



**CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED  
(17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 38**





**FRIDAY 14th JUNE 2019**



**Congregational, East Street, Tollesbury**

**TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2019**









**St Andrews, Fingringhoe**





**St Lawrence, Church Hill, Rowhedge**



**Methodist, Rectory Road, Rowhedge**



**The Quayside and the Mariner's Chapel, Chapel Street, Rowhedge**



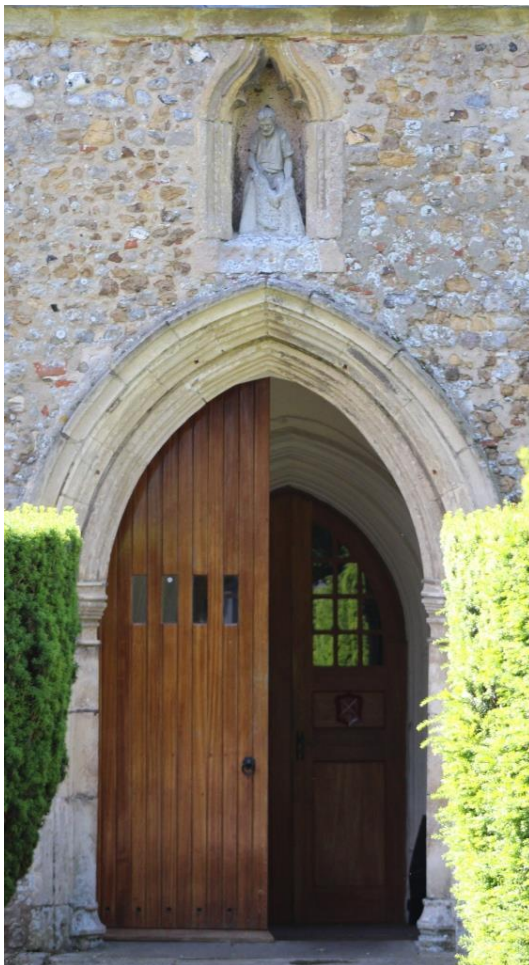
**THURSDAY 20th JUNE 2019**



**Methodist, Mill Road, West Mersea**











**St Peter's and St Paul's, High Street, West Mersea**



It was at a spot only three miles across the Backwater Estuary at Bradwell-on-Sea that St. Cedd founded his little monastery circa 654, built the historic St. Peter's Chapel out of the remains of the Roman fort of Othona, and from there he evangelised Essex, the kingdom of the East Saxons. We feel it is probable that Cedd and his monks came across to establish the first church here at West Mersea, also dedicated to St. Peter.

Coming to the 10th century, the Saxon Ealdorman Aelfgar and his daughters, Aethelflaed (widow of King Edmund of England) and Aelffaed (widow of Ealdorman Brythnoth) by their wills, left properties in Mersea, Peldon and Fingringhoe to St. Peter's Church at Mersea, described as a 'Minster', i.e. a church serving the wider area. By 1042 the Mersea estates had reverted to the Crown, and by charter of 1046 King Edward the Confessor granted them to the Abbey of St. Ouen at Rouen in Normandy. The Abbey founded a small Benedictine Priory here. The monks, no doubt using the Church and the Abbey, became Lords of the Manor. Our historic 11th century tower may well date from that time, and if so, it is Saxo-Norman. Note the considerable use of Roman tiles and brick in it, from the Roman villa which stood near the site (of which pavements were found in the 18th century). Two small round-headed windows and the tower arch of that time remain. The belfry louvres and west window are later. The heavily beamed floors inside the tower have been dated as early as the tower itself with very early examples of joinery. The nave and chancel were probably built in the 14th century and a south aisle added, later extended east in the 15th century to form a south chapel. Note the 15th century brickwork.

In 1415, King Henry V suppressed alien religious houses, including the Priory, and granted its properties of West Mersea, the Peet and Fingringhoe to Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury who endowed them on the College of Higham Ferrers, which he was founding at his birthplace. About this time the north porch was built or rebuilt, and the 14th century niche reset.

The timber roof of the chancel with arched and moulded trusses is early 16th century (Tudor). In 1833, the south porch was rebuilt as a porch and vestry, the north wall of the nave heightened in brick, buttressed and embattled, and the flat Georgian ceiling formed. Also the south arcade was rebuilt in brick and plaster. A west gallery had been erected in 1812, but removed in 1882 with other changes.

A photo of the church circa 1898 shows two north chancel windows of three lights in pointed style, but early in the 20th century all the windows in the chancel were replaced with perpendicular style stone frames, including a new east window at a new level. In 1925 the south aisle roof was rebuilt, the wall plaster all removed, and the niche for a piscina uncovered.

In 1971 a Church Hall was built adjoining the south vestry. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the choir stalls, pulpit and old painted pews were replaced, as thank offerings, in, attractive light wood. Colourful kneelers were worked by members of the congregation, with individual and local designs. The pipe organ was updated in 2002 and 27 new digital stops added. The new memorial window was installed in the south aisle in August 2005. This is to commemorate the Fishermen and Oystermen of Mersea Island.



**FRIDAY 21st JUNE 2019**



**St Mary and St Michael's, Malthouse Road, Mistley**



There is mention of a Church in Ardleigh in King Stephen's reign (1135-1141), when Roger de Ramis, Lord of the Manor of Pigotts gave the Church to the Abbey that was then in Colchester. There is evidence that Ardleigh Church has been built a number of times. The tower and south porch, the oldest parts of the Church, date from 1460. The body of the Church was rebuilt in 1760.



A north aisle was again rebuilt in 1841 and finally the whole Church, apart from the tower and south porch, was rebuilt in 1882 through the efforts of Canon Thomas Walter Perry, Vicar of Ardleigh at that time. The architect for this work was William Butterfield, who was one of the most outstanding architects of the period. He believed that churches were meant for prayer and sacramental worship, which no doubt accounts for the large sanctuary. This Church is the only example of his art in Essex.

**SOUTH PORCH:** This is comparatively large and is built of a mixture of free stone and flints and is medieval. The old niches above the doorway have modern sculpture and in their spandrels are St George and the Dragon. Crowned lions flank the door and two beasts sit on carvings of Adam and Eve and the door itself is about 500 years old. Also can be seen an inscription in Latin asking for prayers for the souls of John Hunt and Alice, his wife, and William Hunt. There is the remains of a Holy Water Stoup. Over the doorway on the inside of the Porch there is a memorial to Barbara and Henry Lufkin, who died in 1706 and 1721 respectively. This monument, which looks to be made of marble, is actually made of wood and is in the classical style. Age and wear and tear had reduced this monument to a dilapidated state but in 1961 it was repaired and the cost of the restoration was borne by the modern members of the Lufkin family.

**TOWER AND BELLS:** "A small and simple, but picturesque tower, highly characteristic of Essex. The buttresses are of bold projection . . . in the top stage, they are reduced to mere corner pilasters. The stepped parapet with simple flush work, also the small octagonal pinnacles appear to be rebuilt. Much of the attractiveness of this tower is due to the beautiful red-brown stone, of which, mixed with flint and fragments of brick, it is built. . ." from *The Great Church Towers of England* by F J Allen. In the tower hang eight bells. Six of these bells were recast in 1955. The tenor bell, cast by Robert Burford between 1410 and 1420, weigh 13 ¼ cwt., and is one of the two oldest bells in the county incorporated in a ringing peal.

(The other is at Romford). In 1674, a peal of six was installed, and in 1892 two trebles were added to make up the octave. The inscriptions on the bells have been retained and the sixth bell has the names of the Vicar, Churchwardens and Captain of the Ringers in 1955 inscribed on it. Below the ringing platform, which was erected in 1953 in order to provide a choir vestry underneath are a number of benefaction tablets. The charities are still distributed but in cash and not in kind as originally. In 2002, the choir vestry was redesigned to create a meeting room together with facilities for storage and, in 2004, an award winning oak and glass screen was installed between the tower room and nave. The exterior of the Tower was restored by Messrs Cubitt and Gott Ltd. In 1968-69.

**NORTH AISLE:** John Kelly, Vicar from 1791-1806, made a list of the complete population of Ardleigh in September 1796, listed under households, and gave the name and age of every man, woman and child, and the trade of the heads of each house. This list took up twelve pages of Parish Register no 6. Dr Kelly was born in the Isle of Man, and before coming to Ardleigh had collaborated in translating the Bible in the Manx language. A memorial to John Kelly was commissioned by John and David Wright in 2006 and was placed in the North aisle.



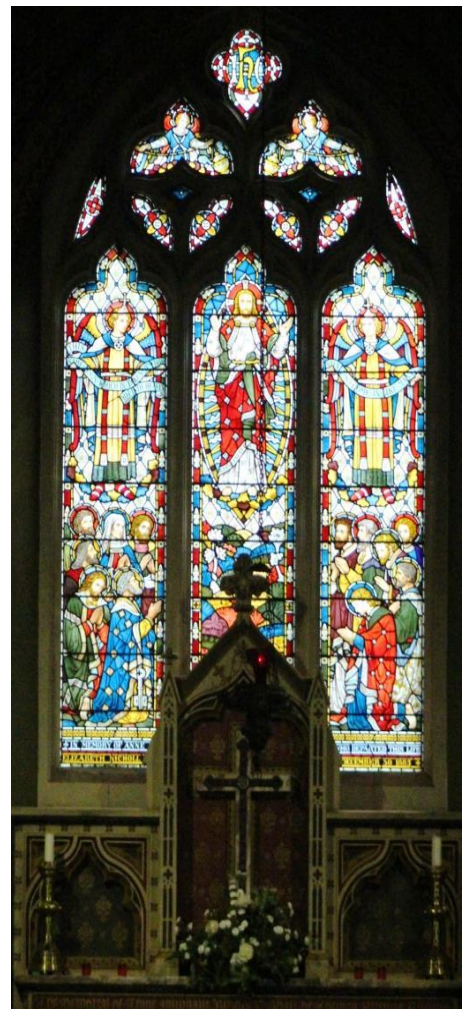
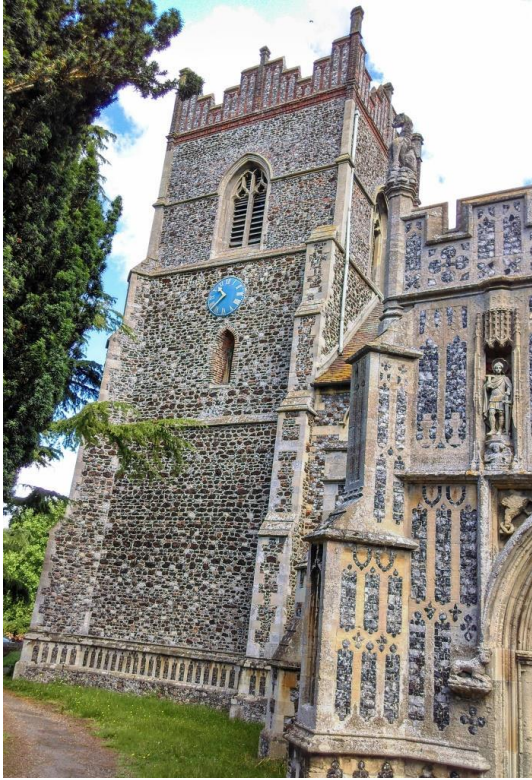
**CHANCEL AND SANCTUARY:** The memorial tablet subscribed by members of the Church Union, of which Canon Perry was a member, can be seen on the South side of the Sanctuary. They were responsible, too, for the mural decorations, which is rather typical of the Victorian era. At the entrance to the chancel there is still some slight evidence of some fine tracery at the base of the ancient screen. In 1990, the Chancel and Sanctuary were cleaned, carefully removing years of oil and dirt – a list of subscribers may be found by the arch leading into the Chapel.



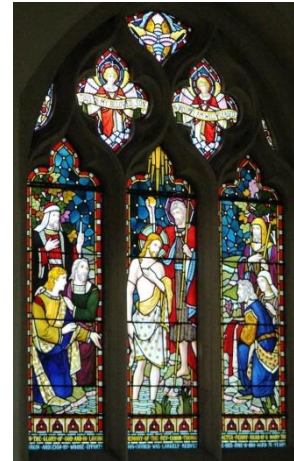
**STAINED GLASS WINDOWS;** All the windows are of 19th century origin and are memorials. One at the east end depicts the Ascension and is a memorial to Ann Elizabeth Nicholl. In the south aisle is a beautiful window depicting the Presentation of the Magi. In the north aisle is a window of the birth of Christ in memory of John Ball, a vicar of Ardleigh. The west window above the ringing chamber is of the Resurrection.















**St Mary's, The Street, Ardleigh**

**SATURDAY 22nd JUNE 2019**











**St Catherine's, Greenfield, Gosfield**



The first church was built in 1190 by Aubrey de Vere, 3rd Earl of Oxford, the owner of Hedingham Castle and a great landowner in the area. His wife had recently established a convent in Hedingham, and the right to appoint a vicar was given to the nunnery.

When Henry VIII suppressed the Convent in 1536, the rights were given to the Earl of Oxford, and later to the owners of Gosfield Hall, who finally ceded their rights at the end of the 20th century. As you approach Gosfield Church through the lych gate, a silver star can be seen, painted on the corner buttress.

It is the de Vere star or mullet of the Earls of Oxford. When the buttress was rebuilt in 1560, the 16th Earl of Oxford has just paid for a new roof to the chancel, and as a compliment to him his star was placed on the corner which faces towards Hedingham. So the connection between the de Veres, Hedingham and Gosfield is remembered.

**SATURDAY 29th JUNE 2019**



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



**SUNDAY 30th JUNE 2019**



**St Germans, Faulkbourne**



**St Etheldreda, White Notley**