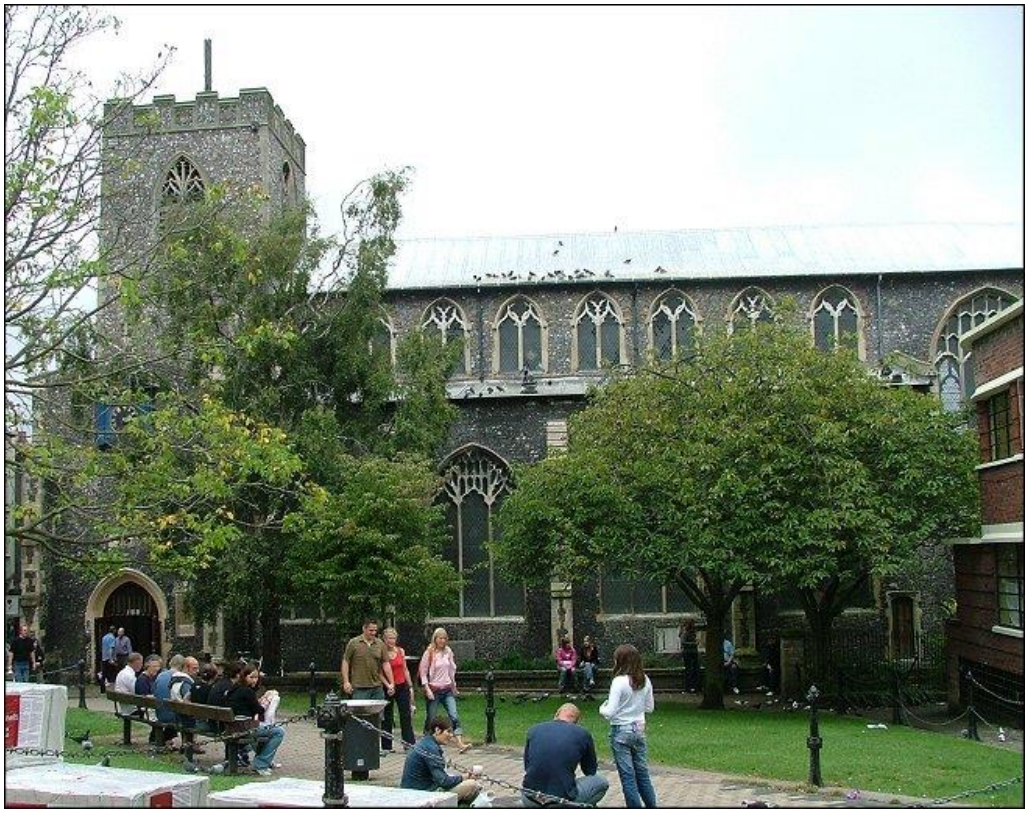
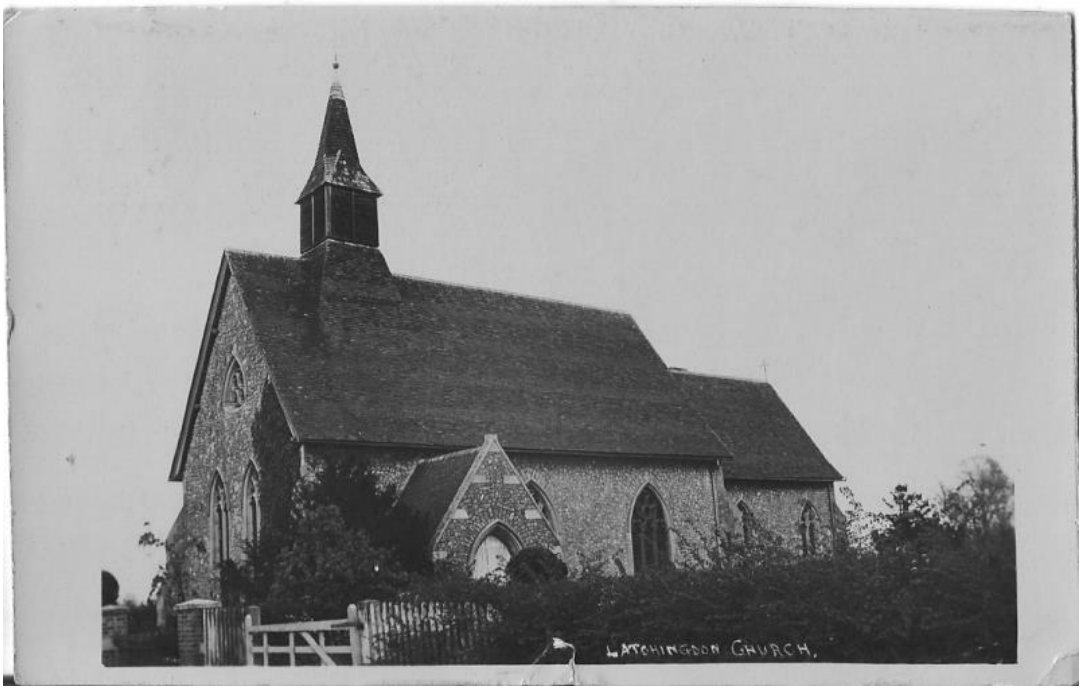


CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED (17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 17

MONDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2017 - OMITTED

Searchlight, Heybridge



St Michael's, Lower Burnham Road, Latchingdon

This is now redundant church, converted to a house. This was mainly late in the 14th and early 17th century. Having passed through Latchingdon, it was into Steeple, where one large church seen below and two smaller ones were seen.

St Lawrence and All Saints, Steeple

The original parish church of St Lawrence was destroyed by fire. The current church was built in the centre of the village in 1884.

St Thomas, East End Road, Bradwell Juxta Mare

The Chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall
Bradwell-on-Sea, Essex

The Chapel

653 AD The arrival of St Cedd.

654 Cedd founded a Celtic style community at Othona, built his Cathedral of St Peters on the foundations of the Roman fort and was consecrated Bishop of Essex. In fact Cedd's Cathedral was built where the gatehouse of the fort had been - so it was built on the wall of the fort - hence the name - Saint Peter-on-the-Wall.

664 Cedd died of the plague at Lastingham in October. Soon after the death of Cedd, Essex was taken into the Diocese of London and St Peter's became a minster for the surrounding country.

1068 The Chapel became the property of the Benedictine monastery of St Valery on the Somme.

1391 The Chapel was sold to William of Wykeham.

1750 For many years it was used as a barn for the storage of grain and shelter of cattle.

1920 Restored for use as a Chapel.

The Early History

1300 years ago there were people working in Ireland and Scotland to spread the Christian faith. In Ireland, Patrick had established many monasteries and from there Columba had come to Iona, a tiny island off the west coast of Scotland, to establish a monastery and many other Christian centres.

From Columba's monastery, a man called Aidan was sent from Iona at the invitation of King Oswald of Northumbria to set up a monastery at Lindisfarne on the north-east coast. It was also to be a school where Anglo-Saxon boys could be trained to become priests and missionaries. It was in this school that Cedd and his brothers Caelin, Cynebil and Chad learnt to read and write in Latin, and learnt to teach the Christian faith.

The four brothers were all ordained as priests and two of them, Cedd and Chad, later became bishops. Cedd's first mission was to go to the midlands, then called Mercia, at the request of its ruler, King Paeda, who wanted his people to become Christians. Cedd was so successful that when King Sigbert of the East Saxons (Essex) asked for a similar mission, it was Cedd who was sent.

So in 653 Cedd sailed down the east coast of England from Lindisfarne and landed at Bradwell. Here he found the ruins of an old deserted Roman fort. He probably first built a small wooden church but as there was so much stone from the fort he soon realised that would provide a much more permanent building, so he replaced it the next year with the chapel we see today! Cedd modelled his church on the style of churches in Egypt and Syria. The Celtic Christians were greatly influenced by the churches in that part of the world and we know that St Antony of Egypt had built his church from the ruins of a fort on the banks of a river, just as Cedd did on the banks of the River Blackwater in Essex (then known as the River Pant).

Cedd's mission to the East Saxons was so successful that the same year he was recalled to Lindisfarne and made Bishop of the East Saxons. His simple monastery at Bradwell would, like those at Iona and Lindisfarne, have been at the same time a church, a community of both men and women, a hospital, a library, a school, an arts centre, a farm, a guest house and a mission base. From there he established other Christian centres at Mersea, Tilbury, Prittlewell and Upminster.

Cedd often visited his northern childhood home and in 659 was introduced to King Ethelwald who asked him to establish a monastery in Northumbria. Cedd chose a site at Lastingham as it was wild and seemed fit only for wild beast, robbers and demons. Again this was exactly how St Antony of Egypt chose his sites. In 664, while at his monastery in Lastingham, Cedd caught the plague. As he lay dying 30 of his monks from Bradwell came to be with him. They too caught it and one young boy survived and returned to Bradwell.


COMING
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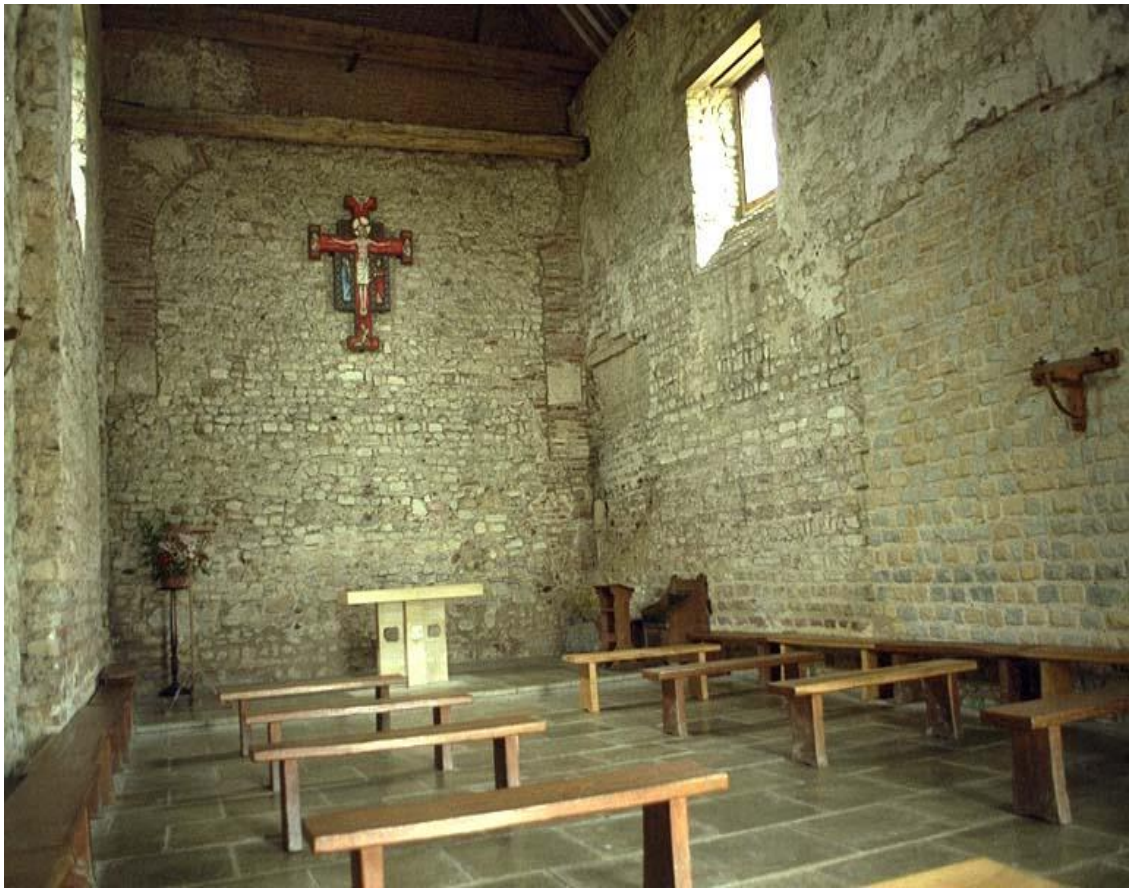


St Peter's Chapel, Bradwell-on-Sea

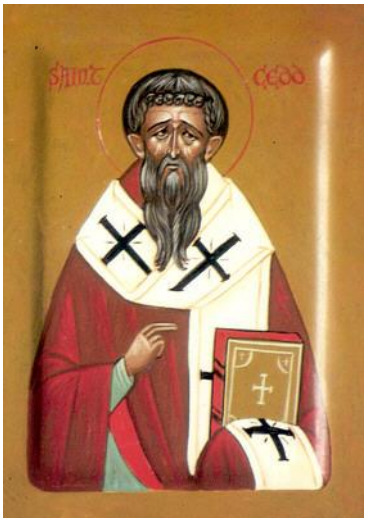
Cedd (Latin: *Cedda, Ceddus*; c. 620 – 26 October 664) was an Anglo-Saxon monk and bishop from the Kingdom of Northumbria. He was an evangelist of the Middle Angles and East Saxons in England and a significant participant in the Synod of Whitby, a meeting which resolved important differences within the Church in England. He is venerated in Anglicanism, the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Background

The little that is known about Cedd comes to us mainly from the writing of Bede in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People. The following account is based entirely on Book 3 of Bede's History.

Cedd was born in the kingdom of Northumbria and brought up on the island of Lindisfarne by Aidan of the Irish Church. He was one of four brothers: Chad of Mercia (transcribed into Bede's Latin text as Ceadda), Cynibil and Cælin were his siblings.

The first datable reference to Cedd by Bede makes clear that he was a priest by the year 653. This probably pushes his birth date back to the early 620s. It is likely that Cedd was oldest of the brothers and was acknowledged the head of the family. He seems to have taken the lead, while Chad was his chosen successor.



Othona Chapel, Bradwell-on-Sea

RECENT PICTURES:

OTHONA - BRADWELL ON SEA

A place to simply be

St Lawrence, St Lawrence Bay

It was time to leave and on the way we saw St Lawrence Parish Church which was built on a high spot at the southern edge of the village. The church has been designated as a rural discovery church and as such displays regular exhibitions. Three generations of the Wedgewood Benn family including Viscount Stansgate are commemorated in this church.

Methodist, High Street, Maldon

St Mary with Mundon, Church Street, Maldon

St George's, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin

In Basin Road is a wooden building which dates from the first world war. It was given to the village to serve as a mission church in 1920. The chancel was refurbished during 1998. Seating 70, St George's has a warm and welcoming atmosphere and, in addition to worship, provides a venue for village meetings. There is a village car park about 200 yards away and limited parking space on the road near the church. A ramp is available for wheelchair access. A loop system has been installed for hearing aid users. Toys and books are available for young children.

SATURDAY 16th DECEMBER 2017

Religious Society of Friends, Quakers, Upper Goat Street, Norwich

Norwich Quaker Meeting, in the heart of the city, is part of the Norfolk and Waveney Area Quaker Meeting. Quakers, (officially known as the Religious Society of Friends), were formed in the 17th Century, are rooted in Christianity although have respect for all faiths. Quakers were involved in the abolition of slavery, and are still known today for their active commitment to social justice, equality and peace-work worldwide.

Quakers believe there is something sacred in all people.
All people are equal before God.
Religion is about the Earth and all life.
We share a respect for the whole of life.
Each person is unique, precious, a child of God.

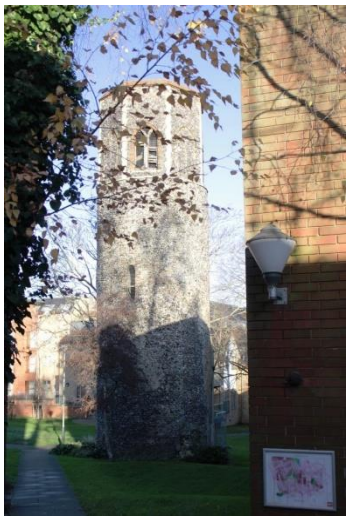
Catholic Cathedral, Unthank Road, Norwich

The **Cathedral Church of St John the Baptist** is the Roman Catholic cathedral of the city of Norwich, Norfolk, England. The cathedral, located on Unthank Road, was constructed between 1882 and 1910 to designs by George Gilbert Scott, Jr. as a parish church dedicated to John the Baptist, on the site of the Norwich City Gaol. The funds for its construction were provided by Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of Norfolk. He funded it as a generous gift to the Catholics of Norwich as a sign of thanksgiving for his first marriage to Lady Flora Abney-Hastings. In 1976, it was consecrated as the cathedral church for the newly erected Diocese of East Anglia and the seat of the Bishop of East Anglia. In 2014, for the first time since 1558, a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated in this episcopal see's cathedral. It is one of two cathedrals in the city of Norwich, the other being the Church of England Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, completed in the Norman style in 1145. It is the second largest Roman Catholic cathedral in England, the largest being Westminster Cathedral.

Spiritualist Church, Chapelfield North, Norwich

St Swithin's (Art Centre), St Benedict's Street, Norwich

Norwich Arts Centre is a live music venue, theatre and art gallery located in St. Benedict's Street in Norwich, Norfolk, England. It has a capacity of 260 for standing music concerts and 120 for seated events. In November 2014, it was named "Britain's Best Small Venue" by the *NME*. Plan Nine playing at the Norwich Arts Centre (May 2007). The venue opened in 1977 in an old department store on St. Benedicts Street. It moved to its current site, St Swithin's church, in 1980. It was originally known as "Premises". Although a small venue, Norwich Arts Centre has hosted many well known bands and comedians, including Nirvana, Oasis, Muse, The Stone Roses, Manic Street Preachers, The Libertines, Coldplay, Enter Shikari, Biffy Clyro, Foals Kasabian, Mumford & Sons, Bombay Bicycle Club, Jack Dee, Mark Lamarr, Sue Perkins, Mark Thomas, Noel Fielding, David Baddiel, Ross Noble, Frank Skinner and Josie Long. The venue is especially noted by rock music fans for being the site where Richey Edwards of the Manic Street Preachers carved the words "4 Real" into his forearm with a razor blade to make a statement to journalist Steve Lamacq, after a gig on May 15, 1991. The church which houses the Norwich Arts Centre is dedicated to Saint Swithun and dates to the fifteenth century, although an earlier, Anglo-Saxon church may have existed on the site. The area was originally a wealthy one, with four medieval churches close to each other. However it had become a slum by the nineteenth century. St. Swithin's became redundant and was closed in 1881. In 1882, the church's tower was demolished as it had become unsafe, this was later replaced by a Bell-cot. The building was back in use as a church between 1883 and 1891, after which time it fell into disrepair. In 1905, a clergyman, John Sawbridge, raised funds for it to be reopened as an Evangelical church, to cater for the poor and deprived surrounding area. There was sufficient money for a large, adjoining parish mission and school room to be constructed in 1908. However, by 1951, the church was again redundant due to falling numbers of local residents. It was used as a furniture warehouse until it was taken over by the Arts Centre in 1980. The church itself became an auditorium, and the schoolroom became an exhibition space and cafe. Little of the interior of the church remains in place except for ten monuments, the oldest being to Sibilla Skottowe (died 1657) and Anne Skottowe (died 1662). Another monument is to William Abbott (1754-1818), a veteran of the American War of Independence, who served at the Battle of Bunker Hill.



St Benedict’s, St Benedicts Street, Norwich

The church on the eve of the Second World War, set in the maze of narrow lanes that interspersed the courts between St Benedict's Street and Pottergate. These days, this area is the heart of alternative Norwich. St Benedict's Street itself is a part of the old city that has mostly survived; fine Victorian and Edwardian two and three storey buildings front the street, with much older ones huddling in courtyards behind. They came very close to not existing, as we shall see. Today, St Benedict's Street's old fashioned pubs, gay bars, second-hand record stores and comic shops are refreshing after the stultefying glossy commercialism of the new Chapelfield shopping centre.

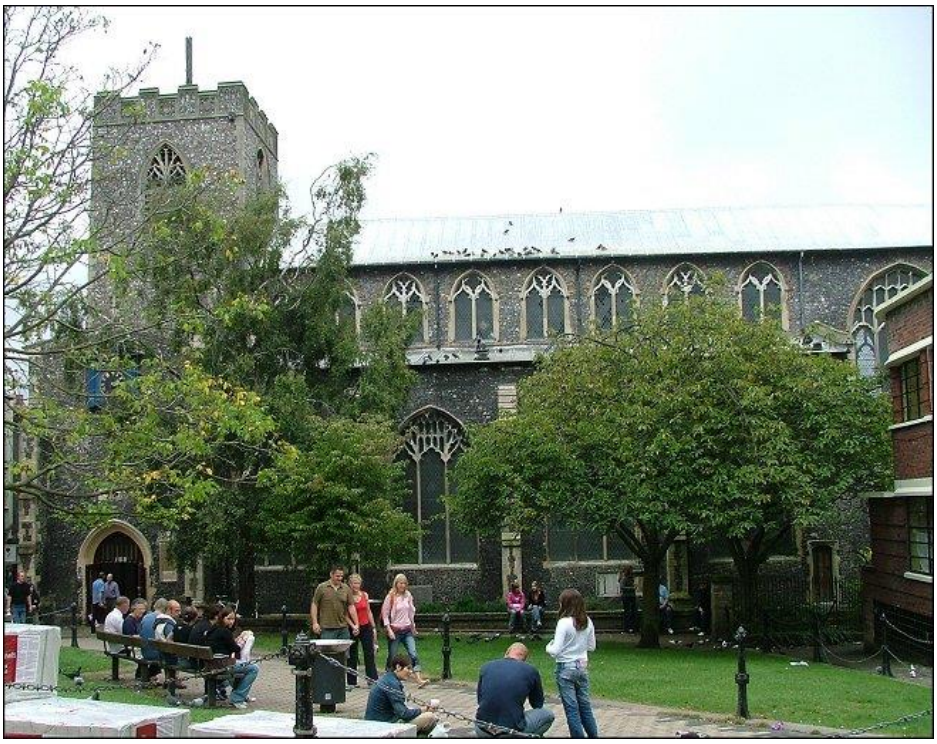
But it had a different feel five hundred years ago, as you can tell from the fact that in its 500-odd metres there are five medieval churches. All of them are redundant now, of course; St Laurence is one of Norwich's biggest, St Gregory probably its most interesting, St Margaret is used for exhibitions and St Swithin is the excellent Norwich Arts Centre. But it is the most westerly, St Benedict, which proudly gives the street its name.

It once gave its name to a gate in the city walls, as well, and if you stand at the end of St Benedict's street you can see remains of the walls. But you won't see much else, because one night in January 1942 this area beyond the street to the west was carpet-bombed by German planes, and the parish was almost entirely destroyed. All that remained of St Benedict was the shell of the aisle and the ancient round tower, standing tall and defiant. Robert Tuck was passing the ruin on January 15th 1952, and sketched the image you see to the right; the south wall has gone completely, and you see the north arcade, clerestory and aisle from the inside.

It isn't clear how much medieval had survived to be bombed anyway. There *was* a fine font, which you can see in some more of George Plunkett's photographs below, and I assume that this was smashed by the bombers. But other than this, Spencer and Kent recall that St Benedict underwent two major 19th century restorations; in 1869 it was repaired and reroofed, but by 1896 it had become 'delapidated and dangerous', the arcade to the single north aisle being replaced with cast iron columns, which you can see in George's photographs and Robert's drawing, unnaturally exposed. This essential yet ultimately futile repair was probably a symptom of the neglect that was inevitable when Norwich's many churches had such tiny congregations. The parish was also tiny - surviving Ten Bell Lane to the west was actually in St Swithin parish - and like St Gregory at the other end of the street, St Benedict was accessible from both Pottergate and St Benedict's Street, its graveyard stretching between the two.

In the years after the War, the rubble was cleared, and the remains of St Benedict were removed, apart from the round tower. The City Council's award-winning 1980s Pottergate housing scheme used the tower as a focal point, creating around it a courtyard of two-storey red-brick housing, with an entrance to the courtyard through the former churchyard trees. It is an excellent assemblage, a little like a university campus. You need to look again at the first of George Plunkett's photographs, however, to see how utterly this setting has changed from what was there before.

In an odd kind of way, St Benedict was actually rebuilt. The system of compensation after the war meant that the Diocese of Norwich was paid war reparation money for this church, as long as it was spent on reconstruction. However, it did not have to be on the same spot, and so the new St Benedict opened in 1956 where the need was greater, in the middle of Lowestoft on the Gunton estate. The bell from the Norwich church tower was rehung in the new church. A fine new church in Suffolk, and an excellent housing scheme around the ruin here, are not matched by the other side of St Benedict's Street, I am afraid. Here, the cleared rubble gave way to a car park, and in recent years this has been replaced by vast Toys R Us and TK Maxx hypermarkets, those churches of the modern age, and a rude awakening after a pleasant stroll along St Benedict's Street. Perhaps our planning policies today are not as demanding as they were in the 1950s and 1980s.



St Gregory's, Pottergate, Norwich

St John Maddermarket, St John's Alley, Pottergate, Norwich

The church is popularly known simply as St John Maddermarket, and is famous for being the church where the morris dancer Will Kempe ended his nine days dance from Norwich to London in 1599. A square church, and a familiar sight to shoppers, where the pedestrianised identikit shops of London Street give way to earthier Pottergate. The suffix Maddermarket comes from adjoining Maddermarket Street, and suggests a place where dye for clothes was sold. The church was rebuilt in a determined Perpendicular style in the late 15th Century. The nave is wide, the clerestory unusually high. Was there ever a chancel? If so, it had been demolished by the end of the 16th Century, but there may well have never been one, since the three east windows appear to have the oldest tracery in the building.

The south door sits on the busy street, the north door is reached by a long passageway past the Maddermarket Theatre. There are no proper porches, the north and south doorways opening directly into the aisles. In the early 20th Century they were joined by a narthex built under the west gallery, echoing the processional way which runs beneath the elegant but hemmed in tower. This emphasises the sense of a church which is wider than it is long.

George Plunkett's photographs show the church as it was on the eve of the Second World War, both views still fairly familiar today. The church was declared redundant in the early 1970s as a result of the Brooke Report, which is perhaps understandable given the proximity of St Andrew and St Peter Mancroft.

For a while, it was used by the Greek Orthodox community, but the building came into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, and is regularly open, although perhaps not as often as it might be given its location.

Stepping inside to the dark, devotional interior, you might be forgiven for thinking that the Greeks were still in possession. In fact, this faux-baroque space is almost wholly the work of William Busby, arch-Anglo-Catholic Rector in the early years of the 20th century, much of it collected from other churches, the rest made to his orders. There is a feel, not so much of clutter, but of a crowding within the enclosing walls of late 19th and early 20th Century glass, and not even the dominating 18th Century baldachino, originally made for St Michael Coslany, can fully draw the eye eastward without distraction. Some fragments of medieval glass survive, but much that was old was destroyed in a gas explosion in the 1870s. A few noteable survivals are elsewhere, as we shall see in a moment.

With the exception perhaps of the 1870s east window installed after the explosion, the glass is good of its kind. In particular, Powell & Sons's Annunciation scene in the north chancel chapel is outstanding.

The east window in the south chapel, which is probably also by Powell & Sons, depicts the Blessed Virgin surrounded by angels holding shields of the instruments of the passion beneath six female Saints in the upper lights. But it is the other window on the south side above the priest's door which is most memorable, showing a splendid Tree of Jesse by the J&J King workshop of Norwich, installed after the First World War. It is hard not to think that the faces of the prophets are actually Norwich worthies of the time.

Missing from the church is the medieval rood screen, which must have run right the way across the nave. Surviving from it are some of the panels, depicting Saints including St Agatha and St William of Norwich, but today they are in the Victoria & Albert Museum, along with some glass from a Norwich church which is also likely to have been St John Maddermarket.

Among the surviving medieval fragments still in the church are a fine figure of St Edward the Confessor, and a heavily restored Christ figure from a Coronation of the Blessed Virgin scene.

St John Maddermarket's splendid Anglo-catholic reimagining by William Busby rather pushes the number of memorials, both in brass and stone, into the background, but they are worth a look.

Among them are the brass of John Tuddenham, who died in 1450. He has a complete prayer clause inscription in English. From the other side of the religious divide are the two Sotherton memorials, one of 1540 and the other of 1606, the couple in each case facing each other across a prayer desk.

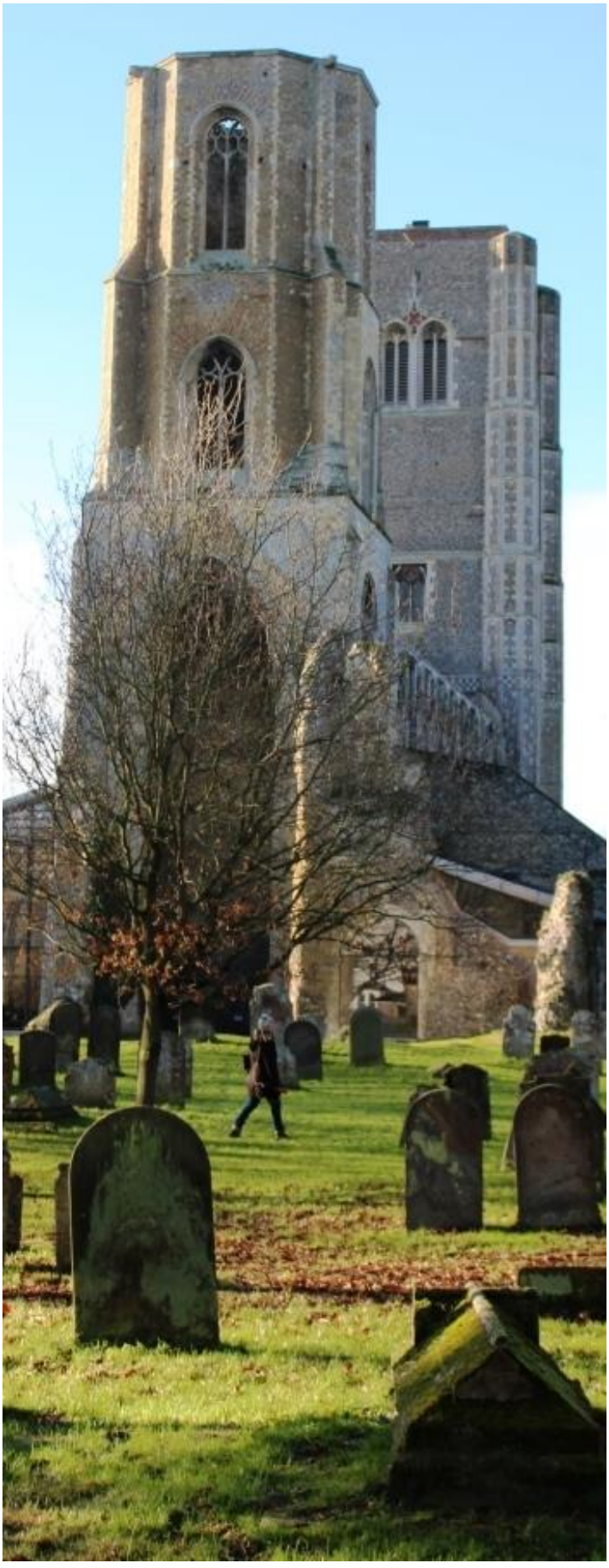
The Sothertons were exactly the kind of family which powered the English Reformation, mayors and merchants who had benefited from the Black Death's freeing up of capital and land to rise to prominence. And here they are today, in all their glory.

St Andrews and Blackfriars Hall St Andrews Hall Plain, Norwich

Saint Andrew's is a fine example of a hall church. In late Perpendicular Gothic style with a timber roof of tie beam construction, it is the second largest church in Norwich, and one of the last medieval churches to be built in the city. The main body of the church dates from 1499 to 1518. The tower dates from 1498, the south porch from c.1469 and the north porch from c. 1474. After the Reformation St Andrew's became a preaching house for the new 'Protestant' religion. In August 1603 John Robinson (pastor) (1576 - 1625) became associate pastor of St. Andrew's Church. Norwich at this time, had strong links with Holland and Flanders. It was the home to a considerable number of foreign workers and refugees and its most influential political leaders and merchants were Puritans. Robinson was one of the founders of the Congregational Church and later became pastor to the Pilgrim Fathers before their emigration to the New World.

Fairland Hill URC, Wymondham

Chapel of St Thomas of Canterbury, Church and Middleton Street, Wymondham

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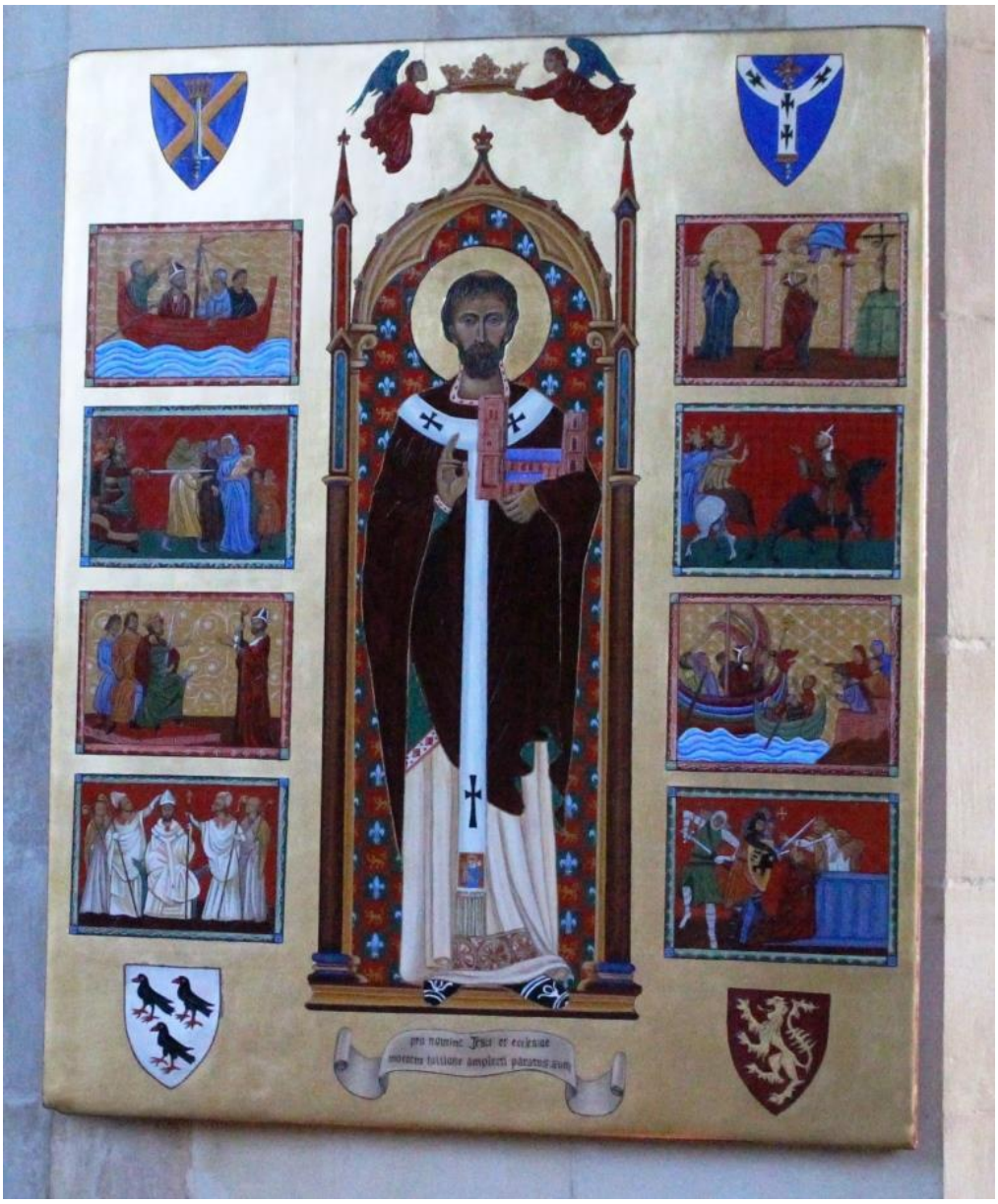

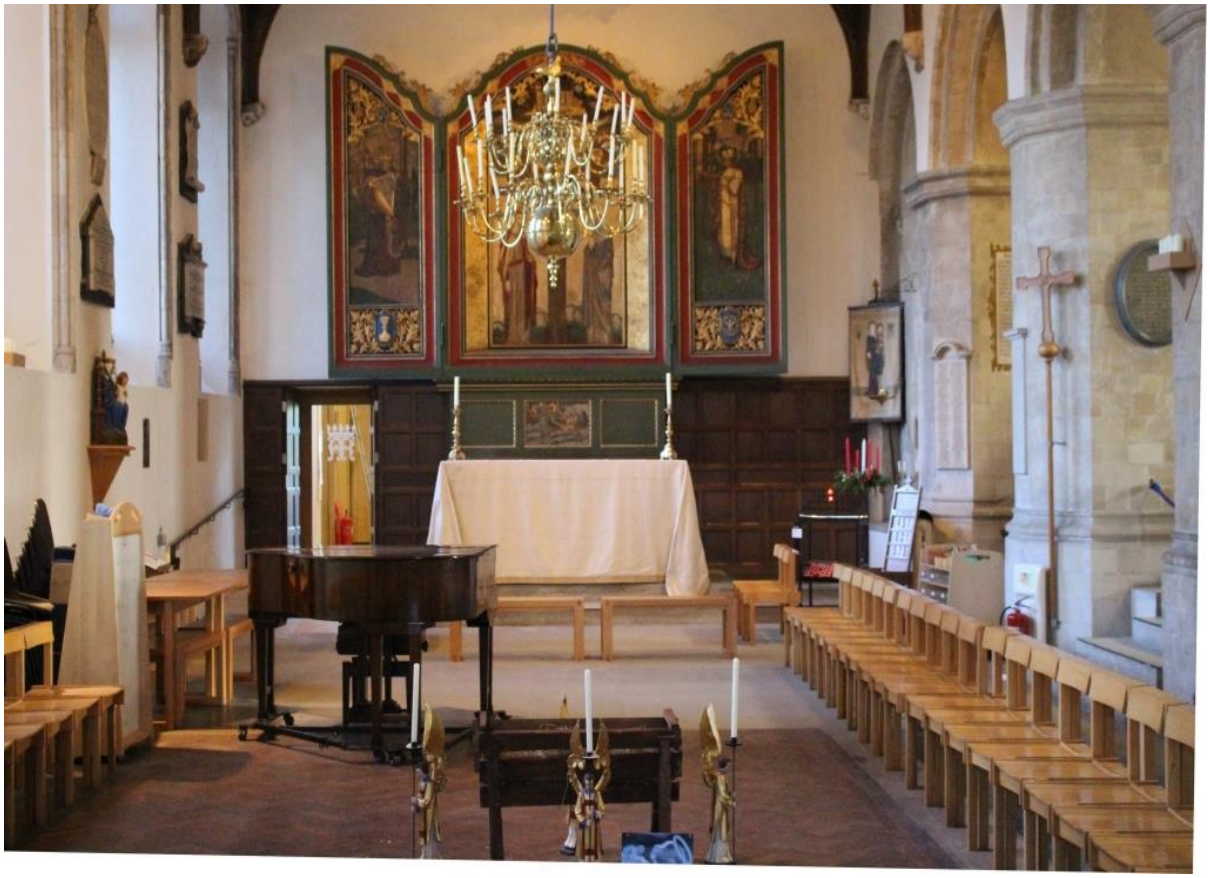


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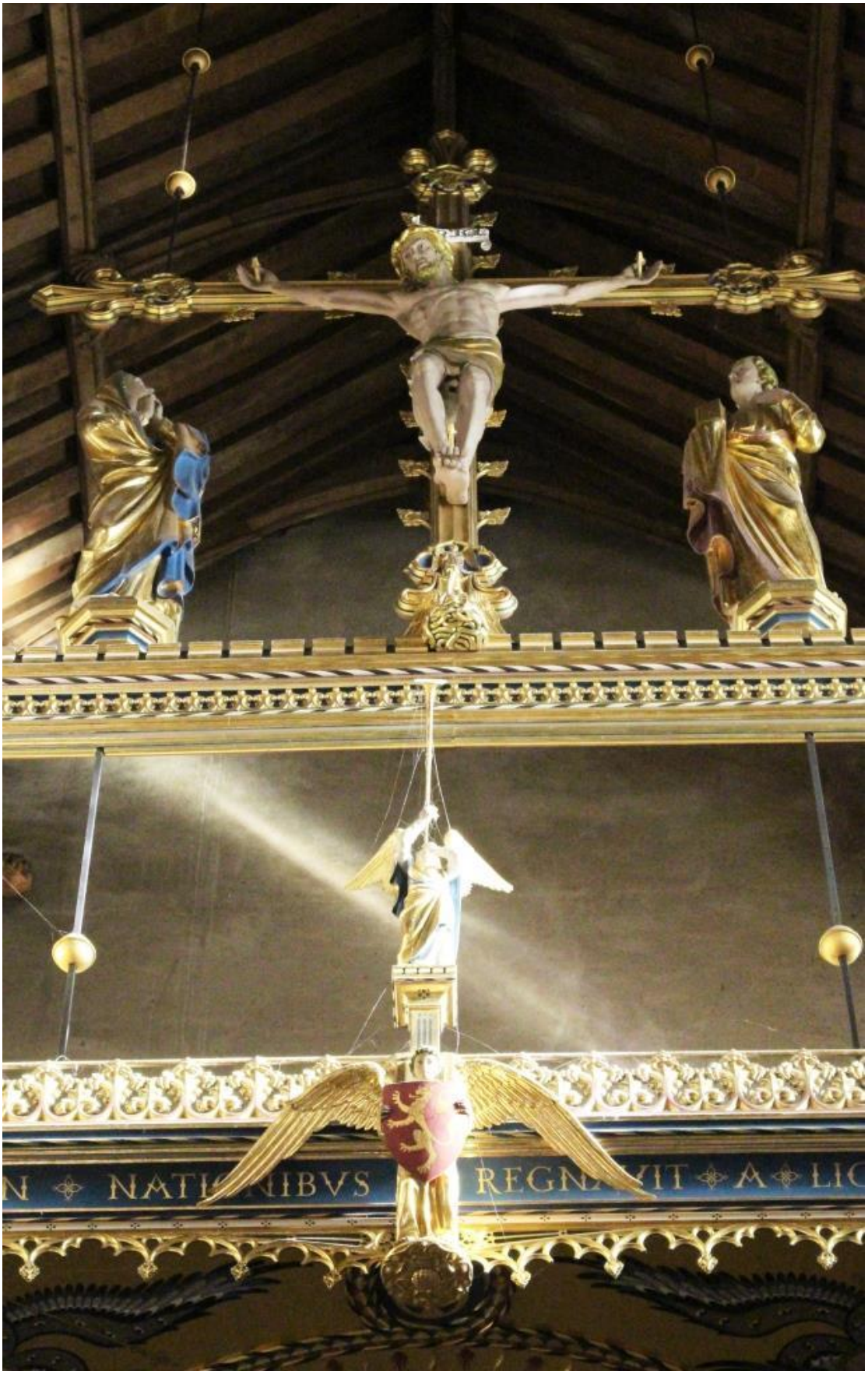
Mary and S. Thomas of Canterbury



Abbey, Church Street, Wymondham

There has been a church on this site for well over 1000 years. In Saxon times, Wymondham probably had a Minster church serving the town and surrounding communities. After the 1066 Norman Conquest, the land passed to the d'Aubigny family from Normandy. In 1107, William d'Aubigny founded a Benedictine monastery here as a 'daughter house' of the great St Alban's Abbey. The church was a grand stone structure used by the small community of monks and also by the parishioners of the town. This arrangement caused frequent disputes, and in 1249 the Pope ruled that the church should be clearly divided. The eastern half was to be used by the monks, the western half became the town's parish church.

Over the centuries, the church saw many changes. New towers were built, the nave was raised with a magnificent angel roof, and the parish church was enlarged with a wide north aisle in Gothic style. In 1448, the priory became an independent abbey, one of the richest in Norfolk. But when King Henry VIII became head of the English church, he closed all monasteries in the land. In 1538, the Wymondham monks surrendered to the king. Their part of the church was taken down, and today only the parish church survives. Significant changes since then include the enlarging of the south aisle in the 1540s, the installation of the great organ in 1793 and the addition of Sir Ninian Comper's gilded altar screen as a First World War memorial. In 2015, splendid new rooms were added at the east end to house new displays and facilities.

Wymondham Abbey was a Benedictine monastery. William d'Aubigny founded it in 1107 as a Priory (daughter house) of St.Alban's Abbey where a close relative was Abbot. There were frequent disputes between the monks of Wymondham and St Alban's, and in 1447 the King and Pope agreed that Wymondham should become independent, known as Wymondham Abbey. The monastery was never large and usually held just 12 to 16 monks, plus lay brothers (who did manual work), novices (monks in training) and servants who worked in the kitchens and on the land. The monks followed the Rule of St Benedict, which said that they must live a simple life of worship, work and prayer. Medieval people believed that when they died their souls were punished for their sins in Purgatory before being allowed into heaven.

But if they did good works, and people prayed for them, they could get to heaven more quickly. William d'Aubigny was a rich and powerful landowner who worked for the king. Eventually he became Pincerna (butler) to King Henry I, which was like being a minister in the royal government. Founding a monastery was a 'good work' for God, and William hoped that he, his family and descendants would benefit for ever from the prayers and masses of the monks. So he granted his new monastery lands and estates which provided a generous income to support them. He also built a splendid church where the monks spent up to eight hours a day in prayer and worship, known as Opus Dei (the work of God).

Their main work at other times was copying manuscripts, managing the monastery's estates, and looking after guests and the poor. William d'Aubigny also wished to provide for the people of Wymondham. He decided that his new church should also serve as a Parish Church for the townspeople. So, once the east end of the church was finished for the monks, a long nave was built for the parishioners and their old Saxon church was knocked down. During the 1530s, the marital problems of King Henry VIII caused a dispute between the King and the Pope (the head of the Roman Catholic Church).

Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, failed to produce a male heir, so he asked the Pope for a divorce. The Pope refused. Henry retaliated in 1534 by declaring himself 'Supreme Head of the Church of England'. Most churchmen supported the king, and they readily granted the divorce. In 1536, King Henry realised that, as head of the church, he could also control the monasteries. There were about 800 monasteries in England at that time and they owned about a third of all the land in the country. Henry saw that he could make himself rich by closing monasteries and seizing their wealth. He sent round Commissioners to visit the monasteries. They claimed that they found many monasteries (including Wymondham) were badly run and that the monks were living easy and sometimes immoral lives. In 1536, King Henry VIII ordered the closure of all the smaller monasteries with annual incomes of less than £200 (about £200,000 in today's terms).

Wymondham escaped, as its income was just above this level. But Henry later continued the process to include the richer monasteries, and in 1538 the Abbot and monks of Wymondham 'freely' surrendered their buildings and estates to the King. The roofs were quickly removed from the monks' part of the church, which was gradually demolished so that its stone could be re-used elsewhere. But the Parish Church – i.e. the western half of the building – survived. This is the building you see today. Wymondham Abbey is one of Norfolk's oldest and greatest historic architectural treasures. Its tall twin towers are a landmark for miles around. The setting of the church is incomparable with its spacious churchyard separated from the adjacent grazing meadow by an ingenious ha-ha. Inside, the great Norman pillars of the parish nave date from the 1150s. In the mid-1400s, the roof height was raised and crowned by a magnificent roof supported by life-size angel carvings, one of the finest examples in the country.

The wide north aisle, with the Lady Chapel at its east end, is in Gothic style with hammerbeam roof and intriguingly carved corbels of angels, musicians and local characters of the day. Important features of the church include the 14th century font with tall pierced cover, the fine 1793 Georgian organ in Chippendale-style case, the gilded altar screen (reredos) designed by Sir Ninian Comper, and the Arts and Crafts triptych in the Lady Chapel. The beautiful new rooms at the east end contain displays of artefacts and documents from the parish archives dating back to medieval times.

St Peter’s and St Mary’s, Station Road West, Stowmarket

URC, Ipswich Street, Stowmarket

Our Lady's, Catholic, Stricklands Road, Stowmarket

MONDAY 18th DECEMBER 2017

Hope Church, Fore Hamlet, Ipswich

Seventh Day Adventist, Rope Walk, Ipswich

THURSDAY 21st DECEMBER 2017

All Saints, Church Road, Brightlingsea

But Henry later There are two churches serving the coastal town of Brightlingsea. The more modern, situated near the waterfront, is St James. The older and more interesting historically is All Saints, set on a low hill about a mile inland from the sea, far from the core of Brightlingsea itself. In fact, so far from the centre of town is the church that we drove right past it before realising we'd arrived at our destination! All Saints was begun around 1250, though it incorporates parts of an earlier Norman church. It incorporates even more than that, for Roman bricks can easily be spotted in the walls, particularly in a round headed recess by the south door. Brightlingsea was associated with the Cinque Port town of Sandwich, Kent, and All Saints is still used as a meeting place for electing the Deputy of Brightlingsea, who serves as a link between Sandwich and the town.

The most striking external feature is the embattled tower, built of local flint in the last years of the 15th century. The tower stands 97 feet high, in three stages, with a minstrel gakllery built into the lowest stage. The tower really is quite remarkable; with one of the finest examples of diagonal butress bracing in East Anglia. Under the tower is a baptistry, housing a Tudor font, carved with roses within a quatrefoil. Considerable traces of gilding and colourful paint still cling to the stone surface. In the Lady Chapel, north chapel, and central nave aisles are a series of 16th century memorial brasses to the Beriffe family, wealthy local merchants and benefactors of the church.

William Beriffe and his wife Joan have brasses in the nave aisle. In the north aisle is a touching brass to Mary Beriffe, showing her 4 sons and single daughter clutching her robe. Also in the north aisle is a 16th century painted (not stained) Flemiish glass panel depicting St Paul. This is part of a larger design, the rest of which is at Ely Cathedral. We do not know how the window came to be separated, and how a panel of a cathedral window came to be here in an Essex parish church! Set into the floor of the Lady Chapel is a 13th century coffin lid. Also in the Lady Chapel are brasses to generations of the Berife family. The oldest is that of John Beriffe (d. 1496), and the youngest that of Alice Beriffe, who died in 1536. Alice's brass is a palimpsest; that is, reused. The reverse side has a much older brass of a medieval clergyman. In the chancel is a very large marble memorial to Nicholas Magens (d. 1764), a German-born lord of the manor, and one of the founding members of Lloyd's insurance company in London. Magens purchased the Brightlingsea estate only a year before his death, and his impressive monument was designed by Nicolas Read and erected in 1779. In the south chapel are late 17th century grave slabs, including those of Francis Wheeler (d. 1692), and his son Francis, who died just 2 years later. There is a 16th century statue niche in the south wall, with a headless figure who may be a bishop, or perhaps St Nicholas.

In 1872 severe storms along the North Sea coast caused widespread destruction and terrible loss of life. Thirty six local seamen were lost from Brightlingsea, and this disaster prompted the then vicar Rev. Arthur Pertwee, to create a frieze of individual tiles, each inscribed with the name of the deceased and the ship on which he served. William Stammers, church warden, and Albert Blyth, who wrote the inscriptions, helped Pertwee design the original frieze. The idea took hold, and since 1872 a tile has been added every time a Brightlingsea native is lost at sea. At first the tiles were limited to mariners by occupation, but this was altered to include anyone from Brightlingsea who lost their lives at sea. Hence we see a tile commemorating Sidney Siebert, who was not a fisherman, but was drowned in the wreck of the Titanic in 1912. There are now over 212 tiles, each unique, each telling a story of tragic loss. It’s a reminder of how closely the people of Brightlingsea have historically been tied to the sea. Reverend Pertwee, who served as vicar for 50 years, from 1872-1912, was known to climb to the top of the tower and raise a light on the flagstaff to guide the fishing fleet safely home in a storm.

United Church, Chapel Road, Brightlingsea

St Sabina Catholic, Richard Avenue, Brightlingsea

St James, Victoria Place, Brightlingsea