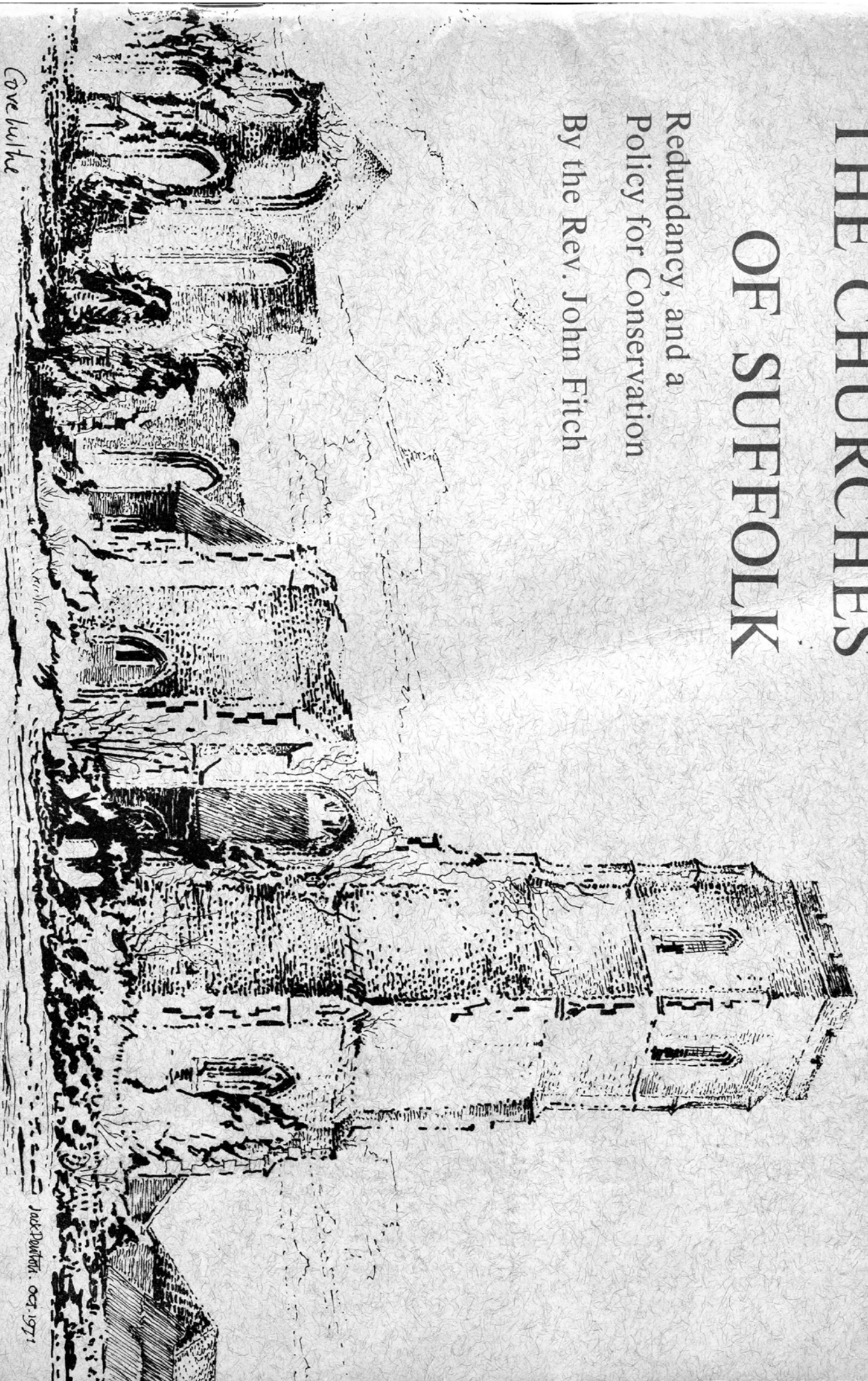


# THE CHURCHES OF SUFFOLK

Redundancy, and a  
Policy for Conservation

By the Rev. John Fitch

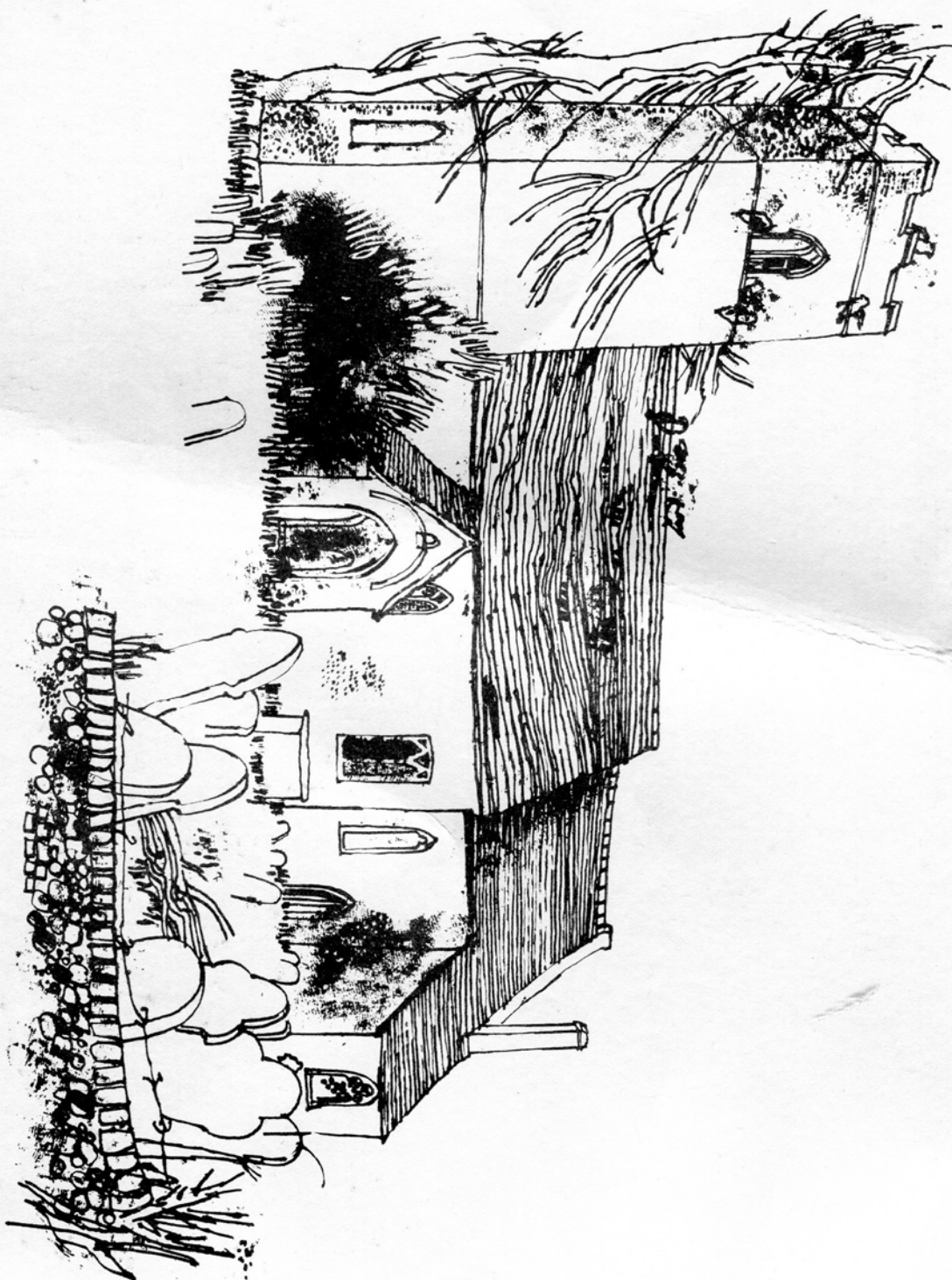
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*Jack Doughty. Oct. 1971*

Published by the Suffolk Preservation Society

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*Long disused, with a hole in the nave roof: Sapisson*

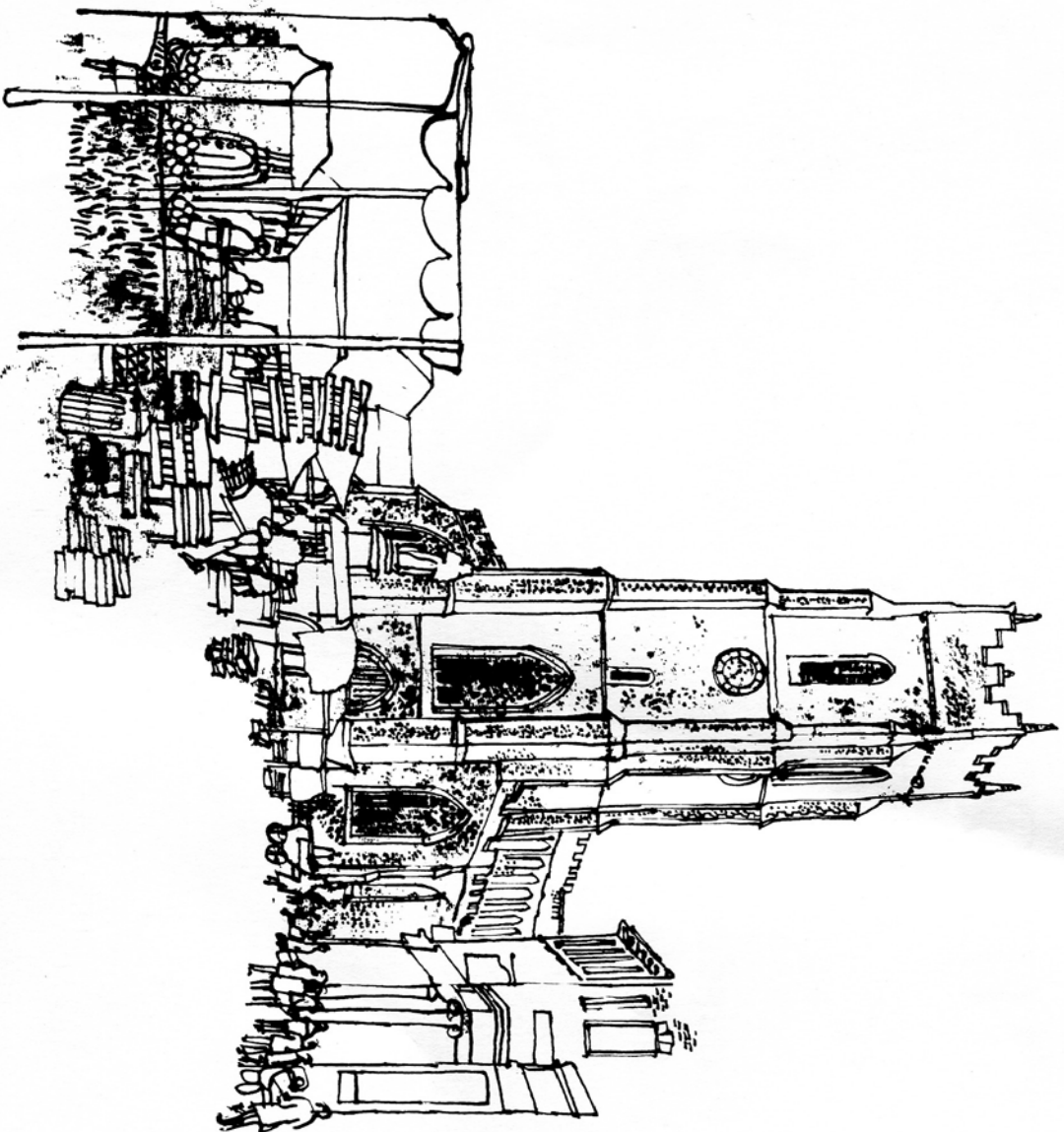


# THE CHURCHES OF SUFFOLK

Redundancy, and a  
Policy for Conservation

By the Rev. John Fitch, M.A.,  
Rector of Brandon and Santon Downham

Published by the Suffolk Preservation Society



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## FOREWORD

by the Duke of Grafton,  
President of the Suffolk Preservation Society.

ALL OF US IN SUFFOLK who care for our magnificent churches are greatly indebted to the Reverend John Fitch for this masterly exposition of the problems that face us concerning their maintenance. The Suffolk Preservation Society, and many others, are becoming increasingly concerned about the total inadequacy of the present procedure whereby the responsibility and cost of maintaining parish churches rests solely on the shoulders of the parishioners. The magnitude of the problem is daunting; but it is inconceivable that the spiritual, architectural and historic wealth embodied in our parish churches should be lost. State help will probably be necessary, and some selection and order of priorities is inevitable. This will be controversial (probably no two people would agree in every detail with the listing), and Mr. Fitch, with no little courage, has made some tentative suggestions. This Society has decided to publish his paper because we feel it should receive maximum and immediate publicity, and because we hope that it will provoke the discussion and consideration from which constructive action may follow. The problems are acute and deeply worrying in many parishes. Mr. Fitch throws down a challenge to Suffolk. Our successors may not easily forgive us if we fail to take it up in time.

Grafton.

President,  
Suffolk Preservation Society

## PREFACE

This memorandum seems to call for some explanation as to how and why it came to be written, and published. Any such explanation is, I fear, bound to be highly personal. For this was a self imposed task. No one asked me to undertake it. I wrote the memorandum under a sense of compulsion. Feeling as I did about the subject in hand, I felt I *had* to get it off my chest (so to speak) and on to paper. The process of doing so helped to clarify my own ideas, and I hope the end-product will perhaps serve to do the same for some at least of its readers. If so, I shall feel this is sufficient justification for writing it.

I laboured to complete it under severe pressure of time and the insistent and rightful demands of a large and expanding parish and a long suffering wife and family, and they share my relief that at last it is finished!

But why all this bother? Let me try to explain, and please forgive the egotism this involves.

Although born one mile on the wrong (Essex) side of the river Stour at Mistley (a circumstance for which I offer no excuse), I can claim to have lived in or around East Anglia strictly so called all my life – with the brief exception of eighteen happy months in Somerset preparing for ordination.

From boyhood cycling expeditions up and down the Stour valley onwards, as my horizons widened, I have come ever increasingly under the spell of East Anglia – its landscape, towns, villages, hamlets, its seaboard, rivers and streams, lanes and hedgerows, woodlands, fields and meadows, heaths and fens, its cottages, farm-houses and stately homes, and the people who live in them – not least of its churches. As a schoolboy I saved up and bought Munro Cautley's famous book when it first came out in 1938, and few copies could be more dog eared or well thumbed, marked and annotated than mine. I have never lost an opportunity to visit a Suffolk Church.

Not that I undervalue or am insensitive to the churches or the scenery of other regions of our richly varied British Isles, or even the great world beyond; far from it; but simply that East Anglia is where I belong, and within East Anglia, Suffolk, in which County I have been well content to serve the whole twenty four years of my parochial ministry so far. And what is Suffolk without its churches? They are bone of its bone, – as if they had grown in the earth like oak and elm. And as I say I belong to Suffolk. Without trying to sentimentalize it, the relation is as intimate as that.

I am not so vain or stupid as to claim any sort of superiority in this respect. On the contrary I believe that all, like me, with deep family roots in this county feel much as I do (though, being East Anglians, they may not give much expression to it), together with, if a shade less intensely, the many who have come from other parts to live here because they like it. 'Silly' Suffolk (we feel in our bones) without its churches (a very few of them excepted) would not be Silly Suffolk any longer, for we recall that silly = selig = holy, — because of all the churches. And silly (in that sense) we want Suffolk to remain!

It may be, and many no doubt will say this, that all this is very unchristian, that people like us care for these churches (and for places, and things), too much, too deeply, too passionately; we shall be told (as if we didn't know already) that the Church of God is not buildings, but people, etc. etc. Strange though it may seem to some, we know and believe that too, and we do care for people even more (most of us) than for buildings, — and one reason we care so much for the buildings is because, not only are they consecrated to the glory of Almighty God, and very often lovely in themselves and in their settings, but they are all of them so intimately bound up with men, women and children and their doings, past and present. So we do not feel we need apologize for, or be ashamed of the intensity of our concern that what we value shall be preserved.

For, let us make no mistake about it, our churches, along with so much else we value, which we have inherited from our forefathers, are threatened. A mood of pessimistic, defeatist radicalism is sweeping through the Church as well as the nation, questioning the value of everything once held sacred, everything associated with "the establishment". In the Church today there is in some fields a strange uneasy alliance between hard headed, practical, down to earth ecclesiastical planners and administrators, understandably impatient to modernize the Church, to streamline and make it more efficient, and brash, woolly-minded, root and branch, latter day Puritans. These strange allies are united in their eagerness to strip the Church of all that they consider unnecessary and burdensome in its inheritance from the past, in order to equip it for its God-given mission in the present. One of their chief targets is supposedly unwanted churches. How laudible this seems — on the surface — the ideal of the Church stripped for action.

Theoretically these people have a strong case, and in what follows I have leaned over backwards (perilously far, some may think) to be fair to them. I understand, and partly share their concern at seeing the Church to which I am proud to belong, so hampered in the discharge of its mission, and sincerely feel the force of their arguments. Having served for some time now on the Diocesan Pastoral Committee, which meets every month, and exists to deal among other related

matters with the subject of this memorandum, seeking to serve the pastoral needs of the diocese more effectively, I am at least familiar with the practical difficulties, and they are legion, in the way of achieving this end.

We meet under the chairmanship of our Diocesan Bishop, Dr. Leslie Brown, than whom no man could possibly be more conscientious, more fair minded, more open to reasoned argument, more charitable or courteous to those who see things differently from himself. Associated with him in the pastoral oversight of the diocese is the Bishop of Dunwich and the three Archdeacons, in all of whom this Diocese is well served. No "business men in gaiters" they. Defenders of Suffolk churches can take comfort from the knowledge that our three present archdeacons are conservationist in outlook to a man. There is therefore certainly no disposition on my part to carp at our diocesan leadership or to make things more difficult for it. We are *extremely fortunate* in this Diocese in our present leaders. They know their Suffolk!

But what I do fear is that in the present climate of opinion, a very strong case for conservation as a good in itself could go by default, that what is at present a slow trickle of declarations of redundancy of Suffolk churches could quickly swell to a flood — I calculate below that on present reckonings over 200 churches, including many of the most precious, out of a total of just under 500, are threatened in this diocese alone. (Not of course that even so they would all, or even most, be demolished, but by being converted to secular use, or even, as has been suggested, turned into dwelling houses, they would irreparably lose their character).

It seemed to me high time therefore that both as a matter of public interest, and especially for the benefit of those in the Pastoral Committee and in London and elsewhere whose responsibility it is to deal with these matters, *all* the relevant facts and considerations, and not just a selection of them, should be marshalled and presented between two covers, so that the decisions which have to be taken can be reached in full knowledge of them. I felt that this requisite full knowledge was lacking and that if no one else was going to supply it then I must, before it was too late.

That is how this memorandum came to take the form it did.

As I wrote it I became aware of new factors in the situation giving welcome grounds for encouragement. The emergence, partly no doubt due to the publicity of Conservation Year, of a broad based philosophy of conservation, as a matter of desperate urgency. A belated and long overdue change of mind in the official church about state and local government aid for historic churches (previously spurned). And, most recently of all, Norwich City Council giving a lead to



Municipalities throughout the country in its practical concern to preserve its wonderful heritage of ancient churches. These new trends, described in detail in what follows, could well transform the situation in respect of redundant churches.

To the Bishops, the Archdeacons and my colleagues on the Pastoral Committee in particular, and to all (not having their minds already made up) who are interested enough in the subject to read it, this memorandum is addressed. It seeks to show that, strong though the case may seem on paper for shedding much of our Anglican load of historic churches (not least in Suffolk) there are for weightier arguments on the other side, in favour of a *deliberate policy of selective, discriminating conservation* of so important a part of our national and ecclesiastical heritage, which, once destroyed, would be lost for ever.

Aware of its imperfections of style and presentation, yet confident of the substantial accuracy of its facts, I therefore offer this memorandum to all who care as I do for these things, in the strong hope that the arguments here advanced may win acceptance.

In conclusion, I must record my grateful indebtedness to my friend Norman Scarfe, the distinguished author of the Shell Guides to Suffolk and Essex, who in so many ways does so much to commend Suffolk to its inhabitants, to increase our knowledge, understanding and love of our county. That the Suffolk Preservation Society should have agreed to publish this memorandum has made me very happy. I must express sincere gratitude to the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich and the Bishop of Dunwich for so readily giving their Nihil Obstat to publication (of course they are in no way committed to or responsible for the views expressed) and, finally to His Grace the Duke of Grafton, President of the Suffolk Preservation Society and of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, for doing me the honour of writing a Foreword.

15th October 1971

John Fitch.

*Note.* Despite the wording of the title of this memorandum, I have been obliged, for technical reasons, to restrict my observations to churches situated within the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. These include the vast majority of Suffolk churches, but for the sake of completeness it should be noted that there are twenty seven Anglican churches in the North east of the county, in the Deanery of Lothingland and Diocese of Norwich. They include a high proportion of mediaeval churches of great value and interest, namely Lowestoft St. Margaret, Ashby, Blundeston, Corton, Fritton, Herringfleet, Kessingland, Lound, Mutford, Oulton, Pakefield, and Rushmere St. Michael.

## THE CHURCHES OF SUFFOLK: Redundancy, and a Policy for Conservation

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## I. The Nature of the Problem, national and local

In approaching this problem of redundant churches, it is essential fully to grasp its difficulty and complexity, and the reasons why the Church has felt obliged to take such nationwide action as it has, and why it is almost certain to take far more drastic action in the not so distant future. We must try to see this particular problem in its widest context.

An "agonising reappraisal" of its policy with regard to its vast inheritance of ancient churches has been forced upon the Church of England by the unprecedentedly severe financial, manpower and, indeed, spiritual crisis it is undergoing at the present time.

### (i) Manpower.

The steep decline in the numbers of men ordained in the last ten years, coupled with (a) the ever increasing pastoral demands of the great conurbations etc., resulting from the population explosion and changing social and industrial patterns, and (b) with the fact that many of those now being ordained are older men with a shorter prospect of active service, is obliging the Church to redeploy its ministry, at present most thickly concentrated in the most thinly populated rural areas such as Suffolk. (This last description now needs qualifying in the light of the 1971 Census results published in August, which show that West Suffolk has the highest rate of population increase of any English County!). This redeployment is bound seriously to reduce the numbers of Suffolk clergy.

### (ii) Financial.

The Chairman of the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, Sir Edmund Compton, has recently been on record as stressing the extreme gravity of the financial crisis now facing the Church, and the urgency of measures of economy and retrenchment, as well as of a new understanding of the meaning of Christian stewardship and commitment as it affects our pockets, if the Church is to be able to meet the greatly increased financial commitments, which, if it is to survive, let alone advance, it *must* meet. Thus the Church, both at national and diocesan levels, is desperately reviewing its resources, to see what ballast can be dispensed with. "Cutting our coat according to the cloth" is the slogan of the day. This seems on the face of it the merest common sense.

### (iii) Spiritual.

Both the manpower and the financial crises are seen as symptoms of a more deep-seated malaise which can only be described as a spiritual, moral and intellectual crisis, leading us to re-examine the most fundamental assumptions on which we have hitherto based our actions and our philosophy of life.

Concurrently with this "crisis", "backs to the wall", atmosphere in the contemporary Church of England, and as a direct consequence of it, there is a growing and increasingly vocal body of radical opinion within the Church, which, quite apart from questions of financial and administrative expediency sees Church planning and streamlining (involving the redundancy of vast numbers of ancient churches) as part of a clear and urgent *moral* necessity.<sup>1</sup> These Church radicals see the Church as preoccupied with Administration, Budget balancing, Buildings and the Past, rather than with Service, Witness, People and the Present - and seeing it like this leads very many "thoughtful" people to despair or near-despair of the contemporary Church. They long to see it "get its priorities right", share its Master's concern with people, and his impatience with established ecclesiastical authority and vested interests. They long to free the Church from its past (as if this were possible!), from its past identification with a social (class) and political system which they dislike, and which to them is largely typified and expressed in our traditional churches, liturgy and pastoral (parochial) organisation - or lack of it!

The extreme wing (lunatic fringe?) of radical reforming opinion in the Church seems to have conceived a Quaker-like aversion to ancient churches altogether, on the grounds that they express a false theology!<sup>2</sup> The Rector of Thetford, the Rev. D. C. Bartle, in a recent letter to the Times, wrote that "for the vast mass of people today, almost all of whom stand outside the religious tradition," "enduring stone and steeples pointing heavenwards" speak of "a static God who is essentially away from it all."<sup>2</sup>

In a rejoinder to Ian Dunlop, Vicar of Bures, who had criticised his letter in the Church Times, Mr. Bartle developed his argument. In "overspill" towns like Thetford (and Brandon) "people need buildings which enable community and fellowship. When men and women have been uprooted and dumped down in another environment, they need a God (whether they know it or not) who is

1. see, for example, that stimulating book, Leslie Paul: *The Death and Resurrection of the Church*. (1968)

2. One more reason to be thankful for the paucity of *spires* in East Anglia!



with them in their moment of alienation.... They are not going to find God in static stone certainties.... but in the warmth of a fellowship which more homely buildings at least make possible".<sup>3</sup>

Is this a real dilemma? Perhaps David Bartle has a point, but, as well as the need to find God immanent in the warmth of human fellowship in more homely buildings", do not we all need to be taken out of ourselves in "breathless adoration" before the transcendent, numinous God, whom we may find in majestic Nature, or great music and art, as well as in "static stone certainties" built to the glory of God? In other words, the two are not incompatible, but complementary. This is in fact yet another variation on the age old, ageless, theme of Transcendent v Immanent, Outward v Inward, Material v Spiritual, Catholic v Protestant, Radical v Conservative, where the dilemma can only be resolved in the discovery that the truth lies, not in a compromise, in some indeterminate point between the two extremes, but in both extremes held together in tension.

Thus radical theorists and practical men of affairs unite in telling the Church that it must give up acting like a sanctified Antiquarian Society, for which it is often mistaken, and set itself free from an obsolete pastoral, parochial structure inherited from the Middle Ages, and designed for a static rural society long since replaced by a mobile industrial society, in order to minister realistically to the contemporary English of today. It is repeatedly urged upon the clergy and indeed the Church as a whole, that we ought not to waste so much of our resources in time, money and energy as curators of museum-churches, and upholders of an outworn system, living in the past.

Those who see things in this way do not envisage multiple groupings of parishes and clergy, or any other administrative expedient, as by itself a satisfactory solution. They fiercely resent what they believe to be the crippling and unnecessary financial burden involved in the maintenance and repair of so many ancient churches and cathedrals, entailing constant appeals for money, which they believe could and should be so much better spent on works of Christian compassion. They will therefore be content with nothing less than wholesale and largescale declarations of redundancy especially in heavily churchd rural dioceses such as this.

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3. Church Times 9th July, 1971 (Dunlop) 6th August (Bartle). See also 20th August (Dunlop's last word) and 27th August (further correspondence) and leading article 'Souls v. Spires'.

That, on their own premises, they have a strong case, cannot be gainsaid. Nevertheless there is another side to the question, and this will be presented in due course.

## II. The Urgency of the Problem

Up to now, Diocesan Bishops and Pastoral Committees have, for the most part, been understandably reluctant, for a variety of reasons, to "grasp this nettle" of redundant churches, — the exception being urban Dioceses such as Southwark, where, with so many unwanted large Victorian suburban churches, the situation is acute.

If the present manpower and money crisis continues to intensify, as seems likely, Bishops and Pastoral Committees are going to be under very strong pressure to step up the rate of redundancies, and there are signs that the pace is already beginning to quicken. 'L'appétit vient en mangeant', and the radicals are hungry!

In our own diocese, declarations of redundancy have already been ratified, or are well advanced in the pipeline, in the case of six Suffolk churches, and are under active consideration by the Pastoral Committee in four or five other cases, and the Diocesan Redundant Churches Uses Committee, a statutory body set up under the Pastoral Measure 1968, (and of which, as of the Pastoral Committee, the author of this memorandum is a member) held its first meeting at Ipswich on 28th September, 1971, on its agenda the problem of finding satisfactory alternative uses for the six churches abovementioned (for details see List 4 below), failing which, under the terms of the Measure, a final decision has to be taken by the Church Commissioners, after taking the specialist advice of the Redundant Churches Board, whether the churches for which no satisfactory alternative use can be found are to be demolished and the sites sold, or handed over to the Redundant Churches Fund to be maintained for posterity. No other alternative (such as de-roofing and allowing them to fall into picturesque ruin)<sup>4</sup> is permissible, under the terms of the Measure, at this point rigid and doctrinaire.

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4. see Appendix 3, below

### III. The Scale of the Problem of this Diocese

At this stage it is important that the scale of the problem as it affects our own Diocese should be clearly understood.

On the basis of a detailed analysis of the latest available figures (1961 Census) of parish populations as given in the current Diocesan Year Book 1970/71, (see Appendix 1 and Lists 1 – 3 below), it appears that out of a total of some 490 parish churches in the Diocese, no less than 218 serve populations of under 250, 138 of which serve populations under 200, and at least 45 (but probably nearer 50) populations under 100. (This of course gives no indication of actual size of Sunday congregations, in some parishes believed to be almost non-existent).<sup>5</sup>

This gives some idea of the magnitude of the problem in Suffolk alone. Like many rural counties, Suffolk has a high proportion of tiny parishes, which, with the present day continuing trend of agricultural mechanization and high wages involving a further flight from the land, together with prevailing local government policies regarding housing in rural areas, are likely to get smaller still, while the larger parishes get larger still. It is the churches of these tiny parishes, very often (in the nature of the case) the most unspoilt, unsophisticated, picturesque and “atmospheric”, which are chiefly at risk. The current controversy over a proposed new building estate at Hawkedon is relevant here.

None of the 218 referred to above can be regarded as entirely safe for the foreseeable future. In the immediate future it is the 50 or so churches of parishes with under 100 souls which are threatened, and this threat must be taken seriously, as well as the only slightly less ominous shadow overhanging the remaining 168.

A few of these churches most immediately threatened, e.g. Gipping (technically a chapel and not a parish church), Little Saxham and Denston, are of

5. There appear to be some misprints in the Year Book figures, e.g. the population of Somerton is given as 2 alongside the names of two churchwardens with Somerton addresses (presumably not the entire population!). Other figures, e.g. the Rickinghamalls, are also suspect. Finally, the figures for a number of the smallest parishes are not given separately, although they have their own churches, among them Carlton (probably included with Kelsale), Little Wenham (with Capel St. Mary?), Saxstead (with Framlingham?), Sotherton (with Uggeshall?), and Sudbourne (with Orford?). Others are Brundish and Southolt. Allowing for all of these factors the substantial accuracy of the figures in the Year Book may be accepted.

unquestioned architectural importance, and if redundant would be obvious candidates to be placed in the care of the Redundant Churches Fund, but they include many others, which, while they may be considered of secondary architectural importance, are totally, or almost completely, unspoilt and unrestored, (among them Badley, Icklingham All Saints, Westhorpe, Withersdale, Barnardiston, Battisford, Shelland, Hoo), and others which, in the rustic beauty of their setting in the Suffolk countryside, and their mellow texture, (e.g. Shelley, Little Wenham, Heveningham, Dalham and many others) are so much part and parcel of the Suffolk scene, that it is unthinkable that they should be wrested from us. All to a greater or less degree are irreplaceable documents of our social as well as our religious history – to put it no higher.

But this is to anticipate. Much more will need to be said on this, in the context of the case for the defence, but, before we go any further, it is necessary that we should understand very clearly exactly what the legal and administrative processes are by which a church can be declared redundant, and in what manner its fate thereafter has to be decided.

Enough has been said already (it is hoped) to emphasise the urgency with which all lovers of the Suffolk scene and its ancient churches should view this problem, and see what action can yet be taken to save our precious heritage while there is still time.

### IV. The Legal and Administrative Procedures concerning Redundant Churches

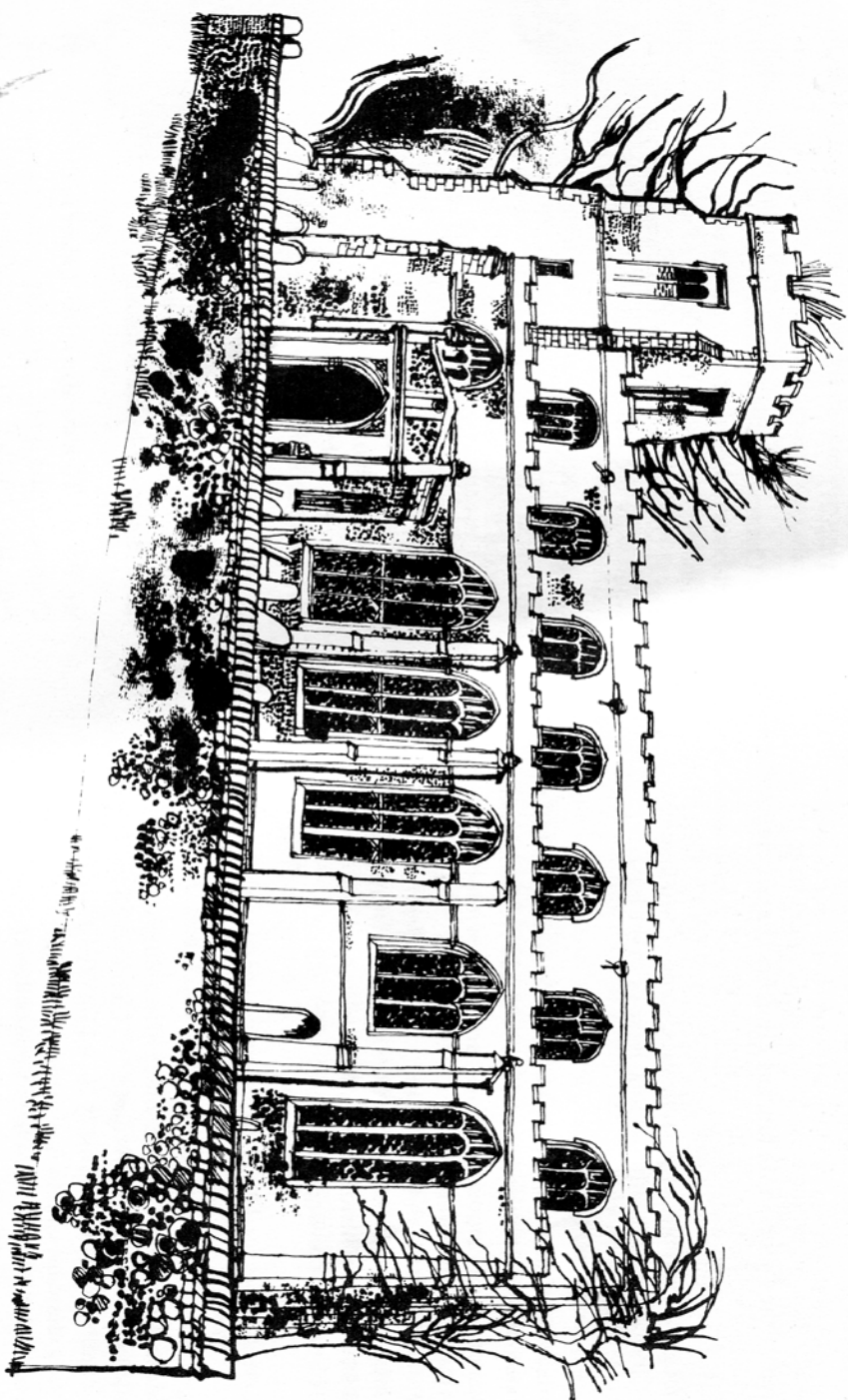
This is entirely governed by the Pastoral Measure, 1968, perhaps the most comprehensive and far reaching ecclesiastical reform to reach the Statute Book since the Reformation, comparable to the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1836 and the Church Assembly in 1920.

So far as it concerns redundant churches, this measure is largely based upon the recommendations of the Bridges Commission which reported in 1960.<sup>6</sup>

The Measure provides for an entirely new procedure for dealing with churches which are no longer required. The first stage is the making of a pastoral scheme, initiated by the Bishop, but subject to approval or alteration by the duly constituted and elected Diocesan Pastoral Committee. Such a scheme may provide

6. Report of the Archbishops Commission on Redundant Churches 1958-60.





*Dension*

for the declaration of a church or part of a church as redundant. Provision is made for the parish concerned to be consulted at every stage, although its objections may be overruled by the Pastoral Committee or later by the Church Commissioners. Once a scheme has been agreed by the Pastoral Committee and submitted to the Church Commissioners, it is still subject to their (the Church Commissioners') final approval, which is not automatic.

If approved, and the declaration of redundancy confirmed, the next stage is for the matter to be referred to the Diocesan Redundant Churches Uses Committee who are charged with the task of finding a suitable alternative use for the building. In their notes for the guidance of such Committees, the Church Commissioners give a range of examples of possible uses, some of which might involve the sale of the Church outright, others a long lease or other legal arrangement.

If no satisfactory alternative use can be found, the matter is then remitted to the Church Commissioners who must refer it to the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches,<sup>7</sup> the chairman of which (appointed by the Archbishops jointly after consultation with the (former) Prime Minister), is Lord (formerly Sir Eric) Fletcher, F.S.A., sometime Labour M.P. for Islington, and an active member of the former Church Assembly. "This Board has a duty to give information and advice to the Commissioners on the historic and architectural qualities of redundant Churches" (Church Commissioners Report 1969, p.21).

The Church Commissioners report for 1970 puts the whole matter succinctly (p.21).

"Under the Pastoral Measure 1968 the Commissioners have a duty to decide, normally within a period of three years, the future of a church which has been formally declared redundant. Unless the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches certify that the redundant church is of such small historic or architectural interest that its demolition would not in their opinion be objectionable on that ground, every endeavour must first be made to find a suitable use. If no suitable use is found, the Commissioners must decide, after consultation with the Advisory Board, whether the building is of "such historic or architectural interest that it ought to be preserved in the interests of the nation and the Church of England". Such a building would normally be transferred to the Redundant Churches Fund for care and maintenance under the provisions of a

redundancy scheme. If the Commissioners decide that the church does not merit preservation, the Measure authorises demolition pursuant to a redundancy scheme. The Redundant Churches Committee (deputy chairman the Bishop of Rochester) are responsible for carrying out these duties on behalf of the Commissioners and for advising the Board of Governors in the event of representations being received following the issue of a draft redundancy scheme." (1970 Report p.21).

The Chairman of the Redundant Churches Fund is Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, well-known also, of course, for his work in connection with the Friends of Friendless Churches, (the address of which is 12 Edwardes Square, London, W.8). The H.Q. of the Redundant Churches Fund appears to be the Church of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4.

Mr. Bulmer-Thomas writing to the Editor of The Church Times from that address in a letter published in the Church Times on 9th July, 1971, is at pains to make it clear, as he has done on other occasions, in other connections, e.g. the Norwich City Churches, that "though the time will no doubt come when the grants made to the Fund will need to be increased, if only to cope with inflation, that situation has not arisen yet, and our present concern is to make it clear that no church of architectural or historic interest need be lost for financial reasons. If suitable alternative use is not found, the Fund will gladly accept the ownership and responsibility for maintenance.

The Members of the Fund are satisfied that for the first quinquennium for which the grants have been settled we can keep in being all churches of architectural or historic interest which are declared redundant and for which no suitable alternative use is found."

Mr. Bulmer-Thomas also made it clear in the same letter that the Redundant Churches Fund is not solely dependant on the grants from the Government and from the Church Commissioners (derived from the sale of redundant churches and their sites) but that they are "encouraged and indeed expected to raise money from voluntary sources, and expect this to play a big part in their work."

It is perhaps worth pointing out in connection with the foregoing that the Church Commissioners are not obliged to accept (but only to seek) the advice of the Redundant Churches Advisory Board in reaching their decisions on the fate of any particular church. Nevertheless the Redundant Churches Advisory Board has recently incurred criticism for unconstitutionally arrogating to itself

7. Headquarters: 12 Little College Street, London, S.W.1.

the power to issue or withhold demolition certificates, thus by-passing the Church Commissioners. (Church Times 24th September, 1971.)

*Note:* The Church Commissioners' reports for 1969 and 1970 afford us the information that in this 2-year period schemes were completed for dealing with 62 redundant churches. Authority was given for 41 of these to be demolished and 20 to be closed, while one was to be appropriated for use by the British Red Cross Society (Reports p.17 in each). None of these was in Suffolk.

From the foregoing it would seem that this memorandum should be addressed in the first instance to the Bishop of the Diocese, the Archdeacons and the members of the Diocesan Pastoral and Redundant Churches Uses Committees, (with whom the initiative rests, except in the rare cases (e.g. Icklingham All Saints) where the request for a redundancy order comes from the Parochial Church Council)<sup>8</sup> and secondly, to the Redundant Churches Advisory Board and the Redundant Churches Fund, at the same time keeping in touch with Mr. Bulmer-Thomas under his other hat as Chairman of the Friends of Friendless Churches, and with the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, Fulham Palace, London, S.W.6., which, since its inception, has done such invaluable work (see its annual reports).

*Note:* For a detailed explanation of the procedure see "An Introduction to the Pastoral Measure 1968 issued by the Church Commissioners for the guidance of Diocesan Authorities", April 1969 Part III pages 27 - 40. This deals also with such related subjects as the removal of the legal effects of consecration; Disposal of font, communion table, plate and other contents, and disposal of human remains, tombstones, monuments and memorials.

## V. The Case for Selective and Discriminating Conservation as a Deliberate Policy in this Diocese

In Section I of this memorandum, the case for wholesale redundancies under the far reaching and almost revolutionary provisions of the Pastoral Measure 1968 was stated (it is hoped) objectively and with intentional force, because it is essential that those who will suffer most if wholesale church redundancies and demolitions occur must be made to see the very great strength and cogency of the radical argument, however unwilling they may be (as the author of this memorandum most certainly is) to accept its conclusions and consequences. As has already been said, the argument thus clearly stated, both in terms of practicalities and of principles, might seem to be almost incontrovertible.

Yet in fact there is a very great deal to be said and weighed on the other side, and in favour of what, with careful and deliberate choice of words, has, in the heading of this section, been called "selective and discriminating conservation" (of our heritage of churches) "as a deliberate policy in this Diocese."

There are most definitely two sides to this question and if there is to be a fruitful and constructive debate leading to a satisfactory resolution of the problem commanding the maximum support, it is essential that, just as the radical argument has been fairly and objectively stated in this memorandum by a conservationist<sup>9</sup>, so, to be fair, the radicals should listen to the arguments on the other side. They may be stated as follows:

(1) It might be thought that the safeguards proposed in the Bridges Report, generally acceptable to the preservationist<sup>9</sup> interests which gave evidence to the Commission, and largely incorporated in the Pastoral Measure procedure outlined above, are sufficient and satisfactory, and that if enforced, they will (as they were intended to do), ensure that no churches of value are lost.

Until we have actually experienced in this Diocese the working of this procedure it will obviously be too early to pass judgment upon it, but it is impossible to suppress serious misgivings.

If this procedure is to command the trust and confidence of conservationists, it is essential that the all important Redundant Churches Advisory Board, to

8. In this case on the understanding that Icklingham All Saints would be preserved and St. James's used for worship.

9. Note: The words 'conservationist' and 'preservationist' are used interchangeably, although it is realised that nowadays only the first is respectable.



which the Church Commissioners are obliged in the last resort to turn for advice (even though not obliged to accept it!) should be such in its composition, knowledge and judgment as to deserve the absolute trust and confidence placed in it. It has yet to prove itself so far as this Diocese is concerned.

The reason for our misgivings is, however, not so much distrust of the composition or judgment of the Advisory Board, as fear of the uncertainties involved. What are these uncertainties?

The essence of this procedure is a complete divorce between purely pastoral considerations and what for want of a better word we may call amenity values. The first is to be decided regardless of the second, which is not to influence it, but to be decided at a later stage, on its own merits. So far so good, — in theory.

But if a Pastoral Committee is faced with the pastoral necessity of making redundant a church which on grounds of amenity it would keenly like to see preserved (perhaps for other purposes or simply *per se* by the Redundant Churches Fund), and for which (as will be the case, it is to be expected, with most rural churches) no satisfactory alternative use can (later) be found, it has to take the risk that the final decision on the fate of that church will be made by a faceless body in London, without possibility of appeal, and applying criteria laid down in the Measure which, if interpreted literally, are frankly inadequate (see below for a justification of this statement). If the Advisory Board interprets these criteria literally many valuable churches may be lost.

The uncertainty of knowing which way the Advisory Board is going to jump until it is too late to catch it introduces an element of gambling and risk which could only have one of two possible effects, both of which would be deplorable. Either it would make the more cautious Pastoral Committees think twice about declaring a beautiful but historically and architecturally second rate or insignificant church redundant, when it is and ought to be so, simply for fear of losing it. Or, with other Pastoral Committees less sensitive to "amenity", large numbers of good churches would be lost in this way, no satisfactory alternative use being found for them.

One wonders how far this all powerful London Committee headed by Lord Fletcher will be prepared to listen to the people on the spot, and in this case to those of us who are not ashamed even in these days to profess and call ourselves Suffolk preservationists — and how far it would be prepared, if requested by interested parties, to commit itself in advance on a particular church's chances of

preservation or demolition, before any irrevocable decisions were taken in the Pastoral Committees.

Some of these uncertainties will be resolved before long. In the meantime let us explain why we consider the criteria for deciding whether a given church is worthy of preservation, as laid down in the Pastoral Measure, to be seriously inadequate.

(ii) "Historical and architectural importance" are not enough to describe all that most of us value in the churches which mean so much to us.

Yet when we try to put into words exactly what this is, to define it, we experience difficulties. We need to avoid vagueness and sentimentality. But it is neither vague nor sentimental, nor more than solid fact, to say that especially for those of us who have retained some God-given (?) sensitivity to God-given (if man-made) beauty and poetry, and particularly to those of us with deep roots in a particular locality, but also to all who value the associations of buildings, very many churches which cannot honestly be said to have outstanding "historical or architectural importance" are so much part of the very fabric of local life (and not just of the past), so much part of the landscape too, whether of country or town, that both would be immeasurably poorer without them.

Sir John Betjeman has succeeded pre-eminently in putting into words what one suspects many of us feel in our bones, and this, passionately.<sup>10</sup>

Something has been said already of Churches as documents of social as well as religious history (this applies of course equally to Dissenting Chapels — Walpole Old Independent; Friars Street, Ipswich; Churchgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds; the Roman Catholic Church in Westgate, Bury, so splendidly restored and redecorated recently; the old Congregational Chapel at Hartest; the gaunt Baptist Chapel at Barton Mills; and the much more civilised one in Garland Street, Bury, to take only a few, if outstanding, examples).

Neither "historical nor architectural importance" has anything to say of the Church-in-its-setting. In Suffolk it is not only the obvious and unforgettable picture postcard examples, — Blythburgh dramatically dominating its marshes, Walberswick approached across the gorse of the heath, Long Melford atop its

10. Besides his own *Collected Poems*, *passim*, see particularly his delightful anthology, "Altar and Pew" (1950), and his instructive and evocative writings on architecture, e.g. "English Churches" (with Basil Clarke) 1964.

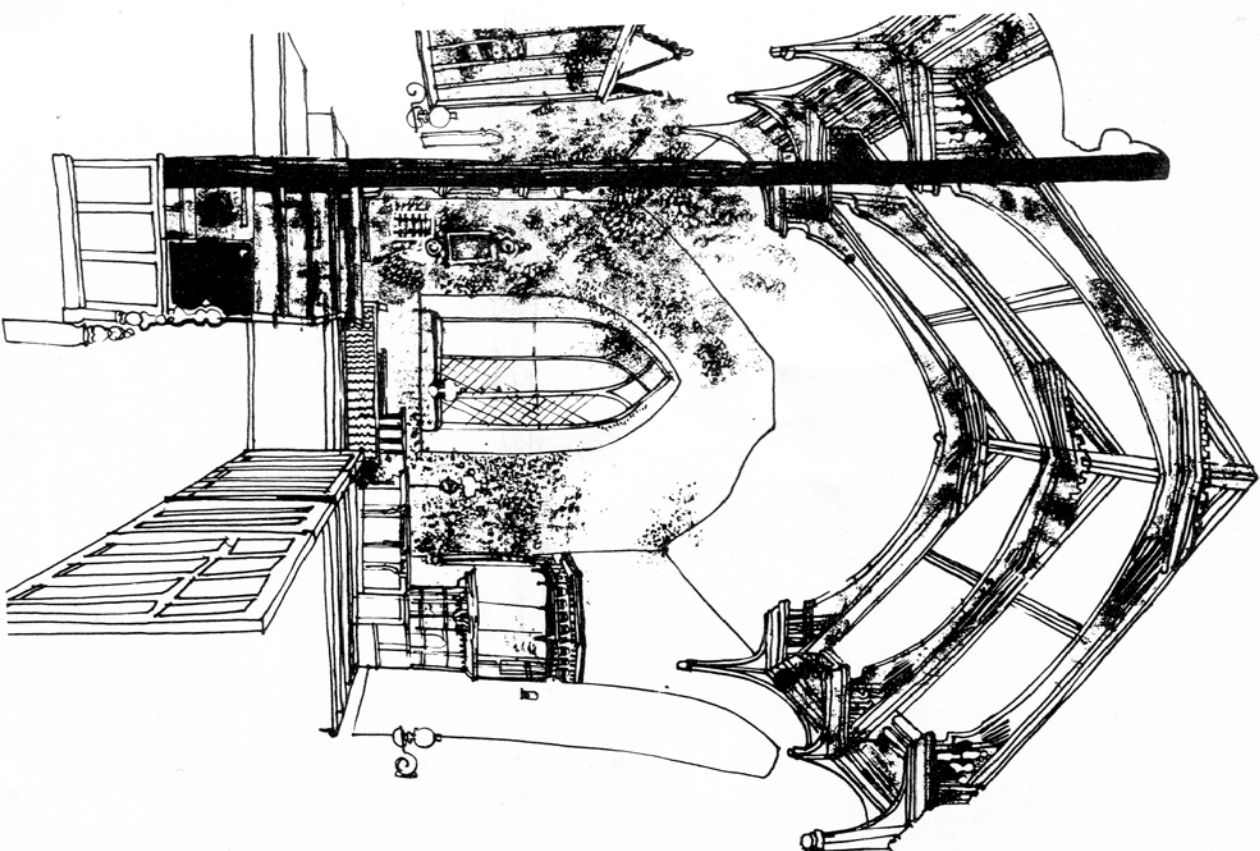
superb village green, (likewise Monks Eleigh); Lavenham tower crowning the skyline for miles and Beccles presiding serenely over the Waveney, like Bungay St. Mary a little upstream; Clare crouching over its friendly huddle of rooftops; St. Mary's, Woodbridge, seen from the Market Place or from Notcutts; Sudbury's three towers as one used to see them from various angles from the train as it skirted the river,—but also Ellough lovely and gaunt on its hilltop, its square outline silhouetted against the sky; Stoke by Nayland as grandly and unforgettably seen by Constable, coming up from Nayland; exquisite Shelley nestling in the little valley of the Brett; Erwarton proudly overlooking the Stour estuary; Little Wenham part of a perfect mediaeval complex of buildings, in a perfect rural setting,—“Castle”, Manor house, tithe barn, surrounded by the moat, best approached along the grassy track from Gipsy Row, Great Wenham; Polstead seen across the Box valley from Stoke; Heveningham astride its two roads, serenely perched above them; (cf. Sibton and Shadingfield); Syleham and Wissington almost like islands in their respective streams; Bildeston and Kersey proudly on their hilltops. Why should we be deprived of any of these?

The picturesque, subtle texture and colour, associations (entirely personal and without number) — these are some of the (non-historical and non-architectural) values we find in churches.

I have deliberately avoided the narrowly “spiritual” — but all of this is spiritual, — of the spirit, human and divine. Of the spirit in a different way is the atmosphere of a totally unpretentious, totally unsophisticated church like rustic Gt. Redisham in its lovely churchyard, or nearby Ilketshall St. Lawrence on its ancient pagan mound east of the Roman road from Halesworth to Bungay. Both have atmosphere, rusticity, sheer simplicity, and one suspects that the devoted labours of two humble unpretentious Christian pastors, — in the one case Stuart Verrells (as, too, at Ringsfield where he lived) and the late R.M.A. Greene (in the other) had something to do with it — a little touch of Suffolk holiness, not peculiar to those two churches. Is this vague sentimentality? If so, let us have more of it! But it is not that. It is just true.

It is these “atmospheric”, unrestored, unsophisticated, out of the way, pre-Tractarian interiors that are most at risk now. Churches like Bruisyard, Hoo, Brundish, Cretingham, Battisford, Lindsey, as well as those already mentioned.

If we are looking for another word to describe this as a criterion (hard enough to apply) how about “aesthetic”, or “atmospheric” or both? All we are concerned to argue here is that “historical and architectural importance” are inadequate.



Cretingham

But before we leave this matter of criteria, in passing let us insist that when the architectural and historical criteria are applied, as by the Redundant Churches Advisory Board, they should apply them broadly, remembering particularly (a) that some Churches (notably Westhall, on which, see Cautley's note ad loc.) derive their particular value from the fact that they incorporate work of every century from the 11th to the 16th, and thus illustrate, each in its very individual way, the growth and development which took place throughout the Middle Ages, and (b) that Suffolk is not rich in Church buildings of the post-Reformation centuries, but that what we do have is all the more interesting and therefore has a higher claim to be preserved. (examples: 17th century: Dalham tower 1627; Lt. Thurlow, (Soame Chapel); Brightwell c.1656; Euston 1676; furnishings at Worlingworth, Witherdale and Ringsfield; 18th century, Cowlinge tower 1733; Shotley Chancel 1745; Grundisburgh tower 1751/2; Shelland 1767; Benacre 18th century (restoration); Gislegham interior; Jennys Chapel, Acton; early 19th century. Westley (1836) and St. John's,<sup>11</sup> Bury (1841), (both by the same architect W. Ranger of London described as 'ignorant' by Pevsner, and all the better for that!); Holy Trinity, Ipswich, 1836; Chedburgh, 1842; Stowupland 1843, Woodbridge St. John 1844).

(iii) Having said all this, one has to admit that some churches, comparatively few, are totally lacking, not only in historical and architectural importance or merit of any kind, but also in atmosphere, texture, and the picturesque. Even these, no doubt, have precious associations for some. But their disappearance could not be regarded as a serious loss to Suffolk.

Those considered to be in this category are in List 5.

All of which points to the urgent need for careful selection and discrimination. That which has been made in Lists 1, 2 and 5 below is no more than tentative, and inevitably strongly marked by personal preference. What we need, in this as in other Dioceses, is for all interested parties and particularly all Preservation and Conservation Societies to be consulted well in advance, together with County Planning Authorities, before the Church initiates redundancy procedures, — in order to arrive at an agreed planning policy.

(iv) A Church should not be considered for or threatened with redundancy simply on the grounds that it serves a tiny community. If it is in good or reason-

able repair and means are available locally to keep it so, if there is some local enthusiasm and genuine attachment to it, especially if the community it serves (however small) is too remote from any other church reasonably to expect the parishioners to travel long distances to go to church if it is closed, then it should be at least reprieved, and perhaps the financial responsibility for maintaining it placed fairly and squarely on the parishioners as a condition of its retention, so that no part of the cost of upkeep and repair should in future fall upon the Diocese or the Central authorities of the Church. But, in this case, in order that the provision of services should not be a burden on the clergy, they should be reduced to a minimum (in some cases once a month and festivals) and conducted where possible either by local qualified laymen (who need not be licensed to preach) or by retired clergy licensed to officiate. This is surely not unreasonable. (See also Appendixes 2B and C below);

(v) It should be gratefully recognized that in recent years, since the 1939-1945 war, and especially since 1950, a very great deal of money, effort and enthusiasm has been put into the repair, restoration and improvement of so many of our Suffolk churches, large and small, and that a drive to restore the Church, far from being a grievous burden, has been in many parishes an inspiration and a unifying force. This is a factor which is ignored by the church radicals.

If numerous churches on which so much love and devotion has been lavished in recent years were to be declared redundant, and either secularized or demolished, not only would it be a wicked waste, but a strong deterrent to similar effort in those which remained. Again, this is incontestable.

For examples of what has been done and what can be done to restore and improve churches, — in some cases to transform drab, dreary and unattractive church interiors, consider Blythburgh, Orford, Framlingham, Halesworth, Southwold, Stoke by Nayland, Denston, Dennington, St. Mary's Bury St. Edmunds, and St. Mary le Tower and St. Margarets, Ipswich, among larger churches, and, among smaller churches, Needham Market, Reydon, Frostenden, Westhall, Great Thurlow, Chelsworth, Badley, St. Nicholas, and St. Stephen, Ipswich, Brettenham, Barking, and the notable group of West Suffolk churches given new life and colour by Jack Penton's brilliantly skilful use of linewash, paint and modern fabrics, Acton, Little Waldingfield, Thorpe Morieux, Bradfield St. George and Rushbrooke.

Just over the Diocesan border in Norfolk is a group of ten parishes, the Hilborough Group near Swaffham, under the leadership of Canon Hugh Blackburne.

<sup>11</sup> St. John's spire may be 'ignorant' but it is a most exciting part of the Bury skyline.



In the ten years or so since the group was established, all except one of these parishes, previously dejected and depressed, with dwindling, almost non-existent congregations each under its own incumbent, and dilapidated down-at-heel churches, now all except one of the ten churches has been skilfully and lovingly repaired, restored and redecorated, and these little parishes have found new life and happiness in working together, - and the people are proud of their churches! Plans are being made for the restoration of the last remaining church at Gt. Cressingham. In one parish, Didington, with a population of about 40, and a large aisled building, the chancel only is used for worship (and the services there in proportion well attended - never less than twelve). The rest of the church is effectively screened off and used as a community centre. The Hilborough Group is naturally proud of all its achievements, and exhibitions and flower etc., festivals held simultaneously in all ten churches last year drew crowds and brought to their attention what can be done to bring the Church to life even in the tiniest parishes by a positive, forward looking policy, co-operation, and the best possible use of existing resources. For details see *The Festival Guide* to the Hilborough Group and *A Commentary on the Exhibitions in the Ten Churches of the Hilborough Group*, especially the note on Great Cressingham headed "Church Restoration in 1970," where it is said:

"We should have to go back to the 1860's to find a time when as much Church Restoration was going on in the countryside as today. Then it was the squires and landowners who were generously paying for the restoration, enlargement or modernisation of their village churches. Now it is the co-operative effort of the community, backed by national organisations such as the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, which is raising the money and doing this work. The fabric of more and more country churches is being carefully repaired, the interior redecorated, the furnishings renewed, the churchyard tidied. There may be fewer people attending services, but the general condition of most country churches has vastly improved in recent years."

This is true, and its importance can scarcely be overstated. It is a tonic to go to the Hilborough Group, or the nearby Harling Group, or other areas of the lively and go-ahead Norwich Diocese, and see what a positive, optimistic attitude to our inheritance of ancient churches can do, and how it can stimulate and focus enthusiasm.

What is being done in Norfolk can be and is being done in many Suffolk parishes too, but could be done in many more. Groups can be a great stimulus, not least

in the field of the care and use of churches. And parishes apparently dead can experience resurrection! Sometimes churches threatened with redundancy revive alarmingly, e.g. Kettlebaston, Coney Weston, and currently, Market Weston

#### (vi) *Manpower*

Admittedly the steep decline in ordinations in recent years (even though there are signs that a turning point has at last been reached and the beginnings of an upward trend) is bound to create a very serious shortage of manpower in the near future, and the Church, if it is to survive, let alone advance, MUST deploy its manpower resources to better advantage - resulting in fewer clergy in the rural dioceses where at present they are most numerous. But even here, with the improved prospects of Church unity, especially of Anglican - Methodist unity, there is some real hope, with a uniting of these ministries, and consequent ending of the wasteful pastoral overlapping we have now, of some improvement in the situation.

Another expedient which, despite its difficulties, is already beginning to be recognized and established in some dioceses, is a part time clergy, in place of or alongside lay "readers". This, if widely adopted in Suffolk could transform the situation.

#### (vii) *Finance*

##### *A. Present Needs and Resources*

At this point in order to put this whole matter into the right perspective, we must first examine the purely financial aspect of the problem as it affects this diocese, the difficulty of estimating the cost of putting all our churches into a satisfactory state of repair, and the resources presently available to this end, both locally and nationally, apart from the prospects of state aid.

##### *(a) The Cost*

Under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, every church has to undergo a quinquennial inspection by an approved architect, whose report is sent to the parish and the archdeacon concerned, and to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches. In most cases (except where a parish

employs another architect to look after its church) these inspections are undertaken by the qualified and experienced architects appointed by the Diocese. They are:-

Suffolk Archdeaconry: Mr. Cecil Beadmore Smith A.R.I.B.A.,  
"Kenilworth", Little Bealings.

Sudbury Archdeaconry: Mr. Martin Whitworth A.R.I.B.A.,  
47, Crown Street, Bury St. Edmunds.

Ipswich Archdeaconry: Mr. Jack Earwaker A.R.I.B.A.,  
37, Lower Brook Street, Ipswich.

An estimate based on the cost of the outstanding repairs recommended in the most recent quinquennial reports, and not yet carried out, would give some idea of the total cost involved for the whole diocese, but even so, and recognizing that this would be an extremely approximate figure, liable to rise rapidly with inflation, it needs to be borne in mind that not all of these repairs are equally urgent, and that they represent more an ideal of perfection than what is immediately practicable. Also standards and ideals vary from one architect to another. To take one current instance. No one disputes that a large sum is needed to put All Saints, Sudbury into good repair, even to make the structure safe. Estimates are said to vary between £64,000 and £100,000. Again how much of this is needed immediately? This, of course, is an extreme and desperate case.

Thus to arrive by such means at an astronomical figure as the estimated cost of repairs needed to churches in this diocese could well lead to alarmist conclusions, and panic, wholesale redundancies. Caution is needed here.

#### (b) *The resources*

When we come to the resources available to meet these needs as they arise we are on firmer ground. We will deal with them under three heads. (i) *parish* (ii) *diocese* (iii) *central*.

(i) *parish*. Parish resources vary enormously. A very few parishes are able to finance maintenance of their churches without recourse to outside help. Not all have fabric funds. Where Christian Stewardship operates, the position is greatly eased, and a wider application of its principles would undoubtedly transform the overall situation. But a great many parishes have raised very large sums over the years for this purpose.

#### (ii) *The Diocese*

Here there are two sources immediately available. The first of these is grants by the Diocesan Board of Finance on the recommendation of its Buildings Committee in response to applications from parishes, from the sum allocated for this purpose in the annual estimates, approved by Synod. The balance available for 1972 is £3,182. It may be said here that in making grants the Board, through its Buildings Committee, always takes into consideration, as well as the need and urgency of the proposed works, the efforts which parishes make themselves to raise the money.

Secondly, there is the Suffolk Churches Capital Fund, originating with the generous bequest of the late Mr. Giles of Hopton, later augmented by further legacies. The estimated balance from this fund, available for distribution in 1972, is estimated to be £4,250, according to the latest figures available. Grants are made on the recommendations of assessors appointed by the Bishop, in conjunction with the Buildings Committee of the D.B.F., and applications always receive the most careful and sympathetic consideration.

#### (iii) *Central*

In this category the most important bodies are the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, and the much older established Incorporated Church Building Society. Recommendations may be and are made to these bodies by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in consultation with the Buildings Committee of the D.B.F. Grants received from the H.C.P.T. in 1970 totalled £2,000.

Also the Pilgrim Trust gives occasional grants for specific purposes. e.g. in 1970 £900 to restore the Doom at Wenham.

Finally there are the Friends of Friendless Churches whose action to save Akenham and St. Mary Quay, Ipswich, some years ago, is well known, but the resources at whose disposal at present are not believed to be large.

We are now ready to turn from present financial facts to future financial prospects — which are encouraging.

#### *B. Prospects of State and Local Government Aid.*

Important in its effects on the question of redundant churches is the long delayed and greatly overdue volte face of the official Church of England on

the matter of State aid and local government grants for historic churches. Until very recently the authorities of the Church, mindful of Archbishop Davidson's undertaking some fifty years ago in very different circumstances, were obstinately refusing to countenance the very idea, (urged by Mr. Bulmer-Thomas and others) of seeking State aid in the enormous financial task, (accentuated by inflation) of keeping our churches and cathedrals in repair.

Only this summer the General Synod (the newly created governing body of the Church of England) requested its Standing Committee "to put in hand further discussions with the Department of the Environment and with other Churches on the possibility of Government subsidies for the repair and maintenance of churches in use" (Church Times 16th July, 1971)

Not only that, but a Private Members' Bill, introduced in May this year by a Conservative M.P. (Mr. Patrick Cormack, Member for Cannock, Staffs) with all-Party support, would, had it become law, have compelled local authorities to make grants towards the repair of ancient and historically important churches in their areas. The purpose and philosophy of the Bill and its mover were outlined in an article by Alan Shadwick in the Church Times, 18th. July, 1971, entitled "M.P.'s Bill provides a Beacon of Hope for Historic Churches," and this makes encouraging reading, even though Mr. Cormack's Bill when reintroduced in an amended form on June 10th failed to obtain Second Reading owing to lack of Parliamentary time in a crowded session. The Bill's sponsors included two Church Commissioners, Mr. Marcus Worsley (Conservative), and Mr. Ted Bishop (Labour), the Liberal spokesman on the environment, Mr. David Steel M.P., a prominent Roman Catholic, Mr. Norman St. John-Stevens M.P., and the recently elected Conservative M.P. for Ipswich, Mr. Ernie Money. It must be supposed that, if the rules of Parliamentary procedure allow, means will be found for a redrafted Bill with such influential backing to be reintroduced at an earlier stage in the next session, perhaps with Government support.

If this indeed comes to pass and the Church's belated volte face on State aid meets an effective response, the redundant churches situation could well be *transformed* and it is very much to be hoped that in the meantime, Bishops and Pastoral Committees will abate their zeal and give pause to think the whole situation out afresh in the light of these very recent and much more favourable financial prospects.

If so, the foregoing points may perhaps also be taken into careful consideration.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### *Need for Classification, Discrimination, Selection.*

It is hoped that in this Diocese the following attempt at classification, discrimination and selection, however tentative, will assist this process, and help to prevent action being taken, which would result in the unnecessary loss of even a small part of our very rich and precious inheritance in Suffolk.

Further, detailed consideration is given in Appendix 2 to three categories of churches which are likely to be early candidates for redundancy, 'down town' churches, 'estate' churches, and 'remote' churches.

#### **Note on the following Classification/Lists**

If the principle that there must be selection/discrimination be accepted some attempt at classification with grading is inevitable. Any such attempt is bound to reflect personal preference. I have, however, endeavoured to be as objective as possible within the limitations of my knowledge.

How limited this knowledge is will be seen from the fact that the letter N, indicating that I have not seen *inside* that particular church (though in a minority of such cases I have seen the outside), appear against some 125 of the 477 or so churches classified. In these cases I have perforce had to rely on:

Cautley:	Suffolk Churches and their treasures (1938).
Pevsner:	Suffolk in 'The Buildings of England' (1961).
Dickinson:	Little Guide to Suffolk (Methuen 1957).
Scarfe:	Shell Guide to Suffolk (1960).

and have made a provisional classification accordingly.

I had not originally intended to classify all the Suffolk churches in the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese, but to concentrate on those believed to be threatened with redundancy. In the way that things do, the undertaking snow-balled, and so, for the sake of completeness, I have included all but the handful of churches built since about 1890. (Ipswich St. John, All Saints, All Hallows,



St. Bartholomew, St. Thomas, St. Francis, St. Luke; Bury St. Edmunds All Saints and St. George; and a new church in Beccles, St. Luke.)

From this classification, tentative and provisional as it is, the following emerges:

List		Churches	
		Total	threatened
1A	Good churches at risk (T) which must be retained and preserved.	78	78
1B	Good churches not at risk at present.	92	—
1C	Good churches never likely to be at risk.	18	—
2	Churches which are good but not in top rank.	233	109
3	Churches already redundant.	7	—
4	Churches considered expendable, i.e. of little or no merit.	49	31
5		—	—
		477	219

I am, of course, aware of the effects of the Town and Country Planning Act 1968, the official grading and listing of historic buildings. Besides the classified lists in this memorandum, there are already in existence, but not readily accessible, two "official" lists of Suffolk Churches considered to be of exceptional architectural and/or historic merit.

First and most important of these is the so-called "Ministry List" of Grade A churches.

The provisional lists of buildings of architectural or historic interest compiled by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government classify almost all ancient churches in two Grades, A and B. In the lists for Suffolk, which may be con-

sulted at the respective County offices, there are a few exceptions to this general rule. (a) quite unaccountably, about a dozen churches, including some of the finest e.g. Southwold, and also some of those with least merit, e.g. Cransford are included in the list but without grading, while (b) the two Newmarket churches, All Saints and St. Mary's share the unique distinction of being grade C!

These anomalies apart, as will be seen from the following lists (in which the Grade A churches are distinguished by the letter A), the ministry grading of these churches is *for the most part* unexceptionable, yet by no means *entirely* free from serious defects and inconsistencies. Some gradings appear perverse in the extreme, both as regards omissions and inclusions, and it is not possible to discover any clear pattern or principles of selection — personal preference and prejudice evidently played their part.

What other explanation can there be for grading A such totally uninspired and uninteresting mid or late Victorian rebuildings as Freckenham, and Thorham Magna, while grading B churches so rich in architecture and/or furnishings as Craftfield, Badley, Euston, Bramfield, Chelsworth, Shotley, Shelland, Barnardiston Cretingham, Withersdale, Covehithe and Walberswick?

Yet such is the official "Ministry List", on which, it is believed, considerable reliance is placed by the principle grant-making body, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust.

The other is a "List of Churches eligible for grants" by the Suffolk Churches Capital Fund. This list of 149 churches was originally compiled, I understand, by the late Munro Cautley, himself a generous benefactor to the Fund, and to whose unrivalled knowledge of Suffolk and Norfolk churches we shall always be deeply indebted. Nevertheless it has to be said that this last inevitably reflects his strong personal likes and dislikes, by its inclusions as much as by its strange and notable omissions (among the latter e.g. Easton, Bruisyard, Brent Eleigh, Barnardiston, Thorpe Morieux, Lidgate and Rushbrooke). It is shortly to be revised by the four assessors of the Fund — the three Archdeacons and Major J. Stewart Gratton, of Orford.

It seems to me to be of cardinal importance that, in place of these three existing classifications (my own included), there should be *one authoritative master list*, compiled on agreed and clearly stated principles and criteria, and generally accessible to all interested individuals and bodies.

## Symbols used in the following lists

In order that it may be seen at a glance which churches feature on which lists, I have distinguished them in *my* lists as follows:

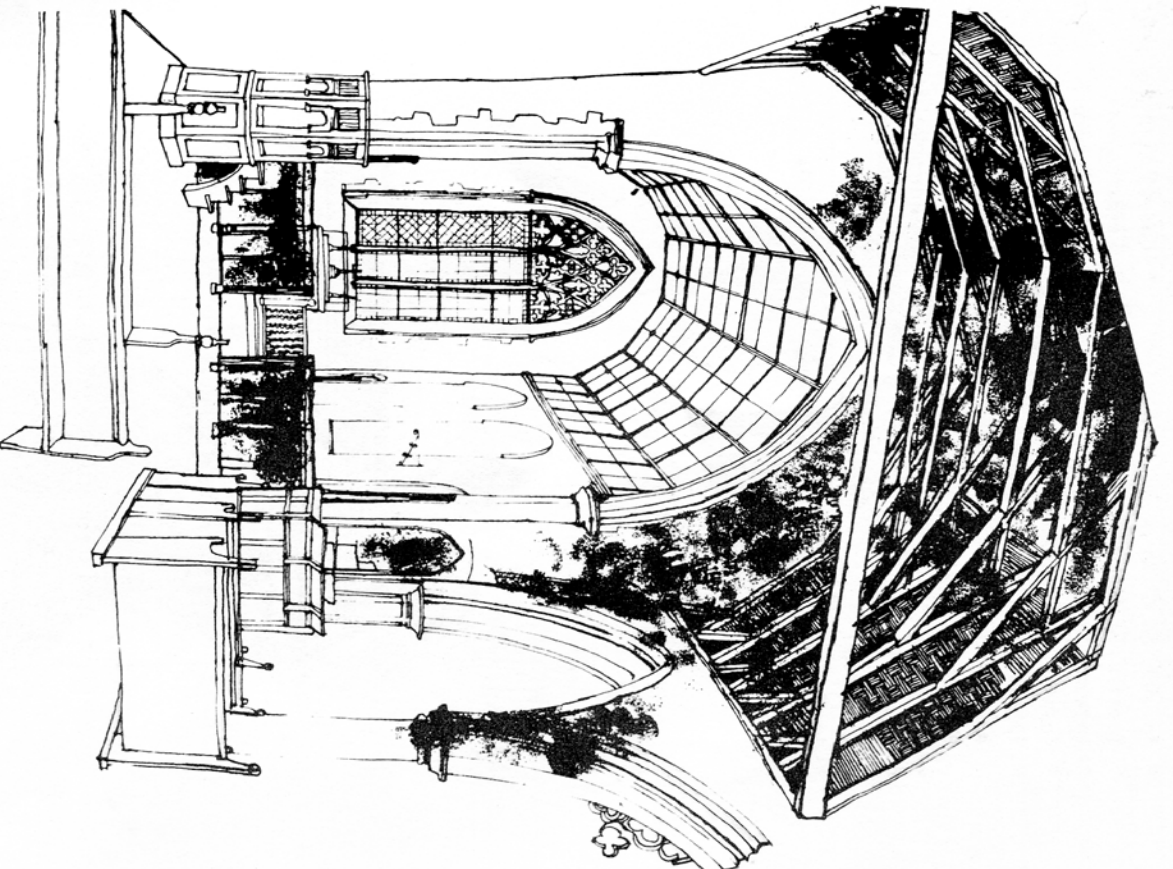
- A — Ministry list (Grade A). Those not so marked are either B or C or ungraded.  
 S — List of churches eligible for grants from the Suffolk Churches Capital Fund.  
 also  
 T — Churches threatened sooner or later with redundancy (parishes under 200 population or down town churches).  
 N — (Interiors) not seen by me.  
 \* — Outstanding value even within own category.

### List 1A

Churches, (of very small villages, or situated remote from their villages, or 'down-town' churches), all of which are considered to be either probably or possibly threatened with redundancy on pastoral grounds, but which it is considered must at all costs be preserved, if need be by the Redundant Churches Fund.

*Note:* Apart from the down town churches, no church in this list serves a population over 250.  
 Exception: Westhall where church is remote.

* Athelington S	Brent Eleigh A	Erwarton A S
* Badley S	Great Bealings A S	* Euston
* Barnardiston	Burgate A	* Gipping Chapel A S
Battisford	* Bury St. Edmunds:	Little Glemham
Benacre	St. John	Hunston N
* Barsham A S	* Covehithe S	* Hawkedon N A S
* Brightwell S	* Chelsworth S	Helmington A
Great Bradley S	* Cretingham S	Heveningham
Little Bradley S	* Dalham A S	* Hoo (sheer rusticity!)
Brundish	* Dallinghoo	Ickworth
* Boxted	* Denston A S	* Ixworth Thorpe S
* Bruisyard (rusticity)	Depden	* Icklingham All Saints A S



*Icklingham All Saints*

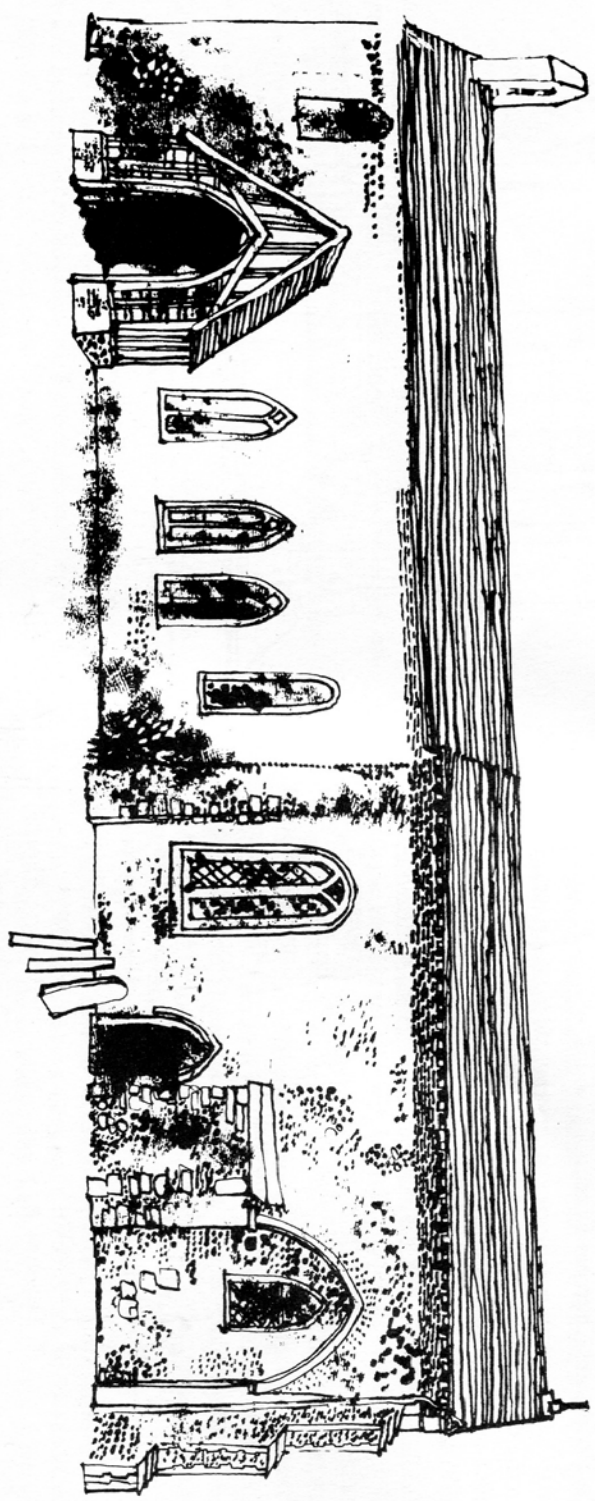
- \* Ipswich: St. Clement S
- \* Ipswich: St. Mary Elms
- \* Ipswich: St. Mary Quay S
- \* Ipswich: St. Nicholas S
- \* Ipswich: St. Peter
- Kettleburgh
- Kettlebaston N
- \* Landwade Chapel A
- \* Lidgate
- Levington
- \* Lindsey

- \* Great Livermere S
- \* Letheringham
- Monk Soham S
- Mickfield
- \* Newton Green S
- \* Ousden A S
- Preston N
- \* Rushbrooke A
- \* Great Redisham A
- \* Shelley
- \* Shelland

- \* Sotterley A
- Shadingfield
- \* Little Saxham A S
- \* Stansfield N A S
- \* Sudbury St. Peter A S
- Sudbury All Saints A S
- \* Troston A S
- \* Thornham Parva A S
- \* Little Thurlow
- \* Great Thurlow A
- \* Westhall A S
- \* Westhorpe A S
- \* Wenham Parva A S
- Wantisden N
- Weston A S
- Wissington A S
- \* Little Waldingfield A S N
- \* Withersdale S
- \* Wordwell A S
- Washbrook
- Woodbridge St. John

78 Churches in this list (\* 43). 50

Those not marked \* could perhaps be considered for transfer to List 2 (q.v.), — in exchange perhaps for those in List 2 marked \*. All these are borderline cases.



Great Bricett

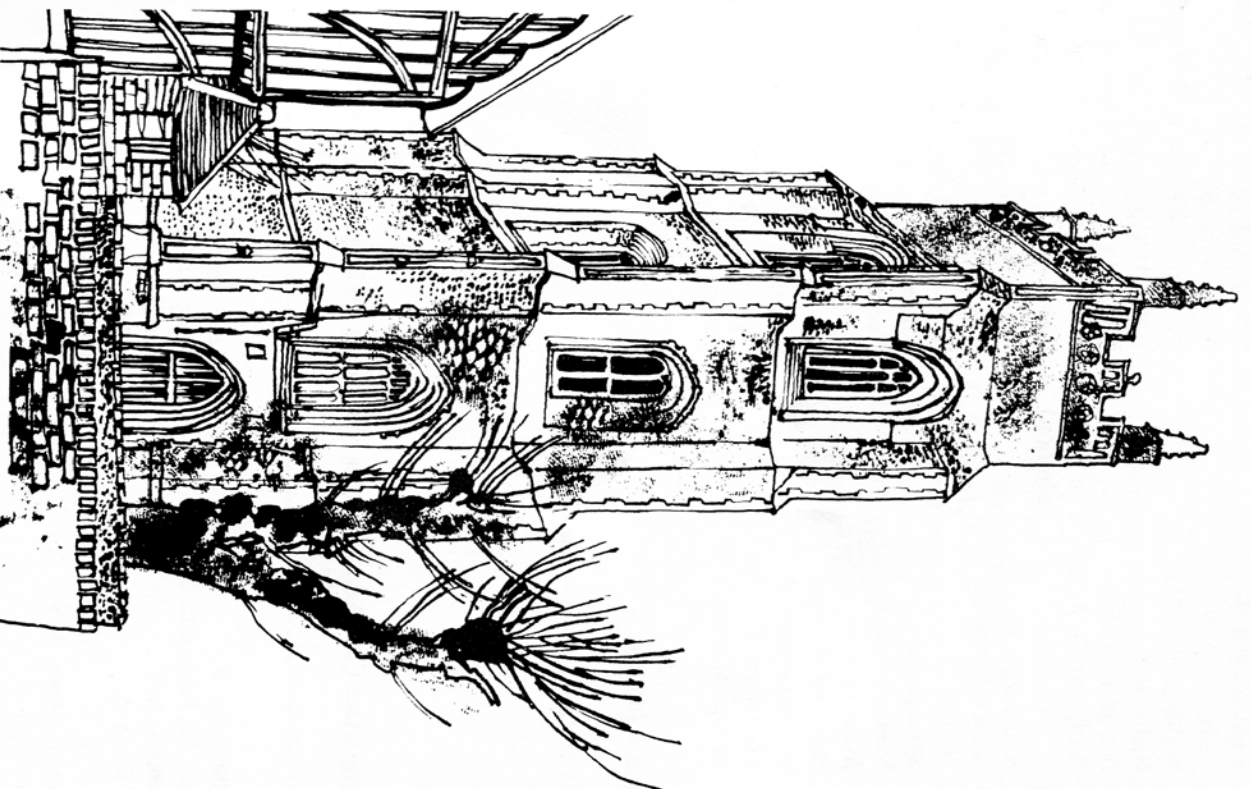


## List 1B

Churches of larger or growing villages or small towns which it is assumed will not be threatened with redundancy in the foreseeable future, but which must in any case be retained. (i.e. Good, but not threatened, we hope!).

\* Outstanding in themselves, or for contents.

* Acton	Exning S
Bardwell A S	Eyke S
* Barking A S	Finningham N
* Barrington A S	* Fressingfield A S
Barton Mills A	Framsden A N
* Blythburgh A S	* Gazeley A S
* Bramfield S	* Gislegham A S
* Bramford A	Glemsford A S N
Brandon A	* Great Barton A
Brome A (for Victoriana — see	* Great Bricett A N
Dickinson's Little Guide)	* Grundisburgh A S
* Bungay Holy Trinity S	Hartest N
* Bungay St. Mary S	* Hawstead A S
Bures A	* Hessel A S
Buxhall A	Hintlesham
* Bildeston A S N	Hitcham A S
* Cavendish A S	Hopton A S
* Claydon	Hoxne A S
Cockfield A S	Ilketshall St. Andrew A
Coddenham A S	* Kedington A S
Combs A S	Kersey A S
* Cotton A S	* Lakenheath A S
* Cowlinge A S	* Laxfield A S
* Craftfield S	Leiston (E.B. Lamb interior)
* Debenham A S	Mendlesham A S
* Dennington A S	Nayland A S
* Earl Soham S	Orley A
* Earl Stonham A S	Pakenham A
* Easton	Parham S
Elmswell A S N	* Polstead A S



Stoke by Nayland

See note on List 1A re \* — same applies.

**Important Churches, the future of which is not in question**

Aldeburgh S  
 Bury St. Edmunds: St. Mary A S  
 Beccles A S  
 Clare A S  
 Eye A S  
 Framlingham A S  
 Hadleigh S  
 Ipswich: St. Margaret A S  
 Ipswich: St. Mary le Tower  
 Lavenham A S  
 Long Melford A S  
 Needham Market A S  
 Mildenhall A S  
 Orford A S  
 Southwold S  
 Stowmarket S  
 Sudbury: St. Gregory A S  
 Woodbridge: St. Mary

Churches all of which, it is considered, ought, if at all possible, to be preserved, but which are not quite of the same degree of importance as those in Lists (A. B. C.).

Those marked T are threatened with redundancy sooner or later on pastoral grounds.

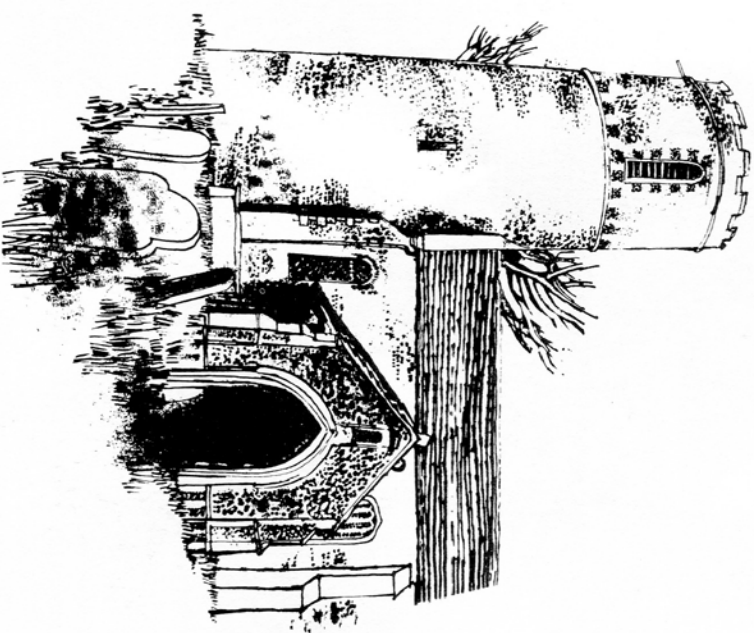
Those marked \* ought perhaps to be included in List 1A or B – borderline cases.

T	Akenham N	*	Brettenham S	T	Falkenham N
T *	Ampton A S	T	Brockley N	T	Farnham N
T *	Ashbocking		Bromeswell		Felsham
T	Aspall N	T	Burgh		Felixstowe:
	Alderton N		Burstall A S		St. Peter & St. Paul N
T	Alpheton N	*	Butley N		Felixstowe: St. John
	Assington S		Campsey Ash N	T	Flixton N
*	Badingham A S	T	Carlton N	T	Flowton N
	Badwell Ash A S N	T *	Cavenham A	*	Fornham: All Saints
T *	Barham A	T	Chattisham		Fornham: St. Martin N
	Barrow	T	Chedburgh	*	Friston
	Bawdsey N	T	Chediston	T	Freston N
T	Bayham	*	Chevington	*	Frostenden
*	Bedfield S	*	Chillesford N	T	Gedding N
	Bedingfield A	T	Chilton N	T	Gosbeck
T *	Belstead	T	Coney Weston N	*	Great Ashfield S N
	Benhall		Creeting: St. Peter N		Great Blakenham
	Beyton	*	Crowfield N		Great Cornard
	Blaxhall N	*	Culford (Monuments)	*	Great Finborough
T *	Blyford A	*	Darsham		(mid-19th century) N
	Botesdale A	T	Denham: St. Mary		Great Glenham N
	Boyton N	*	Drinkstone	T	Great Saxham
T *	Bradfield Combust N	T	Dunwich		Great Walsingham N
T	Bradfield: St. Clare	*	Edwardsstone N	T	Great Wenham
	Bradfield: St. George	*	Elmsett N	T	Groton N
	Brampton A	*	Elveden		Hacheston
*	Brandeston	*	Eriswell S		Halesworth
	Bredfield A	T	Fakenham Magna N	T	Hargrave





T *	Ipswich: St. Lawrence	T *	Moulton	T *	South Cove	T *	Thrandeston A N	T	Wangford: St. Denis T	West Stow
	Ipswich: St. Mary, Stoke	T	Nacton	T *	South Elmham: All Saints A N	*	Tuddenham: St. Martin A S	*	Wangford: St. Peter and St. Paul S	* Wetherden A S
	Ixworth A	T *	Nedging N	T	South Elmham: St. Cross A	*	Tuddenham: St. Mary	T	Wartisham N	Weybread N
*	Kelsale S	T *	Nettlestead N	T *	South Elmham: St. James A	*	Tunstall		Wenaston S	* Wherstead
T	Kenton N		Newbourn N	T	South Elmham: St. Margaret A	T	Ubbeston N		Westfield	Wickham Market A
T	Kentford (probably not redundant because central for Kentford and Kennett, Cambs.) A		Newmarket: All Saints (?)	T	South Elmham: St. Peter	T	Ugeshall	*	Westleton	Winston N
			Newmarket: St. Mary	T	South Elmham: St. Peter		Waldingfield N	T	Westley (1835) (?)	Wixoe
			North Cove A		South Elmham: St. Michael		Walton		(development)	Worlingham S
			Norton A S	T	South Elmham: St. Michael					* Yoxford S
			Nowton	T	Spexhall					
T *	Knodishall	T	Oakley	T	Stanton: All Saints					
T *	Lackford N	T *	Occold N	T *	Stoke Ash N					
T *	Langham N	T	Offton N	T	Stoven					
	Lawshall		Old Newton N		Stow/langtoft A S N					
T	Linstead Parva		Palgrave A S		Stowupland (1843)					
T	Little Bealings S	T *	Pettistree		Stradbroke A S					
T	Little Blakenham N	T	Playford N		Stradshall N					
	Little Cornard N	T	Poslingford	T	Stratford: St. Andrew (either S or Farnham T)					
*	Little Stonham (Stonham Parva)	T	Ramsholt N	T	Stratford: St. Andrew (either S or Farnham T)					
	A N	T	Raydon		Stratford: St. Mary A S					
T	Little Whelnetham	T	Rede		Stutton (because of remote site)					
	A S N	T	Redlingfield N	*	Stratford: St. Mary					
T	Little Wratting N	T *	Rendham N	T *	Stutton (because of remote site)					
*	Marlesford	T *	Rendlesham		Sudbourne					
	Martlesham N	T	Reydon	T *	Sudbourne					
	Mellis		Rickingham	T	Sweetling					
*	Mendham N		Superior A S N	T	Syleham					
*	Metfield A S	T	Ringsfield A S	T	Tannington S					
T	Mettingham (probably not redundant if Ilkeshall St. John goes)	T	Ringshall N	T *	Thelnetham N					
		T *	Saxstead	T *	Thorington					
		T *	Saxmundham	T *	Thorndon					
*	Middleton	T	Shimplingthorne N	T	Thornham Magna A					
T	Milden		Shipmeadow	T	Thurston					
T	Monewden		Sibton	T	Thwaite N					
*	Monks Eleigh S N	T *	Slope	T	Tostock A S					
		T *	Somersham N		Trimley St. Mary					
		T *	Somerton N							



Syleham

*Ubbeston: the first to be formally declared redundant, 1971.*



### List 3

Churches which have already fallen into ruin and have long been disused.

*Note:* This list may be incomplete.

Rishangles N  
 Sapiston (big hole in roof)  
 Iken (burnt out) (plans for rebuilding? but very isolated site)  
 Little Livermere N  
 Stanton St. John Baptist  
 Braiseworth Old Church N  
 Melton Old Church (still used as mortuary chapel)

\* \* \* \* \*

*Also:* (*fragmentary*)

Linstead Magna  
 Fornham St. Genevieve  
 Buxlow  
 Hazlewood etc. etc.

In some cases, where there are insufficient grants for retaining in use or preserving in redundancy under the Pastoral Measure, and where no alternative use can be found, I would think the best solution would be to de-roof the building and let it fall into picturesque decay, but this is ruled out by the Pastoral Measure, (but on this see Appendix 3).

### List 4

A. Church already declared redundant under the Pastoral Measure and for which an alternative use may be sought:

Ubbeston N (Redundant Churches Uses Committee met on September 28th 1971 to consider uses for all churches in Lists A and B).

\* \* \* \* \*

B. Churches recommended for redundancy by Pastoral Committee (but not yet declared redundant).

Culford Heath (Victorian district church near Culford).  
 Rishangles  
 Sapiston see List 3  
 St. Peter's, Sudbury  
 Ellough  
 Ipswich,  
 St. Mary Quay (no official application for redundancy but presumably future use to be considered).

\* \* \* \* \*

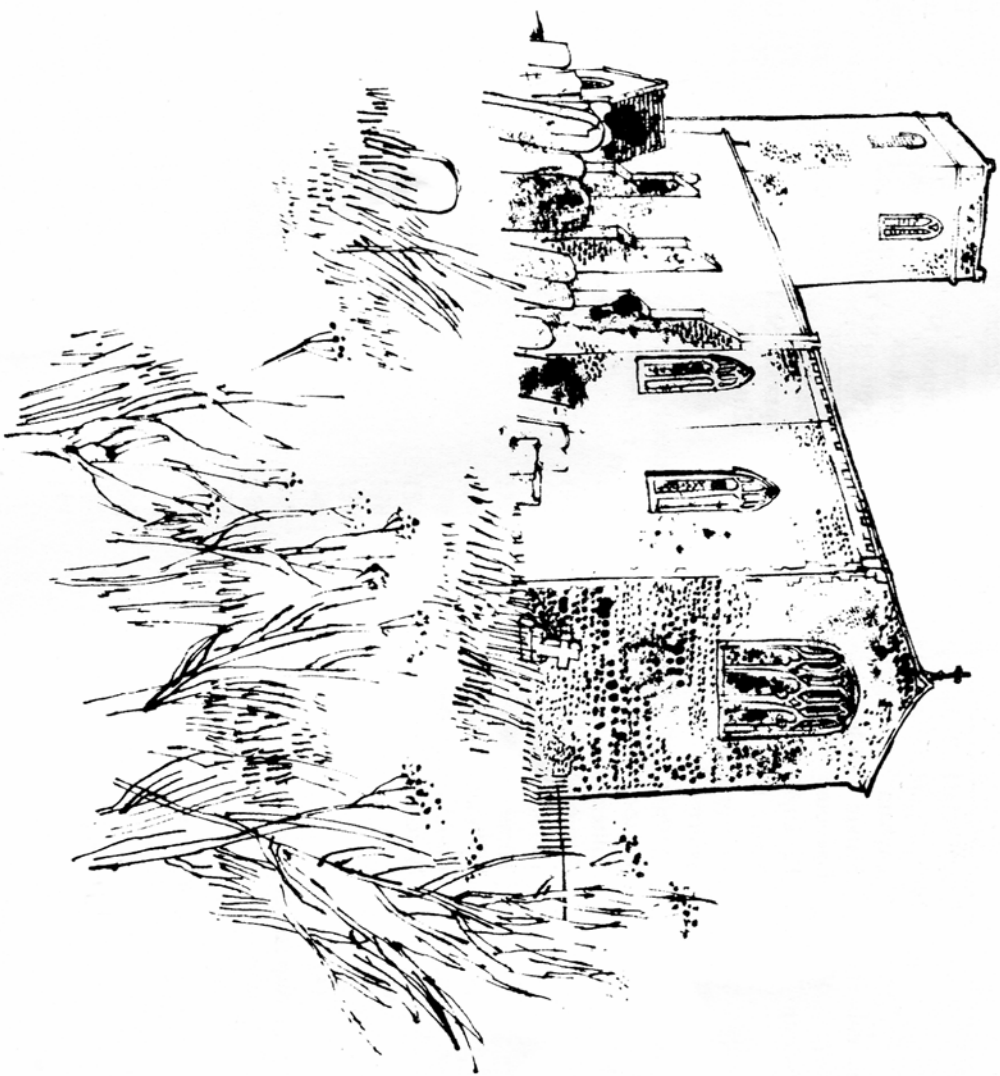
*Notes:* Ellough is a definite feature of the landscape, in a fine isolated position, on the brow of a hill on a lonely road, with a notable skyline and large empty churchyard.

St. Peter's, Sudbury, is, of course, superb, (tower recently restored), but the parish, faced with the need to raise vast sums of money to restore both of its fine churches, could not afford to restore both, and therefore, having to make a choice, after great searching of heart chose to retain the mother church of St. Gregory's and apply for a declaration of redundancy in respect of St. Peter's.

Sapiston, a church of considerable interest with Norman features, and in a delightful rural setting, has a large hole in the roof.

Rishangles, a rather dreary, mournful church, with some ancient glass, is all forlorn.





*Redundant: Ellough*

List 5

Churches of little or no architectural, historical or aesthetic merit, all of which might be sooner or later pastorally redundant.

Ashfield cum Thorpe N	Layham
Aldham (?) (but round tower and pleasant exterior)	Market Weston
Braiseworth N (but see Pevsner on E.B. Lamb)	Onehouse N
Boulge N	Pettaugh
Cransford N	Semer N
Culpho	Shottisham (?) but situation) N
Cookley	Swilland
Culford Heath (v. List 4B) N	Southolt
Darnsden N	Stuston (?) N
Debach N	Sotherton
Denham St. John (?) N	Sternfield
Exning St. Agnes	Timworth
Little Finborough N	Trinley St. Martin
Ipswich: St. Michael	Willisham N
Leavenheath N	Woolverstone N
	Wattisfield

Other churches of little or no merit or interest but not at present likely to be redundant include:

Aldringham N	Peasenhall
Bucklesham N	Sutton
Beyton	Tattingsstone
Clopton N	Barnham
Copdock	Bentley
Creeping St. Mary N	Chelmondiston (nondescript re-building after bombing)
Flempton	
Freckenham	Great Wratting N
Ipswich: St. Helen	(17 Churches)
Kirton N	

Note: Whitton, Melton and St. Peter's, Bury St. Edmunds are worth preserving as mid-Victorian period pieces.

(Melton. F. Barnes, architect. 1868)  
(St. Peter's: Bury. Hakewill. 1858 ) (3 Churches)  
(Whitton. 1852/1862 )

31 Churches, mostly 19th century rebuilding or over restoration.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Appendix I

Parishes with less than 200 population in 1961 Census as given in the 1970-71 Diocesan Year Book.

Akenham	62	Chilton	175	Hoo	81	Shelland	48
Aldham	137	Coney Weston	(not given)	Iken	147	Shelley	26
Ampton	179	but probably over 200)		Ilketshall: St. Lawrence	140	Shippemeadow	89
Aspall	70	Cookley	130	Ilketshall: St. Margaret	178	Shottisham	166
Ashfield	172	Covehithe	73	Ilketshall: St. John	33	Somerton	2
Athelington	47	Cransford	174	Ipswich: St. Lawrence	94	Sotherton	(misprint?)
Badley	72	Cretingham	165	Ipswich: St. Mary Elms	143	South Cove	(not given)
Barnardiston	115	Culpho	48	Ipswich: St. Mary le Tower	Nil	S. Elmham: All Saints	75
Benacre	154	Darnsden	(not given)	Kenton	148	S. Elmham: St. Cross	31
Lt. Blakenham	185	Debach	83	Kettlebaston	59	S. Elmham: St. James	(not given)
Blyford	145	Denham: St. John	167	Lackford	146	S. Elmham: St. Margaret	156
Boulge	44	Denham: St. Mary	148	Langham	77	S. Elmham: St. Michael	122
Boxted (not given in Diocese)		Densdon	154	Letheringham	87	S. Elmham: St. Peter	58
Year Book but		Depden	176	Lindsey	143	Southolt	41
probably less than		Dunwich	156	Linstead	147	Spekshall	(not given)
Bradfield St. Clare	100)	Ellough	156	Market Weston	185	Stansfield	151
Bradfield Combust	140	Erwarton	79	Mickfield	140	Stansfield	185
Lt. Bradley	109	Euston	154	Milden	129	Sternfield	152
Braiseworth	55	Gt. Fakenham	178	Monewden	114	Stoven	109
Brent Eleigh	66	Falkenham	138	Monk Soham	184	Stratford St. Andrew	158
Brettenham	137	Farnham	140	Naughton	77	Stuston	179
(this must be wrong, even not taking Old Buckenham Hall	48	Lt. Finborough	118	Nedging	134	Sudbourne	(not given)
School into account)		Flixton	98	Nettlestead	124	Swilland	130
Brightwell	144	(is this correct?)		Pettaugh	180	Syleham	185
Brockley	185	Flowton	101	Poslingford	187	Tannington	119
Bruisyard	102	Gipping	94	Ramsholt	53	Thorington	86
Brundish	(not given)	Harleston	138	Rede	131	Thornham Magna	144
Burgate	172	Hemlingstone	184	Gt. Redisham	130	Thornham Parva	66
Carlton	(not given)	Henley	50	Redlingfield	100	Thrandeston	158
Chattisham	108	Heveningham	144	Rickingham Sup.	80	Thwaite	76
Chelsworth	151	Hinderclay	195	(but this must be wrong!)		Timworth	69
Chillesford	157	Higham: St. Mary	162	Rishangles	94	Ubbeston	91
		Holton: St. Mary	185	Rushbrooke	80	Wantisden	33
				Sapiston	129	Gt. Wenham	80
				Gt. Saxham	187	Lt. Wenham	(not given)
				Lt. Saxham	92	Westhorpe	138
				Saxstead	(not given)	Westley	85
				Semer	146	West Stow	59
				Shadingfield	122	(new building here; must have made a big difference)	
				(surely more!)			



Lt. Whelmethan	122	Wissington	168
Willisham	142	Wangford: St. Denis	(not given)
Winston	145	Wixoe	78
Withersdale	72	Wordwell	30
		(Wattings not given separately)	

*Note:* Places where population is not given all have churches, and in most cases the population is tiny.

From this list it appears that excluding Brettenham and Rickinghalls, but assuming that the others not given separately are under 200, there are 138 parishes in the Diocese with population under 200 including at least 45 with under 100. (certainly more since this does not include "not given").

## APPENDIX 2.

### A Problem within a Problem: Categories of Churches requiring special consideration

#### A. 'Down Town' Churches

##### (i) General.

In all ancient towns and cities having a multiplicity of churches close together in the centre, the population having moved out to the suburbs, there is a problem. Very often these churches have a small eclectic or "gathered" congregation and "cater for" (horrid expression!) some particular brand of "churchmanship". Or the congregation may be drawn from people with an existing business, or former residential link with the parish, together, of course, with a faithful few actually continuing to reside within it.

The city which experiences this problem in its most acute form is Norwich, where, in addition to the Cathedral, there are no less than twenty-nine mediaeval churches in the inner city, of which fourteen remain in regular use. Many of these churches are of very high quality indeed, and as a group they are unique, embodying so much of the city's history and traditions.

The former Bishop of Norwich (Dr. Lancelot Fleming) appointed a highpowered Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Brooke of Cumnor, with very wide terms of reference (which included specialized ministries, and the proper place of the Cathedral in relation to the city) to investigate every aspect of this problem and to take evidence from all interested parties.

Their fully documented and closely argued Report "The Norwich City Commission Report", published in 1970, although addressed to the peculiar problems of the historic capital of East Anglia, has a direct bearing on those of Ipswich to which parts of it are highly relevant. It may be said to be required reading for any serious study of this problem.

The Norwich Commission was unanimous in its recommendations. Those which concern us in this context are that, in the inner City, the number of parishes is to be reduced from 14 to 4, retaining five ancient city churches for worship, and one, St. Julian's, for special purposes, with the possibility of three others being retained for the time being, the remaining twenty one becoming redundant. The Report devotes considerable space to the question of the future of the churches which, if these recommendations are accepted, will become redundant, and to the possible uses to which at least some of them could be put (pages 22-24). This section of the Norwich Report could be of great assistance in dealing with similar problems in Ipswich and elsewhere.

"The Commission sympathizes with the widespread feeling that every one of the redundant mediaeval buildings should be retained", and hopes that an association of friends of the City Churches may be formed to assist this, but expresses its view that the Church in Norwich has not the resources, (and if it had, ought not to use them) to maintain these Churches itself.

This section of the Report, however, must be read in the light of a letter from Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas which appeared in the Church Times of 13th February 1970. Writing on behalf of the Redundant Churches Fund of which he is Chairman, he pointed out that the Fund had not been consulted about these statements in the Report and that, if the members of the Fund had been consulted, they would have counselled a different wording. He wrote that "the demolition of any of the mediaeval churches of Norwich would" (in the Fund's view) "be a breach of the undertaking between Church and State embodied in the pastoral Measure and we have no reason to think that it will be contemplated", and went on "If the Church Commissioners, after taking the advice of the Advisory Board, declare that (the redundant Norwich churches for which no alternative use is found) should be preserved, the Fund will gladly accept their ownership and the responsibility for their future maintenance. We shall welcome all the help that can be given by any body which may be formed, such as the Friends of the Norwich City Churches suggested in the Report; and we are ourselves authorized by the Measure to promote the formation of such bodies."

(This last suggestion has been adopted and the Friends are actively in being – see also Noel Spencer and Arnold Kent; 'The Old Churches of Norwich', Jarrold, Norwich, 1970).

As a stop press footnote to the story of the Norwich City Churches, the following appeared in the editorial of the Eastern Daily Press 6th. October 1971.

"To its great credit the City Council yesterday accepted without a dissentient vote the proposition that Norwich, possessing the largest collection of mediaeval churches in Western Europe 'shall state firmly and irrevocably through the City Council that all the churches shall be retained for future generations to enjoy'. It also agreed to act as custodian trustee for all mediaeval churches which are declared redundant – and for redundant churches of any denomination which were of architectural or historical value. A Norwich Churches Trust is to be established with responsibility for the maintenance and management of the churches".

Commenting on these decisions the Eastern Daily Press said: "The City Council has agreed with the Church Commissioners a bold measure to ensure the survival and use for secular if not religious purposes of the 20 or more pre-Reformation churches which are or will be declared redundant".

It is to be hoped that due note will be taken of this bold and unanimous decision in the appropriate quarters in Ipswich and Sudbury. Norwich our ancient provincial capital has given a fine lead.

#### (ii) Ipswich.

The foregoing important pledge from the Redundant Churches Fund could equally well be forthcoming *pari passu* in regard to Ipswich, where the problems, uncomplicated, however, by the presence of a Cathedral, are otherwise very similar.

'Expanding Ipswich' was itself the subject of a (much less detailed) report published with others in "No Secret Plan", 1968, pp. 13-14 (q.v.). This is the report of a Working Party appointed by our Bishop with the Archdeacon of Ipswich, the Ven. C. G. Hooper, as Chairman.

This Working Party was charged by the Bishop with considering the pastoral needs and resources of the whole of Greater Ipswich in the light of the town's expansion plan published by the Minister of Housing & Local Government in 1968.

When this plan was dropped, that section of the report was inevitably rendered obsolete.

Section 2 of the report dealing with Central Ipswich, however, remains valid. It begins by stating that "There are within a radius of half a mile from the centre of the town no fewer than 14 Anglican churches, most of which are scheduled under the Planning Act of 1947 (Section 30) for preservation as buildings of historic interest, and in most of which worship takes place regularly on Sundays."

Four of these churches have an assured place in the religious life of the town; St. Mary le Tower (traditionally the Civic church); St. Margaret's; St. Matthew's and St. Mary at Stoke, (although the last is of little architectural, aesthetic or historical value). Concerning the rest, the Working Party noted that St. Peter's is already a united benefice with St. Mary at Stoke, and proposed that St. Nicholas, St. Lawrence with St. Stephen, and St. Mary Elms be united with St. Mary le Tower and served by a team of clergy, each of whom might have special responsibility for a particular church within the Group, but would also be free to undertake other specialized work outside this central parish. They further proposed that Holy Trinity should be reunited with its Mother parish of St. Clement (itself with its own younger daughter Church of St. Luke), and that the clergy serving this united parish should have special responsibility for ministry to the Civic College. (This recommendation has been acted upon).

They further proposed that the parish of St. Michael be united with that of St. Helen. (This has *not* been acted upon, but St. Michael's has instead been united with St. Margarets, and its church reduced to the status of a chapel within the parish, and is earmarked for eventual redundancy).

Confining themselves to the cautious observation that "it is clear that a full quota of services cannot and ought not to be maintained in each of the twelve churches mentioned above", the Working Party said that it was beyond the scope of their commission "to make recommendations regarding possible redundancy and alternative uses of redundant churches".

We need have no such inhibitions!

While as a group the Ipswich town churches cannot equal those of Norwich in architectural distinction, they ought not therefore to be underrated. As with Norwich, they are very much part of the townscape, and embody a great deal of Ipswich history, and moreover, several have charm and distinction.

The "threatened" churches fall into two main groups, (a) central and (b) dockside, and 2 other churches in neither category.

(a) *Central.*

St. Nicholas, St. Mary Elms, St. Lawrence, St. Stephen. Of these the first two have been most skilfully integrated in the new town development, (Greyfriars etc.), and in consequence are seen from the new road to full advantage, each set in its attractive churchyard. St. Nicholas in particular, has been greatly improved under its present Vicar, Kenneth Glass, and is seen to be a building full of interest and character. St. Mary Elms is more intimate and with its handsome Tractarian interior very much part of the Ipswich scene, having also a strong if somewhat narrow church life of its own, nourished by a succession of devoted parish priests.

St. Lawrence and St. Stephen, now a united Benefice under the present Archdeacon of Ipswich, each have their merits. St. Lawrence elongated on both axes with the incredibly elaborate flush work of its slender tower so much a feature of the skyline (albeit 19th. century from the waist upward), and the interior with its curious Evangelical pewing (making it impossible to genuflect towards the altar), tall clear glass windows, except for the nice 'period' East window and pleasantly stuffy Victorian atmosphere.

St. Stephen's a picturesque poor relation with one nice monument. (Recently repaired and redecorated and the churchyard tidied).

Both are obvious candidates for pastoral redundancy but equally have a strong claim to survival qua buildings.

One has been considered for an ecclesiastical museum and exhibition centre. If a choice has to be made between them for this purpose, St. Lawrence's tower and central position gives it the higher claim. The chancel could be retained for occasional worship, as at All Hallows, London Wall.

It ought not then to be impossible to find a suitable alternative use for St. Stephen's. The commercial value of either of these sites, were one to be demolished, would presumably be high — especially St. Lawrence's, but this is no reason for philistinism.

All four churches should be retained.\*

(b) *The Dockland Group*, St. Peter, St. Mary Quay, St. Clement, Holy Trinity. All these (with the possible exception of the last named, which experienced a notable revival under the vigorous ministry of the late lamented Charles Branch) have seen better days! Holy Trinity, architecturally, is a totally unremarkable 19th. century period piece, built in 1836 as a daughter church of the nearby St. Clement's, with its curious cast iron window frames, and bleak, though not wholly unattractive grey brick exterior, and surprisingly pleasing light interior.

St. Clement's, although in some need of a face lift and major repair is basically a 15th. century church of real distinction, with its tall slender tower beautifully proportioned, its clerestory and nave arcades, marred only by rather unworthy Victorian chancel. Its grimy industrial surroundings set it at a disadvantage, although on the East side it adjoins one of the nicest groups of old houses in a town not particularly rich in architectural amenity. It serves a large working class parish, but the Working Party's suggestion of an additional link with the Civic College is imaginative and ought to be (and probably has been) followed up. The whole surrounding area is obviously ripe for a well planned development and could well be centred upon this church and the historic buildings nearby, thus integrating it with the new Ipswich.

St. Mary Quay (or Key), damaged in the last war, has for the last fifteen years or so been used by the Boys Brigade as their headquarters, the furnishings having been scattered far and wide. It, too, is a building of real distinction, although so overshadowed by Paul's and the other industrial buildings nearby. In its heyday it may have had some claim to be considered one of Ipswich's finest churches, and now stands sorely in need of loving care. We owe its continued existence to the much maligned pertinacity of Mr. Bulmer-Thomas and his friends.

St. Peter's, its massive flint tower seen as one enters the town from the south over Stoke Bridge is very much a part of the Ipswich scene, and its architectural merits, despite much nineteenth century restoration, together with its historical connections with Wolsey and his proposed Cardinal College, shared with nearby St. Nicholas, his father's church, should ensure its retention. If St. Nicholas and St. Clements are both to be retained in active use, as is suggested, it is difficult to see St. Peter's being continued in use for worship, and if declared redundant it might be hard to find an alternative use.

\* St. Nicholas perhaps continuing as a separate parish linked with St. Peter's.



(c). There remains to be considered St. Michael's and St. Helens which do not fit easily into either of the previous categories.

St. Michael's has a strong claim to be considered the least attractive town church in Suffolk, late Victorian brick and totally undistinguished. The recent merger with St. Margaret's should pave the way to its being gradually phased out. St. Helen's, although now better exposed to view, is the least important aesthetically of the mediaeval churches, being in fact, very largely an inspired Victorian re-building. Aesthetically expendable, the case for or against its eventual redundancy should be entirely judged on its pastoral merits.

*Summary.* Ipswich is not a town of such distinction that it can easily afford to lose any of the features which help to lift it above the level of drab mediocrity. This role is at present happily fulfilled by the town churches, with the exception of the two last named, (and perhaps, Holy Trinity), and their retention, quite apart from its ecclesiastical connotation, should be regarded as being very much in the public interest. The same in pre-eminent degree, of course, applies to Friars Street Unitarian Chapel.

Our recommendation, therefore, for what it is worth, is that in addition to St. Mary le Tower, St. Margaret, St. Matthew and St. Mary Stoke, the following churches be retained in active use for worship. St. Mary Elms (in association perhaps as a chapel of ease with St. Matthew's or St. Mary le Tower to whose churchmanship it most nearly approximates, but with a degree of autonomy); St. Nicholas, (perhaps continuing as a parish church and serving also the parish of St. Peter\* with St. Mary Quay); St. Clement's (with Holy Trinity?), (area of parish to be redefined if need be, and with a special ministry to Industry, as at present, and the Civic College).

St. Peter, St. Mary Quay (continuing present use if possible), St. Lawrence and St. Stephen to be redundant, but with strong efforts to be made to find alternative uses, and failing success in any or every case, with a strong plea for them or any of them to be handed over to the Redundant Churches Fund for repair and maintenance.

St. Michael to be redundant, and sold or demolished, and likewise St. Helen, if not thought necessary for pastoral purposes, in which case the parish, an extensive one, would need to be parcelled up.

\* St. Peter's, North of the Quay, seems to have more affinity with St. Nicholas than with Stoke, South of the Quay.

Thus of the 14, seven (possibly up to nine) would be retained for worship. There being no Cathedral or St. Peter Mancroft equivalent, this may be thought a fair parallel to the Norwich scheme, (i.e. the Norwich City Commission recommendations).

#### (iii). *Bury St. Edmunds.*

Bury was also the subject of a very thorough survey about three years ago. This was on ecumenical lines, undertaken by the local Council of Churches, and took into account all denominations and places of worship, and the needs and resources of all. It requires to be closely studied together with subsequent discussion of its findings.

The situation here of course is enormously complicated by the existence side by side of the two vast late mediaeval churches of St. James (the Cathedral) and St. Mary's. In addition to these, the future of which is obviously not in question, the Church of England has four others — St. John's, serving a well defined area of the town, and a building, notably its 'ignorant' spire, of enormous character, built c. 1840, and completely homogeneous with its surroundings, also possessing a vigorous spiritual life of its own; St. Peter's, a district church of St. Mary's, adjacent to the existing West Suffolk Hospital. St. Peter's is a perfect mid-Victorian period piece, well cared for, and recently much improved inside; it is the kind of building we have learned in recent years to appreciate and enjoy. Whether it serves a pastoral purpose must be regarded as open to question — but Bury is expanding rapidly and may need all its Anglican churches. The other two, St. George's on the Mildenhall Road, and All Saints, in the Westley Road, are both post-war and serve large and growing parishes.

Bury is also fortunate in possessing a rich assortment of non-Anglican churches and Chapels from the Quaker Meeting House in St. John's Street, the Roman Catholic church of St. Edmund, Westgate Street, an excellent building of 1838, recently restored and simplified (cleared of bric à brac) and all glorious within; the very lovely Queen Anne former Unitarian Chapel in Churchgate Street, the pleasant Baptist Chapel in Garland Street, and the only slightly less attractive Congregational one in Whiting Street.

#### (iv). *Sudbury.*

The redundancy of St. Peter's, subject of great local heart searching, is now a fait accompli. St. Gregory's therefore is safe. The only question, apart from the future use of St. Peter's (the demolition of which is unthinkable) is the future of the dilapidated but fine Church of All Saints; this church has a low tradition

and serves a definite part of the town. The parishioners appear determined to soldier on, and the question therefore to be closed. In any case with its rapid expansion it would hardly make sense to close two out of Sudbury's three fine Perp. churches.

(v) *Bungay*.

Both St. Mary's with its superb tower, and other interesting features, (subject of a monograph, with Holy Trinity, by Cannon Lummis, its former incumbent), and Holy Trinity with its early round tower, nice monuments and pulpit, and delightfully light and intimate interior, have great merits, and again it should not be beyond the resources of another expanding town to keep and use both, alternately as at present.

(vi) *Woodbridge*.

Here exactly the same applies, except that St. John's remains a separate parish but run in close co-operation with St. Mary's. This is surely an ideal arrangement. When St. John's was temporarily disused owing to the collapse of the roof, an attempt was made to close it and unite the two congregations, but this proved premature.

(vii) *Felixstowe*.

There would appear to be no real problem here. The old church (St. Peter and St. Paul) with its interesting modern daughter St. Andrews (1929-31, Hilda Mason and Raymond Erith, architects, said by Pevsner to have real architectural merit) is such poles apart from St. John's in churchmanship, and anyhow the town is easily large enough to support two, — leaving Walton parish church out of account.

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\* \* \* \* \*

In relation to down town churches, notice should be taken of careful adaptation of old city churches, e.g. St. John's Ousegate York, and St. Martin's cum Gregory York, and St. Katherine Cree, Leadenhall Street, London — to new uses. St. Peter, Hungate, Norwich, is an ecclesiastical museum and St. Simon and St. Jude, Norwich, a Scout H.Q.

Also when deciding which churches should be retained for worship consideration should be given to the point that often small, intimate, cosy, interiors are to be preferred — or *are* preferred by some worshippers.

## B. 'Estate' Churches

By 'estate' churches is meant those churches in rural areas in close proximity to the Hall or Great House of the parish, and in particularly close association with the county family there resident as squires, landowners and lords of the manor. Sometimes these churches are alongside the church in the midst of a park and access to them from the village at the park gates is by a private or semi private road across the squire's domain. Usually they are well stocked with family vaults and monumental effigies and in some cases have retained, even in use, the Hall family pew.

Obviously with the break up of the big estates and the old social pattern there is an ever diminishing number of such churches where the Hall and the family still subsist. Outstanding Suffolk examples still extant are Euston, Ickworth, Sorterley, Boxted, Dalham and Brent Eleigh. Others not standing close by the Hall but still much dependent on and largely maintained by "the family", are Benacre, and Helmingham, while Assington, Easton, Brome, Redgrave, Rendlesham, and Chilton and Cowlinge are some examples out of many where the Hall and the family have gone — though not the family in the case of Redgrave. In most if not all these cases, while the great house is no more, the Church retains much of the atmosphere of an estate church — n.b. the Hall pews at Euston and Rendlesham. At Barham, too, although Shrubland is now an institution, the family retains a foothold in the Park — cf. also Wangford with Henham; also Culford, where the Hall, once the seat of the Bacons, and later the Cadogans, is now a Methodist public school, in good relationship with the Parish Church in the grounds.

Where these churches are so remote from any real or sizeable community as to be pastorally redundant (this need not necessarily apply in every case), one wonders whether some mutually satisfactory legal and financial arrangement could be offered to and made with the Hall family (whether on a personal basis or in right of ownership of the great house), whereby the church, subject to safeguards (the bishop continuing to exercise visitational authority as 'ordinary'), would pass into the legal ownership of the family and enjoy the status of a private (family) chapel-cum-mausoleum (what in fact though not in theory it is now), while still continuing to be available to parishioners, or residents on the estate, for occasional services (baptism, marriage and burial in the churchyard if still open), the family undertaking the financial burden of upkeep but qualifying for generous grants from the State and/or local authority.

(Something like this change in status from parish church to private chapel seems to have taken place at Hengrave, so that when the Hall was sold by the executors of the late Sir John Wood to a Roman Catholic Community, the church/chapel in the grounds, up to then used by the parish, passed with it, and although still subject to the Bishop as ordinary, is regularly used and equipped for Roman Catholic worship, cf. also the exquisite chapel of Landwade, with its ancient furnishings and superb collection of Cotton family monuments. Also the status of Shelland, formerly a donative chapel now a parish church, and Gipping still a chapel?).

Where, as at Ickworth, the National Trust has been given the freehold of the mansion, the family, continuing to live in part of it, as tenants, reference could be made to the example of the justly famous, 17th century estate church of Staunton Harold, Leicestershire, now in the care and ownership of the National Trust.

If this suggestion is adopted, a number of churches not large in number, but particularly valuable, not only intrinsically, but as unique documents of family, as well as social and religious, history, would be preserved for posterity.

### C. Remote, isolated (but non-estate) Churches

There are a great many of these in Suffolk, where the tidy, compact, Church-centred, text book planners' dream of a village, such as Boxford, Yoxford and Wangford (near Southwold) is something of an exception.

Badley, Carlton (near Saxmundham), Depden, Wantisden, Washbrook and All Saints' South Elmham are only a few of the least accessible (and most attractive), all but the first named approached by footpaths across fields or meadows. In some cases the church is almost in a farmyard, e.g. Letheringham, Sotherton and Withersdale. I well remember once being deterred from taking two clerical friends to see the latter by the presence of a savage looking bull in the meadow we had to cross to reach the Church!

Instead of solemnly and unimaginatively debating their redundancy and whether they can be turned into houses (God forbid!) or museums (ditto) how grateful we should be (and some of us are) for such havens of peace in a distracted world. All we have to do to solve their problem is to use and enjoy them for the purpose for which they were long ago built and consecrated for ever.

For the most part these are humble unsophisticated little churches, but there are several larger and grander ones situated so far from their (often quite sizeable) villages that they seem to bear no obvious relation to them whatever — e.g.

Combs, Redgrave, Stutton, Westhall, Barking, Norton, and Newton Green, to say nothing of my own former parish of Reydon, with which I struggled for 19 happy years. This physical separation of parish from church poses an intractable and at times exasperating pastoral problem for the parson especially, which those who have never had to cope with it just cannot understand. But those who have, of whom I am one, can testify that some doughy parishioners who have the furthest to go, often on foot or by push bike, to get to their church are more loyal, regular and devoted than others with their church on their doorstep. Distance not merely lends enchantment to the view but is to them a challenge and a stimulus. It is also, in these days when so many have cars, an opportunity for neighbourly service by organizing lifts to church for those who need them.

In other words this problem is to be seen as a challenge, to be accepted and met by positive action, rather than exaggerated by defeatist motorised ecclesiastical committee men who know of it only from hearsay or the study of inch to the mile O. S. maps!

Indeed, in any but the worst weather, going to Church at almost any one of these out of the way, off the beaten track rustic sanctuaries is a sheer delight, offering refreshment to the spirit and exercise of the body (if you leave your car at home), and may to anyone not wholly insensitive to the beauties of nature and art, often an aesthetic (and therefore spiritual) experience of the first order, which service and sermon have to be extremely dull wholly to counter-act!

They need not be, and where you have a livewire "human" and godly parson, and a friendly congregation, the distance of Church from village, and the counter attractions of T. V., Sunday newspapers, and trips to the sea do nothing to deter the flock from Church — as witness (for example) Barking under its present incumbent. Nearby Badley, too, is in so delectable and peaceful a setting, so far from the madding crowd, and is itself so utterly unspoilt and "atmospheric" within and without, that one would expect it (and others like it) to be crammed to the doors with discerning Christian worshippers for every service! Mercifully, perhaps, under the inscrutable but benevolent Divine Providence, its very existence goes unsuspected by the multitudes of the heathen belting along the A45 on Summer Sundays in search of Sabbath rest on crowded beaches — or whatever!



### APPENDIX 3.

#### An idea: 'Making the best of a bad job'

In four parishes on the Suffolk coast where for various reasons the population and the prosperity suffered a marked decline in the seventeenth century, and the churches were falling into decay, the parishioners made the best of a bad job by building a small church in the ruins of their too large, fine, Perpendicular churches. At Covehithe "the present church occupies less than half the original nave and was constructed (of brick and stone, thatched) in 1672 when the rest was dismantled after having been damaged in the Civil War in 1643" (Dickinson). At Walberswick, the parishioners "petitioned" in 1695 to be allowed to take down the roof and N. aisle and sell some of the bells, in order to render a portion of the S. aisle fit for worship. Permission being granted, the present small church was constructed out of part of the South aisle, the S. porch and the W. tower". The ruins of the chancel and E. end of the S. aisle still stand, as at Covehithe, and are exceedingly picturesque.

At Kessingland there is a more complicated history with much ruination and subsequent rebuilding. Finally, as a board in the church records, "this church was put out and rebuilt by the care of John Campe and Thos. Godfrey... in the year 1694 and finished in '95", and consisted of a new church built more or less in the ruins of the old nave, — the fine tower, as at Covehithe and Walberswick, being retained. (A new chancel built in 1909 tends to mark the history of the earlier rebuilding).

Finally at Corton (like Kessingland, in the Norwich Diocese) the nave was left in ruins but the chancel walled off, remains in use.

Similarly at Oxborough, near Swaffham, Norfolk, where the tower and spire collapsed on the main body of the church a few years ago, only the chancel and Bedingfield chapel remain intact and in use. The rest is in ruins. The chancel is quite sufficient for the small village and present day congregations.

A similar and equally picturesque example is at Little Cressingham not far from Oxborough — whereas at Didlington, also in the same area, the chancel is used for worship and the nave is a Community centre and youth club.

Where a church is too large and expensive to maintain for a small community, and the only alternative is a redundancy order and demolition, could not, say,

the chancel, or part of the nave be separated off and used for worship and the rest, deroofed and left in ruins, OR better still handed over to the civil parish for use as a village hall or youth centre?

Some such expedient is at present under active consideration at Icklingham St. James in our own Diocese (see East Anglian Daily Times, 10th May 1971).

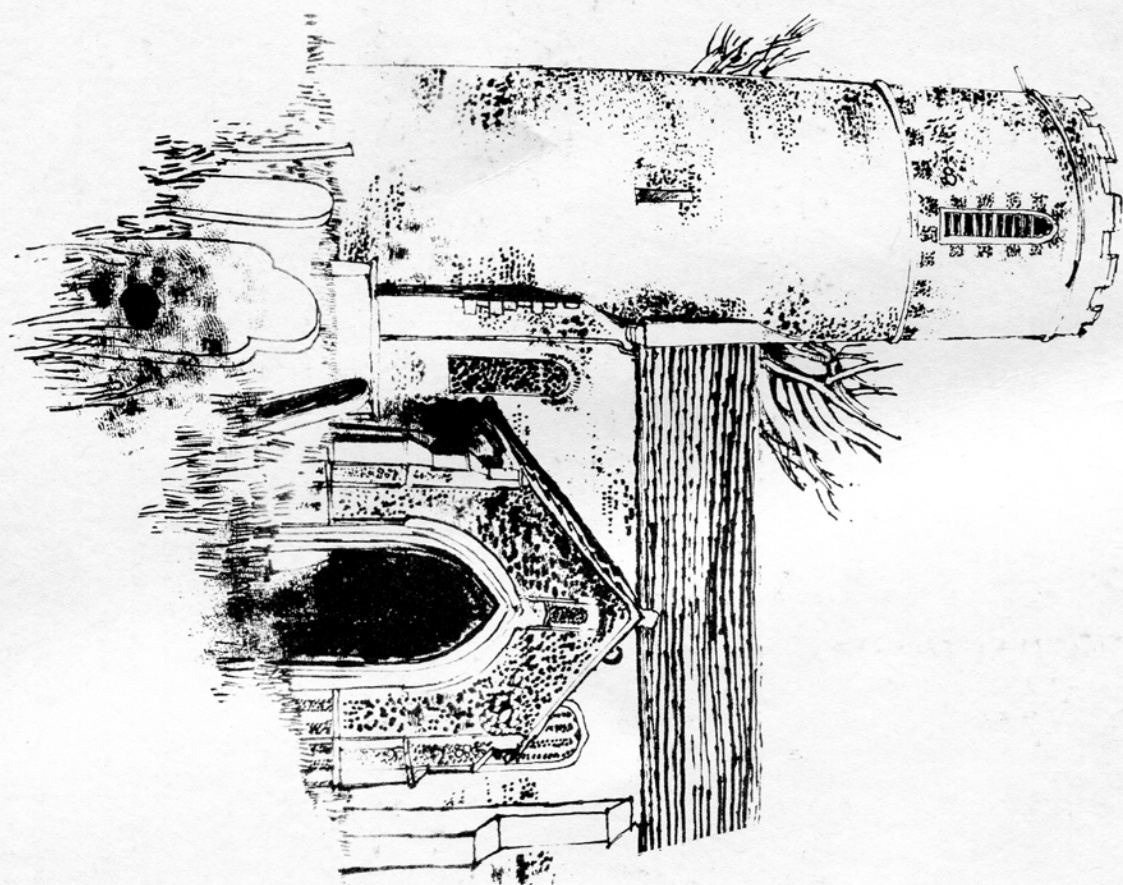
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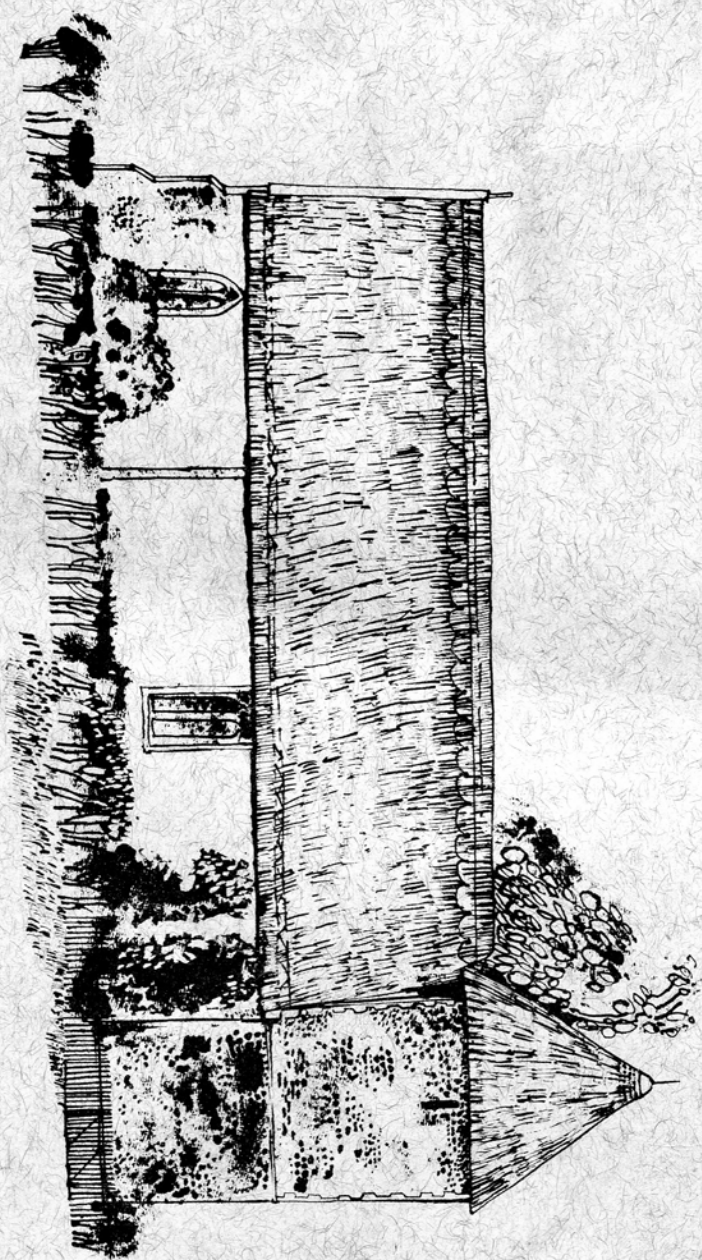
*And I must record my enormous appreciation of the painstaking care, patience and attention to detail, of the printers, Baron Publishing Co., of Woodbridge, who have done a marvellous job.*

*To all who helped in any way Thank you.*



Syeham





*Thornham Parva*