

ADDENDA TO *DECODING FLINT FLUSHWORK*

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SINCE THE BOOK¹ was published by this Institute in 2005 it has sold out and inevitably several new examples of devices have been discovered. Kerstin Fletcher made the interesting general suggestion that the Ald device should properly be All because the orb, in the medieval mind, stood for All. The rebus of Bishop John Alcock on his chantry at Ely has an eagle of St John (or a cockerel) sitting on an orb, as on brass lecterns of the period.

Walberswick St Andrew, Suffolk

The most significant discovery is of a type of flushwork with devices which is a precursor of the work of the Aldryche and Woodrofe workshops. It is only to be found on the east wall of the small church built re-employing original materials in the ruins of the larger church of St Andrew at Walberswick.

Here Richard Russell of Dunwich and Adam Powle of Blythburgh were engaged to build the tower under a contract dated 1426. In his book on Suffolk arcades, Birkin Haward suggests that this tower was the earliest church commission undertaken by these masons on the north-east Suffolk coast.² Unfortunately nothing comparable has been found on the exterior walls of the other churches whose arcades he suggests they built at Blythburgh, Kessingland, Southwold, Woodbridge and Wangford.



FIG. 98 – The plinth of the east wall of the smaller church built within the ruins at Walberswick, with (inset) the ‘Andrew’ device enlarged.

There is an Andrew saltire in flushwork set in a lozenge panel on the chancel east wall of the reduced church, with ambiguously formed devices in the upper and lower triangles which could spell a pair of Rs for Richard Russell, As for Andrew or MRs for Mary. Rune-like marks (netmarks?) are incised into the freestone beneath the lozenge panels (Fig. 98).

Around the north side of the reduced church there are several other panels with saltires for Andrew built into lozenge units, almost always offset from their centre; none include letters. There are signs that the lozenge panels were removed from the base course of the original chancel wall, and replaced by courses of whole flints. The contract for the tower with Richard Russell and Adam Powle is dated 1424 (Jenny Gladstone sent us a photograph of this display in December 2005).

Gazetteers of additions follow for both the main workshops and ‘other styles’.

‘ALDRYCHE’ ADDITIONS

New Buckenham St Martin, Norfolk

Here the late Paul Cattermole photographed a set of five devices previously unnoticed at the east end of the south chancel aisle which, taken with those on buttresses at Quidenham and Old Buckenham, showed that each of these churches received five or six devices when Old Buckenham priory church was demolished at the Dissolution. By incorporating these ‘souvenirs’ as opportunity arose, the three churches sought to preserve their severed links with the priory. Flushwork devices, therefore, were sufficiently valued, both intrinsically and by association, to be moved and reused.

Butley St Mary, Suffolk

The rayed shields on the porch link it to the west tower porch at St Mary Quay, Ipswich (and to the single surviving device on the north side of the west tower plinth at St Peter’s, Ipswich) and Theberton.

Cotton St Andrew

The south porch has crowned MRs in the spandrels of the doorway, and above them rayed shields. The porch parapet has been rebuilt using a jumble of devices, those on the west side devoid of their flints, but including one MR and an inverted Al. The east parapet is entirely fairly modern brick. Peter Northeast found no bequests to this porch, but generous benefactions of the 1470s may have covered its construction.

Elmswell St John the Evangelist, Suffolk

John Hedge of Bury, not only one of Margery Walter’s executors but donor of the font, must also have given some or all the cost of the south porch, for opposite the I to the left of the entrance a modern stone replaces one on which Tom Martin in 1750 recorded an H. He also recorded the now illegible inscription on the south wall identifying Hedge as the porch donor.³

Since William Moundevyle was rector from 1488 to 1503 the panel commemorating him is likely to have been inserted after 1500.

Helmingham St Mary, Suffolk

Decoding Flint Flushwork detailed the contract for building the sixty-foot tower between 1488 and 1498. It was entered into by the churchwardens and Thomas Aldryche of North Lopham. The work could proceed immediately because the whole cost was subscribed jointly by John and Elizabeth Tollemache and John’s brother-in-law Edmund Joyce, and by John Wythe the elder and William Holm, both of Helmingham.



FIG. 99 – The empty inscription frames on the west face of Helmingham tower with the destroyed inscription speculatively restored.

When John Tollemache died in 1510, new inscriptions were carved around the plinth of the tower to commemorate him as the founder of the Tollemache dynasty at Helmingham and the first and most generous donor to the tower.

On either side of the west door, there are six empty rectangular boxes (18 inches in height) from which black letter inscriptions were chiselled out by the iconoclast William Dowsing in 1643 (Fig. 99). Our suggestion of ‘Ave Maria etc’ ignored the survival of the riser of a ‘t’ in the first box and another of an ‘l’ in the last. We now believe that in 1510 the six boxes read:

Orate pro a'ri'a Joh nis Talm'ch

Dowsing would not tolerate prayers for the souls of the departed, and the five Latin words meaning ‘Pray for the soul of John Talmach’ had to go.

Had Dowsing been a better Latin scholar he would have found the words on the south face even more objectionable. He left it alone and the inscription in praise of Mary is still perfectly legible:

Scandit ad ethera virgo puer pera virgu la Jesse

The Virgin Mother, branch of Jesse's stem, ascends to heaven

Ipswich St Lawrence, Suffolk

When this badly soot-blackened inscription was cleaned by Simon Swann Associates during 2009, the last words were found to have been altered at the restoration of 1858. From 1752 until



FIG. 100 – Sections of the flushwork inscription on the south clerestory parapet (above) and (below) another in incised letters above the windows of the Martyn ‘Jesus’ aisle at Long Melford. Both bear prayers for the souls of Laurence Martyn and his wives.

then the east wall had been coated with mortar,⁴ and what was found when this was removed was in poor condition and imperfectly understood. The ending ‘and alle x’t’n soules am’ which meant ‘and all Christian souls, amen’ defeated the restorers who had to rework the whole and chose the banal ending ‘and alle the good donors’, and that is how it will appear in future.

Long Melford Holy Trinity

The only true flushwork inscriptions, in the Aldryche style, run the length of the north nave (1484) and the south nave (1481) and chancel (1479) clerestory parapets (Fig. 100). Other inscriptions lower down, on the south porch, above the windows of the Martyn ‘Jesus’ aisle and around the Lady chapel are more lavish, incised in good quality freestone. All are given in Pevsner.

Raveningham St Andrew, Norfolk

The crenellated parapet of this octagonal tower top (cf. Toft Monks) has flushwork panels and devices on the north and south faces. The north face bears a saltire engrailed below the letters S and A (its bar an inverted chevron), and the south what may be chalices and wafers under canopies. On most of the other six sides are pairs of blank shields; where they are missing repairs may have eliminated them.

Southwold St Edmund, Suffolk

Dr Simon Cotton drew our attention to John Busshop’s Norwich will of 1456.⁵ He was to be buried before the altar of St Anne, and the proceeds of selling his messuages applied to new bells, leaving £20 to the building of the tower (fabrica campanil’).

Toft Monks St Margaret, Norfolk

The crenellated parapet of the octagonal tower (cf. Ravensingham) has pairs of letters on each face, except on the west side where there are two plain stone rectangles, perhaps repairs.

west|- | P O | I B | M S | I V | P L | A - |west
east

The M on the east face is not MR but a plain Lombardic M appropriate to the patron saint. Margareta Sancta is therefore possible. In 1454 John Bullock was presented as rector by William Waynefleete, provost of Eton, which might explain IB. V (for virgo?) has not been found elsewhere. The three uncertain devices may have been lost through repairs.

West Tofts St Mary, Norfolk

Edwin Rose informed us that two west-face panels at West Tofts, removed when a west door was introduced in 1821, were replaced in facsimile by Pugin when the doorway was closed. The original devices were built into the village school, now demolished, but they remain part of a small monument to the school.

Troston St Mary, Suffolk

No religious explanation (gild or chantry) can be offered for the Thomas monogram on the left hand side of the porch parapet, and despite that and the Maria monogram being crowned (as are all four devices) it is possible that there was a double meaning to the otherwise unexplained prominence of the Thomas monogram. Thomas may also have been the name of a prominent donor to the porch. Possibilities are Thomas Rattlesden, abbot of Bury 1479–97 (also lord of the manor); Thomas Rychard (d. 1388), a chaplain who was buried in an earlier porch; or, if taken with the M monogram at the far side, Thomas Man, whose widow Joan willed (1496) gifts to the church with a provision for masses to be sung.

Ufford St Mary, Suffolk

The south porch has much flushwork decoration which includes the All device and crowned chalices on the plinth. Bequests to this porch run from 1466 to 1475.

Woodbridge St Mary, Suffolk

We commented on the pristine condition of the north porch flushwork and suggested that what adorned the east face in particular had been added or altered at a restoration. David Elisha Davy recorded what he saw in April 1831 and also transcribed John Tanner's list of bequests to the tower between 1444 and 1460 (including Albrede's of 1458) and others to the porch from 1455 to 1459.⁶ Davy strained to read the name on the stone twenty feet up the north face of the tower, but earlier observers had found Albrede there (Fig. 101).

John Dallenger's *Record of Woodbridge Parish Church as it was and is* (1875) includes detailed accounts of restorations of the north porch in 1864 and the tower a decade later, but they only confirm that, where details were unclear, they provided replacements without quite understanding what was originally intended. In the spandrels of the west doorway of the tower, for example, where Davy recorded the arms of England on the north and of France on the south carved on freestone shields, the restorers carved Seagrave on the north and Brotherton on the south to signify the mid-fourteenth-century builders of the church. They were forgetting that the tower was built in the mid fifteenth century.

Dallenger makes it clear that before 1863 the porch was in deplorable condition. It is now a showpiece of flushwork decoration at its best, but what Davy saw is the more valuable for that. He described two of the shield devices needing interpretation above the inserted



FIG. 101 – Flushwork display on the east face of the north porch at Woodbridge St Mary.

Perpendicular window on the east face. One was faithfully copied and the other was altered. The former had, and still has, a lion rampant beneath a rose and a crown, all between two ragged staves. It is not easy to suggest what this means. The latter had three crowns in pale, a sword erect passing through each. Now the three crowns have no swords through them and they are framed in a pair of what may be palm branches. Since the church was dependent on the Augustinian Priory of St Mary, Woodbridge, one or both of the two devices might be a priory badge.

Woolpit St Mary, Suffolk

There are strong reasons for believing that this church, like Elmswell, originally had an Aldryche tower, no doubt with flushwork devices adorning the plinth, buttresses and parapet, but it has had a very chequered history. After a severe thunderstorm in 1602, the tower was rebuilt with a 66-foot spire. That was lost in a very strong south-west wind in 1703 and replaced by one of 42 feet. Dr and Mrs Cockayne have an anonymous drawing dated 1841 showing a square buttressed and embattled tower with Aldryche proportions. In July 1852 the spire was struck by lightning once again, and entirely rebuilt by Phipson in fourteenth-century style with Norman mouldings from the old tower as well as the circular sanctus window, flying buttresses and a traceried pierced parapet at a cost of £1750.

Worlingworth St Mary, Suffolk

Here three more panels are significant: **R** for the Bury Abbot Robert of Ixworth neighbouring the **E** for Edmund, and another lily crucifix more formal than the very worn one illustrated lower right on page 87 of our book. There is also a rose within crossed squares which suggests Mary crowned as Queen of Heaven (cf. icons with the same crossed squares surrounding her figure) (Fig. 102).

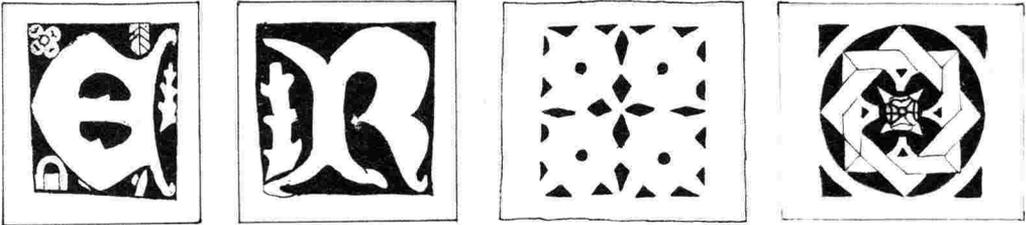


FIG. 102 – Four devices from the nave plinth at Worlingworth St Mary: a. and b. E for Edmund and R. for Abbot Robert; c. Formal lily crucifix; d. Mary Queen of Heaven.

NORWICH (WOODROFE) ADDITIONS

Bungay St Mary, Suffolk

The row of eight crowned **MR** monograms over the large west window of the tower are in Woderofe style, but nowhere else did he place emblems so far away from porches and entrances (Fig. 103). Henry Davy illustrated them in 1818 without clearly indicating the



FIG. 103 – Eight crowned MR in Woderofe style above the west window of the tower of Bungay St Mary.

distinctive crowns. There may have been, at least until 1500, another church of St Thomas in the same churchyard as St Mary and the nunnery; if so, both churches were given new towers in the 1440s, a prolific decade for Woderofe flushwork decoration. It is just possible that the present St Mary's then had joint dedication to St Mary and St Thomas. Thomas Croftes the elder left 20s in his will of 20 January 1442 and William Smyth left 2s on 16 September 1447 towards the new tower of St Thomas. Three others remembered the tower of St Mary's: Reginald Cakebread, chaplain, 20s, 5 Nov 1444; Richard Baret 13s 4d 'to the fabric of the new tower to be constructed there', 25 April 1446. When Thomas Chapman, chaplain, made his will on 28 May 1453 his bequest of 6s 8d to St Mary's was for the new tower.⁷ Further bequests to St Mary's tower continued into the 1470s.

Hunworth St Lawrence, Norfolk

Dr Julian Luxford drew our attention to four crowned letters L and two gridirons (handles downward) on the south porch plinth. On the buttress facing south-west: L, gridiron, L | porch opening | L gridiron L (on buttress facing south-east) (Fig. 104).



FIG. 104 – Lombardic letter L and gridiron for the patron saint at Hunworth St Lawrence.

Oakley St Nicholas, Suffolk

Images niches on either side of the south porch entrance have double-canopied pairs of crowned letters indicating that the original figures were for Margaret (MA) and Thomas (TH).

OTHER STYLES ADDITIONS

Gipping St Nicholas, Suffolk

The whole decorative scheme of this chapel celebrates the marriage of Sir James Tyrrell to Anne Arundell of Lanherne. The device AMLA carved obliquely in rustic Lombardics on stones in six south buttresses was authoritatively interpreted by Norman Scarfe as ‘Anne Morley Lanherne Arundell’. Her mother was a Morley. Roy Tricker points out that similar double two-light windows are to be found over the nave entrances here and at Southwold and Woodbridge.

Norwich St Andrew, Norfolk

When John Kirkpatrick drew the north elevation before 1725, the elaborate tower parapet included S and A three times, the centre letters higher than the others. We are grateful to the late Paul Cattermole for a copy of the drawing. [Aldryche work is never as decorative] (Fig. 105).

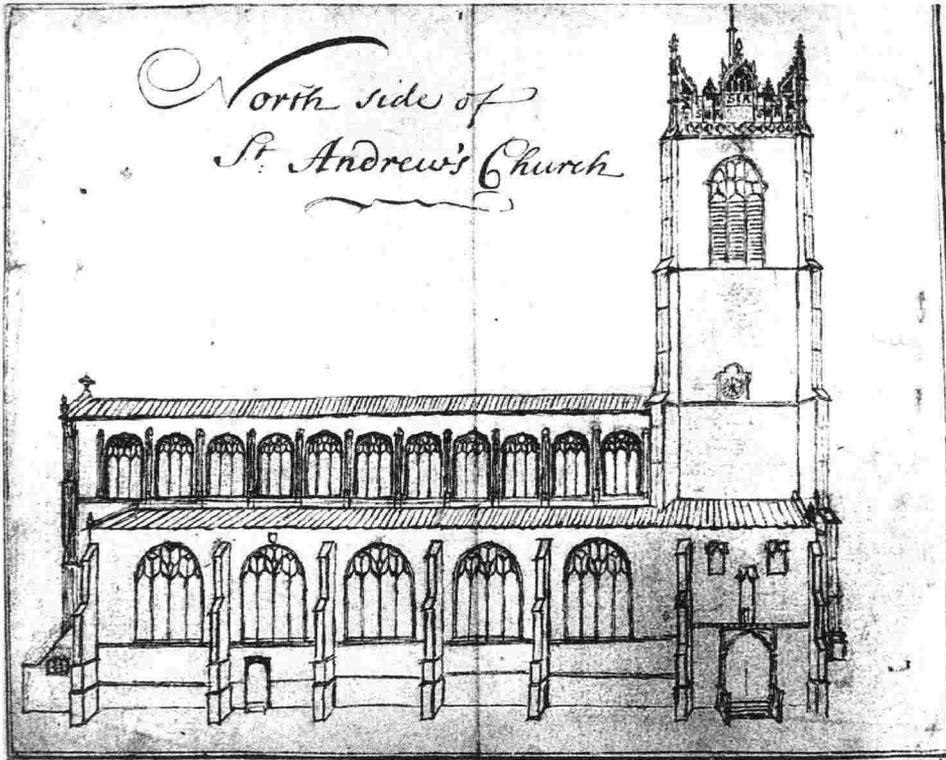


FIG. 105 – John Kirkpatrick’s drawing of the north side of Norwich St Andrew, c. 1712, with S. and A. three times on the parapet (by kind permission of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, ref. NWHCM: 1894.76.1705).

Rattlesden St Nicholas, Suffolk

Charles Farrow borrowed and read Peter’s copy of John Harvey’s *English Mediaeval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary down to 1550*, revised edition 1984. He points out that on page 325 Harvey attributes the south porch and south aisle parapet to John Wastell, explaining at a stroke why the devices are of such high quality, and so different from those of Aldryche or Woodrofe.

Postscript

In their recent detailed study of the inscriptions at Long Melford, David Dymond and Clive Paine have very credibly suggested that it was Richard Almack who, when restoring the clerestory parapet, used slate to make those more distant inscriptions more easily legible. The *Decoding* authors originally decided that the high quality inscriptions at Glemsford and Melford never included flint, and regret the change of mind on page 350 above.

NOTES

- 1 Blatchly and Northeast 2005.
- 2 Haward 1993, 148–49.
- 3 Thomas Martin *s.v.* Elmswell in his MS Collections, SROB, E2/41/8a.
- 4 Edward Duck, Soc. Antiq. MS 102, 34.
- 5 NRO, NCC 13,14 Brotyard.
- 6 D. E. Davy, BL Add MS 19097, fol. 356v.
- 7 Croftes: NRO, NCC 207 Doke; Smyth: SROI, IC/AA2/1/84–85; Cakebread: NRO, NCC 17 Wylbey; Baret: SROI, IC/AA2/1/50; Chapman: NRO, NCC 151 Aleyn.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blatchly, John and Northeast, Peter, 2005. *Decoding Flint Flushwork on Suffolk and Norfolk Churches*. Ipswich.
 Haward, Birkin, 1993. *Suffolk Medieval Church Arcades*. Ipswich.

Abbreviations

NRO	Norfolk Record Office
SROB	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich