

EXCURSIONS 2009

Report and notes on some findings

25 April. Clive Paine and Mel Birch

Hemingstone and Gosbeck

Hemingstone, St Gregory's Church (by kind permission of the Revd Stephen Bryan). There was a church recorded here in the Domesday Book (1086). The south-west corner of the nave has eleventh-century long-and-short work.

The Norman nave has a Y-tracery south-east window and a north door, all of c. 1300. The chancel was altered in the fourteenth-century Decorated period, as is shown by the two western windows and the piscina. A drawing by Henry Davy in 1843 also shows a Decorated east window. Also in the fourteenth century the tower was added and a new south nave door constructed. The unbuttressed tower has Decorated belfry windows and a western canopied niche. The west window is a Perpendicular replacement. The battlements have flushwork panels, including a capital 'G' for St Gregory, the patron saint.

In the Tudor period the tower arch was altered, a new priest's door was made in the chancel, and the red-brick north porch was built. This has a niche and two small recesses over the entrance and diaper patterning to the side walls.

Also on the north side of the nave is another red-brick building, with a blocked door and window in the gable-end. This is known locally, although only in print since 1844, as 'Ralph's Hole'. The Ralph referred to was Ralph Cantrell, son of William (d. 1585), who, as a Roman Catholic, was supposed to have built this structure in order to be able to attend church, but without taking part in the service. He achieved this by means of a squint in the nave wall opposite the pulpit. The access from the church was only made during the 1872–74 restoration. When David Davy visited in 1824 he described it as 'a small building now used for coals or lumber'.

The lower part of the rood screen remains on the south side. Above, the rood beam marks the division between the nave and chancel.

The Decorated font has a deep bowl with crocketed gables, filled with tracery and supported by corbels carved as small faces. The rim of the bowl has a double-battlement decoration. The upper half of the crocketed font cover is fifteenth-century. The fourteenth-century doorway to the tower stair, as at nearby Gosbeck, is covered in iron-work. In the chancel the south-west window has an original fourteenth-century tracery 'eye' of *grisaille* glass.

In 1773 the church was repaired by the churchwardens, and a series of bordered texts was painted on the walls of nave and chancel. The selected texts refer to the altar, pulpit, font and entrance to the church. They are virtually identical to the series at Witnesham and Coddtenham, the latter being removed during the 1887 restoration there.

Davy mentions a western gallery in 1824, which was removed in 1872–74. The two small windows high up at the west end of the nave gave light to the gallery.

White's Directory for 1874 records that 'During the last two years a vestry, new pulpit and east window have been erected, the old gallery removed, a new organ and communion table furnished and the interior gradually repaired.'

In the chancel are memorials and ledger stones to the Colville family, lords here from 1764 to c. 1799. On the south side is a memorial by Humphrey Hopper for Robert (d. 1799) and his wife Amelia (d. 1825) on which curtains are drawn aside to reveal the inscription.

On the north wall, set in round-headed recesses, are a pair of matching sarcophagi by James Smith of London. They are in memory of John Brand (d. 1803), his wife Elizabeth (d. 1792), and their daughters Emma (d. 1805) and Elizabeth (d. 1812).

Monuments for the Martin family of Hemingstone Hall, dating from 1842 to 1907, are on the south side of both nave and chancel. There are four Martin family hatchments in the tower.

The earliest monument is the tomb chest of William Cantrell (d. 1585) with Renaissance pilasters and columns and a shell top flanked by obelisks. William was part of the household of Thomas Howard, fourth duke of Norfolk (executed 1572). The inscription implies that William was either treasurer to the duke or one of the trustees of his estate.

Outside, on the south wall of the nave, are monuments to the Revd William Thorne (1638–1718) and his wife Frances (1641–1704). He was rector of Hemingstone 1664–1718.

Gosbeck, St Mary's Church (by kind permission of the Revd Stephen Bryan). The Domesday Book records a church with fourteen acres here at *Easton*. By the thirteenth century the place-name had become Easton Gosbeck after the manorial family, and by the fifteenth century was simply Gosbeck.

Every twentieth-century guide to Suffolk churches refers to Anglo-Saxon long-and-short work, at the eastern corners of the nave. However, Bob Carr advised caution, as the 'work' looks more like reused sections of early coffin slabs, possibly in the thirteenth century.

The nave is Norman, as shown by the simple north doorway and the deep-splayed lancet window nearby. There is also a fragment of stone with interlaced pattern to the right of the west window. The nave also has an Early English south doorway, a Decorated west window and Perpendicular side windows.

The chancel, although rebuilt in 1848, is of *c.* 1300, as shown by the south door and adjacent lancet window. The latter, shown on drawings by Isaac Johnson in 1818 and Henry Davy in 1844, was renewed in 1848 and 1883. Davy also shows a two-light Early English east window with plate-tracery.

In the Decorated period the tower, also serving as a porch, was added to the south side of the nave. The porch-stage has a Decorated entrance, with a canopied niche over and a Decorated south window. The niche was restored in 1883, when the shields with a crowned M and arms of the Norwich diocese were added. The door to the tower stairs, in the south-west corner of the nave, is iron-clad, as at Hemingstone.

The tall parapet, added in the fifteenth century, has flushwork arcading. The corners and central battlements have cushions for statues or pinnacles. These sections also have quatrefoil decoration at their bases above the string-course. Thomas Kembyll in 1453 left 6s 8d to the 'monacr (?) of the bells', which may indicate the date of the parapet stage.

The fifteenth-century hammerbeam roof of the nave has king-posts above the collars and 1883 floral panels fixed to the hammers and bases of the arch-braces.

Five panels of the rood screen are now on the north wall of the chancel. They have extensive remains of gilt and colour, and at the base of the tracery are lozenges with small shields.

The Jacobean pulpit, still in the same position as noted by David Davy in 1824, was removed from the three-decker and placed on a new stone base in 1883.

Davy also mentioned a western gallery, beneath which was a large square font. This was described in 1855 as 'Norman with a plain square bowl' and must have been replaced in 1883.

The chancel was rebuilt and a vestry added on the north side in 1848, as is recorded on a tablet on the vestry. A note in the parish register in 1848 states 'The chancel of Gosbeck church was rebuilt this year and the vestry erected by Revd W.H. Attwood. Some curious remains of stone windows of a previous church were among the materials.' Had they

discovered Norman windows? The east wall of the vestry has a trefoil-headed two-light window reset from the chancel.

The nave and chancel were restored by Hubert Green of Norwich, on behalf of the Revd Foster Barry (rector 1879–98). The Norman north door and window were discovered and reopened. The latter has glass with lilies and ‘Praise God’. The chancel roof was replaced, the nave windows restored with Ancaster stone (the stonework of the nave south window ‘crumbled into pieces as soon as the glass was removed’), the pews replaced by benches and the floors laid with Godwin tiles.

The chancel roof has angel corbels at the position of the chancel arch; the braces have double tiers of shields with instruments of the Passion. The east window glass is in memory of Frances (d. 1891), wife of Revd Barry, by Heaton Butler and Bayne and depicts the life of Christ from Conception to Ascension. The two side windows have glass by William Worrall of London of c. 1902 and show Mary, and Christ as ‘The King of Love’.

Beneath the east window is a medieval style reredos, which is probably contemporary with the window glass. In 1894 H.W. Birch recorded that ‘some tracery from the demolished screen formerly did duty as a reredos, but has been replaced by a modern painting of the Crucifixion on oak’.¹ This may explain why there is no crucifixion in the stained glass window. The reredos has three panels enriched with gesso backgrounds showing the raising of Jairus’s daughter, the crucifixion and the raising of Lazarus.

The western Arts and Crafts glazed screen of 1907 is in memory of Revd William Hamilton Attwood, rector for thirty-one years (1849–79) and his wife Justinia (d. 1899).

The tower was restored in 2008 and the pinnacles replaced.

Mel Birch gave an illustrated lecture on the recent excavations in Gosbeck.

10 June. Bob Carr

Blythburgh Priory (by kind permission of Nick and Susie Haward). Perhaps for the first time, an SIAH visit was a response to the new technology of television. The visit followed a small-scale evaluation of the ruins and setting of the priory sponsored by the television ‘Time Team’ programme (Fig. 59).

The history of the site is somewhat obscure. Archaeological finds in antiquity and documentary sources open the possibility that this was a site with royal associations and a minster church in the Saxon period. By the time of Domesday the settlement was an important centre with a market and a rich church. Henry I granted the church to the Augustinians, and canons are recorded by 1147. The priory was dissolved by 1537. The building of a turnpike road across the river and marsh to the north in the late eighteenth century seems to have been responsible for the quarrying of fabric from the site and its reduction to the present fragmentary jumble.

A significant element in the study has been the recent clearance of trees, ivy and undergrowth which have choked the site for at least the last forty years, exposing to view the full extent of the surviving fabric. Viewed from the north (i.e. as from the gardens of the residence now known as the ‘Priory’) the principal elements rising above head height and thus clearly visible are the face of an east–west wall, the substantial stub of a drum pier with thirteenth-century architectural features and, behind these, the core of a pier rising well above the other remains. Beyond that to the north-east a further fragment of wall running north–south can be seen. Having passed between the wall and pier, and thus crossed the threshold of the ruins, knee-high structural fragments can be seen aligned due east of the tallest pier: these form the much smaller stub of another pier. Beyond the main ruins the land drops fairly sharply to the north, with a length of low wall also on the main east–west axis.

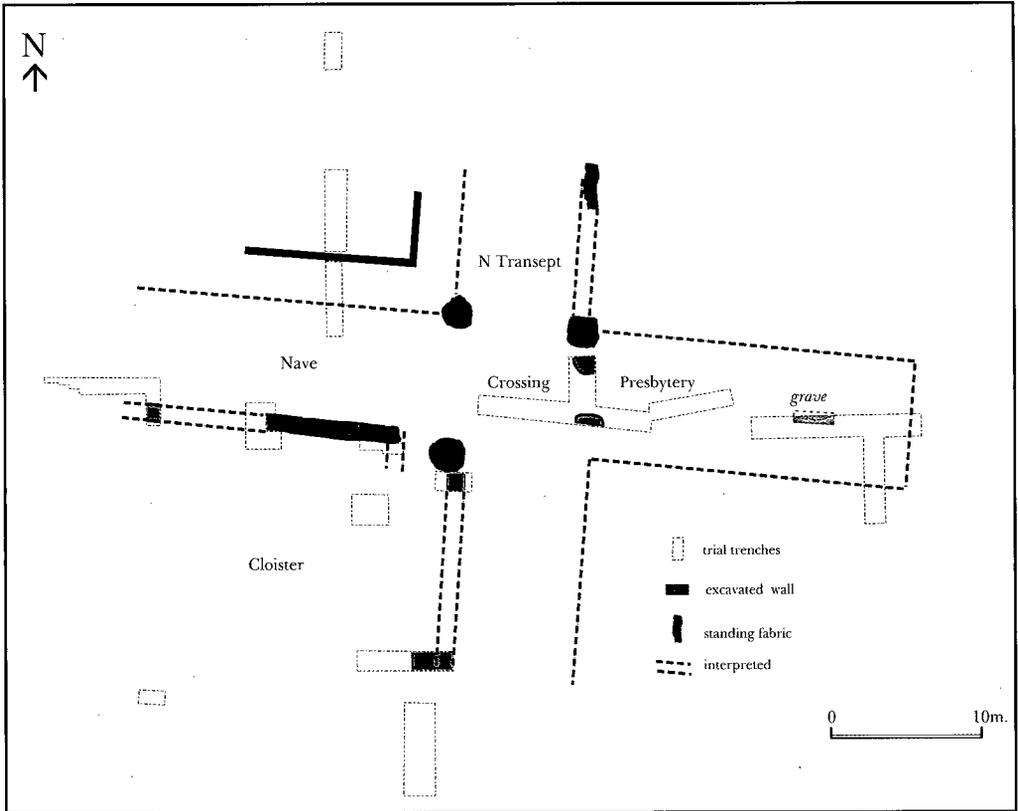


FIG. 59 – Blythburgh Priory: interpretation of survey and excavation.

The basic core fabric of the entire structure is flint set in mortar; however there is a clear distinction between the main length of walling, which is fair-faced with coursed flint work, and the three pier remains which all have surviving elements of ashlar facing (using a fine-grained cream-white limestone which is of French *Caen* type). On the two shorter piers fragments of architectural detailing are visible: straight chamfers to the plinths and roll mouldings to colonette bases; these indicate a thirteenth century date. The flint facing surviving on the south face of the main east-west wall is distinctive; it is laid in strongly coursed horizontal bands with some areas where the flints are pitched at a diagonal. No architectural detailing survives above ground, but the built form of the wall is closely paralleled throughout the region and is typical of an eleventh to late twelfth century date. The wall has no clear quoins or regularised terminal at the east end (adjacent to the pier), but it appears that a fragment of wall returns south at this end. However, at the western end there are quoins and the internal splay of a reveal defining the eastern jamb of a doorway. Apart from putlog holes the wall face is plain: there are no window openings or signs of blockings, indicating that it has always been blind.

The three piers are linked by fabric type and are clearly related geometrically, capable of forming three corners of a square. The immediately apparent anomaly is that the main east-west wall and the adjacent pier are not aligned: the pier is offset to the south, about 1.5m from the line of the walling. The archaeological analysis of the fabrics, however, resolves this problem because it clearly indicates that these two elements are of different phases, the wall probably twelfth and the piers thirteenth-century.

The structural survival above ground, therefore, supports an interpretation of a primary phase of a twelfth-century church (of which only a part of the south wall of the nave survives, without any indication of a western end); and a substantial rebuilding in the thirteenth century replacing the pre-existing east end. This new work consisted of a crossing tower (of which only the three piers survive above ground but are sufficient to show that it was significantly wider than the early nave), transepts to north and south (of which fragments of one wall survive to the north), and a presbytery to the east (of which nothing survives above ground).

The first stage of evaluation work carried out by Time Team involved a geophysical survey; however there were significant restrictions in the areas available because of the remaining undergrowth and scattered stone debris. Although these were not the only areas examined, in practice there were only two main areas with sufficient contiguous open space with potential for successful results. These were south of the nave wall and in a paddock some distance to the east of the crossing. In both locations positive linear anomalies were identified. In addition to trial trenching responding to the geophysics, other trenches were opened to the west of the nave wall to try and locate the west end of the church; to the north of the nave wall to try and locate the north nave wall and investigate lengths of narrow walling which might be survivals of a claustral range on the north flank of the church; and immediately to the east of the crossing, within the area of the presbytery.

In terms of providing definitive evidence which would help to resolve the layout and history of the priory, the product of the investigation was somewhat equivocal. The main results are given in abbreviated form: a west end to the nave was not located. To the north of the church survival was poor and there was no clear evidence for or against a claustral range, but the length of narrow wall has the potential to be a north aisle to the nave. Immediately east of the crossing, within the presbytery, there was evidence for the demolition by the phase 2 crossing of a north-south wall, which may represent the phase 1 church east end, but no structural remains of an east end for the phase 2 church were seen. In a trench in the paddock further to the east, to test the geophysical anomaly, a probable wall-robbing trench running north-south some 20m east of the crossing was investigated; and in the area between this and the crossing a coffined burial laid out on the axis of the church was excavated. To the south of the nave a trench testing the geophysics anomaly found a north-south wall footing aligned to the north of the south-west crossing pier. A burial (not shown on the plan) excavated near the south nave wall predated any surviving building remains and was subsequently carbon dated to the seventh to eighth centuries. A group of mediaeval glazed floor tiles was found *in situ* in the nave.

Despite the small scale of the investigation it seems probable that sufficient was uncovered to allow significant new interpretation: the site was in use for burial at least in the Middle-Saxon period, which may indicate that this, rather than that of the parish church, is the site of the Saxon minster. The subsequent development as a priory church was in two distinct phases, the second a grand embellishment. The claustral range was probably on the south, the excavated wall footing was well located for the east wall of a cloister, and the evidence of a blind south nave wall is highly consistent with the existence of a cloister on this side (this conclusion is contrary to the opinions expressed by the excavators and the archive report). The second phase priory church had a chancel about 20m long with burials within it. The excavated evidence for this is not conclusive, both because evaluation work is inevitably based on small trenches, but also because work was not properly concluded as a result of time constraints imposed by the sponsors; however, the size and orientation of the geophysical anomaly were entirely consistent with a building layout east of the crossing, and the excavated evidence was consistent with a wall-robbing trench. Circumstantial evidence from the burial supports this view: the form of the burial was notable for its quality, and such evidence as is

available from a small trench was that it lies alone, i.e. it lies within a building, not in a compact group as would be expected with burials in a graveyard close to, but outside, the chancel of a priory church (this conclusion too is contrary to that drawn by the excavators).

The experience of working with a media-sponsored project was informative. The main points that became apparent were that the technical quality of the work carried out by the archaeological contractors who formed the bulk of the digging team was good, but there were too few fully trained digging staff. The availability of specialist services such as geophysics on call was a wonderful resource that should be available to all excavations of this type. The entire exercise confirmed the received opinion that the project strategy in such programmes is led by the desire to tell a story. This is, of course, understandable and desirable in those cases where the story is simple, the options for trench location wide ranging, and the proportion of the project impact on the total site area is small. On a compact site such as this, however, with limited opportunities for trench location, a potentially long, complex and varied occupation, and generally difficult archaeological conditions, a time-limited evaluation is inappropriate. It was certainly the case at Blythburgh that the formula of three days on site, the touchstone of the Time Team, was an absolute reality; and in my opinion it led to unsatisfactory archaeology on the closing day and a general rush to form interpretations in order to proceed to the next question to be answered.

24 June. Charles Tracy

Fressingfield and Laxfield, churches and gildhalls

Fressingfield, Church of St Peter and St Paul (by kind permission of the Revd Susan Loxton). The fabric of Fressingfield church reveals nothing earlier than *c.* 1300 because a new church was established here in the high Middle Ages, in place of an earlier building located on the manorial lands of Chippenhall, about half a mile to the east.² Chippenhall manor belonged to the abbot of Bury St Edmunds, but the church's new site was closer to the free lands in the centre of the village, where the jurisdiction of the monastery was less secure. Incomes were higher hereabouts, due to the predominance of freemen, and Fressingfield was a local hub for the wool trade. Most important for the parish church was its consequent exemption from mortmain, which in the old location had filled the coffers of the papacy instead of those of the king.

The west tower and the chancel are early-fourteenth-century, but there is now nothing of this date in the nave, except for the inserted Decorated window at the west end of the south aisle and the door to the tower. The present nave is late-fourteenth to early-fifteenth-century. It makes a fine ensemble with its handsome octagonal arcades, distinctive Perpendicular window tracery, now mostly renewed, tall clerestory, crowned with attractive coloured brick voussours, and a hammer-beam roof of after 1487.³ The chancel has never had a south aisle.

The rebuilding of the nave was followed soon after by the erection of the double-storied south porch, said to have been commissioned by Katherine de la Pole (*née* Stafford), who had married Michael de la Pole, second duke of Suffolk before 1361 (Fig. 60).⁴ Michael's mother was Katherine Wingfield, the heiress who married the first Michael de la Pole, who had been a native of Hull. The latter became first duke of Suffolk in 1385. By tradition the porch commemorates the second duke, who died at Harfleur of dysentery in 1415, as well as his son, a third Michael, who was killed a month later at Agincourt.⁵ The monument combines both familial and political statements. The now illegible shield impaling the arms of Wingfield and de la Pole, held by an angel over the apex of the porch entrance, commemorates the dynastic marriage. Consonant with the bold display of two Lancastrian roses above the entrance, the complementary headstops on each side of the arch soffit may be intended as portraits of Henry V and Queen Katherine. The carved 'sprays' in the spandrels above are debatable. It



FIG. 60 – Fressingfield Church: view of south porch
(*photo: author*).



FIG. 61 – Fressingfield Church: inserted arcade at
north-west end of chancel (*photo: author*).

has been suggested that they represent the palm branches of Victory, in commemoration of the battle of Agincourt.⁶ Mortlock speculated that they are seventeenth or eighteenth-century additions.⁷ However, archaeologically, it is difficult to see how such an addition could have been effected without reconstructing the entire façade. It is a pity that within the porch the central ceiling boss, with its carving of the Assumption of the Virgin and the arms of Bury abbey, is so badly eroded.

There are good early-fourteenth-century carvings on the intrados of the chancel east window. In the nave, on the unstained single hammer-beam roof, the angels formerly attached to the hammers have all been removed, except for two, which are perched incongruously at the south-west end on collar beams. A great rarity is the battlemented wooden block fixed to the apex of the nave's south-east arch. This was the means by which a pulley was employed to raise and lower a circular rowell light before the rood group above the chancel screen. Another unusual feature is the hole drilled vertically through the upper part of the chancel arch, by means of which a rope was attached to the sanctus bell. The latter's elegant Perpendicular campanile crowns the eastern end of the nave roof ridge. The rope would have been operated from the rood loft, which would have constituted an excellent viewing platform from which to observe the progress of the mass in the chancel.

There is will evidence of *c.* 1511 for the 'newe bilding of an ile on the north side of the chancel 10 mark; and to the building of S. Margarets Chapel 20 mark'.⁸ There are also records of legacies for the benefit of the chapel up to sixty years earlier. The northern two-bay extension of the chancel, now occupied by the vestry and organ, has traditionally been assigned to the gild chapel of St Margaret of Antioch. However, there is no archaeological evidence for this feature being secondary. It appears to be integral with the early-fourteenth-

century chancel, and provides evidence of a former piscina at its north-east end, an early roof, impressive Y-tracery window and a nicely moulded priest's doorway.⁹ At its north-west end there is a very large entrance arch from the chancel into the chapel space, quite out of proportion with the rest of the chancel architecture (Fig. 61). This is clearly a secondary feature. From at least the 1420s the Brewes family held the manor of Fressingfield, based at Whittingham Hall. In 1793 Edward Gillingwater, the compiler of some notes on the church, maintained that this space was used as the Brewes chantry chapel. Certainly, there are several of their coats of arms on shields attached to the roof corbels.¹⁰ At the same time, on the south side of the sanctuary, there is an engraved brass commemorating Sir William Brewes (d. 1489), and his wife.¹¹

If it is hard to give credence to there having been, at any time, any 'neue bilding' in the north chancel, a substantial secondary renovation is clearly evident. The inserted arch must have been very costly to construct and seems to suggest a change in function from a former chapel, dedicated to a saint or used as a family chantry. The date of its construction is difficult to assess: its limestone and chalk mouldings recall those on the late-fourteenth-century nave arcade, yet the structure is clearly much later, and it protrudes beyond the wall plane as if it was re-used from elsewhere.

The 'neue bilding of an isle' probably refers to the reincarnation of this privileged space. It could have been a grand flourish on the part of the parish to rededicate a former altar, or to create a new chapel to St Margaret to coincide with the opening of the new gildhall. Had the chapel in the north-west chancel continued as a Brewes family chantry, there would have been no reason to insert an impressive entrance from the chancel, given the pre-existence of a handsome fourteenth-century stone entrance way from the north nave aisle. On the other hand, one cannot overlook that William Brewes was buried in a coveted location on the south side of the high altar. On present evidence, therefore, we do not know to what purpose the north chancel chapel was historically dedicated. Yet the fact of William Brewes having been buried elsewhere than within the confines of his putative family chantry, as well as the opening up of the chancel arch at much the same time, could support a case for the north chancel chapel having become, by the end of the fifteenth century, a newly-colonised location for the parochial gild chapel.

The design of the unstained and unvarnished Fressingfield nave benching is superb, with its unusual fictive window leading inscribed between the tracery mullions of the asymmetrical bench-ends. Another rare feature is the moulded kerb into which the benches are framed. Perhaps the most original feature is the carved seat backs at the west end with their so-called 'Dedication' and 'Passion' carvings. The unaffected veracity of both the figurative and decorative carving is impressive. Whereas several sets of East Anglian benching feature ornamented terminal seat backs, as at Woolpit, Gazeley and Ilketshall St Andrew, the Passion and heraldic content at Fressingfield seems to be unique.¹² At Ashmanhaugh in east Norfolk there is a seat back displaying ten shields, five with the Wounds of Christ and the date 1531.¹³

Finally, at Fressingfield, there is an unidentified merchant's or craftsman's mark on a bench-end at the west end of the south aisle. On the front of more than one bench-end is a mutilated figure, supposedly of a wolf, supposedly sitting in front of the seated figure of St Edmund. However, the animal turns out to have cloven feet! This locally and nationally popular saint was reportedly slain at Hoxne, about six miles away. It has often been suggested that the letters AP flanking the bench-end composition of the Chalice and Host at the west end of the north aisle, refer to Alice de la Pole (d. 1475), wife of the third earl of Suffolk. If this were so, it would represent a useful cut-off date for this set of benching.¹⁴ It is not impossible that Alice donated these exceptionally fine benches in memory of her father-in-law and brother-in-law.

Laxfield, All Saints' Church (by kind permission of Laxfield PCC). The chancel must have been in a ruinous state by the early nineteenth century, and was replaced in white brick on the south and east sides in a design that is little more than utilitarian. The north wall is made up of assorted medieval stonework, which appears to have been imported from another site. Evidence for a former fourteenth-century church can be adduced from the windows and a blocked doorway on the north elevation of the nave.

On the exterior, the most impressive feature is the monumental tower with its lavish freestone facings. The obvious comparison is with that at Eye, although Laxfield's probably predates it by a decade or so. The height is just over 98ft, as compared to that at Eye, at just over 100ft. Although the priory of Eye held the advowson here, it seems that it was mainly the generosity of the Wingfield and Fitz-Lewis families that funded this component. The tower cannot have been started before 1457, by which date Sir John Wingfield of Letheringham (1428–81), Laxfield's lord of the manor, is thought to have married Elizabeth Fitzlewis. The parapet carries the arms of Wingfield and Fitzlewis impaled. The church was not a Wingfield advowson, and neither did the family reside in the parish. It belonged to the priory of Eye. Notwithstanding, the Letheringham Wingfields seem to have been claiming this costly project as their own. The mutilated, formerly two-storey, south porch is of about the same date.

As well as boasting one of the most impressive west towers in the county, Laxfield quite possibly has the widest nave (36ft). Munro Cautley believed that in the fifteenth century former fourteenth-century nave aisles were subsumed into the present spacious nave.¹⁵ By contrast, Mortlock states that the nave was always aisleless, and that other naves of a similar width can be found in East Anglia.¹⁶ The late-fifteenth-century trussed rafter roof is an admirable piece of structural joinery, with principal and sub-principal trusses, long almost straight braces, and scissor bracing at collar level. A coving hides the hammer beams behind.

Although the nave offers a somewhat bleak appearance, it is endowed with much of interest. There is a banner-stave locker at the south-west end (77ins x 12½ins), and an excellent early-seventeenth-century pulpit, originally part of a three-decker, with its reading desk now free-standing, both in a style similar to that at Dennington. At the north-west end, behind an interesting bank of tiered seating for children, is a gablet from an unusually placed piscina. The seven-sacraments font at the west end is set on a very fine 'alternatingly two- and three-step plinth, with a third step in the shape of a Maltese cross'.¹⁷ Regrettably the eight sculptured scenes have been horribly mutilated (although William Dowsing was brought up in Laxfield, he lived mainly in south Suffolk and seems to have been personally responsible for only a few, but regrettable, minor iconoclastic defacements in his mother church).¹⁸ Laxfield's font stands out as one of the best in the county, alongside those at Cratfield, Badingham, Great Glemham, Denston and Westhall.

The church has an interesting collection of late-medieval-type congregational benching. It is typical in form and decoration of a late-fifteenth-century Suffolk type, such as that at nearby Dennington. Some of it has been incorporated into a substantial swathe of early-nineteenth-century box pews, which carry much Renaissance-type decorative carving of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century date. There are also at least two more later bench-end patterns in the church.

The quasi-rebus of a pair of wings, followed in black-figure uncials by the letters 'feld', along with another displaying a prominent letter W on a distinctly un-Gothic-like shield, and a third, with the W surmounted by a spray of meadow flowers, (Fig. 62) stamp a Wingfield family identity on to the earliest group of benches at the back of the nave, already mentioned, which date to the early sixteenth century. There are several unrelated, and probably mid-century, Renaissance refugee panels amongst the Laxfield furniture. They also display pairs of wings and the letter W. Their provenance is likely to be secular, and from a lost Wingfield house. But which one? This later material may have come from Sir Anthony Wingfield's



FIG. 62 – Laxfield Church: detail of Wingfield quasi-rebus on an early 16th-century bench end (photo: author).

‘Godwins’ mansion in the parish of Hoo, in which he was living in 1605. This was demolished by his nephew, probably about 1630.¹⁹

Finally, the chancel screen at Laxfield is easily overlooked on account of its unattractive and restored condition (Fig. 63). Its design, however, is of some architectural merit, being of early-Perpendicular character, with tall side bays with transitional-type stanchions, and crocketed ogee-arched tracery heads and paired lights, surmounted by quatrefoils in the spandrels. The latter are similar to those at Somerleyton and Blundeston, as well as the first phase of the fifteenth-century choir stalls at Norwich Cathedral, of *c.* 1420.²⁰

The Fressingfield and Laxfield gildhalls. A village ‘cherchehouse’ was principally used to accommodate the annual gild feast, but there were also council meetings and occasional funeral wakes and fund-raising ‘ales’.²¹ In recent discussions about the origins of the late-medieval parochial gildhalls, their appearance on the scene is usually attributed to the increasing popularity of preaching in church. It is argued that the large congregations that the preachers attracted to their lively, but lengthy, sermons necessitated the installation of nave pews.²² With this new furniture replacing a formerly open nave, the traditional holding of church ales in the nave, and other social gatherings, would no longer have been possible.

Whether it was to make way for this renaissance in preaching, or pressure from the clergy and churchwardens to banish the long-standing tradition of feasting and socialising in church as a means of fund-raising, a predisposition had been created which was to have important consequences. The need to continue the long-standing communal practice of holding church ales is to be expected, as it was a vital means of bolstering both parish and gild coffers.²³ In a deed dated 1509 it is stated that the new gildhall at Fressingfield was intended for the use of the church wardens and parishioners ‘for the more reverens of God and avoydyng of etynge and drynkyng and other abusions in the church ... and for the keyping of al churchales,



FIG. 63 – Laxfield Church: chancel screen (*photo: author*).

Gildes, yerdayes, buryngges and other drynkngges necessary to the profyete of the seid church or p[ar]isshe' (Fig. 64).²⁴ It is curious that these concerns were still in the minds of the Fressingfield parishioners as late as this, given that the extant nave benching must have been put in place during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Moreover, there exists some documentary evidence for a predecessor to the present gildhall, although there is no absolute certainty of its precise location. An early-sixteenth-century deed suggests that another reason for the construction of a new gildhall was the inconvenience of the distance between the church and 'le olde Gildhall'.²⁵ Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legal evidence has been cited to suggest that the location of the latter was that of Bridge Cottage, near the vicarage.²⁶ Therefore it is not clear why the parish should have needed a new gildhall at this juncture, unless, as is likely, its predecessor was no longer big enough.

At Laxfield a gild of St Mary was set up in 1452. Nine years later, the lord of the manor of Laxfield Rectory granted a parcel of land and one house, called 'le Cherchehou' to four trustees.²⁷ By 1462 the gild was sufficiently organised to be able to support its own chaplain, and by the year 1480 it had built a dedicated chapel. This would presumably have been located somewhere within the church, but no trace of it remains. The first gildhall was erected at this time. The 90-degree southwards bend in the highway, to the west of the extant gildhall, probably delineates the limit of the medieval churchyard which had forced this abrupt diversion. The building which sits on the land beyond it, now a public house, could very easily occupy the footprint of the earlier gildhall.²⁸ Between 1452 and the 1530s parishioners made various bequests to the gild at Laxfield. These ranged from money, plots of land and houses, to the gift of a cow by William Blynde in 1503. A cooking pot was bequeathed in 1472.²⁹ The old gildhall was superseded by the present one, on the south side of the highway, around 1520.

The gild fraternity's annual feast would have been held in an impressive assembly chamber on the first floor, about forty feet in length, under an open roof. Since the Reformation,



FIG. 64 – Fressingfield: view of north side of Gildhall (*photo: author*).

because gildhalls have so often suffered the indignity of conversion to schools, poor houses and other public purposes, these formal rooms have rarely survived in their original state.³⁰

At Fressingfield the original eight- or possibly nine-bay frontage is now reduced to seven. It exceeded one hundred feet in length. It was probably jettied on three sides, but plain at the back. The front resembles neighbouring Laxfield quite closely, with the visible timber frame of the façade with its inserted brick nogging. It has three chimney-stacks, all later insertions. Internally, the spaces have been subdivided, but at the east end there seem to have been four-bay rooms on both the ground and first floors, approachable from the principal entrance on the south side, now blocked.³¹ The ceremonial upper room would have been open to the roof. In the document dated 20 February 1509, the ‘gildhall’ was described as newly built, making it some ten years earlier than that at Laxfield. The gild’s dedication is emphasised by the much abraded wooden carving of St Margaret of Antioch on the half-corner post at the south-east end. Adjoining it to the east is another niche, which almost certainly contained the figure of an abbot of Bury St Edmunds.

At Laxfield, the ‘show’ front is, again, close-studded, with herringbone brick-nogging within the timber framing, although the bricks are laid differently.³² Much of the former layout of the interior room spaces, which have also been subdivided, can be recognised from an inspection of the building (Figs 65, 66). The ground floor consisted of three different areas, the most important occupying the first four easterly bays. Originally it would have had mullioned windows, an oriel at the end, and a window in the east wall, occupying almost the entire width of the building. It was accessed *via* an entrance door, since blocked, in the fourth bay from the east, with a corresponding entrance on the south side. The narrow adjoining bay is thought to have been used for storage, but it is possible that most of it was occupied by a smoke box enveloping an open hearth, to heat the hall. The extant chimney-stack and attic



FIG. 65 – Laxfield: view of north side of Gildhall (photo: author).

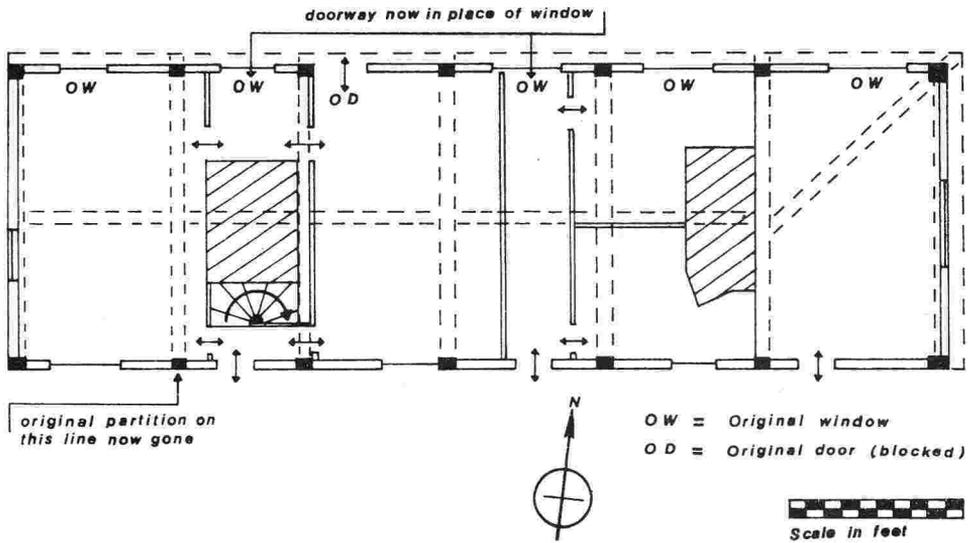


FIG. 66 – Laxfield: ground plan of Gildhall (reproduced by kind permission of Adrian G.H. Colman).

are secondary. The room at the west end may have contained the kitchen, although it is more likely that this was located in a separate building.

On the first floor the original west window has been exposed. This obviates the mooted possibility of any kitchen extension at this end of the building. Further east, what was probably the feasting chamber occupied the five terminal bays under an open roof. This spacious room boasted a mullioned window on the north side, the evidence for which is still preserved on the inside. Apart from the windows mentioned in the ground-floor hall, the

others are later in date. The first floor was reached by an internal staircase rising from the south side of the small penultimate bay at the west end. The roof is of the characteristic queen-post construction, typically found in late-medieval Suffolk north of the Gipping divide. Neighbouring examples can be found in the Laxfield locality, as well as in the Fressingfield gildhall, Church Farm, Fressingfield, and Wingfield College.

As at Fressingfield, Laxfield's chimneys are secondary, public buildings at that time not normally being provided with integral heating. For gild gatherings and council meetings, braziers could have been employed. In both gildhalls it is apparent that over half of the building was given up to the provision of the two major assembly rooms for formal gild business. At Laxfield, had a gild priest habitually occupied the gildhall, his quarters might have been on the first floor in the surviving west windowed room at the head of the stairs.

5 July. Clive Paine

Stradishall and Boxted

Stradishall, St Margaret's Church (by kind permission of the Revd Stephen Abbott). A church with thirty acres was recorded in the Domesday Book. The Norman chancel was heightened and lengthened *c.* 1250 in the Early English period. The height of the earlier walls is shown by a horizontal 'scar' along both sides. The chancel arch, a blocked lancet on the north side, the piscina and south door are all Early English. The border of red trailing vine scroll decoration on the north and the associated drapery on the south wall, are probably part of the same work.

In the early fourteenth century the two easternmost windows and the east widow were replaced in the Decorated style. The east window is of exceptional quality and has reticulated tracery with moulded mullions and inner and outer hood moulds.

The north aisle and tower were added to the nave *c.* 1300. In the aisle there are Decorated east and north-west windows and a north doorway. The north-east window is Perpendicular, but set in the earlier Decorated window opening. The tower has a Decorated tower-arch and belfry windows. At the same time the nave was widened 3½ feet to the south. The south-west corner of this outer wall can be seen at the junction of the west wall of the nave and south aisle. The south-eastern corner is now hidden by the later rood stair turret. This widening of the nave accounts for the fact that the ridge of the nave roof is off-centre, to the right, from the apexes of the east window, chancel arch and tower arch, which are all in line.

The south aisle was added to the widened nave *c.* 1350. Although both arcades have octagonal piers, the capitals, bases and arches are different. The earlier north arches are pointed and the later south arches are segmental. The south aisle is 2½ feet wider than the north. The doorway is Decorated and the three iron strap hinges with floriated ends on the door are original.

The wooden porch is also fourteenth-century, but most timbers have been replaced, except for the head of the outer arch.

In the late Perpendicular period the nave walls were heightened with six clerestory windows and spanned by a new low-cambered roof with tie-beams. The height of the earlier nave walls can be seen above the clerestory window sills. The outline of the earlier higher roof can be seen outside on the east wall of the tower.

The capitals of the chancel arch were cut back to insert the rood screen, the fixings of which can be seen on either side. Parts of the tracery from the upper part of the screen, or loft, are in a frame on the north pier. Other sections were used in 1857–58 as window surrounds at the rectory.

Both sections of the base of the screen have elevation squints, although those on the north side are masked by 1857–58 tracery. On the south pier is a mass of graffiti including a

consecration cross for the screen, smaller crosses, symbols and names.

The external red-brick stair turret was built on the south side in the angle of the chancel and aisle. The chancel arch has a groove either for a tympanum associated with the rood or, in the Elizabethan period, to frame the royal arms and texts.

The font is late Decorated with quatrefoils and transomed windows on the stem. The bowl has ogee two-light windows, flowers and quatrefoils. David Davy's plan of 1831 shows the font under the western arch on the north side. On the wall above is a seventeenth-century painted text from St John, chapter 3, verses 4 and 5, recording the words of Jesus about the necessity of baptism. During the 1857–58 restoration other texts blocks and fresco paintings including St Margaret, the patron saint, were discovered and removed. There are fragments of a St Christopher to the right of the north door. The head, hand and staff of Christopher and the head of the infant Jesus can still be seen.

The royal arms over the tower arch have recently been restored. They are dated 1788, but the heraldry and motto show them to be for James I. The pulpit with its coved stem is late Stuart. Several balusters from a seventeenth-century communion rail have been reused on the front of the choir stalls. In 1831 Davy described rails around three sides of the communion table. No doubt they were removed or altered in 1857–58.

At the east end of the north aisle is a box pew. Below the east window is a blocked door giving access to the pew, which had an outer and an inner door. The pew was for Stradishall Place and there is still a footpath through the churchyard linking the two.

The church was restored by Robert Last, builder and surveyor of Clare, in 1857–58. The tower arch was opened up. All the box pews, except that in the north aisle, were replaced with benches. The gallery was removed and the font moved to its present position. The six clerestory windows were all renewed with Bath stone copies of the originals. Two new south windows in the aisle were paid for by the churchwardens. The pre-Reformation stone altar *mensa* was discovered under the aisle floor and moved to its present position on the communion table. The porch was restored and re-roofed.

The north aisle was restored and re-roofed by Detmar Blow in 1914. This work was paid for, as a tablet records, by Thomas Bower of Stradishall Place in memory of his wife Mary Ann (d. 1908) and their two sons Richard and Thomas who both died in 1911.

There are four monuments in the chancel by de Carle of Bury St Edmunds, for members of the Ranger family of Stradishall Place. Those on the north are for William (d. 1830) and Alice his wife (d. 1822); on the south William (d. 1845), Frances his wife (d. 1835) and their daughters Martha (d. 1838) and Maria (d. 1840).

Outside, on the south chancel wall, is a monument to Joseph Cook (d. 1739 aged 25) and his sister Sarah (d. 1740 aged 20) 'leaving to their afflicted parents one consolation; the remembrance of their innocent lives'.

Boxted, Church of All Saints (by kind permission of the Revd Patrick Prigg). See the Institute's *Proceedings*, 1983.

19 September. Jane Allen and Edward Martin
Orford Church and Castle

Orford, St Bartholomew's Church (by kind permission of the Revd David Murdoch). For this visit to Orford church, members resolutely turned their backs on the architectural glories of the Romanesque ruined chancel and fourteenth-century Decorated nave to concentrate on the later stages of the church's history – the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Revd Josiah Alsop (rector 1700–22), finding the twelfth-century chancel in a dilapidated state, walled it off. The space occupied by the aisles was transformed, first into a

'preaching box' in emulation of Wren's City churches³³ and then, nearly 200 years later, under the guidance of the Revd Edward Scott (rector 1877–1901), it assumed its present-day appearance, light and uncluttered but dominated by a newly-inserted rood screen. The period in question coincided for the most part with the ownership of the Sudbourne estate by members of the Seymour Conway family (the first four Marquises of Hertford) and then Sir Richard Wallace.³⁴

The tour started in the churchyard to see the graves of the family of the Revd John Maynard (rector 1844–77) and the railed area containing the graves of members of the Scott family, including the rector's brother, Sir John Murray Scott, who was secretary to Sir Richard Wallace.



FIG. 67 – Members of the Institute at Orford Rectory, 23 June 1898 (*editor's collection*).

Next (by permission of Mr and Mrs Tim Fargher) the group went into the grounds of the Old Rectory, rebuilt in white brick to the design of the architect Matthew Hastings in 1832 and altered in 1878 by Frederick Barnes of Ipswich for Edward Scott (Fig. 67). The door furniture (a bell pull and door knob) is identical to some at Hertford House in Manchester Square in London which now houses the Wallace Collection.

Back at the church, helped by the notes of David Elisha Davy's four visits between 1808 and 1842, his plan made in 1832 and a painting of the north-east end of the interior by Emmeline Rope (1885),³⁵ it was possible to identify a number of features remaining from the eighteenth-century reordering – the Corporation pew erected in 1712 during the reign of Queen Anne, but bearing the arms of William and Mary; paintings of Moses and Aaron which, according to the benefaction boards (which also remain) cost £14, and, with Commandment, Creed and Lord's Prayer boards, had been fixed above the altar; and a board dated 1772 from the free-standing organ gallery which stood in front of the tower arch at the west end.

A floor slab and wall memorial by the north door commemorated the Revd John Connor, curate for forty-two years from 1787 to 1830, then rector for just one year before his death in 1831, said by Davy to be an illegitimate son of the first Marquis of Hertford, one of whose legitimate sons, the Hon. Edward Seymour Conway, had been rector from 1781 to 1784.

The attraction of the Sudbourne estate, which was purchased in 1754 by the Seymour

Conways, who also owned estates in Warwickshire, Cornwall and Antrim, was of course that Orford was a 'rotten borough' returning two MPs. After the 1832 Reform Act the property retained its appeal because it was a fine sporting estate where the first three Marquises entertained royalty and friends from the world of politics – the Prince Regent, Wellington, Castlereagh, and Peel were all regular visitors. The fourth Marquis of Hertford, who had lived in Paris for most of his life, died in 1870 without a legitimate son, leaving all his money and unentailed property to his natural son, Richard Wallace. Wallace purchased the Sudbourne estate from the fifth Marquis, a second cousin of his father. He moved the most important items in his father's art collection from Paris to Hertford House and lived the life of an English gentleman at Sudbourne and in Lisburn, County Antrim.

Wallace's secretary, John Murray Scott, must have used his influence with his employer to secure the living of Sudbourne with Orford for his clergyman brother, Edward. In 1881 Wallace commissioned the leading architect G.E. Street to make plans for the restoration of Orford church. Street's scheme involved reincorporating the twelfth-century chancel into the church and building a new west tower to replace the one which had fallen in 1830. Those plans, now in the RIBA Library Drawings Collection, were not carried out. In 1884 Sir Richard Wallace sold the Sudbourne estate. He died in 1890, but John Murray Scott continued in Lady Wallace's employment and his mother and sisters became her close friends. Edward Scott remained as rector at St Bartholomew's, Orford.

In 1892 it was discovered that the tie beams in the nave roof were in a dangerous and dilapidated state. The north and central aisles were boarded off and all services held in the south aisle.³⁶ A church restoration committee was formed and application made to the Incorporated Church Building Society for a grant. The minute book of the committee and the files of the ICBS (in Lambeth Palace Library) give a detailed picture of the restoration project.

After consultation with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the architect chosen for the restoration was J.T. Micklethwaite (who later became surveyor to Westminster Abbey). Orford is his only church restoration project in Suffolk, though he did design the reredos in St Mary le Tower in Ipswich. The builders were Cornish and Gaymer of North Walsham who carried out the work in two phases. The church was re-roofed and restored to the original high pitch of the fourteenth-century roof. The east wall was rebuilt and buttresses inserted through the most westerly of the ruined Norman piers outside. All the pews (apart from a few in the south east chapel) and the organ gallery were removed and the north clerestory windows unblocked. Next, the south aisle and porch were restored. The main structural work was completed in 1900. The greatest innovation was the insertion of a rood screen across the entire width of the building to create a new, artificial division between 'nave' and 'chancel'.

On the completion of the work Edward Scott resigned in 1901 and moved to the south coast. He had introduced some new furnishings (a large brass lectern and altar cross and candlesticks) before the restoration began, but many more fixtures and fittings were donated (mainly by members of the Scott family). Most are still in use, and can be identified from the catalogues of the firm of Jones & Willis, manufacturers of church furnishings, of Birmingham. The elaborate oak carved rood screen, designed by Sydney Tugwell of Bournemouth and carved by Lawrence Turner, replacing a plainer one, was given by his widow as a memorial to Edward Scott who died in 1917.

John Murray Scott inherited an enormous amount of money and property from Lady Wallace when she died in 1897, plus furniture and *objets d'art* which had not been earmarked by Sir Richard Wallace for eventual public display in Hertford House. In spite of his stupendous fortune, John Murray Scott's only gift to Orford church was a pair of oak standard candlesticks.

Another of Edward Scott's brothers, Malcolm, had, in 1898, married Bessie Maynard, granddaughter of the Revd John Maynard. Members of the Maynard family remained in Orford until the 1960s and they, too, made a great contribution to the church restoration. Their gifts included the stained glass in the east window, the Old Master paintings and funds towards the rebuilding of the tower. Bessie Scott lived to be 103 and in 1975 was the last member of the Scott family to be buried in the family grave plot. Her husband was a generous benefactor of the church. Amongst many other things he paid for a new west door, and financed an archaeological investigation at the exterior of the east end of the church by F.H. Fairweather in 1930, and the consolidation of the Romanesque ruins.

Orford Castle (English Heritage). In 1165 King Henry II's officials began the building of the splendid new royal castle at Orford, a project that we know was achieved by 1173 at a total cost of £1413 9s 2d.³⁷ Except possibly for a shadowy castle in Ipswich that was fought over in 1153 by King Stephen and Hugh Bigod, earl of Norfolk, this was the first royal castle in Suffolk.³⁸ There is no direct statement about the reason for the building of the castle or the choice of Orford as the site. There is an assumption that it was to be both a defence against invaders from the Continent and a counterbalance to the power of the king's rebellious subject, Earl Hugh Bigod, who had castles at Bungay and Framlingham. Unlike the long established and large port at Ipswich, Orford must then have been both new and small. *Orefort* is first mentioned in 1137/8, when King Stephen granted its market to Eye Priory in a charter confirming to the monks all their possessions.³⁹ The wording is unclear as to whether this was an original gift made by Robert Malet when he founded the priory in the late eleventh century, or a more recent gift made by Stephen himself when he was lord of Eye c. 1113–39.

What survives of the castle is the lofty stone keep, which is circular with three projecting rectangular turrets and a forebuilding – a plan form that was both new, complex and a sign of sophisticated planning.⁴⁰ Drawings and prints from Tudor times onwards however indicate that this keep was surrounded by a substantial masonry wall with turrets. The last part of this wall fell in 1841, but recent earthwork surveys and trial trenching have confirmed its presence and dimensions.⁴¹ This has revealed that Orford Castle was also equipped with a curtain wall with mural turrets, making it the first castle of this innovative type in England, predating Dover Castle, which has previously been credited as the first in England. This new style of fortification was copied by the Bigods when they rebuilt Framlingham Castle in the 1190s.

A curiosity of the plan is that the entrance to the castle faces south-west, away from the large market place, church and port that seem to have been developed in tandem with the castle. The entrance instead points in the direction of Gedgrave and a dead-end surrounded by marsh and water. To go further one would have had to make a 180-degree turn outside the entrance to head westward to the quays of the port or to access the road that leads northwards out of the town. In view of the other aspects of innovative design and planning at Orford, this is a puzzle.

*Clive Paine,
Hon. Excursions Secretary*

NOTES

- 1 Birch 1894, 313.
- 2 The scholarly church guide, by the Revd W.R. Raven-Hart, FSA (Raven-Hart 1912), is still essential reading for a history and description of the church as it was nearly 100 years ago. He was rector from 1906 to 1920.
- 3 'I be set on to the reparacon of the ley (? timber) roof of the church of Fressingfield when they repair it new 13s 4d.' From the will of Robert Fox, which was proved in 1487: NRO, NCC, 330A Caston: Raven-Hart 1912, 27.

- 4 The south side of the nave, in which the porch was most closely detailed, was drawn by Henry Davy in 1818. See BL, Add. MS 19178, David Elisha Davy's Suffolk Collections, vol. III, fol. 200.
- 5 Scarfe 1986, 157. The north porch is also medieval.
- 6 Raven-Hart 1912, 20.
- 7 Mortlock 2009, 186.
- 8 Raven-Hart 1912, 15. A mark was 13s 4d.
- 9 My thanks to Bob Carr for his thoughts on the architecture.
- 10 Bedingfeld 1863, 323–24.
- 11 See the pen and ink drawings of the Brewes brasses in BL, Add. MS 19178, fol. 201.
- 12 Illustrations of Gazeley and Ilketshall St Andrew in Munro Cautley 1937, 147.
- 13 Pevsner and Wilson 2002, 361.
- 14 Alice was responsible for the rebuilding of the chancel at Wingfield church. See Goodall 2003, 162–71.
- 15 Munro Cautley 1937, 11.
- 16 Mortlock 2009, 303. Munro Cautley mentions the 27ft nave at Tostock. See Munro Cautley 1937, 11.
- 17 Pevsner 1975, 328.
- 18 For Dowsing's official visit to Laxfield, see Cooper 2001, 302–3.
- 19 Pers. comm., E. Martin.
- 20 Howson 2009, I, 16, and gazetteer; Tracy 1990, 32–36, plates 105–6.
- 21 Some useful sources for late-medieval guilds and gildhalls, and East Anglian ones in particular, are Giles 2000; Farnhill 2001; McRee 1987, 108–22 (this includes a case study of the religious guild at St George, Norwich); Colman 1979, 44–47; Colman 1977. See also *Eavesdropper*, 17, 6–8 and 41, 15–17.
- 22 Mattingly 1991, 58–72.
- 23 The medieval tradition of holding church ales was so well entrenched that, notwithstanding the dislocations of the Reformation, in some country areas it survived into the middle of the seventeenth century. Speaking of north Wiltshire, John Aubrey recorded that 'In every parish is, or was, a church house, to which belonged spits, crocks etc., utensils for dressing provision. Here the housekeepers met, and were merry and gave their charity; the young people came there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc., the ancients sitting gravely by, looking on'. See Underdown 1985, 45.
- 24 SROI, FC90/L3/8.
- 25 Raven-Hart 1912, 13–14.
- 26 Colman 1979, 46–47.
- 27 Colman 1977, 2.
- 28 Thanks to Wendy Smedley for this suggestion.
- 29 Colman 1977, 3.
- 30 The undivided council chamber of the gildhall at Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, founded in 1448, is still used for the meetings of a revived town guild organisation: Styles 1945, 206, 211. It is likely that at the Reformation the some part of the Fressingfield gildhall was used as a school. By 1672 the latter, whose object was 'to teach five poor boys born in the parish', was recorded. In the seventeenth century other parts were adapted as a Poor House, but by the early eighteenth century, a public house (the Fox and Goose), a grocer and a granary and wood loft were occupying the building. For the gildhall's after-life, see Evans 1979, 42–43.
- 31 Until recently, the only archaeological account of the Fressingfield gildhall could be found in DOE, *List of buildings of special architectural and historic interest*, District of Mid Suffolk, 69, *Fressingfield*, 1987, 9. Ian McKechnie's necessarily limited survey of the interior and plan drawings in *Eavesdropper*, 41, offer additional clarification.
- 32 The DOE report on Laxfield is found in the listing series above, vol. 76, *Laxfield*, 1988, 28. Much of the following is based on the Colmans' invaluable booklet on the Laxfield gildhall, where there is a measured plan and section by Adrian Colman. See Colman 1977, 10–12.
- 33 Dow 1954, 225–28.
- 34 Allen 2008.
- 35 Illustrated in Allen 2008, 63.
- 36 See contemporary photograph in Allen 2008, 27.
- 37 Potter *et al.* 2002, 13.
- 38 Arnold 1879, 288; Howlett 1884, 89.
- 39 Brown 1992, 25, 27.
- 40 Heslop 1991.
- 41 Brown 2004.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
NCC	Norwich Consistory Court
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich.

LECTURES 2009

All lectures were held at the Blackbourne Hall, Elmswell

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| 10 January | Continuity and Change in Suffolk 1349 to 1500: the Black Death and its Aftermath', by Mark Bailey. |
| 14 February | 'The Silver of the Iceni', by Megan Dennis. |
| 14 March | 'The Theatre Royal: Beneath the Surface', by Christina Sitwell and Spike Bucklow. |
| 14 November | 'Medieval Mercers of London from Suffolk c. 1200–1550: Benefactors, Privateers and Merchant Adventurers', by Anne Sutton. |
| 12 December | 'Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, Orford Ness, Suffolk', by Wayne Cocroft. |

BASIL BROWN

A special service, in the form of an Evensong led by the rector, the Revd Chris Norburn, was held at Rickinghall Inferior church on 30 August 2009 to commemorate the 70th anniversary Basil Brown's excavation at Sutton Hoo in the summer of 1939, which led to the discovery of the great Anglo-Saxon ship burial. This amazing find was, however, overshadowed by the beginning of World War II in September 1939.

The church was full for this service at which the SIAH paid tribute to Basil Brown's archaeological work. Our member Gilbert Burroughes presented a terracotta commemorative plaque with a replica Roman 'samian' finish that he had created to the parish. After the service, which was attended by SIAH members and villagers, all were made welcome with tea and cakes in the village hall.

MEMBERS ELECTED DURING 2009

During the year 61 members were elected, of which 49 were full and 12 associate. After taking into account resignations and lapsed members, the membership at the end of 2009 stood at 862, a net decrease of 13. The total comprised 604 full members, 180 associate members, and 78 institutions and societies.

ACCOUNTS

SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

The Council presents its report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2009.

Structure, governance and management

The Council is elected at the annual general meeting.

The current members of the Council are shown on page 220. At the previous AGM, on 25 April 2009, Elizabeth Cockayne, Timothy Easton, Stephen Mael, Jezz Meredith and Judith Middleton-Stewart retired, and Philip Aitkens, Jess Tipper, Caroline McDonald, Mel Birch, Colin Pendleton and Tony Redman were elected.

Objects and activities

The objects of the Institute shall be for the advancement of the education of the public:

- a) to collect and publish information on the archaeology and history of the county of Suffolk,
- b) to oppose and prevent, as far as may be practicable, any injuries with which ancient monuments of every description within the county of Suffolk may from time to time be threatened and to collect accurate drawings, plans and descriptions thereof, and
- c) to promote interest in local archaeological and historical matters.

Financial review

The financial statements below show the state of the finances at 31 December 2009, which the Council considers to be sound, and allowed the development of the various activities during the year.

Reserve policy

The reserves of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History are in a form available for instant use should the occasion arise. The Institute is committed to the education of the public. The calls upon funds may be sudden and it may not be possible to mount an appeal at short notice, where a considerable amount of local money is needed to trigger funds from central bodies. The trustees consider that the level of reserves on the Accumulated Fund should be in the region of two years' income, currently averaging £17,000 per annum. The trustees review the policy each year.

Performance and achievements

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The charity substantially relies on income from membership, publications, and to a lesser extent grants and investments, to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of its activities for those on low incomes.

continued

Apart from the publication of the *Proceedings*, Volume XLI, Part 4, and two *Newsletters*, the Institute's publications have continued to sell well. There were also the usual excursions and lectures during the year.

Signed for and on behalf of the Council on 24 April 2010

A.B. Parry

Hon. Treasurer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

I report on the accounts of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History for the year ended 31 December 2009, which are set out below.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the 1993 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which according with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Acthave not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

C.L. Bassett, *Chartered Accountant*

on behalf of Izod Bassett, Chartered Accountants, 105 High Street, Needham Market, Suffolk, IP6 8DQ

24 April 2009

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009 £	2008 £
Incoming resources	2		
— from generated funds:			
<i>Voluntary income</i>			
Membership income		8,845	8,710
Grants and donations		1,260	3,700
<i>Activities for generating funds:</i>			
Income from Investments		1,533	2,271
— from charitable activities			
Gross income from publications		3,092	1,388
Total incoming resources		<u>14,730</u>	<u>16,069</u>
Resources expended	3		
Charitable activities			
— General		(3,146)	(2,333)
— <i>Proceedings</i> publication		(7,986)	(10,050)
— Other		(3,709)	(7,904)
Total resources expended		<u>(14,841)</u>	<u>(20,287)</u>
Net incoming resources		(111)	(4,218)
Accumulated funds brought forward		41,639	45,857
Accumulated funds carried forward		<u>41,528</u>	<u>41,639</u>

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009		2008	
		£	£	£	£
Investments	5		—		5,964
Current assets					
Cash at bank – Current Account		3,167		5,271	
– Deposit Account		48,249		31,223	
Debtor		1,000		—	
		<u>52,416</u>		<u>36,494</u>	
Less: Creditor	(10,510)			(541)	
Subscriptions in advance	(378)			(278)	
		<u>(10,888)</u>		<u>(819)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>41,528</u>		<u>35,675</u>
Net assets			<u>41,528</u>		<u>41,639</u>
Represented by					
Unrestricted funds:					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
Gwen Dyke Bequest	4		13,168		12,383
Research, Excavation and Publication fund	4		11,974		12,920
<i>General funds: Accumulated fund</i>	4		16,386		16,336
			<u>41,528</u>		<u>41,639</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Council on 24 April 2010

A.B. Parry

Hon. Treasurer

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

1. Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued in March 2005.

2. Incoming resources

	Gwen Dyke Bequest	Research, Excavation & Publication fund	Accumulated fund	Total 2009	Total 2008
	£	£	£	£	£
Membership income					
Subscriptions	—	—	8,845	8,845	8,710
Voluntary income					
Grants	—	—	1,000	1,000	3,700
Donations	—	—	260	260	—
	—	—	1,260	1,260	3,700
Income from investments					
Interest on investments	500	—	—	500	500
Bank interest	5	9	13	27	1,037
Income tax recovered	—	—	726	726	734
Gain on redemption of Treasury stock	280	—	—	280	—
	785	9	739	1,533	2,271
Income from charitable activities					
Gross income from publications					
<i>Proceedings sales</i>	—	—	338	338	104
<i>Decorating Flint Flushwork</i>	—	122	—	122	192
<i>Suffolk Arcades</i>	—	139	—	139	86
<i>Suffolk Church Chests</i>	—	2,437	—	2,437	935
<i>Others</i>	—	56	—	56	71
	—	2,754	338	3,092	1,388
Total incoming resources	785	2,763	11,182	14,730	16,069

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009
(Continued)

3. Resources expended

	Gwen Dyke Bequest	Research, Excavation & Publication fund	Accumulated fund	Total 2009	Total 2008
	£	£	£	£	£
Expenditure – General					
Newsletters, including postage	—	—	880	880	758
Excursions	—	—	287	287	339
Lectures	—	—	754	754	430
Printing and stationery	—	—	15	15	16
Office expenses and postage	—	—	190	190	74
Insurance	—	—	210	210	200
Independent examiner's fee	—	—	288	288	282
Subscriptions	—	—	219	219	234
Basil Brown commemoration	—	—	303	303	—
			<u>3,146</u>	<u>3,146</u>	<u>2,333</u>
Expenditure – Proceedings					
Printing and Postage	—	—	7,986	7,986	10,050
			<u>7,986</u>	<u>7,986</u>	<u>10,050</u>
Other Expenditure					
Articles in Newsletter	—	1,278	—	1,278	1,252
Insurance	—	348	—	348	327
Field Group	—	100	—	100	100
Indexing	—	1,983	—	1,983	25
<i>Suffolk Church Chests</i>	—	—	—	—	6,200
		<u>3,709</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>3,709</u>	<u>7,904</u>
Total resources expended	<u>—</u>	<u>3,709</u>	<u>11,132</u>	<u>14,841</u>	<u>20,287</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009
(Continued)

4. Movement on funds

	Gwen Dyke Bequest	Research, Excavation & Publication fund	Accumulated fund	Total 2009	Total 2008
	£	£	£	£	£
Opening balance	12,383	12,920	16,336	41,639	45,857
Incoming resources	785	2,763	11,182	14,730	16,069
	<u>13,168</u>	<u>15,683</u>	<u>27,518</u>	<u>56,369</u>	<u>61,926</u>
Resources expended	—	3,709	11,132	14,841	20,287
Closing balance	<u>13,168</u>	<u>11,974</u>	<u>16,386</u>	<u>41,528</u>	<u>41,639</u>

Gwen Dyke Bequest

The Gwen Dyke Bequest fund is used to assist in the study of records, and the publication of research arising from such study.

5. Investments

	Market value £	Cost 2009 £	Cost 2008 £
8% Treasury Stock, 2009 £6,244.78 Nominal	—	—	5,964

6. Summary of net assets by funds

	Gwen Dyke Bequest	Research, Excavation & Publication fund	Accumulated fund	Total 2009	Total 2008
	£	£	£	£	£
Investments	—	—	—	—	5,964
Net current assets	13,168	11,974	16,386	41,528	35,675
	<u>13,168</u>	<u>11,974</u>	<u>16,386</u>	<u>41,528</u>	<u>41,639</u>

7. Trustees

No member of the council received any remuneration or reimbursement of expenses during the year (2008: nil).

SUFFOLK INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

Membership

Application forms for membership are obtainable from the Hon. Membership Secretary, Nigel Maslin, 3 The Courtyard, Sudbourne Park, Orford, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 2AJ; nigelmaslin@btinternet.com. Present members are urged to support the Institute by enrolling new members.

Subscriptions

The annual subscription, which is due in advance on 1 January, is £20 for an ordinary member; £25 for two adults plus children under 16 at the same address. Members under 25 pay £12. UK institutions pay £30 a year; overseas institutions £35. Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Financial Secretary, Adrian Parry, 23 Vermont Crescent, Ipswich, IP4 2ST.

Privileges

The annual subscription entitles members to a copy of the Institute's journal, the *Proceedings*, which contains articles by national and local scholars on the archaeology and history of Suffolk. They also receive the twice-yearly *Newsletter*, giving details of forthcoming events, short notes and book reviews. The Institute organises a number of excursions in the summer to places of interest in and around Suffolk. In the winter it has a programme of lectures, held at Elmswell. Members may also use and borrow books from the Institute's library, housed in the Suffolk Record Office, Raingate Street, Bury St Edmunds. Finally, members who wish to take an active part in archaeological fieldwork may join the Institute's Field Group, which has close links with the County Archaeological Service and local museums. Enquiries respecting the Field Group should be addressed to the Hon. Field Group Secretary, John Fulcher, The Old Coach House, Cransford, Woodbridge, IP3 9NZ; jfulcher@freenetname.co.uk.

Publications

Indexes of the articles in past volumes of the *Proceedings* are to be found in volumes X (1900), XXIV (1948) and XXX (1966) and a Bibliography of articles is available on the Institute's website (at www.suffolkarch.org.uk click on 'Bibliography' on the 'Publications' menu). Back numbers of the *Proceedings* are available from Joanna Martin (details below). There are four annual parts in each volume. All parts volumes XL, XLI and XLII (these are the journals since 2001) are £10 per part to members, £12 per part to non-members, plus postage and packing. All parts of volume XXXIX and earlier volumes (2000 and earlier) are £2.50 per part to members and £3.50 to non-members, plus postage and packing. Some parts, particularly from earlier volumes, are out of stock, so to check the current availability of specific parts and the total cost please contact Joanna Martin (very few parts before 1951 are in stock). For details of the Institute's other publications, please contact Jane Carr (details below).

Articles and notes on all aspects of Suffolk archaeology and history should be sent to the Hon. Editor, Dr Joanna Martin, Oak Tree Farm, Finborough Road, Hitcham, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 7LS; joanna.martin5@btinternet.com, from whom copies of the Notes for Contributors may be obtained. Items (including books for review) for inclusion in the *Newsletter*, published in March and August, should be sent to Mrs Jane Carr, 116 Hardwick Lane, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2LE; bobcarr@clara.co.uk.

Website

www.suffolkarch.org.uk provides up-to-date information and contacts.

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