

# A Guide to the Church of St Mary the Virgin Kettlebaston



by Roy Tricker  
with illustrations by Andrew Gourlay



## **WELCOME TO SAINT MARY'S .....**

which stands geographically at the centre of the small parish which it was built to serve.

Kettlebaston is a tiny village and the little cluster of houses which forms its nucleus is set high, with commanding views over the Suffolk countryside. Its population in 1841 was 203, but this has gradually dropped to 62 in 1991.

We think that the name of the village may indicate that it was Ketelburn's Tun (i.e. his enclosure homestead or settlement) . The Domesday Book (1086) records it as "Kitelbeornastuna", whilst a document of 1095 accords it the splendid name of "Chethelberneston"!

It is set in a delightfully rural and picturesque part of Suffolk, surrounded by lovely villages with interesting churches, like Hitcham, Bildeston, Chelsworth, Monks Eleigh, Brent Eleigh and Preston St. Mary (all within 2½ miles, as the crow flies) and as we approach along the road from Hitcham, we look across to Lavenham's mighty tower, some 3½ miles to the west.

Kettlebaston's church is rather small and rustic compared with many of our mighty and magnificent Suffolk churches - yet it is an absolute "gem"; full of beauty and character, both outside and in - and no visitor will ever forget it! Its atmospheric and devotional interior was described by Norman Scarfe in his "Shell Guide to Suffolk" as "A model for all parishes of how to make the most of an ordinary ancient church". Most of the colour and beauty which brings this church to life is a product of our own century and was installed at the instigation of the Rev'd H. C. Butler, who was Rector here from 1929-64.

The love and care which is lavished upon this little shrine by its present-day custodians is also much in evidence. Maintaining a building such as this is a difficult and costly task for a tiny community; Please pray for the people, who worship here, and please give generously to help them maintain their ancient church intact and beautiful for future generations to use and to enjoy.

We hope that you will enjoy your visit to St, Mary's and that this little booklet will help to point you to its features of interest. Like all our old churches, this is a place where people of all faiths or of none may find beauty and inspiration and where Christians - whoever or whatever they are - may look upon as "Home"!

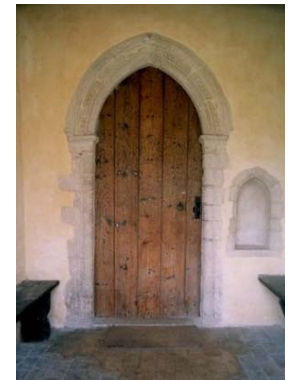
MAY GOD BLESS AND KEEP YOU.

## HOW OLD IS THE CHURCH?

This simple and sensible question is often asked by visitors to an old church. The answer is usually far from simple, because most churches (including this one) gradually evolved over many centuries and contain craftsmanship from many periods, as people of different tastes and Christian traditions altered and beautified them and left their mark upon them. From what we can see in the structure of the church itself, and from what little documentary evidence is available, the major landmarks in the long history of St. Mary's are as follows:-

c.1100. The Norman window in the north nave wall suggests that the core of the nave dates from this time, and is the oldest part of the church.

c.1180-1200. The south nave doorway was added during this Transitional period, when Norman architecture was evolving into Early English architecture. About this time, or just before, the font was made.



1363. An ancient document informs us that at Whitsuntide this year the church was "built anew". Looking at the church, it is clear that a major reordering took place at this time, when England was recovering from the Black Death and when the Decorated Style was beginning to develop into the Perpendicular Style of architecture. It appears that this work

included the rebuilding of the chancel and the addition of the tower.

The 1400s. Several windows in the Perpendicular Style of this period were inserted and it was probably towards the end of this century that the rood-loft staircase was constructed to give access to a new loft above a new screen.

The 1500s and 1600s. At the Reformation in the mid 1500s, much of the colour and carving which adorned the interior was removed and the church was equipped for the worship of the Established Church, with its Bible and Prayer Book in English rather than Latin. In 1643-4 the Puritans, in their zeal to rid our churches of "superstitious images and inscriptions" probably wrought more destruction, especially of the mediaeval glass. The 1600s saw the installation of a new altar table (now the Sacred Heart altar), Communion Rails (now at Rattlesden) and pulpit (the top section of which remains), also the interior was almost certainly equipped with box pews.



*A recreation using a superimposed image of the Rattlesden altar rails*

An early 17th century Rector here (we know that he was here in 1616) was John Rannev (or Raynev), who was removed from the benefice because he was "a common alehouse haunter and much given to tipping and drinking and useth to provoke

others to do the same and hath been oftentimes drunke and hath preached in his sermons that Original Sinne is washed away in Baptism". Furthermore, he had read the "Book of Sports" on the Lord's Day and had encouraged others to do the same. He had also caused some of his parishioners to be punished in the Commissioners' Court for going to hear sermons in other churches when they had none at home!

c.1750-1826. During the 1700s the south porch of brick was erected and in the early 1800s the vestry was added to the north of the chancel. In 1826, David Elisha Davy visited the church and his notes give us an idea of the interior at that time. The nave and chancel had plaster ceilings and above the Communion Table, flanking the east window, were two framed boards, inscribed with the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments. The nave was equipped with pews of deal. The Royal Arms hung at the west end and the pulpit stood at the north-east corner, with the entrance to the rood-loft stairs beside it. Davy was advised by the Clerk not to ascend the tower because it was believed to be dangerous. Although Davy does not mention it, the tower was crowned at this time with a slender, lead-covered spirelet, which was not removed until c.1895-1903.

c.1860-1903. As was the case with many churches, much restoration work took place during this period. Here it appears to have been achieved in stages. 1864 saw repairs to the chancel, during which the four mediaeval alabaster panels were discovered embedded in its wall. Repairs to the nave took place in 1879 and it may be that the stonework of the windows was renewed then, In 1895, Fr. Sellon asked the Rev'd Ernest Geldart to make a report on the church with a view to further restoration. This Anglo Catholic priest/architect, who compiled a book entitled "The Art of Garnishing Churches", was Rector of Little Braxted, near Witham, from 1881-1900. During his time there he transformed his little church into a treasure-house of colour and carving. He also designed the church at Rawreth, near Rayleigh, perhaps his most memorable work is the massive and sumptuous reredos at St. Cuthbert's Philbeach Gardens,

Earls Court. In Suffolk we see his work at Thurston, Alpheton, Langham and here at Kettlebaston. Here he proposed a new porch, new chancel roof, new floors throughout, a choir vestry at the west end and a sacristy behind the altar, also a rood screen, reredos, stalls, font cover, new pulpit and the removal of the north vestry. Most of this work was never carried out, but in 1902-3 the chancel was restored to his designs. He created its rather eccentric roof and its beautiful reredos and shortly afterwards the screen was added under his direction. At nearby Preston St. Mary hangs his design for a rood screen there, dated 1903, but this never materialised.

1922 onwards. By 1922 the nave roof had become dangerous, and many of its rafters had to be renewed, under the direction of Mr. A. Ainsworth Hunt of Bury St. Edmunds, and three years later the east wall was underpinned and the north-east buttress rebuilt.

Throughout the long incumbency (1929-64) of the Rev'd H. C. Butler, work was being done to maintain and adorn the church. Fr. Butler had artistic taste, also an understanding of what was beautiful in mediaeval churches. By gradual stages over the years (and occasionally using his own elbow-grease!) he created the devotional interior that we see here today. He wrote shortly after his resignation in 1964, "I was so thankful I had been spared to see the end of all the work I had planned". The details of this work will be described later in this booklet.

The work of loving and maintaining this church has continued during the past 30 years. The wall-lights, new chairs, the little organ and other additions, also much work on the fabric which has been achieved, all testify to the fact that St. Mary's is a church which is very much loved, valued and wanted.

Having traced its history and development, we now examine the building, its features and treasures, in detail.

## EXPLORING THE EXTERIOR.

What could be more attractive than this quiet and elevated corner of Suffolk, with its picturesque views across the countryside? Here we are just above the 200 foot contour-line, which is "high" for this part of the county - although no visitor to Kettlebaston could ever believe that Suffolk is flat! The village sign, across the road, showing two sceptres, was erected in 1937 to commemorate the Coronation of King George VI and our present Queen Mother. The sceptres remind us that William de la Pole, Marquis of Suffolk, received from King Henry VI in the mid 1400s a grant of the Manor of Kettlebaston in return for rendering the Sovereign the service of carrying a golden sceptre with a dove at its head on the Coronation Days of his heirs and successors and an ivory sceptre with a golden dove on the head of it at the Queen's Coronation and those of successive Queens of England. "



A plaque on the old National School House beside the drive to the churchyard announces that it was erected in 1838. Its first stone was laid on a Monday in September by Lady Pocklington. Mrs. Beachcroft (the Lady of the Manor) gave £10, also a grant of land valued at £10 and an annual subscription from herself and her nephew (Mr. T. Beachcroft of Wiston Hall) of £2 towards this School.

Yew trees have been trained to form an entrance arch to the

attractive churchyard. To the east of the chancel are graves of some former incumbents and their families, whilst a large rectangular plot, north-west of the tower, with a central recumbent cross, asks prayers for certain relations of the Rev'd W. S. Sellon (Rector 1894-1911), including his aunt, Priscilla Lydia Sellon, a pioneer of the Anglican Sisterhoods. She was the founder and first Superior of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity at Devonport (Plymouth) and later at Ascot Priory, where she is buried.

The church itself is simple in plan, comprising tower, nave, with south porch and chancel, with north vestry. Like most East Anglican churches its walls are constructed of flint-rubble, which has been covered in places with rendering.

There is beautiful architecture of c.1363 in the CHANCEL. Its elegant three-light east window has reticulated (net-like) tracery and carved corbel-heads with wimples. The keen eye will notice that this window is not quite central to the top of the eastern gable. Two double windows in the south wall and one in the north wall also date from this time, as does the priest's doorway, with its moulded arch and remains of worn corbel-heads. The north-west and south-east chancel windows are in the Perpendicular Style and (although carefully renewed in the 19th. century) date from the 1400s. One cannot miss the beautiful (c.1363) niche in the south-east buttress with its ogee-shaped arch, little hood-mould and finial at the top. In 1947, the carving of the Coronation of Our Lady was designed for it by Mr. Drew of Ipswich, reproducing in its lower parts the fragment of the



mediaeval alabaster panel found in the chancel wall in 1864. It was given colour by Miss Enid Chadwick and the iron gates (with the "Maria" monogram) made by Mr. H. Willmington of Thorngumbald near Hull were hung on the mediaeval iron hooks which had survived.

The flint and brick VESTRY to the north was added probably in the early 1800s; it has a simple wooden "Y" traceried western window.

The core of the NAVE is Norman, although there is nothing externally to indicate this. Its south wall is partly covered with modern rendering, whilst traces of much older rendering also survive. The southern buttresses are of 17th or 18th century brick, and brick has been used to restore the northern buttresses. The double Perpendicular windows which give light to the nave were almost totally renewed in the 19th century, apart from that to the east of the porch, which preserves much of its original 15th century stonework, with worn corbel heads supporting its hood-mould. The 14th century north doorway contains a door of considerable age and, further east on this side, is the abutment containing the rood-loft staircase.

The embattled western TOWER, which was added c.1363, is elegantly proportioned, although it is not particularly large or tall. Sturdy buttresses at all four corners, rising just above the tops of the belfry windows, give this tower great character and at the east end of the south side a staircase turret rises to the first stage of the tower. There is a double Perpendicular west window, single windows on the north and south sides give light to the first stage, and the two-light belfry windows show very pleasing 14th century design. Fine animal faces peer out from beneath the parapet on the north and south sides and act as gargoyles to throw rainwater



clear of the walls.

The rustic brick PORCH dates from the 1700s and could not be more humble in design, with its simple entrance arch and its triple eastern opening. It shelters a most interesting south doorway, which was fashioned c.1180-1200, during the Transitional period between Norman Romanesque and Early English Gothic architecture. Here we see Norman circular shafts supporting Norman scalloped capitals, which in turn support an Early English pointed arch, which is embellished with a simple zig-zag pattern. To the right is the Holy Water stoup, which was almost entirely renewed with Clipsham Stone in 1953. In mediaeval times (and in several churches today) people dipped their fingers into the Holy Water and then made the Sign of the Cross as an act of symbolic cleansing and rededication upon entering the sacred building.

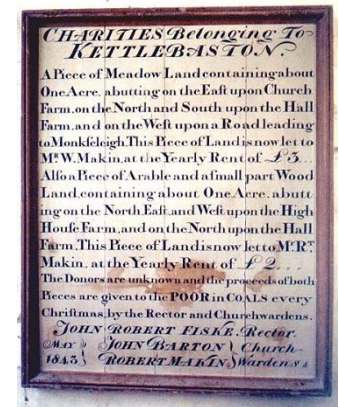
### WHAT TO SEE INSIDE THE CHURCH.

It is worth while just sitting for a moment to drink in this unforgettable interior as a whole. Our old churches were built to inspire people with the beauty of their craftsmanship and the "feel" of their atmosphere and maybe thus bring people gently to their knees. This is so very true of Kettlebaston's beautifully adorned little shrine, where light shines through the clear glass of the windows onto work of many periods. The atmosphere is enhanced by leaning walls, which betray their great age, by floors of bricks, pammets and mediaeval tiles, by the tasteful use of colour, the feeling of spaciousness due to the lack of superfluous furnishings and by the many aids to devotion which make St.Mary's feel like a Holy Place. There is no electric light here - the church is still lit by hanging paraffin lamps and by pairs of candles on the wall brackets (given in memory of Mr. E. E. Ward, who was Churchwarden



here and who died in 1977).

A sturdy 14th century TOWER ARCH (notches in its stonework show where a tower screen or western gallery once fitted), leads to the base of the tower. Looking up at the west window, we can appreciate the tremendous THICKNESS OF THE TOWER WALLS - over 4 feet. On the north wall here hangs a CHARITY BOARD, made in 1843, recording gifts of an acre of land, let to Mr. W. Makin for £3 per annum, and another acre of part arable and part woodland, let to Mr. Robert Makin for £2 per annum (this Robert was also Churchwarden). The donors of these gifts were unknown, but the annual income was spent on coals for the poor each Christmas by the Churchwardens.



A spiral staircase of 24 steps leads to the chamber above, from which ladders give access to the bells and to the tower roof. The three BELLS were hung "dead" in 1933, when the present chiming mechanism was installed. The treble bell was made by John Darbie of Ipswich in 1663, the second by Henry Pleasant, the Sudbury bell-founder, in 1699 and the tenor by Stephen Tonne of Bury St. Edmunds in 1567.

The NAVE ROOF is supported by crown-posts which rise from tiebeams which straddle the nave walls. Some of this timber work is mediaeval, although the roof was thoroughly restored in 1922. The wall-posts rest upon STONE CORBELS, carved with intriguing animal faces, which peer out at us - some with their tongues protruding.

The nave walls are about 900 years old and in the north wall is an original NORMAN WINDOW (c.1100), which was discovered in 1930. Its wide splay was designed to let in as much light and air as possible from a small opening. It is

adorned with WALL PAINTING - scroll work patterns from c.1250, which centuries of hiding from the light of day and from "restorers" have nicely preserved.

More treasures were found hidden in the chancel wall in 1864.



These are the fragments of four 14th or early 15th century ALABASTER PANELS which may well have been walled up for preservation at the Reformation. These rare and precious pieces of mediaeval craftsmanship were given to the British Museum in 1883. The Museum in 1934 presented the church with the CASTS OF THE ALABASTERS which may be seen in the south-west corner of the nave, also PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ORIGINALS, taken in 1932. The alabasters show:

1. The Annunciation. The lower right-hand section survives, where we see Our Lady seated (note the beautiful folds in her long clothes, also her delicately-carved hand). To the left of her was the Angel Gabriel, who had come to tell her that she was to be the Mother of the Saviour.
2. The lower half of a scene of Our Lord's Ascension into heaven, showing four robed and kneeling figures.
3. The Coronation of Our Lady. Here we see the Virgin kneeling (note her lovely hair) and the seated figure of God the Father at a slightly higher level. This is the scene reproduced in the south-east buttress outside, and completed by Mr. Drew of Ipswich.

4. The Holy Trinity. The seated figure of God the Father (in flowing robes and with bare feet) supports the figure of Christ crucified. Now missing from the scene is the Dove of the Holy Spirit.

In front of the tower arch is a CHEST which was made in the 1500s. Its central lock has been filled in, but two later locks remain. If this was the Parish Chest, probably all three locks would have been in use, the Rector and two Churchwardens each having a key, so that all three needed to be present in order to open. ANOTHER CHEST, on the north side, made in the 1600s (probably for use in somebody's home) has the initials "H. T." beneath its central lock.

Notice the MEDIAEVAL FLOOR TILES near the north doorway. These may well be 14th century and traces remain of the colouring which originally adorned them. A great treasure of this church is its late Norman FONT, dating probably from c.1160-80. Such fonts are rare in Suffolk, although another (and more elaborate example) may be seen at Preston St.Mary, about 1¼ miles to the west. The square bowl rests upon square pillars at each corner (notice how the north-western one has been placed upside-down) and an octagonal (and maybe slightly later) central shaft. The bowl is decorated with simple patterns. Three of its corners are rounded off with imitation clustered columns and scalloped capitals, and there are bands of cable-moulding near the top on all four sides. The north and west faces are carved with chevron patterns, whilst the south face has horizontal bands of zig-zag and cable moulding and on the east face is one band of zig-zag, with vertical lines beneath. The FONT LID was made in 1929, when the lead lining of the bowl was pierced to drain the baptismal



water down the stem of the font and into the earth beneath.

The PULPIT dates from the late 1600s and looks a little odd because it once formed the top stage of a two or three-decker arrangement.



Two altars flank the chancel arch (as they would have done in mediaeval times). The SACRED HEART ALTAR, on the north side, is the beautifully carved 17th century Communion table, which served for at least 200 years as the High Altar in the sanctuary. It was given a new base in 1935 and in 1936 the brown paint which had coloured and disfigured it for many years was removed by Fr. Butler. The STATUE of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (1932) stands beneath a wooden canopy given in memory of Featonby Jobson Smith by his daughter at Easter 1939. Notice the four small and unusual gothic candlesticks (complete with tracery and pinnacles), also the hanging VOTIVE LAMP of Indian silver (1941) and the marble ALTAR SLAB, with its five crosses, upon which the priest consecrated the bread and wine. In the north-east windowsill nearby is a tiny PISCINA DRAIN which was used by priests saying Mass on this spot before the Reformation. On the south side is the LADY ALTAR (a 19th century altar, maybe brought here from another church) . The STATUE OF OUR LADY (who is treading the Serpent under her feet) was given by a

daughter of Fr. Claude Powell, Vicar of St. Bartholomew's Ipswich. Its canopy was given in 1936 and the VOTIVE LAMP came from St. John's Clerkenwell, where Fr. Butler had been curate from 1923-9.

Beneath the chancel arch stands the ROOD SCREEN, designed by the Rev'd Ernest Geldart in the early 1900s, in the fashion of the lovely mediaeval screens which survive in many of our churches. It has three traceried openings each side of the entrance arch. On the Cornice above is inscribed , "IHESU" (Jesus) and over the entrance on a shield is the "MR" (Maria) emblem. Surmounting it is a small ROOD GROUP (Christ crucified and flanked by His Mother and St. John) which was added in 1930. Most of the colouring and gilding of the screen was done by Mr. Patrick Osborne in 1949, but the six painted figures which adorn the dado (or lower part) were added in 1954 by Miss Enid Chadwick, the Walsingham artist. Mediaeval screens were usually painted with Apostles or other saints, but here we see six saints and martyrs especially associated with England. These are (working from north - south):-

1. St Felix (died c.648), who brought Christianity to East Anglia and was the first Bishop of Dunwich.
2. St. Thomas Moore (died 1535). He was Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, but was beheaded having opposed the King's divorce and the Act of Supremacy. He declared himself to be "The King's good servant, but God's first".
3. St. Thomas a Becket (died 1170). The Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in his own cathedral by four Knights, having enraged King Henry II. We see him vested and carrying his primatial cross, but with a sword through his mitre.
4. St. John Fisher (died 1535). He was Bishop of Rochester and he refused to recognise Henry VIII as Head of the English Church. For this he was put to death.
5. St. Alban (died c.304). The first recorded English martyr, who was put to death by the Romans near the Hertfordshire city which now bears his name. He is dressed here in his uniform as a Roman soldier.
6. St. Fursey (died 648). In the 630s this Irish missionary



established a monastery at Burgh Castle and we see him carrying a replica of the Roman fort at Burgh Castle, parts of which survive today.

A careful look at the stonework of the chancel arch will show MORTISE HOLES (some now filled in) where parts of the framework of the mediaeval Rood Complex fitted. Above the mediaeval screen, jutting out in front of the chancel arch across the full width of the nave, was the rood-loft (or gallery) along which it was possible to walk, mainly in order to tend the candles which burned before the great Rood which stood above it, which was possibly backed by a wooden tympanum which filled the upper part of the chancel arch and was painted with a scene of the Doom, or Last Judgment (one of these survives at Wenhaston, near Blythburgh). All Roods and their lofts were taken down in the 1500s. What does survive here however is the ROOD



LOFT STAIRCASE, in the north nave wall nearby. Its upper entrance led directly on to the rood-loft. The IRON GATE at its lower entrance was designed by Sir Ninian Comper and made by Mr. H. Willmington in 1948.

The CHANCEL is bright, spacious and is pleasantly free of superfluous clutter. It is also unusually long (34¼ feet) in proportion to the nave (48½ feet). The upper parts of its ROOF are boarded in and hammer-beams with blank shields support vertical posts, between which are longitudinal arch-braces. All

this is part of Geldart's 1902-3 restoration, but he retained the 17th century cornices along the tops of the walls, with their simple leaf-patterns in circles.

In 1934, the floors beneath where the choirstalls once stood were paved with Woolpit pammets and the present vestry door was made. On the north wall nearby is a CONSECRATION CROSS, which was repainted in 1946 over the remains of an original cross, painted over one of the spots where the Bishop anointed the walls with Holy Oil, probably when the rebuilt chancel was consecrated in 1363. The little ORGAN (a "Lieblich Organ", by T. C. Lewis) was brought here from the Church of St. Nicholas at Wattisham in 1977. The north-west chancel wall-lights are a memorial to W. H. Hayward, who died in 1974.

In the north wall, further east, is a TOMB RECESS, probably marking the burial-place of the donor of the 1363 restoration. Its arch has the "Ogee" curve, which was fashionable at this time and terminates in a carved finial. There is a worn tomb-slab beneath it. This tomb is in just the right position for use before the Reformation as an Easter Sepulchre, where the Blessed Sacrament was placed from Maundy Thursday until Easter each year.



In the south wall of the sanctuary is a fine set of SEDILIA and PISCINA (c.1363). Their trefoil-headed arches rest upon clustered columns, with moulded capitals and bases. The hood-moulds which frame their arches once rested upon five corbel heads, of which only the two end ones survive. The eastern corbel is a bearded priest, with a tonsured haircut, which was part of the uniform of clergy during the middle Ages. The



sedilia provided seats for the Celebrant, Deacon and Subdeacon during certain parts of the High Mass, whilst into the piscina drain was poured the water from the washing of the priest's hands at the Mass.

The COMMUNION RAILS were installed in 1903, when their 17th century predecessors were transferred to Rattlesden Church, where they may be seen towards the west end of the nave.

The High Altar and reredos, set beneath the elegant tracery of the east window, provide a dignified, devotional and colourful climax to this interior. The ALTAR itself is of York stone, made by Saunders of Ipswich to the designs of Fr. H. C. Butler in 1950. It was given in memory of Miss Eleanor Featonby Smith (a resident of nearby Preston St. Mary, who worshipped at this church for 12 years until her death in 1949) by her sister, who lived at Durban, South Africa. The large mensa slab is set upon four carved pillars, which are based upon the 14th century columns of the sedilia. Into this slab is set a smaller central altar-stone, which was consecrated by Bishop Gerald Vernon (formerly Bishop of Madagascar) at Finedon, Northants in 1956.

The handsome carved and painted REREDOS was designed by Ernest Geldart, and received its colouring in 1948 at the hands of Patrick Osborne of Maidstone. In the central panel we see the Annunciation, where the Angel Gabriel visits the kneeling Mary (with her long hair in a plait), with the Dove of the Holy Spirit above. In the panels each side are St. Peter (with keys), St. Edmund (with arrows), St. Etheldrada (crowned, with book and lily) and St. Paul (with sword). These figures were restored by Woolf Bros. of Monmouth Street London in 1947. The reredos is surmounted by openwork tracery and pinnacles, with

two angels carrying scrolls and the Virgin and Child, backed by rays, at the centre. This was renewed in 1949 by Bryan Saunders of Coggeshall.



The six Baroque Style CANDLESTICKS and CRUCIFIX arrived in 1931, when the little SACRISTY AREA was formed behind the reredos. The SANCTUARY LAMP hanging in front of the High Altar reminds us that this is a Holy Place. It also reminds us that Our Lord Jesus Christ is specially present here, in the Blessed Sacrament which is reserved in the TABERNACLE behind the reredos. The tabernacle itself (which is a locked metal safe) was purchased by Fr. Butler in 1930.

#### MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS.

Apart from the furnishings and adornments, which were given as memorials and have already been mentioned, also the tomb recess in the north chancel wall, there are a few inscriptions on the walls and floors of the church which commemorate people of the past who have been part of this church and parish. These are:

1. A BRASS in the chancel floor to the wife of the Rev'd John

Pricke (we would now probably spell it "Pryke"). He was Rector here and died in March 1613. His wife, who died in 1599, is commemorated thus:

"The corpse of John Prick's wife lyes heere / The Pastor of this place./ Fower moneths and one and thirty yeerr / With him she ran her race. / And when some eightye yeres were past / Her sovlē she did resigne / To Her good God in August last / Yeeres thrise five Hundreth Ninety Nine".

2. A WALL PLAQUE on the north chancel wall to Lady Johann Jermy (wife of Sir Thomas Jermy of Metfield and daughter of Edward Styward of Teversham, Cambs). She died in 1649, aged 87. The plaque has her coat of arms at the top and the lettering was carefully blacked in by Fr. Butler, using a lead pencil. Her epitaph reads:-  
 "Sleep sweetly Saint, since thou wert gone / Thers not the least aspersion / To rake thine Asshes: no defame / To veyle the lvsre of thy Name. / Like odorous Tapers thy best sent / Remaines after extinguishment. / Stirr not these sacred ashes, let them rest / Till union make both sovlē and body blest."



3. Her burial place is marked by a LEDGER SLAB in the floor, upon which we read:

"A ladies Ashes here perfumed lye / With vertues which surpass all poetry. / Marble's a frail supporter of her name / Yet time devours, but cannot waste her fame".

4. In the south sanctuary floor, another LEDGER SLAB commemorates seven year old Hannah Hasell (daughter of Peter and Mary Hasell), who died in 1694.

5. In the nave floor is a small LEDGER STONE (now very worn), to John Boyce (died 1757) and his daughter, Mary Scott (died 1792).

## SOME 19th AND 20TH CENTURY RECTORS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL AT KETTLEBASTON.

During much of the 18th and 19th centuries, successive members of the Fiske family were Rectors of Kettlebaston and also of Shimplingthorne, some having begun their ministry as Curates of Kettlebaston.

The Rev'd THOMAS FISKE, who was Curate in 1791, became Rector in 1805 and remained until 1839, when he was succeeded by his eldest son, the Rev'd JOHN ROBERT FISKE, who was Curate here 1828-9 and then of Gedding, before becoming Kettlebaston's Rector for 52 years until his death at the age of 86 in November 1891.

The Rev'd GEORGE LLOYD JONES then arrived, having served curacies at Laugharne (Wales) Overton (Lancs), Newland (Glos), Narborough (Leics) and Christ Church Coseley (Staffs), but he was here only two years, until his death in 1894 at the early age of 37.

The arrival of the Rev'd WILLIAM STORER SELDON (Rector 1894-1911) saw the beginning of a new chapter in the life of St. Mary's. Trained at Chichester Theological College, he served curacies at Forton (Hants), Swanmore (Isle of Wight) and Kingsland (Herefs), before becoming Chaplain of St. Saviour's Hospital London, Parish Priest of Newton and then Vicar of Llanveynoe (both in Herefordshire). From there he came to Kettlebaston, firmly rooted in the principles of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England, with its emphasis on Sacramental worship in the beauty of holiness. He introduced the reredos in 1902 and the rood screen shortly afterwards, both to the designs of Ernest Geldart, the Anglo Catholic Priest and Architect. The "Ritualistic Clergy List" for

1903 tells us that Fr. Sellon, who was a member of the English Church Union, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Society of the Holy Cross, used Eucharistic vestments, lighted candles, eastward position at the Eucharist, the mixed chalice and also incense here. It is no surprise therefore that this little church soon became known as a centre of what was considered to be "extreme Ritualism", which was seen by sturdy Suffolk Protestants as a sell-out to the Church of Rome. It was like a red rag to a bull to the worshippers at the Rev'd Theodore Beckett's Baptist Chapel at Bildeston, who enticed Kettlebaston folk who disliked Fr. Sellon's High Church practices to join their congregation. It was when one of these people died in 1899 that Mr. Beckett informed Fr. Sellon that he intended to conduct the Burial Service in Kettlebaston churchyard. The Rector did nothing to prevent Beckett from so doing, but pinned a notice to the church door, asking parishioners not to attend but instead to come to a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 8 a.m. on the morning of the funeral. The congregation of 15 at the Eucharist included Mr. Beckett, whose behaviour throughout was described as "unseemly". Whilst people were making their Communion, a small explosion was heard and the church was filled with "an abominable stench". A man (who then bolted from the church) had produced a small bottle of assafoetida, which had been set light to so that it would explode, giving forth a hideous and choking smell which would have drowned any smell of incense in the church and would have made any schoolboy's stink-bombs smell like Easter lilies by comparison!

In 1900, Mr. Beckett was back - this time with an Anglican ally, the Rev'd J. R. C. Fillingham, Vicar of Hexton (Herts) and a fiery protestant agitator. On one Sunday morning he preached at Beckett's Chapel inciting the congregation there to accompany him to Kettlebaston to protest during the most solemn part of the Mass there at a future prearranged date. On the appointed day, Fillingham, Beckett and about 50 people duly turned up. Fr. Sellon had heard of the plan and informed the Police. Fillingham first went to the vestry and tried to force a "Protest Document" upon the Rector, who refused it, and the

Churchwardens escorted the "visitor" from the vestry. At the Consecration, Fillingham yelled at the top of his voice "Idolatry! Protestants leave this house of Baal!", whereupon he and his followers left for their own open-air service in the road outside. He was as a result convicted of riotous behaviour and fined £70 by Hadleigh Magistrates for his trouble.

The Rev'd EDWARD SCARLETT (Rector 1911-12) had been Curate at the Anglo Catholic strongholds of St. Alban's Bordesley, St. Faith's and St. Michael's Wandsworth and St. Peter's Streatham. He was assisted during part of his short stay here by the Rev'd T. Stowell Jackson, who had been Curate in Charge of Woolverstone, then another "extreme" Suffolk church.

The parishes where the Rev'd JAMES FREDERICK TODD (Rector (1912-21) received his training were also spearheads of the Catholic Revival - St. Margaret's Aberdeen (where Sir Ninian Comper's father was Rector), St. Chad's Haggerston and St. Anne's Hoxton. Kettlebaston was his first and only parish; he retired from here to Fulham.

Between c.1910 and 1928, the Sisters of the Holy Childhood (whose Mother House was at Clapton Common, London) ran an Orphanage for 12 boys at Kettlebaston. These Sisters specialised in work with children in needy parishes. When the Rev'd REGINALD HARRY NOTTAGE arrived in 1922 there was no house for him and for a while he lived and slept in the church vestry, until a wooden bungalow was built for him. Kettlebaston was also the home for a short while (c.1920-4) for a few aged Sisters of the tiny Community of St. Mary and Scholastica. These had remained loyal to the Church of England when their community of Benedictine Nuns of St. Bride's Abbey Milford Haven seceded to Rome in 1913.

Fr. Nottage was popular here and built up a good congregation (sometimes numbering 70 people). He was one of those devoted and hardworking country priests who brought great credit upon the Catholic Movement. After Vestpers and

Devotions on Sunday evenings, he invited people of all ages to the Rectory for social gatherings, with music, refreshments and games. He later (in 1930) brought out a little book called "the Village Eucharist", based upon his work in Suffolk country parishes. His first year here was spent raising money to restore the nave roof, which was so dangerous that the congregation had to use the chancel. It was re-opened in September 1922 with a High Mass, celebrated by Fr. Powell of St. Bartholomew's Ipswich, at which the preacher was Fr. Dudley Symon, headmaster of Woodbridge School. When applying for a grant towards the underpinning of the east wall in 1924, Fr. Nottage stated that out of his 117 parishioners, there were 35 children, 25 adult Non-conformists and 57 church folk. These 57 included 18 householders, 10 labourers' families and 5 pensioners' households. He left in 1926 for the parish of Chevington, where he was persecuted by certain of his parishioners, backed up by Mr. Kensit's Wicliffe Preachers. He was later Vicar of All Saints Clapton, then of Corringham and finally of Rawreth near Rayleigh - a church rebuilt to the designs of Ernest Geldart.

The Rev'd RICHARD DE BAILLEUL COUSSMAKER (Rector 1926-8) had been Curate at Our Most Holy Redeemer Clerkenwell and St. Nicholas Guildford. Kettlebaston was his first parish and from here he continued his ministry in the Staffordshire parishes of Great Haywood, St. Chad's Lichfield and Trysull.

The last Rector of Kettlebaston as a single benefice was the Rev'd HAROLD CLEAR BUTLER, who served it from 1929-64, having been Curate at St. Agnes Bristol, Falmouth, St. Michael's Walthamstow and then for six years at St. John's Clerkenwell. He was a staunch Papalist and maintained here a system of worship which was clearly more Roman than Anglican in character and this was probably the only church in the diocese which had "advanced" so far. His Sunday services were mainly Mass at 11a.m. and Vespers at 3p.m. and the great annual event during his time was the Assumptiontide Vespers and Benediction, which was followed by a Garden Party. He

was more than a little suspicious of the Church of England "Establishment" and had little time for what he called "High Churchmen". He disliked having "State" notices pinned up in his porch and he refused to keep Registers for his Sunday and weekday Services. He maintained that Fr. Elsdon of St. John's Clerkenwell did not keep such documents, which were quite unnecessary and were probably invented by 19th century High Churchmen, who liked to write down all the new services they had introduced into their parishes. He enjoyed the occasional brush with the Establishment and the only event recorded in his otherwise empty Service Register was "1933, October 2nd, 2.30 - Visitation of Archdeacon of Sudbury. Abortive. Archdeacon, finding no Churchwarden present, rode off on his High Horse!"

He loved this little church though and he lavished his love and his considerable artistic taste upon it. Details of his work are recorded in previous pages, and much of the paint-stripping and simple tasks he undertook himself. Sadly he did not attract large congregations towards the end of his ministry and numbers dwindled to such an extent that he wrote in 1963 to a friend "You are quite right - there is no congregation", adding that it was thanks to the family of a nearby Rector attending Kettlebaston Church that he was able to carry out the ceremonies for Holy Week and Easter. When ill health forced his retirement in 1964, Kettlebaston was linked with neighbouring parishes and the services here became more "Anglican" than they had been since the 1890s, although the little church has kept its identity and much of its beauty.

From 1964-70 the Rev'd A. C. W. PHILLIPS (Rector of Preston and Thorpe Morieux) was in charge and from 1971-91, Canon EDWARD WETHERALL (rector of Hitcham) cared for the parish. His successor, the Rev'd STANLEY MONTGOMERY, began his ministry in the benefice of Hitcham, Little Finborough Preston and Kettlebaston in January 1993.

**ADDITIONAL NOTES about the NATIONAL SCHOOL and the CHARITY (by Mr. A. C. Tooke).**

The VILLAGE SCHOOL (built in 1838) was closed in 1904. In 1958 Fr. H. C. Butler bought the hall and adjacent cottage so that the hall could become the Church Hall and the cottage could provide some income. The property was vested in the Diocesan Board of Finance on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. Under a scheme sealed by the Charity Commissioners on April 12th 1984, a 22 year lease was granted, which was transferred to the Official Custodian for Charities in trust for the Village Hall Management Committee.

Of the CHARITY, the Commissioners Report (c.1830) states: "Two parcels of land in Kettlebaston, containing about half an acre each, are let by the Churchwardens at rent amounting at present to £6.4.0. a year, which are laid out at the discretion of the Churchwardens, partly in the purchase of coals, which are distributed among the poor during winter, and partly in clothing the children who attend the Sunday School".

The land was recently sold and a new scheme has been set up by the Charity Commissioners, under which the income is available for any resident in Kettlebaston who is in need, hardship or distress. The dual role of "coal for the poor" and "clothing the children who attend the Sunday School" has been met by one trustee being appointed by the Parish Council and another by the Parochial Church Council.

*This booklet was written by Roy Tricker - a lover of this church for many years. He is grateful for the help and advice of others, especially the Rev' d Philip Gray (who wrote an earlier Architectural Guide to the church), Mr. and Mrs. A .C . Tooke, Ronald Clouston and Christopher Dalton, also the Staff of the County Record Office, Lambeth Palace Library and the Council for the Care of Churches, for the use of their resources.*

*October 1993.*

**The guide attributed to the Rev'd Philip Gray:**

**ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, KETTLEBASTON**

The building probably dates from the Twelfth Century, but was greatly altered in the Fourteenth Century. A few Norman features can still, however, be seen - in particular THE FONT, with its square bowl and crude carving. One of its four legs would seem to be upside-down. In the north wall of the nave is a blocked up Norman WINDOW with early painting around it. The DOORWAY through which you entered has typical Norman pillars and capitals on either side, but with a pointed arch.

The NAVE ROOF is of simple King-post construction, supported along the walls by rather jolly carved stone corbels. Under the tower arch is a good antique chest, and another one near it, beside the north doorway. Also at that end of the nave, in a case, are reproductions of four fine fragments of carved alabaster panels found 'Imbedded in the walls of the chancel'. Dated some time around 1400, they have been in the British Museum since 1883.

The ROOD SCREEN, designed by E. Geldart, as was the reredos to the High Altar, was placed there sometime after 1895. The lower panels were painted in 1950 by Miss Enid Chadwick of Walsingham, during the incumbency of the late Rev. H. C. Butler (Rector, 1929 - 1964), who did so much to beautify the church. The screen is flanked by altars of the Sacred Heart and of Our Lady, The Stuart table on the left is most probably the post Reformation communion table which stood in the chancel before the present stone table was placed there. To the left of the Sacred Heart altar is the STAIRCASE which gave access to the earlier rood loft. Note the simple PISCINA cut in the adjacent window sill (A piscina is a basin and drain for water used at the communion service).

In the CHANCEL, dominated by the beautiful reredos behind the altar, with its central panel depicting the Annunciation of

Our Lady, is an especially fine grouping of windows (fourteenth century) and doorway, and four-arched and pillared piscina and sedilia (The sedilia are seats for the sacred ministers at the Eucharist). On the north side of the chancel is a canopied TOMB, of similar date, which may well have been used as an Easter sepulchre. The ORGAN was formerly in the now redundant church of Wattisham, and was built by T. C. Lewis, generally associated with building those enormous Victorian organs (The organ in Ipswich Corn Exchange is by Lewis). To its left is a repainted CONSECRATION CROSS, found in 1939.

#### EXTERIOR

The TOWER dates from the early or mid-1400's. At one time it had a small lead spire. It houses three bells, dated 1567, 1663 and 1699.

The doorway in the PORCH has already been mentioned, whilst the porch itself is of 18th century brick outside, with older timbers inside.

On the buttress to the left of the chancel door, one can just see a MASS or "SCRATCH" DIAL. Finally, on the south-east buttress nearest the churchyard gate) is a niche in which is a restored coloured reproduction of the "Coronation of Our Lady" ( from one of the alabasters found in the church) protected by pleasing wrought iron gates, which, when closed, make the letters MARIA.

Produced by Andrew N Gourlay, MMIV.

Copyright to all original material held by Meesrs Tricker and Gourlay