

Foreword

As a child I used to be taken, unwillingly, around Norfolk churches by my Father. I am fairly certain I didn't much enjoy the experience at the time, but those visits must have instilled a residual interest in, and affection for our churches, as I have now been a committee member of the Norfolk Churches Trust for several years, and indeed, I now very much enjoy visiting them myself.

The parish church is perhaps the definitive icon of rural England, and it, together with the village green, the pub and the cricket field, is the picture that so many, especially English expatriates abroad, carry with them, and remember with nostalgia as quintessential England.

Some years ago, in high summer, I was driving from Holkham to mid Norfolk, when I saw a tiny village dominated by its church tower; on impulse I turned off the main road to the village. It was a hot afternoon, no one was about and the only sound the calling of jackdaws. Inside, the well-kept church was an oasis of calm

and restfulness. As I read the names of all the incumbents over the centuries, it struck me as to how very important it was to ensure that our churches continue to be well cared for, so that one's successors are able to read a similar list with all its associations of continuity, stability and peace.

In Norfolk and Suffolk, we have the highest concentration of Mediaeval churches in Europe; 659 altogether, in a relatively small area. I urge you to spare a few minutes out of your busy lives and explore some of these beautiful buildings. I am certain you will find it as rewarding as I do.

In this, his revised guide to Norfolk churches, Mr Mortlock has provided us with a fascinating and illuminating description of each and every one he has visited. Armed with this guide the visitor cannot fail to enjoy exploring our lovely churches and having done so, it is my earnest hope that he or she will be inspired to lend their support to these marvellous symbols of our heritage.

The Countess of Leicester