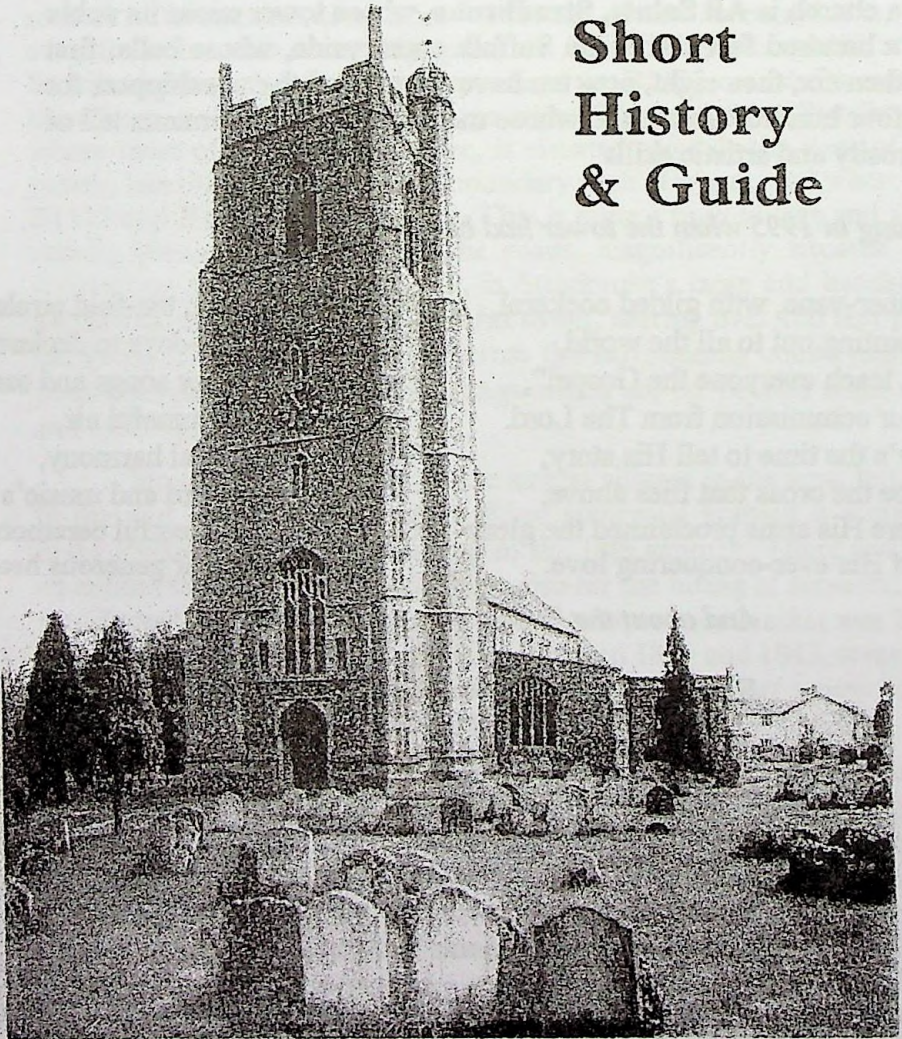


All Saints Church, Stradbroke

Short History & Guide



ALL SAINTS CHURCH, STRADBROKE

A Parish Church is its own history book whose pages are the walls, the roof, the furnishings and the memorials, the bells and the tower. They were written by the men and women whose piety, whose wealth, whose zeal, whose sense of duty find an expression in what is, and in what has been, part of a building that stands in a town or village to the glory of God, and in thanksgiving for the devotion of its inhabitants to the well-being of their fellow-citizens.

Such a church is **All Saints, Stradbroke**, whose tower raises its noble head a hundred feet above the Suffolk countryside, whose bells, first five, then six, then eight, now ten have summoned the worshippers for over four hundred years, and whose memorials and adornments tell of generosity and artistic skills.

We sang in 1995 when the tower had been restored:

Weather-vane, with gilded cockerel, Pointing out to all the world, "Go, teach everyone the Gospel", Our commission from The Lord. Now's the time to tell His story; See the cross that flies above, Where His arms proclaimed the glory Of His ever-conquering love.	Bells that swing in ten-fold circles Times and flag-days to declare, Pipes and reeds for songs and canticles Blowing out a tuneful air, Voices in convivial harmony, Bright with word and music's arts, Set by man for cheerful ceremony, Lift to God your generous hearts.
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And about the Bishop on our Village Sign:

Robert Grosseteste, Stradbroke's son,
Oxford's Master of the Schools,
Priest and Scholar, Archdeacon,
Statesman too, when Henry rules.
Let the saintly qualities
Lincoln's Bishop made its own,
In St. Edmund's Diocese
Be by his descendents shown.

These words, about a man who lived in the earliest days of this church, set an example for us all to follow. May your visit here encourage you to do so.

David Streeter. Rector.

WELCOME to All Saints Church Stradbroke, which serves a large parish in the rural, agricultural and very picturesque countryside of north Suffolk, less than four miles from the Waveney Valley and the Norfolk border. This is a beautiful area, abounding in pretty villages with charming old timber-framed houses and cottages and fine churches. Stradbroke is bordered by the parishes of Wilby, Laxfield, Fressingfield, Wingfield, Denham St. John and Horham, all of which are worth visiting.

The parish of Stradbroke is extensive and scattered; there are several little communities called "Greens" within its boundaries, but away from the main centre of population. From Depperhaugh Wood on Stradbroke's north-west border, to where the B1117 crosses its eastern boundary, is a distance of some four miles. The nucleus of Stradbroke, where most of its inhabitants live, is situated towards the west of the parish, less than a mile from the boundary with Horham, and where the B1117 and B1118 roads intersect. This is quite a busy village and at its centre, beside the junction of the roads, magnificently situated and dominating the houses around it, is Stradbroke's large and handsome parish church. Its noble and graceful tower, soaring over 100 feet from the ground, is visible for miles across the surrounding countryside. It points people heavenwards, to things which are far beyond what time and space can measure.

Stradbroke is still one of the largest villages in the area, but was in the past a small market town. King Henry III granted it a market every Friday, which took place up to the 18th century. There was also an annual fair for cattle and pedlary, also for the hiring of servants; this was discontinued in 1872. In the 19th century a corn market was held, and a Corn Hall was erected in 1854. Between 1831 and 1843, some 200 paupers were helped by the parish to emigrate and start a new life in America.

One of Stradbroke's best-known sons was Bishop Robert Grosseteste, who was born here about 1168. He grew up to be a great scholar and theologian, also a respected author and translator of books. He became Master of the Schools at Oxford, where he was also Lecturer to the newly-arrived Dominican and Franciscan Friars. In 1235 he was elected Bishop of Lincoln, where he was remembered as a wise and kind Father in God. He was not however afraid to argue with the Pope about certain clergy appointments and so was not very popular in Rome. He died in 1253 at Buckden, Hunts.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Before the Reformation.

There has been a church at Stradbroke for at least 900 years, because the Domesday Survey of 1086 records the existence of two churches. As this survey is a record of what people owned at the time, the second church may well have been one in another village. Nothing has survived from Stradbroke's Saxon or Norman church and the oldest visible workmanship that we see here today comes from the 14th century. Most of the fabric dates from the 15th century — the period when so many of our grand Suffolk churches took their present shape, and when the Perpendicular style of architecture was at its zenith.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, it seems that Stradbroke church was in the care of the Benedictine Priory at Eye, but by the 14th century the advowson of the living (the income and the right to appoint the Vicar) was in the hands of the College of Priests at nearby Wingfield. The first Master of Wingfield College — Peter Brown — resigned to become Stradbroke's Vicar in 1371 and in 1492, Ludovicus Bradley, another priest attached to the college, became Vicar here. Stradbroke's close connection with Wingfield brought it into contact with the De la Poles — the Dukes of Suffolk. This family were great church builders and almost certainly had some part in the rebuilding of this grand church in the 15th century.

Richard Phipson (the architect of the 1870s restoration) believed that the chancel was 14th century, to which the rest of the church was added in the 15th century, replacing a Norman or 13th century structure. There were two chantry chapels at the east ends of the aisles; that on the north side was for Sir Richard Brewse, whose family owned one of the manors in the 14th century, and the south chapel (founded c.1306) belonged to the Shelton family, who owned the other manor. These chapels were dedicated to Our Lady and to her mother, St. Anne.

The coronets and roses on the great west doorway lead several experts to believe that Stradbroke's glorious tower was built by William de la Pole, who died in 1450. We do know that there was much rebuilding and refurbishing taking place during the second half of the 15th century, as can be seen from the following bequests:-

1448 — Thomas Hoo left 6s.8d to the reparation of the Chapel of the Virgin Mary.

- 1452 — Richard Gryme left 8d to the "sustentation" of the bells (maybe in the new tower).
- 1463 — Sarah Gryme left 8d to the leading of the north aisle roof.
- 1470 — Magaret Saxe left 3s.4d to the painting of the Crucifix — indicating that a new rood may have been installed, and also possibly the rood screen.
- 1489 — John Pype gave £20 (a very large sum) to build a new porch on the north side of the church. We see his initials "I P" in the spandrels flanking the entrance.
- 1490 — Thomas Baas gave 40s. "to the reparation of the lead" (on the roof).
- 1491 — John Hobard left 10s. towards the making of the "new aisle" of Our Lady.
William Hendry left 5 marks for the new roof of St. Anne's Chapel and for painting it.
- 1501 — Nicholas Furmage asked to be buried in the "new aisle of Our Lady in the parish church of All Hallows at Stradbroke".
- 1504 — John Heryng the younger left 13s.4d to "the leading" of the church.

How glorious this church must have looked just before the Reformation, when all this was comparatively new, also the other beautiful things which must have enriched the interior. We can imagine the windows filled with mediaeval glass, the walls covered with mural paintings, the great rood beneath the chancel arch, with its carved and painted screen and loft, the candles, benches, embroidery and statues and a host of other visual aids which made the church building the common folk's manual of religious education in the days when few could read and the services and scriptures were in Latin.

From the Reformation to the Mid 19th Century.

With the Reformation in the mid 16th century came new liturgical requirements which greatly altered the interior decor of our churches. With the introduction of services in English and the English Bible it was felt that many of the old visual aids were no longer necessary, so a great deal of colour and craftsmanship was destroyed. The Chantry Chapels were suppressed in 1545, roods were taken down

in 1548, and Queen Elizabeth I ordered that stone altars should be replaced by wooden tables. About 1547, the Churchwardens of Stradbroke recorded the disposal of several pre-Reformation items which were no longer needed, including two pairs of chalices, two censers, a chrysmatory (for Holy Oils) and a Pax (a small representation of the crucified Christ which was passed round and revered by the congregation). These realized £27.6s.0d, most of which was spent on church repairs. The chalices, which held very little wine, were replaced by the Elizabethan Communion Cup, which was made in Harleston about 1560 and which is still in the possession of the church.

The wall paintings were replaced by godly texts in English and the walls were reported to have been covered with texts in 1792. During the 1870s restoration the remains of mediaeval wall paintings were discovered at the east end of the north chapel. These showed three saints, but they were ruined by the pickaxes of the men who were stripping the plaster from the wall.

Much repair work was done in 1593 and the churchwardens record the purchase of lead from Dennington, also the use of timber, lime, sand and nails. It seems that some new seating was made at this time, because on one of the old oak seats seen in the church in 1792 was cut the date 1594.

Several remaining items of pre-Reformation craftsmanship which had survived, did not escape the eagle eye of William Dowsing, the Puritan inspector of churches for the destruction of 'superstitious' images and inscriptions, who had lived in nearby Laxfield. He visited the church on April 4th 1644 and his Journal records the following report:-

"8 angels off the roof and cherubims in wood, to be taken down; and four crosses on the steeple; and one in the church; and one on the porch; and 17 pictures (? in stained glass) in the upper (? clerestory) windows; and "pray for such out of your charity" (maybe on somebody's brass, or in stained glass) and organs, which I brake".

During the period 1649-1660, when Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector of England and the English Church became Presbyterian, the Vicar of Stradbroke, James Buck, was expelled from his Vicarage and parish. Clearly he did not agree with the Presbyterian ideas of the Puritans, and was accused of preaching in Stradbroke Church that the Pope was the real Head of the Church and of encouraging people to

believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, to make their Confessions to a priest and to bow to the altar and at the names of Jesus and Mary. When Charles II came to the throne in 1660, Buck did not return to Stradbroke, but became one of the King's Chaplains in London.

The 18th and early 19th centuries saw our churches furnished for the plain and Prayer Book worship of the Established Church. The people sat (according to their various stations and classes) in tall square box-pews, to hear the preaching of the Word. Towering above these commodious chambers was the three-decker pulpit, where the parson preached from the top deck, read the service from the middle deck, and in the lower deck sat the Parish Clerk, who kept his eye on the congregation and led them in responses and the amens. Far away in the sanctuary stood the Communion Table, where the "Sacrament" was administered four times per year at the most.

David Elisha Davy's notes give us a good idea of what the interior looked like at the turn of the 19th century. He records visits by Edmund Gillingwater, Stationer and Bookseller in Harleston in 1793 and by himself in 1806. They show the church with its walls adorned with texts of Scripture painted black. The ancient roofs of the nave and aisles survived and the chancel roof of oak had a plaster ceiling between the rafters. The font then stood beside the western pillar of the north arcade; its shields were defaced, but the inscription on its base was deeply cut in black letters. At the west end was a gallery, and on three of its panels were painted lists of Charities and Benefactions. The Communion Table was raised on one step at the east end and was railed off. Above it on the wall were the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments, which were almost white-washed over. These had been repainted in 1749. Two unusual paintings are noted — one in the niche in the north side of the altar and one to the south of the east window. Both showed books lying on cushions; on one book was a crown and on the other a mitre — doubtless representing Church and State.

Near the east end of the nave on the walls each side were boards with the Ten Commandments. The hexagonal pulpit was painted yellow. The seating at that time was a mixture of enclosed box-pews and old wooden seats with backs. A little of the church's mediaeval glass remained, particularly in the west window of the north aisle and in the two eastern chapels; the Brewse arms were in a window in their (north)

chapel.

In the north aisle stood the remains of the screen base, which Gillingwater describes as "beautiful". At that time there were five painted figures surviving; now there are only two.

On the north side of the church was a large arch which led to another Chantry Chapel, for members of the Beales family. This chapel had been taken down in the 18th century because it had fallen into decay, and in order to give more light, the arch was mostly glazed, rather than being bricked up.

In 1823 the Rev'd William White became Vicar of Stradbroke. He was concerned about the dilapidated state of the church at that time and especially the poor seating - accommodation. About 1824 he restored the building and had new box-pews made. This was of course well before the Victorian period and the Gothic Revival, so his pew scheme was in accordance with the 18th century fashion of box-pews gathered around the pulpit. Plans of this seating survive and they show very well how our churches were arranged before the Victorians restored them. The central blocks of pews, with seats on two or three sides, extended well beyond the chancel arch — these were owned or rented by the families who occupied them. They were designed so that people could see the pulpit, so many people sat with their backs to the altar. Near the pulpit was the Vicarage Pew, and one for the Vicarage Servants. Most of the pews and benches in the aisles faced inwards, so that people sat with their backs to the walls; many of these seats were actually "free", for use by the poor and by visitors. At the west end was the musicians' gallery, also blocks of seats (possibly in tiers) for the children. He opened a subscription list and raised £150 for a new organ from Last of London.

In 1837, White started work on the restoration of the chancel, and services were cancelled for two Sundays because the chancel roof was off. The new ceiling was "ornamented" by the Vicar. One writer in 1871 said that the chancel roof was reconstructed using very rough timbers and to hide its defects a ceiling of "common thin deal boarding" was made. Davy, on his return to the church in 1841, noted this work, also that there was a new east window (a very pleasant four-light decorated window — see the photograph under the tower), and painted glass. The glass (which is now in the west window of the north aisle) showed the Royal Arms of Queen Victoria, the arms of the

Diocese of Ely, who were the Patrons of the living, and the arms of White's own family. This glass was made to commemorate the coronation of Victoria in 1838. Over the altar was placed a huge oil-painting of Jesus being taken down from the cross, which White had purchased in Italy. This was a copy of an original by Rubens in Antwerp Cathedral. It remained in position until the 1870s restoration, when Canon Ryle returned it to the White family. It is interesting to compare the interior of the church shown in the photograph under the tower, with what we see today.

William White also started a clothing club in the parish and was instrumental in setting up the Infants Schools. One Sunday in 1841, after preaching to a crowded congregation at Stradbroke, he travelled to London, where he was taken ill; he died two days afterwards.

Canon John Charles Ryle and the Restoration in the 1870s.

The Vicar from 1861-1880 was the Rev'd J.C. Ryle, who was one of the leading Evangelicals of the second half of the 19th century. As such he was a champion of Reformation Protestantism and was a firm and militant opponent of Roman Catholicism and also of the Anglo Catholicism which had grown out of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England. These he ferociously lambasted with his tongue and his pen. He stood for simple Gospel preaching based entirely upon Holy Scripture and not only was he a very popular preacher, but also a prolific writer of tracts and books which gained him national repute.

He had been Vicar of Helmingham from 1844-1861 and the move from there to Stradbroke was beneficial to him, not only because the living was worth double the income of Helmingham, but also because there was no powerful Squire in the parish (Ryle and Lord Tollemache of Helmingham had not always seen eye to eye). In addition, Stradbroke was a much larger church and Ryle was gaining a reputation for his eloquent preaching and writing.

Unlike his fellow Evangelical, Dean Close, who once said "the restoration of churches is the restoration of Popery", Ryle was a great supporter of this product of the Oxford Movement, which he otherwise loathed. He had restored Helmingham Church and had preached at the reopening services after restoration of several churches. In 1870, he began to appeal for money to restore Stradbroke Church and (in good Ryle tradition) issued a tract setting out his needs and asking his friends,

admirers and readers all over the United Kingdom to raise the £2,700 which he needed to restore his church. The final paragraph begged that the many unknown friends who had read and approved of the writings of the Vicar of Stradbroke "would now likely remember the church in which he preaches and generously aid him in the work he has undertaken". An appended list showed that £1,875 had already been given or promised by friends, including £45.11s.6d from his parishioners, £150 from himself, in addition to paying for the chancel restoration, and £75 from Miss Ryle, towards an organ and clock.

The restoration was a thorough one and much of what we see today in the church dates from that time. In a way this is superficially a largely Victorian church. What was not renewed was carefully cleaned and replaced in many instances and much stonework in windows and doorways was re-cut or renewed. The work was done accurately and sympathetically — all new work was carefully designed, either to reproduce the mediaeval originals or to be in character with the mediaeval work. The stonework and woodwork shows craftsmanship of great quality and dignity. Despite Ryle's extreme Protestant leanings, it seems that he was happy for certain pre-Reformation furnishings to be introduced, like open benches replacing the box-pews and choir-stalls being placed in the chancel.

The architect was Richard Makilwaine Phipson, the Surveyor to the Diocese of Norwich, who restored many East Anglian churches, including St. Mary le Tower Ipswich (which was almost totally rebuilt) and St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, and designed fine new churches at Great Finborough and Harleston. The contractor was George Grimwood of Weybread; this firm employed about 100 men and was reported to have worked only for Phipson. The stonework was subcontracted to Mr. Vine of Eye and much of the woodwork was executed by John Groom of Ipswich for the contractor. Work had commenced by June 1871 and the reopening took place on April 3rd 1872.

The newspaper account of the restoration commented that "Mr. Phipson has a horror of doing things by halves" and this is very true of his work here. The work done included the following:-

Exterior.

1. All walls, buttresses and copings were put in good repair, also the stonework of the windows.

2. The clerestory windows were entirely renewed.
3. The south porch was taken down and rebuilt and the north porch was restored.
4. The tower entrance was restored and new louvres placed in the belfry windows.
5. A new vestry was built, replacing a poor brick one.
6. New slate roofs were placed on the nave and chancel and new lead roofs on the aisles.

Interior.

1. The nave roof was restored, with careful attention to the mediaeval work. The old rotten timbers were carefully replaced where necessary.
2. The chancel roof was entirely renewed, and given a handsome arch-braced roof, with carved bosses at the intersection of the braces, springing from carved corbels.
3. The aisle roofs were entirely replaced with pitch-pine roofs, also the north chapel roof, but the south chapel roof only needed restoration.
4. A new chancel arch was inserted, also new arches from the chancel to the chapels.
5. The arcades were thoroughly restored and the tower arch cleaned down. The walls were renovated and their plaster facings were replaced with stucco.
6. The west gallery was removed and a 13 feet high tower screen was erected at the west end.
7. The box-pews which filled the nave, aisles, chapels and chancel were removed. New benches of oak were installed and new choir stalls in the chancel. The latter had poppyheads representing natural foliage (vines, ivy, oak, etc.).
8. A new pulpit and prayer-desk were installed.
9. The font was moved to the west end of the north aisle, its step was inlaid with Minton tiles and the panels of the bowl, also the mediaeval inscription, were recut.
10. The church was given new tiled floors and the windows were filled with "Cathedral" glass, with the exception of the west tower

window, which received stained glass.

11. A new heating apparatus by Boulton of Norwich was installed. It had been noted how well the Boulton system was working in Eye church.

In addition to this, the Vicar had engineered the purchase of a row of cottages at the edge of the churchyard opposite the south porch, the demolition of which opened up the view of the church. The churchyard received a new iron fence, and splendid gateways of flint, with stone-quoined caps, to Phipson's designs.

The Bishop of Norwich preached for the Reopening on Wednesday April 3rd 1872 and a collection towards a fund for a new organ raised £26.13s.10d — a fair amount for those days. The total cost of the restoration was £3,500, of which Ryle received £1,000 from his personal friends within a fortnight of his appeal.

On November 6th 1873, Stradbroke's new organ was opened; Ryle preached from Psalm 150, verse 6 and Mr. Holditch, the organ-builder, gave a recital. Although the weather was bad, the congregation was large and another £26 was raised. The organ cost £250.

About this time a new clock was placed in the tower by Messrs Cooke & Co of York, at a cost of £125. Messrs Cooké were back in 1878 to rehang the bells, which included two new ones by Taylor of Loughborough. There was a grand reopening in March 1878, when the ringers from St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich, rung a celebration peal. At the evening service on that day, Ryle preached from Zechariah 14, verse 20.

Ryle's work of restoration was completed in 1879 when he had the chancel and sanctuary furnished to his wishes. This was of course very important to him and it completed his desire to leave this church as "a model example of what the House of God ought to be in the Reformed Church of England".

In 1878 another Appeal Tract was sent out to his friends and readers, stating that he had personally paid £500 for a new chancel roof and now wanted another £500 to complete the work on the chancel. Ryle of course was disgusted that so many churches were being given large sanctuaries, with richly adorned altars raised upon several steps, according to the Anglo-Catholic tradition. This he saw as treachery against the Protestant Reformation and a sell-out to Rome! He was

determined to leave every part of Stradbroke Church in such good order that "no fair excuse may be left to any succeeding Vicar for introducing ornaments or fittings of an un-Protestant character".

So, to Phipson's designs and again with George Grimwood as the contractor, the east wall received a handsome new five-light east window, which was filled with stained glass by Clayton & Bell, showing the Christian Armoury and the Means of Grace offered through the Church. The new oak reredos, with shafts of polished rosewood, was fixed to the east wall; its panels were slate-painted with the Commandments and texts from Scripture. A new Communion table, its arcaded front carved with foliage, was placed in front of it. New kneelers for the Communion Rails were made by Mrs. Edgar Davey. The chancel and sanctuary floors were paved with Minton tiles, with designs showing roses and portcullises. At this time the floors of the north and south aisles were also repaved. The total cost of the work was in the region of £700, much of which came out of Ryle's own pocket, as a memorial to his father.

The reopening services took place on Thursday, October 30th 1879. The Bishop of Norwich preached in the afternoon and Ryle preached in the evening. The total collection came to £27.

Having completed the restoration of his church, it was providential that in 1880 Canon Ryle was consecrated Bishop of Liverpool (having first been offered the Deanery of Salisbury). His farewell sermon was preached to a packed church on Sunday June 20th of that year. He asked them to pray that he might be "a true Bishop of the Reformed Church of England and not a mere Popish Bishop" and he exhorted them to fight against sin of every kind, including drinking, gambling, card-playing and Sabbath-breaking.

The 20th Century.

All Saints today is still very much as Bishop Ryle left it, but much has been done during our own century to maintain and beautify it. It was not until 1915 that a cross was placed on the reredos, as a memorial to Ethel Tate. In 1952 the tower was restored and two new bells were added. The south chapel screen was given in 1957 and this chapel was furnished as a Lady Chapel during the 1960's. Bringing this chapel to life and into use for its rightful purpose was probably the greatest 20th century improvement here. In 1977, to celebrate our

present Queen's Silver Jubilee, the Royal Arms over the north door were made.

The task of maintaining an ancient and beautiful building such as this is expensive and never-ending. Much has already been spent in keeping this great church intact and there is always some restoration work needing to be done. Having once entered All Saints no visitor will fail to notice the pride and care lavished by its present-day custodians upon their ancient church. This reminds us that the building is no mere museum or ancient monument, but is the Father's House, where the living Church in Stradbroke, who are the Body of Christ, meet for worship and then go out of its doors into the world to love and serve God and their neighbours. This is the purpose for which All Saints was first built and this is why, over the centuries, people have cherished and cared for it.

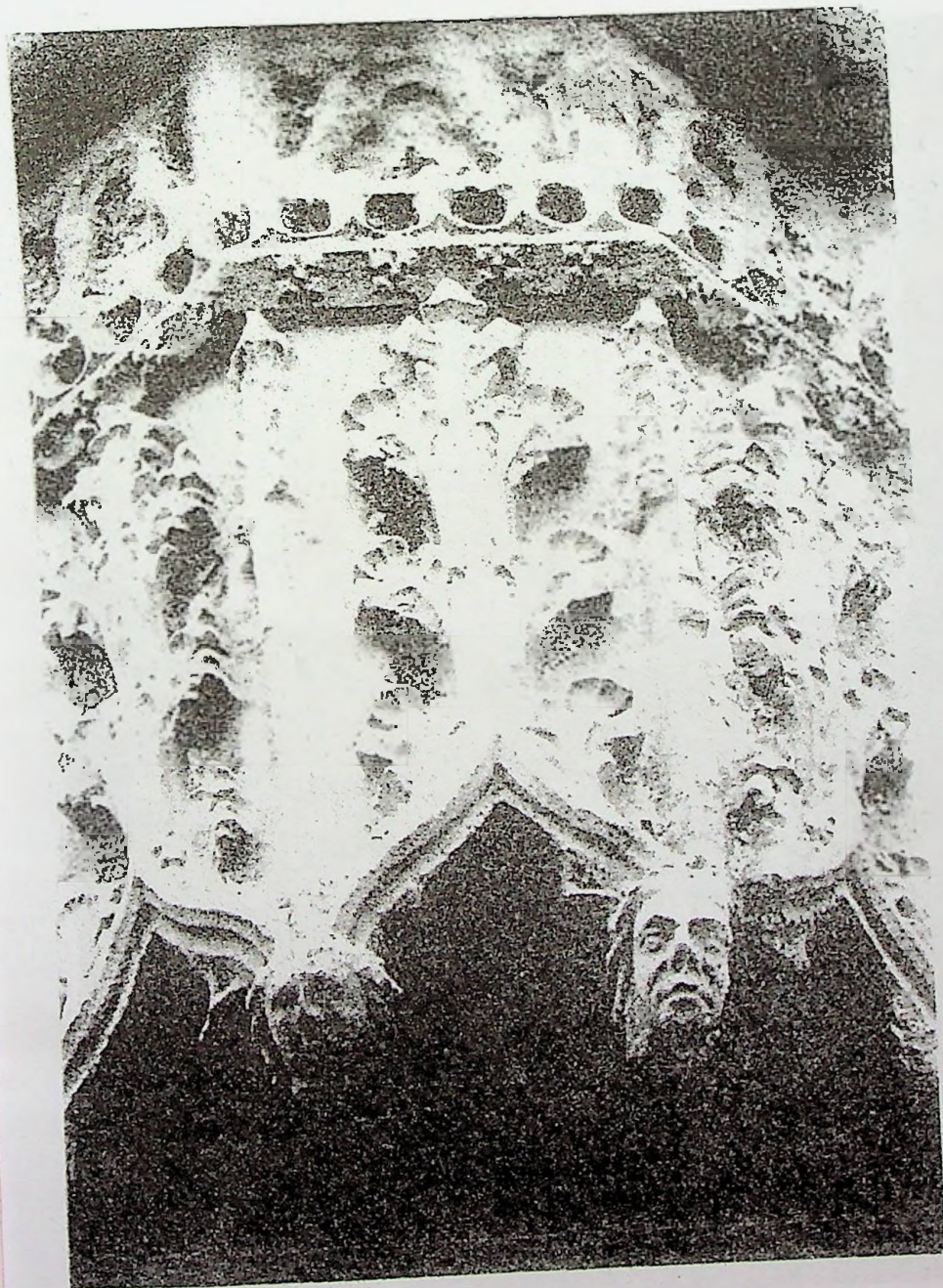
Having briefly looked at some of the landmarks which have punctuated its long history, we now examine the building and its treasures in detail.

WHAT TO SEE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

All Saints has a grand exterior, and occupies a superb **position** at the heart of the village, dominating its surroundings. It is well worth while standing back and enjoying this fine building as a whole in its setting. Phipson in 1871-2 restored the exterior with great taste and feeling, faithfully reproducing the mediaeval work without the additional Victorian embellishments and eccentricities which have altered the appearance of so many churches. The tower, aisles and porches show splendid Perpendicular architecture of the 15th century; the chancel shows the grace and beauty of the Decorated Style, used in the first half of the 14th century. Note the ambitious **churchyard gateways** which are flint-faced and turret-like.

In the north-west corner of the churchyard is the large, low **tomb of the Fox family**. Its top is covered with copper and on three sides are copper inscriptions, commemorating Nathaniel Fox "who left wealth and a good name behind him" in 1690, also Simon Fox and Major John Fox. Nathaniel made provision for the tomb to be maintained in good repair (see the western inscription), also for an annual distribution of bread to the poor people of Stradbroke.

The crowning glory of the exterior is the superb **tower**, which is



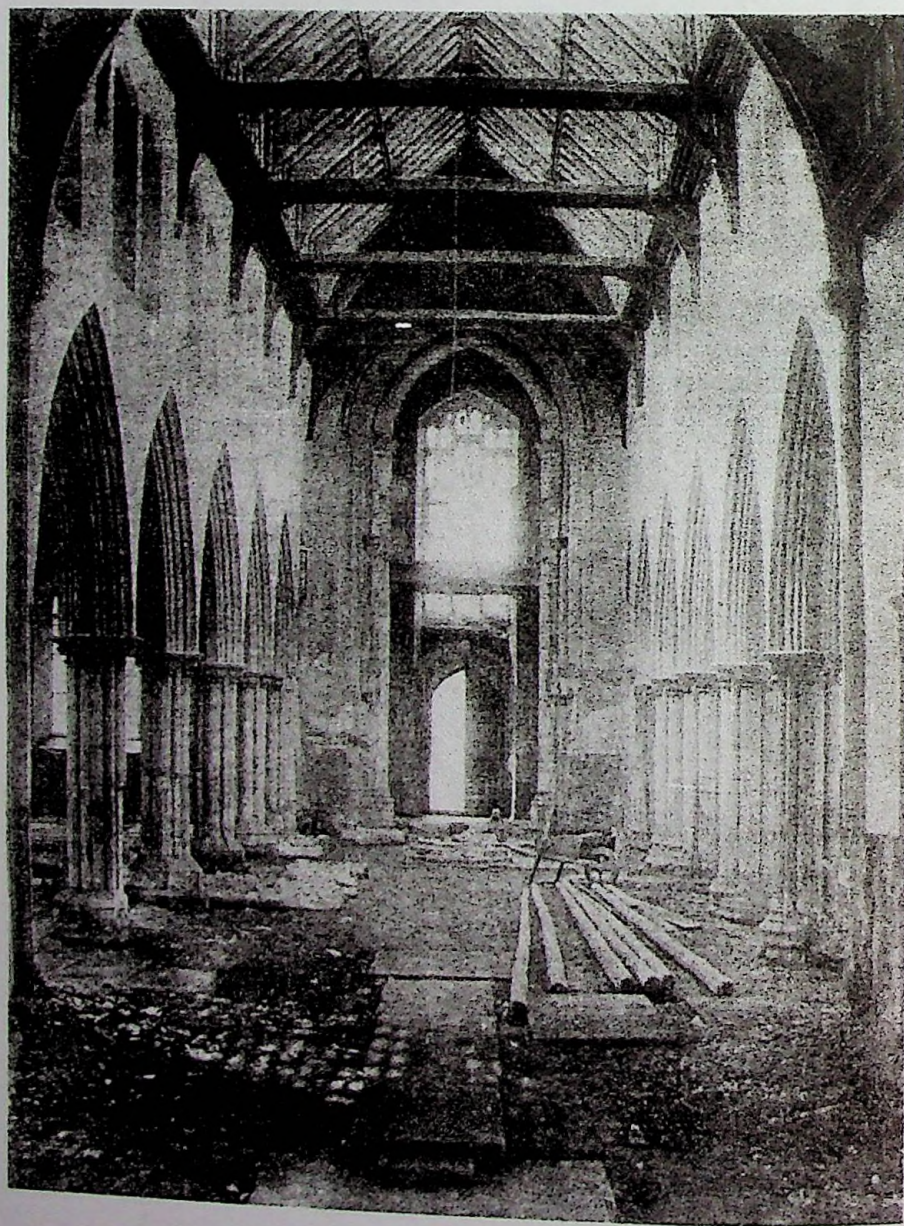
The Canopy over the West Door.



The Font.



The Interior before 1871.



The Interior during Restoration - April 1871.

one of the finest in Suffolk. Although it does not have all the airs and graces of nearby towers, like Laxfield and Eye, it is lofty, elegant and beautifully proportioned, giving an impression of great strength and dignity. It is supported and enhanced by diagonal buttresses at the four corners. At the east end of the south side the staircase turret rises in diminishing stages above the height of the parapet. The nearby towers at Hoxne and Dennington have similar turrets; these add greatly to their dignity. Both tower and turret have embattled parapets which are faced and beautified with flush-work panelling in flint and stone. There is simple flushwork on the buttresses also. At the base of the parapet on the north and south sides are two gargoyle faces, which throw the rainwater clear of the tower walls. Smaller gargoyles may be seen on the staircase turret. The tower is crowned by pinnacles at the corners and the turret is surmounted with a fine vane and weathercock.

The tower is constructed mainly of whole flints, with dressings of stone. We can see in the masonry evidence of put-lock holes, where the scaffold poles fitted when it was first constructed. At the foot of the tower is a base-course with stone shields.

The Perpendicular west doorway is a handsome piece of stonecarving. There are small shafts with foliage capitals each side and in the arch moulding are flowers and foliage, coronets and little faces which are leopard's heads from the DeLa Pole arms. The square hood-mould framing the arch is studded with little flowers and in the spandrels (between the hood-mould and the arch) are Tudor roses. The corbel heads of a king and a bishop are 19th century renewals.

The three-light west window has elegant Perpendicular tracery; it is flanked by two fine image niches, with pedestals for their former statues. Their beautiful canopies are a mass of stonecarving (look for the little carved faces) and are flanked by pinnacles. Each niche has its own little vaulted ceiling.

The west face of the tower is pierced by two small double windows, with the clock face between them. The belfry windows are also of two lights, but are large and tall, excellently completing the character of this tower.

The height from the ground to the battlements is 88 feet; to the summit of the pinnacles, 92 feet and to the top of the staircase turret, 102 feet.

The walls of the rest of the church are faced mostly with flints which have been knapped (split) to expose their shiny dark cores. The **north aisle** is lit by three-light Perpendicular windows; one has a slightly different shape from the rest and its hood-mould rests upon corbel heads.

The **north porch** has a much-restored flushwork parapet and a Perpendicular entrance arch with a square hood-mould, beneath which in the spandrels are shields with the initials "I" and "P". These were thought to represent John de la Pole, but as John Pype paid for the porch to be built, they must be his initials.

Further east, near the church, is the **grave of James Chambers** (look for the harp at the top). He is described here as a "poor wandering Suffolk poet" and used to describe himself as the "Itinerant Poetaster". Born in 1748, he grew up to become a tramp, but a very literary one! He lived as a wandering pedlar, and used his gift of composing acrostic verses on people's names hawking these from door to door for a little money or maybe a good meal. In 1820 (when he was 72), some Suffolk literary folk had a book of his poems published. He was given a home in Woodbridge, but he stuck this for only two months, before he got the wanderlust again and was off. David Elisha Davy mentions meeting him at Bealings in 1823. He died at Stradbroke in 1827 and this is his grave. Its inscription is worth reading.

To the north of the chancel is the **vestry**, which is entirely work of 1871-2 and replaced a poor brick vestry which was not ancient.

The east window of the **chancel**, dates only from 1879 but is a very fine five-light window, with beautiful tracery in the Decorated style which was fashionable around 1320-30. Phipson designed equally fine Decorated east windows for St. Giles Norwich and St. Mary le Tower Ipswich. It replaced a smaller and simple four-light window which William White installed in 1838. The two-light window on the south side has net-like "ogee" tracery and is largely original work of c.1330, with one corbel head remaining, showing a mythical "Green Man" with foliage sprouting from his mouth. The priest's doorway is also of this date and its hood-mould rests upon corbel-heads, one of which is nicely preserved by being partly covered by the south chapel wall. The hood-mould (or dripstone — the meaning of which is obvious) framing a window or a doorway, deflects the rainwater away from the arch.

The **south chapel** has no east window, but two triple Perpendicular ones on the south side. The **south aisle** is wider than the chapel and is also lit by triple Perpendicular windows, with a four-light west window.

Above the aisle roofs rises the **clerestory**, which is pierced by two-light Perpendicular windows. Apart from those at the east and west ends, these are set in pairs, similar to the clerestory windows in Hadleigh Church.

The **south porch** is a total rebuild by Phipson, but is a worthy imitation of 15th century work, with flushwork in the buttresses, a stone parapet with quartrefoils and a wide outer entrance arch. Note the beautiful knapped and squared flints in the south face. The south doorway into the church has been largely renewed, but has mediaeval stonework in its arch. Above it are two ogee-headed niches in the wall and Tudor roses.

WHAT TO SEE INSIDE THE CHURCH.

The interior of All Saints is dignified and lofty; it is a "big-boned" church, containing much of beauty and interest. Phipson and the 19th century craftsmen did a very thorough job here, and several text books bemoan the amount of 19th century work here, but this is of the highest quality and there are several features which have survived from earlier periods. As we look round we must also bear in mind the aim of J.C. Ryle, the "power" behind the restoration, that the church should be restored to its former mediaeval glory architecturally, but at the same time proclaiming the principles of Evangelical Anglicanism, with the truths of Holy Scripture predominating.

The aisles are divided from the nave by soaring **arcades** of five bays. Their chamfered arches rest upon quatrefoil piers with fillets (vertical mouldings) which are topped by moulded capitals. The **chancel arch**, made in 1871-2 is tall and stately, and of similar design. The **arches from the chancel to the chapels** are 19th century replacements of 15th century originals and are studded with flowers, coronets and portcullises. Beneath the lofty 15th century **tower arch** at the west end is the very worthy 19th century **tower screen**, made by Groome of Ipswich.

Beneath the tower are some interesting **framed photographs**

of the church taken before, during and after the restoration by Canon Ryle's daughter, who was a keen amateur photographer. It is particularly interesting to examine the picture of the interior before the alterations and to see the box-pews, the old pulpit, the painting behind the altar and the former east window. There is a good 15th century **doorway to the tower staircase**; its door, although restored, incorporates original 15th century timbers. Here we also see detailed **notes about the bells** and a **brass plaque** recording the restoration of the church.

Stradbroke possesses one of Suffolk's six rings of **ten bells**. These represent a variety of dates and makers. Only the tenor bell is pre Reformation, but by the 19th century there were six which were extended in 1877 to an octave of eight in the key of E flat. In 1952, two new trebles were added, these being named after Bishop Grosseteste and Bishop Ryle. The makers, dates and weights are as follows:-

Treble	Gillett & Johnson of Croydon	1952	6cwt	1qtr	6lb
2	Gillett & Johnson of Croydon	1952	6cwt	2qtr	20lb
3	John Taylor of Loughborough	1877	6cwt	2qtr	20lb
4	John Taylor of Loughborough	1877	7cwt	1qtr	6lb
5	Charles Newman of Norwich	1697	7cwt	0qtr	24lb
6	Miles Graye of Colchester	1613	8cwt	2qtr	16lb
7	Miles Graye of Colchester	1622	8cwt	3qtr	5lb
8	John Brend of Norwich	1567	13cwt	3qtr	9lb
9	John Darbie of Ipswich	1683	15cwt	3qtr	10lb
10	John Kebyll of London	c.1480	20cwt	1qtr	10lb

The nave is crowned by a sturdy tie-beam **roof**, which was greatly renewed in 1871, but contains some original 15th century timbers which did not need replacing. What is unusual are the **texts of scripture** which Ryle caused to be painted on each side of every tie-beam. Note also the text painted on sheet-metal which frames the chancel arch. The eastern bay has hammer-beams, to which are attached large shields painted with **coats of arms** of the families of Ryle and his wife. On one we see the arms of Ryle, impaling those of Lowe, Hurt, Ashborne and Fowne and on the other the families of Clowes (Ryle's third wife, Henrietta), Chetham, Chederton and Rush.

The **aisle roofs** were entirely renewed in pine in 1871. These have fine bosses and nicely-carved spandrels; their wall-posts rest upon stone corbel heads. Only the **south chapel roof**, although greatly

renovated, contains mediaeval woodwork. The 19th century arch-braced **chancel roof** rests upon large foliage corbels, all of which does look rather Victorian in flavour.

At the west end of the north aisle stands the 15th century octagonal **font**. This is of a type which is common in East Anglia and is a fine piece of stonework. It has been carefully restored and re-cut. Its step contains the inscription telling us that John Smyth and Joanna Rous gave it (hunc fontem fieri fecerunt). Around the stem we see lions and those fascinating wild hairy men with clubs which we call wodewoses. At the top of the stem is a band of flowers and on the underside of the bowl are angels with outstretched wings. The eight panels of the bowl contain a wealth of Christian symbolism, showing the emblems of the Four Evangelists, alternating with angels, bearing shields upon which are carved various symbols. Starting with the panel facing east-north-east and working anti-clockwise, we see:- 1. The Angel of St. Matthew, 2. Three mitres, for the diocese of Norwich, 3. The Winged Ox of St. Luke, 4. The Instruments of the Passion, 5. The Eagle of St. John, 6. Three chalices, representing the Blessed Sacrament, 7. The Winged Lion of St. Mark, 8. The emblem of the Holy Trinity. Note the angel over the north-west window — a surviving corbel from the mediaeval roof.

Above the north door are the **Royal Arms** of Queen Elizabeth II, made to celebrate her Jubilee in 1977. They were painted by Percy Holton of Edinburgh, whose uncle was a member of the choir here. The frame was made by Harry Hewlett of oak from the old workhouse, which was demolished about 1920. It has been the custom since the Reformation for the Royal Arms to be set up in our churches and Charles II made them obligatory in 1660, but since the 19th century many have disappeared and it is unusual to find the Arms of our present Queen in a church.

To the east of the north door is a **recess**, which may have been built to contain an image or a light, although it is unusually wide. The large table nearby is the 17th century **communion table**, which has been greatly restored. The Gothic mouchette patterns under the table-top may well have been added by William White.

The oak **benches** are of fine quality, with simple tracery in their square-topped ends and tracery in the backs of the rear benches. In the north aisle the benches towards the east are slightly smaller and were

obviously intended for the children. The huge and richly-carved **reading-desk** stands in the nave, opposite Phipson's handsome pulpit, where we see the influence of Ryle in the text (with reference) "Preach the Gospel to every creature". For the benefit of the preacher he had inscribed in the top of the pulpit "Woe betide me if I preach not the Gospel", and it is believed that upon its completion, Ryle took a chisel himself and cut the somewhat unprofessional-looking groove beneath the word "not".

The south aisle is remarkably wide; much wider in fact than the north. In the stonework of the eastern jamb (side) of the south doorway are traces of faint **graffiti** of considerable age. Nearby is a **framed account of the restoration of the tower and bells** in 1952, under the direction of Basil Hatcher. The **list of vicars** begins with Radulphus de Fuldone in 1314 and thus covers over 670 years. See also the 1833 print of the Church by W.E. Bishop of Harleston and the layout and seating plan before J.C. Ryle's restoration.

High in aisle wall we see what must have been the upper **entrance to the rood loft staircase**. If this is its original position, it led first to the loft above the parclose screen which surrounded a Chapel in the eastern bay of the aisle on the west and north sides (as at Dennington). It was therefore possible to walk round the parclose loft and on to the rood loft beneath the chancel arch. We can get some idea of the glory of the **rood screen** from the two surviving panels from its dado (or base). These are emblazoned with superb paintings (executed c.1500) of two Old Testament characters — Kings Ahias and Abias, who are throned and clad in beautiful robes. The workmanship is very similar to the paintings on the glorious screen in Eye church, and may be the work of the same artist or designer. Newly restored, they are now on the north wall of the chancel.

The **south chapel** has been furnished during the 1960s and 70s, although the light oak screen which divides it from the chancel was made as a memorial in 1957, to the designs of Basil Hatcher. This chapel is now an intimate and colourful Lady Chapel for prayer and for small services. It is carpeted and comfortable and the craftsmanship here is a tribute to our own century, everything being the work of Suffolk people. The Chapel was dedicated in 1962 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the priesthood of the Rev'd John Cowgill — a retired priest who settled here. The altar, with its curtains and riddel posts (in

the Old English tradition) was designed by Basil Hatcher, the Suffolk architect, who also designed the churches of St. Francis, Chantry, Ipswich and Chelmondiston. The **curtains** themselves and two **altar frontals** were embroidered by Mr. Cowgill himself; the workmanship is beautiful and is particularly skilful considering that he had only one arm. The most unusual and beautiful **altar crucifix** is of triple laminated glass, interleaved with gold leaf — the work of John Grenville of Wetheringsett. The figure was engraved by Sheila Elmhurst. The **candlesticks** of bronze were given as a memorial in 1973. The oak **credence table** was made by Police Sergeant W.E. Jenner.

It is doubtful if Bishop Ryle would have approved of the decor of this chapel, but, with the exception of the High Altar cross and candlesticks, the **chancel and sanctuary** are still very much as he left them. The chancel is liberally equipped with **choirstalls**, designed by R.M. Phipson, but unlike the nave and aisle benches, these have carved poppyhead ends. On the north side, or rather in what was once the north chapel, is the **organ**, which was erected in 1873 by G.M. Holditch of London and was subsequently restored in 1935 and 1973. It is interesting to note that the 1973 overhaul cost £400, whereas the entire instrument cost only £250 a century before! The organ has two manuals, a pedal-board and 14 speaking stops. It is worth venturing behind the organ into what was the **north chapel** in mediaeval times, where the original **piscina** survives in the south wall. Into its drain was poured the water from the washing of the priest's hands at the Eucharist. In the north wall is an **ambry** recess; this was a cupboard where the Communion vessels were stored.

A **brass plaque** over the vestry door records that J.C. Ryle completed his restoration of the chancel in 1879, in memory of his father, who had been M.P. for Macclesfield. It was then that the sanctuary was equipped as he wanted it. It is small (too small in fact, because the Communion Rails do not even enclose the sedilia), but being small, there would be little hope of future incumbents filling it with servers, or even with too many ornaments! The simple oak **communion table** is also comparatively small; it is carved with arches and wheat. Behind it is the oak **reredos**, which has traceried panels upon which are painted the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Ten Commandments, in pre-Oxford Movement tradition, also two texts, with references. All this does look decidedly Victorian and rather colourless by modern standards, but it was very important to Ryle that

it should be simple and correct by his standards. Above it however Phipson placed a large and very splendid five-light **east window**, and we can admire the design of the tracery from inside, also the beauty of the glass.

Three pre-Reformation items in this sanctuary were allowed to remain. The 14th century **piscina** in the south wall was carefully restored by Phipson. The windowsill beside it has been lowered to form **sedilia**, where the mediaeval clergy could sit during the long sung sections of the High Mass. The two-light window above the sedilia is original 14th century work, and so are the genuine mediaeval faces (one with a wimple) which form **corbels** to support its internal hood-mould.

Most glorious of all the features of the sanctuary is the magnificent **Easter Sepulchre Recess** in the north wall. The mass of stonecarving at its base was entirely renewed by Phipson, but its beautiful trellis-vaulted ceiling and rich canopy, with leaf-croquets and little faces, is mostly original 15th century work. Some experts are of the opinion that this was an image niche, but it is a most unusual place for one; it is however the exact position for the Easter Sepulchre, where the Blessed Sacrament was reverently placed from Good Friday until Easter, to symbolise Our Lord's burial in the tomb.

Stained Glass

Before the Reformation, the stained glass in the windows of our churches provided a wonderful resource centre for ordinary people to learn the Faith. Unfortunately, none of Stradbroke's mediaeval glass has survived, but it is clear that Ryle intended the glass in the **east window**, by Clayton & Bell, 1879, to remind Stradbroke people of St. Paul's words in Ephesians 6 about the Christian's spiritual armour. The upper panels show the helmet of Salvation, the shield of Faith, the crown of Glory, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and the breastplate of Righteousness. The corresponding lower panels show the font, the lectern, the cross, the pulpit and the chalice and paten.

The **south-east chancel window** has two small shields; one with the ancient emblem of the Holy Trinity and the other, using the same pattern, showing Jesus — the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The **eastern window in the south aisle** (near the arch to the chapel), in memory of Thomas W.C. West, shows Our Lord with Peter and Andrew, with three sea scenes below. This was made by Clayton &

Bell shortly after 1897.

The **south-west window in the south aisle** has three emblems in late 19th century glass — a decorated cross, the "PX" emblem of Our Lord's name and the six-pointed Star of David.

The **west window of the tower**, by M & A O'Connor of London, has panels with lilies, wheat and grapes, and roses.

The **west window of the north aisle** contains the earliest glass in the church. This was originally placed in the east window by the Rev'd William White in 1838 to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Victoria. It shows the Royal Arms, flanked by the three lions of the White family and the three crowns of the Diocese of Ely, who were the Patrons of the Living.

Memorials.

This is not a church which is noted for its fine monuments, but nevertheless, the walls and floors do contain many memorials to people of the past who have been part of this church and parish.

The following **wall plaques** commemorate:-

Chancel, south.

1. The Rev'd William White (1841), his wife Elizabeth (1840) and William Duill, her uncle (1838). Above is a mourning lady with a palm. This memorial is by Gaffin.
2. Canon H.K. Florance, Vicar 1959-73.
3. Anna Tate (1889), and beneath this,
4. The Rev'd William Tate (1912), Vicar 1880-1912 and his daughter Ethel (1915).

Chancel, north.

1. Gothic tablet to The Rev'd J.T. Allen, Vicar 1841-61.
2. George Rose, Chorister for 76 years (1933).

North Aisle.

Geoffrey Humphrey (Churchwarden) (1950) and Violet (1953).

The following **ledger slabs** in the floors (some with good coats of arms) commemorate:-

Sanctuary.

1. The Rev'd Henry Knevett (Vicar 1782-1822), his wife Elizabeth (1832) and their daughter Suzannah (1794).

2. Hannah, sister of the Rev'd William Johnson (1795). Note her flattering epitaph.
3. Anthony Grenling (1655).
4. The Rev'd William Johnson, J.P. (Vicar 1753-82).
5. Small stone marking the burial of the ashes of Canon H.K. Florance (1974).

By chancel step.

1. Small stone in memory of Lucretia Mayhew (1840) and George (1861).

South Aisle (east-west).

1. William Girling, (1653).
2. George Cutting (Churchwarden) (1741).
3. Abraham Grenling (1804), his wife Susannah (1821), Abraham, their son (1803) and William (1856).
4. Tiny black ledger slab at the west end to Susan Girling (1651).

North Aisle (east-west).

1. Mary Borrett (1804).
2. Giles Borrett (1749) and his wife Martha.
3. John Borrett (1697) and Mary (1688).
4. John Borrett (1724).
5. Thomas Borrett (1694).
6. Frances, widow of a) Antony Grenling and b) Giles Borrett. Note the flattering inscription to her. (1707).
7. Giles Borrett (1670). Also a very good inscription.
8. Nathaniel and Lydia Cook (she was the daughter of Giles Borrett). They died on the 5th and 6th of September 1802, both aged 25, leaving two children who were "too young to be sensible of their loss".
9. Mary Borrett (daughter of Giles) (1680).
10. Charles Langley (1714).
11. Simon Girling, Surgeon 1792 and his wife Ann 1797. (Under door mat).
12. In the South porch, (under door mat) an indent of a **brass**, a priest.

Church Plate.

This of course is in safe keeping and not usually on show to visitors. Stradbroke does however possess some items of plate which are of interest. There is a silver chalice which was made about 1560 at Harleston, and a paten which is also 16th century. Two silver patens

and a flagon were presented to the church in 1698. A further chalice and paten were given by Georgina Matilda Ryle in 1868. The modern wafer-box, in memory of Noel Olive Johns, was designed and made by John Grenville of Wetheringsett.

Further historical information can be found on the walls around the church. Note the details about the flying of flags, at the west end and under the tower.

Overleaf are two pages added to cover the years 1986 to 1998.

This book was compiled by Roy Tricker, who is grateful to David and Margaret Streeter for their help and encouragement, also to Cynthia Brown, Birkin Haward, Peter Northeast, George Pipe and George Butler for advice and assistance, and to the staff of the Suffolk Record Office the use of their facilities. March 1986.

New edition produced by David and Margaret Streeter. April 1998.
Revised and reprinted. April 2004.

"Stradbroke Notes", Chapters on the history of the village – Available from the County Library.



W.E. Bishop

STRADBROOK.

Harleston 1833

Benefactors to the church and the parish have been many over the last 900 years. In 1994 a board recording generosity in the 16th to the 18th centuries, long hung behind a locked door in the vestry, was placed on the south-west wall to the right of the window. It records that in 1599 William Grenling left 5 marks annually (£3 6s 8d) to ensure a sermon every Sunday, and the same amount for education and the highways, and the residue of the rent of his Westhall estate toward "the reparation of the church". In 1994 and 1995 £116,000 was spent on repairs to the building. (The Grenling Charity has an annual income of £175.)

In 1992 Andrew Anderson's quinquennial report said there were serious problems. In 1994 applications were made for grants to: Rebuild and repoint cracks in the **Tower** buttresses and staircase turret, and insert ring beams and ties; re-leading the Tower roof sheets, valley gutters and spouts; repairing and re-leading the ringing chamber and clock chamber windows; overhauling the weathercock, clock, flagpole, belfry louvres and lightning conductor.

Grants were received from English Heritage, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, the Ladies Guild of Ringers and others, and with the memorial gifts (the names are recorded on the board on the left of the window) and parish fundraising the work, which also included repointing walls and repairing windows in other parts of the church, was completed after 12 months in summer 1995.

The architects were Andrew Anderson and Arthur Paxton, with advice on structural engineering from Professor Jacques Heyman of Cambridge University, and on the bells from Randal Clouston. The main contractor was Collins and Curtis Masonry of Ipswich, and the masons were Bill Sykes and Adrian Driver. Using traditional mortar for the pointing and modern stainless steel for the ring beams and ties, the whole tower has been strengthened to take the ringing of ten bells, the flying of flags, signals and pennants for days that are festive for church, nation and parish, and the display of a star at Christmastide. These features make the tower both heard and seen at different seasons over a wide area. This is much appreciated now as it was 180 years ago

A visitor to the Church in 1817 wrote: "The grand tower of this church is as you go out of the great gate of Wingfield Castle directly in front... I found a large neglected parish church in an uplandish poor village, the houses of which by their gables etc exhibit much antiquity at least

as old as the time of the de la Poles. In the church neither monuments or painted glass." He describes the "noble, lofty tower", the north porch and the nave. "In the year 1662", he writes, "these arms were here - now all gone." (They were: De la Pole, Wingfield, Brewes, Brotherton, Mowbray, Stafford, Ufford and two with swans & a lion.)

"The disused Market House in the street north-west of the church is a long gabled building much in the style of the vicarage", (which is probably the house sketched on his notes), "and is", he says, "as old at least as Henry VIIIth's time."

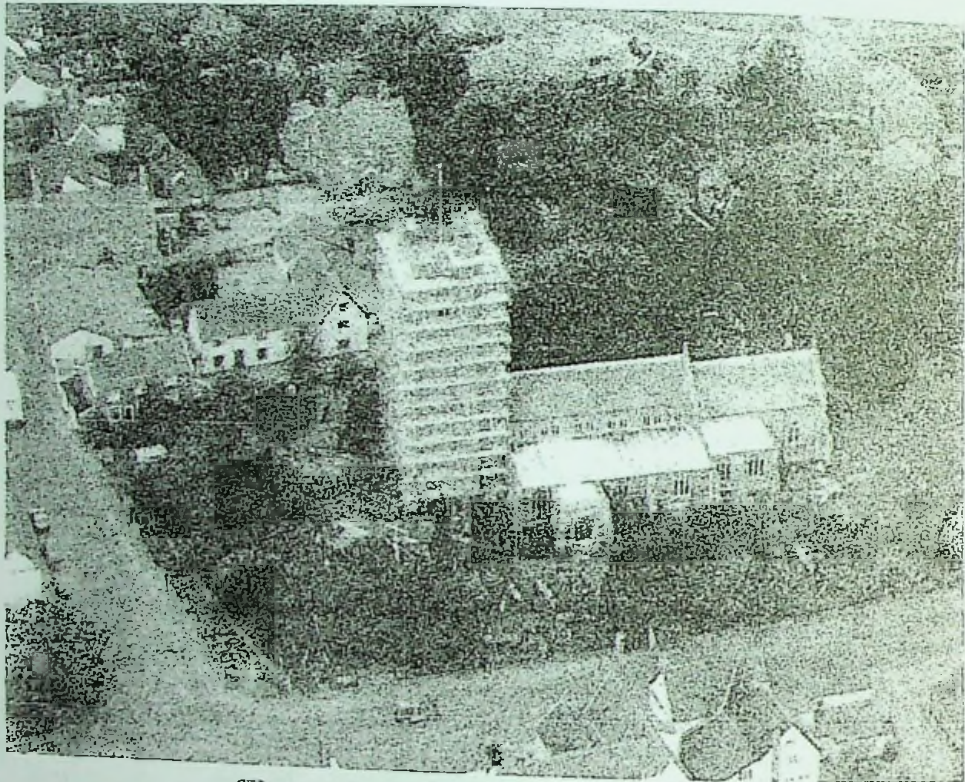
These notes were found in an antique shop. Four other documents came to light in October 1994 when a "time capsule" was discovered by the masons behind a flint in the tower, put there on April 25th 1878.

It was a bottle taken from The Queen's Head and sealed to contain the landlord Thomas C Bennett's **business card** signed on the back by the foreman: "T Patterson put me in here", the **Stradbroke Almanack 1878** which, like the annual Stradbroke Directory, lists the Parish officers, meeting places etc., a **summary** of the work on the church 1871 - 1878, and as **wrapping paper** some cartoons and satire relating to Ipswich.

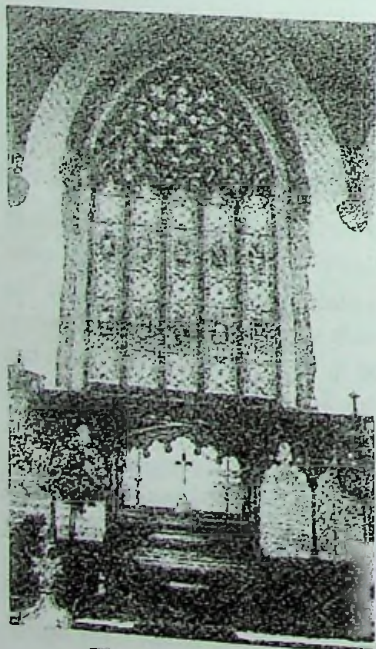
120 years later, on April 23rd 1998, foreman Bill Sykes added his signature to a collection of papers and other means of late 20th century communication for a new "time capsule", filled by students of Stradbroke's High School and Primary School to describe their times which, on that day, was concealed in the tower, to be discovered in the next millennium.

The Churchyard was closed for burials in 1904. The Cemetery in Laxfield Road now serves that purpose, and is a County Wildlife Site. Being ancient meadowland, it is a haven for wild flowers and grasses. The area round the Church is managed by the Parish Council with a policy of regular but selective mowing to maintain a smart appearance in the middle of the village but also to provide conservation. There is a leaflet available about the trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses that may be seen there.

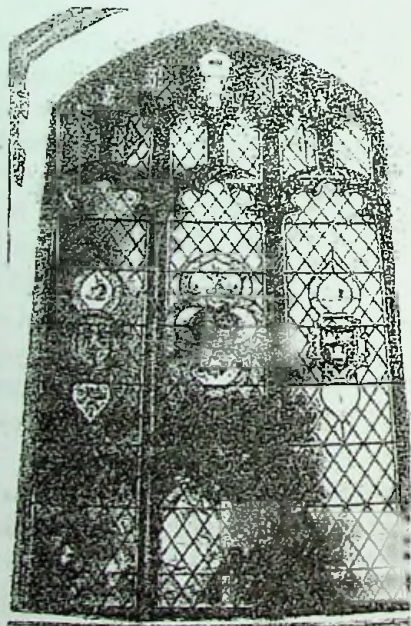
Family Services, the Primary School, Concerts, Art Exhibitions and Flower Festivals have been given more room by the removal of pews in the nave and the south aisle. May **All Saints Church** be a training ground for saints, and a centre to display God's love for his world through the living word of his Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit



The restoration of the tower, 1994 - 95.



The East Window.



The North-West Window.