This was the first Cathedral to be built after the English Reformation in the sixteenth-century, when Henry VIII removed the Church of England from the jurisdiction of the Pope and the Crown took control of the life of the church.

1905-present

Defending the Building | Royal Events and Social Reformers

1906–1960 Belt and Braces: Strengthening the Dome and Defending the Building

Cracks had appeared in some parts of the Cathedral as a result of settlement even before the Cathedral was topped-off in 1710 and concern over the structural stability of the Cathedral persisted in to the early years of the twentieth-century. After various investigations, fears culminated in the Corporation of London's serving of a dangerous structure notice to the Dean on Christmas Eve 1924: the Cathedral was closed from 1925 to 1930 while the piers and dome were strengthened under the supervision of the surveyor Walter Godfrey Allen (1891–1986). Some of the strengthening interventions may have been excessive; however they were to provide valuable structural support when the Cathedral suffered two significant bomb strikes during the Second World War.

St Paul's Watch, the group of volunteers who defended the Cathedral during The Blitz, enabled the continuation of services as normally as possible throughout the war years. At the end of the conflict, on 8 May 1945, ten consecutive services were held in thanksgiving for peace, each attended by over three thousand people. The last of the services focused on the work of the St Paul's Watch. In the years that followed St Paul's played an important role in commemorating those who had sacrificed their lives and in reconciliation.

The American Memorial Chapel was constructed and consecrated in the presence of President Eisenhower (1890–1969) and on 21st October 1958, Theodor Heuss (1884–1963), President of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1959, visited St Paul's to present an altar set with the words "The German people have asked me to hand to you, Mr Dean, and to the Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral this crucifix and these two candlesticks. Our gifts are a token of our sincere wish to serve, together with the British People, the cause of Peace in the World".

1960–2012: Royal events and Social reformers

With the major structural issues resolved and war damage repaired, the Cathedral continued to welcome world leaders, thinkers, theologians, politicians and the public in pursuit of hope for a better society. Canon John Collins (1905–1982), who had been a leader in the drive for post-war reconciliation, campaigned tirelessly for peace, human rights, and nuclear disarmament, and against apartheid in South Africa. Dr Martin Luther King (1929–1968) stopped at St Paul's to speak from the west steps en route to collect his Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and his widow Coretta Scott King (1927–2006) became the first woman to preach in a statutory service in St Paul's. On January 30th, 1969 the Cathedral Choir was joined by Indian singers and instrumentalists, and addresses were given to mark the centenary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) the champion of non-violent resistance, civil rights and freedom across the world. Continuing this tradition, in 2012 the Dalai Lama (b. 1935) was welcomed to receive the Templeton prize ('for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities'). The St Paul's Institute was established in 2003 to foster an informed Christian response to the most urgent ethical and spiritual issues of our times and engaged with the Occupy Protests of 2011/12 seeking constructive debate on financial ethics.

The wedding in St Paul's of HRH the Prince of Wales to Lady Diana Spencer gripped the nation and much of the world in 1981, and Queen Elizabeth II officially marked both her Golden and Diamond Jubilees with Thanksgiving services in St Paul's Cathedral. There have been occasions for national mourning: in 1965 Winston Churchill (1874–1965) who had led Britain during the war received a state funeral, a ceremony reserved for heads of state and others who have given significant leadership in the defence of the nation. A large ceremonial funeral was held for former Prime Minister, Baroness Thatcher, in 2013. Vast crowds gathered at St Paul's following the terrorist attacks on New York on September 11 2001, as London expressed its solidarity with the people of New York at a time of grief; and the victims of the 7/7 bombings were mourned in special services in 2005. The Diamond Jubilee and the special summer service at St Paul's celebrating the Paralympic Games made 2012 a spectacular year for the Cathedral.



Southwark Cathedral, London

Southwark Cathedral or **The Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie**, Southwark, London, lies on the south bank of the River Thames close to London Bridge. It is the mother church of the Anglican Diocese of Southwark. It has been a place of Christian worship for more than 1,000 years, but a cathedral only since the creation of the diocese of Southwark in 1905.

Between 1106 and 1538 it was the church of an Augustinian priory, **Southwark Priory**, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Following the dissolution of the monasteries, it became a parish church, with the new dedication of St Saviour's. The church was in the diocese of Winchester until 1877, when the parish of St Saviour's, along with other South London parishes, was transferred to the diocese of Rochester. The present building retains the basic form of the Gothic structure built between 1220 and 1420, although the nave is a late 19th-century reconstruction.

History

Legendary origins

The 16th-century London historian John Stow recorded an account of the origins of the Southwark Priory of St Mary that he had heard from Bartholomew Linsted, who had been the last prior when the priory was dissolved. Linsted claimed it had been founded as a nunnery "long before the [Norman] Conquest" by a maiden named Mary, on the profits of a ferry across the Thames she had inherited from her parents. Later it was converted into a college of priests by "*Swithen*, a noble lady". Finally in 1106 it was refounded as an Augustinian priory.

The tale of the ferryman's daughter Mary and her benefactions became very popular, but later historians tried to rationalise Linsted's story. Thus the author of an 1862 guidebook to the then St Saviour's church suggested it was probable that the "noble lady" Swithen had in fact been a man – Swithun, Bishop of Winchester from 852 or 853 until his death in 863.

In the 20th century this identification was accepted by the Revd Thomas P. Stevens, Succentor and Sacrist, and later Honorary Canon, of Southwark Cathedral, who wrote a number of guidebooks to the cathedral, and a history that was revised and reprinted many times. He went on to date the foundation of the supposed original nunnery to "about the year 606", although he provided no evidence to support the date. Although recent guidebooks are more circumspect, referring only to "a tradition", an information panel at the east end of the cathedral still claims that there had been "A convent founded in 606 AD" and "A monastery established by St Swithun in the 9th century".

Saxon and Norman

The earliest reference to the site was in the Domesday Book survey of 1086, when the "minster" of Southwark seems to have been under the control of William the Conqueror's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux.

It is unlikely that this minster pre-dated the conversion of Wessex in the mid-7th century, or the foundation of the "burh" c. 886.

There is no proof for suggestions that a convent was founded on the site in 606 nor for the claim that a monastery was founded there by St Swithun in the 9th century.

The Old English minster was a collegiate church serving an area on the south side of the Thames. In 1106, during the reign of Henry I it became an Augustinian priory, under the patronage of the Bishops of Winchester, who established their London seat Winchester Palace immediately to the west in 1149. A remaining wall of the palace refectory, with a rose window, survives in Clink Street.

The Priory was dedicated to the Virgin Mother as 'St Mary' but had the additional soubriquet of "Overie" ("over the water") to distinguish it from the many other churches in the City with the same name.

Some fragments of 12th century fabric survive. The church in its present form, however, dates to between 1220 and 1420, making it the first Gothic church in London.

Gothic reconstruction

The church was severely damaged in the Great Fire of 1212. Rebuilding took place during the thirteenth century, although the exact dates are unknown. In its reconstructed state – the basic layout of which survives today – the church was cruciform in plan, with an aisled nave of six bays, a crossing tower, transepts, and a five bay choir. Beyond the choir stood a lower retrochoir or "Lady Chapel", the form of which can also be interpreted as group of four chapels with separate gabled roofs, two opening from the choir, and two from each aisle.

There was a chapel dedicated to Mary Magdalen, for the use of the parishioners, in the angle between the south transept and the choir, and another chapel was later added to the east of the retrochoir. This was to become known as the "Bishop's chapel" as it was the burial place of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes.

In the 1390s, the church was again damaged by fire, and in around 1420 the Bishop of Winchester Henry Beaufort, assisted with the rebuilding of the south transept and the completion of the tower.

During the 15th century the parochial chapel was rebuilt, and the nave and north transept were given wooden vaults following the collapse of the stone ceiling in 1469.^[9] Some of the carved bosses from the vault (destroyed in the 19th century) are preserved in the cathedral.

The 15th-century poet John Gower lived in the priory precinct and is entombed in the church, with a splendid memorial, with polychrome panels. There is also a recumbent effigy of a knight in timber (rather than brass or stone) and it is suggested by the church that this dates from the 13th century.

If so then this is one of the oldest such memorials and some credence can be given to the suggestion by its lack of heraldic emblems.

16th and 17th centuries

A 1616 drawing showing Old London Bridge with Southwark Priory (now the Cathedral) in the foreground.

In around 1520 Bishop Fox carried out a programme of improvement, installing a stone altar screen, a new west doorway with a window above and a new window in the east gable of the choir.

Along with all the other religious houses in England, the priory was dissolved by Henry VIII, being surrendered to the crown in 1540. In that year St Mary Overie received the new dedication of St Saviour and became the church of a new parish, which combined those of St Mary Magdalen (the attached parochial chapel) and the nearby church of St Margaret, which was deconsecrated.

The parishioners leased the priory church and rectory from the Crown until 1614, when they purchased the church outright for £800.

During the reign of Queen Mary heresy trials were held in the retrochoir. In January 1555, six high-ranking clergymen, including the Bishop of Gloucester, were condemned to death there.

As the parish church for the Bankside area, St Saviour's had close connections with the great Elizabethan dramatists. William Shakespeare's brother, Edmund, was buried there in 1607. His grave is unmarked, but a commemorative stone was later placed in the paving of the choir. The Cathedral instituted a festival to commemorate this cultural history in the 1920s which endured into the late 20th century.

A stained glass window dedicated to William Shakespeare, depicting scenes from his plays, at the base of which is an alabaster statue representing the playwright reclining, holding a quill. Two dramatists, John Fletcher and Philip Massinger were buried in the church. Along with Edward Alleyne they were officers and benefactors of the parish charities and of St Saviour's Grammar School.

John Harvard was born in the parish, and baptised in the church on 29 November 1607. He is commemorated by the Harvard Chapel in the north transept, paid for by Harvard University alumni resident in England. His father, Robert, a local butcher and inn-holder, was a business associate of Shakespeare's family and a parochial, school and church officer with the playwright's colleagues.

The connection with the bishops of Winchester continued after the Reformation. One, Lancelot Andrewes, part-author of the Authorised Version, who died in 1626,^[17] was buried in a small chapel at the east end that afterwards became known as the "Bishop's Chapel". After the destruction of the chapel in 1830, his tomb was moved to a new position, immediately behind the high altar.

It was from the tower of St Saviour's that the Czech artist Wenceslas Hollar drew his *Long View of London from Bankside* in 1647, a panorama which has become a definitive image of the city in the 17th century.



The tower and east end of the Cathedral, restored by George Gwilt the Younger in the 19th century

By the early 19th century the fabric of the church had fallen into disrepair. All the medieval furnishings were gone, and the interior was as Francis Bumpus later described it, "pewed and galleried to a fearful extent." Between 1818 and 1830, the tower and choir were restored by George Gwilt Jun. In his efforts to return the church to its thirteenth century appearance, Gwilt removed the early sixteenth century windows at the east end of the choir and, lacking firm evidence as to the original design, substituted an elevation of his own invention, with three lancet windows, and a circular one in the gable above. The transepts were restored, less sympathetically, by Robert Wallace. The Bishop's Chapel and parochial chapel were removed, but plans for the demolition of the retrochoir were averted, and it was restored by Gwilt in 1832.

At a vestry meeting held in May 1831 it was decided to remove the nave roof, which had become unsafe, leaving the interior open to the weather, and to hold all future services in the choir and transepts. In 1839, the roofless nave was demolished to within seven feet of the ground, and rebuilt to a design by Henry Rose.

The new nave was at a higher level than the surviving mediaeval eastern part, and closed off from it by a glazed screen. It had a plaster vault carried on iron columns, and a wooden gallery around three sides. It was widely criticised, notably by Pugin who wrote "It is bad enough to see such an erection spring up at all, but when a venerable building is demolished to make way for it, the case is quite intolerable." On the initiative of Anthony Thorold, Bishop of Rochester, the nave was once again rebuilt between 1890 and 1897 by Arthur Blomfield, in a manner intended to recreate its 13th century predecessor as accurately as possible, and to preserve the few surviving mediaeval fragments.

The main railway viaduct connecting London Bridge station to Blackfriars, Cannon Street and Charing Cross stations passes only eighteen metres from the southeast corner of the cathedral, blocking the view from the south side. This was a compromise when the railway was extended along this viaduct in 1852; the alternative was to demolish the building completely to allow a more direct passage for the line.

Since 1900

The collegiate parish church of St Saviour was designated as a cathedral in 1905 when the Church of England Diocese of Southwark was created. The nearby early-18th-century church of St Thomas became the new cathedral's chapter-house. The cathedral stands in an area heavily damaged by German bombing during the Second World War. The total number of bombs dropped on Southwark between 7 October 1940 to 6 June 1941 alone was 1,651 High Explosive Bombs and 20 Parachute Mines. On 20 February 1941 it was reported (after being unrestricted by the ministry of information) the cathedral had been damaged by a bomb. Shrapnel damage is still visible on the outside of the building to this day.

There are memorials to Isabella Gilmore and the victims of the *Marchioness* disaster, and monuments to Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. In 2001 Mandela opened a new northern "cloister" on the site of the old monastic one, with a refectory, shop, conference centre, education centre and museum. In 2002, these Millennium buildings received an award for being one of the best new buildings of the year.

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| FRIDAY 9th JUNE 2017 |
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St Michael at Plea, Redwell Street, Norwich

There St Michael's is a 14th century church with an oddly truncated tower with strikingly tall pinnacles. The pinnacles were added when the top storey of the tower was removed for safety reasons in the late 19th century. The church itself stands on one of the oldest Saxon foundations in Norwich possibly a cremation-cemetery of the 5th or 6th century. The tower is a familiar local landmark, in part because of the clock face which dates to 1827 and is inscribed "Forget me Not".

Why at Plea?

The earliest name we know of was St Michael at Motstow, that is, at the market, or the meeting place. The name changed after the Archdeacon's court was held here, so the name essentially means "at the court". One of the first things you notice as you are walking along the road, is high the churchyard is. This is the result of centuries of burials crammed into the small churchyard. It was declared redundant in the 1960's and is now a bookshop and café.



St Andrew's, St Andrew's Street, Norwich

The church of St Andrew, Norwich, is the second largest medieval parish church in the city. It is a fine example of a hall church, in late *perpendicular gothic* style and with a timber roof of *tie beam* construction. The tower is the oldest part and dates from 1478 with the rest of the building erected by 1506, replacing an existing structure. Not long after the building work had finished, the Reformation occurred, sending the whole of Europe into religious turmoil. St Andrew's became a preaching house for the new 'Protestant' religion. The church later had links to John Robinson, a freelance clergyman who became pastor to the Pilgrim Fathers before their emigration to the New World.

St Andrew's was a wealthy parish and the church was well situated on the main route from the market to the Cathedral with Princes Street being the traditional route to Tombland and the cathedral. Only in the Twentieth century was this replaced by a new road which cut through to St Michael at Plea and Bank Plain.

Memorials

The church has one of the finest collections of **memorials** in the City of Norwich. Here are represented Mayors and Aldermen, a sea captain and a variety of business leaders. In the South East corner of St Andrew is the Suckling chapel. The Sucklings were a major Norfolk family who were closely related to (and at one time lodged) Horatio Nelson.

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| SATURDAY 10th JUNE 2017 |
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St Peter's, Church Street, Sheringham

The Sheringham we see today is a relatively recent creation, the result of the arrival of the railway line in 1887, at just the time that sea bathing was becoming popular. It meant that North Norfolk was no longer as remote from major population centres as before, with large numbers of people able to come here for their holidays (London was only just over 3 hours away by train – as now!).

What had formerly been a small fishing outpost of Upper Sheringham developed into a holiday resort for the middle-classes, just as the crab industry was collapsing due to over-fishing, and farming was entering a recession. A building boom got underway, with hotels and boarding houses constructed, and a golf links laid out.

The once quiet High Street became a bustling centre, as new shops and businesses were set up to cater for the needs of the changing population. The local landowners, the Upchers of Upper Sheringham, owned most of the land, and following the slump in agriculture, decided that a better financial return would be derived from selling plots off for development. This new expansion was to include a new church to cater for the spiritual needs of the much increased (and still growing) population.

By Norfolk standards St Peter's is a very recent creation. In a region graced by so many medieval churches, it is rare to find one from the Victorian era, but just as with many of those churches, St Peter's came about through the generosity of a local family, the Upchers. They took their responsibilities for the local community seriously, and provided a school, helped the local fishermen and labourers and their families, provided and supported a lifeboat and encouraged the development of (Lower) Sheringham.

It was as a result of their efforts that in 1842 a Chapel of Ease was built, which a few years later was enlarged to allow the seating of about 500 people. Services finished in 1897 with the opening of St Peter's, the former chapel continuing to be used as a church hall until the Parish Hall in Waterbank Road was opened in 1956. The old chapel was eventually demolished in March 1969 making way for a modern block of flats, Temple Court.

The Upchers donated the land on which the church is built, and also contributed generously to the cost of the building itself, which was designed by St Aubyn and Wadling of London and built by Bardell Bros. of Kings Lynn. It was on St Peter's Day 1895 that the foundation stone was laid by Mrs Upcher, and the building was consecrated exactly two years later, on St Peter's Day, 29th June 1897. Whilst it was being built, new houses were also going up on nearby plots, sold by the Upchers in response to the new demand for land. The church is of red brick, faced with knapped flints, and roofed with slates. There are crosses on east and west gables, and a figure of St Peter in the niche over the outer doorway of the south porch worked by a local stonemason.

The building cost £8000 and could supposedly seat more than 700. Additions and improvements were made over the years: in 1910, the choir and clergy vestries on the north side were built; in 1928, the reredos (the decorated wooden screen behind the altar) was added; in 1930, the north and south sides of the chancel were panelled in oak; in 1931-2, the low screens at the top of the chancel steps were added; and in 1933, the Chapel of the Holy Spirit was dedicated.

St Peter's was built as the daughter church of All Saints, Upper Sheringham, and it wasn't until 1953 that it became the Parish Church of Sheringham following a boundary change when All Saints became linked with Weybourne.

The overall impression on entering St Peter's is one of enormous spaciousness and light, with the wide nave extending into the side aisles.

It has never had pews (many of the chairs still in use today were made in the local workhouse from trees, which grew on the Upcher estate) and this adds to the sense of space.

The interior is bold in design, an impression generated by the ridge of the roof, which is carried in one continual line throughout from east to west, with the roof of the chancel being the same height as that of the nave. There is a plain stone font, and the pulpit and lectern are made from oak, a theme continued in the chancel with its richly carved woodwork. The floor of the nave is of oak blocks and the chancel and porches have splendid mosaic floors.

Above the altar the story of the Ascension is depicted in stained glass, whilst in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit are windows showing the Transfiguration, the Baptism of Christ, and the Garden of Gethsemane. Along the south aisle are windows of St Peter, St George, St Andrew, St David and St Patrick, together with a very fine carving of St Peter. On the north side are windows of the four Evangelists, and at the west end are stained glass windows representing Baptism, Communion, Confirmation and Marriage.

In the Baptistry, on either side of the font, the wooden cupboards contain the electronic bells and the kitchen facilities, all cleverly blended into the fabric of the building. The organ was built by Bishop and son of Ipswich and installed in 1899. Over the years various improvements were made, culminating in a complete rebuilding in 1986. It is a very fine instrument, and together with the excellent acoustics, means that St Peter's is one of the most sought after concert venues in North Norfolk. In addition to the many baptisms, weddings and funerals that take place, the church is much in demand for recitals, and is very much a community building.



St Peter and St Paul, Cromer

You can tell a lot about a town by the efforts its medieval church go to be welcoming. While all the churches in the Yarmouth and Hemsby area appear to be kept locked most of the time, Cromer church is militantly open every day, and you can never be alone inside it.

People passing by just wander inside, holiday-makers go in to explore, and best of all you can go up the tower, which is East Anglia's tallest. It has become one of the resort's attractions. Unlike many Norfolk town churches, the congregation here is low church in character, and so they are to be thanked and congratulated for allowing their building to be open for private prayer and meditation.

Pevsner's entry for St Peter and St Paul begins *Externally a very impressive church*, and you can hear what's coming. Several paragraphs later, he notes that *the interior, after so much display, is a little disappointing*, but there is good reason for this. Cromer had been one of the prosperous north Norfolk ports in the late Middle Ages, and it is the only one of them which retains anything like the same significance. But the post-Reformation period, and its suspicion of Europe, brought hard times to this remote place. Much of the eastern end of the church collapsed in the 17th century, and serious consideration was given in the 1780s to demolishing the whole thing.

It wasn't until the Anglican revival of the second half of the 19th century that attention was paid to restoring St Peter and St Paul to full use, under the direction of Arthur Blomfield, an architect who was generally a safe pair of hands, if not terribly exciting ones. He rebuilt the chancel, refashioned all the window tracery, and restored the tower and porch, which nonetheless are all that survive in their original state. The chancel would once have been longer, and in proportion is not entirely successful now. Inevitably, you step into what is essentially a 19th century building.

The vast windows flood the great, lofty nave with light, and offset some excellent modern glass on the south side. Abstract lozenges commemorate various members of the lifeboat crew, and depict lifeboats as well as other features of the resort, including the lighthouse and buckets and spades. The distorted clear glass in which they are set creates a fine effect.

The truncated chancel makes the east window rather imposing. Blomfield apparently based its proportions and tracery on what was there before, but of course it had been set further to the east. The glass by Hardman & Co is good. The best glass is in the east window of the south aisle, by Morris & Co to the design of Edward Burne-Jones. It was damaged in an air raid in 1942, but has been fully restored. The west window has recently been filled with a fabulous image of the Ascension - I wonder who the artist was?

Apart from the glass, there isn't a huge amount to see, beyond the sheer drama of the soaring arcades and the vast tower arch, its proportions somewhat compromised by what is an undeniably attractive ringers platform with meeting room beneath. You step through here to climb the steps to the top of the tower, from which the view is spectacular, especially on a clear day, although I always find my vertigo kicking in when I stand on the raised decking, which at the centre of the tower is higher than the parapet. And then, down into the lovely town below.