

# Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History.

## SCREENWORK IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK.

### PART III. PANELS PAINTED WITH SAINTS.

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The following is a complete survey of Suffolk screen panels (so far as the writer has been able to discover them), painted with saints, angels, prophets, and similar figures.\* Suffolk cannot compare with Norfolk in the number or importance of such paintings; yet they are far more numerous and far more rich in archaeological interest and in beauty, than has generally been allowed. With the help of H. Munro Cautley, Esq., and other friends, and of books and periodicals, amongst which must be especially mentioned Dr. M. R. James's *Suffolk and Norfolk*, it has been possible to discover screen panels and their iconography which will considerably augment the statistics hitherto received. One of the latest of such lists, that given in Prof. Constable's articles in the *Connoisseur* in the autumn of 1929, makes the total of screens or screen panels in Suffolk painted with saints only 21. In the following pages record will be found of no less than 38 such screens, actually seen by the writer, or vanished now but vouched for by Keyser. And this total does not include those panels in museums and private collections which are thought, or even known, to have come from Suffolk churches. Since it is impossible to group the screens of a single county, and especially of a county with such neighbours as Norfolk and Essex, according to style and origin, it has been thought best to arrange the following notes alphabetically. For further notes upon the general decoration of these screens, and for additional illustrations of the panels, readers are invited to turn to the Society's Proceedings for the year 1930.

\* See entry under *Southwold*.

*Barking.* The panels of the roodscreen show traces of figure-painting, for which Keyser provides authority. The figures were those of prophets.\* Hence there were formerly four if not more screens painted with prophets to the north and west of Ipswich.†

*Bedfield.* The base of the screen in this little church contains eight narrow panels bearing paintings of the Old Testament prophets. On the north side are three figures, with inscriptions now obliterated, and a fourth figure itself defaced. On the south side are Joel (*Ioell ppha*) and Barach (*Baruk ppha*), and two more prophets unknown. The figures are crudely drawn, but with a true Gothic naïveté, which gives them an interest above their intrinsic merit. The attitudes are awkward, but not merely stiff and commonplace. The painting is unpretentious, but pure, and independent of the black outline employed in the humbler screens of a later day.‡ The prophets are clad in the traditional garments of their order, the cloaks being sometimes clasped at the neck with a morse. They wear the "prophet" cap and turban headdress, and with one hand draw together their voluminous mantles, whilst with the other they bear the fastened scrolls of their Messianic prophecies.§ The cloaks, lined with a light-coloured cloth or fur, are painted in shades of red and green, powdered with gold. The under-ropes and hats are coloured more freely, in blue and brown as well as in shades of pink and green. The form of the headdress, and the tones of hair and beard, are also varied. The figures stand, some on a floor chequered in the form of tiles, others on an indeterminate ground of grass or earth. Below, in the place occupied in later East Anglian screens by tracery, runs a continuous white band inscribed for the donors. The black-letter is much defaced, but contains the names, on the south side, of Robert and his wife Alice, and on the north of "Alice" again. Other names are now indecipherable. Between this band and the sill are red and green grounds decorated with large septfoils of gold.

\* Keyser, *List of Buildings having Mural Decorations*, Rev. Ed., 1883, p. 17

† See also *Bedfield, Coddendam, Kersey*.

‡ C.f. *Westhall*.

§ The arrangement is not quite uniform.

Taking into consideration the narrowness of the panels, the cramped tracery in the head and absence of tracery at the sill, together with those characteristics of drawing and painting already mentioned, one might assign the work to the mid years of the fifteenth century. The figures are definitely earlier than those on the majority of our roodcreens, though not so early as those at Ufford or Woodbridge. They are of small merit, yet are far superior to the clumsy imitations of many later and more elaborate screens.

*Belstead.* Only the base of the rood screen remains. The panels bear a late and quite unusual series of paintings, debased in workmanship, but of a peculiar value archæologically. They are done in bright, thin, transparent colours, which have but little decorative force. The same weakness is found in the colouring of the carving and framework: yellow displaces gold, design is tawdry, and execution poor and careless. But this degeneracy of craftsmanship is accompanied by the novelties of a new (and alien) art. This is noticed immediately in the setting of the figures, which are painted against a long, continuous panorama of mountains and lakes and towers, with a shaded blue sky above and a foreground realistically studded with flowers. The figures themselves have the placid looks and sophisticated poise of the Flemish burghers to whom they owe their origin. Their books and keys and arrows are no longer medieval symbols, but have the appearance of objective personal possessions. In costume, the traditional robes of the Church Triumphant are almost abandoned, their place being taken by the secular garments then the fashion of the day. Other novelties appear as the panels are looked at one by one. These show:—(i) Blank. (ii) Blank. (iii) *S. Sitha*. This patroness of housewives and servants is clad in a green kirtle, with scarlet cloak and tippet. She bears a bunch of keys on a heavy ring or cord in one hand, and points to a book with the other. Upon her head is a veil and wimple. Beneath the black edging of her skirt appear the square toes of her shoes—unusual for a woman and perhaps indicating the humble path in which she proved

her sainthood. (iv) *S. Ursula* is similarly dressed, only the colours being transposed, but is represented with long waved hair about her shoulders, and her feet hidden, as befits her royal birth. She bears a rigged ship crowded with her Virgins, and a large arrow. (v) *S. Margaret of Antioch*. This is another royal saint, and is painted with auburn hair and a kirtle of yellow shading to orange. Her dragon is now somewhat indistinct. (vi) *S. Mary Magdalene* (?). This figure is clad in a close-fitting reddish kirtle, with under-sleeves of green, very full at the wrists, and a low sash-like girdle, one end of which she grasps in her hand, knotted and tasselled. The face appears almost in profile, and a strand of her hair is separated and hangs loose on one side. There is no symbol, but there can be little doubt, from the saint's dress and appearance, so like other Flemish and East Anglian examples, that *S. Mary of Magdala* is intended.\* (vii) Blank. (viii) Blank. (ix) (Passing to the south of the doorway). A Bishop, perhaps *S. Thomas*, vested in cope (fastened with a large jewelled trefoil morse), red dalmatic and green albe; and mitred. With ringed fingers he grasps what appears to be the triple cross-staff of an archbishop. It seems probable that he was intended as the martyred Thomas of Canterbury. (x) Another *Bishop*. (xi) *S. Lawrence*, with his gridiron. He wears a scarlet dalmatic fringed with fur. His head is tonsured, his feet bare, and he carries a book with open leaves. (xii) *S. Stephen* (or ? *S. Vincent*). A deacon, holding some object in a long cloth or scarf, the phial of *S. Vincent*, or, more probably, the stones of the martyred Stephen. (xiv) *S. Edmund*, nimbed, with crown and scarlet cap-of-estate, a large arrow in his left hand and a sceptre (?) in his right. The scarlet cloak, with its ermine tippet and extravagant sleeves, is traditional; but the wide puffed shoes provide an unusual note of contemporary dress, and show these paintings to have been made well in the reign of Henry VIII. (xiv) *S. Sebastian*. Holds a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other, and is shown in the very height of fantastic fashion. His scarlet hat, with its three long curling feathers—one red, one yellow, one

\* Cf. *Bramfield, Yaxley, Sotherton*.

blue—looks ridiculous against the halo. He wears a jewelled collar, a curious garment of green over the upper half of his armour; and is hung about with meaningless tags of cloth.

*Blundeston.* Here is a roodscreen with its uprights and tracery, but with only a fragment of the colour which formerly made its Angel paintings part of a splendid whole. Keyser records "St. Peter . . . and Saints on the panels," as well as Angels. The pairs of panels at the extreme south and north of the screen are blank, and may have contained such saints. The eight remaining panels have Angels, winged and nimbed, with hands raised, or crossed upon the breast in adoration, and bare feet resting upon a plot of green. The figures are small and slender, the heads covered with the traditional shock of close-curved yellow hair. Such symbols as they carried are now almost completely erased; but they may be assumed to have been the Instruments of the Passion (c.f. *Hitcham*). The alternate figures have scrolls above their heads: *Passio Christi Salvatoris*.\* These same figures are clad in close-fitting tunics of white. The others are vested in a coloured amice, generally red, and an alb, gracefully gathered at the waist. Another opportunity for variation is found in the wings, which are made red against the darker backgrounds, light-coloured against the red.

Angels of the Passion are a rare subject for screens, only occurring at one other, also in Suffolk, at *Hitcham*. The *Blundeston* paintings, however, are much earlier, with their small scale and narrow, imperfectly-filled panels. They are of a Norfolk type, as may be seen particularly in the delicate, graceful heads and high, rounded foreheads.† They were probably painted in a workshop at *Norwich*, for, in structure and carving, as well as colour, the screen is comparable not only to its *Lothingland* neighbour *Somerleyton*, but also to a score of earlier screens in other directions from *Norwich*.‡

\* Dr. M. R. James, *Suffolk and Norfolk*, p. 113, gives the last three syllables in brackets; but they seem to be definitely supplied in one of the scrolls.

† C.f. *Hemstead*, *Barton Turf*, and many other Norfolk screens.

‡ E.g., *Scarning*, *Costessey*, *Nort Tuddenham*.

*Bramfield.* Some notes on this, the loveliest of our Suffolk screens, are to be found in the writer's article on the Colour Decoration of Suffolk Screenwork. Here we may add a short description of the paintings themselves. The series consisted originally of the four Evangelists (two on either side of the doorway), and four other saints, thus leaving a pair of bays at each end of the screen for the backing of a small altar. The figures formerly by the northern altar have vanished; and the S. Matthew and S. Mark are largely repainted. The panel once next the southern altar has also been defaced, but its companion makes, with the two of S. Luke and S. John, three of the most graceful and most accomplished paintings we possess. The S. *Mary Magdalene* may be compared with those on the screens at Yaxley and Sotherton, which were painted in the same workshop, if not by the same hand. The figure has a double interest, first as depicting a contemporary *grande dame*—the only means of indicating the popular belief in her sin of "Luxuria,"\* and second because the lady is without doubt a Fleming. In the National gallery there is a painting of the Madonna with Saints, by Quinten Massys (School of Antwerp), which from details of costume may have been the actual model from which the painters in Suffolk worked. It was made between 1504 and 1517. Both in original and derivatives there are the rich garments of contemporary Flemish fashion, and the unmistakable facial type, with its small hard mouth, raised eyebrows and prominent, heavy-lidded eyes. In the Bramfield panel the S. Mary wears a dark green cap with flowered frontlet, a jewelled ear-ornament, a kirtle of dull pink, with overdress of a figured pattern in red, and a pale pink mantle lined with green. She carries a sumptuous casket. The S. *John* (in scarlet robe and light brown mantle) and the S. *Luke* (in robe of powdered gold and green mantle) are similarly Flemish in feeling. The former carries an open book, the latter the pen with which he has

\* It need hardly be pointed out that there is no warrant whatever for confusing the "woman that was a sinner" with our Lord's friend, Mary of Magdala.

written the opening words of the story of the Annunciation. Behind the shoulders of the figures their names are inscribed : SCS LUCAS, SACS JONES, SANCTA MARIA.

Besides these, there are the charming little figures of angels, the heavenly host, in the blue panels of the vaulting of this screen, a rare and beautiful thing, which must have helped to make it one of the most lovely pieces of medieval craftsmanship in the land.

(See illustrations at beginning of the *Proceedings* for 1930).

*Bury Abbey.* Dr. James mentions the Abbey pulpitum, with scenes from the Book of Genesis.

*Coddenham.* Here, still unfortunately locked away from view, are four halved panels, and half-lengths of two more, painted with Prophets. They are poor work, without any compensating freshness of style. But they have a special interest for their inscriptions ; Coddenham is the only East Anglian screen showing the prophets with the Messianic words to which they owe their place in medieval iconography.\* They read as follows :—

(i) For Obadiah—“ . . . cabunt eum om̄s et servient eum ” (a shortened form).

(ii) For Isaiah—“ Ecce Virgo concipiet e pariet Filium ” (Is. 7. 14).

(iii) For Hosea—“ O Mors ero mors tua, morsus tuus ero inferne ” (Ho. 13. 14).

(iv) For David—“ Dominus dixit ad me Filius meus es tu ” (Ps. ii, 7).

(v) For Zechariah — “ Respicierunt, in eum quem transfixerant ” (a mixture of Zech. 12. 10. and the quotation Ju. 19. 37).

(vi) For Micah—“ Deponet omnes iniquitates vestras ” (Mic. 7. 19).

At the end of this last inscription is a date (in Arabic figures), a.d. 1534. By this year, of course, the spoliation of the monasteries had begun, so that we have here the very last phase of East Anglian screen painting.

\* At Bedfield the Prophets' scrolls are closed.

It has hitherto been omitted from the lists of such paintings having a known date. It should be noted that it provides an example some sixteen years later than any other.\*

The remaining interest of the screen at Coddtenham is provided by certain points of costume. Amongst these may be mentioned the slashed doublets, with their lower edges tasselled and tabbed; the sasklike belts, knotted at the side, and sometimes with a long chain hanging from the front; the puffed and slashed sleeves; and the square-toed shoes.

*South Elmham, St. George.* Of little value archæologically are the two panels of a former screen incorporated in the modern reredos. They represent Our Lady and S. George. Some ancient colour appears to be still preserved in the latter panel (especially about the dragon's wings).

*South Elmham, St. Margaret.* Standing in the sanctuary are panels and framework of a former screen. At some time a seat has been placed against them, and they have been shamefully obliterated. But considerable fragments of the colour-decoration remain; the carving (of that late type to be seen at Fritton, Norfolk, and elsewhere) is good; and enough remains of the figures upon the panels to show that they were bishops, three of them in the act of blessing, and one of them (the second from the right) carrying what appears to be a boat. They are painted upon backgrounds patterned in red or green.

*Eye.* Although a very beautiful screen, and admirably decorated,† the paintings here are but poor work, and not to be compared with those on the neighbouring screen at Yaxley. The least clumsy is that by the doorway, representing S. Edward the Confessor, in red and green powdered with gold. Interesting figures are those of the boy saint, William of Norwich, supposed to have been martyred by the Jews‡; S. Lucy, with her eyes

\* See the lists given by Mr. Long in *Country Life*, June 2, 1928, and by Prof. Constable in the *Connoisseur* of September, 1929.

† For description see p. 260 of the Proceedings for 1930, also the accompanying illustrations.

‡ See the monograph on S. William of Norwich by Dr. Jessop and Dr. James.



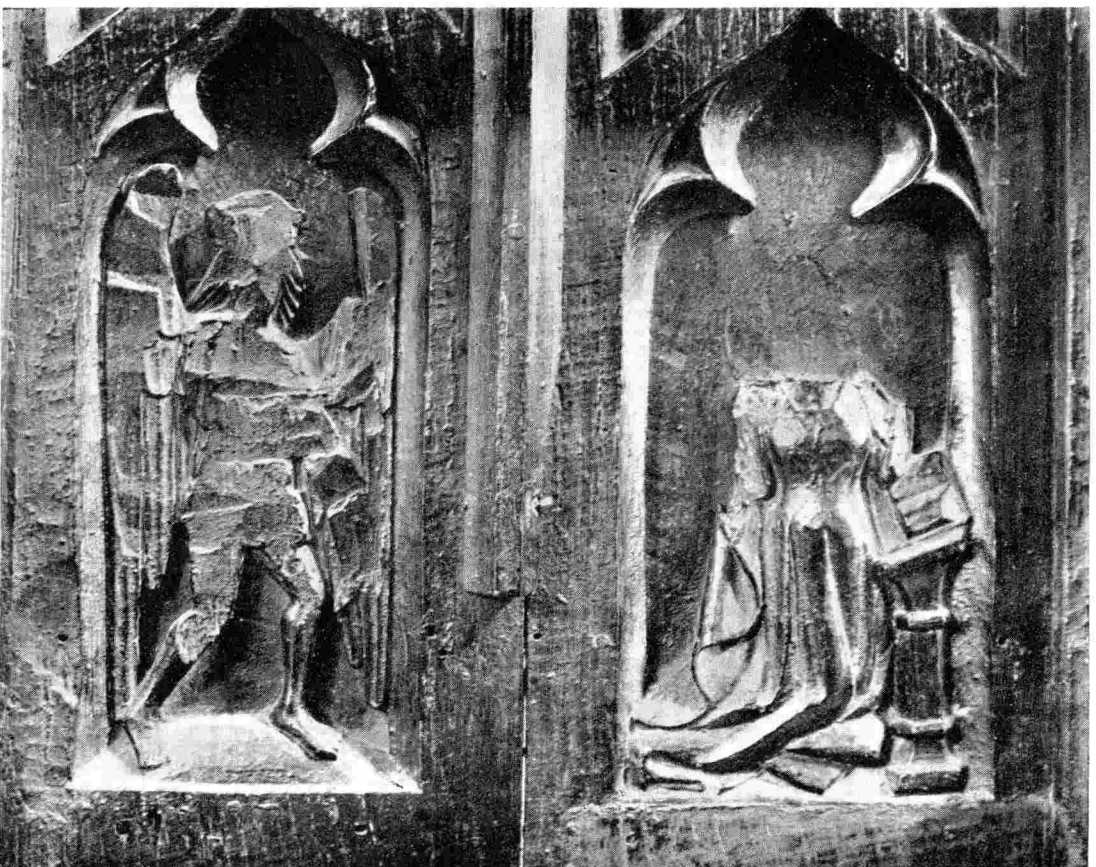


PLATE III. WYVERSTONE. The Annunciation.

PLATE IV. WESTHALL, Female Saints.



upon a book ; S. Ursula with her Virgins ; and S. Barbara, standing beside a tower so tall as to make a picture rather than a symbol. The full list, from left to right, is as follows :—S. Paul, S. Helen, S. Edmund, S. Ursula, Henry VI, S. Dorothy, S. Barbara, S. Agnes, Edward C., S. John the Evangelist, S. Katherine, S. William of Norwich, S. Lucy, S. Blaise, S. Cecilia ? S. Peter (corresponding with the S. Paul at the other end of the screen). S. Blaise, it may be noted, though a saint naturally to be looked for in the Wool counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, is actually seldom found there. In Bucks. an excellent example remains at N. Crawley.

Not even the Rev. E. Farrer, F.S.A., can make anything of the small shields at the north end of the screen. They were, however, undoubtedly those of the donors.

*Gisleham.* Keyser records saints painted on the screen. (*List of Buildings having Mural Decorations*, p. 112).

*Gislingham.* See under *Wyverstone*.

*Hacheston.* Five bays of the base of the former rood-screen stand in the N.W. corner of the nave, behind the font. Under fair carving, decorated with colour, are ten panels painted with Apostles. They are badly mutilated, but still show much of interest. In the robes there is an unusual predominance of a yellow or tawny colour, relieved here and there with a red or green. The backgrounds are of the normal alternate red and green, powdered with small gold sexfoils. From left to right the symbols, etc., which can be made out are as follows :—(iii) Part of the spear of S. Thomas. (iv) S. Simon, with a very flat-looking fish, in yellow and grey robes, deeply folded and wavy at the edges. (v) S. James the Great, with his pilgrim's shell, not upon the hat but upon the wallet, his hat slung over his shoulder, and dressed in a curious short straight cape. (vi) Part of the palm, and of the devil from the chalice, of St. John. (vii) S. Jude, with the boat. (ix) ? The fuller's bat of S. James the Less. The paintings, though not primitive efforts like those at Westhall or Eye, can hardly have been of more than average merit. They were probably made late in the second half of the 15th century.

*Hawkedon.* Set within well carved tracery are panels with what Keyser describes as "traces of colour." But this is a meagre description of remains that even sixty years later reveal at least two identifiable figures. Dr. James gives the names of James, John, Dorothy, and another Virgin saint. To-day the S. Dorothy, in a grey-blue robe, and carrying her basket of flowers, is still to be seen; and the outline of the Virgin saint beside her. But the "S. John" is now a surmise based upon the "S. James." The latter, indeed, looks more like S. Roche. He has a grey hat and cloak, carries a staff or fork, and seems to point to the plague-spot on his leg.

*Hitcham.* Here is the base of what must have been a noble screen. Though late, and quite unlike the great painted screens of the north-eastern part of the county, it was evidently one of the finest of the south-western group. As a whole it is carved and decorated but sparingly; but its eight panels bear a series of Angels with Instruments of the Passion, which are graceful and most rare.

The colour-scheme of the panels is unusual. No attempt is made, as with the Angels at Blundeston, to vary the colours of the figures themselves. Alternating red and green backgrounds, which are almost always seen in the screens of Norfolk and Suffolk, are abandoned in favour of a continuous ground of red. And outside the panels, cusp and moulding show a surprising lack of interest.

But the Angels themselves are delightfully painted. The wings, and feathered bodies, are green, shaded to a grey-blue. Upon their shoulders are tippets of ermine and on their heads coronets of gold. The legs and feet are bare, the latter resting upon tiny circular plots of earth. The cinctures, formerly gilded and jewelled, are now for the most part erased. The Instruments, from north to south, are as follows:—(i) The Scourge, up-raised in the left hand of the Angel, its knotted thongs dangling by his arm. (ii) The Pillar of Flagellation, with its cords about it. (iii) The Spear. (iv) Apparently the Seamless Robe, held up in the Angel's two

hands. (v) Half blank, and defaced. (vi) Very much damaged, but probably the cleft Reed, for the sponge, of hyssop. (vii) The Nails and the Hammer. (viii) Almost certainly the Crown of Thorns, which was held in both the Angel's hands.\*

These paintings must always have been decorative rather than noble ; but there is grace and variety about the attitudes of the figures, and it is noticeable that the bare legs and feet are less clumsy than in many otherwise finer medieval paintings. The screen would appear to belong to the opening years of the 16th century.

*Ipswich, St. Matthew.* Here are six panels of considerable interest, representing four bishops and two groups of donors. The first of the bishops (on the left) is vested in gold and white (as are also the third and fourth). He wears what is almost certainly intended for the pall of an archbishop, probably S. Thomas of Canterbury. This identification is the more likely because the hand raised in benediction, and the other, clasping the crozier of cross-staff, is specially obliterated. The second bishop has no clue as to the intentions of the iconographer, but is well painted in a cope of red cloth-of-gold. The dark and heavy facial type of these paintings is particularly clear in this figure. The third bishop is vested in chasuble, without a cope, as is the fourth also ; but has the same jewelled gloves with tasselled gauntlets, and rich mitre and crozier. The fourth of these episcopal figures provides the puzzle of the group. Is he intended for S. Erasmus, as Prof. Constable has suggested ; and if so, are the kneeling groups of donors to be called brothers and sisters of a Guild of S. Erasmus, of which there is record in a will of 1487 and elsewhere ? The symbol which he carries might possibly be the windlass of Erasmus' martyrdom ; but the usual East Anglian representations of this saint (as at Hempstead in Norfolk) leave no room for doubt as to the bloody manner of his death. The instrument here might equally be intended for the long-headed hammer of S. Eligius (also to be seen at Hempstead,

\* In the nave of the church is a popey-head, the finial of which is carved as an angel holding a crown of thorns in this way.

and elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk). S. Eligius, patron of smiths, is certainly a likely choice for Ipswich craftsmen of the 15th century. Another suggestion is S. Leger, with his auger. Yet on the whole S. Erasmus seems the most probable.

There is still, however, no necessary connection between this figure and the groups of donors. The two panels have come together by accident, and were obviously not so placed originally, for they are of different sizes. S. Erasmus (if it is he) would be a not unusual choice for a screen, whoever gave it. However, the groups of donors, whether Gild-members or private subscribers, are most interesting. They may be compared with the donors in the two panels at Fritton, Norfolk, and with no others known to me. But the Norfolk donors are a family, the name of which is inscribed; and that the St. Matthew's donors are not. The costumes seen in the two pairs of panels are, however, similar—notably in the head-dresses of the women. The latter are seen on Norfolk brasses of the early 16th century, e.g., that at Sheringham, which is dated 1513; and the date of the Fritton panels is about 1520. There seems little doubt that the St. Matthew's panels belong to the first twenty years of the 16th century also. When undefaced they must have looked gaily decorative, with their green and scarlet robes, yellow purses, and occasional gold morse. It has been suggested that the foremost male figure is a priest, thereby making it possible if not probable that the donors were members of a gild. But this figure, although he might be thought tonsured, carries a merchant's purse.

*Kersey.* Here is a portion of a very graceful roodscreen, which had a strong and deep sill and a somewhat heavy moulded rail with carved pateræ. Beneath excellent tracery are six panels painted with Kings and Prophets.\* Against alternating backgrounds of red and green, and upon a foreground of grass and flowers, the figures stand a little stiffly, and yet with a curious appearance of liveliness and movement. From left to right we have (i) a Prophet, with closed scroll, in a blue-grey mantle trimmed with ermine, and a cap (and robe) of brown.

(ii) *Edmund*, K.M., in scarlet and ermine. (iii) A second King, without symbol. (iv) A Prophet, with raised hand. (v) Another Prophet, dressed like the first, and also carrying a scroll. (vi) An excellent figure of another King, with gilded belt, and jewelled morses at the divisions of his deep ermine tippet. These sumptuous figures are now almost all nameless; they were probably once inscribed above or below. The Prophets would have belonged to a Messianic series, such as those so frequently seen on the painted screens surviving in the Midlands, and in Suffolk at Coddendam and Bedfield. The two Kings unknown *may* represent David (who occurs twice on the screen at N. Crawley, Bucks.); but in view of the S. Edmund are more likely to have been intended for Edward Confessor (perhaps Panel vi) and Henry VI. The screen belongs to an important group in South-west Suffolk and the adjacent part of Essex, a district once made rich by the cloth-trade.\* The screens of this group seem nearly all to belong to last decade or two of the 15th century.

*Knettishall*. From the ruined church of Knettishall have been removed to Riddlesworth, across the Norfolk border, two rather large panels formerly painted with saints. These panels would appear to have been used as reredos or retable to a side altar, as at Ranworth or Gislingham (q.v.). Little of the actual paint remains, but there is enough to show that the figures were those of S. Peter and S. Edmund. The former holds a cross-staff, and wears a papal tiara, whilst for symbol he has a church, and above, upon the dexter side, a pair of keys crossed. The latter holds a large arrow, and wears the royal ermine.

*Nayland*. Here formerly was another belonging to the South-west group of painted screens. All that now remains is a set of mutilated panels, hung (too high to be seen with comfort) on the S. wall. They have already been described in detail by H. Clifford Smith, Esq., F.S.A., in the *Antiquary's Journal*, vol. III. It will suffice to note that the saints upon these surviving panels include *Edward*, Conf. (with symbol and inscription too); S.

\* See the illustration at the beginning of the 1930 *Proceedings*.

*Cuthbert* carrying the head of S. Oswald; *Edmund*, K.M., with his arrow; an Archbishop, almost certainly *S. Thomas of Canterbury*; and Henry VI.

Some of these saints are most unusual in Norfolk or Suffolk, as are also the tiled pedestals upon which they stand, and the drawing as a whole. They would appear to be the work of an Essex or other Midland painter. (Plate VIII).

*Pakefield*. Dr. James says "portions of a painted screen remain; some were worked into a reredos." But now (1934) all that is to be seen are some boards in a niche in the south wall of the nave, which are said to have been the door of a shrine, and to have borne paintings of the Blessed Virgin and S. Margaret. Nothing but the outline of a pair of figures remains now. Although of the normal size for a screen, and with the traditional background, they are done upon narrow, *transverse* boards, which certainly seem to have served some purpose different from that of the panels of a screen.

*Ringsfield*. Keyser has a reference to painted screen-panels here.

*Rickingham Inferior*. Since they are placed under tracery from the old roodscreen, and two of them represent Prophets with scrolls, the modern paintings over the altar here would appear to be derived from medieval panels with saints. If so, we have yet another instance of Prophets in Suffolk. The modern figures represent Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel (with scrolls); the Evangelists; and the Epiphany.

*Rumburgh*. The rood screen is lofty, and the tracery under its pointed arches most graceful; but all is disfigured with hideous paint and varnish, which should be removed. Were this done it is possible that considerable remains of figure-painting might be disclosed. Even now one or two robes can be made out on the unvarnished space of panel beneath the pulpit, and the dado-band, marking the shoulder-level of a vanished figure, can be seen on a panel near the doorway. There is no previous record of these paintings.



*Sotherton.* Two panels, with the greater part of their gesso backgrounds, remain, fastened to the door of the vestry. They have been painted over with poor modern oils, but are still most interesting figures. They represent *S. John* and *S. Mary Magdalene*, and belong to the workshop of those other Flemish-looking panels at Yaxley and Bramfield (q.v.). The *S. John* is notable for having, not only chalice (with devil) and book, but also the Evangelist's Eagle at his feet. There is no other example of this combination of symbols in the screens of Norfolk and Suffolk. Both figures were brilliantly coloured.

*Sotterley.* Fragments of a screen of some interest remain; but the panels have been so repainted as to be almost worthless. The least spoil is that of *S. Paul*, with book and small sword. In this we have an indication of poor and primitive workmanship, so that the loss may not have been so great. The other saints (by their symbols) were all part of an *Apostle* series, and were arranged in the traditional order.

*Somerleyton.* Here is a simple but well carved screen of eight bays. It has an excellent series of Saints, which at once challenge comparison with that at Ranworth. But the connection between the two screens is not so close as might at first sight appear. The influence of the Ranworth paintings can be traced throughout all Broadland, from Hempstead in the north to Somerleyton and even Southwold in the south, and during a period which extends over forty or fifty years. Yet such influence rarely resulted in a wholesale imitation. The Filby screen is exceptional. For the most part it is a matter of the exploitation in the Norwich workshops of the splendid Ranworth cartoons for *S. Michael* and *S. George*—and to a lesser extent those for the deacon martyrs *Stephen* and *Lawrence*. It seems to the writer a serious mistake, from the archæological point of view, to make Ranworth the starting-point for the study of East Anglian painted screens. The real starting-points, if we could discover them, would be the workshops in Norwich and elsewhere

in which the different traditions of screen-painting developed. Consider the series of paintings before us. It is plain that the "Ranworth" cartoons were adapted for the S. Michael and S. George at the beginning and end of the Somerleyton set, and possible that the S. Stephen and S. Lawrence owe their presence and general characteristics to a similar source. But the majority of the figures, though of a recognizable Norfolk type, could not be set down as imitations of the paintings at Ranworth. Indeed one of them, the S. Andrew, is far more like the S. Andrew at Barnham Broom, the other side of Norwich. Neither has the Somerleyton screen any of the sumptuousness of decoration that appears at Ranworth. The backgrounds are of unrelieved red or green; the haloes make an unusual array of plain red, purple and green; the robes are drawn in simple folds, not in rich patterns of damask; the foregrounds are of natural earth or grass. It might be inferred that the donors of the paintings at Somerleyton lacked the means or the generosity of those at Ranworth; but the more probable explanation is that these paintings were later productions of a workshop which had inherited some, but not all, of the cartoons used for the Ranworth screen.

They may now be described with a little more detail. Going from north to south we see:—(i) *S. Michael*. Stands upon a dragon of the traditional red-brown, clad in a red robe with ermine tippet, and covered with golden feathers. Above his head he wields the brown sword of the conqueror, flecked with blood. (ii) *Edmund*, K.M. A rather poor figure, in robes of a light purple, the inner trimmed with brown, the outer with ermine. (iii) A female saint with book and hammer. Dr. James gives S. William of Norwich, but there can be no doubt of the fact that the figure represents a female. (iv) *S. Lawrence*. Vested in purple, white, and green-and-gold, with gridiron. (v) Keyser gives S. Simon; but here again the figure is of a female. Dr. James says "someone with a saw." May this not be the virgin martyr Fausta, whom Husenbeth describes as with "hands and feet sawn off"? (vi) *S. Thomas*



PLATE V. (a) BLINDSTON. Angels of the Passion.  
(b) BEDFIELD. Prophets.



PLATE VI. SOMERLEYTON. SS. Dorothy, Edward and George.

of *Canterbury*. Dr. James corrects Keyser, who suggests obscurely Zeno. It is the figure of an Archbishop, in red pallium, richly mitred, with the right hand raised in benediction; but the cross-staff is not double. (vii) *S. Anne with the Blessed Virgin*, the former in grey and purple robe, the latter very gracefully clad in purple and ermine, with her book. (viii) *S. Andrew*. A pleasing figure in dark green and purple, with clasped book and saltire cross. (ix) *S. John*. In red mantle and grey robe. He holds the martyr's palm, and the chalice from which he exorcised poison. An inoffensive sort of demon perches on the very edge of the cup. (x) *S. Mary Magdalene*. Dressed in purple and green and pointing to her casket of ointment. (xi) A Bishop, with white jewelled mitre and gloves, his hand raised in blessing. (xii) A female saint, who appears to hold a book by her side, but is otherwise undistinguished. (xiii) *S. Stephen*. Unaccountably given by Keyser as *S. Nicholas*. He wears a gold, fringed dalmatic and carries the stones of his martyrdom. It should be noted that the arrangement of the symbols is quite unlike that in the Ranworth, or indeed in most representations of the proto-martyr: five stones are carried upon the top of the book, and a sixth rests on the figure's tonsured head. (xiv) *S. Dorothy*. She has a coronet as well as a basket of flowers, but there seems no reason for suggesting, as Keyser does, *S. Cecilia*. (xv) *Edward, Confessor*. A rather stiff kingly figure, with ring and ermined robes. (xvi) *S. George*. A fairly close copy of the Ranworth drawing.

In concluding this sketch of the Somerleyton paintings it may be well to draw attention to the facial type depicted, and to the character of the framing and carving of the paintings. The former can be recognised again as far away as Hempstead; the latter can be seen in screens to the west as well as the east of Norwich. It is Norwich and not Ranworth that holds the key to the origin of the greater part of the East Anglian screen-paintings.

*Southwold*. This magnificent screen, rivalling in importance even those at Ranworth and Barton Turf, will be described in detail in a future number of the Proceedings.

*Stanton.* For paintings here we have the warrant of Keyser.

*Stoke-by-Nayland.* This church has some good screenwork. Besides the two parclooses, there are considerable remains of tracery from panels of the former roodscreen incorporated in a modern stall-front in the N. aisle, and two whole sections from the lower part of the roodscreen made up, with popeyed bench-ends, as stalls in the sanctuary. These consist each of two bays of two panels each. The tracery in the heads of these panels, which is just like that at Kersey or at Sudbury, retains the greater part of its gilding, and the panels themselves are of the usual alternating red and green. Beneath the present seats, and here and there above them, can be made out the remains of figures. Enough can be seen to make it plain that the paintings were akin to those at Nayland, for some of the figures plainly stood upon octagonal platforms or pedestals, as described above. We have on the south side: (i) A King, in ermine and cloth-of-gold mantle over a blue robe. (ii) Another King, this time in a red mantle over cloth-of-gold. (iii and iv) Also appear to be Kings, blue being the principal colour where the background is red, red where the background is green. On the north-side panels, only one figure, of *S. George* or *S. Michael*, can be deciphered. The saint, with gilded shield and spear, stands over a yellow dragon. He wears a red mantle and grey robe. The choice of kingly and prophetic subjects seems to have been characteristic of this S.W. Suffolk and Essex group of painted screens.

*Stradbroke.* In the vestry are two panels of the former roodscreen, which were rescued some years ago from the stairway in the wall of the south aisle. In 1923 they were sent for exhibition at Burlington House, and are briefly described in the catalogue of the exhibition by Prof. W. G. Constable.\* They bear representations of two Kings, clad in golden robes and seated upon stone-coloured seats or thrones. Behind the heads of the figures are bands of gesso, curved to give the red and green backgrounds the appearance of a niche. Across

\* Exhibition of British Primitives, 1923.

these bands or dadoes droop carefully-shaded tawny-yellow scrolls, inscribed, one "*Abias Rex*," the other "*—ahias Rex*." In both paintings the robes are lined with a deep olive-green and are shaded with red lines; the mantles are clasped over dark-coloured tippetts edged with fur; the crowns and sceptres are richly jewelled. The only obvious variation between the two figures is to be found in the disposition of the free right hand, that of King Abia being raised in blessing, that of the second King resting upon his cincture. Other differences are accidental, e.g., the hair and beard and tippet of the second king, which have spoilt in repainting, and the dado-bands, which are most uneven in scale.

These two paintings are of late and not very careful workmanship, and appear flat and mechanical. It is possible that a single cartoon was made to serve for the whole former series. But the panels are of considerable decorative effect, and of a type by no means commonly found. They also provide a fresh parallel to the work at *Eye*.<sup>\*</sup> This is especially true of the woodwork. There was therefore a group of at least three screens in this neighbourhood which belonged to a single tradition. It is probable that this is due, not only to local imitation, but also to the enterprise of some Norwich workshop; for carving and decoration of the same school is to be met with upon screens scattered throughout the centre and east of the northern county.

*Sudbury St. Peter.* Here are lofty and well carved parclose screens, and four bays of the base of the rood screen. The latter are in the exact style of the Kersey screen-base, but are entirely repainted and of no interest from the point of view of colour or drawing. They are notable, however, as a guide to the original iconography, and record representations of SS. Peter, John, Simon, Philip, Matthias, and Anthony (with Bell and book).

*Sudbury, St. Gregory.* A single panel, formerly in the Rectory, is now kept in the church. It did not belong to the roodscreen itself, but was apparently used in con-

<sup>\*</sup> See description, *Proceedings*, for 1930, p. 260, and see also *Yaxley* in the present article.

nection with a screen, as part of the backing to an altar, or for a similar purpose. The painting represents the famous *Sir John Schorne*, conjuring the devil into a boot. It would seem, by the saint's square-toed shoes, to be of very late medieval origin.

*Ufford*. Under pleasant tracery are panels with saints. The paintings are early, and primitive in style, being small of size and simply decorated. The robes and haloes are a flat gold, deeply outlined in black, with but the merest trifle of hatching to indicate the shadows. The faces are heavy, and drawn with hardly an attempt at modelling. Long curling golden hair falls over the shoulders of the female saints, on the south side of the screen, and all stand upon dark circular plots of earth. The backgrounds are red, with green behind the upper tracery, and are decorated with gold and inscribed in white. On the south side they read as follows: *Sca Agnes*; *Sca Cecilia*; *Sca Agatha*; *Sca Fides*; *Sca Brigida*; and (following Dr. James) *Florentia*, "this last a martyr of Bezier, perhaps." On the north side there is nothing to be seen but signs of what appear like ecclesiastical vestments on the panel next the doorway. These paintings may be dated about 1440-1460.

*Wattisham*. has the lower part of a screen with good tracery and buttresses of an early type with good crocketed pinnacles. A row of stencilling upon a ground of cream remains along the middle of the rail, but the rest of the screen is repainted and quite spoilt. Yet it seems probable that the original scheme is mainly preserved; so that we have an interesting parallel in the buttress-decoration to the Parham screen. The saints shown are (i) A bearded figure with tiny chalice, perhaps a mistaken repainting of a *S. John*. (ii) An uncrowned King, with sword and sceptre (probably another mistaken version of what lies beneath or was scratched away). (iii) *S. Paul* and (iv) *S. Andrew*.

*Westhall*. Here is the lower part of a most interesting painted screen. The carving is of a rather late Norfolk type, and very beautiful. The colour-decoration, with its red-and-white wave ornament, and green leaf-trail,



is also of a Norfolk type ; but the paintings themselves are peculiar. They are of two distinct schools, those on the south side resembling the paintings at Ufford, and those on the north being the merest primitive daubs, not to be compared with anything similar known. The former, placed against a curious background of leaded windows, are all of female saints, closely filling the narrow spaces of the panels, and drawn with hard black lines. Some of them are rudely inscribed beneath. They represent (from left to right) *Etheldreda* ; *Sitha* (inscribed), with rosary, and turning the leaves of an open book, wearing a rolled head-dress and wimple and a rich circular collar ; *Agnes* (inscribed " Angnes "), a fillet about her loose hair, her hands raised as though in the prayer of her martyrdom, a sword through her throat, and a little hound-like lamb leaping at her knee ; *S. Briget* (inscribed " Beda "), with the veil and staff of an Abbess, crowned, with small book and heavy chain ; *S. Katherine* ; *S. Dorothy*, with jewelled belt and morse, and basket of flowers ; *S. Margaret*, piercing the dragon with the staff of her cross, the left hand raised ; *S. Appollonia*, with the loose hair of a virgin martyr, the folds of her mantle gathered up in the right hand, the pincers holding a tooth in the left. The saints on the north side make an unusual series. We have (in the same order) *S. James the Great*, in flat black hat with scalloped shell, and a strange sort of cloak, with the wallet of his pilgrims at his side, and a book and staff in his hands ; *S. Leonard* (much faded) with simple tonsure, staff, book, and chain ; *S. Michael*, a rather small figure in armour, trampling upon a very hideous dragon ; *S. Clement*, vested as Pope, with double cross-staff, and black anchor ; *Moses* with the Tables of the Law, and the *Christ* of the Transfiguration, the hands raised and the face " shining as the sun " in gold, with *Elias*, in turban headdress, gazing at the Lord ; and *S. Anthony*, an old man with bare head, staff and book in hand, and the pig at his feet. There are some unusual saints in this series, but most remarkable of all is the triple panel of the Transfiguration, elsewhere quite unknown on screens. It may be remarked that, although they occur in a few instances in

Norfolk, subject-paintings are almost unknown in Suffolk screens. A further point of interest in the screen at Westhall is the Donors' inscription along the rail, wherein the names of Thomas Felton and Margaret Alen, widow, are recorded.

(See Plate IV).

*Wingfield.* Saints recorded by Keyser.

*Woodbridge.* The Woodbridge panels are the one series which has previously been described in this journal. They are dated at the end of the earlier half of the 15th century, and are of two distinct types. Copies of some of the panels which have disappeared from the church, are to be found in the British Museum, and some more, by Watling, in the collection now in the Christchurch Museum, Ipswich.

*Woolpit.* Keyser contented himself with noting here "figures much defaced." Dr. James adds that "years ago St. John Baptist and St. Edmund (first and second on south) were decipherable."\* The modern paintings represent SS. Withburga, Felix, Mary Magdalene, Peter, Paul, Edmund, Etheldreda, and The Blessed Virgin and Child. How do they stand with regard to the original images? King Edmund in the second panel from the south is vouched for by Dr. James; the S. Peter and S. Paul are in their traditional places on either side of the doorway; S. Mary Magdalene is a probable choice for the original scheme, as also in East Anglia are S. Withburga and S. Etheldreda. But the S. Felix and the Blessed Virgin possibly owe their presence to modern sentiment. It was probably one of these that supplanted the original S. John Baptist.

The mutins still show remains of their medieval decoration above the level of the rail.

*Wyverstone.* Here are four screen-panels of the greatest interest, which were not only painted but *carved*, in a way that can only be paralleled at the neighbouring church of Gislingham. The paint is now concealed

\* *Suffolk and Norfolk*, p. 76.

PLATE VII. BELSTAD. 16th Century Paintings.





PLATE VIII. NAYLAND. An unusual series.

beneath layers of dull varnish, which should certainly be removed. The value of these carvings is increased by the fact that they represent subjects, and not single saints. They are (i) *The Annunciation*. The Blessed Virgin kneels at a kind of lectern desk, and turns to greet the angel. She is dressed in a tight-fitting robe and an over-mantle. Gabriel enters in the panel on the left to kneel and announce his message. His wings fill the small panel to the sides. His feet are bare. (ii) *The Epiphany*. This scene also filled two panels, but that formerly containing the figures of the Mother and Child is now bare of all but a kind of wattle fence and an animal feeding at a small trough. On the right are the three Kings, and the one in the centre kneels. Only a portion of one of the gifts can be seen. The kings wear tippetts (formerly painted like ermine), and their robes are carved in regular, simple folds. (iii) (A single panel). *The Mass of S. Gregory*. The latter kneels at a small altar, and seems about to raise the chalice as the vision appears. The Christ rises from the open tomb, presumably displaying the wounds of the Passion (but this part of the carving is badly damaged and shows no detail). In the background to the right is a standing figure, and a part of the Church. (iv) *The Salutation* (badly mutilated).

With the Wyverstone panels go the rich and important fragments at *Gislingham*. These at first were a puzzle, until it was seen that they fitted the framework of the lower part of a screen recently found in the tower, and so made up the closed panels of an exceedingly rich screen on the plan of that at *Ranworth*, with two small spaces on either side of the chancel arch for altars, separated from the nave by small wings, and backed by the continuation of the main screen against the west wall. The carving which was formerly applied to the closed lower panels of this screen still show some traces of their colour. Between tiny buttresses in the middle of these carved panels were subjects or scenes very like those at Wyverstone. All that now remains is the corner of the tomb in a *Resurrection* carving, but this is enough to indicate the nature of the rest, which would appear to have been other scenes from the Passion of our Lord.

*Yaxley*. This screen has already been mentioned in connection with the Bramfield and Sotherton paintings; but the Yaxley panels, though small, are more ornately decorated with gesso, and have the largest number of figures painted in this elaborate Flemish style. The fact has already been noted that the Yaxley people, whilst ordering their screen to be carved by the firm which made the screens at Eye and Stradbroke, chose a different source for its paintings. These may now briefly be described. From N. to S. we have (i) *S. Ursula*. The figure has long flowing hair, and wears a jewelled and embroidered head-dress, a collar and a pendant chain of gold, a red or pink mantle, and a dark green robe. The left hand grasps the shaft of what must be an arrow; for the Virgins of *S. Ursula* seem to be shown in the fragments of colour below. (ii) Almost entirely obliterated. All that remains is the heavy gesso background with its grotesque heads with lolling tongues, the purple-pink tiles of the foreground, and part of the halo and coronet of a figure once clad in scarlet, perhaps *S. Edmund* with his arrow. (iii) Almost entirely blank. (iv) *S. Katherine*, much defaced, but showing a jewelled crown, a few strands of her flowing hair by her elbow, and part of her mantle and scarlet robe. In her right hand is the long two-edged sword with which she was martyred. (v) *S. Mary Magdalene*. This is the most complete and the richest of the paintings. (See Plate I.) The robe is dark green, the kirtle a salmon-pink, and the head-dress a lighter shade of pink. Note the rich casket, the handle and lid set with precious stones, the bowl ornamented with tiny gilt figures and scroll-work. (vi) *S. Barbara* beside her tower, clad in scarlet and purple, with an extravagant green cloth fluttering from the sleeve. (vii and viii) *S. Dorothy*, with her basket, and *S. Cecilia*, with her chaplet, of flowers.