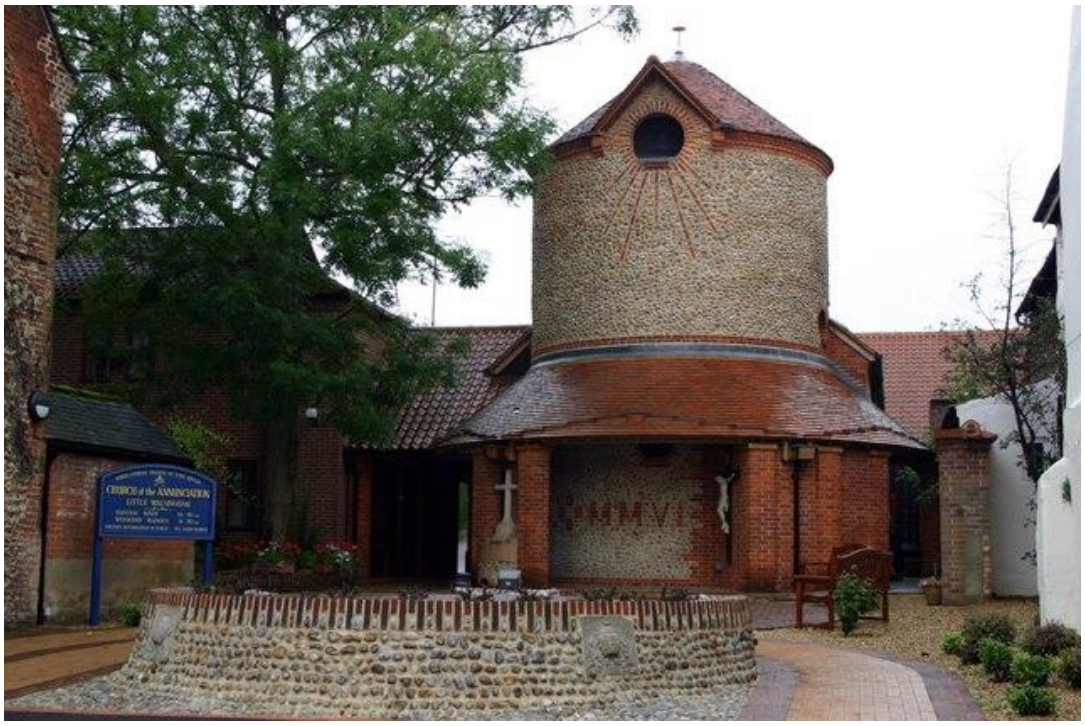


CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED (17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 21

SATURDAY 13th JANUARY 2018

St Paul's, St Pauls Road, Clacton-on-Sea

House at 16 Russell Road, Clacton-on-Sea
Brethren Meeting House, Weeley

SATURDAY 2nd FERUARY 2018

St Andrew's, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich

Here we are right on the edge of the Ipswich urban area, but this church appears to have a village setting, looking out across the fields. Rushmere is rather a genteel suburb, with big houses set back from the street and a large duck pond, quite unlike busy Kesgrave with its Anglican and Catholic churches to the south. From the look of it, you wouldn't think that St Andrew serves an Anglican parish of more than 10,000 people. Most of the people in the parish are in the housing estates of north-east Ipswich, but despite its rural setting this building is fully equipped to serve them, as we will see inside.

There was a rather dull, though necessary, 19th century rebuilding here; only the late medieval tower and Norman south doorway are old. Local architect Edward Hakewill's work was something of an emergency, a result of the strain placed on the walls by Perpendicular windows at the time the tower was built.

Hakewill's work is notorious in Suffolk for its dour, dark interiors and low north aisles. In fact, Rushmere was Hakewill's home parish, so he pulled a few more of the stops out here; and in any case, things have happened since Hakewill's day. The first sign of this as you approach is the large parish hall to the east of the graveyard, apparently abutting the chancel.

A circumnavigation of the church reveals a rather alarming 1930s vestry at the west end of the north aisle (since converted into toilet and kitchen facilities), the large municipal cemetery behind, and a great array of roofs eastward, showing that something extraordinary has happened here. Almost incidentally in the midst of this is a high-roofed Victorian building.

Hakewill's rebuilding was in 1861, in his familiar Early English style.

You step through the south doorway into dimness even on a bright day. A low, dark north aisle is the setting for jewel-like glass, mainly of Old Testament scenes. There are more in the nave south wall. There is an almost lapidary feel to them in the darkness, and they lead the eye through the gloom to the surprise of the east end.

In Hakewill's day there was a stone screen, which must have been terribly claustrophobic. But that has now gone, and beyond the altar is the magnificent 1968 extension, the first of its kind in Suffolk, by George Pace, who rebuilt Llandaff Cathedral.

The church opens out into a wide, light square space, with chairs turned to face the altar from the east and north. The windows are high, narrowly panelled with pine in the scandinavian manner, with rugged concrete beams and undressed brickwork. The space opens upwards as well, echoing the 19th century crossbeam roof of the former nave. It is all thrillingly modern, even at a distance of forty years.

The potentially awkward space at the east end of the north aisle is successfully managed with a brick half-arch, and a piano sits beyond it, as though on holiday from Kettles Yard or Snape Maltings. The archway allows borrowed light to enter the otherwise dim north aisle. The windows on this side echo the high east window, narrowly panelled in pine.

On the south side, a doorway leads into the parish hall complex.Large tiles pave the extension and central sanctuary. Above shows a 1960s dormer window echoes the medieval one at Ipswich St Nicholas, coincidentally another Hakewill restoration.

The use of concrete, brick and wood is reminiscent of Basil Spence's work at Sussex University - all that is missing is the ripple of reflected water.

This is one of the most exciting and interesting enlargements of a medieval parish church in Suffolk - another is a mile away at Kesgrave All Saints. It is still possible to find a number of interesting Victorian details, and the loving care with which they were executed reminds us that this was Hakewill's parish church; the sedilia windows are his memorial.

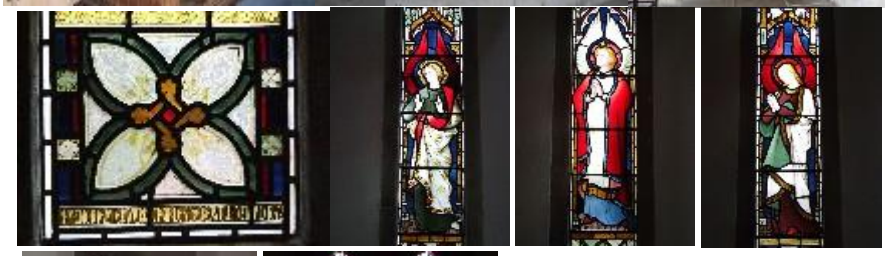
Set behind his alarming mock-Norman font (to go with the south doorway, presumably) is the parish war memorial. The woodwork east of here is Hakewills, a contrast with the modern chairs in Pace's extension.

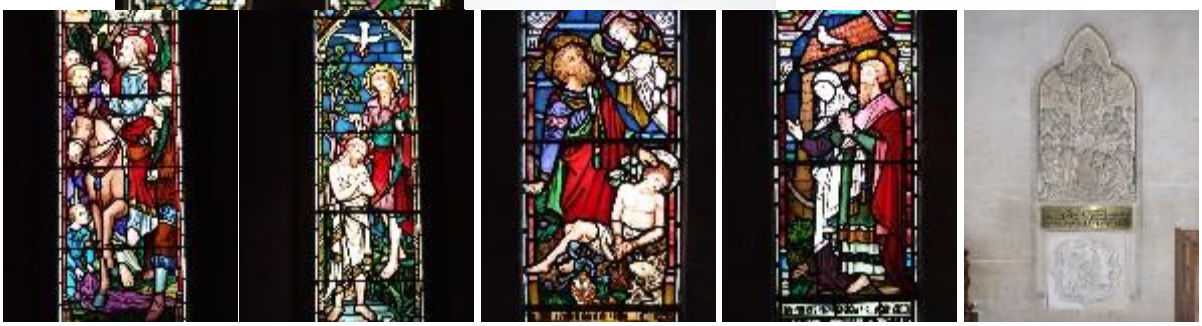
Pace was an architect, but he was also a designer. He was responsible for the refurbishment of St John the Baptist in Cauldwell Hall Road, the adjacent parish, in the 1960s.

Here at Rushmere, many of his simple wrought-iron furnishings survive: flower stands, candlesticks, even an elegant black metal hymn board.

This is a church to leave thrilled, by a juxtaposition of light and dark, between Victorian sentiment and modernist rationalism. This is a space worth seeing.






SATURDAY 3rd FEBRUARY 2018

St Augustine, Bucklesham Road, Ipswich

St Augustine, a familiar landmark to drivers in east Ipswich, was the work of diocesan architect Henry Munro Cautley. Cautley was born at Bridge in Kent in 1876, but when he was eight years old his father Richard was appointed minister at Ipswich's new All Saints church in Chavallier Street. Cautley would spend the rest of his life in Ipswich. He is most famous today for his epic literary works on Suffolk and Norfolk churches, but as well as being the diocesan architect he was a partner in an Ipswich practice with Leslie Barefoot. His best building on his own is the red brick Ipswich County Library, and their best together is probably the Walk, an Elizabethan-style shopping arcade near to Ipswich's Corn Hill.

Cautley was also retained by Lloyds Bank, and designed a number of improbably Classical banks for them in the 1920s, mostly in the east of England. Cautley and Barefoot's practice was based down at the Cornhill Chambers in the Thoroughfare, and the building survives today with Cautley's lettering above the entrance. The same lettering can be seen on the war memorials he designed, of which about half a dozen can be traced in parish churches in the Ipswich area.

As diocesan architect, Munro Cautley designed three churches for Ipswich. St Augustine was the first, in 1927, bankrolled by Ipswich shop owner Charles Bantoft in memory of his mother. The site was donated to the diocese by Lady de Saumerez of Shrubland Hall. All the work was carried out by firms based in Ipswich, the main contractor being Charles Green & Sons of St John's Road. Like many Ipswich builders, Green was a Methodist, and it is said that his honesty after discovering he had been under estimating costs which led to the firm making just £20 profit on the two years they spent on the project.

Cautley observed the letter of the Perpendicular style rather than its spirit, and there is a central tower, thus not really Suffolk Perpendicular at all. Perhaps his eyes were wistfully remembering the great cruciform churches of his childhood in Kent. The brick walls are rendered, the tower is concrete.

Grander than his St Andrew, Britannia Road, it has none of the spirit of its age that you find at its 1930s near neighbour All Hallows, Landseer Road, where Cautley was on top form both inside and out. Internally, pretty much all is Cautley's, the narrow aisles set behind Perpendicular arcades with panelling reminiscent of Lavenham. There should be the feel of a grand urban church of the late 15th Century, but the lack of clerestories and the narrow aisles miss the trick, and the eye is drawn eastwards rather than upwards.

The anonymous feel of the nave enhances the beauty of the chancel, where steps climb to Cautley's altar and reredos, with Horace Wilkinson's excellent five-light window depicting the Ascension of Christ. The interior would seem rather stark without it. In 1936, Wilkinson came back and installed the three-light window in the south transept. It depicts the Blessed Virgin and Child flanked by St Monica and St Augustine. Beneath, a charming little vignette depicts the church's donor Charles Bantoft and his mother as St Augustine and St Monica. A plaque beside the window remembers their donation, but does not name them.

The tower contains the bell from the now-vanished church of Linstead Magna, which was derelicted the year before St Augustine was built. Supposedly, the font is from there, too. But it seems possible that the Linstead Magna font was actually moved to Linstead Parva church, and Diocesan architect Cautley pressed the rather finer Linstead Parva font into service at his brand new church. The font currently at Linstead Parva has a face which was once set against an arcade, but Linstead Parva church has no arcades.

Behind the font is a lively little window of 1961 by Harry Stammers depicting an infant being baptised, the family and godparents gathered around. It is very much in the familiar Festival of Britain style of the York school of .stained glass artists. What Henry Munro Cautley would have thought of it we don't know, of course, because he died at home in Ipswich in 1959. His gravestone is in Westerfield churchyard - he designed it.

His wife Mabel, who had died the previous year, is buried in the same grave.

FRIDAY 9th MARCH 2018

New Buddhist Centre, 2 Portland Road, Colchester

Colchester Buddhist Centre was previously located on Manor Road where we had been operating since 1998. Our premises there was rented, and it was always our ambition to buy our own property. At the end of 2014, after years of saving donations given to the centre, we purchased 2 Portland Road. We began an ambitious project of restoring and extending the building which was completed in April 2017. The grand opening was on 18th November 2017.

SUNDAY 25th MARCH 2018

Christian Scientist, Firstsite, Colchester

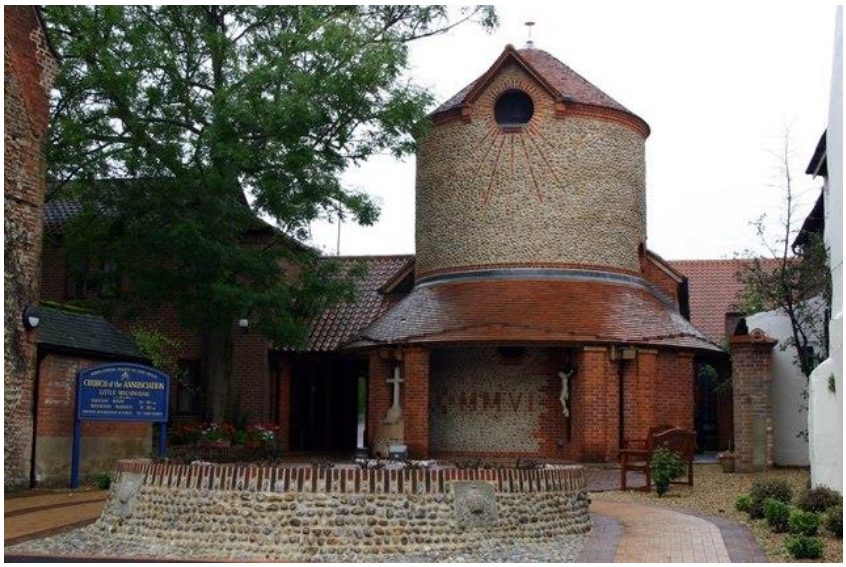
Sunday Services
Christian Science Sunday church services are for everyone! The hymns, prayer and a Lesson-Sermon read from the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* provide spiritual inspiration and a healing atmosphere.

Sunday School
Just an hour every week where young children through to teenagers can explore the moral and spiritual teachings of the Bible and *Science and Health* and learn how to make them practical in their own lives.

Wednesday Meetings
These meetings are a midweek pause for prayer, for listening to readings from the Bible and *Science and Health* that speak to a current need in the community or world. There is also an opportunity to share (and listen to) testimonies of healing and experiences gained through prayer and the study of Christian Science.

Christian Science Reading Rooms
They are friendly places to explore the Bible, in many versions, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy (as well as her other writings) plus books, magazines and CDs on Christian healing. An all-in-one library and bookshop, they are resource centres for personal growth, health, and spiritual discovery that anyone will enjoy visiting.

MONDAY 26th MARCH 2018



Catholic, 90 Colchester Road, Halstead

897 Cardinal Vaughan visited Halstead to deliver lectures on the Catholic church. As a consequence, Mass was from then on celebrated once a month, in a room in Rosemary Lane. The Cardinal indicated that he wished a mission house to be started to support evangelisation in the surrounding area. As a result a congregation of Franciscan Sisters settled in Bocking, Braintree. Their chapel, serving as the parish church for the new parish of Braintree which covered Halstead was carved out of the then Witham parish.

1898 On Christmas Eve, A Franciscan priest took up residence at the convent.

1923 The Bocking Sisters were requested by the diocesan bishop to engage in pastoral work at Halstead. They started catechetical instruction of children.

1926 A Mass centre was started and site for a church acquired in Halstead.

1928 A temporary church (now the church hall) was built in Colchester Rd. The first permanent priest was established in post. The cost of this was born by Madame Edith Arendrup, nee Courtauld, a convert lady.

1936 The Parish Priest was incapacitated as a result of a road accident. After a number of temporary arrangements, Braintree again assumed responsibility for Halstead until 1942.

1942 The Pallottine Fathers, due to the influx of Italian prisoners of war, took over the parish in the December of that year.

1950s A Mass centre set up in Yeldham, moving later to Sible Hedingham (in the Constitutional hall) where it remained until Christmas Eve 1982 when it then moved to St. Peter's, the pre-reformation Anglican church in Sible Hedingham.

1953 The house next to the Halstead church was acquired by the Pallottine Fathers as the presbytery. On their departure from the parish in January 2009, due to their decreasing numbers, the building was purchased by the diocese at a favourable price.

1955 In October, the permanent church of St. Francis was opened. Financed largely by Dr. Richard Courtauld, another convert, who's father's cousin had provided the finance for the original temporary church. This was the third church this man had played a major part in establishing. The other two churches being those built in Braintree and in Lexden. The latter now use as the parish hall there.

1970 The Parish Pastoral Council established.

1973 First phase of re-ordering the church, as required by Vatican, II undertaken.

1987 Second phase undertaken to make it compatible with the standard required by the diocese.

2001 Due to advancing age and diminishing numbers the Franciscan sisters relinquished responsibility for religious education of the children to the parish. This now became the responsibility of lay catechists. Children from the parish seeking a catholic education are obliged to travel to the schools given above.

St. Francis of Assisi parish is predominately rural although few of its members are engaged in agriculture. Most live along the line of the A1124 in Halstead, with clusters in the villages of; Earls Colne, Colne Engaine, Sible & Castle Hedingham plus Gt. & Lt. Yeldham. There are a few others thinly scattered in the remaining dozen or so villages that lie to the north of this road up to the Suffolk boarder from Ridgewell in the North-west through to Chappel in the South-east. It has a high number of retirees and a few younger families.

With the distances involved and the small numbers, building community is an ongoing challenge. On leaving school, quite a number of our more able young people leave the area to go onto higher education or to find work elsewhere in the country.

St. Francis has an active Parish Pastoral Council, is involved at deanery level and represented on the Diocesan Pastoral council. It has an active social/fund raising committee and seeks to engage in adult catechesis through the Café programme. Ecumenical relations are very good, particularly in the town of Halstead and in the Hedinghams. St. Francis is represented on the Churches Together in Halstead and is engaged in leadership roles on that body.

Methodist, New Street, Halstead

Halstead Methodist Church in Halstead is a Christian congregation serving the Halstead community and seeking, engaging, and encouraging others through a life-changing Christian journey.

Halstead Methodist Church in Halstead, Essex seeks to be a loving, friendly community that worships God, and serves others. We place a high priority on teaching from the Bible and following the example of Jesus. Our vision is to impact and renew Halstead, Essex and beyond with the transforming message of Jesus Christ through words and actions. Everyone is welcome, no matter your age, beliefs, sexuality or background. Come as you are - we'd love to get to know you.

SATURDAY 31st MARCH 2018

URC, High Street, Ingatestone

The Ingatestone United Reformed Church is a 200 year old building located at the heart of Ingatestone village. They meet for worship every Sunday at 10:30am for approximately one hour. Our family orientated worship encourages questions and participation and consists of music, singing, prayer and Bible readings.

On the first Sunday of each month we have Holy Communion, sharing bread and wine together. Our worship is led by the Minister, by members, or by visiting worship leaders. During the year we have a number of special all-age services, aiming to include young children in the worship. These include, our celebratory services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Some of the services are joint with other churches in Ingatestone, so if you are new to village it is a great opportunity to meet your new neighbours.

URC, New Road, Brentwood

In October 1997 the United Reformed Church celebrated its 25th anniversary. Formed in 1972 by the union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England, the United Reformed Church has continued to express its deep commitment to the visible unity of the whole Church. In 1981 it entered into union with the Re-formed Churches of Christ and in the year 2000 with the Congregational Union of Scotland. The United Reformed Church is in frequent dialogue on unity with other traditions and has more than 400 local churches united with other denominations.

The United Reformed Church comprises 150,000 adults and 100,000 children and young people in 1750 congregations spread throughout England, Scotland and Wales, served by some 1100 ministers, both women and men.

Though one of the smaller of Britain's 'mainstream' denominations, the United Reformed Church stands in the historic Reformed tradition, whose member denominations make up the largest single strand of Protestantism with more than 70 million members world-wide. Along with other Reformed churches the United Reformed Church holds to the Trinitarian faith expressed in the historic Christian creeds and finds its supreme authority for faith and conduct in the Word of God in the Bible, discerned under guidance of the Holy Spirit. The United Reformed Church's structure also expresses its faith in the ministry of all God's people through the structure of democratic Councils by which the Church is governed.

Theologically, the United Reformed Church is a broad church. Its membership embraces congregations of evangelical, charismatic and liberal understandings of the Christian faith – in a variety of mixtures!

Catholic Cathedral, Ingrave Road, Brentwood

Brentwood Cathedral began in 1861 as a parish church built in a Gothic style. This relatively small building was raised to Cathedral status in 1917. Between 1989 and 1991 the church was enlarged in an Italianate Classical style by Quinlan Terry. The original church building on the south (liturgical east) side was retained. The new Brentwood Cathedral was dedicated by Cardinal Basil Hume on 31 May 1991. The donors chose to remain anonymous and the money was given solely for this purpose. Architecturally, Quinlan Terry took his inspiration from the early Italian Renaissance crossed with the English Baroque of Christopher Wren.

This, it was felt, would be appropriate for the town and its conservation area, but above all it would provide the right space and light for the liturgy to be celebrated. The cathedral was designed along a square plan, focussed on the high altar, placed in the nave to accommodate the changes in liturgical fashion after the Second Vatican Council. Work began in 1989 and was completed two years later. The north elevation consists of nine bays each divided by Doric pilasters. This is broken by a huge half-circular portico, which was inspired by a similar one at St Paul's. The handmade traditional Smeed Dean brick of the clerestory leads up to the octagonal lantern, or cupola, the high point both of the outside and inside. A conscious decision was taken to retain part of the Gothic revival church of 1861 alongside the new classical cathedral.

The east elevation juxtaposes the old and the new, linking them through the scale of the 1991 building and the use of ragstone and Welsh slate roof tiles. All the Classical architectural orders are represented in the interior - the four giant Doric pilasters, the Tuscan arcade of arches, the Ionic pilasters of the Palladian windows in the east and west aisles, the Corinthian and Composite influences evident on the cathedral and the organ case. While the interior of the cathedral has a deliberately 'restrained' feeling to it, richness is to be found in the ceiling. The Roman key pattern and the double guilloche pattern, picked out in gold leaf, are dominant here. All the round-headed windows are in the Classical-Wren style, with clear leaded lights of hand-made glass.

With clear windows on all four sides, the cathedral is flooded with light at any time of the day. This, together with the white walls and stone floor, combines to give a translucent effect which uplifts the spirit and conveys its own sense of the presence of God. The cathedral is lit by brass English Classical chandeliers (one of which was formerly in the church at Epping) and, above the cornice, concealed lighting. The processional cross is a copy of a medieval design. The figure represents a transitional period in the theology of design where Christ still wears the crown of the Risen Lord, but the corpus is that of the crucified Saviour. The Bishop's chair or cathedra is a tangible sign of his presiding over the diocese. It was made in Pisa, in Nabrassina stone, and has steps of Portland stone. In the centre is the coat of arms of the diocese. The base of the seat is inlaid with slate, to match the floor.

The Cathedra in Brentwood Cathedral

Consecration crosses are incised into the stone of the Doric pilasters that hold up the clerestory. They were anointed like the altar, as a sign that the whole building is dedicated to God. On the feast of the Dedication the candles in front of the gilded crosses are lit. In the east aisle, there are two rooms set aside to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. Opposite them is a crucifix, formerly in the church at Stock, Essex. Around the arcade are terracotta roundels representing the 15 Stations of the Cross. These were modelled by Raphael Maklouf, the well-known sculptor, who was responsible for the Queen's head on Commonwealth coinage from 1985 to 1997. Their milky glaze perfectly complements the subtlety and intimacy with which the familiar scenes have been expressed.

St Thomas Of Canterbury, St Thomas Road, Brentwood

Brentwood began as a clearing made in the woods by burning trees (hence 'burnt wood' which became Brentwood) to provide a stop-off point about one day's journeying from the Thames for pilgrims en route from East Anglia to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

The first church building dedicated to St Thomas in Brentwood was a chapel built around 1221 to serve these pilgrims. The ruins of the original chapel are still to be seen in the High Street. Brentwood remained part of the Parish of South Weald until 1873, but in 1835 a new church was built on the site of the present church to cater for the growing population in Brentwood. The new building had a short and unhappy history, being poorly designed and structurally unsound. Not long after Brentwood became an independent parish, the church was demolished to make way for the third St Thomas's in Brentwood.

On 14th February 1881 the local MP, Octavius Coope (a member of the brewing family), laid the foundation-stone in the west wall of the present church. Two years later the main part of the church had been completed, and it was consecrated on 26th April 1883 by the Bishop of St Alban's (in whose diocese Brentwood then was). A total of seven services were held between 5.00am and 9.00pm that day. The present church is Victorian Gothic in the early English style, and it was designed by Mr EC Lee, also responsible for the design of St Paul's Bentley, a nearby parish.

A generous gift from the Revd Charles Belli, a former vicar of South Weald, made it possible to rebuild the chancel, and the following five years saw further collections and gifts towards the building fund. The tower was completed in 1887 and dedicated by the Bishop on 19th October. The following year saw the installation of a peal of bells, and the old organ was replaced in 1897. A beautiful reredos depicting the crucifixion was bequeathed by George Larkin in 1896. Originally uncoloured, colour was added during as a memorial to those who died in the second world war during the redecoration of the chancel by Laurence King in the late 1950's.

The church centre was added in 1988, to replace the old church hall which was located on Queens Road near the present vicarage. The centre contains the foyer where refreshments are served during the day, a hall, kitchen, sacristy, choir vestry, office and meeting rooms.

Elim, High Street, Ingatestone

WEDNESDAY 5th APRIL 2018

Salvation Army, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich

St Mary's, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich

Looking at the modern church of St. Mary's, built in 1960, you might well think that this is a new parish which grew out of an expanding town population: but in fact you are standing near the oldest Catholic church in Ipswich since the Reformation.

It was founded by an emigre French Priest, Abbe Louis Pierre Simon, who escaped from the persecutions of the French Revolution and arrived in Ipswich in 1793 to teach. During that time he was befriended by a Catholic woman, Miss Margaret Wood who lived with her widowed sister-in-law and niece in Silent Street, Delighted to meet a Catholic Priest she offered him lodgings in her house and room to say Mass. It was probably in Silent Street or in her subsequent house in Carr Street, opposite the end of Cox Lane, that Mass was celebrated regularly in the town for the first time since the Reformation. Glyde, an Ipswich historian living at the time records that "Much ill-feeling existed in the minds of a large proportion of the people towards their Catholic brethren and worship had to be performed in as secret a manner as possible to prevent annoyance". Nevertheless, Pere Simon succeeded in gathering all the local Catholics into one "fold" by his faithful pastoral work, and after the French wars were over he decided to devote the rest of his life to working for the Catholic community in Ipswich.

After settling his affairs in France he returned to Ipswich and purchased a house in what was then called Albion Hill, now the Woodbridge Road, with five acres of land attached. Appropriate, it was near the site of the Convent of the Black Friars at Cauldwell, destroyed after the Reformation, but more important. it was near the temporary barracks still existing after the Napoleonic Wars, and from the soldiers, many of them Irish or German. Pere Simon found a number of his flock.

The house, which still stands, is now used by the Sisters as a Convent. Pere Simon made one room into a temporary chapel while he overcame the local objections to having a Catholic Chapel built in Ipswich. Eventually his perseverance was rewarded and a small chapel dedicated to St. Anthony was built next to the house. As you enter the parish hall, which was converted from the old church, this original chapel ran from what is now the Pere Simon Lounge, across the end of the hall and into the alcove opposite - the transepts of the later church.

If you stand in the Woodbridge Road you can see the marks of the former entrance in the wall of the Convent, now bricked up. It was discreetly hidden from the road by trees so that people could slip into the church unobserved.

The Chapel was consecrated on 1st August, 1827 by Dr. T. Walsh, Vicar Apostolic, and the Suffolk Chronicle records that "the novelty of the appearance of a Roman Catholic Bishop at Mass brought a number of respectable individuals to attend on this occasion". At the same time free lessons for the poor were started on a Sunday morning in reading, writing and catechism.

Pere Simon had a strong and attractive personality which helped him to establish the first Catholic parish in the town, and he became a popular and respected figure by everyone. He mastered written English but was never fluent in speaking it. At Mass the Gospel was read in English, during the break after the Latin Gospel and the notices by Mr. Salter Fox, a parishioner: the first lay reader at St. Mary's over a hundred and fifty years before they were officially commissioned!

Within ten years the Chapel of St. Anthony proved too small, and after some opposition Pere Simon was granted permission to enlarge the church north and south so that the old chapel formed the transept to the new church which had a new nave of 76 feet long, opening directly off the Woodbridge Road. This church is now the parish hall of St. Mary's. A contemporary description tells of a "fine model of gothic architecture" with a fine ceiling, organ and a beautiful painting of the Crucifixion over the altar.

On 10th October, 1838 Dr. Walsh returned to bless the enlarged church, now dedicated to Our Lady and called St. Mary's and during High Mass seventeen people were confirmed, of whom five were converts. The Bishop took as his text "love one another" and part of his homily was directed to "our dearly beloved Protestant brethren", an early sign of the ecumenical spirit reflected in St. Mary's today.

The Suffolk Chronicle reported that "Mozart's Grand Mass in C was performed by the choir in a very creditable style, its strength being increased by a portion of the band of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards.

The writer suggests that the church was only half full partly because of the entrance fee of half a crown(!) but also because of the stern denunciations against Popery from some of the pulpits of the parish churches in the town.

Less than a year later Pere Simon died, and the church of St. Mary's was then served by Priests from Stoke by Nayland and Bury St. Edmunds. In 1854 Father Kemp settled in Ipswich from Stoke by Nayland and at this point the church was still owned by Miss Mary Wood, niece of the Miss Wood who had befriended Abbe Simon.

However they were now conveyed to the Bishop and Trustees. Pere Simon and Margaret Wood are remembered by plaques in the parish hall of St. Mary's, which was once the church they founded.

In 1861 St. Pancras Church was built in the centre of the town and until 1919 both parishes were administered jointly. Father Kemp, when he retired, handed over to his friend, Father Wallace, in 1869. A slightly eccentric character he once finished a sermon and asked for three cheers for the Pope, and often walked from Ipswich to Woodbridge to say Mass. In the 1870's he went off to the Ashanti Wars as chaplain, and then on to India, but he returned to live at St. Mary's as chaplain to the convent.

1860 was an important year for St. Mary's for it witnessed the arrival of the first Sisters of Jesus and Mary from France, as a result of a request from Dr. Amherst, the Bishop of Northampton. The church was very poor at that time and the nuns took over the cleaning and sewed some much needed altar linen. In 1861 they started an orphanage, and later despite financial and educational obstacles they launched an elementary school and a boarding school which grew rapidly and were the strong foundations for Catholic education in this area. Emily Bray House for the elderly now stands on the site of the Elementary School which was founded by Mother St. Clare, who was born as Emily Bray.

In 1862 religious bigotry in the town erupted in a riot, led by a man named Baron de Gaume. A fanatical mob rampaged through the town one November night until it arrived at the Convent. Unable to storm the doors the mob then threw stones all night, breaking every widow and at one point narrowly missing Mother Superior's head. The Blessed Sacrament was brought into the Convent for safety and throughout this terrifying night the Sisters prayed and kept a vigil.

The following morning the Civil Authorities were shocked, a Magistrate and his wife visited the Convent to express their sympathy and the newspapers roundly condemned the riots as a disgrace to a civilised society. By March, 1867 Father Kemp was cheered by crowds as he and the school boarders watched the town's loyal procession to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales.

In 1919 Bishop Keating decided to separate the two parishes of St. Pancras and St. Mary's and he appointed Father McCaul, then curate of St. Pancras, to be the first Parish Priest of St. Mary's.

During the First World War when fears of invasion were strong the Convent School was prepared for the wounded, and a large room offered to the RAMC soldiers quartered nearby for recreation and relaxation.

Between the two World Wars the Sisters acquired Holmewood to extend the facilities of the school, and the long wooded drive used by St. Mary's gives it the special peace and attractive rural atmosphere so rare in a town church. The grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes near the school was built at this time, a present from former pupils of the school.

Also remembered in St Mary's Church are two altar servers who died in action in the First World War in 1917. Cyril Oliver who was a corporal in the 10th King’s Royal Rifle Corps, 10th Battalion and Michael Price who was a rifleman in the 9th KIng's Royal Riffle Corps. 9th Battalion. For more information please follow the following links Cyril Oliver and Michael Price

By the 1970's the Catholic Church in East Anglia had expanded so that in 1976 the new Diocese of East Anglia was created. St. Mary's parish reflected that growth: in the same year the parish acquired the beautiful Convent church built in 1960. It was designed by Suffolk Architects Purcell and Johnson and reflects its dual purpose: as a convential chapel with the nun's stalls ranging along the sides, and as a school chapel with a wide central space for a congregation. It has adapted easily to use as a parish church.

As you look around the church you will notice the striking effect of the different woods used: the stalls and panelling are of an African timber called Afromosia, with panels faced in English sycamore. The floor is of African mahogany, slightly toned to bring it into harmony with the Afromosia.

In the Sanctuary four different stones have been used. The altar is of Ashburton marble from Devon and the pilasters behind the altar and the frieze are in rose and white alabaster from Derbyshire. Portland stone has been used for the Sanctuary floor with the skirting in grey Italian marble.

The Stations of the Cross, the statues of Our Lady and St. Joseph and the beautiful Crib figures which appear at Christmas time, are all hand carved. The link with the old church has been kept with the large Crucifix behind the altar and some of the pews. The old church has been converted into the parish hall, busy with activities most days of the week.

In 1988 the porch area was extended, with a large repository, toilet facilities and with a glazed wall into the church so that while the microphones are used during Mass it provides a useful area for small children and adults who need to withdraw from the church for any reason.

The beautiful stained glass window over the new door was designed by Jim Budd of Hertford.

FRIDAY 7th APRIL 2018

St Mary's, Stoke by Nayland

Perhaps only St Peter and St Paul at Lavenham has a grander exterior than this mighty ship. But Lavenham's setting is thoroughly domesticated. Here, in the wild hills above the Dedham Vale, St Mary lifts its great red tower to heaven, and nothing can compare with it.

John Constable loved this tower, and it appears several times in his paintings, not always in the right place. Simon Jenkins, in *England's 1000 Best Churches*, says that when the bells of Stoke-by-Nayland ring, all Suffolk stops to listen. All Essex too, perhaps, since this church is right on the border between the two counties.

St Mary is pretty much all of a piece, in the 15th century, although there are some older bits, and a great deal of rather undistinguished 19th century work. But the glory of the church is the red brick tower, completed about 1470 and surmounted by stone spires, reminiscent of Bungay St Mary, away on Suffolk's northern borderland. There are fine views of this from many places, and from many miles away. Close to, it is immense; Stoke by Nayland is, after all, a small village rather than a town, and the setting of cottages only enhances the sense that this tower is enormous. The buttresses are laced with canopied image niches - how amazing it must have looked before the 16th century reformers removed all the statues! Tendring and Howard shields flag up the dead people we'll meet inside.

On the north side there is a dinky little Tudor porch (although it would be rather more imposing against a smaller church); but the south porch, which is the main entrance, is rather more of a curiosity. It was entirely refaced by the Victorians, and

at first sight you might even think it 19th century, but the windows and corbels reveal to be one of the earliest parts of the church, an early 14th century addition to the building that was then replaced in the late 15th century. There are two storeys, and the parish library is still kept in the upper one. The corbels include an Annunciation, and what may be Moses. There are images below; hover to read captions, and click on them to see enlarged.

A serious distraction from all this is straight ahead of you. St Mary has the best late 15th century doors in Suffolk, eclipsing even Otley. The figures are remarkable; they stand proud of Gothic turrets and arches. They seem to represent a Tree of Jesse, effectively Christ's family tree, with Mary at the top and ancestors back into Old Testament times beneath. I think the figures in the border are disciples and apostles - in which case I could identify St Paul with his sword (although it might be St Bartholomew with his flencing knife) and St John the Evangelist. Medieval doors haven't survived at all widely in East Anglia, and it is exciting to see them at such close quarters.

Preserve the illusion of the medieval one moment longer. Step through the doorway, and turn immediately to the west. The tower arch is superb, a soaring void that lifts to roof level. The fine font on its huge pedestal seems tiny in such an open setting. The parish has done well in removing all the furnishings from the west end. This is quality work, on a cathedral scale. This vastness swallows all sound. The font stands in tiny isolation, although it is actually on a massive Maltese cross pedestal and would dwarf furnishings in many smaller churches.

The font is curious, to say the least. Four of the panels show conventional evangelistic symbols, but three of the other four are unfamiliar. One is an angel, but the others are a woman in a cowl carrying a scroll beside a tree, a man with a sack pointing to a book open on a shelf, and a man with a scroll at a lectern. The iconography is unfamiliar; I wondered if they might be representations of Doctors of the Church. Click on the images to enlarge them.

Looking up, you'll see that several 15th century corbels survived the Victorian restoration. One on the northside shows a ram caught in a thicket from the Abraham and Isaac story, and opposite it is a pelican in her piety. Images are in the left hand column. The splendid glass in the west window is by the O'Connors, and it may detain you for a moment, but eventually you must turn eastwards and realise that, from here, St Mary is all pretty much all Victorian inside. It is done well, it is well-kept and well-used, but it is all a bit dull I am afraid. You can't help thinking that the minister has a much better view than the congregation.

A couple of points of interest in the nave are an unusual memorial board for dead children - *In Memory of Our Children Now With Jesus* it says - which I liked very much, and a north chapel, now set out for weekday services and private prayer, that was an early 14th century chantry chapel for the Peyton family. A little ikon sits above the simple altar.

The church has two large memorials, one in the south chancel chapel and the other in the north chancel chapel. The one to the south is to Lady Anne Windsor, originally one of the Waldegraves who we have met at Bures, who died in 1615.

Her alabaster effigy lies between her two daughters who kneel at her head and her son at her feet. You can see images of it below.

Across the chancel lies Sir Francis Mannock, 1634. It is believed to be by Nicholas Stone. The Mannocks were a recusant family of Giffords Hall, who were responsible for the survival of the old faith throughout the penal years at Withermarsh Green. There is an image of him in the column on the left.

Curiously, Sir Francis's wife Dorothea does not lie with him, but under a brass set in the floor not far away. It is offset by an architectural niche. Mortlock thought Stone may have been responsible for this as well, and it certainly suggests that the Renaissance did not entirely bypass protestant England. There are several other brasses, including a substantial one near the priest door to Sir William Tendring, one of the donors of the 15th century rebuilding.

I do like the jolly lion at his feet. Don't miss the chrysom child engraved on a nearby ledger stone. His grim-faced wife Katherine lies nearby, and Mortlock points out how remarkable it is to see a figure of this period wearing rings. Once again, hover to read the captions and click to enlarge them.

The full drama of St Mary is best appreciated from a distance. But there is much here that makes a visit worthwhile, many of them apparently understated survivals that would shout in your face in a smaller church. I decided I liked St Mary a lot after all, and silently commended the parish for not installing one of those awful craft shops familiar from other large Suffolk churches. I stepped outside to the sound of a village football match immediately to the north of the graveyard.

FRIDAY 7th MAY 2018

Prayer Mission, Shrub End Social Centre, Shrub End Road, Colchester

FRIDAY 10th MAY 2018

Methodist, Crossways, Jaywick

TUESDAY 15th MAY 2018

Methodist, Tanner Street, Thetford

St Peter, Broad Street, Ely

St Peter's is a small and very friendly church where a warm welcome awaits. We follow the long established tradition of High Anglicanism while at the same time proclaiming the truth of the Bible and the relevance of the Christian message of Hope to all. We share the vision of Catharine Maria Sparke who founded our Church in 1889 as a mission church for the people of Ely's riverside area and we are thankful to its early benefactors who made it a place of colour and beauty. We meet Sunday by Sunday at 9.30 am for a sung celebration of the Holy Eucharist. After nearly all services we meet to talk and listen to one another over tea or coffee in the Church Room. Additional services are held in Advent, at Christmas and in Holy Week.

St Peters is a proprietary chapel within the Church of England (Diocese of Ely).

Opposite the church porch, across a driveway, is the entrance to the church room, which is owned and administered by the Trustees of St Peter's, and available for community use.

FRIDAY 18th MAY 2018

St Edmund's, Church Road, Kessingland

All along the East Anglian coast there are medieval churches with massive towers, and at Kessingland the church of St Edmund has one of the biggest. They serve as beacons and marking points to ships and sea, and this one has much in common with the one at Walberswick. Mortlock suggests the architect was the same person, Richard Russell, and that it was probably begun in the Spring of 1436 or 1437. It took about 12 years to complete, an extraordinarily short time for such a vast structure. The western face is glorious, with flushwork symbols, including Catholic imagery that the 16th and 17th century reformers must have thought outrageous.

The way in which it rises above this busy coastal parish reminds me of those at Winterton and Happisburgh in Norfolk, and the fact that Kessingland is actually in the Diocese of Norwich is a mark of how far north we have come. Time has not been kind to either Kessingland village or church. The sea has come calling, as it has on so many villages around here, taking houses and lives. The people themselves destroyed the south aisle and chancel in the late 16th century, finding them expensive to maintain, and unnecessary for the Preaching House liturgy of the Church of England.

The north side collapsed about a hundred years later, so really there is very little here from medieval times, apart from the tower.

On an earlier entry for this church, I bemoaned the fact that St Edmund was kept locked without a keyholder, like so many of the Lowestoft area churches. How times have changed! This church is militantly open every day these days, with signs out on the road and a welcoming sign at the entrance. I warmed to it immediately, but I had not realised that I was about to step in a fascinating and compelling interior. You enter from the west, and down through an internal porch into the body of this big church. It must have been enormous when the aisles were in place. I was struck by how well-used it felt, how welcoming it was.

The arcades have been filled in, leaving windows in the Decorated style on the south side, but an unusual series of late 17th Century domestic windows on the north side. The reason is explained by a wall inscription: *This Church was put Out and Rebuilt by the care of John Campe and Thomas Godfrey Gent. in the Year 1694, and Finished in 95*. Campe and Godfrey were the churchwardens responsible for overseeing the rebuilding of the church. A late 17th century nave is an unusual thing in East Anglia - an unusual thing anywhere - and coupled as it is with an Edwardian chancel I should think it is pretty well unique.

Even if you had been transported here magically from the centre of London, you would know straight away that this was a coastal church. The paraphernalia of the main business of the parish is scattered around - anchors, ship wheels, pilot lights, and so on. Another big clue is the enormous list of names on the war memorials, most of them serving in the Navy. Up in the chancel, which was rebuilt at the start of the 20th Century, a plaque reminds us that it was *erected to the Glory of God and in memory of parishioners lost at sea*. The memory of the past is a deep one here, and the sum of it is still being added to: as recently as 2007, a fabulous new window by Nicola Kantorowicz was added on the south side *in memory of the Kessingland driftmen*.

The glass in the east window is a good scheme by Kempe & Co at the height of their powers, depicting the Crucifixion flanked by the Blessed Virgin and St John, with the Suffolk Saints St Edmund and St Felix looking on. The other glass is not so good, a sentimental rendition of the three Marys at the empty tomb by the Maile workshop. The Marys in particular look decidedly awkward.

But the great treasure of Kessingland church is not any of the windows, but the 15th Century font. Its great battered heavy bowl seems to melt like a ripe cheese, and the carvings depict seated figures, mostly women; among them you can see the Blessed Virgin and St Ursula. Around the stem is a sequence of Bishops and Saints.

A curiosity on the north wall of the nave is that there are two separate memorials to Robert Provo Norris. He was killed in the first South African wars of the 1850s, and one of the memorials was *erected as a mark of esteem by his brother officers*. The other was set here, presumably, by his family, and notes that *he died of a wound... received whilst gallantly leading his company into action against the Kaffirs, during the war then going on at the Cape of Good Hope*. Peter, who was with me, spent some of his school days in South Africa, and noted quite how offensive the term 'Kaffir' would have been there, even by the late 19th Century.

There is a jaunty ship wheel on the front of the pulpit which, along with all the other furnishings at the east end, is a nice piece of Edwardian sentimentality. And I really liked the fact that some of the older banners survive here - so often, they were thrown out during the course of the 20th Century. St Edmund still has two banners for the Girls Friendly Society. This was a movement begun in 1875 by Mrs Mary Townsend, and it was designed to befriend and support unmarried girls coming out of the countryside to work in service in the towns. One of the banners here has TMF, short for Townsend Members Fellowship, across it: the TMF was what the girls moved on to when they grew up. The Girls Friendly Society still exists as an organisation working with young women in some Anglican parishes. Today it is known as GFS Platform. What a lovely thing that they have survived. Simon Jenkins once said that Anglican parish churches are the greatest folk museum in the world, and to see these banners still in place certainly feels like a touchstone to the past of Kessingland parish, like so much here. To enter this building is to enter the story of an English coastal parish.









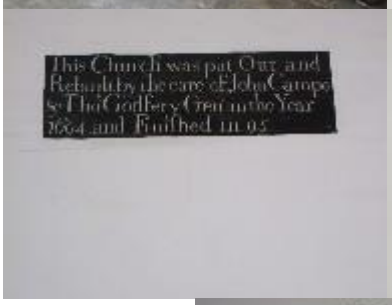








KESSINGLAND
MOTHERS
UNION



Holy Trinity, Church Lane, Blythburgh

There is a Blythburgh has had a long history of Christianity dating back to pre-Conquest times. Indeed the Saxon period may have been the greatest time for Blythburgh, and we believe there has been a church on this very site since 630. In the 'Domesday' survey of 1087, Blythburgh is listed as a royal burgh with one of the richest churches in Suffolk, perhaps a minster with missionary duties. Canons from Essex founded Blythburgh Priory in 1130, and it was to their prior in 1412 that Henry IV granted the right to build this church. There was a great surge in church building in Suffolk in the fifteenth century, reflecting a substantial increase in prosperity during this period. Blythburgh benefited from the commercial activity of the time - from the cloth trade of West Suffolk, from its position on the great medieval road linking London with the east-coast ports and the continent of Europe and from the coastal and fishing trades.

Indeed, Blythburgh was so important that it rated two annual Charter Fairs. However, ironically, Blythburgh itself was already probably past its most prosperous days when the church was begun, as a result of plague, the wars abroad and the rise of other trading centres on the East Suffolk coast. There was local rivalry in church building, and Blythburgh is one of a group of churches near the sea competing in beauty and wealth. It should be compared with Southwold, Covehithe and its own daughter church at Walberswick.

Why Such a Large Church?
The shape and form of fifteenth-century churches was determined less by the size of the population than by the religious practices and doctrines of the day. Housing the congregation was in many ways a secondary aim; the building was raised, after all, to the glory of God. The nave roof needed to be high to allow space and light through the clerestory windows to highlight the crucifixion figures standing on the rood screen. Aisles had to allow space for additional altars and processions. And the great men who had given generously to the building had to be accommodated by the founding of chantry chapels where masses could be said every day for their souls and the souls of their families. In Blythburgh, it was the Hoptons of Westwood Lodge who had reason to thank God for their worldly success.

Decline The church began its long period of decline quite early in its history. Its problems began in 1538 when the nearby priory was closed by Thomas Cromwell during the Great Dissolution, leaving the parish church to face alone the forces of reform, reaction and secularisation. Then, in a great storm in August 1577, the church was struck by the hand of God (or was it the devil?). During the morning service, lightning 'cleft the door, and returning to the steeple, rent the timber, brake the chimes, and fled towards Bongay, six miles off,' leaving on the Great North Door, clearly to be seen today, the fingerprints of the Devil in scorch marks. A man of forty and a boy of fifteen were found 'starke dead'.

The mid seventeenth century was a time of sad destruction for many glorious East Anglian churches: Parliament demanded they be rid of superstitious ornaments, and a local Puritan, William Dowsing, was commissioned to do this. On 8 April 1644, he came to Blythburgh and ordered the removal of '20 superstitious pictures, one on the outside of the Church; 2 crosses, one on the Porch and another on the steeple; and 20 cherubim to be taken down in the Church and Chancel ...

And gave orders to take down above 200 more pictures, within eight days'. How different this church would be today if it still had these treasures ' particularly the pictures in the stained glass windows. There are dramatic versions of the Puritan attack on the church, including bullets fired into the roof and horses tethered to the pillars of the nave. The holes in the faces of the angels, the rings set in the north pillars and the trampled brickwork of the floor, all make us want to believe these stories. Problems continued through the days of the Commonwealth and Restoration: a note in the Parochial Visitation Book in 1663 says 'here at Bliburgh hath been no communion for these 12 years past'. In fact, the church suffered less from the zeal of the Puritans than from the neglect of later centuries.

By 1819 the church presented a sorry sight: '. . . tracery removed, windows patched up with bricks and mortar, shields and angels' wings falling disregarded from the roof.' What brought about this neglect? Grinding rural poverty, competition for religious allegiance and the absence of a rich resident patron all contributed to the dereliction of the church. In 1847 the church was described as 'mouldering into ruin', and thirty years later a newspaper reported the congregation sheltering under umbrellas from the rain pouring through holes in the roof. A year later again, the church was closed as unsafe.

Restoration

Possibly one of the most remarkable parts of Blythburgh's history is that a ruin of such sentiment and romance escaped the attentions of Victorian enthusiasts for restoration and so survives today unspoilt, though a plain and whitened version of its former colourful self. Major works of restoration were put in hand, and the church was re-opened in 1884. For the next 100 years much work was done: windows unbricked, reglazed and releaded, worm-eaten wooden pews replaced by oak from the old mill post of Westleton Mill, the Priest's Room over the porch rebuilt and opened as a place of prayer and meditation, and the great roof over the nave and chancel practically rebuilt and raised over 20 cm.

Work of this kind goes on for ever, and two major programmes in the last twenty years have seen treatment for death-watch beetle and, more recently, repair work to the clerestory windows, the roof and the inner fabric, culminating in a lime-washing of the whole interior to put the finishing touches to a century of restoration.

St Nicholas, Southwold Road, Wrentham

This is a church that always seems to be locked. Perhaps it is an unlikely set of circumstances which the author of this article has seen him arrive to find weddings going on (twice), a funeral, the church closed for repairs, the church locked with no keyholder notice, and finally the keyholder out on the occasion when there *was* a keyholder notice. I wonder if the notice is still there? Perhaps Wrentham church is wide open every day now for all I know. But it is now five years since his last visit, he is unlikely to be back in that neck of the woods in the near future, and so he thought it was about time he replaced the original entry. If by any chance he should revisit and, wonder of wonders, find the building accessible, then he will gladly replace this entry too.

For anyone travelling up the A12 from London and Ipswich towards the Waveney ports, Wrentham comes as a surprise - it is bigger than you'd think. There was a concentration of 18th and 19th Century prosperity here. You can see how it has served travellers over the years, before the dualling of much of the road made the journey from London possible in two and a bit hours. A few shops still survive, but he didn't suppose many people stop here anymore. The large congregationalist church on the main road now seems to be some sort of antiques warehouse, and generally Wrentham probably benefits from the fact that it is one of the few unbypassed villages on the A12. Mind you, I don't live there, so I don't have to put up with the traffic. As you look around, you may wonder where St Nicholas is, for no tower peeps up above the houses. In fact, Wrentham's parish church is about a mile away across the fields, and although you can reach it from a narrow lane in the village, you will be directed off of the A12 on a larger one if you are approaching from the south. This takes you past a very splendid red brick United Reformed Church. You'll find St Nicholas sitting prettily at a junction of narrow roads - these are obviously ancient routes, because they curve around the graveyard and cut down beside it, so that the church appears to be sitting on a mound. It seems pretty clear that this was the original heart of the village, but that everyone drifted eastwards when the London to Yarmouth road was put through in the 18th century.

The graveyard is a delight; it isn't very big, but it has a good collection of 18th and even 17th century graves, which is a most unusual thing to find in Suffolk, or indeed, anywhere. It surrounds what can only be described as a big church, even for this part of Suffolk. The great 15th century tower stands tall and proud in the middle of this island - supposedly, you can see the sea from the top. The church beside it, although clerestory-less, is long and wide, with two big aisles. The northern one is Victorian, but the other is 15th century, matching the tower and porch. Mortlock thought that they had seen better days, but they look pretty good to me, so I assume they have been restored as part of the repairs programme. The chancel is probably the oldest part of the church, stealing 200 years on the south aisle and tower judging by the windows, but it is supported by red-brick flying buttresses that are rather elegant. Mortlock thought they might be 19th century.

So, that's as far as I got. Inside, it is said to be spacious, with some interesting memorials, including a couple of brasses. Peeping miserably through the window, all I could see was stacks of plastic chairs, which at least showed that there was a bit of life in the old place.

Not far from the church, along the road back into the village, you'll find Suffolk's best preserved pound. This was used in the 18th and 19th centuries to contain stray animals rounded up in the parish. Their owners could get them back on payment of a fine. It is a perfectly round, red-brick structure, a delight to the eye. Ironic, that this parish contains not only a building that I seem to be finding it impossible to get into, but another from which it is impossible to escape.

URC, High Street, Southwold

SATURDAY 18th MAY 2018

Holy Trinity, West Runton

The Tradition of this church is mainly Anglo Catholic and the Mass is celebrated every day of the week, except Thursday and Saturday. Each Sunday **Sung Mass at 11.00 am** is celebrated which lasts just over an hour. Holy Trinity is a Resolution B Parish. Incense is used on the third and fifth Sunday of the month and Evensong and Benediction is observed on the third Sunday (3.00 p.m. November to March, 6.00 p.m. April to October). The Great Feasts are celebrated in Holy Trinity occasionally with High Mass. Holy Trinity benefits from having its own Church Hall a few hundred yards away in the village allowing for a full social life in the Church.

During the summer months, July to September, our Organist arranges a series of Organ Recitals by well known local musicians which occur weekly at lunchtime on Wednesdays. The Parish has a successful Evening Mothers' Union which meets monthly. An active Walsingham Cell has a programme of monthly meetings in church and there is a long established Men's Society. Please contact the **Churchwardens** for more information.

EXTERIOR

The church sits on a rise above the coast road and is a typical long flint and stone building of the 12th Century. The south aisle has stepped two-light 15th Century windows, the chancel two very big Perpendicular windows. The two-light west window is also 14th Century. The north aisle with its Y-shaped tracery windows may be earlier. The tower was begun in the 13th Century and finished in the 14th and although not as tall as some in the county it rises prominently in view on the road from Cromer. The parapet has four small pinnacles and bell openings with Y tracery on a circular shaft. There is one bell of 1715 with the name Thomas Newman on it.

WAR MEMORIAL

The War Memorial is unusually situated by the road in an angle of the wall of the churchyard embankment. It is a handsome flint and stone construction with the appropriate and rather moving inscription:

"THEY WERE A WALL UNTO US BOTH BY NIGHT AND DAY"

LYCHGATE

The attractive Victorian lychgate has been moved back from the busy main road and has the carved inscription *"O enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise ..... be thankful unto Him".*

THE CALVARY

The calvary in the churchyard is a memorial to Felix Hackett Matthews, for 45 years Rector of the Parish, who died in 1964. The figure is a fibreglass replacement for the original which was vandalised in the 1970s.

EXTERIOR CARVINGS

On the south aisle window-corbels are some carved heads, now quite eroded. They depict, from west to east, a lady, a knight, animals, a queen and a king. Also, under the gable of the south aisle, are two grotesques, a man's head and a man pulling his mouth wide open.

PORCH

The old porch has a blocked niche above the entrance. On the east buttress are the remains of a "mass-clock" with the metal base of the gnomon still embedded in the stone. The Victorian door has some fine floriated ironwork, and on each side a carved head, one a bishop, one a queen.

INTERIOR

The interior, which was extensively restored in 1854 and 1886, is wide and light with a mixture of old and new pamment flooring in terracotta and ochre. The restorations replaced most of the window traceries and the roofs.

There are two aisles with four-bay arcades separated by octagonal piers with double-chamfered arches. Just by the door is an old stone of the 17th Century set sideways with very worn lettering, found there in 1963. There is another outside the porch.

FONT

The octagonal font is 14th Century with small ogee-headed panels. The cover, a memorial to Kay Connell who died in 1964, was designed by Cecil Upcher.

CHANCEL

In the chancel there are carved sedilia and a decorated six-petal piscine retaining its recess for the sacred vessels. The church plate contains a medieval paten.

CARVINGS

In the choir, some old poppyhead carvings have been grafted onto the Victorian pews of 1886. Though rather battered, one can make out a medieval lady, a merchant, various seedheads, and a monstrous face with its tongue out. *Poppyhead* is not a reference to flowers, but supposed to be from a nautical term *puppis or popeys = poop*, the raised deck on the stern of a ship. The Victorian carved pews and chancel rail are quite restrained. There are attractive iron hinges on the altar rail.

STAINED GLASS

There are fragments of old glass in the south choir tracery. The five-light east window was designed by Edward Frampton, and was inserted in 1896. It shows the Ascension of our Lord, with vigorous drawing and strong composition. His also are the south chancel windows of St. George and St. Cecilia, after 1896, and the south aisle window of the Resurrection, 1904, which is rather dark. Some Art & Crafts influence is seen in his window at the east end of the south aisle, 1911, where St. Francis preaches to the birds.

In the north aisle are St. Hilary and St. Stephen, 1938, St. Elizabeth with the child John the Baptist, and our Lady, 1954, by G. Maile of London. The easternmost window of this aisle is by Harry Stammers, 1959, in a simple "modern" style typical of its date. It depicts people in various historical costumes, and is signed with his symbol of a ship's wheel and an "S". The west windows of the aisles were reglazed in more modern times. The figures of two apostles, St. Peter and St. John, 1850s, were taken from the tower window in 1963 and inserted here in 1989. They are by J. Grant of Costessey. The roundels show a pelican and the Agnus Dei. Two other roundels, the Trinity and the Star of David, were lost during the reglazing.

ORGAN

The first organ was installed here in 1865. Built by Mark Noble, it was transferred to Aylmerton in 1907. The second organ, by Norman & Beard, was larger (and therefore better!). It went to Thornington in Essex in 1923. A third organ was then built by William Middleton of Norwich. The present organ was built in 1959 by Williamson and Hyatt of Trunch. At that time it cost £2,300. There is a total of 441 pipes. In 2000 a new electronic console was installed but the sound still comes from the original pipes, set high on the west wall.