



**CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED  
(17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 14**



**SUNDAY 20th AUGUST 2017**



**Salvation Army, George Street, Harwich**

The army banner has flown in Harwich since June 1880. Local soldiers, adherents and members of the Salvation Army are proud of the fact that it is one of the oldest corps of the British Territory. The Army in Harwich were regarded as being a social nuisance with their noisy, often early gatherings, social misfits, attracting all the wrong sort, and a social menace, blocking the paths and roads. Many in the town were opposed to them for their own greedy reasons.

**THURSDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2017**



**Baptist, Coggeshall Road, Braintree**









**Our Lady Queen of Peace, Catholic, The Avenue, Braintree**



**Elim Pentecostal, Manor Road, Braintree**



**St Michael's, St Michael's Lane, Braintree**





### **URC, The Street, Little Waltham**

In the year 1672, Christopher Wragg, former vicar of Great Baddow, took out a licence for "Foxtons", his house in Little Waltham, to be a Presbyterian Meeting House. After his death, the property was left to a Dr Yardley of Bishop's Stortford, who had then married either a daughter or a sister of Christopher Wragg. It is not known whether the meetings continued at "Foxtons" while the Yardleys were there or not, but a year or so after Yardley's death, a Joseph Clark requested permission for his house in Little Waltham to be used as a place of religious worship. It seems that the thread of Presbyterianism or Nonconformity faded away, for when the Revd. Douglas began to preach in the village about 1790, several souls were converted whom "had till then been totally destitute of divine grace". By the year 1801, this group of people was thinking seriously about building their own place of worship.

As a start, they rented a house in the village, which they fitted up as a Meeting House, and Ministers attended on a regular basis. They started to collect money to build a church seating 400 people. The following local families gave donations: Emberson, Dowsett, Marlton, Hasler, Kirkham, Luckin, Devonish, Boltwood, Joslin, Bentall, Hagger, Beardwell, Skinner, Wiffen, Linnett, Monk, Fitch and Albon. Large gifts came from three members of the Watkinson family of Cressing, Felstead, and Lt. Waltham, and also from Abraham Legerton of Great Leighs. There were contributions from other churches at Chelmsford, Bocking, Braintree, Witham, Hedingham, London, and Billericay. The building, costing £800, was started in the summer of 1803. It must have been a good summer that year, because the church was finished and ready for the official opening on 15th September. The Revd. Stevenson of Castle Hedingham preached on the text from Acts 11, verses 23 and 24.

Several other ministers assisted at this opening service. For several months afterwards the church was supplied with preachers from the Academy at Hoxton in London. A visiting preacher, William Podmore, was then invited to take pastoral charge of the congregation, and, after a trial period was made the first pastor at a service held on 5th June 1804. Extracts from the records of those early days tell us that the members and pastor were referred to as "brothers" and "sisters". Brother Podmore, Brother Emberson, Sister Evered, etc., also that the congregation took part fully in the Sabbath and evening services. For instance — "Thursday evening, 16 present, Brother Monk prayed and an address was given. Mrs Mead was proposed for Church Communion and Brothers Emberson and Hasler departed to converse with her. Also two brethren were sent to enquire why Mary Emberson had been absent."

The Congregational Church was always in the care of trustees, many from some distance away. In 1859, for example, out of 20 trustees, only James Campen was from Little Waltham. Six were from Great Waltham, three farmers, one grocer, and two "gents". The remainder included three millers, three brewers, an auctioneer, a grocer, a fishmonger, a draper, a printer, and two more farmers. Since March 1909 the trustees have been the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

There was evidently a problem with drink in the village, and in quite early years the decision to use unfermented wine for the Communion met with the full approval of the congregation. Several brothers were suspended from attendance at the Lord's Table until they had been convinced of the impropriety of their conduct after overmuch elbow lifting at the White Hart or the Bell. Later it seems that a group of these men become Total Abstiners, and there is reference to the Independent Order of Rechabites meeting in the schoolroom. This Friendly Society of Total Abstiners was founded in 1835.

Mr Podmore remained as Pastor until 1820 when he resigned. He was followed by Mr. Carlisle who was in the village until 1827, then Thomas Fish until 1840 when he resigned through ill health. And so, Pastor after Pastor has cared for the flock through the years right up to the present day. There was Mr. Fowler, who ran the school for boys at Albion House which is situated at the top of the hill on the Braintree road, opposite where the old manse stands next to the allotments, and Mr. Beck, the ailing pastor, who died at the turn of the century - his daughter had many memories of the great kindness shown to the family during the years they were in the village. John Neville was here from 1900-1919. He spent a lot of time and energy trying to get a smallholding scheme going in the village, but although well thought of, in the end his scheme failed through lack of support. After Mr. Neville retired, Mr. Singer took his place, and he retired in 1927. The state of the church must have been pretty low at the time, it was barely recognised by the Union, and it became necessary for the new pastor to have college training. The congregation were asked to raise the annual stipend by £30.

This they said they could not do, but would request a grant from the Union. They did, however, undertake to raise £10 to pay for books, and to help towards the college course. The church had its own burial ground, which was used into the 1900s. The graves were levelled after many years to make the present car park. In olden days when people arrived for services on horseback or by carriage.

The carriages were left in the road, and the horses tied up in the long shed on the west of the building, which later became the bike shed when bicycles came into general use. In 1904, it was proposed that the Lord's Supper be administered before or on the full moon, for the convenience of those coming from afar.

There was a Sunday school in quite early days. Three members of a family called Hitchcock, from Powers Farm, taught in the Sunday school. Years later descendants of the family donated £10 for books for the church library, in memory of these teachers. There must have been quite a large library, as in 1870 it contained 300 books, and had 40 subscribers. More books were added in 1895. In 1896, The Dorcas Society was formed. The members made and distributed 19 articles of clothing to women and children in the first year, and when the needles were really flying in the second year, they made 74 articles. This Society superseded the old clothing club, which had been in the care of Mrs. Mallet from the mill.

In 1865, a preaching room was opened in a house in Chatham Green, where Sabbath and weeknight meetings were held, and also classes for reading and writing. On 10th October 1872, a branch chapel was opened there. It still stands today, and is sound and dry, in spite of having had an incendiary bomb through the roof during the last war. It went out of use in the 1930s and is now used for other purposes, but still houses a tiny memorial to the fallen of the First World War. In 1895, the church was closed for repairs, and Mr. Sorrell loaned his barn for service for two weeks. In summer time, services were sometimes held in the open air. A Harmonium was purchased for £5 for use in the Sunday School, and may also have been carried outside to be played at the outdoor meetings. Mr Gannon was organist and choirmaster at this time, and Miss Lightfoot played for the Sunday school.

The Men's Own Brotherhood met on Sunday afternoons, and had their own music; about 10 or 12 of them played in the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Orchestra. In 1909 the old church organ either needed a great deal of repair, or a new one was required.

The P.S.A. men collected for a new one, and wanted to buy an American organ for £50 tuned to a very high concert pitch to tune with the band instruments of that day, not the British Standard Pitch we know today which is lower. They were persuaded that this would not be suitable for the choir and congregation, and another one was chosen and installed. In 1934, a new pipe organ was given to the church, the gift of Mr and Mrs Wakeling.

Congregational numbers did not always remain high. In 1841, for example, Jonathan Hicks held a meeting with the 20 members present, to decide what steps should be taken to "continue worship in this church". In 1875, some members left to join the Plymouth Brethren.

But by the early 1900s there were 103 members in the congregation. A women s Bible Class was held weekly, 28 being the average attendance. The men's Bible Class had 42 members, and the young people's Band of Hope, 20 members. This activity was still operating in the church up to 1956, working with young people in the Temperance Movement.



At various times the church had to be repaired or altered. In 1861, a debt was incurred by putting a new front on the “chapel”. Although this was the Congregational Church, it was usually referred to in the village as “the chapel”, to distinguish it from St. Martin’s Parish Church.



### **St Mary with St Leonard, Church Green, Broomfield, Chelmsford**

The original Norman church, possibly on the site of a wooden Saxon church was probably built on the initiative of the de Mandeville family of Broomfield Hall. almost a thousand years ago. The south wall of that original small church containing nave and chancel survives today. The windows were small lancets then and the chancel was shorter, as can be seen from the line of Roman bricks that formed the original south east corner. Among the flint and Roman bricks of the South wall is a projecting puddingstone, or mass of conglomerate. Some believe that such marker stones are an indication of a pre-Christian site.

The Roman tiles are a reminder of the story still related fifty years ago. The plan had originally been to build the church at the top of New Barn Lane. However every night a dragon moved the stones down to the Green. Finally the villagers gave up and built the church where it is today. In the field at the end of New Barn Lane, called Dragon’s Foot in the tithe maps, there is a depression, now somewhat ploughed out but still deep enough to be a dragon’s footprint. This was the site of a Roman building which still yields numerous hypocaust tiles and bricks, so the story is a delightfully muddled memory of the Saxons trundling cartloads of Roman bricks down to the Green on the orders of their new Norman masters to use for the quoins, since there were no local stone quarries.

The lack of cut stone is also the reason for the round tower. The thickness of the wall at the tower arch which is virtually that of the church west wall and the tower wall together shows that this was added later, possibly about 1130. The circular structure of courses of flints was built against the west wall, growing at roughly nine courses a year and built of rubble and field stones. Elsewhere round towers fell out of fashion and so were gradually replaced as transporting stone became easier and more affordable, but Broomfield is proud to be one of the six that survive in Essex.

This first church was dedicated to St Leonard and around 1150 the church and tithes of Broomfield were given to the Prior and canons of Holy Trinity, London. This foundation appointed the vicars for Broomfield until the Reformation. Early in this period the Norman font of Purbeck stone was given to the church.

The arcaded sides and four pillars are typical of the period but the central support is a later addition. Solid though it looks the font has been moved several times, and not only in recent re-orderings. During the Civil War the font was thrown out of the church along with stained glass and candlesticks as a sign of 'popery'. The story goes that Cromwell's soldiers used it as a trough to water their horses. Certainly it re-appeared in the Vicarage stableyard where it was later recognised and restored to the church.

During the 14th and 15th centuries larger windows were introduced in the south wall. The earliest was the low-side window near the pulpit, as well as gaining larger windows at this time the church had its chancel extended in 1430 and the perpendicular style east window installed. The line of Roman bricks in the south wall clearly marks where the old chancel ended. Other changes included the spire, with its remarkable internal timber frame, added to the tower. The first south porch was built and to the right of the south door was a holy water stoup, since vandalised by the Commonwealth iconoclasts. By 1504 the church had been re-dedicated to St Mary. There was no north aisle but some form of chapel to St Leonard still existed on the north side, as we know that Broomfield had a chantry priest. In the early 1500s he was making up the sums he was paid to say masses for the souls of the departed by teaching children at Writtle.

When in 1541 Henry VIII dissolved the Priory of the Holy Trinity, the Priory's possessions were bought by Lord Rich of Leeze, who used the Broomfield tithes to help fund his new school at Felsted. Protestant enthusiasm removed the signs of 'Popery' but with the re-introduction of Catholicism under Mary Tudor, the churchwardens at Broomfield had to buy a mass book, a cross and images for the rood screen. Under Elizabeth I, the Act of Uniformity brought the end of the chantry chapel, and the introduction of parish registers. The first page of our earliest register – now in the Record Office – is decorated with cadells and swashing and reads:

*'The Register Booke for the Parish of Bromefeild in the Countie of Essex in which is contained all the Baptisms, Burialls and Marriages which could be found from the year of our Lord 1546 untill the year 1598 and the 27th daie of Maie & deinceps (i.e. from then on).'*

A visitation of 1689 gives a depressing picture of what the church was like after the turbulent years of the Commonwealth.



The smashed stoup in the Porch is a lasting reminder of the dissenters. Thomas Woollard, church-warden and founder of the Broomfield Woollard Charity, and the new Vicar, Revd. Thomas Cox, the scholar and historian, listed what the church possessed (two items) and what was needed (seventeen). Besides repairs to the uneven floors, cracked walls, missing glass and clearing the rubbish from the church-yard, at this time a gallery was added at the west end. After 46 years Cox was succeeded by another historian, Philip Morant. He is the first to mention a little vestry at the north-west corner of the church

By 1870 the small brick built north aisle that had been added in the early 19th c. was both inadequate and unsound and a major restoration was begun. Over the next few years the church took on the general appearance that it has today. Frederic Chancellor, Mayor of Chelmsford as well as being Diocesan Architect, drew up elaborate plans for Broomfield church which are preserved in the Essex Record Office. To him we owe the stone pillared arcade and north aisle, built in materials to match the rest of the church, the vestry, the replacement of box pews with the present benches, and the choir stalls. He also added a barrel organ and gallery, which were later removed. The north east corner, now occupied by the Lady Chapel, was originally filled with benches and these were the seats favoured by the families from the 'big houses'.

The rest of the congregation dubbed this area, fronted by its stone communion rail, "the Drawing Room". Chancellor's plans included large wall paintings, but only the Commandment boards and the painted East wall of the Chancel were adopted. The generosity and efforts of Henry Wells, a local brewer and Church warden for 44 years made the work possible. Frederic Nield, miller and flour merchant, donated the Gothic carved credence and sedilia on the south wall of the chancel. These and the stone reredos depicting the Last Supper was carved by Ray and Fuller of Chelmsford and are a modified version of Chancellor's more elaborate designs. The lych gate and present porch also date from this time.

In 1926 the William Hills organ was given by Richard Clay of Little Orchards in memory of his parents. The church suffered bomb damage to the north wall, roof and windows in 1943, which is recorded in the painting by Rosemary Rutherford in the north aisle. The second half of the century saw the installation of a new altar, communion benches and lectern and the on-going provision of cheerful hand-embroidered kneelers.

By the end of the 20th century the original church hall, which stood on the far side of the busy main road had proved to be too outdated and inconvenient. The decision was taken to build a new extension, linked to the church. Funded by a grant from the Fowler Trust, the sale of the site of the old hall and untiring money raising efforts and donations on the part of the congregation, the new building was finally dedicated in 1997.

Designed by Tim Venn it provides a hall, a committee room, kitchen and toilets and makes imaginative re-use of the windows removed to provide access from the church. Now known as St Leonard's Hall, it has proved a valuable addition for the work of the church.



**Methodist, Main Road, Broomfield, Chelmsford**

There has been a Methodist church in Broomfield since 1911. The present church is situated on the main road, the A131, from Chelmsford towards Dunmow. It was built in 1963 and refurbished extensively in 2006. They pride themselves on being a friendly welcoming church that is "Seeking to love and serve God in the community and in the world."



**St John the Baptist, Main Road, Church Green, Danbury, Chelmsford**

The Parish Church of St John Baptist stands out on Danbury ridge as a landmark whose spire is visible from the A12 and from many local vantage-points. There has been a church here from at least 1233, and probably considerably before that. The present church is a Grade 1 Listed Building. There is much of interest to see inside the church, including the three famous wooden effigies of the Crusader "Knights of Danbury". The interior is largely Victorian, deriving from Gilbert Scott's re-ordering in 1866. The unusual carved wooden creatures gracing the ornate pew-ends copy the style of the three remaining fifteenth-century pews to be seen just inside the church.



**URC, Maldon Hill, Maldon**



The first record of a building on this site was in 1696 when a piece of land at the top of Market Hill was acquired by the Revd Joseph Billio, the first minister, and a "Meeting House" accommodating 400 was built for the Protestant Dissenters of the town. Such was the enthusiasm and fervour of Billio's preaching that the phrase "like Billio" passed into the English language. A portrait of him hangs in the church vestry. By 1800 the original building was found to be unsafe and was demolished, to be replaced by the present church. This building was enlarged throughout the century as the church continued to flourish, acquiring its present appearance in 1878 with the addition of the pillared portico. By this time it was known as the Congregational Church.

The building on the left, forward of the church, is the old British School building erected in 1843. The deep grooves in the brickwork either side of the entrance door were caused by the pupils sharpening their slate pencils. The Lecture Hall, also part of the British Schools until their closure in 1911, occupied the adjacent car park and was used by the church and local organisations until its demolition in 1987. The monuments in the graveyard to the north and east of the church indicate the close links between business and non-conformity in Maldon during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The congregation which meets for worship in the church today is known as the United Reformed Church, a result of the uniting in 1972 of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches in England and Wales. In 1999 the decision was taken by church members to refurbish the interior of the building by removing the Victorian pulpit and downstairs pews, and adding a kitchen, toilet and enlarged entrance area. The work was completed in 2000 and includes new heating, a carpeted floor and sophisticated sound and video systems. These now provide a comfortable and welcoming building, much in demand for concerts as well as regular worship.



**St Andrew's, Crescent Road, Heybridge**

There has been a settlement in and around the Heybridge area since Pre-Roman times, as revealed by the recent excavations at the Elm Farm site where the new Bovis housing development now stands. Many fine Roman remains have been uncovered in this Parish and are now in the Colchester Museum. Evidence points to a wealthy settlement that owed its existence to good communications as the port on the Blackwater. Aerial photography has revealed clear evidence of a Roman road running directly to Heybridge. There are few Roman remains in Maldon and Heybridge was clearly the major settlement.

The Saxon name for Heybridge was Tidwalditune, (Tildwald's Town, Tildwald being an early Saxon). There are various spellings in the old records including Tidwaldinton, Tidoldanton and Tidolditune. Similarly, Heybridge is also spelt as Haybridge, Hebrege, Hebrugge and Heybreg.

The present name seems to be taken from the High Bridge over the river. It consisted of five arches and is assumed to have been the bridge over the main stream of the Blackwater as the bridge at Fulbridge is much later and of shorter span. The Causeway between the two bridges is possibly of Roman origin and was considered important enough for Edward II to order a survey in 1324.

Athelstan became King of the Mercians and the West Saxons in 925A.D. Tidwalditune was one of 13 lordships which the King endowed the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. It had certain privileges, e.g. no purveyor of the King could take any corn from within its precincts. There was only one Manor in the parish and that was Heybridge Hall. There is no specific mention of a Church being built but it has been assumed that a Saxon Church predated the present one. The Earliest Parts of the Church dating from the 12th Century

The walls of the Church are of flint rubble, boulder clay and pudding stone with dressings of limestone and clunch, and the roofs are tiled. The Chancel is not structurally divided from the Nave. At the West end are the remains of a Norman Tower of unusually large dimensions and exceeding the width of the Nave. Norman Towers are seldom of great elevation but the base of this one has been adapted for one of considerable height. Its present height is but very little above the walls of the Nave and is of one stage and part of a second. It has a pyramidal roof that is tiled.

The Domesday survey did not concern itself with Churches but does record "Tidwoldituna" held by St Paul's, and consisting of 8 hides and 1 manor, 16 villeins, 4 bordars and 4 serfs, several ploughs, woodland for 60 swine and pasture for 160 sheep (identified in 1222 survey as a marsh of 60 acres), 30 acres of meadow, 8 beasts, 3 hives of bees, 1 mill and 1 salt pan. The whole was worth £8.

The present Church was founded between 1160 and 1181 and remains of that period still exist. There is a record of a visitation by the Dean, Ralf de Diceto, on 20th January 1181. The vicarage of Heybridge was ordained in 1243 and assigned the small tithes, altarage and a small glebe. The door through which you enter is of the 12th Century and said by Pevsner to be one of the finest Norman Doors in the country.



**All Saints, Shrub End Road, Colchester**



FRIDAY 8th SEPTEMBER 2017



St Mary the Virgin, Peldon



Peldon Church 1884 showing earthquake damage (*Illustrated London News*)

**Anglo-Saxon beginnings** - In 1086 the Domesday Book recorded 'Peltenduna' as having "one church with thirty acres". This makes it Anglo-Saxon in origin.

**The current building** - In general it dates back to the 11th century, the nave being 12th century, the tower 14th century, and the roof and clerestory 16th century.

**The Leaning Tower and the Essex Earthquake** - The tower has a noticeable lean to the southwest, often said to be caused by the Essex Earthquake of 1884. However, the leaning tower was noted before then, in the book: 'Mehalah, a Story of the Salt Marshes' (1st edition 1880). The cause was probably subsidence due to poor ground.

The church did suffer from the earthquake, with damage to the battlements and roof.

**Current situation** - A full inspection in the early 2000's identified the need for urgent repairs and restorations. This was the trigger for the formation of The Friends.



### **Free, Mill Road, West Mersea**

Until 1805, apart from the Parish Church at West Mersea, there was no other place of worship, and Non-conformists, such as Congregationalists and Baptists, met in barns for regular services. There was a Strict Baptist Chapel in East Mersea (Meeting Lane), and of course the East Mersea Parish Church.

In 1805 (battle of Trafalgar year) a local Oyster Merchant, Mr Bennett Hawes, according to a note found amongst old papers, "had long wished to see the Redeemer's Cause permanently established on this benighted island", gave a portion of land in the field then known as Little Pattens to the Independents (Congregationalists) for the site of a Chapel building. This was situated in Shelleys Lane, known locally later as Chapel Road and even later as Mill Road.



This gift of land was then confirmed by a Trust Deed dated April 1836 and naming as Trustees various influential Tradesman in Colchester, probably connected with Lion Walk or Stockwell Congregational Churches. The building erected on the site was opened for worship on Tuesday, October 1st 1805 with a special service. Mr Bennet Hawes was a deacon of the chapel for 35 years; he died in 1846 aged 82 years and was buried in a vault at Lion Walk Church, Colchester. In 1841 the Chapel was rebuilt by George Lufkin of Colchester – a stone tablet on the front of our present building records that fact – this was during the ministry of a Pastor Haas who, when he left in March 1844 took many of the records of the church and ‘would not surrender them to the members at that time’.



**Methodist, Mill Road, West Mersea**







**St Nicholas, Copt Hall Lane, Little Wigborough**

St Nicholas Church at Little Wigborough is known locally as the church on the marshes. It is situated beside Copt Hall which is owned by the National Trust. It is a small historic building with a rood screen which only seats about 50 people.

The church is used for worship every first Sunday of the month at 11am, for a family friendly Holy Communion service to which all are welcome. The church is normally open daily to visitors during the summer months.

St Nicholas Church is also known for its proximity to the site where the L33 zeppelin landed on September 24th, 1916. A centenary commemoration event will be held on the fields around Copt Hall during the weekend of September 24th and 25th, 2016.







### **St Stephen's, Great Wigborough**

**St Stephen's Church** serves a small village community near the coast of North Essex. They are a small but welcoming congregation, meeting each Sunday except the first in the month when we have a service at St Nicholas Church, Little Wigborough, and the fifth Sunday when we have a Benefice Service at one of: Rowhedge, Finginghoe, Abberton, Peldon or Wigborough churches.

They share coffee or other refreshments after each service and welcome visitors at any service.

They hold **Messy Church** for children and young families on an ad hoc basis, currently near Easter and Harvest.

Their PCC is working towards making the church nave more accessible to the local community for both public and private events. They need to renew the floor and do more work on the heating, lighting and electrics. They would also like to provide wifi, a sound system and projection facilities for various types of events. We have a toilet and wet area for serving refreshments.

**St Stephen's Church** serves a small village community near the coast of North Essex. We are a small but welcoming congregation, meeting each Sunday except the first in the month when we have a service at St Nicholas Church, Little Wigborough, and the fifth Sunday when we have a Benefice Service at one of: Rowhedge, Finginghoe, Abberton, Peldon or Wigborough churches.

They share coffee or other refreshments after each service and welcome visitors at any service.

They hold **Messy Church** for children and young families on an ad hoc basis, currently near Easter and Harvest.



Their PCC is working towards making the church nave more accessible to the local community for both public and private events. They need to renew the floor and do more work on the heating, lighting and electrics. They would also like to provide wifi, a sound system and projection facilities for various types of events. They have a toilet and wet area for serving refreshments.



**St John the Baptist, Laver-de-la-Haye**



The first record of the church's existence is found in a charter of 1128, although the oldest parts of the present walls were built some time before. At this time the church belonged to the Abbey of St John in Colchester, but within sixty years it had passed to the Priors of St Botolph. It was from these two great religious houses that the priests who ministered to the needs of the parish were drawn for over four hundred years.

The written records of the church are few. We know that after the Black Death the monks of St Botolph set to work to rebuild the nave and tower, both of which date from about 1350. A hundred years later they raised the chancel arch and gave the church its oldest bell (1459).

During the 17th and 18th centuries the church suffered from neglect while it was held in plurality with Berechurch and other places. It was not until the middle of the 19th C that steps were taken to repair the fabric of the church and make it fully fit for worship. This was during the incumbency of the first resident vicar. The church was also enlarged by the building of the south aisle because the population had more than doubled since the turn of the century.

The bells are of particular interest. A major restoration project was completed in 2001 which involved the installation of a new bell frame and ringing chamber in the tower, a new bell, and refurbishment of the other bells, some of which are very old. Bells are rung regularly for morning service on a Sunday. Bell ringing practice takes place on a Monday evening. The Tower Captain is Mr. Martin Piper.









### **St Andrew's, Abberton**

**Welcome to the** Parishes of Abberton and Langenhoe, St Andrew's Abberton is fine Church in a lovely setting overlooking the Abberton Reservoir. St Mary's Langenhoe which had been damaged in the Essex earthquake of 1884 was closed to worship in 1955 and demolished in 1963 after it was deemed structurally unsafe.

Now part of the Donyland Parishes comprising of St Andrew Fingringhoe with St Lawrence East Donyland or Rowhedge and St Andrew Abberton with Langenhoe in the Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford

Set overlooking the Abberton Reservoir they welcome people of all ages, all church backgrounds or none, and especially those thinking about the Christian faith for the first time for prayer and quiet reflection and good liturgy.

Church Services are held every week

Prayer for healing and Healing service is held 2nd Wednesday of every month at St Lawrence church Rowhedge following our 10am weekly Eucharist which is very much part of our tradition.

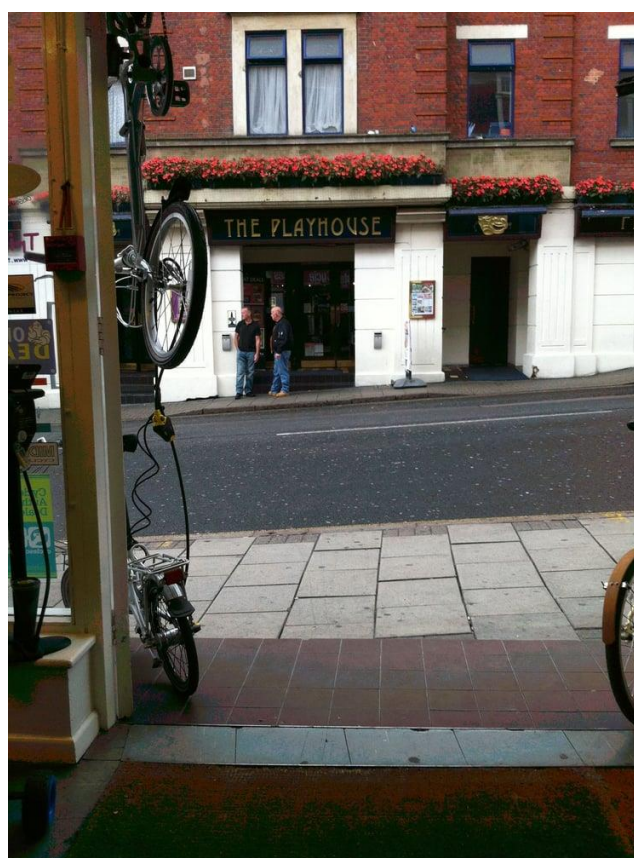
**Their vision statement:**

"They exist to worship a loving God; to express that love in Christian community; to draw people to Jesus; to build them up as His followers; and to equip them for service for the good of the world."

We are a warm and friendly group of people that welcomes people of all ages and all walks of life. We seek to serve people from the local area through Sunday services, a variety of events and partnerships with others in the community.



**Independent Temple of Light, 117 Shrub End Road, Colchester**



**Colchester Vineyard, Playhouse Public House, St John's Street, Colchester**



Colchester Vineyard is a bunch of people who enjoy getting together to be useful. It's an open community, but at its heart is a spirituality – the down-to-earth kind that Jesus did. Which involved eating and drinking with friends and guests, giving and forgiving, healing and rescuing. So we try to do everyday life (whether at home, at work, or in our neighbourhoods) with Jesus at the centre. To find out more about what we're doing...

Colchester Vineyard does not provide church services, but most Sundays we get together for a meal, where we celebrate Jesus with friends and neighbours.



## Parish of Myland St. Michael's Church

*Serving the community of Myland*

*Braiswick - Chesterwell - Mile End - The Myle - New Braiswick Park  
Northfields - Northern Approaches - Romans - Severalls - Turner Rise*



**St Michael's, Mile End Road, Myland, Colchester**



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

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

The church had suffered so much during the Civil War that a complete rebuild was necessary and this was accomplished in 1660. The original church was evidently much larger than shown in later records and pictures. The nave was 32 ft 9 ins long and 18 ft 9 ins wide with walls 2 ft to 2 ft 6 ins thick. From this extended a chancel with a width of 15 ft 9 ins. The south wall was traced for 23 ft of its length and the east end lay at some point beyond. By 1660 the rebuilding of St Michael's Church was completed, using materials from the original church. The chancel of the new church was only 6 ft 10 ins long and this is the building depicted in old drawings and by a model made by Miss A P Strong which is in Hollytrees Museum.

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

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

In other words, the present Severalls site but extended to the south and west. Mile End Hall (now St Helena Hospice). Severalls Hall in what is now Severalls Lane, demolished some years ago, Rovers Tye and Cock Common.

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

Vestry meetings were usually held in the church but were sometimes held at the Dog and Pheasant and once at the Waggon and Horses on North Hill, Colchester. No vestry records survive for St Michael's Church before 1810. A map of 1846 shows the old St Michael's Church, High Woods, Mile End Hall, Severalls Hall, Mile End Heath, remnants of Chesterwell Wood, the Severalls, the Dog and Pheasant, Tubswick, Church Farm, Braiswick Farm and the Primitive Methodist Meeting House. Houses are shown in Nayland Road, north and south (both sides) of the Dog and Pheasant and at the western end of Mill Road (north side). The road towards Little Horkesley, branching to the right at Braiswick, is also shown. In 1851 the rector, the Revd A E Julius, started a subscription fund for a new church in order to replace the old one, which had comprised a chancel, aisleless nave, south porch, western gallery and wooden bell turret at the western end of the nave. The Foundation Stone of the new Church of St Michael, Myland was laid on 1854. The new St Michael's Parish Church was built in 1854-5, half a mile north of the old one. As a result, a village focus developed round the new church. It was designed by E Hakewill of Craig's Court, Charing Cross, London, in the Early English style of the 13th century and built on a site given by Thomas Philip Weddell, Earl de Grey, the patron. It comprises chancel, nave with north aisle, west tower and south porch.

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

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

The new St Michael's Church was consecrated on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1855. It was in the diocese of Rochester. The Revd Edmund Hall was appointed rector. White's Directory of Essex, 1863, it describes the old St Michael's Church as "a small ancient fabric, with a nave, chancel and wooden turret, but it is now disused." White's, 1863, also says that the rectory had 28 acres, 1 rood and 14 poles of glebe, written as 28A. 1R. 14P. It adds: "The Rectory House is a neat mansion, erected in 1842, and having pleasant grounds, commanding fine views of the Colne valley."



(Note: A rood is a quarter of an acre, or 1,210 square yards. A pole when used for area is 30¼ square yards).

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

The first part of this edition of the history of St. Michael's, Myland, Parish Church is substantially the same as that published in May 1955 to commemorate the Centenary of the building of the Church on its present site. A few minor alterations have been made to the text and the final pages have been added to bring the story up to the "present day". I am very grateful to Canon Bolsin for his help in preparing the last chapters; to Mr. Mark Davies, Deputy Curator of the Colchester & Essex Museum, for information with regard to the uncovering of the foundations of the Old Myland Church; and to all those people who, by their encouragement and support, have made this publication possible. The Churchyard has been in use since the Church was built in 1854, and closed for new burials in 2005 as it is now full.



### **Mile End Methodist, Nayland Road, Colchester**

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

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

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



### **Highwoods Methodist, Jack Andrews Drive, Colchester**

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



### **St Luke's, Highwoods, Colchester**

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

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





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

The Church of St John the Evangelist Colchester was built in 1863 by Arthur Blomfield in the Decorated style. It is principally of red brick with yellow and blue brick and stone window tracery. It consists of a chancel and nave surmounted by a small bellcot at the west end. The chancel and its fittings and part of the nave were built with money collected in memory of J.T. Round. It has a boarded and tiled roof.

In the late 1960's and into the 1970's, the modern housing estate of St John's was built and a further estate of Highwoods was developed in the 1980's. From 1980 under the leadership of Rev Brian Nicholson, the numbers of the congregation steadily grew. Mainly through the generous giving from the church family, the church was significantly extended in 1987. Following continuing growth in church membership, St Luke's was planted, meeting weekly in the community centre on Highwoods. In 2012 the church undertook a million pound plus building project, replacing our old pre-fab church hall with a new multi purpose Community Centre.



#### **Mount Zion Salvation Army, 328a Ipswich Road, Colchester**

Their aim there is a desire to be a spirit-filled, radical, growing church with a desire to save souls and actively serve the community and fight for social justice. They see everyone as equally valued. At Mount Zion they enjoy meeting together regularly for spiritual and social occasions. There is also an active house group network, varied prayer events and loads of coffee and evenings out.

<b>FRIDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2017</b>
-----------------------------------



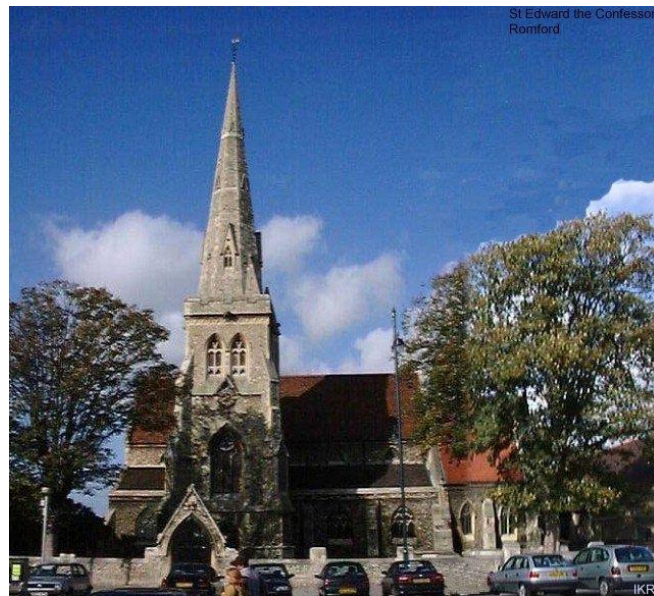
#### **St Anne's, Compton Road, Colchester**

They are a warm and friendly group of people that welcomes people of all ages and all walks of life. They seek to serve people from the local area through Sunday services, a variety of events and partnerships with others in the community.



They are one of three churches in the Greenstead with St Anne Ministry Team in North East Colchester. They are linked in with St Matthew's in Harwich Road and St Andrew's in Forest Road.

**THURSDAY 5th OCTOBER 2017**



**St Edward the Confessor, Market Place, Romford**

St. Edward's has been "The Church in the Market Place" since 1410. The earliest church, or rather chapel of Romford, was in what is still known as the Oldchurch area and was first mentioned in 1177. Built near the river Rom then called Mercke-dych, it became too ruinous to use towards the end of the 14th century and the new church was built.

The new church was built on the site of the present church. It was consecrated by the Bishop of St David's, March 23rd 1410, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St Edward the Confessor; it consisted of a chancel, nave and North Aisle and was larger than the old Church by 28ft in length and 14ft in width. It had a brick tower with five bells (8 by 1800) and later there was a gallery at the west end, for the charity children.

On the South wall of the Chancel was placed the monument to Sir George Hervey, transferred on rebuilding to its present position in the porch. The monument to Anne Carew, his sister, is nearby. On the North Wall was the memorial to Sir Anthony Cooke, now scheduled as of national importance. It formerly stood over the vault at the East end of the North aisle, where the Lady Chapel then was.

The Chapel of St. Edward the Confessor, long used as the Parish Church at Romford, had fallen into such a state of decay by the early 19th Century, as to be unfit for the celebration of Divine Service. In due time it was decided to pull down the old Church, extend its foundations and build a larger church with a spire.

On Sunday 22nd April 1849, the last services were held. Three sermons were preached by:

Reverend James Charles Blomfield, on "the Vicissitudes of the Church"

Reverend Samuel Arnott, on "The Perpetuity of the Church"

Archdeacon Grant, on "Things Old and New"

The present church was built in 1849-50 on the site of the 15th century building. On Thursday 19th September 1850, the present church was consecrated by the Bishop of Rochester and dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St Edward the Confessor. The architect John Johnson designed the church in the decorated style that is a type of Gothic architecture used in this country in the Middle Ages. It is built mainly of Kentish Rag with Bath dressings.

The stained glass in the church is Victorian dating from the turn of the century, with the glass in the East and West windows being modern replacements following blast damage in the Second World War. Some of the memorials are from the earlier church of 1410 and were transferred to the new building in 1849-50.

The well-proportioned church consists of a nave with five bays with clerestory, north and south aisles, chancel, Lady Chapel and west gallery. Its dimensions are 81ft in length, 54ft in width and 55ft in height. Alternate clustered and octagonal columns, with finely carved foliated capitals, from one of which a little human peeps, support the arches of the nave and there is an occasional lion's mask to be seen. It is interesting to note that of the materials used in the building of the church, some stone came from Nash's Quadrant in Regents Street, London, which was then being pulled down. Some was possibly from the old church, and this may account for the many carved corbels depicting the heads of Kings, Queens, Bishops, the Green Man, a veiled woman and sundry other heads with unusual head dresses.



These have the air of the superb heritage found in our medieval churches. If these carvings were the work of a 19th century sculptor, he must have inherited the spirit of the masons of the 15th century. Two vestries were added in 1885.

In 1922 electric light replaced gas.

The church changed very little, until 1978 when the present organ was built on the gallery, at the west end of the church. It replaced an instrument that had been on the north side of the chancel.

In the summer of 1988, work was undertaken to the interior of the church, the pews were reconstructed to be free standing and a new floor and underfloor heating system was installed. These works were a huge step to prepare the building for the 21st century. The church was closed for several months and services were conducted in the Wykeham Hall.

The spire, 162ft high, underwent major repair work in 1992.

Exterior floodlighting was installed in 2000.

In 2001 the choir vestry was remodelled, this work was undertaken with a generous grant from The Pilling Trust, at the same time a lavatory with facilities for the disabled was constructed. Improvements were required to ensure that the church met the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. The west door was modified and step free access is now available into the church.

In 2002 the pews were replaced by chairs.

In 2010 the Archbishop of Canterbury dedicated the Commemorative York Stone in the centre aisle.

The maintenance and improvement work to the church is continuing. Defective masonry on the south elevation of the church has been replaced and the Hervey and Carew memorials in the south porch have been conserved.

A carving of St. Edward the Confessor, carved by Ivor Livi in oak, has further enhanced the porch. In 2014 the names on the First World War Memorials in church were regilded to mark the centenary of the beginning of the First World War.

The tower, which is surmounted by a spire of 162ft, contains a peal of eight bells, all of which predate the present church by a considerable period.

The original church or chapel was built in 1410 and the existing tenor bell dates from this period, being ascribed to the London Founder Robert Burford. Robert died in 1418. Much of his work is to be found in Kent and Essex.

It appeared that there were six bells and a sanctus bell in 1552, when the inventories of church goods were made in the sixth year of the reign of King Edward VI. At that time, the tenor bell was used as an hour for the clock, as it is today nearly 500 years later.

The present treble bell by Lester and Pack of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry is dated 1756 and must have been recast as The Royal Society of Cumberland Youths rang a peal on eight bells in the tower in 1753. The second bell has John Darbie of Ipswich's lettering but as Darbie was not known to have cast bells before 1657 (although there are many of his bells in East Anglia and this bell is dated 1651), it may have been cast by a predecessor of Darbie. It seems likely that Romford had a peal of eight bells from this time and if so, was one of the earliest eight bell towers in the country. The third bell was cast by an itinerant founder, John Waylet. It is therefore possible that this bell was cast in the churchyard, although there is also some evidence to suggest that the bell was cast at Bishop's Stortford.

The Graye family of Colchester were founders between 1600 and 1686. Bells 4, 6 and 7 are understood to have been cast by Miles Graye II. The fifth bell was recast in 1850 by Charles and George Mears, also of Whitechapel Bell Foundry, at the time the present church was built. The Reverend E. Fox writing about this time said that the predecessor of the fifth bell was inscribed "The Bachelors of Romford made me 1578", however, most of his manuscripts were inaccurate and this information may be unreliable. The bells were re-hung in 1877 and again in 1922, lower in the tower, when John Warner and Co. of Cripplegate installed the present frame work. The treble bell was rehung on ball bearings in 1958 and the remainder of the peal in 1971 on both occasions by Whitechapel Bell Foundry. Four Clock bells, cast by Gillett and Johnson of Croydon, in 1945, are hung above the ring and strikes the Cambridge Quarters (Westminster Quarters), with the tenor bell striking the hour. A new clock also by Gillett and Johnson was present at the same time as replacing a clock of 1759 vintage. In 2008 the bells were re-hung in their present frame, with new fixtures and fittings. A Restoration Appeal was launched and we are grateful to all those who have supported the appeal, members of the congregation, bell ringers and grants amounting to £12,000 from The Pilgrim Trust, The Essex Association of Bell Ringers Restoration Fund and the Tovell Bequest. The bells themselves were cleaned and the cast-in crown staples were removed from all bells.

<b>THURSDAY 18th MAY 2017 - OMISSION</b>
--







### **St John the Baptist, Church Hill, Finchingfield**

For many parishioners the way to church was through this gateway of the Guildhall, though perhaps the lads in this photo (probably late 19th century) have more mischievous plans for their day than listening to a sermon. The Guildhall, Grade I listed, dates from the late 15th century.

After the Reformation the building fell into disrepair until it was bought and repaired by Robert Kempe in the 1620s. In 1630, he sold it to the village for £50 to be used as a school or almshouses. It has remained in village ownership ever since. The building is currently undergoing restoration. This view of the Church of Saint John the Baptist is what you see having passed through the Guildhall. The church largely dates from the 14th century, though the lower two stages of the tower were built in the 12th and the third in the 15th.

Perhaps, given the dominant location of the building, the tower was used for both defensive purposes and for worship. There was once a spire but it was blown down during a gale in 1658 and never rebuilt. All that survives of it is the 15th century angelus bell, which is now in the cupola built in place of the spire atop the tower.





The South Porch, built in 1865 in early Perpendicular style, probably replaces an earlier porch of similar size. The ring of eight bells was installed in 1781, though one of them is older, dated 1766, but recast in 1952. The clock, of 1902, marks the coronation of King Edward VII. The Rood Screen dates from the early 15th century. Another screen, leading into the Berners Chapel on the south side of the church, is earlier, c.1350.



Finally, the view of the Guildhall that parishioners through the centuries have seen as they left church.

**MONDAY 7th AUGUST 2017 - UPDATE**



**St Michael's, Berechurch Hall Road, Colchester**



This is the church that my father and grandfather attended that was St Michael's Church which is a redundant Anglican church in the village of Berechurch, Essex, England. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II\* listed building, and is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. The church stands on the south side of Berechurch Hall Road south of the town of Colchester.

St Michael's has never been a parish church, but rather a chapel of ease to Holy Trinity Church, Colchester.<sup>[1]</sup> It is possible that a church was on the site in the 11th century, but the earliest part of the present building is the tower, which dates from the 14th century. The rest of the church was rebuilt in the late 15th century, re-using some of the earlier material. A chapel was added to the north of the church in the early 16th century, and this was completed before 1533. In 1536 Thomas Audley, the Lord Chancellor to Henry VIII, was licensed to create a separate rectory at Berechurch, and it is thought that Audley may have been responsible for building the chapel, which now bears his name. More work was done to the church in the early 17th century.

In 1872 the church was entirely rebuilt, apart from the tower and the Audley Chapel, by Charles Pertwee, re-using some of the earlier features. The south porch was added in 1878. After the Second World War, the nearby town of Colchester grew, and new housing estates were built in the area. St Michael's became too small for the congregation, and a new church dedicated to Saint Margaret was built nearby in 1968–72. The congregation moved to the new church in 1973, and St Michael's was declared redundant in 1975. The main part of the church was converted for other uses, but the Audley chapel was vested in the Churches Conservation Trust in 1981.

The church is constructed in brick with stone dressings, and has tiled roofs. Around the body of the church and the chapel is decorative stone banding. Its plan consists of a nave and chancel, with a north chapel (the Audley Chapel), a south porch and a west tower. The tower is in three stages, with diagonal buttresses, a stair turret at the southeast, and an embattled parapet. There is a door and a window on the west face of the tower, and bell openings in the top stage on all sides. The windows in the nave all date from the 19th century, the window to the east of the porch being particularly large. The east window of the chancel has been re-set from the earlier church; it dates to the early 17th century and contains Perpendicular-style tracery. The chapel has a large three-light east window dating from the 16th century with brick tracery. The west wall contains a 16th-century brick doorway.

The nave, chancel and tower have been converted for non-ecclesiastical purposes. The Audley Chapel has a hammerbeam roof with carvings that include the emblems of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Also on the roof are heraldic badges containing the arms of Audley of Walden. The chapel contains monuments, the most notable of which is to Sir Henry Audley, erected in 1648 before he died. It includes a white marble reclining effigy in armour, on a black and white chest containing the carved figures of his five children. There is also a tablet to Robert Audley who died in 1624, with *memento mori* motifs. There are further memorials dating from the 19th century. The churchyard contains the war graves of an army officer and a Royal Air Force officer of World War I.