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EXCURSIONS 2018

Reports and notes on some findings.

14 April. Jane and Bob Carr.

Hunston and Stowlangtoft churches.

St Michael's church, Hunston (by kind permission of the Revd Katherine Valentine). (*Report by Jane and Bob Carr*). The W tower is unbuttressed and of flint with a Decorated W window and bell openings to N and S. Money was left for its building in 1472.¹ Ring of five bells on the ground floor. The Norman nave is entered on the S side via a 19th-century wooden porch with steps down. A blocked 13th-century window is visible internally in S nave. The N windows are 14th /15th century. The nave, chancel and S transept are of flint and mortar fabric with a slated roof (Fig.179). The removal of render from the external nave and chancel walls in 1992 revealed horizontal coursing suggesting Norman origin.² The transept has an Early English 13th-century W doorway with shafts and, in the S wall, three stepped lancets under one arch, renewed in the 1880s to match the main E window. In the chancel there are three 13th-century lancets in the S wall and two in the N wall (Fig. 180). The doorway in the N of the chancel is Early English; there is also a blocked doorway in the S chancel with two rounded arches, one above the other with a 13th-century hood-mould. The three stones reset to form the internal threshold of the doorway are pre-Conquest or early Norman, probably reused from the head of a single-splayed window. Adjacent to the NE chancel buttress is a round-headed, monolithic window head, reset at ground level in the N chancel wall and decorated with concentric bands of beading and hatching which may be 12th century or



FIG. 179 – Church of St Michael, Hunston, from the south (photo: Bob Carr).



FIG. 180 – Hunston St Michael, north wall of nave and chancel (*composite photo: Bob Carr*).

earlier.³ The church was visited by Claude Morley in 1920, drawn by John Corder, recorded as pre-Conquest and described by Pevsner as Norman.⁴

Inside, there is a timber hammerbeam roof of six bays, probably by a local 15th-century carpenter, and a 19th-century rebuild of the chancel roof which follows the same pattern as that of the nave.⁵ At the W end is a small, plain, unlined 13th-century drum font with its surface covered with tooling marks (it looks too perfect and fresh to be original) standing on three 19th-century shafts on a plain round base. A tester or sounding board from a 17th-century pulpit stands against the wall. There is a chest in a 17th-century style, with panel decoration and inscribed with the letters 'I' and 'B' below the lid.⁶ From the nave, an exceptionally wide arch leads into the S transept, which rests on corbels set into responds; the irregularly sized voussoirs, retooling and general curve of the arch suggest that it is reformed, quite possibly from an original double arch with central pier. An image niche dated to the early 14th century in the E wall with jambs and hood-mould has a large petal decoration. There is also a large aumbry. A double piscina in the SE corner has one drain in each wall, a trefoil head and moulding. Loose carved architectural fragments include a stone grave slab or cover in three fragments, of a similar stone to the stone cross used for a grave marker found in the churchyard which was in the form of a small cross with an unpierced head and decorated on both faces with splayed cross arms and with a short, plain shaft. The fragments had a 10th- or 11th-century date.⁷

The wide chancel arch, 13th century with 19th-century restoration, has shafts on the outer corners and broader ringed shafts against the jambs. There is an unusual foliate decoration on the capitals. The arch has a central groove for a tympanum. Former access to the rood loft is indicated by a recess near the pulpit. The stalls have some bench ends, including dogs, a monkey and a horned creature.⁸

The N and S windows of the chancel have stained glass by Heaton, Butler & Bayne and include an image of the Blessed Virgin and Child and a war memorial window captioned 'To the Glory of God and in Memory of the Hunston men who fell in the War 1914–18 from the Heigham Family'. The monuments within the church are mostly to Heigham family, once of Hunston Hall. There is a Coade stone memorial to Capt. George T. Heigham and his son, Major George H.J. Heigham, which incorporates regimental badges, etc.

There are three painted Heigham hatchments on N nave wall. A charity board records the will of Mrs Mary Page (d.1731) which left money for the teaching of three poor girls to read, knit, spin and sew, and for books to be purchased for the school and to be given to school-leavers.

St George's church, Stowlangtoft (by kind permission of the Revd Katherine Valentine). (*Report by Bob Carr, Jane Carr and Timothy Easton*). The SIAH visited this church on 24 August 1899, as part of an excursion described as 'one of the largest and most successful gatherings which the Institute has held'.⁹ The church stands on a prominent knoll, with



FIG. 181 – Churchyard wall of St George, Stowlangtoft (*photo: Bob Carr*).

antiquarian suggestions that the site was once an encampment, but no traces survive. It is all of one period and was built by Robert de Ashfield (d.1401 and buried in the chancel) between 1370–1400, with evidence that it replaced an earlier building. Work was certainly under way in 1387, for in 1410 Edmund Mason, aged 53, remembered that on 15 August 1387 ‘there were 16 carts that day at Santon Downham laden with stone for the repair of Stowlangtoft church and one fell by the way with a broken wheel’.¹⁰ In 1390 the rector, William Stanton, left the residue of his goods to Robert de Ashfield ‘towards the chancel being newly built’.¹¹ The church was sufficiently finished by 1394 for John de Ashfield (Robert’s son) to request burial in the ‘new church’.¹² A new chancel roof was added in 1832 and major restoration took place during 1855–56 under the direction of William White.

The churchyard wall is mainly 18th century and includes random reused fragments of limestone tracery from the medieval windows which are in a Decorated style, i.e. earlier in date than the present Perpendicular-style building (Fig. 181). The church is of flint and limestone rubble, with freestone dressings. There is chequerboard flushwork on the parapets of the tower, the nave and the chancel and also on the buttresses and along the base all around the church. The porch frontage is covered with chequer work. There is a moulded porch doorway with a niche over and shafts which have possibly been reused from the earlier 14th-century building. The nave and chancel have very tall windows, with panel tracery, of which there is more in the E window with five lights. A small priest’s door is in the S chancel. The tower is buttressed, with bell openings and belfry windows. A stair turret on the S side provides access to a ring of four bells.

Within the porch, there are the remains of a stoop in the NE corner by the door, at one time there was also an iron-bound chest, but this is now in the chancel.¹³ There is an original medieval wooden door with ironwork. The tower door is covered with iron straps and there are two locks covered by a hinged plate, suggesting a secure place for valuables. Remains of a large wall painting of St Christopher cover an area of approximately 16ft x 13ft on the N nave wall opposite the S door. It is indistinct, with traces of feet, also a hermit figure and possibly a rabbit. The early 14th-century limestone font consists of an octagonal bowl with carved panels on a fluted shaft. Its panels depict, from the E face; the Virgin and Child, St Margaret of Antioch, a bishop, St Peter, Our Lord, St Paul, St George and St Katherine.

The nave has decorated bench ends. The roof has an arch braced tie beam, with grotesque corbels, boarded between the tie beams and the roof. There is a painted canopy or ceiling in

the E bay, for which money was left in 1520.¹⁴ The rood stair is visible in the N wall adjacent to the pulpit. The lower part of a painted rood screen remains.

Within the chancel, the altar has a mid 19th-century reredos in marble and alabaster depicting the Last Supper. The stained glass in the E window is by M. & A. O'Connor of London and is dated 1853–54; the N and S windows are by A.L. Moore and dated 1913 and 1906 respectively. There is a monument to Paul D'Ewes by Jan Janssen, dated 1624, with a kneeling husband between two wives and children, and one to Sir Willoughby D'Ewes (d.1685). The choir stalls include finials and misericords. The nave windows are by Lucy Rickards, daughter of Revd S. Rickards, rector from 1832–64.

The medieval woodwork. (Report by Timothy Easton and Edward Martin). There can be few similar-sized churches in Suffolk that have such a rich mixture of late medieval carvings, albeit from four or five different dates. The late medieval bench ends are not especially outstanding for quality but are fairly complete. Noteworthy are two carved beavers, possibly still surviving in parts of Britain in 1500, and a mermaid, stranded a long way inland. There is also a figure interpreted as a sloth. This is a carved diminutive figure with claw-like feet, clearly a little demon, with a quill, inkpot and parchment roll. This more likely represents Titivillus, the patron demon of scribes, who also listened to gossiping women in church and noted down their sins; a subversive figure played for laughs in some medieval morality plays. Mid-19th-century replacement ends to some benches were carried out by the Ipswich woodcarver, Henry Ringham.

The misericords, which back onto the dado of the rood screen, have high-quality carvings below each perk (perch), the four representing the evangelists being particularly noteworthy. The attachment of these to the dado does not appear to be original and modern timberwork hides the connections between the seating and screen on both sides. There is also an awkward junction between the misericords and the return seating on the N and S.



FIG. 182 – Stowlangtoft St George, front of the singing boys stalls with near matching north wall screen behind (photo: Timothy Easton).

The returns at each end of the desks before them are exceptionally well carved. The blind tracery has small mask-like faces in the topmost quatrefoils. These have design qualities similar to the backs of the benches for the singing boys before them, which are capable of seating seven boys on each side of the chancel dais (Fig. 182). The high backs of the N and S wall benches also seem to be of a piece and are not only contemporary with the front boys' benches, but have similar details to the dado carving of the rood screen. So the screen, which also has the Ashfield arms carved in one of the spandrils, was probably made for this church in the mid-15th century. The misericords, possibly earlier in date, may have been brought later from Ixworth Priory.

Capping each of the outer ends of the boys' stalls are a priest in a pulpit and a cantor with a book on a desk. Other figures officiating at the mass are also present as carved figures rising from the benches. Two standing figures hold shields, one with the arms of the Ashfield family and the other with the arms of the Tendring family, to indicate who commissioned these stalls. Robert Ashfield (1387–c.1459) married, by 1444, as his second wife, Cicely, the daughter and coheiress of John de Tendring of Brockdish in Norfolk. By his will, dated 1459 and proved in 1464, Robert requested burial in the middle of the chancel of Stowlangtoft church beside the grave of Eleanor (Curzon) his first wife.¹⁵ This suggests that the stalls may have been in the nature of a chantry around Robert's grave. The absence of any heraldic reference to Eleanor Curzon may suggest that the work was commissioned by Robert's widow Cicely after his death. Also in the chancel are the remains of a brass to another Robert Ashfield (d.1549). He too had two wives and he requested burial between them, but although space was left on the gravestone for an image of the first wife (Margaret le Gros), there is only an indent for the image of his second wife, Alice Jermyn, with a shield with the impaled arms of Ashfield and Jermyn above her. She predeceased her husband in 1546, so the omission of the first wife cannot be blamed on her. As the Ashfields were copatrons of nearby Ixworth Priory, it is just possible that Robert salvaged the misericords from the priory at its dissolution to enhance the family burial area.

The screen's dado was examined in detail by Tim Howson who convincingly demonstrated the similarities to detailing on four other screens in the Bury region and five in south Norfolk, suggesting production by the same workshop.¹⁶

There is a mortise in the stanchion to the N of the central opening at the rail level to indicate a side wing at 90 degrees to create a reserved space either for a side altar or the display of an holy image. With similar evidence at Langham, these are the only two Suffolk screens with clear evidence for the sort of subdivisions seen most clearly at Ranworth in Norfolk, where the wings survive. The screen at Stowlangtoft is unusual in that there was only one return wing rather than two. Repainted in the 19th century, but with enough of the original design coming through to show this is similar to its original intention. The original scheme may have been painted around 1520, possibly in keeping with the will bequest for the painted canopy above.¹⁷

The fine carved panels arranged around the altar are Flemish, imported to this church in the 19th century. These are late 15th century and illustrate scenes associated with the crucifixion. There is also a particularly striking Harrowing of Hell that is probably not related to the set. Overall, the carvings in this church present a wonderful opportunity for making stylistic comparisons for any interested student of church architecture and their internal fittings.

15 May. Rosemary Hoppitt and Arthur Rope.

Kesgrave, church of the Holy Family and St Michael (by kind permission of the deacon, Christopher Brighten). (*Report by Rosemary Hoppitt*). The history of the church was explained by the deacon, Christopher Brighten, and the artistic contents of the church featured in a talk by Arthur Rope, a relative of the artists. Also covered in the talk were family history and more background on other family members, including Father Harry Rope and Irene Vaughan.

The church of the Holy Family and St Michael at Kesgrave is particularly distinctive in its foundation and its artistic contents. It owes its existence to the tragic crash of the R101 airship south of Beauvais, France on 5 October 1930, in which forty-eight people died. Among them was Squadron Leader Michael Rope, recently married to Lucy Doreen Jolly, daughter of a Kesgrave farming and landowning family. The young widow decided to establish a memorial chapel to her husband, and to those who perished with him, on a corner of the family land

close to the Ipswich to Martlesham road. The resulting small building (capacity sixty) was opened as a 'semi-public oratory' in December 1931. In later years, the building was extended twice; in 1955, bringing the capacity to 100, and then more substantially in 1993. The resulting building reorientated the direction of worship from S to the more traditional E and considerably increased capacity, enabling the church to serve the Roman Catholics of the growing community of Kesgrave and around.

While the church stands as a well-designed and practical example of modern church architecture, it is the artistic contents that distinguish it. The artists of the various works were descendants of George Rope of Blaxhall, farmer and businessman, particularly the Rope family based in Shrewsbury, where one son of George Rope was a doctor, and the Rope family at Leiston, where another son was a farmer. George Rope's other children also included an internationally known sculptor of the late nineteenth–early twentieth century, Ellen Mary Rope. In the following generation, the Shrewsbury Ropes produced an outstanding stained glass artist, Margaret Agnes Rope, later Sister Margaret of the Mother of God, while the Leiston Ropes included Dorothy Anne Aldrich Rope, another sculptor, and Margaret Edith Aldrich Rope, another maker of stained glass windows. All these artists contributed to a greater or lesser extent to this Roman Catholic church.

The most important artistic contribution was from Margaret Agnes Rope, eldest sister of the deceased squadron leader and, by the time of his death, a nun of some seven years standing at the Carmelite monastery then at Woodbridge. Remarkably, despite it being an enclosed order, the community enabled Sister Margaret to continue her artistic production after taking her vows. In the Kesgrave church her windows are as follows: two lancets in the porch, originally wedding presents later adapted (and expanded) for the new location, presenting St Teresa of Ávila with St Margaret (including a distinctive *Paternitas* image of the Holy Trinity), and Our Lady and a Sister of Charity with St Catherine; the original liturgical E window, actually S, showing the Holy Family with St Michael (see front cover), the latter modelled on Michael Rope who has a representation



FIG. 183 – King David (photo: Arthur Rope).



TOP:
FIG. 184 – Holy Saturday (photo: Arthur Rope).

ABOVE:
FIG. 185 – Margaret Rope's memorial window
(photo: Arthur Rope).

RIGHT:
FIG. 186 – St Francis (photo: Cliff Hoppitt).



of the doomed airship shown over his head; on the W wall, a single window commemorating St Thomas More and St John Fisher donated in thanksgiving for the donors' conversion to the Roman church; further S along the same wall, a narrow lancet showing St Dominic; above the relocated principal altar, two lancets either side of the modern central panel depicting Isaiah and King David (Fig. 183) (windows transferred from St Mary's Priory, East Bergholt, after the latter's deconsecration) and dedicated to the Vaughan family into which the artist's youngest sister had married; in the partition separating the nave from the galilee, a personal panel showing a number of family members during a Holy Saturday service, imagined as being in Shrewsbury Cathedral with the artist herself appearing in caricature, standing at the back (Fig. 184) (this panel was shown in the Exhibition of Decorative Art held at the Royal Academy in 1923, shortly before the artist withdrew from the world into a Carmelite enclosure); finally, set inside the frame of a N window, Margaret Rope's memorial window (Fig. 185) which has two components, an inner panel, full height, made by Margaret for her mother on the theme of the Mother of God, with added side panels giving the dedication to Sister Margaret by her cousin and one-time assistant, M.E.A. Rope. Interestingly, the latter made one other change – the self-caricature of a miserably humble nun in basic garb created by the original artist, below right, was replaced by a blander but more serene version of a nun in full habit. This information has only recently emerged from a study of the artist's archive, of which more later.

In addition, the church contains a large number of full-sized cartoons of windows which Margaret Rope made for other locations, including those of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (for St Mary's, Lanark), SS Francis and Benedict (for Llanarth Court chapel, Gwent) (Fig. 186), St Thérèse Of Lisieux (for Oxton, Birkenhead [repurposed as a memorial to another Teresa]), Boy with Loaves and Fishes (for Michaelhouse School, South Africa), three small roundels commemorating English Catholic martyrs (from a series of twenty for Tyburn convent, Marble Arch) and St Ralph Sherwin (for the Venerable English College, Rome). There is also an early, and less assured, cartoon made by Margaret Rope for her first major commission, the Great West Window at Shrewsbury Cathedral. It shows a single panel depicting John Forest and Edmund Campion, two more Catholic martyrs.

Works by other Rope artists at this church include a small figure of St Michael in a niche above the N door (outside) by Dorothy Rope, and a fan-shaped bas-relief plaster panel *Agnus Dei*, a late work by Ellen Mary Rope, over the inner entrance off the N porch. The church also contains a small reproduction of her much larger triptych in memory of her brother Henry Rope, the Shrewsbury doctor and father of Margaret Rope, now located in Shrewsbury Hospital. This reproduction accompanies a brass panel in her brother's memory on the N wall of the nave. There are also three windows by Margaret E. Aldrich Rope: in the S wall, near to the original sanctuary there is a memorial to Alice Jolly, mother of the church's founder, referencing Little Walsingham Abbey and specific members of the Jolly family; also in the S wall and nearer the E end is a Nativity scene, a recent donation to the church; in the galilee is a thanksgiving window depicting three local Catholic martyrs. This window is on a typical theme of the elder Margaret Rope and may have been delegated by her to her cousin in the years when ill health, and isolation at Quidenham, Norfolk, prevented her from making windows herself.

Not included in the tour, for reasons of room capacity and unreadiness for public access, was the Margaret Rope archive, recently transferred from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery with the agreement of the community at the Quidenham Carmelite monastery. It is hoped that in the near future this will be accessible by appointment to individuals or small groups.

4 July. Bob Carr, Jane Carr, Christopher Cardwell, Timothy Easton and Simon Loftus. *Southwold, lighthouse, museum and St Edmund's church*. Following a welcome by Christopher Cardwell and coffee at Southwold, SIAH members visited the museum and lighthouse alternately in two groups. A drinks reception was held in Southwold church by kind invitation of the town mayor, a visit was then made to the church. Simon Loftus provided tours and a brief history of Southwold Museum (Museum of the Year 2017) and its collections. It is described as a unique cottage museum dedicated to local and natural history, and owned and managed by the Southwold Museum & Historical Society. Christopher Cardwell was the guide to the lighthouse and has written the following report.

Southwold Lighthouse (by kind permission of The Corporation of Trinity House). (*Report by Christopher Cardwell*). Southwold Lighthouse, which became operational on 3 September 1890 and has remained so ever since, is owned and managed by the Corporation of Trinity House. The Corporation licenses Southwold Millennium Foundation to conduct guided tours. More than 8000 visitors are welcomed to this Grade II listed building each year.

Southwold was chosen as the location for a new lighthouse because of the repeated failure of lights at Orford Ness, some 20 miles to the S. They had been replaced or rebuilt on numerous occasions following destruction by fire, storm damage, rough seas and coastal erosion. At its meeting on 15 November 1887, the Lighthouse Board of Trinity House resolved not to replace the Low Light, which stood damaged at beach level on Orford Ness, but to erect a new light to the N and that 'a new light somewhere in the vicinity of Southwold would meet the object in view'. Coastal erosion has since changed the precise coordinates, but Southwold is located further E than the Orford light and stands on higher ground than Orford, hence its suitability.

The tower is 101ft high (31m) and the height of the light above Mean High Water (MHW) was originally 120ft (37m), with the lantern being accessed via two staircases totalling 113 steps. The lighthouse optic dates from 1868 and is a Chance Brothers catadioptric lens previously used at Happisburgh Lighthouse in Norfolk. The light was originally provided by an Argand burner, which comprised a number of wicks set inside a glass chimney through which was drawn a current of air resulting in the efficient combustion of oil. Argand lamps were originally fuelled by fish oil, then vegetable oil and by 1860, mineral oil. The burner used at Southwold had 6 wicks in a concentric formation, each producing a flame 4½in long. The lighthouse still has remnants of the small bore copper piping that was part of the lamp system.

The lighthouse beam was produced by the use of a system operated by a clockwork mechanism that periodically raised and lowered a cylindrical shutter over the lamp. By 1906, this was replaced by a Matthews' incandescent oil burner which vaporised paraffin. David Hood further developed the technology whereby vaporised fuel was burned to heat a mantle, resulting in greater luminosity than earlier oil lights. Subsequently, a Hood 100mm burner was installed at Southwold in 1923 and this remained in place until the station was first electrified in 1938. It was automated and the keepers stood down that same year. By 2001 the light had changed to a 12-volt system using a bank of batteries with mains electricity continuing to be used to charge the batteries and supply power to heat and light the tower.

As would be expected, the lamps have changed considerably over the years. In 1938, a 230-volt, 3000 watt filament lamp was used. The earliest version of this lamp had a triple filament, whilst a later model had a filament arranged in a square. In 2001, three 12-volt, 90 watt halogen lamps were introduced only to be replaced in 2012 by a BLV Topspot 90-volt Metal Halide 150 watt lamp. The current light is a magnetorheological fluid reflector manufactured by Mediterraneo Senales Maritimas (MSM), a company based in Valencia, Spain. Its optical system has a light source of white Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) set into individual acrylic

reflectors containing dioptric and catadioptric elements. It has six panels, each of which contains eight LEDs set in 2 columns, using 30 watts of power per panel. The average life expectancy of each LED is around 60,000 hours.

The light, which is continuously illuminated, sits on a magnetic motor unit which rotates at 1rpm, so whilst it gives the appearance of flashing, it does not actually switch on and off. It simply rotates into and out of a viewer's field of vision. Its effective intensity is 893,750cd (candela) and the range of light is 24 nautical miles. Its positioning is slightly higher than its predecessor resulting in the light now being 38m above MHW.

This brief outline of the historical development of the light demonstrates a quite remarkable series of technological improvements over a 130-year period. The rate of energy consumption has reduced from 3000 to 3 watts, whilst the luminosity and range have both increased exponentially.

Southwold Lighthouse is expected to remain operational for the foreseeable future.

St Edmund's church (by kind permission of Revd Simon Pitcher). (*Report by Bob Carr*). SIAH last visited this splendid church on 26 June 1997 and a full report on its history may be found in the Proceedings.¹⁸ The church is unusual in being structurally of one single medieval building episode, documentary records show it was begun around 1430 and finished in the 1490s, the very last phase of major pre-Tudor church building in the country. There was a preceding medieval chapel of ease which had been destroyed by fire, an event which occasioned the building of the present church. The very uniformity and completeness of the structure, coupled with high quality internal fixtures and fittings, have made the church difficult to reorder; it had none of the utilities and meeting spaces required by 21st-century practice. Over the last 20 years there have been several major schemes to provide new facilities, all have involved significant alterations and external additions which would have affected the appearance and integrity of the building to the extent that they have fallen at the planning or faculty stage. However, over the last two years, a scheme for reordering which provides for utilities within the tower base and flexible open spaces at the W end has been approved and the work was completed in spring 2018.

The archaeological evaluation and recording work attendant on the development has significantly informed the understanding of the church's history. The final report is a work in progress which will, hopefully, be published in the Proceedings when it is available. The significant results include the discovery of medieval wall foundations beneath the current floor which identified the extent of the preexisting chapel of ease. It was only one bay shorter than the current nave and its overall width extended to the midpoint of the two present aisles. The scope of the chancel remains uncertain as archaeological investigation did not extend beyond the nave of the present church.

The second discovery, beneath the raised timber floor platform which supports the 19th-century pews, was the extent of a medieval floor formed of glazed tiles. The floor had been previously identified in the 20th century; it has now been shown to be contemporary with the 15th-century construction of the church. It covers the bulk of the nave beneath the pews and is formed in a chequer pattern of green and yellow tiles. A significant area of it is now exposed to view. Work to lower the floor of the tower to allow the introduction of facilities also exposed a fragmentary original floor of Purbeck marble slabs.

Screen and wooden furnishings. (*Report by Timothy Easton*). The entry through the great W doorway of the tower on special occasions, and particularly on various bishop's visitations, would follow over the counter-balanced tiled floor, and would have given an impressive view right through to the altar. To create a majestic entry and acknowledge the families who paid

for this grand tower, there is a horizontal row of shields above the W arch that must once have been painted with the families' arms. This is common practice in many other East Anglian churches (Woolpit, Pulham St Mary and Cawston). The best surviving confirmatory evidence is above the W door at Salle in Norfolk where the families' arms are all carved on the shields.

The painted screens that span the church, made around 1459–60 with decoration from three periods during the last quarter of the 15th century, are considered some of the finest in East Anglia. They are stylistically linked, in part, with the workshops that carried out the decorations on the Ranworth group of painted screens.

A central rood screen, the panels enriched with impressed gesso and gilded background behind figures of saints, has raised gilded decoration on the muntins with small painted figures in canopied niches, made to simulate enamels.

The first screen panels to be painted were those in the N aisle, probably paid for by the Southwold merchant, John Grueman, whose merchant mark appears in a shield at the base of each panel. The twelve figures on the dado panels are of the nine hierarchies of angels and three further angels.

The figures on the S aisle dado panels have painted prophets standing within painted frames to represent decorated sculpted figures in niches. The donors of the paintwork were possibly John and Helen Bishop. At the loft level, the upper part of this screen has a double set of mortises on both sides, indicating a wider loft. This probably connected to the existing undecorated parclose screen.¹⁹

The choir stalls are from the first half of the 15th century. These are richly carved below the tip-up seats, but particularly noteworthy on the divisional arm rests between each seat. Among some fine, bearded heads are several that appear to represent actors. One has feathers in his hat; there are grimace makers, a pipe player and a notable fool with a flowing combined cape and bonnet, a pair of ears and cockscomb attached (Fig. 187). The most noteworthy feature is the diamond pattern over his lower costume and leggings; it has been generally assumed this patterned outfit was attributable to the 17th-century *Commedia dell'arte* but here in Southwold he appears fully decorated in Harlequin outfit at least two centuries before his suggested invention. The patterned costume also appears on an actor fool in a 15th-century carved spandrel to the left of the painted doom tympanum in Earl Soham church. Next to the Southwold fool is the beaver biting his testicles. On the S side is a hell mouth with figures emerging, a stock feature of many depictions of the playing place that was also copied on doom paintings over chancel arches.

12 September. Tony Redman.

Euston Hall, park and church.

Euston Hall (By kind permission of His Grace, the duke of Grafton). (*Report by Edward Wortley and Revd Tony Redman*). Twenty-six members, the maximum permitted, gathered at the gate house at Euston Hall on 12 September. Edward Wortley, honorary archivist to His Grace, the duke of Grafton, gave us a conducted tour of the Hall.

The Euston estate was in the ownership of the Catholic Rookwood family from the fifteenth century before being acquired in 1666 by Henry Bennett, Lord Arlington, Secretary of State to King Charles II. Henry's daughter Isabella married Henry Fitzroy, illegitimate son of Charles and Barbara Villiers, duchess of Cleveland, in 1672. In 1675, Henry Fitzroy was made 1st duke of Grafton and the current owner, the 12th duke of Grafton, is descended from him. Matthew Brettenham (1699–1769) remodelled the house for the 2nd duke in 1750, taking over from William Kent who had died in 1748 having completed a rather grand refurbishment scheme of the house and park, of which only the temple in the park remains (1746). Brettenham went on to interpret Kent's designs at Holkham Hall three years later.

The house has been much remodelled over the years, but Brettenham's courtyard and stable block still exist, and the doubling of the N wing by him remains evident. The house is unusual in retaining so much of its family's treasures, which have been accumulated over 350 years, and in still being occupied by the original family. Mr Wortley expertly introduced us to the history of the house, the family and their interests through the artefacts and images which quite literally covered every wall we were shown. Significant art works by Stubbs, Lely and others, rescued from the disastrous fire of 1902 which destroyed much of the house, have since been conserved and rehung.

Brettenham designed in a restrained Palladian style for the 2nd duke. The N front, viewed first of all through the archway in the former stable block, is nine bays long with a central entrance door and parapets added in the nineteenth century. It is in red brick with stone quoining and window surrounds. It is plain, whilst giving a sense of arrival, with an excellent front courtyard which is symmetrical but for the newly laid out gardens to the E.

The parkland and environs have subsequently been remodelled by a series of eminent landscape architects and gardeners including John Evelyn (in 1671), William Kent (between 1740 and 1748), Capability Brown (who diverted and widened the river Blackbourne in 1760–61) and Sir Samuel Moreland (who introduced the fountains in 1859).

St Genevieve's church (by kind permission of Revd Phillip Garbett, rector). The church was rebuilt in the Palladian style by Henry Bennett, 1st earl of Arlington, then keeper of the privy purse, in 1671. It serves both as a family mausoleum and parish church. It was built to a cruciform plan, with symmetrical E and W semi aisles and step cascades from both N and S doors, both of which are pseudo-openings. The main entrance is through the W tower which has been raised in height to accommodate bells. A stuccoed ceiling halfway along the S side indicates the location of the former family pew which was removed when the church was repewed in the 1880s. The retable plaque depicting the Last Supper might be of a similar date to the reordering, whilst the other carved works, including the pulpit, all appear to be original.



FIG. 187 – The mid-fifteenth-century Southwold fool from the stalls on the north side of the chancel has been digitally enhanced to show up the diaper patterns on his lower costume (photo and enhancement: Timothy Easton).

Stylistically, the church has traditionally been attributed to Henry Bell, an amateur architect and linseed oil merchant of King's Lynn. He was the architect for the Custom House in Lynn and for the market cross (now destroyed), as well as for alterations to the churches of St Margaret and St Nicholas in the town. The church of St Peter at North Runcton, one of his last commissions, which resembles Euston in ground plan and elevations, was not completed until 1706. However, recent research has suggested Elizabeth Mytton, Lady Thomas Wilbraham, as the most likely architect of the church. Like Bell, she had worked closely with Sir Christopher Wren in the rebuilding of London after the great fire of 1666. The possibility that the church was the work of Elizabeth Wilbraham (née Mytton) was first raised by David Higgins in 2005. In 2010, in an essay attributing her as the architect for Wotton House in Buckinghamshire, John Millar goes further to note that her honeymoon, at the age of nineteen, took on more of a grand tour of the notable architectural wonders of Europe.²⁰ He suggests that she was both the first woman architect and possibly architectural mentor to Wren, helping him to design 18 of the 52 London churches that were commissioned to him after the great fire. Two of the London churches attributed to Wren, St Bride's church in Fleet Street (1667) and St James's church in Piccadilly (c.1670), are both very similar in plan and interior layout to the church of St Genevieve at Euston.

NOTES

- 1 Will of William Fullere; SROB IC 500/2/10/572 (Fullere).
- 2 Caruth & Gill 1993, 100.
- 3 Baxter 2019.
- 4 Morley 1920, 93–96; Pevsner 1975, 281.
- 5 Church of St Michael, Historic England.
- 6 Sherlock 2008, 73.
- 7 Plunkett 1998, 327, 336.
- 8 Mortlock 2009, 257–58.
- 9 The Annual Excursion, *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, 10, 164.
- 10 Proof of age of John de Asshefeld; *CIPM*, XIX, no. 782.
- 11 Will of John de Aysschefeld of Stowlangtoft, dated and proved 1394; NRO, NCC Harsyk 196 (Aysschefeld).
- 12 Will of William Stanton, rector of Stowlangtoft, proved 1390; NRO, NCC Harsyk 132 (Stanton).
- 13 Sherlock 2008, 96.
- 14 Bettley and Pevsner 2015, 501–3.
- 15 Will of Robert Asshefeld, proved 1464; NRO, NCC Brosyard 323 (Asshefeld).
- 16 Howson 2009.
- 17 Bettley and Pevsner 2015, 501–3.
- 18 Lawrence *et al.* 1998, 254–57.
- 19 Baker *et al.* 2011, 184–89.
- 20 Millar 2010.

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- Historic England, Church of St Michael, Hunston.

ABBREVIATIONS

CIPM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
NCC	Norwich Consistory Court
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SROB	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds