

Erpingham, St Mary (H2): Standing away from the village in a big churchyard, mainly late-C14 with a fine C15 tower. This has ERPINGHAM picked out round the battlements, the letters interspersed with crowned 'M's for the dedication. The w. door has been well restored and has unusual brackets for figures in the centre panels. There are little figures too in niches on either side of the door as part of the *base course*. Note the *sanctus bell turret* on the gable of the *nave*. The interior has a spacious feel about it emphasised by the sparkling white walls, plain brick floor, and general air of cleanliness and care. By the door is the font which came from the bombed Norwich church of St *Benedict*. The figures round the bowl have been recut and given new heads in some cases. Still at the door, look for the large *squint* to the right of the *chancel* arch. Through it one can see the *ambry* (where the Sacrament is reserved) which is offset to the left so that it is in line with the door. At the e. end of the s. *aisle* is a big *brass* of Sir John de Erpingham who died in 1370, although the *brass* dates from 1415. He was the father of Shakespeare's 'Old Sir Thomas' of Agincourt fame, who may well have built the tower and aisle here. The e. window contains a beautiful assembly of German and French C16 glass from Steinfeld monastery in Germany (more from the same source is in the Victoria and Albert Museum). The Adoration with the shepherds in the bottom left panel is particularly fine. Much of the statuary in the church is good modern work as is the charming head of the Virgin in the window by the font. The church has a good ring of 6 bells, tenor 9-2-0 cwt.

Fakenham, St Peter & St Paul (F3): From a distance, especially from the n. and w., the 115ft. tower stands beautifully above the town and one almost seems to see the base, but in reality buildings cluster close to the church and the way up to the s. *porch* is by snug little lanes under deep brick arches. The big n. graveyard has been transformed into a broad and pleasant park and from there one can take in the fine proportions of the C15 tower, with its double *base course* and panelled buttresses. The square *sound-holes* are filled with a net of lozenge tracery and above them, great three-light *transomed* bell openings. Until 1828 the top was plain, and here is a case where C19 battlements and pinnacles greatly improve the whole. The town fire engine was once kept under the tower but now there is a modern glass panelled w. door; deep canopied

niches either side and a frieze of shields over, with crowned 'P's for the dedication. Entry is by the late-C15 porch which once had an upper room, and then into the great *nave* with its C14 *arcades*. A massive restoration in 1864, when roofs, windows, pews, and much else were replaced seems to have robbed the building of a certain quality, but now that the obscured glass has largely been replaced with clear panes the effect is light and open. Note the imaginative modern roundels with symbols that connect with their individual donors (see the card at the back of the church for details). Good C15 font with crowned 'P's in the shaft panels and, round the bowl, *Symbols of the Evangelists* with, w., *Instruments of the Passion*, s.w. *Royal Arms*, and n. the *Trinity* emblem. Also at the w. end, a pedestal poorbox dated 1665 which disappeared and came back to the church only in 1888. A generously proportioned nave altar is now used for most services and behind it the C14 *rood screen* has turned pillars between uprights, *ogee arches* and good tracery; much restored, its cornice is all C19 and the improvers cut away the base panels and inserted *trefoil* arches. On the n. wall, a fine portrait in oils of C18 rector Dr John Hacket who was Vice-Master of Trinity College Cambridge, the Patrons of the living. By Joseph Highmore, it was purchased for the church in 1941. The *chancel* is spacious, with a big C14 e. window of five lights with flowing tracery – C19 stained glass. The C14 *sedilia* and *piscina* are on a large scale and very like those at North Creak; fine but rather stiff design in which *crocketed* pinnacles rise from each intersection of the *ogee arches* which are themselves *crocketed*; fore edges of the pillars are 'V' shaped and battlemented. A good modern set of *communion rails* with turned *balusters*, and within the sanctuary, four small *brasses* have been fixed to a board – one to Richard Betteson has the date 1497 in arable numerals rather than the more usual Roman. 2005 saw the beginning of another restoration and improvement, with pews replaced by chairs; a new vestry, choir stalls and lighting are planned, and the n. aisle arcade will be glazed to provide a community room. The church has a good ring of 8 bells, tenor 19-3-0 cwt.

Felbrigg, St Margaret (I2): Now that the estate has passed to the National Trust, Felbrigg is much more accessible and the church, lying some distance across the park from the house, should not be missed. It has a magnificent series of *brasses*, and of them, the one commemorating



Felbrigg, St Margaret: Sir Simon de Felbrigg's brass

Sir Simon de Felbrigg and his wife is one of the finest in England. It is in the *aisle* between the foremost pews, and is over 9ft. long and 4ft. wide, with two figures under an elaborate and graceful double canopy. Sir Simon was standard-bearer to Richard II, and his wife Margaret was the Queen's cousin and her maid of honour. This is one of only five old brasses remaining in the country to Knights of the Garter. The *chancel* has a fine e. window and an early-C15 *piscina* – ruined by having the sculptor *Joseph Nollekens'* monument to William Windham, of Felbrigg Hall (d.1813) jammed into it. Other windows in the *chancel* were blocked up to house an astonishing array of Windham monuments, and one to another William (1686) is by *Grinling Gibbons*, having typical swags of flowers and fruit. The two convex tablets close by are beautiful examples of C17 lettering and design. *Box pews* and a series of *hatchments* add to the delights of this church.

Felmingham, St Andrew (I3): The bulky C15 tower has a distinctive look from a distance because there is no parapet and it seems to bulge. There is quite elaborate *flushwork* around the w. door and the *sound-holes* are traceried. When the remainder of the church was rebuilt in brick in 1742 the good windows on the s. side with *reticulated* tracery were re-used. The roof is mean

matchboarding on stark braces and there is no *chancel* arch. The C19 pulpit has some old tracery incorporated in it which may have come from the *rood screen*; a *griffin*, *woodwose*, hawk, and dragon can be seen carved in the little *spandrels*. The local style of C14 font shaft with eight attached columns supports the familiar type of C13 *Purbeck marble* bowl. The church has an excellent ring of 9 bells, tenor 15-3-26 cwt.

Felthorpe, St Margaret (H4): Attractive churchyard with Scots pines standing above pond. Peculiar, oblong tower with large buttresses. Church almost entirely rebuilt in 1846, and a cramped narrow s. *aisle* added. Variety of windows, C14 to C15. Inside, a curiosity is a glass frame of photos of World War One servicemen – number roughly tallies with the Roll of Honour. A good *Jacobean* chest, nicely carved with *scallop* frieze, inscribed I.T.F. The C19 stained glass is by *Ward & Hughes*.

Feltwell, St Mary (D6): From the n., the *nave* is overshadowed by a large *aisle* and *chancel* chapel built in the 1860s, but attention really focusses on the splendid *Perpendicular* tower. The stepped battlements are pierced and chamfered, with a line of small shields within *cusped* squares; each of the *crocketed* corner pinnacles has a little weathervane and the whole effect is very decorative. The mid-C14 *chancel* has a wide e. window, with *reticulated* tracery in the side windows, and see how one on the s. side is cut short to accommodate the *sedilia* you will find within. Large *Perpendicular* windows in the s. *aisle* have stepped embattled *transoms* and entry is by way of the s. *porch*. The s. *arcade*, like the *chancel*, is *Decorated*, with miniature shafts between the main lobes of the *quatrefoil piers*. In contrast to the narrow s. *aisle*, the n. *aisle* is as wide as the *nave*, and the Victorian architect indulged himself with the arcade details, particularly in the e. chapel. The whole of the *nave* is filled with lovely C15 benches, with every top rail carved and varied pierced work in the backs. Most of the figures on the arms are mutilated but there is a sentry box group (Mercy ministering to prisoners) on the s. side at the w. end, similar to the one at nearby Wilton; opposite, a priest, with acolytes carrying the *censer* and candle, stands over a shrouded corpse. The *chancel screen* is handsome, but more replacement than original, and the stalls beyond have remarkably large *poppy-heads*. The *piscina* and stepped *sedilia* are set within large five-leafed *ogee arches* cut square at the top with very little

elaboration, and there you will find a *brass* to Margaret Mundford (1520) – an 18in. figure in *kennel head-dress* with a heavy rosary and girdle. A little to the w., a brass for Francis Hetht (1479) in armour, and two wall monuments for Moundefords – they both have small kneeling figures and Francis (1590) is by the screen, while Osbert (1580) and his two wives are above the Hetht brass. On the chancel n. wall, a large and elaborate example of a Victorian Gothic Revival brass for the Rev William Newcombe (1846). The chancel windows are filled with remarkably good C19 glass signed by Didron (1862) and Eugene Oudinot (1859), both of Paris. A coherent series of vignettes in the style of medieval manuscripts is displayed in roundels set against intricately patterned backgrounds, and creates an impression of richness combined with sparkling clarity.

Feltwell, St Nicholas (D6): Vested in the *Churches Conservation Trust* in 1975 and still used for occasional services. It stands high by the road in from Methwold Hythe and has an oddly truncated silhouette because the *chancel* was demolished in 1862, and then the tower collapsed in 1898 while repairs were under way. It was a round *Norman* tower built of *carstone*, with a lining of *clunch* (the hard chalk sometimes used as building stone in the eastern counties) and the bottom section of the drum remains, with a hollow half shell rising to the gable of the *nave*. The n. *aisle* wall was rebuilt in brick in 1830 with re-used *Perpendicular* windows but to the s., a pleasant *porch* in *Tudor* brick. There are tall *Perpendicular clerestory* windows, and between those on the s. side, six striking *flushwork* panels with crowned initials on four and a chequerboard design on another. Inside, the Norman tower arch is massive and almost overpowers what is now a small church. The C13 s. *arcade* has *quatrefoil piers* with well moulded *capitals*, and opposite is a C15 variation on the same theme. In the s. *aisle*, a C13 *piscina* within a five-leafed arch, and on the floor below, fragments of what may have been a medieval *mensa* which was used for many years as a doorstep. When the n. wall was rebuilt, the workmen found a stone coffin complete with its lid and this now lies at the w. end. Its tapered shape was not in vogue after 1270 and so it is likely to be earlier and was probably used for a priest. Another fragment of the church's Norman origins can be seen in the n. e. angle of the sanctuary – a single column decorated with zigzag, but not necessarily in its original position.

During the 1940s there were prisoners of war in the area and they used this church for services. In gratitude, one of them, Ernst Bojahr, carved the crucifix on the altar, and in the best tradition of such men, he used only a penknife to do it. By the tower arch hang three bell clappers, and there is a nicely lettered verse from the pen of Feltwell's own historian A.J. Orange to say why:

Five of us used to speak to you
Two hundred years and more;
We called you from your cottages
And from the old fen shore.
With lofty tower one morn we fell
In Eighteen Ninety Eight,
No more we'll call you to your prayers
For silence is our fate.

Fersfield, St Andrew (G7): The remarkably small-based tower – barely 14ft. square outside – with its cap and weathercock, somehow gives this attractive little church a look which is almost Continental. The tower's date is uncertain. The fabric of the *nave* is earlier, as indicated by the graceful s. door of about 1300, but the church's general character as we see it now is *Perpendicular*. The *chancel* is a Victorian rebuild of 1844. Notice that the point of the gable of the charming little *porch* has been rudely hacked away to accommodate a sundial and give it a 'truer' angle to the sun. This porch, which has its original timber roof, can be fairly accurately dated, because in 1493 Jeffery Ellingham died in Fersfield, leaving in his Will four marks to build the porch; as well as his lands in the parish from which the yearly profits should be 'laid out in repairing, beautifying and adorning this Parish Church FOREVER' (see inscription below w. window). The church is spacious and uncluttered, and though its roofs and furnishings throughout may be modern and of no special virtue, it has a lovely atmosphere. High two-bay *arcade* between nave and s. *aisle*, with a further small arch at the e. end which presumably led to an enclosed chapel (see *squint* through to the high altar); in the aisle e. end a simple *piscina*, deeply inset into the wall; and beside it, the particular treasure of this church, lying in an arched recess under a window, a splendid wooden effigy of a knight. He is said to be Sir Robert du Bois, who died in 1311, and is credited with having refounded this church. The effigy, with much colour of indeterminate date, shows him in his armour, helmeted head resting on two cushions, sword at side, hands in prayer, and his feet resting on a buck deer. His legs are

uncrossed – exceptional in the C14. On the wall of the s. aisle, the *Royal Arms* of Queen Anne, dated 1703. To the right, by the door, an oval memorial tablet, with Arms above it, to members of the Blomefield family, and nearby, in the floor, small memorial tablets to yet more. In the s. e. corner of the chancel, lies the *ledger-stone* to the most illustrious of them, *Francis Blomefield*, Rector of Fersfield:

and author of the History of Norfolk, a work which had he lived to have completed, would have conveyed a lasting obligation on his native county; and on himself the merit of Extensive powers, successfully Exerted. To the grief of his Family and Friends and the regret of Learning, he was snatched away in the midst of his Labors, at the age of 47, on the 16th of January 1752.

In this otherwise Victorian chancel, the fine *Jacobean* panelling round the sanctuary is notable and of special interest, under an arched recess in the n. wall, is the stone effigy of a C13 priest, plainly severe. As you turn to leave, notice the tremendously tall tower arch; and above it, a *sanctus bell opening*. The bowl of the font at the w. end is *Norman*, its stem somewhat later, perhaps C13.

Field Dalling, St Andrew (G2): A handsome church, the outside beautifully cared for, the fine C14 *Decorated* tower (which boasts excellent bell-opening tracery) was restored and repointed in 1977. The windows here are a graphic object lesson of the leap from ambitious late Decorated to *Perpendicular*. The first is seen in the fine *chancel*, all of a piece, including its lofty arch, about 1370 (the *hammer-beam roof* is modern). Secondly, the large and imposing *Perpendicular nave* windows on the s. side, in the tracery of which are some good remnants of C15 glass. The nave *arcade*, with its slender columns, is C15, like the excellent *arch-braced roof* with elegant *bosses* at the main beam intersections, carved with *Tudor roses*. In the s.e. corner is the old *rood stair* entrance (outside the spiral stair juts out, with its tiled cap). Good C15 octagonal font, carved with the *Instruments of the Passion*. In the chancel, a little *angle piscina*; *dropped sill sedilia* adjoining. The filled-in arch opposite led to a chapel whose remains can be seen outside. In n. aisle, an unusual lozenge-shaped *Royal Arms* for the Hanoverian Georges; undated, but pre-1801. There are some old C18 *box pews* here, now serving the purpose of ‘play

squares’ for the children. In this *aisle*, and in the nave, a lot of medieval *poppy-heads*, very simple, complete with their C15 benches. On leaving, note the *corbels* supporting the outer arch of the *porch*, carved with shields showing the Cross of Christ on one side, and that of St *Andrew*, on the other. By the gate is the stump of the ancient *preaching cross*.

Filby, All Saints (K4): Tall tower with prominent stepped and panelled battlements and figures of the *Four Latin Doctors* of the Church at the corners. All the windows have been re-worked in the course of restoration except the diminutive *clerestory* circles and *quatrefoils*. The font is C13 *Purbeck marble*, made to look like new. Near it, the tower stairs door is heavily banded with iron and with a profusion of locks; it may be a re-used medieval chest top deployed to safeguard parish valuables in the tower. The recently restored base of the *rood screen* is very good. Virtually no defacement mars the painted figures, and much of the minor decoration survives. To right St *Cecilia*, St *George*, St *Catherine of Alexandria*, St *Peter*, St *Paul*, St *Margaret of Antioch*, St *Michael*, St *Barbara*. In the *chancel*, the ‘Lucas Angel’ monument is a fine piece by Hermann of Dresden. Three *ledger-stones* witness 140 years of continuous ministry by successive rectors, 1681-1820.

Fincham, St Martin (C5): Large and handsome in the centre of the village. Almost totally rebuilt in the mid-C15, it is a coherent expression of the *Perpendicular* style in full flower. The tower is well proportioned and has excellent detailing – a *base course* of recessed panels with *trefoil* heads, angle buttresses with carved panels on the upper stages of crowned ‘M’s, *IHS* monograms, and traceried battlements. The deeply moulded arch of the w. door terminates in profiled lions, and above the tall w. window there are big three-light bell openings. Most of the windows of the church have stepped *transoms*, and the (renewed) e. window is a huge five-light expanse of glass. On the n. side of the *chancel* is a two-storied vestry built by Sir Nicholas Fincham on older foundations in 1503; it had space for an *anchorite* (which may explain the small blocked door) and the first floor room was used as a school at one time. This is a church that puts its best face to the street, for the n. side parapets are plain and the *clerestory* windows are of two lights only, while on the s. side, the *aisle* has elaborate *flushwork* battlements punctuated by tall

crocketed pinnacles, and the clerestory windows have three lights. Have a close look at the big *gargoyles* on this side – a double-headed figure, and a woman with a devil swinging a rosary on her shoulder. The s. *porch* is in keeping but plainly dated 1852, although it must have replaced something similar – see the remains of a *holy water stoup* near the door. True to its period, the church is light and spacious, with a tall tower arch and five-bay *arcades* with lozenge shaped pillars. The *nave* roof is alternate *hammer-beam* and *arch-braced* construction, with recumbent figures of angels and grotesques on all the principals; some are repaired but the high quality carving reminds one of the n. aisle at Mildenhall, Suffolk. The font is an astounding *Norman* example and can be classed with Burnham Deepdale for quality and interest. It came from Fincham's other church (St Michael's, ruined and demolished in the 1740s) and stood in the rectory garden from 1807 until 1842 before being moved here. Square, with a band of ornament above and below triple arcades on each face, it has a unique sequence of scenes: n., the Garden of Eden with the (restored) Tree of Knowledge between Adam and Eve; e., the Magi, each with his gift; s., the Nativity – the Babe in a manger, attendant cattle, and a huge star overhead, with the Blessed Virgin and St *Joseph* alongside; w., the baptism of Christ, St *John the Baptist* pointing to Our Lord and the dove descending, with a Bishop holding a crozier. Close by is the iron banded parish chest, and on the s. side a C16 table with carved and turned legs and a carved top rail – no doubt an altar table at one time. The inlaid side table in the s. aisle is actually part of the old pulpit *tester*, made and given by one Gregory Watson in 1604. The pine benches were installed in 1847, but note that many of the oak *poppy-heads* were saved, and some have double eagles carved on them. In the aisles, an interesting and unusual set of boards painted with the Lord's Prayer, the creed, and some texts which seem to hark back to the C17, despite the fact that that one is dated 1717. There is a long *squint* through the masonry of the chancel arch to give a view of the high altar from the n. aisle chapel, and the *rood stair* rises from the s. side. The *screen* is very tall, and the centre arch has a double row of delicate *cusping* – partly broken but still beautiful; the slender subdivisions of the lights have been renewed in pine, but above the transoms are *crocketed* pinnacles in threes within the tracery – a very lively conceit. Quite a lot of original colour remains, and the panels below are painted dull red, with a vine and flower

repeat design in each. On the n. wall of the chancel, in incredibly convoluted Latin, the epitaph of Joseph Forby, last rector of St Michael's and last vicar of St Martin's before it became a consolidated living. His great nephew Robert Forby was rector for a quarter of a century until 1825, and is remembered now as the author of 'The Vocabulary of East Anglia' – the first systematic survey of our dialect. As you leave, note the shaft and base of a *preaching cross* to the s. of the church – it is another relic of St Michael's and was moved here in 1905.

Fishley, St Mary (J4): This little church is so closely guarded by a thick grove of pines, oaks, and limes, that were it not for the tower one would take it for a copse in the middle of open fields. Less than a mile from the w. outskirts of Acle, its isolation seems absolute. Even after the narrow byroad, there is a long path between high hedges before one reaches the churchyard, and from the e. end the open country drops away to the marshes and the river. The round *Norman* tower has a later top of narrow red bricks with early-C14 bell openings. The s. door is also simple Norman work with a *billet* frieze, but drastically re-cut in the 1861 restoration. Everything was rebuilt then and calls for little comment. There is a pretty little C18 chamber organ at the w. end.

Flitcham, St Mary (D3): It is said that this is where St *Felix* built a church in the C7, and the core of the present building is undoubtedly *Norman*. The massive tower has C14 bell openings, but below them is a band of large Norman blank *arcades* in *carstone*. This was a *crossing tower*, but the *chancel* has disappeared except for the raised mound of its foundations, and only the ruins of a late-C13 *transept* survive to indicate the original *cruciform* shape. The *nave* has traces of two Norman windows but all the existing windows are C19 and early-C20 renewals. The C14 s. *porch* originally had a *groined* ceiling and the worn *corbel* heads are still to be seen in the corners. It is a plain interior, with a panelled barrel roof and a *clerestory* on the s. side only, over the C15 *arcade*. The base of the tower now serves as a chancel and the plain arch to the nave has been restored. There is a deep *lancet* to the n. and the outline of a Norman *transeptal* arch to the s. In the nave, a *brass* inscription for Edward Runthwite who died in 1614 aged 82 – a long way from his native Yorkshire.

Flordon, St Michael (H6): Like most of the village, the church is perched comfortably on the side of a hill and a path climbs up through a little avenue of limes to the s. porch. Its round tower fell down in 1774, but tucked in by the eve of the porch there is a double splay *Saxon* window and another on the n. side that confirms a pre-Conquest foundation. There are C13 *lancets* in the nave, and the *chancel* windows have pretty *Decorated* tracery. For a small church, the porch has a generous width and the pale pink brick floor set *herring-bone* fashion is most attractive. The C13 doorway is set within the outline of an *arcade* arch – one of a number in the nave walls that suggest that the church once had *aisles*; so the s. door must have been re-set quite early on. By the rudimentary chancel arch is a substantial staircase in the n. wall, complete with little window, that led to the *rood loft*. The present *rood* has remarkably small figures – only 12in. tall. Above the arch, a dark set of Hanoverian *Royal Arms* in a curly gilt frame. The pulpit is late-C16 but has the look of having been cut down and put on a fresh base. One of the sides has four panels decorated with shallow chip carving and all has been given a coat of shiny varnish over very dark stain. The lectern and reading desk match it, and have initials and the date 1575 (both bases look younger than this). The tracery at the head of the e. window has managed to retain its original C14 glass with canopy designs in each *light*, and in the centre there is a C17 *St Peter* wielding a large key.

Fordham, St Mary (C6): A small and humble building mainly of *carstone*, by the roadside in this little by-passed hamlet. The *chancel* dates from the late C13 but now has no e. window and the side windows are renewed. There was a tower once but all trace has now gone and the nave collapsed in about 1730. It was rebuilt in *Decorated* style and there must have been a s. *aisle* originally because you will see the outline of the *arcade* from the outside. One of the n. nave windows is larger than the rest, with *ogee* shapes in the tracery and appears to have been undisturbed. Most of the old *headstops* survive outside too. A plain and simple interior, with *Decorated* chancel arch offset. The chancel has been plastered out and given a coved ceiling but on the n. wall there is a very faint outline of an *ogee* canopy which possibly covered a tomb or *Easter Sepulchre*. The simple *arch-braced roof* has *tie-beams* and there is a plain octagonal C14 font on an equally plain shaft. No surprises here save that this tiny church has survived tenaciously.

Forncett St Peter, St Peter (H6): Altogether a picture postcard church, rich in character and its *Saxon* tower alone is worth coming far to see. Complete right to the top, save for the battlements, it has two-*light* belfry openings with typical triangular shaped heads, supported on slabs and with a central shaft; slit windows at two levels; and round, deeply splayed ones at two further levels, eleven in all. The body of the church is *Perpendicular*, though the fabric is much older. In the walls of the *chancel* can be seen *herring-bone* work, which is typically *Saxon*. Curious, and very puzzling, on the s. side, is the outline of a large opening, long since filled in, set some six feet above the ground, with round, rough head of *Saxon* character. Much too big for a window of the period, illogical as a door – yet there it is: so what was its function? Beneath it is a small *priest's door*, which appears *Early English*. Entry to the church is by a lovely n. porch, which has a square hood over its outer arch, and in the *spandrels*, the keys of *St Peter* and crossed swords of *St Paul*; above, a long inscription which begins 'St Peter and St Paul, patrons of this place'; above again, a panel with the sacred monogram, *IHS*. Inside, the church has a fine C15 *arch-braced roof*, with 'embattled' *tie-beams*, and deep *wall posts* resting on 'embattled' *corbels*. The C14 three-bay *arcade* has deeply splayed, two-*light clerestory* windows above which have interlacing tracery, possibly contemporary with the roof. The w. wall retains its tall, slim *Saxon* arch to the tower, showing the massive thickness of the tower walls. Across the step between tower and nave, a *mensa slab* is placed, with at least two of its original five carved *consecration crosses* surviving. Below the step, *brasses* to Thomas Baxter, 1535 (left) and Richard Baxter, 1485, the latter's Latin inscription including the curious 'ignave vulneratus' – 'cowardly wounded' – was he murdered? Note close by the two pew-end bird carvings, including a splendid *pelican* in her piety. At the opposite end of the nave the two-sided pulpit is *Jacobean*, finely carved, was evidently assembled from something else. The C15 bench ends in the nave have exceptionally good figures on the elbows above squared columns. Look particularly for the huntsman with his falcon and the miser with his coin box. In 1857 *Thomas Jekyll* had the benches repaired and added some new ones with *poppyheads* in the centre aisle. In the s. e. corner of the s. *aisle*, set about 4ft. from the ground, is the doorway to the old *rood stair*, which emerges in the nave. In the sanctuary is a heavily carved *reredos* behind the altar, said to be

part of the vanished *rood screen*. Also here, a tablet on the s. wall commemorates Anna Cookson, who died, aged eight, in 1804 – her cousin was William Wordsworth, the poet, whose equally celebrated sister Dorothy stayed here in Fornsett for several years. In the n. aisle, under the e. window, is a charming and unusual C15 alabaster table tomb to Thomas & Elizabeth Drake, whose portraits are incised into the slab – he dressed in an ermine cape, she in a *kennel head-dress* and with lovely ruffed cuffs to her sleeves. The C15 font is very simple, octagonal and unadorned – except that underneath the bowl, modestly hidden away, are a couple of faces, *Tudor roses* and other floral decorations. By the n. door is a *holy water stoup*, with a fine flowing *trefoil* head, topped by a *crocket* flower. The church has a good ring of 6 bells, tenor 13-0-12 cwt.

Foulden, All Saints (D6): Very much a unified C13 and C14 building is the impression given, despite the intrusion of a later *Tudor* window in the *chancel*, as you view it from a distance. The tower collapsed in the C18: now a little *bell cote* on the w. gable must serve. Closer to, the detail of the church becomes yet more interesting. The C14 *Decorated* traceries in the *aisle* windows – flowing forms of confident vitality – are very good indeed. At the end of the s. aisle another fine window (*quatrefoil*, *trefoil* and *mouchette* patterns) was rudely eaten into to build a stair turret up to the *rood loft*. The *Tudor* imprint on what is in fact a *Decorated* chancel is almost complete, and great windows under flattened arches do look rather grand. In the s. aisle wall is a big, *cusped* tomb recess which could be that of the C14 founder of the church, Sir John de Crake. Excellent little s. *porch* – C13 outer arch and pillars with ring *capitals* and a C14 window with *reticulated* tracery in the e. wall. Inside, under a modern ugly timbered roof, are a vast chancel arch and tall, powerful C14 *arcades* of four bays. Plain C15 octagonal font on an attractively moulded and fluted stem. Some good C15 *poppy-head* benchends, with a variety of birds and beasts and grotesques carved in the elbows; C15 too the pulpit. Only the base of the ancient *screen* remains, though it still has its doors (not a common survival), on one of which two painted saints can be seen, one with a happy looking little bearded devil at his feet, the other with a crowned angel above his shoulder. On the other door the two figures there have been brutally defaced, though one is said to represent *Henry VI*. The *box pews* in the aisles are C18 Georgian. In the s.e.

corner of the n. aisle the little *Tudor* doorway to the *rood stair* still retains its original door. Immediately above, and on the corresponding arch opposite, see where the stonework was hacked away to slot in the *rood beam*, and in the capitals to each side the indentations where the loft itself was supported. In the base of the two pillars at this point, on the n. side, enormous slots were cut out to take what must have been a pretty hefty *parclose screen*. Plain timbered and attractive C15 *arch-braced roof* to the chancel; *Decorated piscina* under an *ogee* arch adjoining plain *dropped sill sedilia*; C17 carved panelling against the e. wall, and a sturdy mid-C17 altar table. The clergy desk appears to have re-used a couple of old poppy-heads. On the n. wall, a pompous wall monument to Robert Longe, 1656, all classical columns, scrollery, shields and skulls in black and white marble.

Foulsham, The Holy Innocents (G3): The late-C15 tower is very handsome. It has *flushwork* around the door and in the *base course*, and the shields in the doorway *spandrels* have the arms of England and Lord Morely. The *sound-holes* have a honeycomb pattern of lozenges and the stepped battlements are a rich mixture of *cusped* panels and 'M's. To the n.w. of the tower is a table tomb with decorative panels and groups of crowned letters. They spell 'Robert Colles, Cecily his wife' – Foulsham people in 1500. Apart from the mainly Victorian e. window with its glass by Charles Gibbs and the roof, the *chancel* is C14 and this is the date of the lavish *sedilia* and *piscina*, although C19 restoration has overlaid them heavily. The *priest's door* is tucked away behind the chancel arch on the n. side and its position is curiously improbable. It lies at an angle within the corner formed by the chancel and the n. *aisle*, and the internal arch shows that this was intentional. There seems no reason why a conventional placing should not have been chosen further along the wall. The *nave* still retains three circular *piers* on the n. side from the earlier C13 building, but the most noticeable thing here is the plaster ceiling – it looks sadly out of place, and its incongruity is emphasised by its immensity. The village was devastated by fire in 1770 and this ceiling is the most permanent reminder. So much of the church was damaged by the fire that few of the original fittings remain, but one might assume that the font did – until the eye lights on an account written in 1846: 'The font consists of a circular marble basin placed on a modern stone pedestal'. The present one is a very good C19 reproduction of

what one would have expected to find here. One of the survivors of the fire is a fine wall monument in the chancel to Sir Thomas Hunt (d.1616). He kneels in company with his three wives (he always married widows, it seems) under triple arches, his coloured coat of arms above: behind him, resting against the wall, is his sword – not in alabaster, but the real thing. A *brass* which also survived is by the lectern...a cautionary example of 'you can't take it with you':

Of all I had this only now I have
Nyne akers, wch unto ye poore I gave
Richard Fenn who died March 6, 1565.

Foxley, St Thomas (G3): Some of the *quoins* and the coursed flintwork below the windows on the s. side point to an early original, but the present *chancel* dates from the late C13 and the tower followed about a century later. The late-C15 *porch* has a nice outer arch with a niche, a shield in one *spandrel* and a ragged staff in the other, a possible reference to the builder's heraldic badge. The inner door is older and may be C14. The plain C14 font has a pleasing C18 candle-snuffer cover topped by a gilded dove, and over it is a *Regency gallery*. The bench ends have *puppy-heads* of varying naive designs, with a mask on one and the initials 'R.W.' on another. There are plain C18 *box pews* at the front (there were some in the chancel with curtains in the C19), and a matching pulpit. It is a two-decker but the reading desk panelling looks earlier. Behind it there is a patch of colour on the wall with no discernable design, and it possibly marks the position of a *guild altar*. The late-C15 *screen* has an unusual and most interesting reminder of how parishes reacted to royal commands. The top was dutifully sawn off for Edward VI but was obviously not destroyed; the advent of Mary gave the village a chance to put it back – and so it remains, held on with iron straps. Presumably when Elizabeth came to the throne the *rood loft* had to go, but the doors survive with paintings of the *Four Latin Doctors* – *Jerome* holds an open missal with staves of music visible, and below there are fine portraits of the donors John Baymont and his wife.

Framingham Earl, St Andrew (I5): An unpretentious, pretty little church. The hand of restoration has marked it heavily, but still there is much of its ancient heritage to see. The slim round tower is *Norman*. Basically Norman too is the *nave* (notice its massive flint quoins at the w.

end), despite the appearances made by changes over the years – including the unfortunate 'faked Norman' windows. Earlier still is the *chancel*, its deeply splayed, small round windows to n. and s. pointing to *Anglo-Saxon* construction; the slim *lancet* windows here are C13 *Early English*. Norman again is the s. doorway – small and slim, but ornately and surprisingly delicately carved on arch and *capitals*; Norman too is the n. door, but of much simpler cut, complementing inside the plain but massive arch between tower and nave. The real surprise is the chancel arch – more solid Norman work, large-scale, enduring, and embellished with zig-zag and other carved ornamentation. To each side are later openings, now much altered, which serve as *squints*, to give a view of the high altar. There is a homely little w. end *gallery* for the organ, modern roofs and furnishings (except for the handsome *Jacobean* pulpit which came from Sotterley, in Suffolk); and in the chancel, the old *piscina* niche was given a rather good modern carved head, with an *ogee* arch and lots of *cusps* in 1925. In the nave n. window, notice the St *Catherine* in C15 glass – crowned, with her wheel and sword to hand, and set against a dark blue background contained in a gold medallion.

Freethorpe, All Saints (K5): This beautifully kept little church stands in a great churchyard, and the truncated round *Norman* tower has a conical tile roof topped by a jolly gilt weathercock. The two-bay *arcades* are C13 but C19 restoration has effectively confused most of the rest, so that dating is problematical. Except, that is, a big *Early English lancet* in the s. wall of the *chancel* which has shafts on either side of a deep interior splay, and outside, the hood has delicious little curlicue leaf stops. The plain octagonal font stands on a heavy shaft which is reeded to look rather like *linen-fold panelling*. A cadet branch of the Walpole family (see Wickmere) were Lords of the Manor here, and there are a number of tablets in the chancel, including that of Robert, grandson of the first Lord Walpole of Wolterton. In the C19 they built a little manorial pew opening off the chancel; it has its own cast iron corner fireplace and prominent chimney, and the family arms are emblazoned in the window.

Frenze, St Andrew (H7): A church that has to be sought out, but worth the effort. A by-road off the Diss-Scole road leads past a business centre to the drive of Frenze Hall, and after half a mile of fields and copses, one finds a farmyard with the Hall on one side and the

church on the other. It is now in the care of the *Churches Conservation Trust*. There is no tower – merely a *bell cote* on the *nave* roof, and the ruined *chancel* was pulled down in the early C19, with the e. window re-set. The C15 *Tudor* brick *porch* is charming – an outer arch that is pinched at the foot, and a C13 priest's slab carved with a double omega in two separate pieces in the floor. Above the inner doorway are remains of niches. The interior is calm and simple. The C14 font on a high step has a reeded shaft and the bowl panels are like a window mason's pattern book – take your pick of 'Y', *reticulated*, or *lancet*. Beyond the few rows of chairs are two pieces of *Jacobean* furnishing in lovely untreated oak, faded to the palest cream. On the s. wall, an oblong pulpit with plain panels bearing split bobbin cylinders in the centres, with a range of shallow carving in panels under the rim; the *tester* has turned pendants at the angles and in the centre. Opposite, a family pew, obviously by the same man, but this time the carving in the panels is a little more elaborate, and there is a pretty range of little *balusters* around the top. During a restoration, the old stone *mensa* was found under the floor and brought back into use. Its slightly bowed and polished surface is incised with five roughly cut *consecration crosses*. Frenze escaped the wholesale destruction of *brasses* and has a fine collection. By the n. door is the effigy of Dame Joan Braham (d. 1519), a *vowess* shown wearing cloak over her gown and a girdle with long tassels. The Blennerhassetts flourished in this place for centuries, and young Sir John Paston made fun of the name in a letter of 1473 – 'Raff Blaundrehasset wer a name to styrtle an hare.' In front of the sanctuary s. side lies Jane (d.1521), wearing a *kennel head-dress*, with a long chain pendant from her embroidered girdle. By her side to the n. is John her husband (d.1510), with bobbed hair and in armour with his sword hung centrally. Half of Anne Duke's effigy remains in the n.e. corner of the sanctuary but her husband George's has gone. The earliest brass here is Ralph Blennerhasset's (d.1475), his mailed figure lying in front of the altar, and to the right there is Mary Bacon's (d.1587). Above, on the e. wall, Sir Thomas Blennerhasset (d.1531) is shown wearing a tabard that was enamelled originally. On the wall to the left of the altar is Thomas and Margaret Blennerhasset's brass and close by on the n. wall is an inscription for Thomasin Platers. Lastly, by the pulpit is a little *shroud brass* for



Frenze, St Andrew: pulpit

Thomas Hobson (d.c.1520). The *Royal Arms* of James I hang above the n. door.

Frettenham, St Swithin (I4): On its own, half a mile n. of the village. Apart from the 1869 *chancel*, the church is C14 throughout, with little *quatrefoil*, *clerestory* windows above graceful *arcades* which match the s. *porch* doorway. The C13 *Purbeck marble* font stands on a new base. In the *sedilia* wall are *brasses*. One figure, to Margaret Whyte (1435), and a label to Richard Woodes: 'Master of Artes who dyed Ano 1620 haveing continued a paynefull and profitable minister of God unto this Pish 48 yeares'. ('Paynefull' in C17 meant one who took pains in his vocation.) On the n. side of the chancel is another small figure brass to Alys Burnham (1430).

Fring, All Saints (D2): A church of delightful completeness in its unpretentious, early-C14 lines, it sits on a little hill high above an enormous farmyard. Very slim tower with a later, flat parapet in alternating red brick and flint; big, plain 'Y' traceried windows to the belfry; and a fascinating w. window with a diamond-shaped frame containing flower-like tracery in four big, balanced outlines – lovely. Every window in the body of the church, with one exception, is of a piece, two-*light*, *cusped* 'Y' traceries, of the very

early C14. The e. window is a small modern replacement, set within the original big arch and *jamb*s. Under the head of this arch, however, fragments remain to show that originally it was filled with *reticulated* tracery. Small *priest's door* on the *chancel's* side, and to its left, a tiny, filled in, *low side window*. Inside the church one could well feel that time stopped here a hundred years ago, when the Victorians put the plain deal pews in the *nave* and cleared the *chancel*. Barnlike roofs, hanging oil lanterns, and two on iron brackets in the *sanctuary*. All the walls throughout the church are faintly tinged with the blush of ancient colour, creating a memorable atmosphere. There is a huge, faint St *Christopher* in a painted frame on the n. wall, and faint figures on each wall in the s.e. corner of the *nave*, all of about 1330. In this corner too is a tall niche with a fine, multi-cusped, *ogee* head. Immediately above, and on the opposite side of the C14 *chancel arch*, are the wooden stumps of the *rood loft* supports, and a stone *corbel*, presumably for the same purpose, in the e. *jamb* of the s.e. window. The entrance to the *rood stair* is behind the pulpit. In the *sanctuary* is a lovely *trefoil* headed *piscina* under an *ogee arch*, complete with stone *credence shelf*. Adjoining are unadorned *dropped sill sedilia* on two levels. The *communion rails*, barbarously varnished, appear to have incorporated bits of tracery from the old *rood screen*. The massively severe font bowl is C13, in *Purbeck marble*, with typical *blank arcading* round its eight sides. Nearby there is a scrubbed and worn *Stuart* table. Beyond, the lozenge window in the tower sits in a deep embrasure of the oddest shape, which catches the light and reflects it glowingly into the church – memorably so at sundown.

Fritton, St Catherine (16): A grassy track leads off the road up to a big churchyard where there seems always to be either jays or pheasant or both. Despite its C15 octagonal top, the round tower is *Norman* and has a tall plain arch to the *nave*. The blocked n. door-way is also *Norman*, but the one by which you enter is C14 and has worn male and female *headstops*. On the door itself, look at the centre rail – it has the initials of the churchwardens of 1619 carved on it. The C15 font belongs to the local group which all have lions round the shaft and angels alternating with lions in the bowl panels. But the variant here is that the shaft is square, and what is more, everybody smiles – all the angels, all the lions. In fact, the ones round the shaft positively laugh! Above, on the n. wall, a faded and flaking St *Christopher* is hardly recognisable – a great pity

because one can pick out the last traces of an inscription at the bottom which said once that John Alward gave the painting and was buried in the *porch* in 1506. Further along the n. wall, a big St *George* and the Dragon has been over-restored, but at least the whole of the legend can be seen and understood now. There is a *consecration cross* near the *rood stairs*, and above that is the partial figure of a bishop in a low C13 mitre – it could be Archbishop Rich (later canonised as St *Edmund Rich*). A C19 restoration programme changed many of the windows, but the *lancets* are probably as they always were. You will see that there is a *low side window* incorporated in the pair on the n. side of the *chancel*. For once, a chance to see what the old *rood screens* and lofts looked like, because Fritton has a new *rood* and a proper loft, fitted in the early 1900s, so that the stairs in the wall lead somewhere – as they were intended to. All that it lacks in comparison with the original is colour, but the early-C16 base shows how rich and brilliant the whole must have been. The heavily *cusped* tracery has gilt and multicoloured decoration, carvings of St *George* and the Dragon, and a pair of unicorns in the *spandrels* by the *chancel* entrance. The donor John Bacon and his wife have excellent portraits in the two left hand panels, she with three daughters, he with eleven sons. Next come the *Four Latin Doctors*. On the s. side, St *Simon* with a fish and St *Jude* with a boat. As you go back down the path, look for the consecration crosses on the *jamb* of the priest's door, still visible after 600 years.

Fritton, St Edmund (K5): Nowadays many people come to Fritton to enjoy the delights of the Country Park established round the long lake in its beautiful setting. That they can also call in to see the church is an advantage not to be missed for this is one of the most fascinating that the county has to offer. Until 1974 it lay within Suffolk's boundary but now Norfolk has within a few miles a trinity of churches with the rare *Norman apsidal* e. end surviving. Like Hales and Heckingham, Fritton is thatched, with a round tower that has courses of Roman tiles at its base. Walk round the outside first to see the C11 flat buttresses on the *apse*, and the little trapdoor under the eaves on the s. side of the *chancel* that tradition calls the Smugglers' Loft – brandy for the parson and baccy for the squire. The inside of the church is an object lesson in survival. Against all the odds, the tiny *Norman* *chancel* is intact in its essentials – the *vaulted roof*, the *sanctuary arch* and the tiny *lancet* windows.

The e. window surround is original with single flanking columns, decorated *capitals* and a zig zag arch, framing a little portrait of St *Edmund* and his wolf in bright stained glass of about 1875. The two other lancets have replica arches to match, and the two side windows under wide timber lintels were cut through walls and vaulting in the C15. The glass in the n. lancets, with its pleasant range of delicate colours, was flited in the early years of the C20 and has affinities with J.C. Buckley's work at Burgh Castle. In 1967 came the revelation that under the whitewash of 400 years lay a painting of the martyrdom of the patron saint. Centrally, St *Edmund* wears a crown, the arrows have pierced his body, and on the left his faithful servant who found the body after the wolf below had appeared with the head in his jaws. To right and left are the Danish bowmen loosing their arrows to complete the scene. Round this theme are four other subjects: two upper panels representing, on the left, Mother Church – crowned and holding the pastoral staff and chalice; on the right, Pagan religion – her crown falling off, her staff broken and her pitcher draining away. Two more figures (possibly the donor on the left and St *Peter* on the right) fill the bottom corner panels. Expert opinion believes that these paintings are more or less contemporary with the C12 apse, and are thus among the earliest figure paintings to be found in any church. This beautifully intimate chancel also has a C13 *pillar piscina* and a lovely little set of C16 choir stalls – very plain with nobbly flowers, the wide oak plank tops having worn so smooth that the grain of the wood stands up like ripples on a drying beach. When the *nave* was widened in the C14 it had its own scheme of decoration and a lot has been uncovered. A big St *Christopher* faces you as you enter. The Christ child has a halo and raises his right hand in blessing; the saint wears a green tunic and although his staff doesn't sprout leaves as in some other examples, it forks at the bottom. As usual, fish sport around and there is a pretty vine trail border in red and green. There was probably an altar dedicated to St *John* where the pulpit now is (making use of the extra width provided by the rebuilding) because a painting of the saint has been uncovered in the e. *jamb* of the nearby window. The whole wall surface must have had scroll painting like the fragments to be seen in the n.e. and s.e. corners, and the vivid lozenge/band decoration of the chancel arch was designed to match. The screen has no doors but it must have come from the same workshop

as the one at neighbouring Belton – the same turned columns, with roundels springing from them, all under a flat cornice. Over the arch is a fine and large set of George II *Royal Arms* on wood and dated 1749 (though you need binoculars to check that!) In place of the pre-Reformation altar stands a plain mid-C17 *three-decker pulpit*, with *parish clerk's* desk and reading pew side by side, leading along to the pulpit, angled slightly in the s.e. corner of the nave. Fat little *finials* at the corners of each frame fit the hand snugly and are its only embellishment. The Victorians ordered a font suitable for a Norman church and may themselves have been faintly surprised at the result.

Fundenhall, St Nicholas (H6): This sturdy building comprises *nave*, central tower and *chancel*, and a widely spaced screen of Scots pine sets it off very well. When it was restored in 1869 all the windows were re-done except the two small *lancets* in the base of the *Norman* tower. The s. doorway is Norman and has single shafts with simple *capitals*. The C13 n. doorway is only 3ft. wide and has a good arch with fine mouldings. The interior is a little barren, giving the impression that it is rather a struggle against the odds. There are settlement cracks in the Norman w. arch of the tower, and a vista through to a glum Victorian gothic stone *reredos* of the commandments, creed and Lord's Prayer. The work of 1869 cleared away the massive *road screen*, but a remnant has been put back and whereas bottom panels are the most usual survivors, here it is the underside of the loft. It is complete from wall to wall and there are shadows of painting in the panels. Those over the wide centre arch were coats of arms. If by some remote chance you favour the pulpit, a framed drawing tells you that it was designed by the architect R.M. Phipson in 1869.

Garboldisham, St John the Baptist (G7): A quiet village since the busy main road was moved away. And comfortably within it, this good-looking church with its handsome *Perpendicular* tower. A pity, as you approach it from the lower end of the village, that the *chancel* should have quite so dull and lifeless an e. window, with replacement tracery (1887) of *quatrefoils* and *trefoils*. The tower rising beyond, however, is excellent – a piece of C15 elegance of line and style. The parapet is richly ornamented, with *crocketed* pinnacles at the corners; a carved angel standing at the centre of each side of the embattled parapet; the parapets themselves

lushly embellished with *flushwork* panels, the *IHS* and crowned initials of saints. The angle buttresses are decorated in like manner, including wheel motifs and panels of diamond-studded flushwork; and a good panelled *base course* with roundels, flowers and shields – one of the latter with scratched graffiti giving one 'James Taylor, 1787' a minor line in history's margin. Somewhat more evident a place is given William Pece, who gave the *porch* in about 1500 – it is on the n. side now, but was originally a *galilee porch* on the w. face of the tower, where you can see its old outline, before being moved brick by brick. It has a handsome outer arch, with floral motifs and angels with shields carved round its moulding; finely canopied figure niches to each side and good flushwork. But what distinguishes it are its enormous stone-carved inscriptions, with letters nigh-on a foot high. That above the arch commemorates 'Galielmi Pece cappell' – William Pece, chaplain here. All round the base of the porch is an invocation in Latin to Christ, *John the Baptist, Zacharias and Elizabeth and John the Divine*. Inside, the porch has its original *arch-braced roof*, with well-carved *wall plates*. The n. and s. aisles are C14 *Decorated*, the windows having good *cusped* and intersecting tracery of the period; Perpendicular *clerestory*, with four pretty two-*light*, square-topped windows each side, and the remains of a *sanctus bell turret* on the e. gable. The chancel is largely Victorian. The interior of the church has an air of richness about it, being both architecturally imposing, and glowing with the colours of a gilded modern *rood*, abundant stained glass by *Powell & Sons*, beautifully vested high and side altars. Good *arch-braced* and *tie-beamed roof* to the *nave*, soaringly tall tower arch with a tiny quatrefoil *sanctus bell opening* high above it; fine four-bay *arcade* of about 1300, two pillars being round, the rest octagonal. Mostly modern furnishings, but with some old *poppy-heads* re-used in the aisles; and at the w. end, a nice *Jacobean* chest and a sweet little churchwarden's desk, shaped like an old-fashioned child's school desk, but built to take a man of substance. Late-C13 octagonal font bowl, completely plain on a modern stem. Over the s. door, a good set of *Royal Arms* for Queen Anne, carved in wood. Big plain *piscina* in corner of s. aisle. Opposite, in n. aisle, the well-preserved entrance to the old *rood stair*. The base of an ancient *screen* has been placed here, with excellent Victorian upper section, made by a village craftsman. The base, of about 1500, is said to have come from the now-ruinous neighbouring church of All Saints. It has four

painted panels, much defaced and faded, but still showing workmanship of high quality, both in the one remaining set of tracery, and in the painted figures: St *Germanus*, seen as a bishop carrying a crozier; *William of York*, as a bishop but carrying a processional cross; *Mary Magdalene*, and *Agnes*. Just behind the screen, another *piscina*, with a crisply cut trefoil arch; it was moved to its present position during Victorian restorations, but originally served the n. aisle chapel of the Bois family, further along where the organ now stands. Across the chancel arch is the C15 base of this church's own original screen, with no colour and only basic tracery carvings. It was put back in its old place after the last war, having been removed and forgotten for an unknown number of years – being at last retrieved from the Rectory piggeries! The chancel retains an enormous and rather fine late-C13 *double piscina*, under one big arch with a mass of *cusping*. *Dropped sill sedilia* adjoin it. The church has a good ring of 6 bells, tenor 11-1-21 cwt.

Garveston, St Margaret (G5): A handsome C14 *Perpendicular* tower, the battlements ornamented with *flushwork* and shields; big belfry windows with boldly *cusped* tracery; *sound-holes* on three sides, that on the s. having pretty *quatrefoil* tracery – and the general effect is splendid as you approach up the hill from the direction of Hardingham. The body of the church is largely *Decorated*, though the s. *aisle* and *nave* windows are all Perpendicular / *Tudor*. The *chancel* window tracery (excepting the big replacement Perpendicular-styled e. window) is *Decorated*, with early 'Y' tracery seen on the n. side. There appears to have been a nave e. window over the *chancel* arch before the chancel was raised to its present height. After collecting the foot-long key from the Post Office abutting the churchyard, you enter to find a plain and unadorned interior. Look to the e. and see how the chancel *weeps* to the s. The four-bay *arcade* with its octagonal pillars, between nave and s. aisle, is early-C14 *Decorated*, as is the chancel arch with its slim rounded 'shaft' pillars. The s. aisle has shallow 'blind' wall arches over the s. side and w. end windows, and over the s. door – a decorative feature presumably, and not indicating further, now vanished, buildings beyond. The simple font, with blank shields carved round its octagonal bowl, is C16. In the chancel, the *piscina* by the altar has had its headstone replaced by a ponderous piece of moulded masonry. Beside it *dropped sill sedilia* remain, though the window above has long

since been blocked. The church has a good ring of 6 bells, tenor 10-2-0 cwt.

Gateley, St Helen (F3): An unpretentious church, mainly C15, but the doors are of about 1300 and the *chancel* was entirely rebuilt in 1866. The tower has buttresses to the w. and *Perpendicular* bell openings. On the s.w. buttress of the *nave* there are the arms of Thorpe quartering Baynard and Northwood, and the buttress itself half covers the outline of an earlier door in *carstone*. Through the *Tudor porch* to an interior with some surprises. The monument by *Robert Page* to Mrs Elizabeth Segrave is nowhere to be seen, but the inscription slab stands in the n. w. corner and says that, 'she was a Person of good understanding and Just Principle but in Conjugal Life not so happy as Deserving'; one wonders whether Mr Segrave or his wife composed that careful distinction. On the n. wall, a *consecration cross* and beyond, Robert Sharbrook (1803) has a large heart-shaped memorial held aloft by three cherubs. Some of the front benches have traceried backs, and although most of the figures on the bench ends are mutilated, there are two fine monsters on the s. side. The C15 *screen* is excellent, with a lot of original colour; it has lost its vaulting but the painted panels are in reasonable state, albeit decayed at the bottom in places. There are four figures each side; from left to right: St *Audrey*, St *Elizabeth*, the Blessed Virgin, St *Puella Ridebourne* (the only known painting of her), St *Louis*, Henry VI, St *Augustine*, and *Sir John Schorne* holding a little boot with the devil peeping out. The chancel retains its solid set of late-C17 *communion rails*, and on the s. wall of the nave, there is a most interesting set of Charles I *Royal Arms* in pale colours, painted on board. The frame is inscribed 'Custos utriusque tabulae' which Stanley Wearing translated as 'Guardian of each table of the law' and believed that it was evidence that arms and commandment boards were set up together.

Gayton, St Nicholas (D4): A building mainly of the C14, with a very leggy tower. The buttresses reach only to 12ft, and above the *quatrefoil sound-holes* there are two ranges of bell openings, the first with 'Y' tracery and then a further stage with *Decorated* tracery; the battlements have the *Symbols of the Evangelists* at the corners and the whole is crowned by a vaulted dome. The *clerestory* has alternating circular and two-*light* windows, and the *aisles* and chancel windows have variations on the 'Y'

theme – all, that is, except the 1850s e. window with glass by George Hedgeland, whose great window dominates the w. end of Norwich Cathedral. There was a vestry to the n. of the chancel (see the foundation mound and the blocked door) and there is an *Early English priest's door* on the s. side. Although the n. door is now the main entrance there is a *porch* on the s. side, with a sundial over the depressed outer arch and an Early English doorway within. The *nave* roof has been altered twice – outside there is the line of a steep gable on the tower and a blocked *sanctus window*, and inside you will see the line of an earlier roof that was much lower. The tall C14 *arcades* have octagonal *piers* and there are plain boarded ceilings to the aisles, with a C19 nave roof. Note that neither the chancel arch nor the tower arch of the earlier church are quite in line with the later rebuilding of the nave and aisles. The C14 font has a deep bowl with quatrefoils, standing on a short panelled shaft, and there is a simple *trefoil piscina* in the s. aisle chapel. The chancel piscina and *sedilia* are grouped under a square label, and the door to the old vestry has thick rosettes as stops for the *hood mould*. Epitaphs fascinate many of us, and here are two with an agreeable contrast: on the s. wall of the chancel we find that the Rev. Ligonier Tredway 'was suddenly summoned to appear



Gateley, St Helen:
wood screen panel of St *Puella Ridebourne*

before his Judge' in 1830, while on a ledger slab before the chancel step there is a Latin elegy to William Tyler who died in 1657. It translates:

This tomb is index of his dear dust, of his death, of the man; not of his soul, life history, virtue; those the stone, and marble page, these heavens and the book of life declare. The rest is grievous and should not be told, whether you would take warning or find fault; for he lived well, superior to description or detraction. His wife Mary placed this here.

Gayton Thorpe, St Mary (D4): A little church in a very pretty situation, perched on a mound just off the by-road. The pre-Conquest tower is oval rather than round, there are two *lancets* to the w. (the upper one with a very deep splay), and large boulders are embedded in the lower walls. The C12 top has two-*light* Norman bell openings, columns each side and a sturdy one in the middle, with zig-zag in the arches and down the sides. The e. window has intersected tracery and the other windows there have 'Y' tracery and so the *chancel* probably dates from about 1300. There are *Perpendicular* nave windows under very long labels and the entrance doorway within the diminutive *porch* is *Early English*. The interior is plain, with pitchpine pews, pulpit and stalls. The C15 *hammer-beam* and *arch-braced roof* must have started to spread at some stage because *tie-beams* have been inserted under the hammers. Most of the fonts in this area are rather plain but this one has the *Seven Sacraments* illustrated in the bowl panels, and there are thick, rounded ribs running down the stem. The design differs from others in the county by having the eighth panel carved with a crowned Virgin and Child. All the detail is very mutilated, but clockwise from the e. the sequence is: extreme unction, ordination, matrimony, confirmation, confession, mass and baptism. The chancel arch has a pair of small late-C13 *headstops* and note that it was morticed both for the *rood screen* and for a *tympanum* to fill the space above. In the chancel is a simple *piscina*, and the *dropped sill sedilia* are separated by armrests. On the s. wall of the chancel, a chaste, well designed tablet with an urn on the *pediment*, in grey, tan and white marble, it is for Martin Coulcher (1818) who was both rector and Master of the Grammar School at Lynn.

Gaywood, St Faith (C3): Close by one of the busy roads into King's Lynn, but well back in a

pleasant churchyard. After many vicissitudes this brick church was rebuilt and enlarged – *chancel* in 1909, *nave* in 1926, and the work was well done. Walking round, one can recognise many features of its predecessors that have been incorporated; the outer arch of the *porch* is *Norman*, with zig-zag decoration, the *transepts* have 'Y' tracery windows although much of the fabric there is C17, and the new chancel retained the C14 e. window. The handsome brick tower is basically C14, with *cusped* 'Y' tracery in the bell openings, and narrow slits for *sound-holes*. The interior, neat as a pin, has some very good things. Firstly, the octagonal font by the tall brick tower arch; it is heavy and squat with a panelled shaft, and has three C17 Latin inscriptions from the New Testament, together with one in English on the s. side – 'I am thy God and the God of thy seed'. In the s. *aisle*, a pair of fascinating C17 painted panels; one shows Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury in 1588 after the defeat of the Armada, with a vignette of the battle in the background and the Queen at prayer above; the companion piece is inscribed, 'In memory of the Gunpowder Treason Plot', with the king at the top, his parliament in session, and below that, Guy Fawkes creeps in led by a devil with a flaming torch while guards search. These panels were given by the rector Thomas Hares who died in 1634, 'wearied and wasted in constant paines in the ministry' – as a *brass* on the chancel s. wall puts it. The modern joinery and carving in the church is excellent, particularly the choir stalls, the five-sided pulpit with its 2ft. figures, and the *reredos* Virgin and Child by Norman Hitch. The church has an excellent ring of 6 bells, tenor 12-0-16 cwt.

Geldeston, St Michael (J6): The church is on the main road away from the village and there is a handy car park so that you can avoid the perils of parking on the sharp bends. Big cedars frame the w. end very attractively and the churchyard has more than the average number of readable inscriptions. Look for George Holland's stone s. w. of the tower, with its finely cut lettering and 'The night is past, the Stars remain'. In 1864 the *chancel* was rebuilt, the n. *transept* added, and in 1886 the *Norman* round tower was re-faced and given a new top. The *Perpendicular* s. *porch* entrance has shields in the *spandrels* (emblems of the *Trinity* and the *Instruments of the Passion*). They are carved as though they hung from pegs but diagonally, and happily deny the force of gravity. There is a niche above with new pinnacles and worn *headstops* of a king and queen. The

C15 font has a slim square column set lozenge fashion on a base which is inscribed with the donors' names, the Garneys; tall smiling lions under a bowl which has two forms of the *Tudor rose* and a variety of shields. The s. wall of the *nave* was apparently not much altered by the restorers and they uncovered the staircase to the old *rood loft*. Opposite, the n. transept has an elaborate double arch with a highly polished marble centre column. The chancel has a set of *corbels* and *capitals* that defy classification. They sprout and gambol unrestrainedly and in one (n. side, w. end), the serpent tries the fruit itself. The e. window glass is by Leonard Walker – a central Christ with multi-coloured swirls left and right against a background of tinted panes; of 1957, it is not his best work.

Gillingham, St Mary (K6): At one time Gillingham had four parishes and still has evidence of two. To the left of the Hall drive stands the tower of All Saints, open to the sky and mantled with ivy. The rest was knocked down in 1748 and used to make a new road near the church, but there were still burials around it as late as 1918. St Mary's to the right well illustrates the panache and self-confidence of Victorian churchmen – they inherited a church essentially *Norman* and employed Penrice of Lowestoft in the 1850s and 1860s to improve it in consistent style. The old *nave* was cut down to the size of a large *porch* with the doors re-set, and a new nave, *aisles* and *apse* built e. of what was a central tower. The tower was not altered a great deal and has slim columns set in the corners up to the belfry where two-*light* bell openings are contained in larger arches and flanked by blank *arcades*, providing a continuous scheme of ornament all round. The w. and n. doorways have a proportion of original material in them and it is likely that their designs were followed when they were re-used. Entry from the n. door is into a w. porch with plenty of space round the C19 font. Then comes the old tower – four deep arches with minimal decoration on the two e. and w., and two original *lancets*. Beyond, the Victorian version of no-expense-spared Norman, with everything hard, smooth and overdone. The *wall plate*, and braces of the roof with little perching angels, look as if they were saved from the old nave w. of the tower and used again, like the *sanctus bell turret* on the gable outside. The *chancel* step has a re-set *brass* inscription to John Everard and his wife (1553) and in the s. w. corner by the font is a big wall tablet to the lord of the manor Nicholas Bacon

(1666) – grey marble medallion with heavy mantling set between *Corinthian columns*. The three coats of arms are topped by the wild boar family crest. On the opposite wall there are two panels from the C15 *rood screen*, having against all the odds survived incorporation into the squire's pew and the wholesale rebuilding. The rail has an inscription for the Corder family as donors, and the panels show how varied medieval colour schemes were. The w. window is a memorial to a rector's widow and her daughter who were drowned on their way to Australia in 1895 and the figures of the Virgin and St *John* are by *Kempe*. Rector John Lewis's memorial is unremarkable but he apparently was not – a lifelong horseman who, when he could no longer stand in the pulpit, had his old saddle installed and preached from there. Did he ever use Psalm 68 as a text, 'magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse'?

Gimingham, All Saints (I2): A church which greatly rewards some time carefully spent here. Seen from n., it looks rather dull. Look from the s. and it's very different; a good *porch*, embellished, panelled and battlemented like a miniature abbey gateway. There are three grouped windows over the entrance arch, but as the central one has a 'foot' projecting underneath, it was probably a figure niche. To the right, elegant *Tudor* windows in the *nave*, finished off with rose-red brick toppings. Unusually, the nave buttresses are capped with slate. Inside the church, all is white and simple and beautifully cared for, the light streaming in through the clear glass. Small, *Decorated chancel* with agreeable tracery in e. window. A feature not to be missed is the s. windows – they have delicate, fragile *jamb-shafts*, with tiny, exquisite foliage *capitals*, framing the window splays. Date about 1300. At the n.w. corner of the nave, a later craftsman has used the same pattern – but his work lacks the airy lightness of the original. Prayer desk in chancel is made up of two old medieval bench ends with funny little animals carved on them. The font is *Perpendicular*. As you leave, note in w. face of the flint tower (with nicely contrasting *knapped* battlements) a defaced coat of arms set in a tiny, square-headed opening. Nice to muse fancifully that it might have been the arms of John of Gaunt, whose palace was just up the road from here and who would have been but recently dead (1399) when the tower was built. The church has an excellent ring of 5 bells, tenor 8-1-25.