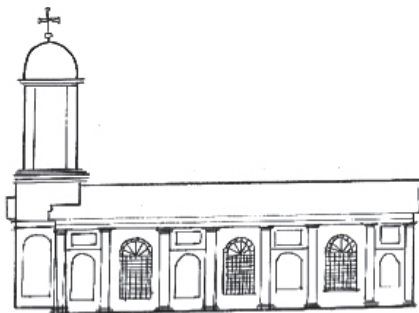


ST JAMES CHURCH DUNWICH

A DETAILED ACCOUNT

1832



1852

Today



THE DEVELOPMENT OF ST JAMES CHURCH

Over the years, Dunwich's many visitors and pilgrims have found it to be a magical and unforgettable place. There is nowhere quite like it in England and its story is fascinating. What is now a tiny parish of about 1,140 acres of land and some 70 inhabitants was once the ancient capital of East Anglia – a busy town and thriving port, where St Felix brought Christianity to its Saxon settlement and established his bishopric here in the 630s and where the shipbuilding and fishing industries brought prosperity. It had a population of about 3,000 in 1080, but since then the sea has gradually encroached and eroded it, accelerated by the occasional violent storm and flood.

At least eight mediaeval parish churches, two parochial chapels, a preceptory of Knights Templars and a Dominican Friary are beneath the sea while the Maison Dieu Hospital and church are under the beach car park. Only the remains of the Franciscan Friary and the chapel of the Leper Hospital of St James (built well inland from the centre of population) remain in situ to remind us of the glory of mediaeval Dunwich.

Dunwich's last remaining parish church of All Saints was in regular use until 1755, but was becoming very dilapidated. The population had by this time decreased to about 100 and the church was not only much too large for them to maintain but they also feared that, before many years, more of the cliffs would be eroded and it would fall into the sea, although it was not until the early years of the 20th century that it finally succumbed. The largely 14th century church was 147 feet long (longer than Blythburgh and Southwold but lacking their handsome proportions) and its nave was 22 feet wide. There was no south aisle, but a north aisle added in 1537. The sturdy embattled western tower served as an important sea-mark for shipping, and after the church fell into ruin was maintained as such by Trinity House.

The parishioners demolished the north aisle in 1725, bricked up its arcade and sold its lead and materials to put the rest of the church in repair. Services were conducted fortnightly in summer and monthly in winter by a visiting priest but

the last regular service took place in 1755, when the church was abandoned, although it was used occasionally for baptisms and burials until St James was built. Marriages took place at Westleton church, which became the parish church for Dunwich folk.

Old prints from the 1700s portray All Saints in a sorry state. An engraving made in 1736 shows it complete, but in Thomas Hooper's 1785 view we see how the central section of the nave roof had collapsed in 1764-5. Isaac Johnson's sketch from the north (published in 1818) shows the wall blocking the former arcade pierced by rectangular window-openings and only the chancel roofed. Prints of the interior reveal that it had a very fine and elaborate hammerbeam roof. The lead from the roof was removed and, together with the three bells, was placed in safe storage.

In August 1770, Daniel Bonhote, Town Clerk of Dunwich (which had its own Corporation until 1886) visited All Saints and, having moved around with his foot the dirt and detritus which covered the floor, discovered Thomas Cooper's 1576 brass inscription. This he 'liberated' and gave to the Yarmouth historian John Ives. In the late 1800s it was discovered at Strangers Hall Norwich; it was graciously returned to Dunwich in 1928 and fixed to the south wall of St James church. Had Mr Bonhote not stolen the brass, it may well have been lost or destroyed for ever.

Miles Barne (1718-80), son of a London merchant, purchased the manor of Sotterley, south-east of Beccles in 1744, and ten years later also purchased Dunwich manor. He was succeeded by his son Miles (1746-1825) and then by Miles II's half-brother, Lt Col Michael Barne (1759-1837), who took a keen interest in Dunwich and was instrumental in spearheading the building of its new parish church.

A 'Town Meeting' was convened in 1826 to discuss the building of a new 'chapple' in the parish. A faculty was obtained for the sale of the lead and 'three old and broken bells' from All Saints (which raised £124.15s.6d for the lead and £70.8s. for the bells) and the local worthies began to set about raising subscriptions of money for the new church.

Lt. Colonel Barne and Lord Huntingfield started with £100 each, Barne Barne (Michael's bachelor brother) gave £50, as did the Corporation of Dunwich and a further £70 was raised by other individuals. The meeting also agreed the site of the church, beside the old Leper Hospital of St James, with the ruins of its Norman church; doubtless this also influenced the dedication chosen for the church.

The architect chosen to design the building was Robert Appleton, who lived (and farmed 399 acres) at Thorington and practised as an Architect and Surveyor from an office in Halesworth Market Place. His works included schools at Holton, Leiston, Westhall and Westleton, vicarages at Thorington and Ubbeston, Halesworth police station and Saxmundham Corn Exchange. Although he supervised alterations at Aldeburgh and Halesworth churches, his only known complete church is here at Dunwich – and what a very distinctive building he created.

The church as first built (and still forming the core of the present tower and nave) was a 'white' brick building in the Classical style of the late 1600s and 1700s. It may be that Michael Barne influenced its design and showed Appleton pictures or plans of Classical churches in London, and the result was a church like many which still adorn our towns and cities but which had never been seen before or since in a tiny Suffolk village!

David Elisha Davy visited it in 1839 and from his detailed notes and from the architect's drawing and plan, we can get a picture of this eccentric (for Suffolk) little church. The building was a rectangular box of 'white' Suffolk brick, measuring 62ft x 22ft internally, without any structural chancel. Its brick-panelled north and south walls had three semi-circular headed windows and there was a larger east window. At the west end was a small tower (10ft x 9ft), crowned by a circular, dome-capped, cupola-like belfry, described by Davy as being 'more like a pepper-box than the thing it is intended for'.

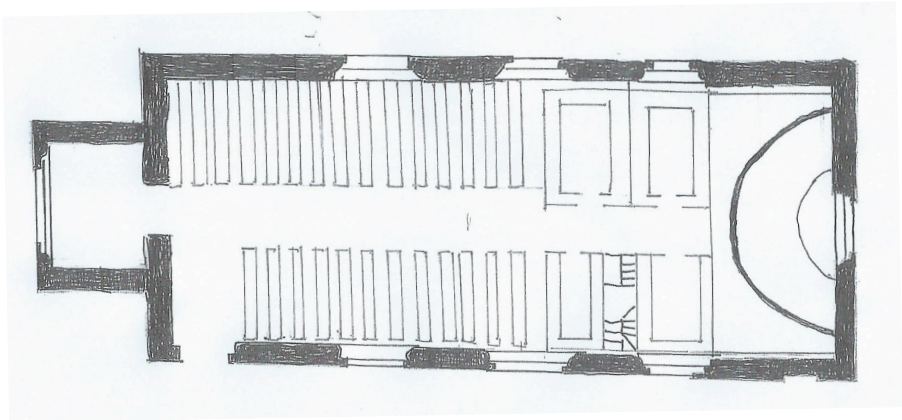
Building work began in April 1827 and the Churchwardens' Accounts record payments up to December of that year to T Johnson for lime, Richard Girling (bricks), John Sallows (timber), John Vidgrift (mason's work), Richard Garrett (copper) and George Morris (slate for the roof) totalling £524.10s.4d. Mention is made in 1829 of furnishing the church and in 1832 £4.4s. was paid for an iron chest for the church. The bricks were actually made by Dunwich Corporation, who sold them to the contractor.

Tuesday 14th August 1832 was a great day for the people of Dunwich, when the Right Rev'd Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, then aged 88, solemnly consecrated their new church, having arrived at the residence of Lt Col Barne the previous day. The service was conducted by (and 'an appropriate and excellent sermon' preached by) the Revd Robert Howlett, who was to be the parish priest, the legal sentence of consecration having been read by the Rev'd Henry Uthhoff, rector of Huntingfield and Cookley. The *Suffolk Chronicle* reporter wrote that 'The solemn ceremony was rendered the more imposing by the venerable appearance of the respected Diocesan, whose performance of the Consecration was most impressive and articulate'.

The final cost of £1,625 included £845 from the Barne family, £280 raised by public subscriptions, £195 from the sale of lead and bells from All Saints and a £200 grant from the Incorporated Church Building Society, awarded on condition that a certain number of seats in the church should be free of pews. The renting out of pews to those families who could afford them generated considerable income for the maintenance of churches, but many people thought this to be divisive and un-Christian and the ICBS was one of a growing number of influences to encourage 'free and unappropriated sittings' in our churches, where the poor and visitors could be accommodated.

The Churchwardens' Accounts give details of the seating in 1835. The church was equipped with mostly open benches but at the east end of the nave were two box pews each side, the southern ones flanking the pulpit. Lord Huntingfield and the Barne family occupied the commodious compartments on the north side, whilst Mr F Robinson rented the eastern box pew opposite.

The northern benches (working westwards) were occupied by John Brinkley Easey and his family (1 and 2), Joseph Dix Sr (3), Lt Col Barnes' maidservants (5 and 6) and Mr Robinson's servants (7). On the south side the pew west of the pulpit was free, then came James Woolner Sr (2), the Corporation Pew (3), Lt Col Barne's menservants (4 and 5) and John Dimmel (6). The remaining seats were free.



Plan of original Appleton designed interior of church

The pulpit was a three-decker and must have been quite lofty, with the clerk's desk in front (near the central aisle), the reading desk above and behind it and the pulpit proper above and behind the reading desk, and beside the south wall. A Mr Stevens was paid £2.1s.7d for altering it in 1833. David Elisha Davy in 1839 described it as being 'large and handsome and has a quite new sounding-board; the hangings are of purple cloth with yellow fringe and embroidery – as is the covering of the Communion Table'.

Davy describes the church as 'a single room', the eastern part of which formed the sanctuary in which stood the Communion Table within a semi-circular communion rail, south of which stood the slender 'modern' font. Flanking the east window were framed boards, two each side, inscribed with the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments.

The east window was filled with stained glass (for which a Mr Thompson was paid £12 in 1837), showing the Royal Arms in the centre and, in various parts, small figures of Our Lord and ten of the Apostles. A small gallery had been erected at the west end of the church in 1839, for which plans (drawn up by a Mr Page) were submitted for an ICBS grant, which was rejected, although the work took place.

Lt. Colonel Michael Barne had died in 1837 and Davy's keen eye spotted in one of the pews 'a case, in which the Clerk told me was a mural monument to the memory of the late Lt Col Barne, which was to be fixed against one of the walls and by it stood a hatchment of Barne impaling Boucherette' (Michael had married Mary Boucheret). He was buried in the new family vault within the ruins of the Leper Chapel in the churchyard. Interestingly Davy wrote that the churchyard 'is small, though perhaps sufficient for the parish... though the older inhabitants rather prefer All Saints churchyard'.

His son Frederick Barne (1801-86) inherited the manor and was the last MP for the 'rotten borough' of Dunwich, which was abolished in 1832. It seems that he had decided ideas about church buildings and favoured the principles of the Gothic Revival in English architecture, rather than the outdated neo-Classical style in which the church was built. He must have discussed this with Davy, who records that 'It is the present Mr Barne's intention to put in new windows of a more ancient form and to case the outside walls with flints, so as to give the whole fabric more of the appearance of a country church than it has at the present'.

Hamlet Watling's drawing of the church in 1850 shows that by then the 'pepperpot' tower had been encased by the present square tower, the south porch had been added and the walls had been faced with flint. The windows however were still single Classical ones, with round-headed arches. This work probably took place in 1845.

Sunday 31st March 1851 was the day of the Religious Census, when all churches had to send in statistics of the numbers attending their services. St James, (which then possessed 200 free ‘sittings’ and 50 for rent) did not have a service that day owing to the recent death of the Revd W M Weddell at the age of 42. They recorded however that worship took place each Sunday, alternating between morning and afternoon services and that the average morning congregation was 50 adults and 50 ‘scholars’, with 90 adults and 50 ‘scholars’ in the afternoons. Interestingly about 30-40 local Methodists worshipped in ‘an inhabited dwelling-house licensed for worship’. The population of Dunwich was then 294.

In 1881 St James church was transformed, thanks to the generosity of Frederick Barne, who paid the entire cost. The single windows in the nave were replaced by two-light gothic windows in the Decorated style of the 1300s and a chancel (25³/₄ feet x 17³/₄ feet) was added, in the same style. Internally the church received handsome new roofs and furnishings, including exquisitely carved benches in the chancel, a new pulpit and font.

Whilst we have yet to discover documentary evidence with which to identify the architect for this work, he may well have been the versatile Edward Fernley Bisshopp, whose office was in Museum Street Ipswich. He restored many east Suffolk churches, including Aldeburgh and Friston, he transformed St Mary-at-the-Elms and Holy Trinity Ipswich by the addition of new chancels and designed the vast red-brick St Michael’s Ipswich. Bramfield House, Blackheath at Friston and Hurts Hall Saxmundham are among the mansions created by him, also the transformation of Greyfriars, Frederick Barne’s mansion here in Dunwich, which was lavishly altered, extended and embellished to his designs in 1890.

Much has been done during the 20th and 21st centuries to adorn and beautify this much-loved church and its surroundings and to enable it to serve the community whose Spiritual Home it is and its many visitors and pilgrims. These developments include:-

1902-3 – Lady Constance Barne provided the tower clock in 1902 and in the following year the church was lit with new lamps supplied by Messrs Hart, Son & Peard of Charing Cross Road.

The 1920s – The War Memorial and the memorial tablet in church were erected in 1920 and Sir Charles Nicholson's chancel screen in 1921. In 1923 the fragment of the last buttress from All Saints was transferred to the churchyard and in 1927 the Cooper brass from All Saints was fixed to the nave wall.

The 1930s – The lych-gate at the entrance to the cemetery across the road was repaired and rebuilt in 1930 and in 1938 the tower screen was given in memory of the Revd A Scott Thompson.

1991 – The new organ, with its splendid case, was installed on the newly built west gallery.

2010 – The west end of the church was transformed by a tasteful and effective re-ordering, providing an entrance vestibule, kitchen, toilet and improved vestry facilities, and much-needed space.

St James Church Today

Bearing in mind that mediaeval Dunwich extended some distance out to sea, what is left on land to form the present parish which St James' was built to serve is roughly a long rectangle, stretching approximately 2 miles from the village in the north to the foot of Dunwich Common in the south, and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the border with Westleton to the sea. A small triangle of lanes gives access to where most of the people live.

Clearly much thought was given to the position of the new church, which has proved ideal and picturesque, close to the 'village proper', at the meeting of the lanes, within easy access to most of the houses and forming an attractive landmark at the entrance to the village from the north-west. It was also built upon what had indeed been holy ground, in the precincts of the ancient Leper Hospital of St James, which had survived the ravages of the sea because it was built well to the west of the city gates, in isolation from the townsfolk. Although it ceased to minister to lepers in the 1530s, its church was still used until c.1685.

EXPLORING THE EXTERIOR

It is well worth-while taking time to enjoy St James in its peaceful setting and to explore its picturesque and atmospheric **CHURCHYARD**.

Entering from the west, the finely carved gate is a memorial to Geoffrey Fairs who tragically died young and whose family had farmed Church Farm from the mid-1950s for about twenty years.

In the south-east corner stands the ruined chancel and rounded apse of the **Leper Hospital Chapel of St James**, dating from the mid-1100s. Although now but a shadow of its former glory, enough remains to indicate that, with its elaborate wall-arcading, this must have been one of the late Norman ‘gems’ of East Suffolk. When Michael Barne died in 1837 the Barne family built a large vault within these ruins in which he and several members of the family are buried. In 2002 the roof of the mausoleum became dangerous and was removed and the vault filled in with the coffins left in situ. (*A leaflet, available in the church, gives details of the Chapel’s history and beauty*).

Standing proudly near the churchyard wall to the south of the church is the **north-west buttress of the tower of All Saints Church**. When All Saints was abandoned in the 1750s, it stood some 70 yards from the cliff edge and it was not until the years between 1903 and 1920 that the ruined building fell, stage by stage, over the cliff. A fascinating series of photographs taken over these years records this. All that remained of the church on the cliff edge was this section of the tower’s north-west buttress, which was carefully dismantled and was faithfully and accurately re-erected here in 1923.

Interestingly, the whole tower may well have been preserved and re-erected had the Revd Arthur Ashton, rector of Uggheshall from 1886-1938, been successful in his request to Captain Barne to dismantle it and use the materials to complete Uggheshall’s truncated tower. The Captain hesitated in removing it for sentimental reasons, but agreed that Uggheshall should have the materials when it eventually fell. Captain Barne was sadly killed in the Great War and the tower collapsed over the cliff and onto the beach below, making it impossible to transport the remains.

The fragment of buttress is embellished with simple flint and stone flushwork – lozenge patterns on its base-course and chequer-work on its main face – originally work of the 1400s.

Four old **headstones** from All Saints churchyard are preserved beside the buttress; the only legible one is for Robert Easey, who died in 1795.

Later graves of Dunwich inhabitants include several for members of the Easey family, including (south-west of the tower) John Brinkley Easey - Frederick Barne's Steward for over 10 years and churchwarden here - who died in 1871 and William Easey, his land agent, who died in 1879, (near the nave's north wall). The Dix family, who were local farmers, are also well represented. A plinth of cast iron, crowned by an urn, commemorates Francis Robinson of Cliff House, who died in 1843 aged 91. This remarkable memorial, made by Garrett's of Leiston, was recently conserved with a grant from the Ironmongers' Company. John Robinson (died 1860) has a sarcophagus-shaped tomb which records that he was 'many years a Member of the Corporation of Dunwich and resident of Cliff House in this ancient Borough'.

A headstone towards the southern end of the churchyard is in memory of St John Horsfall. 'Jock' was a famous 1940s motor racing driver and played a key role in Operation Mincemeat, the successful disinformation plot which saved many lives by convincing the Germans that the Allies planned to land in Greece rather than Italy in 1943. Dunwich's WW1 involvement is remembered by the five graves which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Near the chancel is a section of an octagonal column – possibly part of an arcade-pier - from All Saints.

Rising from, and blending with, the greens of the churchyard are the grey flint walls of the **CHURCH** itself. The flint facing of 1845 encases the brick core of the nave and tower base of Robert Appleton's original church. Incorporated into the flintwork are pieces of dressed stone and brown septaria, maybe from the Leper Hospital remains.

The slender **tower**, rising some 60 feet, is strengthened at its western corners by diagonal buttresses (of 1845) for about half its height; their corners have brick quoins and the embattled parapet is capped with bricks. The single trefoil-headed west window may have taken its present shape in 1881, but the narrow slit windows in the bell-chamber above are work of 1845; this stage covers Appleton's circular belfry-stage, which is still in place. The clock-face was installed on the north side of the tower in 1902.

Tiny slit windows also pierce the east and west walls of the simple **porch**, which was also added in 1845 and has bricks in its quoins and entrance arch.

The **nave and chancel** are simple and have few airs and graces, but have reproduced, as Frederick Barne had intended, a simple Suffolk country church. His 1881 transformation (almost certainly to EF Bisshopp's designs) provided three uniform two-light windows each side of the nave and a handsome south doorway – all in the 'Decorated' style of architecture which was used in the early 1300s. The major 1881 extension was the chancel, with single 'lancet' windows (fashionable in the 1200s) in its north and south walls and a southern priest's doorway.

The one unusual feature is the curious three-light east window, with its round-headed arch and its mullions and reticulated (net-like) tracery made of timber.

WHAT TO SEE INSIDE THE CHURCH

The **entrance vestibule**, designed by Simon Merritt and made in 2010 gives access to a bright, colourful and cared-for interior. Much of what we see here dates from Frederick Barne's 1881 make-over 'to create the appearance of a country church' and no local architect could be better qualified to realise his hopes than Edward Fernley Bisshopp.

The present nave area represents the entire church consecrated in 1832 and the pammments in the floor of the **central aisle** probably survive from this time. By contrast, the **chancel floor** is quite a blaze of colour from the glazed encaustic tiles of 1881, which were so loved by Victorian Gothic Revival restorers.

Superb craftsmanship in timber may be seen in the **roofs** of the nave and chancel and we will certainly forgive you for lying flat on a pew in order to enjoy the beauty of the carpentry and carving without the risk of neck-strain! The roofs are of arch-braced with collar-beam construction (as are several genuine 15th century roofs in Suffolk churches).

The arch braces rest upon wooden corbels in the wall, which are carved with a variety of rich carvings of foliage, etc. The arches rise to support the collar-beams which straddle the roof about two-thirds of the way up and help to tie it in place. What is rather eccentric about this roof is the array of little projecting beams at its base, along the tops of the nave and chancel walls.

Presumably the same skilled woodcarver created the **benches**, with their array of exquisitely-carved poppyhead ends (again in the style of the 15th century originals which grace many of our Suffolk churches). These are worth examining in detail to enjoy the wheat, foliage, acorns, pomegranates, etc. Amongst those on the north side, the 2nd from the east has the masonic square and compasses (representing God as the great Architect of the universe, setting the bounds of behaviour and morality); at the centre is the 'all-seeing eye' of God and on the square is the date 1881. A larger carving of the 'all-seeing eye' appears on the 3rd poppyhead, whilst on the 4th is the Lamb and flag emblem of Jesus, the 'Lamb of God'. The 5th has a pair of wings and the

7th a shield dated 1881. The 6th poppyhead from the east on the south side is carved with the initials 'FB', for Frederick Barne.

Of similar date and high-quality craftsmanship are the **pulpit** and **priest's stall**, with their traceried panels. The **lectern** has a two-sided book-rest which revolves, in the fashion of some mediaeval lecterns.

Now fixed to the north and south nave walls are the **Lord's Prayer and Creed** (south) and the **Ten Commandments** (north), painted on canvas c.1832 to flank the east window of the new church and moved to their present position in 2010. Also facing each other across the nave are two **carved panels** with 17th century style woodcarvings of two long-necked birds (north) and two mermaids (south), which once adorned a fireplace in Greyfriars (the home of the Barne family) and were placed here in 1997 in memory of Frank and Muriel Stone.

At the west end of the church, opposite the entrance (to symbolise entry into the family of the Church through Holy Baptism) is the **font**, in which Dunwich babes (and older people) are still baptised. Its octagonal bowl rests upon a stem surrounded by eight circular shafts, reproducing the style of font which was fashionable in the 1200s. This was not the original font described by Davy in 1839 and was probably part of the 1881 refurbishment.

Simon Merritt's re-ordering of the west end of the nave incorporates the carved **tower screen** which was given in memory of the Revd Alfred Thompson, who ministered here from 1903-33. It was consecrated on October 9th 1938 by the Right Revd Walter Whittingham, the diocesan bishop.

On the gallery above it and adorning the west end of the church is the magnificent **organ case**, the style and quality of which is rare in a village church. This is the work of Roger Pulham, the Suffolk organ-builder from Charsfield, near Wickham Market. Its style is influenced by 17th century organ cases in Northern Europe, with the Great and Pedal pipes in the larger, upper case and those for the Positive (or 'Chair') organ in the lower case.

Much of the **organ** was salvaged in 1987 from the hurricane-wrecked chapel of Hazelwood Preparatory School, Limpsfield, Surrey, where it had been installed just three years earlier. It was rebuilt at Dunwich (with some of the pipework, casework and mechanism totally replaced) and was dedicated on 30th June 1991 by the Right Revd Kenneth Riches, formerly Bishop of Lincoln, in memory of Laura Semmence, who had been the village schoolmistress. It is a remarkably versatile instrument with two manuals, pedals and twelve speaking stops. (*A leaflet giving details of the organ's history, construction and specification is available in the church.*)

In 2010 the west end of the nave and tower base were re-ordered, bringing the tower screen forward, removing and redesigning four pews and providing a toilet and kitchen area and a more spacious vestry. The architect was Simon Merritt, who also supervised the much-acclaimed re-ordering of his own parish church at Leiston.

A plaque on the tower's south wall records that the tower **clock** (made by J W Benson Ltd of Ludgate Hill London), was given in 1902, in thanksgiving for the safe return of Captain Miles Barne from the South African War. Sadly he was not to return from the 1914-18 War. The church **bell**, which weighs about 5 cwt, was made in the Whitechapel bell-foundry of Thomas Mears II in 1832 and was given by Frederick Barne.

The **chancel arch** is nicely proportioned and in the style of the 1300s, with half-octagonal responds (at the sides) which have moulded capitals and bases. The **chancel screen** set beneath it is a simple but beautiful piece of woodcarving, with linenfold panelling in its dado (lower part) and delicately-carved tracery crowning the openwork sections above. It was designed by the eminent architect, Sir Charles Nicholson, who created several beautiful late 19th and 20th century churches and restored and beautified many others. In East Anglia he designed St Saviour's Chapel at the east end of Norwich Cathedral and he adorned Sotterley church with a reredos and a stone altar, also for the Barne family. The work was carried out by E Bowman & Sons of Stamford – another firm of national repute.

A brass plaque on the screen's southern panel records that it was given in memory of Lady Constance Adelaide Barne, daughter of the 5th Marquess of Hertford and widow of Lt Col F St J N Barne (1842-98), who died in 1915.

The screen was dedicated on 11th April 1921, together with the wall-tablet near the pulpit commemorating Lady Constance's two sons, Miles and Seymour, who were killed in World War I. The preacher was Canon Algernon Markham, vicar of Grimsby (and later Bishop of Grantham), whose wife Winifred (Lady Constance's daughter) unveiled the brass plaque. The screen was then dedicated by the Revd Lord Victor Seymour – brother of Lady Constance and vicar of the Anglo Catholic stronghold of St Stephen's Gloucester Road, Kensington. Mrs Barne of Sotterley then unveiled the wall-tablet, which was dedicated by the vicar.

The chancel was added in 1881, when its curious timber-traceried east window was re-set. The original Appleton window in the east wall of the nave was filled with stained glass in memory of Mrs Mary Barne in c.1859-60, for which the wooden tracery was made and presumably this was simply taken apart and reconstructed in the east wall of the new chancel. The chancel forms a lovely Gothic Revival period-piece, with its brightly-coloured **floor-tiles**, its northern **choir stall** with large poppyhead ends and arm-rests, a tracery frieze in its back and its openwork bookrest beautifully designed and carved. The **Communion rail** is also embellished with attractive woodcarving and the **altar** table has three arched openings, with its 'frontals' in the liturgical colours, cleverly fixed behind them. The lavishly-carved wooden corbels supporting the wall-posts of the arch-braced **roof** are low enough to reward examination.

Fine craftsmanship in stone, reproducing mediaeval design, may be seen in the sedilia and piscina in the south wall of the sanctuary. In mediaeval times **sedilia** provided seating for the Celebrant, Deacon and Subdeacon at High Mass. Sometimes this seating was on a lowered windowsill but occasionally it was beneath an arch, as here (or individual arches, as at Westleton). Here EF Bisshopp provided a grand trefoil-headed arch, resting upon circular shafts, the eastern one also supporting the two trefoil-headed arches of the **angle-**

piscina. Into the piscina drain was poured the disposable water which was used at the Eucharist. The hollowed-out piece of **stone** on the floor in the south-east corner was discovered on the beach in 1907 and placed in the church; it was thought to be part of a holy water stoup from All Saints.

STAINED GLASS

In mediaeval times stained glass was one of the many visual-aids by which our church buildings taught the Faith to the people who could not read and did not understand the Latin of the Vulgate Bible. It also provided wonderful scope for artists and glassmakers to beautify the House of God. The 19th and 20th century scenes in the windows here also teach and are of great beauty; most were given in memory of Dunwich worthies and have appropriate inscriptions. They are as follows:-

East Window – Jesus at the Last Supper is instituting the Holy Communion, which still takes place regularly at the nearby altar. Eleven disciples are present (i.e. not Judas, the traitor) and Peter and John are central, in front of the table. In the tracery at the top are three angels with scrolls. It commemorates Mrs Mary Barne (née Boucheret), wife of Lt Col Michael Barne and mother of Frederick Barne, who died in December 1858 at the grand old age (for those days) of 92. Beneath it is the Latin motto ‘FUNGAR INANI MUNERE’ – a motto of the Barnes. It is a quotation from the ‘*Aeneid*’ by Virgil, which is translated, ‘Let me perform a duty of no personal gain’. The family engaged one of the finest stained glassmakers of the day – John Hardman & Co of Birmingham to design and make it. It was originally inserted in the old nave’s Classical east window, in a new three-light wooden framework, which was carefully moved to its place in the new chancel in 1881.

Chancel, north – The Wise Men presenting their gifts to the infant Jesus.

Chancel, south – The Crucifixion of Jesus, with his Mother and St John looking upwards, and with Mary Magdalene weeping and clutching his feet.

These two windows, believed to be also by Hardman & Co, probably date from 1881.

Nave, south-east – Another scene of the Wise Men, also a scene of Jesus welcoming children, with the Dove of the Holy Spirit in the trefoil above. This is in memory of Edwin James Clark's wife Elizabeth and son, Cecil Osmond. Edwin had lived at Church Farm adjoining the churchyard for 46 years, and the window, placed here in 1950, is the work of G Maile & Son of Canterbury.

Nave, north-east – The trefoil at the top contains a small rectangular panel of very crazed, faded and blackened glass with an unidentifiable painted scene surrounded by a double border. Detailed examination reveals that the inner border has vases each side, the 'IHS' emblem at the top and a cross at the bottom, all in faded red ochre. There appear to be three figures, one of whom is brandishing a sword. It could be 17th or 18th century Continental glass and its condition makes one wonder if it had been found on the beach.

Tower, west window – St Felix, who brought Christianity to East Anglia was its first bishop, operating from Dunwich. This replaces glass which was badly damaged - maybe by the troops who used the tower – during World War II. It was designed by the London and Bristol firm of John Hall & Sons and was installed in 1959 by James W Willer of Warwick Road Ipswich. The mitred bishop is dressed in the full pontificals (tunicle, dalmatic and chasuble) of a mediaeval prelate, rather than a bishop of the 600s AD.

MEMORIALS

St James contains several memorials to people of the past who have been part of this church and community and some of these have already been mentioned. On the walls are plaques and tablets commemorating:-

Michael Barne of Sotterley and Dunwich (died 1837). He was an MP in four successive parliaments from 1812-30. 'By his care and principally by the aid of his liberal contribution this church was erected in 1830'. This marble plaque, with a profile portrait of him, is by William Behnes of Charles Street

London – a sculptor of national repute, who was ‘Sculptor in Ordinary’ to Queen Victoria. (*Chancel, north-west*).

Frederick Barne (son of the above), who was the last MP for the Borough of Dunwich and who restored this church, altering the tower and adding the chancel and most of the furnishings. He died in 1886 and would have approved of this gothic memorial, placed here by his widow, Mary. (*Chancel, north-east*).

Jessie Kate Thompson. The small lozenge-shaped brass plaque by the sedilia records that she received Holy Communion for the last time here on Easter Day 1910. She was the wife of the vicar and the plaque, which touchingly highlights the single word ‘Satisfied’, was dedicated by Bishop Bertram Pollock of Norwich on 23rd March 1911.

Major Miles Barne and Captain Seymour Barne, sons of Frederick St John and Lady Constance Adelaide Barne, who were both killed in France in 1917. Their memorial, with two inscription panels in black marble, is near the pulpit.

War Memorial Plaque recording the names of ten people of Dunwich who died in the 1914-18 War. This tablet, near the entrance, designed and erected by Messrs Colman of Norwich, was dedicated by the vicar and unveiled by Mrs Barne of Sotterley Hall on 13th June 1920.

Brass inscription to Thomas Cooper (died 1576), removed from the abandoned All Saints church in 1770, then discovered in Strangers Hall Norwich, who kindly returned it in 1927 when it was placed on the wall near the entrance. This is part of the brass inscription plate commemorating a Bailiff of the Town of Dunwich. The full inscription reads,

Here Thomas Cooper, sutym Baly of this towne, inclosed is in clay / Which is the resting place of fleash until the latter day. / Of one son and daughters six the Lord him parent made / Ere cruel death did worke his spite or fickle life did fade. / Who deceased ye XVII of Maye in the yere of Our Lord 1576’.

VICARS OF ST JAMES

Robert HOWLETT (1832-39). Son of Samuel Howlett of Frostenden. He was vicar of Longham and Wendling (Norfolk) 1841-61 and then of Hopton near Lowestoft 1861-72.

Richard DAY (1839-43). A farmer's son from Yoxford, he was vicar of Wenhasston 1831-52, and also of Dunwich 1839-43. He died in 1859.

William Langstaff WEDDALL (1843-51). In addition to being vicar of Darsham (1832-51) he was also rector of Chillesford (1832-38) and vicar of Dunwich (1843-51). His death at the age of 42 occurred at Tuxford, Notts.

Thomas Rabett MAYHEW (1851-66). He was reared in Saxmundham and left Dunwich to become rector of Warehorne in Kent.

John Frederick NOOTT (1867-95). A native of Barnstaple, Devon, he served curacies at Westhall and at Wangford. He was rector of Blyford from 1860-94 and also vicar of Dunwich from 1867 until his death in 1895, but resided at The Hermitage, Frostenden.

Henry Dunsterville DAY (1895-1903). CMS Missionary in Bengal, then curate at St Stephen Edge Hill Liverpool, Emmanuel Weston-Super-Mare, Wadsley Yorks and Bredfield with Pettistree. Dunwich was his only living, although at the same time he looked after Wissett near Halesworth, where he resided. He retired to Liverpool.

Alfred Scott THOMPSON (1903-33). Trained at the London College of Divinity, he held curacies at Biddestone Wilts, Christ Church Battersea, St Michael's Stockwell, Saxtead and Halesworth. He was vicar of Peasenhall (1889-92), then again curate at Halesworth (1892-1903) before his thirty-year incumbency at Dunwich.

Thomas Johnston BAYLY (1933-35). Having served as a priest in the Church of Ireland, he became rector of Theberton from 1922 (and also curate-in-

charge of Bruisyard from 1928) until his arrival here in 1933. He left to be vicar of Stanningfield and Bradfield Combust in West Suffolk.

Alfred STONE (1935-41). *The first vicar of the united benefice of Westleton-with-Dunwich had been curate at Writtle Essex and St Peter's St Albans, then vicar of Holy Trinity Lee, Lewisham (1929-32) and of Wickham Skieth (1932-35). He was vicar of Walpole (1941-44), before retiring to Gidea Park, Romford.*

Norman Stanley GAY (1941-47). *Trained at the London College of Divinity, he was curate at Christ Church Ellacombe Torquay, St Philip's Southport, Lache-cum-Saltney Cheshire and St Mark's Harrogate. Westleton and Dunwich was his first benefice; he left to become curate-in-charge of St Andrew's Newcastle-under-Lyme (1947-8) and then vicar of Buckminster and Sewstern, Leics.*

William James EVANS (1948-54). *He ministered for ten years in British Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama, before a two-year curacy at St Clement's Ipswich and his ministry here.*

William John JOHNSON (1954-62). *After training at Wycliffe Hall Oxford four years' missionary work in Colombo and a curacy at Crewkerne Somerset, he arrived to take up his first living here as vicar of Westleton and Dunwich, leaving to be vicar of Holy Trinity Darwen (1961-64) and then of Twerton, Bath.*

Victor Saunders EDWARDS (1962-67). *He was curate at Havant, the vicar of All Saints Thames Ditton (1937-50), Shoreham and Lullingstone Kent (1950-62), then of Westleton and Dunwich.*

James Alan LOVEJOY (1967-74). *Having served a curacy at All Saints Hertford, he was a missionary in India (1939-49), then vicar of Shirehampton (1949-58) and secretary to the Conference of British Missionary Societies (1958-67). He became vicar of Westleton and Dunwich in 1967, to which Darsham was added in 1971. He retired to Framlingham.*

Ian Cameron ROBINSON (1974-84). *A late entry to the ministry, Ian was curate at St Augustine's Ipswich, then vicar of this benefice. He retired to Halesworth.*

Richard John GINN (1985-2013). *Richard served curacies at the London churches of Christ Church Crouch End and St Michael's Highgate before his ministry here. He has retired to Hacheston, near Wickham Market.*

Christine Howick REDGRAVE (2014-). *Christine was made Deaconess in 1978 and served in the parishes of St Mary's Watford, St Andrew's Maidenhead and Bracknell, where she later became Parish Deacon, then Team Vicar. From 1996-2004 she was priest-in-charge of the Berkshire villages of Woolhampton, Midgham and Beenham Valence, also Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands, becoming a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford in 2000 and full-time Director of Ordinands in 2004.*

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Roy Tricker

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