



**CHURCHES VISITED AND REVISITED  
(17/12/16 TO DATE) – BOOK 40**







**St James, Little Clacton**

This lovely old church is an almost unspoilt example of early Norman architecture. The chancel was built in the early 1100's and the nave lengthened and probably rebuilt in the early 14th century, the first recorded priest was John Russell in 1321. You enter the church through the ancient porch which is probably 14th century, but one source says 1381. During the decade it has its lean stabilised by lifting the roof and fitting new oak beams. The original could have been rescued from ships or cut from oak beams or cut from the oak woods then surrounding the village. In the millennium year the present decorative metal out porch and side bars were finally put in place. The decorated Norman Font is of Purbeck marble and dated around 1190. A new stand was made in 1954. There is a legend that it was rescued long ago from someone's garden.

In the 1930s a minstrel's gallery was demolished to make way for a huge organ, now replaced by the present two-manual Walker one. The tower has three bells, the oldest dates from 1437 cast by one Robert Crouch. Only thirteen of these exist and only one in Essex. On it is inscribed "St. Margaret pray for us". The bells are rung on a regular basis. Beside the altar is an unusual ancient double piscina. The original and probably mediaeval pews were taken out and replaced in 1847 with high pine pews, for a century a haven for bored children. They were replaced in 1963 by the present limed oak pews, still with doors. The pulpit, choir stalls and altar rail date from the same period. The oldest window is a narrow Norman window to the North of the altar and then the 14th century West window. The magnificent glass in the 14th century East window was put in as a memorial in 1945. The new Parish Room was completed in 1993 after years of strenuous fund raising and is now an essential part of church and community life. Inside the church are memorials to the dead of two world wars; many of the names can be traced far back in village history.

High above them hangs the Royal Coat of Arms. An award winning altar kneeler was designed and made by ladies of the congregation for a millennium project and also a new altar frontal. The churchyard has some interesting tombs and besides having a number of ancient yews, it was replanted with some forty forest trees by volunteers from the congregation. The latest tiny yew, which was planted at the millennium, was a cutting from a 2,000 year old tree. The ancient bells have been cleaned and renovated and from 2006 the Victorian cement which encased the outside walls of the church has been progressively removed. On the South side this revealed a lovely honey coloured septaria stone, one of very few in Essex. This has now been painstakingly repaired and pointed. The North side we were told to render with a permeable lime plaster but there was a surprise when the cement was taken off the chancel wall. Part of the wall was revealed as Tudor brickwork instead of stone and behind it we found traces of a mysterious wide Norman archway. Its purpose is unknown. Putting in the new vestry window caused a cascade of rubble among which was a 12th century priest's tomb lid. This is now displayed in the church. Another find was a tiny mediaeval scratch dial. The next and most delicate stage is to repair the inside of the church, when we can find the money. St. James remains a very active parish church playing a part in village life.

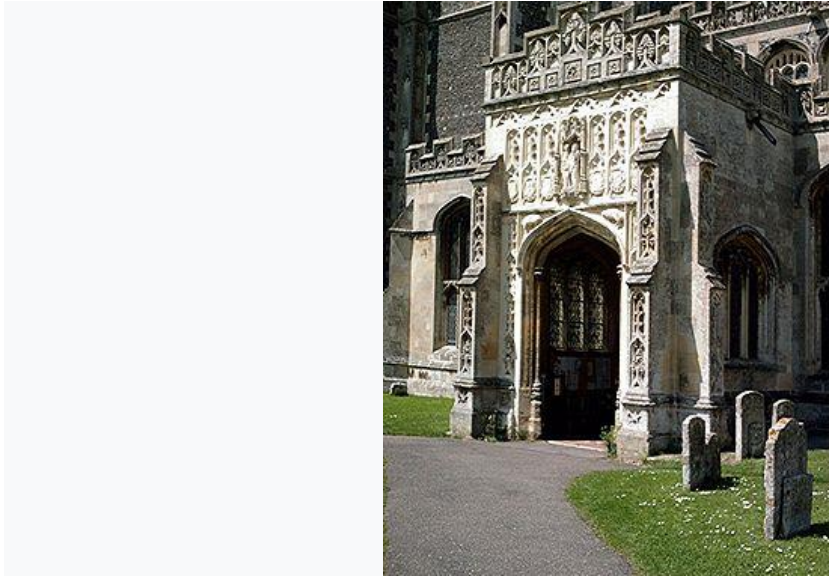
### **WEDNESDAY 31st JULY 2019**

Continuing the history of St Peter and St Paul in Lavenham - The reconstruction of the church took place mainly between 1485 and 1525. The architect is thought to have been John Wastell, who built the Church of St Mary the Great, Cambridge, which is very similar. The building is late perpendicular in its design, and regarded as one of the finest churches built in that style. It was also one of the last churches to be completed before the English Reformation. The extraordinary cost of the work was paid for by the local merchant families, who had become amongst the wealthiest in England. The same families continued to pay for the upkeep of the building, in some cases for centuries after its completion. The two principal donors for church were the 13th Earl of Oxford and the cloth merchant, Thomas Spring of Lavenham. As such, the building is decorated with the coat-of-arms of the Spring and de Vere families. The Spring arms, as well as the merchant's mark of Thomas Spring, appears over thirty times on the exterior of the building, while the star of the de Vere family surrounds the top of the tower.

A screen in the south aisle was possibly intended as a chantry chapel for the clothier Thomas Spourne, although his remains do not lie here, whilst the parclose screen in the north aisle was to the chantry of the Spring family, later ennobled by Charles. The remains of Thomas Spring lie in the church and there are several monuments erected to his descendants, such as Francis Spring. North of the chancel is the Branch Chapel dating from around 1500 and south of the chancel is the Spring Chapel dating from around 1525.

The church was extensively restored by Francis Penrose between 1861 and 1867. The diplomat, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, gave substantial funds for repair work to the tower in the 20th century. Today, the church is one of the most visited in East Anglia. It was awarded four stars by Simon Jenkins in his 1999 book *England's Thousand Best Churches*. Jenkins writes: "Many enthusiasts prefer it to Long Melford, finding it less ostentatious, more serene. To the purist, its tower is more original, its nave more Perpendicular, and its chancel arch more majestic.

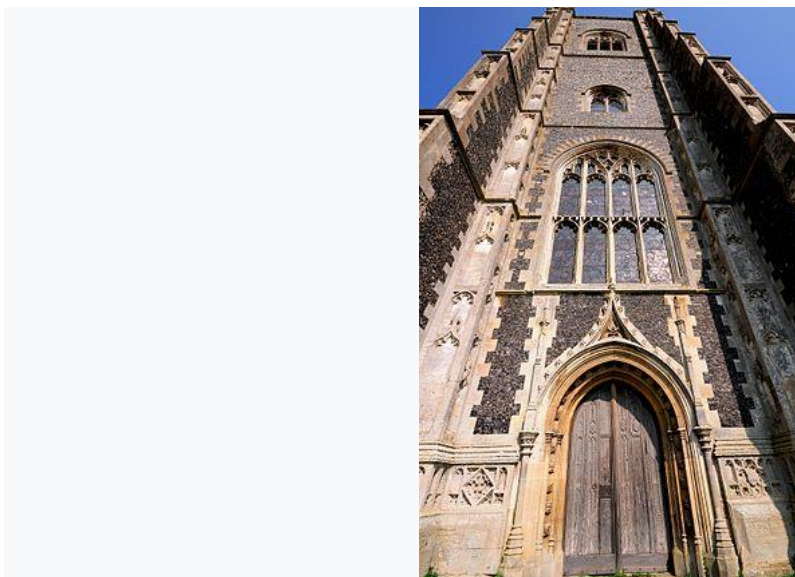
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The church contains five 15th century misericords featuring imagery such as composite creatures; one, half-woman, half beast playing a viol, and another, half-man with the hindquarters and tail of a beast, mimicking her by playing a pair of bellows with a crutch. Another shows a pelican with her chicks, and another depicts a man holding a pig.

There are numerous other outstanding fittings, including a painted rood screen dating from c. 1330–1340 and an octagonal font also from the 14th century which is much worn. Parclose screens front both the Branch and Spring chapels. The wonderfully carved Spourne parclose screen protects the tomb of John Ponder (d. 1520). Funeral monuments range from the 15th to 17th centuries and include one small memorial brass to an infant, showing the child wrapped in blankets.

The church iron gates and door fittings were made by local blacksmith Edgar Lingley and in 1865, as were the handles on the door.



**The tower from the west**

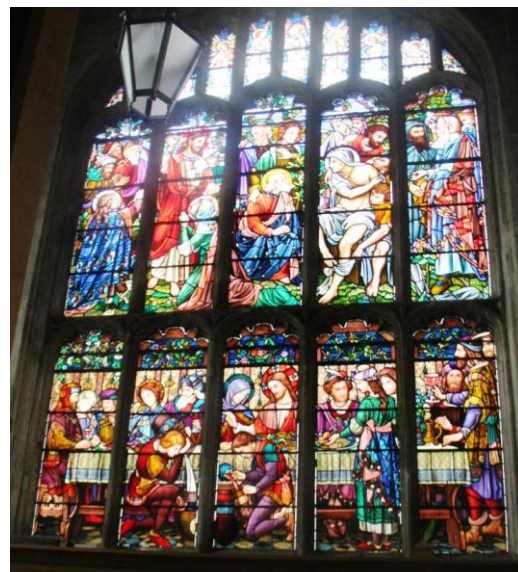


Work started on the tower in 1486 and was completed in 1495. However, due to a large sum of money being left in the will of Thomas Spring, further work was undertaken in the early 16th century, resulting in the unusual size and grandeur of the tower today. It is built in four stages, of knapped flint and stone with rare clasping buttresses. The tower ring comprises eight bells.

The tenor weighs 21 cwt 7 lb, and was cast by Miles Graye of Colchester in 1625. The Lavenham Deanery guidebook says the bell has been described as "the finest toned bell in England, probably in the world". The bell is rung whenever a member of the royal family dies.

The church clock, which has no external dial, was made by Thomas Watts in 1775; an hour strike and quarter chimes were installed to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

The Puritan divine, William Gurnall, known for his 1655–62 literary work *The Christian in Complete Armour* and also as one of the few Puritans who conformed to the Act of Uniformity 1662, was Rector of St Peter and St Paul from 1644 until his death in 1679. The priest showing was Godfrey de Merk in 1260.





**St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lavenham** is a Grade I listed parish church in the Church of England in Lavenham, Suffolk. It is a notable wool church and regarded as one of the finest examples of Late Perpendicular Gothic architecture in England. A church has existed on the current site, in a prominent position to the west of the town, since Anglo-Saxon times. The original church, which was probably wooden, was rebuilt in stone in the 14th century. The chancel is the oldest part of the current church, having been constructed in about 1340 and decorated with money from wealthy citizens, including Thomas Spring II. In the decades following the Black Death the town of Lavenham grew rich as a result of the booming wool trade. The 14th-century church was added to and modified several times in order to convey the new wealth of its religious community. The eastern vestry, built in 1440, is the only other remaining part of the previous church building. Following the victory of Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, the Earl of Oxford, a major local landowner and commander of Henry's army, suggested that the church should be rebuilt in the latest style to celebrate the new Tudor king.





**St Peter and St Paul's, Lavenham**

However, it is likely that plans were already underway to rebuild the church in order to reflect the growing prosperity of Lavenham. The reconstruction of the church took place mainly between 1485 and 1525. The architect is thought to have been John Wastell, who built the Church of St Mary the Great, Cambridge, which is very similar. The building is late perpendicular in its design, and regarded as one of the finest churches built in that style. It was also one of the last churches to be completed before the English Reformation.

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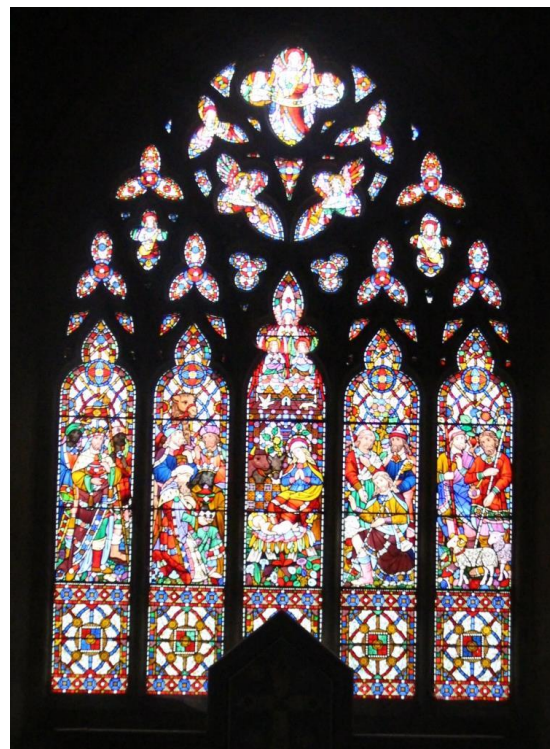
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A flint and stone church built at the end of the 14th century by John Appleton. There is a fine west tower of three stages with castellated parapet and diagonal buttresses. A half octagonal staircase turret rises on the south-east corner. The nave and aisles have battlemented parapets and on the south side there is an inscription along the parapet seeking prayer, probably for the soul of John Appleton.



There is some flush work and chequerboard pattern. The south porch has a castellated parapet and some flushwork ornamentation. The north porch was restored 1827-29 and the chancel was rebuilt between 1866-69 by William Butterfield. The nave roof has good moulded and carved beams and the aisles have moulded beams And joists The communion rail was taken from the Church of St Michael, Cornhill in the City of London and is probably the work of Richard Cleere circa 1670-75. Graded for its architectural, its historical and the topographical value.







**St Lawrence, Great Waldingfield**





**St Andrew's, Church Street, Great Cornard**

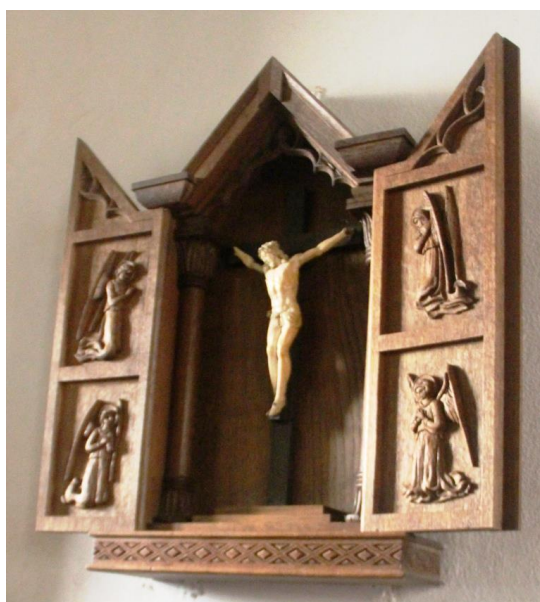
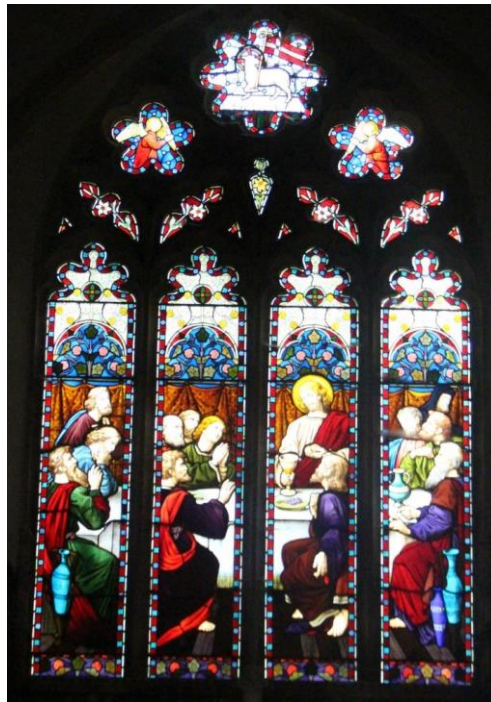


A flint church with stone dressings. The west tower is 14th century, with diagonal buttresses with niches in the angles of the buttresses on the west side. On the north-east there is a Tudor octagonal red brick staircase tower. The nave and chancel are mainly 15th century and the south aisle was built in 1887. The west tower has a shingled broach spire. The chancel has moulded and embattled beams. Graded for its architectural and historical value.



**Christian Fellowship, Broom Street, Great Cornard**





St Andrew's, Wormingford



St Andrews' church, Wormingford is one of 200 ancient churches in the south of England dedicated to Saint Andrew. The early church building consisted of a tower with a bell, which formed a look out post to watch the river Stour for approaching raiders and sound the alarm. The present church is Norman and dates from the 12th century. During his reign Henry VIII forced every parish to keep a register of their parishioners. Wormingfords first record of Baptism is on the 20th December 1557, the first Marriage was recorded on St. Peter's day (29th June) 1558 and the first recorded burial was on the 23rd December 1557.

St Andrews is positioned on a height above the middle reaches of the River Stour, which is very beautiful. Just below is Smallbridge Hall, Where Sir William Waldegrave entertained Elizabeth I. On the distant horizon opposite is Arger Fen nature reserve, and the hill upon which Edmund was crowned King of East Anglia on Christmas Day, 856, and, marked by the BBC television mast, the old farmhouse where Martin Shaw composed his hymn 'Hills of the north, rejoice!'.

The church is one of twelve in the neighbourhood which are dedicated to the apostle Andrew. Churches built near water were given St Andrew dedications.

North of the gate are the tombs of John Constable's Uncle Abram, Aunt Mary and their children, 'The Wormingford Folk', as the artist described them in his letters home. By the far hedge you will find, the grave of John Nash, R.A., who painted this landscape over many years, and his wife the artist Christine Kuhlenthal.

Early 12th century, comprising of limestone, with Roman brick quoins. The Roman bricks may have come from a local villa or from Colchester. There are vast numbers of them in the district. They make fine corners. The tower is of three stages and is topped with a 17th century brick parapet and pinnacles. The windows, also made of Roman brick, are 12th century.

The tower contains six bells which are rung before all services. Bell practice is at 7:30 pm on Tuesdays.

Chiefly Victorian (1870) but containing the re-set 15th century archway of the earlier porch. The doorway is late 14th century. Above it may be seen the arch of the original 12th century entrance, and by the side a medieval stoup.

The nave is 14th century with a north arcade of four bays. The octagonal columns have moulded capitals and bases. The south wall contains three 14th century windows, much restored, and a blocked 12th century window. The north Aisle is 14th century with a 16th century camber beam roof. The Nave roof is among the most remarkable feats of Victorian carpentry. Made of resinous soft wood, it is said to be a replica of the mediaeval roof it replaced in 1870. It is decorated with a great many thin panels of pierced tracery which lend it an airy elegance.

For the nave - Fragments of 14th century glass remain in the north west and south west windows, and the piscina and sedilia in the sanctuary are of the same period. The great mid 14th century chancel arch is moulded, with sunk chamfering. The organ is by J.W. Walker (1867).

The elaborate reredos of stone and alabaster commemorates the ministry of Thomas Tufnell, who was vicar of Wormingford for forty seven years. The figures are of St Andrew and St Alban, the first British martyr. The church possesses an Elizabethan chalice, and registers dating back to 1557. In the West End - the tower arch is 19th century but it contains the restored 15th century Rood screen which once divided the nave from the chancel. Peal-boards on the walls of the combined choir vestry and ringing-chamber witness to Wormingfords fame as a centre of the campanologist's art. There are six bells. They include one cast in 1460 by a woman bell-founder, Joanna Sturdy of Colchester, and two cast by Richard Bowler in 1591. Brasses include that of a young man who died c. 1450, and who Miss Beaumont, our historian, suggests may be either Thomas Bowden or Radus Rydale, and one of a Tudor gentleman with his two wives. Like the belfry floor, which is paved with old headstones from the churchyard, these brasses no longer cover the graves of those they memorialise. Thomas Hardy would not have approved.

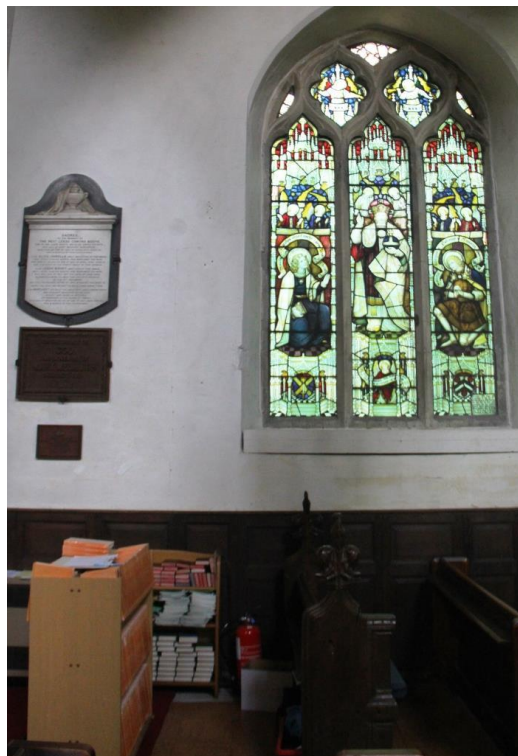
The lectern is carved out of ancient barn beams by Samuel Joliffe Tufnell in 1949. The shields show the three sees in which the church has been held, Rochester, St Alban's and Chelmsford. For unofficial art and legends - the medieval columns and door jambs contain much graffiti, mostly initials and dates. But there is a fascinating scratching in the north aisle of the antler of a fallow deer, from the Smallbridge deer park? It is surrounded by a long inscription scratched in a fine hand but which, alas, is no longer decipherable. And in the east window of the north aisle can be seen the 'cokadrill'-dragon-worm which has given Wormingford its own version of St George and the Dragon story. Note the poor girl's legs. There is a full account of this brave tale on the wall to the right of the window. Essentially St Andrew's parish church is a Norman Medieval building which, as so many churches did, received a drastic overhaul in 1869-70. It has the appearance of timeless strength, and of Victorian confidence, all intermixed. If one takes into consideration the materials from which it was made, the Roman bricks, the flints from the local fields and the wood from the local oaks, its history could be as old as Christianity in Essex.

**TUESDAY 6th AUGUST 2019**



**Church of the Holy Spirit, Forest Drive, Widford, Chelmsford (seen from bus)**





### All Saints, Writtle

With thanks to information on the internet, the church dates back to about the 12th-13th century and later the tower was rebuilt 1802-3; and restorations were done in 1878-9 and 1885-6. The materials used were mainly ragstone rubble with some flint and ironstone, and some Roman brick in the chancel; dressings of clunch, limestone, Barnack stone, a hard limestone resembling Purbeck, and some brick. S nave chapel is 16th century brick.

The roofs are leaded except for the chancel, which is tiled and the aisled nave with West tower, North and South porches, North and South chapels to the aisles, and South East road stair turret. Chancel has North and South chapels and North vestry

In the exterior there is a large West tower which was rebuilt in 1802 following the collapse of the earlier tower of unknown medieval date in 1800. It reuses stone from the old tower, and has heavy brick buttresses and a brick parapet. The windows originally had rounded heads, with brick dressings and churchwardens' gothic-style Y tracery, but they were altered to a decorated style in 1924. At the same time, pinnacles were added to the tower parapet, and the West door was changed from a Georgian panelled door with a glazed fanlight to a Decorated-style opening. Brick string courses dividing the tower into four stages were also removed, and the buttresses were altered with the addition of small gables on the offsets.

The chancel has late 12th or 13th East quoins and so had reached its present extent by that date. The remains of round-headed windows, presumably of the late 12th century, were discovered, and removed, when the East wall was rebuilt during the later 19th century restorations. The chancel was given new windows, now heavily restored, in the 15th century. The chancel chapels and the two-story North East vestry are 14th century in origin, and also have 15th century windows. There is a 16th century window in the upper story of the vestry, which is probably an addition of that date, and has a plain parapet and low pitched roof.

The exterior of the North and South nave aisles may also be 13th century in origin, as the South door and parts of the North door are of that date, and the lack of buttresses also points to a 13th century origin, contemporary with the 13th century arcades internally. The aisles were given new windows in 14th century. The small rood stair turret at the E end of the S aisle was added in the late 14th century or early 15th century. The North and South porches were added about 1400. They have restored, cusped barge boarding, and the North porch was given a glazed outer door 2005. Small, projecting chapels were added to the East end of both aisles in the early 16th century. That on the North is very shallow, while that on the South is larger and was built of brick as a chantry for William Carpenter, vicar until 1526. Also in the 16th century, the clerestory was rebuilt and embattled parapets were added to the nave, aisles and chapels and vestry.

In the interior the chancel arch was entirely rebuilt in 1879 and is 15th century in style with many tiny mouldings on polygonal shafts with moulded capitals, and a hood mould with foliate stops. The arches from the aisles to the North and South chancel chapels were also rebuilt in the 19th century in a 15th century style. The 2-bay arcades to the North and South chancel chapels are 14th century in origin, but were reworked in the 15th century and heavily restored in the 19th century. The door to the North vestry has a 14th century door. The chancel has a restored boarded and panelled ceiling with carved bosses, 15th century in origin. The 5 bay nave arcades are 13th century in origin and have chamfered orders on round piers with moulded capitals. The western bays were shortened in 1802 when the tower was rebuilt, and the rest of the arcades were largely rebuilt along their original lines in the later 19th century. A blocked window in the nave South wall above the first pier of the South arcade may be the remains of a 13th century clerestory.



There is a wide 16th century arch into the shallow North nave chapel and a narrower arch into the South nave chapel. The nave roof is low pitched with cased bosses and stands on demi-figures of angles. Of 15th century origins, it was restored in the 18th (East beam inscribed by Reginald Branwood, carpenter of Writtle, 1740) and 19th century, and again in the 20th century. The aisles have restored 15th century roofs.

The tower arch in an Early English style was inserted in 1893 and replaces a door of 1802. The arch is closed by timber and glazed doors of 1955. A kitchen and toilets were installed in the base of the tower in 2000-02, when the bells were also rehung. A blocked door above the tower arch formerly provided access to a gallery.

The principle fixtures are 12th century font, square with attached shafts at the angles. An early 13th century piscina was reset in a new niche in the chancel in the 19th century. A few surviving 15th century benches with poppy heads. The largely 19th century choir stalls have some early 16th century poppy heads and late 17th century or 18th century openwork panels to the fronts. Plain 19th century nave benches have shouldered ends. Mosaic reredos, integrated into the bottom of the East window by A W Blomfield of 1885-6. Pulpit of 1885, eagle lectern of 1895. Arts and Crafts Gothic screens to North and South chancel chapels by F W Chancellor of 1929. The screen from the chancel to the South chapel is the former chancel screen of 1909, also by Chancellor. The cresting was added in 1929.

The church has many brasses and has a large number of surviving 16th and 17th century brasses, including Thomasin Thomas, her father and grandparents, 1513; Constance Berners, 1524; Edward Bell and wife, 1576, and Rose Pinchon, 1592, all made in London, and all restored in 1993 following the fire in the North chapel. Also Edward Hunt, who died in 1606, and Edward Bowland and his wife died in 1609 and 1616, and a number of others.

For the monuments, there are several excellent ones inside the church, the most notable being a mural monument to Edward Pinchon and Dorethea (Weston), in 1629 by Nicholas Stone. A version of another monument by Stone in Southwark cathedral, it is an allegory on man's resurrection as a crop sown, reaped, and renewed by God. A female figure within a broken pediment stands on sheaves of wheat and reaches up towards the Sun of Righteousness in the centre, with two seated angels wearing reapers hats at the sides. The pilasters supporting the pediment have decoration of agricultural implements.

Other important monuments include a Purbeck marble altar tomb in the chancel to Richard Weston, who died in 1572; a wall tablet to Edward who died in 1595, and Jane Elliot, with kneeling figures facing each other across a desk; an alabaster wall cartouche with scrolls and arms to Elizabeth Knightbridge, died in 1658; and a fine sarcophagus tomb surmounted by life-sized bust to Sir John Comyns, died 1740. Erected in 1759, it is signed by Sir Henry Cheere; it stood against a tall obelisk backdrop now in South porch. Ledger slabs.

Except for the arms of William of Wykeham, dated 1619 in the North vestry, the glass is largely 19th and 20th century South aisle chapel of 1870 by Clayton and Bell. South aisle Ion Pace, 1899 and C C Powell of 1902 as a memorial to Queen Victoria.

Chancel East window 1914 by H W Bryans. South window of 1950 by A K Nicholson, and South chapel East window by Jane Gray of 1992. Fragment of wall painting of St George uncovered above North nave door. The North vestry door is 14th century. The history of the parish of Writtle shows it is one of the largest in Essex. Writtle was a royal manor in the Anglo-Saxon period, and lands belonging to the church and to a priest are mentioned in Domesday book of 1086. The church was given to Bermondsey abbey in 1143, and then in 1204 to the Hospital of the Holy Ghost in Rome, a papal foundation for English pilgrims to Rome. By the mid 13th century a cell of the hospital chaplains was established in Writtle, which probably helps to explain the size and grandeur of the 13th century work on the church. There was also a chantry for the king in the church. The earliest fabric is late 12th century, but the very irregular setting out of the building suggests that it was built around an older church. It was greatly extended in the 13th century, when the aisles were added. The chancel had also reached its present extent by the early 13th century. The tower was added at an unknown date but may have been 13th or 14th in origin. The aisles were remodelled and given new windows in the 14th century, when the chancel chapels were added and the N vestry built. More new windows were installed in the 15th century, when the rood stair turret was built and the chancel arch rebuilt. In the late 14th century all alien priories (English cells of foreign monasteries) were dissolved and Writtle was bought in 1399 by William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, as part of his foundation of New College, Oxford.

Some of the early 15th century work on the chancel may be attributable to the college, but the nave was the responsibility of the parishioners. Writtle was a prosperous market town, and the parishioners did much work on the church. There were four chantries by the late middle ages, including a Guild of St John and a Lady Chapel, the latter possibly a detached building in the churchyard. In the early 16th century, small chantry chapels were added to both aisles, the clerestory raised and rebuilt, the parapets added and the upper part of the vestry built. 17th century refurnishing is recorded, and work was also done on the roofs in this period. The nave and aisle roofs were repaired in the 18th century, and new furnishing are also recorded.

Considerable refurnishing was undertaken in the post-Reformation period, but little of it survives. The collapse of the tower in 1800 was attributed to its having been, 'at different times very injudiciously repaired', and the rest of the church was also seems to have been in poor condition by the 19th century. The medieval tower collapsed in 1800 and was rebuilt in 1802-3, a project paid for and directed by a parishioner, Henry Lambirth. The church was heavily restored in the later C19, including the removal of most of the 17th and 18th century furnishings and the rebuilding of much of the fabric, including work on the nave by Frederic Chancellor in 1878-9 and on the chancel by A W Blomfield in 1885-6. The tower was remodelled in 1924, including the refashioning of all of the windows and the W door to make them more medieval in appearance. There was further minor reordering in the 20th century, and restoration after fires at the east end in 1974 and 1991. In 2000-2, service facilities were installed in the base of the tower. The chancel arch, for instance, was 'in a crippled state and supported by a modern contrivance' in 1856. The harsh restoration of the 19th century, which saw the replacement of much medieval fabric, was not untypical of the period, but the medievalising of the early 19th century West tower in 1924 is unusually late for such a drastic change.



The church was more sympathetically restored in the late 20th century following two fires at the east end.

The reasons for designation. The church of All Saints, Writtle, Essex is designated at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons: \* A large and handsome 13th century parish church, with additions and remodelling of the 14th-16th century and an early 19th century tower, heavily restored in the 19th and 20th century. \* An intricate history and development, reflected in its fabric, connecting the parish with significant orders and patrons in the middle ages. \* Some good fittings including 15th century benches and restored 15th century roofs. \* For its monuments, including a series of fine 16th century London brasses, an especially fine allegorical monument by Nicholas Stone, and another (albeit altered) by Sir Henry Cheere.



**All Saints, Writtle**



**Trinity Methodist, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford**









**Cathedral, New Street, Chelmsford**



### **Baptist, High Street, Bures Hamlet**

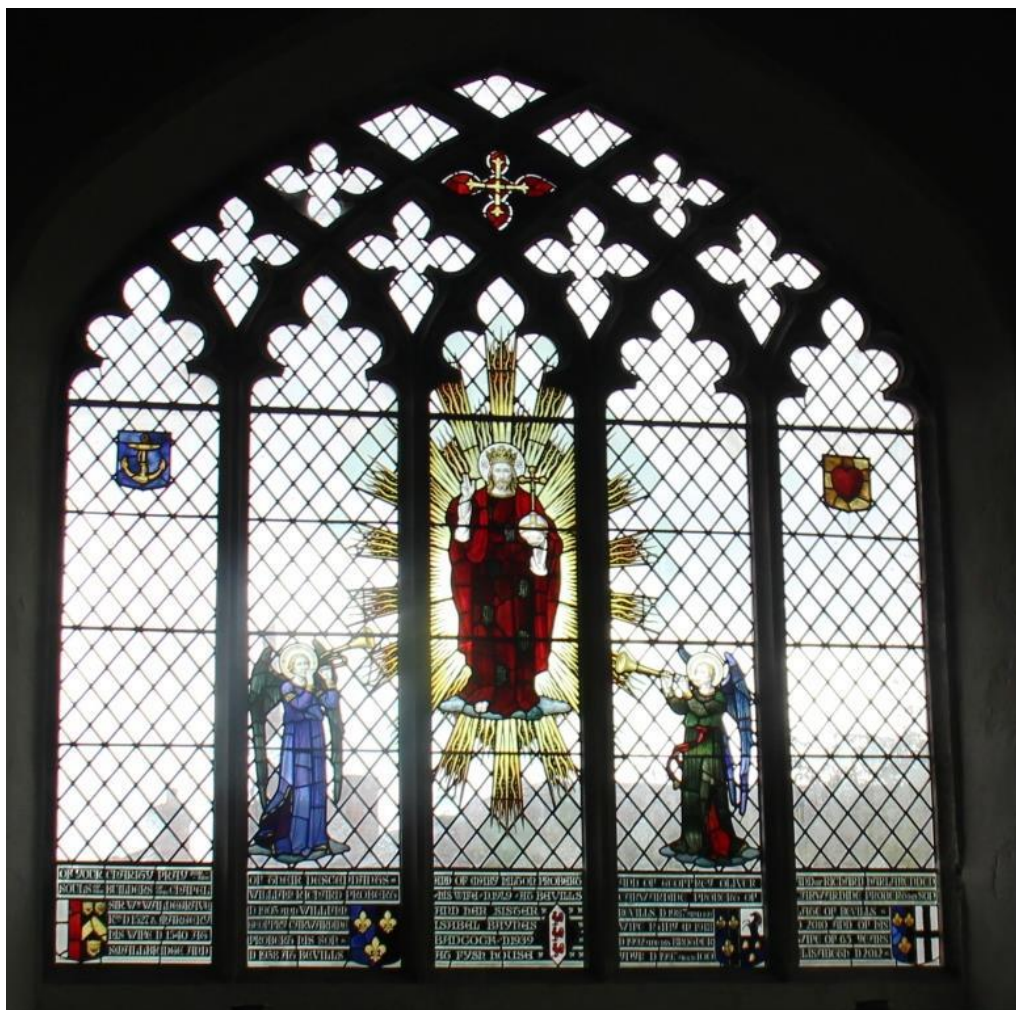
A red brick building with a grey gault brick front. Built in 1835. It stands set back from the road with a small sunday school of similar date on the north-east side. The front is divided by pilasters rising through 2 storeys, with moulded caps and bases. 3 window range, casements with semi-circular arched heads with rusticated voussoirs.

The centre window is larger and has rustications to the reveals also. 3 doorways with cornice hoods on console brackets. The centre doorway is larger and double. Roof slate.

They are a small, friendly congregation, with a range of community outreach ministries.

Our Sunday morning services (10.30am) feature in-depth bible teaching, a mix of traditional and modern worship songs, kids talks, prayer and reading the scriptures.









**St Mary's, Church Square, Bures Hamlet**



St Mary's has been a Christian presence in the heart of Bures for over 600 years. Our wonderful historic church building sits at the heart of the village and is surrounded by many beautiful and interesting properties (over 65 are listed).

With many fine features our medieval church is largely of 14<sup>th</sup> century origin with 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century additions. Its many interesting features, including Medieval Graffiti, make this a fascinating building for visitors.

<b>WEDNESDAY 21st AUGUST 2019</b>
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For a century after the Reformation Witham Catholics were cared for by the chaplains of wealthy families. Witham is an old Catholic parish, though, in post reformation terms with roots into the eighteenth century. A house still stands on Chipping Hill which has some “church” style windows and dates from the time when Catholic worship was illegal and Catholic priests regarded as spies and traitors. A goodly number of recusant families and groups were served from Witham which made it an important Catholic centre.

In the foyer of the parish church there is a list of post reformation priests in Witham, the first being Francis Thompson S.J. 1777-84. In 1851, soon after Catholic emancipation, a purpose built stone church was erected on the corner of Colchester Road and Avenue Road by what became known as “Catholic Bridge” over the railway.



**The Holy Family and All Saints (Catholic), Guithavon Street, Witham**



Dedicated to The Holy Family it served as the parish church until 1989 when possession was taken of our present church. The Catholic population had grown considerably with the development of Witham and the capacity of the old church became inadequate.

In 1969 the Anglican Church of All Saints in Guithavon Street, a chapel of ease to St Nicolas' in Chipping Hill, was closed. It had been built just a couple of years before The Holy Family Church. Twenty years after its closure the Catholic Church purchased this redundant building for a nominal fee and then spent a vast amount of time, effort, energy and money on its restoration, re-ordering and refurbishment giving us the beautiful parish church we have today. Out of respect for its history the church was dedicated under the twin patronage of The Holy Family and All Saints. Witham continues to grow and the Catholic Church continues to be a strong and thriving community witnessing to God's truth in our twenty first century society.



**Methodist, Guithavon Street, Witham**



**Evangelical, Guithavon Valley, Witham**

The founder of the Peculiar People, James Banyard, was a ploughman's son born on the 31st January 1800 in the small market town of Rochford, in Southeast Essex. This part of Essex was given over to agriculture, and was, with other parts of the eastern counties, the corn garner of England. Its politics were conservative, its religion earnestly non-conformist, a bastion of the Puritan cause from Elizabethan times.

The Peculiar People were to prove that, even in the nineteenth century, Puritanism and religious controversy were not dead there. He married Susan Garnish but his habits continued and he was the despair of his wife. At length in his early thirties he saw the error of his ways. A sudden change came over him. After visiting a local fair, he promised his wife that he would attend the local Wesleyan church on Sunday. This he did, and impressed with what he heard, he joined the Wesleyan body, soon becoming a zealous local preacher. At the same time, he turned decisively from alcohol and became a strict teetotaler.

He then met a Mr William Bridges who invited him to hear Robert Aitken, a powerful preacher from the North of England. Banyard then knew that Bridges and Aitken had something more than he. So, prior to leaving Bridges home in London he went into an upstairs room, fell on his knees, and there, according to all accounts, was 'born again'. Banyard returned to Rochford a new man took his place among the Wesleyans. He then commenced meetings in his cottage and also in the open air. They then obtained premises in Union Lane (Rochford), which had been erected in 1837 as an old workhouse and it was here that the Peculiar People's work commenced.

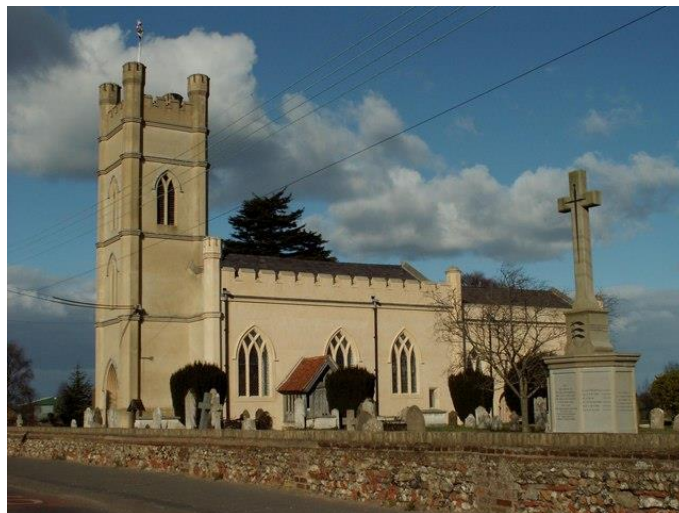
By 1842 the church had moved to better accommodation in a large house called the Barracks and it was here that Banyard was persuaded to call for divine healing on a man ill with consumption (tuberculosis). The man had been convinced that the words of James 5:14-15 were for him and that the prayer of faith would heal.



He was healed and after this there were many instances of dramatic healing such that the Banyardites gained a reputation for being a special people, given special powers by God himself. Gradually, more chapels sprung up and were established in the Essex, Kent and East London and by 1852 a constitution was established with bishops, elders and other helps. The name 'The Peculiar People' from 1 Peter 2:9 was decided upon.

At the height of the Peculiar's popularity there were 43 chapels, all giving emphasis to strict Bible teaching, personal testimonies and divine healing without medical intervention. Most of the congregations came from farming and labouring communities. They met together for united meetings at central venues, such as Chelmsford, when large numbers joined together for worship and fellowship.

On 27th April 1956 Supplemental Deed Poll Number 2 was signed; this was to change the name of 'The Peculiar People' to the 'Union of Evangelical Churches', as the denomination is now known. Divine healing does not now have such prominence but strict and literal interpretation of the Bible still forms the main basis of church teaching. Today, fifteen churches remain open within the UEC with some having large and other having small numbers in membership.



**St Mary's, Church Road, Rivenhall (seen from the bus)**



**St Francis, Western Road, Silver End**



### **St Paul's, Braintree**

The first St Paul's church was in East Street, next to where Dominos Pizza is today. It was opened on Saturday October 11th, 1913, at a time when Courtaulds, Crittalls and Lake and Elliot were employing hundreds of people in their new factories and providing for housing for them in East Braintree. There was a population of nearly 2,000 within ten minutes walk of St Paul's.

The first St Paul's was a converted Unitarian chapel that had walls of corrugated iron - because of this, it earned the nickname of 'the Tin Tabernacle'.

In August 1914, the First World War began. In October, St Paul's Church was requisitioned for war use, first as a YMCA recreation hall, for soldiers billeted locally, and later as a meat store.

### **Daughter church of St Michael's**

By 1925, the then-vicar of St Michael's, who had responsibility for St Paul's, recommended that there should be a new site for St Paul's, in the Hay Lane/Cressing Road area. By 1929, no site was found, and the idea was abandoned. During the Second World War, on October 16th 1940, two parachute mines fell behind East Street, damaging St Paul's, but it was repaired and services started again on November 6th 1940. In the 1950s, a new St Paul's was considered again. The council offered St Paul's a vacant plot of land, plans were made, a 'Building for the Future' sign was erected, a fund was started, but nothing happened.



In 1966, the Reverend Richard Mulrenan became vicar of St Michael's. He revived the idea of St Paul's, Hay Lane. Plans were prepared in 1967. They were ready to go ahead in 1968, but funds fell £8000 short of the estimated cost. A PCC meeting was arranged. On that day, the vicar received a solicitor's letter containing a cheque for £8000, a third share of the estate of a former Braintree resident and member of St Michael's Church, unknown to anyone present at the meeting. The PCC vote was unanimous, certain that their prayers had been answered.

### **The move to Hay Lane**

In December 1968, Norman Thorp arrived as curate-in-charge. The Foundation stone was laid on a snowy winter's day on February 15th 1969. On October 11th 1969, St Paul's was dedicated, exactly 56 years after St Paul's, East Street was opened. Morning and evening services began the following day. There were just 24 members of St Paul's on the parish electoral roll, 4 of whom had been asked by the vicar to transfer to St Paul's to help establish the work there. Norman and Bettine Thorp worked hard to build up the church. Monthly family services were introduced, and gradually increased in numbers. By 1973, the average attendance was about 130. The Sunday school groups grew, and groups for Jucos (Junior Covenanters, 10 to 13 years), and Covenanters (13 plus) were established. A youth fellowship followed, together with a wives group, and social events like film evening and garden parties. At about this time, East Street was sold, and the proceeds were used to build a wooden church hall. John and Madge Cassleton carried on the good work that the Thorps had begun. Through the 70s, St Paul's saw a considerable growth in the numbers of families joining - quite a few as the result of the formation of a St Paul's football team!

### **The parish of St Paul's**

As East Braintree developed during the ministry of Stephen and Sheila Lloyd, the diocese looked into creating an independent parish of St Paul's. Initial consultations took place from 1989, and on 1st August 1992, the new parish of St Paul's Braintree was created. Under the incumbency of Robin Sewell, an extension consisting of a welcome area, a new kitchen and new toilets was started in 2003, and completed in 2005. Under the leadership of our most recent vicar, Sarah Hayward, Messy Church was launched, which proved to be very popular with the local community. Sarah moved to begin a pioneer ministry in Myland, Colchester, in August 2019, and St Paul's is currently in interregnum.



**URC, Little Waltham**

**THURSDAY 29th AUGUST 2019**



**St James, Church, Little Tey**

Built around 1130, the church consists of a single cell nave and chancel with an apsidal end. The roof is believed to be early 13th century, the tower 15th century and the porch 19th century. The roof was thatched at one time, but church records report that some tiles were blown off in 1594 so the thatch must have been replaced by tiles before that date. This tiny Grade I listed church contains a series of medieval wall paintings depicting The Passion.

**SATURDAY 12th OCTOBER 2019**



**St Augustine's, Bucklesham Road, Ipswich**



The church of St Augustine is a familiar landmark in East Ipswich and was the work of Diocesan architect Henry Munro Cautley who was born at Bridge in Kent in 1876, but when he was eight years old, his father 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 library works on Suffolk and Norfolk churches, but as well as being diocesan architect.

## **SUNDAY 22nd SEPTEMBER 2019**



**St Giles, Maldon Road, Langford (seen from car)**

An altar within a circular apse was a tradition which began in Christian Syria in the 5th century. By the 9th century, it was common in Anglo-Saxon lands for churches to have altars at both the east and west ends, as was the case at the Saxon cathedral at Canterbury. St Giles is a unique example of a circular apse accommodating this at the west end of the church. with architectural evidence of a now-missing apse at the east end. The apse, with 4 feet thick walls, was built in Norman times and is the only surviving example of this in the country. **Parish church.**

Look at the building in more details – it has a 11th to 12th century chancel and nave originally with east and west apses. About 14th to 15th east apse demolished and square extension added to Chancel. Circa 1880, when extensive restorations were carried out by Edward Browning, including added North Aisle, South Porch, North East Bell Tower. Plastered walls of flint rubble and puddingstone limestone dressings. Dressed stone to Chancel, N aisle and bell turret. Red plain tiled roofs with stone coping to gables. Shingles to bell turret. Chancel east wall with moulded band above and below 3 graduated lancet windows. Circular window to gable. Moulded plinth. Angle buttresses. Rusticated quoins to bell tower. Square panel with sunk moulded quatrefoil to South East and North faces. Timber sounding louvres of moulded 2 lights to each face. Weathervane finial. South wall. Stone faced Chancel with moulded plinth and band. Buttress at Chancel division, plastered wall to Nave and apse carries through to north wall of apse.



One small lancet and one small square headed window to Chancel. 2 19th century 2 light windows with 2 centred heads and labels. 19th century gabled open porch with stone plinth, timber supports forming a 2 centred arch entrance. Clock over and bargeboards to gable. Internal side seats. Circa 1100 North doorway with plain jambs, round arch and chamfered imposts. Vertically boarded door with strap hinges. 3 c.1100 small round headed windows to W apse. 19th century North aisle dressed stone facing, moulded plinth. 4 buttresses. Small c.1100 reset round headed window to W wall. Three 2 light cinquefoiled windows with square heads and moulded labels, one of which is 15th century restored and reset. North vertically boarded door, with segmental pointed arch under a square head and moulded label. Interior. Chancel and Nave roofs boarded, ribbed and barrel vaulted.

Moulded and crenellated wall plates. No Chancel arch but corbels support moulded wall posts, moulded rood beam with traceried spandrels. Side tracery over. 13th century double piscina in Chancel with shouldered head and round drains. Stoup of uncertain date in Nave with 2 centred head and 19th century cill. circa 1950 carved panelling to carved and painted 19th century reredos. 19th century stained glass to E windows. 19th century circular stone pulpit, moulded circular base and stem, fleuron and ball flower moulding to cornice and soffit. 19th century coloured tiling to floors. North arcade of 2 segmental pointed arches, moulded capitals and bases to sunk chamfered columns.

19th century panelling to West wall of organ chamber. Sanctus stained glass to North windows. 15th century plain octagonal font with chamfered base and rings to stem. Line of former eastern apse in the Chancel wall. Although heavily restored 19th century the Church is outstanding for the western apse believed to be the only one surviving in Britain.