

Roof Angels of the East Anglian Churches A Visitor's Handbook and Guide

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Acknowledgements

In grateful appreciation of
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Roof Angels in East Anglian Churches

When you stand in the Fen landscape and look into the sky you see birds flying on high. When you stand in many of the East Anglian churches and look up you see wings again. But these are the wooden wings of the East Anglian Roof Angels.

The first glance at these astonishing and awe-inspiring carvings prompts several questions. Why, although some Roof Angels can be found elsewhere, are the East Anglian churches so richly endowed with them? What was their purpose when they were first installed? Where do they fit into the range of angels portrayed in other art forms?

Above all, what do they say to us today? To find answers to these questions requires a brief survey of the origins of angels and some description of their depiction in art through the ages.

Angel Origins

In Christianity, Judaism and Islam angels appear as supernatural beings, created at the same time as the material universe, whose functions are to praise and serve the Creator while acting as His messengers to mankind.

Both the Old and New Testaments describe these functions while also mentioning other, often ambiguous, forms of celestial beings. A fifth-century text, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, attempted to categorise these Biblical heavenly hosts, placing them in nine orders divided into three hierarchies: Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones; Dominions, Virtues and Powers; Principalities, Archangels and Angels.

The function of the first hierarchy was to surround God in perpetual adoration, that of the second to control the stars and the elements, that of the third to protect and guide the souls of men and act as intermediaries between Heaven and human beings.

Of all these orders the ninth one, that of Angels, is the one closest to man; the words for "angel" in Greek - *angelos*- and Hebrew -*mal'akh*- both have the meaning of "messenger", and numerous instances of angels carrying messages from God to man can be found throughout the Bible. For example an "angel of the Lord" brought the news of Christ's Nativity to the shepherds who were then surrounded by "a multitude of the heavenly host" (*St. Luke*, 2, 9-13).

Three angels brought Abraham a message announcing the birth of his son (*Genesis*, 18, 2-10), and two angels came to warn Lot about the destruction of Sodom (*Genesis*, 19, 12-16). It is mainly these familiar, and guardian, angels, together with three of the Archangels, namely Raphael, Gabriel and Michael, whom artists selected to make the invisible visible by depicting angels as heavenly, and yet strangely accessible, personages.

Angels in Art

The first artistic representations of angels are found in fourth-century Byzantium. In Greek Classical style they are depicted as winged gods with large-eyed and serious countenances.

In the Middle Ages, Western adaptation of the Byzantine mode resulted in humanised angels, combining their gravity and graciousness with a sense of radiance and movement. Some angels wore haloes, all were furnished with wings, symbol of the messenger and also of the angel's marvellous ability to bridge with speed, as quick as thought, the huge distance between God and mankind.

Through the centuries the appearance of angels, crafted in stained glass, sculpted in wood and stone, painted on parchment and canvas, gradually changed. The stiff Byzantine

countenances softened into rounded, serene, almost childlike faces of heavenly beauty, compassionate and caring, and the heavy garments became floating draperies.

In some pictures angels became simultaneously unearthly and tangible; a tiny picture in a sixteenth-century Book of Hours (*Hours of Francesco Maria Sforza*, in the British Library) shows the youthful owner of the Book walking confidently along beside his tall, beautiful, winged and halo'ed guardian angel, firmly holding his hand.

This same trusting belief in an angel's ability to console, support and guide a needful human is amply demonstrated in the many artistic representations of a tale from the Apocrypha's Book of Tobit. There the young boy, Tobias, is not only guarded on his dangerous journey to a distant city by the Archangel Raphael but also provided by this benevolent guardian with healing remedies for his blind father.

The National Gallery's version of this popular image of angelic protection (Workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio, about 1470-1480) shows the brightly-dressed pair with linked arms and expressive faces, stepping out cheerfully together with a little dog frisking around the Archangel's elegantly-saddled feet.

The Archangel Gabriel delivering his message from God to the Virgin (*St. Luke*, 1, 26-27) was another favourite theme for artists, as shown in Fra Filippo Lippi's version, in the National Gallery. Here the richly clothed angel kneels in a flowery garden and gently bows his head to Mary in reverent communication.

The Archangel Michael, equally popular as a subject for artists, is always shown fulfilling two roles, as leader of the heavenly armies ridding heaven of devils, and as the guide and weigher of souls as they pass over from life to death.

One panel of Pietro Perugino's altarpiece, originally made for a monastery near Milan and now in the National Gallery, depicts a fully armoured Michael with sword and shield, stamping on Satan. In this picture Perugino gave Michael a pair of dark waist-length wings, rising up to points on either side of his head to form a dramatic framework to the Archangel's face. But this style of wing was only one in a huge variety in which artists, throughout the centuries, attempted to depict the angels' most essential attribute.

Wings could be tiny gauzy confections sprouting from cherubic heads, or huge feathered spreads attached to angels' shoulders to imitate flight, or foot-length and quietly folded, or pointing up to the sky, a technique often used when painting a host of angels.

A 15th century stained- glass window in All Saints Church in York depicting the Nine Orders of Angels contrived to accommodate the huge wings by unusually and neatly criss-crossing them in a fold above the angels' heads. Wings could be silvered or gilded, covered with eyes like a peacock, dotted like ermine, chequered, shaded, striped or brilliantly coloured in red, green and blue.

Nearer our times William Blake arranged the wings of paired angels into graceful formal designs, while the wings of Anthony Gormley's *Angel of the North*, sculptured in steel and reminiscent of aircraft wings rather than those of birds, dominate the landscape with their huge powerful span.

All artists depicting angels observed this emphasis on wings, and another attribute of the angels, their association with music, is found in many pictures. Angels holding music scores and singing, and joyfully playing lutes, harps and trumpets crowd the painted skies in happy exultation.

The East Anglian Roof Angels

East Anglia is defined here as the four counties of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and this study concerns the Roof Angels within this boundary.

The Angel Roofs appear to be in geographical clusters of Churches possessing this unique form of roof decoration. The Lists comprise the individual East Anglian Angel-Roof Churches recorded so far, and also a few outside this area. Examples have been discovered as far away as Cornwall (Parish Church, St. Ives), Oxford (St. Mary, Ewelme) and Yorkshire (All Saints Church, York).

The earliest documented Roof Angels are those built into the roof structure during Richard II's extensive refurbishment from 1385 onwards of London's Westminster Hall. But East Anglia possesses by far the most beautiful and varied collection of Roof Angels, and their existence poses the question of how this came about.

Many theories have been put forward. The unique landscape of the Fens, with its clear light and huge high skies seeming to reflect the nearness of Heaven; the vast numbers of wildfowl always present in the skies reinforcing the image of flight, and the huge size of some of the Fenland churches, many as large as cathedrals, their interiors echoing Heaven's arch.

These may have been positive factors in the decision to people the roofs with angels, but there can be no doubt that the original motive was devotional inspiration with the angels exercising a benevolent and comforting guardianship over isolated groups of worshippers scattered across a harsh and lonely countryside.

Dowsing's Destruction of Roof Angels in the 17th century

Trying to unravel the mysteries of the Roof Angels is complicated, or perhaps bedevilled might be a more appropriate term, by the iconoclastic activities of the Puritan William Dowsing, empowered by the 1643 Act of Parliament to destroy all Church altars, pictures and images.

Dowsing took his despoiling gangs through Suffolk and Cambridgeshire from late 1643 through 1644 and was so proud of his work that he kept a diary detailing his triumphant harangues with the despairing churchwardens and listing the church contents he succeeded in smashing. Many of the Roof Angels fell victim to Dowsing's rampage and the list makes sad reading.

Nor were the Cambridge Colleges exempt. Peterhouse lost "two mighty great angells with wings and divers other angells...and about a hundred chirubims and angells", Gonville and Caius "68 cherubims", Jesus College yielded up a mixed bag of pictures, saints and angels "120 at least".

The Fellows at Pembroke Hall put up a spirited defence on the legality of cherubim by citing the Book of Deuteronomy. Dowsing riposted with quotations from the Book of Exodus, and evidently considered that he had won the argument since he left the poor Fellows as "they stared one on another without answers".

Dowsing then visited country parishes in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk where the toll of the cherubim and angels which he "brake down" mounts alarmingly. His list includes 12 cherubim at Great Shelford, 13 at Southwold, 14 at Madingley, 18 at Kesgrave, 20 each at Otley and Blythburgh, 36 at Comberton and 68 at Wetherden among other entries. Dowsing names both "cherubims" and "angells". Southwold, for example, lost 20 angels as well as 13 cherubim, but his grounds for distinguishing between the two categories are not clear.

If Dowsing had been familiar with the accepted division of the heavenly hosts into nine orders and three hierarchies, he would have realised that cherubim had a slightly different function from that of angels. They can be recognised from divergences in costume and appearance when both types are present in one church.

Unfortunately Dowsing's descriptions of the objects he rifled and destroyed are vague. His men indiscriminately smashed stained-glass windows and fonts, broke altars and levelled

their steps, and removed crosses from inside and outside the churches, as well as stripping the roofs.

Their destruction of the Roof Angels has rendered the study of these beautiful decorative images very difficult. So many were lost for ever that establishing an accurate catalogue can only be hazardous and any totals of angel numbers have to be approximate.

Roof Angels and their Roofs

Discussion of the Roof Angels has to begin with a description of their "homes", the marvellously constructed Medieval wooden roofs in the East Anglian Parish Churches. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries English carpentry reached a degree of sophistication without rival on the Continent.

The beauty and variety of these structures, notably the arch braced collar roof, the single hammer-beam roof and the double hammer-beam roof where all the work is open to view, are unsurpassed. For individual East Anglian Churches only sparse information has been found regarding the making of the roofs and their angels, but fortunately the building of the huge hammer-beam roof in Westminster Hall, which took from 1393 to 1399, is documented. Although this enterprise was carried out on a regal scale with no expense spared, many of the working details would have applied equally to these churches.

The first task of the master carpenter, in effect the architect, surveyor and builder of the roof, was to find his material; oak was the preferred wood. Hugh Herland, master carpenter for Westminster Hall, found his timber in Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Surrey, and conveyed it to his "framing site" at Farnham. Here his team of woodworkers, carpenters, joiners and carvers, cut and prepared the myriad pieces.

The span of the roof-space in the Hall being 67 feet, and Herland's longest beams being only 40 feet, many joins had to be worked in. When this prefabricated structure of timber, estimated at weighing about 660 tons, was ready, it was conveyed piece by piece in strong wagons pulled by sixteen horses, each supplied by the sheriffs of the counties of Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey, to Hamme on the river Thames, whence it went by barge to Westminster. Massive scaffolding was set up in the Hall during 1395-1396, and bit by bit the heavy wooden components were hauled up and secured in position.

The twenty-six protruding hammer-beams carrying the horizontal angels were among the largest and heaviest timbers. Only the bodies of the angels were carved out of the solid beam; their wings were carved separately and fixed vertically high on their shoulders, so that when seen from far below the angels appear to be flying across the great span of the roof.

The accounts name a specialist wood carver who made two of the angels and then farmed out the other twenty-four to three other carvers. If the intention of this master carver was presumably to make a pattern for his team to copy, then the "copying" must be loosely interpreted since the Westminster angels sport distinguishing details in their clothes and hairstyles.

This prompts a comparison with the East Anglian Roof Angels, where one of their outstanding features is the wide variation to be seen in facial features, clothes and wings of angels flying side-by-side in the roofs, and suggests the freedom allowed to individual carvers.

One of the special features of the wooden roofs was that no nails were used in the construction. The beams were mortised and tenoned together (a projection on one piece of wood fitted tightly into a cavity on another) and secured with long and thick wooden pins, known then as now as "dowels".

Admirers of Dorothy L. Sayers will recall that in *The Nine Tailors* her detective, Lord Peter Wimsey, sitting in the gallery of a church roofed with angels, found where a burglar had hidden a valuable necklace. He had withdrawn one of these dowels, cutting a slice from the

middle and then replacing the two ends with his loot safely tucked away in the little hiding-hole thus formed. An ingenious notion devised for a novel, but also a fair comment on the strength and endurance of medieval carpentry.

Although the craftsmen who carved the angels for Westminster Hall are named in the accounts, the origin of the idea of placing angels on the hammer-beams is not documented. Was it the King, Richard II, for whom Westminster Hall was being rebuilt, who realised that a host of angels could be placed on these conveniently jutting-out beams?

Richard was a monarch preoccupied with promoting his own image. That he understood the importance of the symbolism of angels is evident from the Wilton Diptych (now in the National Gallery). It was painted for him about the same time that his Westminster Angel roof was being erected, and shows adoring angels surrounding the Virgin and Child, bearing the King's personal badge on the shoulders of their robes.

It is not known who specified the angels on the hammer-beams in Westminster Hall. Was it Richard II himself, or a courtier, or an unknown craftsman who had the notion of embellishing the huge and prominent hammer-beams in the fashion of the day? But they were certainly used to promote Richard's kingship, since each of the twenty-six angels is carrying a shield blazoned with Richard's coat-of-arms.

In Westminster Hall the hammer-beams were used to fashion the angels' bodies. This clever use of the roof structure is repeated in many of the East Anglian roofs. St. Mary the Virgin at North Creake, St. Peter's at Upwell, and All Saints at Tilney, all in Norfolk, and St. Mary's at Mildenhall in Suffolk, among others, adopted this notion.

The appeal of the hammer-beam angel was very strong. In at least one East Anglian Church, St. Peter and St. Paul at Carbrooke in Norfolk, which had an archbraced roof, false hammer-beams (projecting from the wall but not in any way supporting the roof like the true hammer-beam) were inserted and carved into angels.

Other woodworkers used the hammer-beams as vantage points for positioning their angels. Little ones consisting of head, bust and steepled hands are placed on the ends of the hammer-beams in St. Peter's Church at Ringland in Norfolk. In another Norfolk Church, St. Peter's and St. Paul's at Swaffham, upright angels with outstretched wings are poised as if to fly off from the ends of their hammer-beams.

In East Anglian churches the hammer-beam would always be a favoured place for angels, but to it were added many other vantage points on the roof for affixing and displaying huge flocks of angels. The success of these additional placings is to be seen in St. Wendreda's at March in Cambridgeshire. There a double hammer-beam roof boasts no fewer than one hundred and eighteen angels poised on the corbels. They project from the wall to support the hammer-beam shafts, and are also on the archbraces which form the peaked curve of the roof, as well as on the ends of the two rows of hammer-beams.

These positionings created entirely different perspectives. In Westminster Hall, because of their horizontal stance the angels are majestically static and their gaze is directed across the Hall. In the East Anglian Churches many of the angels, occupying several areas of the roof, are able to look down on the congregations. In this posture they take on the true attributes of guardian angels, hovering comfortingly over the men and women below. Artists managed to convey this impression in painted pictures by depicting angels in swirling robes floating over human figures.

The carvers of the Roof Angels, creating three-dimensional images from the same wood as the beams of their roofs and fixing them as if floating from the roof space, effortlessly achieved the same result.

The introduction of new kinds of roof also opened up possibilities for elaborating the basic archbraced and hammer-beam structures with other kinds of decorative carving. The wooden wall plates, placed horizontally along the top of a wall to support the weight of the roof rafters,

formed an ideal backing for rows of little angels. Some were beautifully elaborated, as in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin at North Creake where the waist-high angels extend their wings wide and hold up adoring hands, and in another Norfolk Church, All Saints at Necton, where the carver has generously provided two rows of angels, one above the other, on his wall-plates.

In the same way the wall-posts, vertical beams placed against the walls to support the downwards thrust of the roof, became niches for carved figures, as in the Church of St. Kyneburgha at Castor in Cambridgeshire.

The majestic timber-framed roofs thus inspired the art form of Roof Angels, first used as we have seen in Westminster Hall, and then appearing in the many and diverse varieties found in East Anglian churches.

The Roof Angels when they were made and as they are today

It used to be said that there were so many wooden Roof Angels in East Anglian Churches that they could not be counted. This is still the case today, despite the ravages of time, damp, woodworm and rot upon these fragile structures, is in a great measure due to the care bestowed upon them by their custodians.

How many more there could have been but for the destruction wrought by Dowsing and his fellow iconoclasts is hard to calculate, since Dowsing's angel tallies included sculptured and painted angels as well as wooden ones.

Some Churches are certainly sadly denuded, All Saints Church at Elm in Cambridgeshire, where the nave alone measures 94 feet in length, has a huge double hammer-beam roof where remaining fragments indicate that at least forty angels were once accommodated on the beams; in a Norfolk Church, St. Mary's at Barney, of the eight angels there only two still have their full wings, and in St. Mary at Otley in Suffolk the hammer-beam Angels have lost their heads (more examples of missing and damaged Angels can be found in the Lists).

Enough Roof Angels have survived intact in large numbers - one hundred and ninety-two in St. Peter and St. Paul's Church at Swaffham in Norfolk and over three hundred in the Suffolk Church of St. Mary's at Woolpit - to allow visitors to see what the Medieval congregations saw. As visitors progress from one East Anglian Angel Church to another one aspect which will impress them immediately is the huge variety in design. Angels come in all different sizes, starting with full-length.

One of the largest could be a standing 8-foot high Angel in St. Agnes Church at Cawston in Norfolk, while the Angels at St. Kyneburgha at Castor are estimated to be 5-feet high with a wingspan of 5 feet. Angels can also be three-quarter length to the hips, and half or demi-length to the waist, or just heads with wings. One roof will sometimes contain examples of all of these.

But they also differ from each other as they rest side-by-side on their perches, and what is even more surprising is that Angels in Churches only a few miles apart can be of different design. This observation could mean that the Angels were not the work of one, or several, itinerant master carvers travelling round the Fens specialising in angels, but instead every local woodworker was competent enough to carve an angel for his Church, and that plenty of latitude in his design was permissible.

If this is how the angels were produced and raised up on to the East Anglian Roofs then it brought about two laudable results. Local craftsmen had the satisfaction of creating something beautiful for their own Church, and congregations could view, then as now, not stereotyped images but their individual guardian angels.

When the angels were originally carved they were painted in bright colours, usually red, blue and green and often gilded with gold paint. In spite of the height of the roofs and consequent

distance from those standing below, the effect must have been breathtaking, and in the soft glow of medieval candlelight positively dazzling.

Visitors fortunate enough to attend a candlelit concert in a Church with an Angel Roof will experience something of the same wonder as they look up, even though many of today's angels are darkened with age. In some Churches vestiges of the original colouring have remained on the angels, sufficient for restoration to be attempted; this was done in the Norfolk Church of St. Andrew's at Northwold, whose thirty-two full-length angels were sympathetically repainted and re-gilded by Victorian restorers.

Not only the angels, but often the whole roof was coloured by its Medieval craftsmen, the beams were painted, and gilded and coloured bosses were placed over the joins at the intersections. Examples showing the original effect can be seen in Suffolk in the Church of Holy Trinity at Blythburgh where the beams are painted with foliage, flowers and the sacred monogram and at St. Edmund's at Southwold where the beautifully restored roof glows with gilding and stars. In Norfolk St. Peter Mancroft Church at Norwich has brightly coloured Tudor flowers at the intersections of the main timbers and nine magnificent red, blue and gold suns in splendour along the ridge of the very lofty roof.

To appreciate the variations in the appearance of the Roof Angels, comparisons can be made of their faces and hair, their clothing, their wings and their actions. These Angels are not only acting as guardians but are also busy working angels with imaged messages.

All the Roof Angels are high up in the roofs but many of their faces, although now darkened with age, can be seen from the ground and it is obvious that their carvers put a lot of work and thought into their features and hair.

Most faces were left unpainted but a few were lightened with whitish paint. Examples can be seen in Cambridgeshire in St. Andrew's Church at Kimbolton, and in the Norfolk Church of All Saints at Necton, where the watchful recumbent Angels, now restored, on the hammer-beams not only have white faces but clearly marked eyebrows and big dark eyes. Most Angels have sweetly solemn expressions, although some, notably one of the Angels in Holy Trinity Church at Blythburgh, appear to be almost smiling.

Treatment of their hair encompasses many styles. Close-cropped curls all over the head (All Saints, Walsoken), short curly hair (St. Peter, Upwell), smooth on top and with ear-length curls (St. Giles, Norwich, All Saints Church, Necton), bushy curls on each side of the head (St. Mary, Pinchbeck, Lincolnshire), masses of curls on tilted-back heads (St. Peter Hungate, Norwich). If the hair is painted at all, it is usually golden, although some of the Angels in St. Mary's Church at South Creake in Norfolk have been given silvery-white hair.

Some Angels wear crowns on their hair (St. Wendreda, March, St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Spalding, Lincolnshire), or circlets with little crosses (St. Mary, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, St. Peter and St. Paul, Knappton, Norfolk) or small decorations (St. Mary, Whaplode, Lincolnshire), or small hats, of which some of the most unusual, resembling the hats worn by American sailors, are to be found at St. Nicholas's Church at Addlethorpe in Lincolnshire.

Roof Angels' clothing falls into two types, robes and feathered garments. Robes are usually of simple form like the traditional alb worn by priests, a full-length tunic, sometimes belted, with long sleeves. Since most of the Roof Angels are carrying or doing something with their hands and arms, the fronts of their tunics are usually covered and the variations of design occur in the collars and sleeves.

Robes have cowl collars (All Saints, Necton and All Saints, Tilney), little standing-up collars and narrow sleeves (St. Peter Mancroft, Norwich), open shirt collars (St. Mary Costany, Norwich, All Saints, Walsoken, Norfolk) or no collars at all (St. Michael-at-Plea, Norwich). Collars are sometimes painted gold (St. Mary's, Pinchbeck), or red and green (St. Mary's, South Creake), and sometimes the sleeves are full, with turned-back cuffs now painted red as in All Saints, Necton.

The feathered garments worn by the Roof Angels are far more elaborate and diverse in style than the robes, and they prompt the observation that they were copied from real garments made for the actors taking the part of angels in Medieval Miracle Plays and pageants. The Miracle Plays depicted Biblical stories whose characters included the Angel of the Expulsion and the Angel at the Sepulchre, while in the Chester cycle of these Plays the whole Nine Orders of Angels were personified. As for pageants, the many documentary references to these events make it clear that the audiences were familiar with the feathered costumes defining the angels.

At the Coronation of Henry VII's bride, Elizabeth of York, an actor dressed as an angel and swinging the Cathedral's great censer was let down from the roof of St. Paul's. At the marriage of Henry VII's son Arthur and Catherine of Aragon an actor dressed as the Archangel Raphael was resplendent in "goldyn and glyteryng wyngis and ffedyrs of many and sundry colours".

The phrase "full of eyes" in a Biblical description of angels (*Ezekiel*, 1, 18) was the origin of the depiction of peacocks' feathers in angel wings by painters and, apparently, for their actual use in pageant angel costumes. For a pageant at London Bridge we are told of the sum, 21 pence, paid for the incredible total of nine hundred peacocks' feathers, all used for making angels' wings.

Feathered angels, therefore, were welcome sights, associated with the telling of the Bible stories and thrilling occasions, and that among the guardian Roof Angels some should be feathered was a logical decision for the wood carvers. That their designs are so varied reinforces the suggestion that the carver was free to carve his angel as he wished.

Some angels are carved to appear feathered all over like the gilded angel in St. Edmund's, Southwold, whose body is feathered down to his feet. Others are feathered to the knee only, as are the two large angels stationed between the hammer-beams in St. Mary's Church at Doddington in Cambridgeshire. The angels in the nave of St. Edmund's at Emneth in Norfolk. Angels feathered to the hip can be found in St. Mary's Church at St. Neots in Cambridgeshire and at St. Peter Hungate, Norwich.

The roof angels at Holy Trinity, Blythburgh appear to have little coloured feathered skirts, while some of the Angels at St. Nicholas, Addlethorpe in Lincolnshire have long graceful feathered robes sweeping to the ground.

As well as carving feathered bodies for many of their Roof Angels, the East Anglian woodworkers of course had to carve their feathered wings. They appear to have used the same method of fixing the wings on to the Angels' bodies as the Westminster Hall carvers had done, by inserting them into grooves on the back. Such is the case with the ten large Angels at St. Mary, Mildenhall, whose spread wings have no other support. But where the East Anglian carvers found the models for their craftsmanship?

Even though they lived under the vast Fenland skies, in an area famous for supplying huge quantities wild fowl to the London market, they did not copy real birds' wings. A close examination of the designs of the wings of the Roof Angels shows that none of the wings are in fact copied from birds.

The beautiful wings attached to the Roof Angels were not really intended to represent a practical purpose as a bird's wing does. They represented rather a belief in the power of the Roof Angels to be spiritual messengers and especially to hover protectively in the roof space over the congregations below.

The great diversity of wing shapes and sizes and their colourful decorations bear out this theory. Wings not only come in a variety of shapes- and this is particularly evident in big flocks of Roof Angels as in St. Wendreda's at March where no two pairs of wings are exactly the same - but they also come in different sizes.

They can be full-length and folded along the Angel's sides as in St. Edmund, Emneth and in the Abbey of St. Mary and St. Thomas of Canterbury at Wymondham in Norfolk, or knee-length as in All Saints, Walsoken. Most Roof Angels have one pair of wings, but some are provided with three pairs.

These are traditionally associated with the Seraphim, elegantly arranged with one pair crossed above the head, one pair extended out at the sides and one pair folded down the legs, as seen on the two big feathered Angels at St. Mary, Doddington. In addition some of the Roof Angels tucked into corners have been given only a single wing so that they fit into the confined space, for example in the crowded roof of St. Wendreda's at March.

Brilliantly coloured decorative wings include those recently repainted at St. Mary, South Creak (in red and green), those at All Saints, Necton (in red, blue, cream and fawn), at St. Michael-at-Plea and St. Peter Hungate in Norwich, and at St. Mary, Pinchbeck, where the wings of the Roof Angels are all gleaming gold.

To add to the richness of their design and decoration, almost all the Roof Angels are supplied with imaged messages in the form of objects they are carrying, or actions they are doing. These messages, some of which are difficult for us to interpret today, would have been absolutely clear to the congregations to whom they were first directed and for whom the Bible stories were a large part of their lives.

The device of shields, which many of the Angels clasp to their bodies, is used to convey these messages. The message which the Westminster Hall Angels carried on their shields was the power of kingship implied by Richard II's coat-of-arms; those carried by most of the East Anglian Roof Angels are of a spiritual content.

These include the Instruments of the Passion (crown of thorns, nails, hammer and pincers, scourges, dice, seamless robe, pillar and cords, ladder, pieces of silver) which can be seen in St. Peter and St. Paul, Swaffham, All Saints, Tilney, and St. Mary at Coddensham in Suffolk, and the Instruments for serving Mass in St. Edmunds, Emneth. Other Angels swing censers and carry crowns, opened books, little churches and chalices, while All Saints at Landbeach in Cambridgeshire and two Norfolk churches, St. Botolph's at Banningham and St. Mary's at South Creak each have angels holding hearts.

The only example so far found of a Roof Angel carrying a tiny soul in a cloth held by his two hands is not in an East Anglian church but at All Saints Church in York. It is probable that more Angels performing this traditional task await discovery in East Anglia.

The other attribute of angels, their association with music as painted by many artists, is well represented among the Roof Angels. High in the roof the Angels perform on small organs, lutes, stringed instruments, and trumpets, and can be seen doing this, among many other examples, in St. Mary's at Buckden in Cambridgeshire, St. John's at Stamford in Lincolnshire and St. Andrew's at Burlingham in Norfolk. Here the carvers may have copied the instruments from those actually used by their local church bands.

It is clear from the craftsmanship, the lovingly carved details, and the careful effort put into the positioning on the East Anglian Roofs that the carvers of the Angels were motivated by devotional inspiration and that the Angels were considered as precious and beloved guardians by their congregations. Many were destroyed in periods of religious intolerance.

What do the remaining Roof Angels mean to us today? They stand, now as then, as evidence of encompassing and compassionate faith. But in our more secular times they risk being ignored, even by architectural historians, and fading into obscurity.

Roof Angels are part of our National Heritage and should not be neglected. We hope therefore that this modest guidebook will inspire visitors to explore churches, look up at the Roofs, find more Angels to record, and in so doing add greatly to their own appreciation and pleasure.

Where to find the Roof Angels

Many of the Churches are closed through the day for reasons of security; directions on how to obtain the Door Key are usually posted in the Church Porch. A pair of binoculars is a useful accessory. The best position for viewing the Roof Angels is by lying down at full length on a pew seat with your head towards the central aisle and looking up (ask for permission first from whoever has opened the Church for you). Please remember to leave an offering for the Angels.

(The Ordnance Survey Map References given refer to the nearest village / village centre / town centre)

The name in bold blue print indicates a church with special features.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Alconbury, St. Peter and St. Paul, (map reference TL186760)

15th century Chancel Roof with 6 full-length Angels with wide outstretched wings, 16th century Nave Roof with angels on part of the wall-plate, 16th century Roofs in the North and South Aisles, carved Angels on some of the wall-posts.

Bourn, St. Helen and St. Mary, (map reference TL325565)

Single hammerbeam Roof with 5 Angels of unknown age on each side of the Chancel Roof, holding shields, wings folded downwards, very small angels at the foot of the wall-posts.

Buckden, St. Mary (map reference TL192678)

Arch-braced Roof with interesting Angels. There are 6 large, almost life-size, in the Chancel standing at the feet of the intermediate principals, with long robes, curly hair, holding alternately tablets and open books; carved c. 1435-1438 when the Chancel was rebuilt by Bishop Grey of Lincoln and his prebend, John Depyng. The tablets may have held either the Bishop's arms or those of his prebend. The South Aisle Roof has 5 Angels from the same period but different in appearance being tall and thin, and all not merely holding but demonstrating how to play musical instruments, the lute, viol, tabor, dulcimer and hurdy-gurdy.

Cambridge, The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, The Round Church (map reference TL458567)

The Round Church, modelled on the 4th century Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, was built c.1130. The Angel Roofs in the Chancel and North Aisle were installed in the 15th century during a major restructuring; the Roof beams and the Angels have darkened extremely over time. The 6 half-length Angels in the Chancel have widespread wings; the 14 half-length Angels in the Chancel hold shields obscuring their bodies and their widespread wings are all carved in the same pattern.

Castor, St. Kyneburgha (map reference TL124986)

In 650 A. D. Saint. Kyneburgha, daughter of the King of Mercia, founded a Convent on the ruins of a huge Roman palace at Castor. The present Church was developed with Saxon and Norman additions. The spire was added to the Tower in 1350. The 15th century oak Angel Roof has a total of 66 wooden figures, most of them Angels, in the Nave, the Side Aisles, South Porch and Priest's Room, carved into the roof beams and into the wooden upright posts supporting the beams. Many of the Angels in the Roof carry musical instruments,

including trumpets, tambourines, pan pipes, flutes and violins.

Special feature: the display of 12 large full-length Angels with huge outstretched wings in the Nave, 7 of them with gold-feathered bodies, 5 with red and green robes.

Excellent Guide to the Roof Angels, "The Whole Company of Heaven", with illustrations by James Tovey.

Comberton, St. Mary (map reference TL386556)

One of the churches visited by Dowsing's breakers in 1644 when he "took down 36 cherubims". Vestiges of the Angels' wings can be seen in the North Aisle, 10 remnants on the Nave side, 5 on the window side.

Doddington, St. Mary (map reference TL402906)

Early 15th century archbraced Nave Roof, later restored, with 8 large full-length Angels. 6 wear long robes and have widespread wings, 3 hold their hands up in prayer, and 3 hold shields. The other 2, positioned opposite each other, are Seraphim, beautifully feathered all over except for their feet, with three pairs of large wings, one pair folded high above their heads, one pair spread out sideways, the third pair folded down their sides to their feet. 24 small demi-angels, some feathered all over, are carved on the wall plates, and another 32 on the tie beams.

Ellington, All Saints (map reference TL161720)

15th century archbraced Roof. Eight larger than life-size Angels sit on the intermediate principals in the Nave Roof. They all wear long robes, have curly hair, and hold objects, some of which are defaced. Their wings are large, outstretched, and prominent; they differ in pattern and some have been repaired and brightened.

The South Aisle has 4 large life-size Angels with long robes and curly hair; 1 has lost his hands, one his face, the restored wings match those in Nave. The North Aisle has 4 large Angels, 1 a feathered Seraphim with 3 pairs of wings, 3 in long robes, 1 of them defaced, all with restored wings.

Elm, All Saints (map reference TF473068)

High and handsome double hammerbeam Roof with remnants of what must have been a proud array of some 40 Angels. The 7 remaining are small demi-angels in poor condition, some with broken wings, holding discoloured shields with indistinct markings.

Fordham, St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TL625707)

The Chancel Roof has 15 half-length Angels; of the 3 on the North wall 2 carry shields and 1 a scroll, on the South wall 1 carries a shield, 1 has hands folded in prayer, 1 holds hands up adoring. Nine Angels on the three tie beams hold scrolls and shields. The Chancel was reordered and redecorated in 1904-5, when the Angels may have been painted in their current bright colours.

Great Gransden, St. Bartholomew (map reference TL270560)

The Nave Roof has 8 carved figures, 2 are feathered Angels with their wings folded over at front and musical instruments in their hands. The 6 others are wingless, wear long robes and carry shields. The North Aisle has 8 small half-length Angels, some wingless. The South Aisle has 7 small Angels, 2 feathered all over; the heads have been defaced.

Great Shelford, St. Mary (map reference TL464523)

This church has a handsome 15th century Roof of unusual construction with both king and

queen posts and false hammerbeams (without hammer posts). When Dowsing's breakers visited this church in 1644 he ordered "12 cherubim to be taken down", but several full-length Angels, although without wings, are still attached to the beams; 4 raise their hands in prayer, others hold books and objects.

Hamerton, All Saints (map reference TL243728)

The 15th century Nave Roof has 8 large full-length Angels positioned on the intermediate principals. 7 have long robes, the eighth a long feathered dress. All have masses of curly hair and clasp their hands or hold musical instruments and other objects. Their outstretched wings are carved in an unusually broad and solid pattern.

Huntingdon, All Saints (map reference TL135798)

15th century Roof restored in the 1950s when the Chancel Roof was repainted in bright colours. 6 Angels of very dark wood, about 3 feet high, in the Chancel Roof, all wearing robes, with wings folded down at their sides and picked out with gilding, and crosses on their heads. They hold the Instruments of the Passion, crown of thorns, flail, nails and hammer, ladder, sponge and spear. 24 small waist-length Angels are on the crossbars high in the Chancel Roof; they have large wings extended sideways, little ermine collars and all hold scrolls. The Nave Roof has 6 larger Angels, 4-5 feet high, of very dark wood, all in long robes, with curly hair bound with a fillet, wings folded at the sides. 3 hold musical instruments, 2 shields, 1 an open book, and 2 clasp their hands.

Isleham, St. Andrew (map reference TL645743)

A unique Angel Roof in that it records the exact year of its making, 1495, and the name of its donor, Crystofer Peyton, who had it made to commemorate his mother, father, wife and himself. His Roof has alternating hammerbeams and tie beams, both king and queen posts, and Angels lying on the hammerbeams.

Kimbolton, St. Andrew (map reference TL098680)

In the 17th century this church was under the patronage of the Earl of Manchester who was responsible for appointing Dowsing. Some damage and defacement from that time can be seen in the church and may explain the missing wings of the Angels on the 15th century Roofs. 2 large Angels in the South Chapel lack one wing each; the remaining wings are of a striking pattern with jagged separated feathers on the underside. These Angels have curly hair, crosses on their heads, one holds a shield with a red cross, and both show traces of faded colour. Eight small Angels on the wall-plate underneath have similar patterned wings, while 3 Angels in the South Aisle, 2 in robes and 1 feathered, and 2 in the North Chapel, are wingless.

Landbeach, All Saints (map reference TL475650)

8 life-size wingless Angels on the hammerbeams of the Nave Roof, 4 feathered all over except for their feet and 4 with long robes, all with small crosses on their heads. They all hold shields with heraldic arms, which may have been repainted during the Victorian restoration during the 1860s. During restoration work in the 1980s, mortices to hold a single pair of wings were observed on the Angels' backs. There are 7 very small demi-angels on the crossbeams. Another 10 wingless Angels in the Aisle, about 18" high, with curly hair and long robes, 3 with hands clasped in prayer, 2 holding hearts, 3 holding shields and 1 a scroll.

Madingley, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TL395602)

Dowsing ordered "14 cherubims in wood to be taken down" in this church but faithful church members seem to have been able to rescue some of their Roof Angels, since 10 very emaciated remnants are now affixed to the inside walls of the tower. These Angels are bleached white; they are wingless, headless and only one has a hand.

March, St. Wendreda (map reference TL422964)

7th century shrine of Saint Wendreda, daughter of a Christian Anglian King, with possible early Saxon and Norman structures entirely rebuilt on the strength of an Indulgence of 1343 permitting its use for pilgrims; 140-foot tower added between 1350-1380. The double hammer-beam roof was built between 1470-1530. It holds 118 Angels, many with outstretched wings, carved from English oak and placed at every conceivable vantage point. Viewing of the Roof Angels is greatly assisted by using the mirror trolley available for visitors.

Special feature: the number and diversity of the Angels and their ingenious positioning covering the whole Roof.

Excellent Guide Books, to the Church by Peter Baxandall, and to the Roof Angels by Trevor Bevis.

Offord Cluny, All Saints (map reference TL220672)

15th century arch-braced Nave Roof with 6 distinctive wingless Angels, all with little crosses on their heads, resting on long planks of wood which are affixed to the Roof beams. 2 are feathered all over; 1 folds his hands, the other holds his hands up in adoration. Two wear long robes; one holds a censor, the other a book. Of the last 2, 1 carries a shield on his left arm and a dagger in his right hand; the other wears a knee-length tunic with an ermine collar and holds a long stave in his right hand.

Soham, St. Andrew (map reference TL591734)

An unusual Nave Roof where the roof truss has both king and queen posts with the spaces between filled with more struts to make 10. Every alternate truss is a false hammerbeam (without hammer posts) carrying Angels.

St. Neots, St. Mary (map reference TL188592)

The original 12th century church was extensively rebuilt during the 14th and 15th centuries. The main body was complete about 1486, the porches in 1489 and the massive tower, 128 feet high, was begun at the same time. This became one of the largest, most uniform late medieval churches in England, known for its size and construction as the Cathedral of Huntingdonshire. The 15th century oak Nave Roof consists of arch-braced cambered beams with ornate carving.

Special feature: 10 large 3/4 length winged angels with feathered bodies, placed on the principals midway in the 5 bays of the Nave. The host of elaborately carved small Angels and animals, including hunting dogs, hares, rams, deer, unicorns and dragons, running along the cornices and the beams in the Nave and South Aisle Roofs.

Comprehensive Guidebook with a history of the town and the Church.

Tilbrook, All Saints (map reference TL080691)

The late 15th century archbraced Nave Roof was replaced in the 19th century. 6 15th century Angels were retained; they are three-quarter length with curly hair and are now wingless. They hold shields and objects or clasp their hands. The 15th century North Aisle Roof has 4 wingless Angels with elongated faces curly hair and long robes; they hold a wreath, a shield and two musical instruments. The North Chapel has 1 Angel very similar in appearance to the 4 in the North Aisle with the addition of large upraised wings.

LINCOLNSHIRE

Addlethorpe, St. Nicholas (map reference TF534682)

The Church was built between 1360 and 1420. The chancel was removed in the 17th century, but fortunately much of the original woodwork of the Church has survived. The Roof is of low pitch with queen posts and tie beams, ornamented at the intersections with elaborately carved bosses. The South Aisle Roof has curious carved figures; when this Roof was carefully restored in 1992 these figures and the bosses were taken down and soaked in a solution to fill and restore them; some were so fragile they could have crumbled in the hand. Carvings on the Roof of the North Aisle were lost in restoration work a century ago. On the Nave Roof there were originally 10 wooden Angels situated on the principals between those connected by the tie-beams; the 2 Angels nearest the tower disappeared at an unknown date.

Special feature: the 8 remaining wingless Angels with large elongated faces and some wearing dresses of a unique pattern, a feathered robe covering the whole body, fitting tightly to the hips and then spreading out in very long feathers to the ground. These unusual Angels are not holding anything; instead they all raise their large left hands in a gesture of blessing to the congregation below.

A booklet is available, by Tony Barker, with an interesting history of Addlethorpe village and the Church. Photograph courtesy of Mr. David Elliott

Benington, All Saints, (map reference TF386451)

6 Roof Angels all holding shields (one broken), 4 without wings.

Brant Broughton, St. Helen, (map reference SK917541)

15th century Angel Roof with full-winged Angels whose present colouring and appearance is due to mid-Victorian restoration by the architect G. F. Bodley.

Careby, St. Stephen, (map reference TF026164)

4 Roof Angels, 1 under repair in the Belfry Tower, all with full-length robes and a single pair of wings, 2 carrying books, 1 with Bible; no signs of having ever been coloured.

Freiston, St. James, (map reference TF398426)

Nave roof with alternating tie beams, 18 angels against the principals, 7 holding shields, 11 with shields missing.

Gedney, St. Mary Magdalene, (map reference TF391242)

15th century archbraced roof with tie-beams and 1 single hammer-beam above the Font; 1 small Roof Angel with outstretched wings, large bosses at the intersections of which at least 2 represent Instruments of the Passion.

Halton Holgate, St. Andrew, (map reference TF417651)

Archbraced roof with tie beams, destroyed and rebuilt in 1846 together with 8 angels in the Nave, wearing full-length robes and carrying shields.

Pinchbeck, St. Mary, (map reference TF239258)

Church dating from the 14th century, Nave roof has alternating tie-beams on arched braces, 10 full-length Angels on the hammer-beams all with golden hair, gold collars and large gold wings pointing downwards; all Angels carry shields painted with coats-of-arms.

Spalding, St. Mary and St. Nicholas (map reference TF241230)

The foundations of the Church were begun in 1284. The oak Roof is of hammerbeam construction and was put into the Church in 1450, replacing the former roof. It supports 28 waist-length wooden Angels dressed in robes, with crowns upon their curly hair and with

spreading wings. All of them carry shields on which are painted the instruments of the Passion.

Special feature: the remarkably well preserved Roof, best viewed when standing by the Font near the West Door. Thoroughly restored in 1865, this is an example of a Hammerbeam Roof where iron ties have been inserted across the width to control the tendency of this type of roof to spread.

Interesting history of the Church and district, *700 Years in the life of Spalding Parish Church*.

Stamford, All Saints, (map reference TF030073)

In 1449 William de Bruges, first Garter King of Arms, who had the Chapel and Clerestory built, commissioned a Roof Angel bearing the signs of the Passion. Today there are 6 full-length painted wooden Angels wearing long robes in the Chancel Roof, and 4 half-length unpainted wooden Angels in the Lady Chapel Roof; 3 of the Angels carry scrolls, 4 carry shields and 1 holds a cross.

Stamford, St. John the Baptist, (map reference TF024074)

25 wooden Angels in the Roof of which 23 are full-length with outstretched wings and wearing robes; some are painted red and black, which may be original colouring, some are unpainted, carrying musical instruments, books, shields, wreath, crown and cross.

Whaplode, St. Mary (map reference TF308242)

Archbraced Nave Roof with hammerbeams, c.1500, only 3 small wingless Angels remain, 1 carries a scroll, 2 carry shields.

NORFOLK

Banningham, St. Botolph (map reference TGT220297)

Hammerbeam Nave Roof with 14 Angels, 7 on each side, all winged except 3. These Angels were repainted in the 1950s. They all wear long robes and carry objects. On the North side of the Nave 2 Angels carry plain shields, 1 a shield with a cross, 1 a shield with a symbol, 1 a shield with a heart, 1 carries a wreath in his hands, and 1 a crown. On the South side 3 Angels carry plain shields, 1 a chalice, 1 an open book, 1 a folded cloth and 1 a heart in his hands.

Barney, St. Mary (map reference TF995324)

The Nave Roof, which was restored in 1889, has 8 Angels in not very good condition and badly wood-wormed; 2 are winged, 2 have 1 wing each, and 4 are wingless. They all wear robes, 4 carry shields, and there are vestiges of the original colouring, gold on the Angels' hair and red or brown on the robes.

Blakeney, St. Nicholas (map reference TG029438)

15th century single hammerbeam Nave Roof with recumbent Angels on the hammerbeams.

Burlingham, St. Andrew (map reference TG371102)

Hammerbeam Nave roof with 10 three-quarter length winged Angels and 4 smaller Angels. They carry the instruments of the Passion and musical instruments and retain some vestiges of colour mostly on the objects they hold.

Carbrooke, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TF951022)

A spacious 15th century archbraced Nave roof with large floral bosses at the intersections and false hammerbeams. The Nave contains 24 Angels, 12 full-length and 12 semi-Angels, carrying objects or clasping their hands in prayer.

Cawston, St. Agnes (map reference TG136239)

Single hammerbeam Nave roof with very large, over life-size, standing Angels with huge outstretched wings and feathered bodies and legs showing vestiges of colouring. The wall-plates carry rows of demi-Angels with outstretched wings. Large floral bosses decorate the intersections of the purlins and principals.

Creake, North, St. Mary the Virgin (map reference TF855381)

A very fine 15th century hammerbeam and archbraced roof richly furnished with flocks of Angels. The Nave contains 20 full-length wingless Angels recumbent on the hammerbeams. They have full-length robes, and hold musical instruments and instruments of the Passion. They wear short crimped hair, are serene, almost smiling. A frieze along the wall-plates on each side with a total of 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ -length small Angels with outstretched wings, hands held up in prayer or holding objects; 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ -length small angels with a single pair of wings at the junctions of the roof trusses and the purlins. There are 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ -length small wingless Angels in the corbels supporting the alternate roof trusses. All the Nave Angels show signs of the original medieval colourings. In the Chancel, restored in the Victorian era, a similar Roof supports, 14 full-length Angels with wings folded up near their heads, in part boldly picked out in white and red. They all wear hats, some with little crosses on top, have a variety of hairstyles and some are bearded. 7 hold shields and the rest carry objects. 12 wingless figures are placed between the Angels. In the Sanctuary are 6 full-length vertical figures.

Special feature: the carving of a tiny angel sitting at the feet of one of the 20 full-length Nave Angels may represent a dead child, something not found in any other East Anglian Angel Roof. This perhaps bears witness to the woodcarver's personal loss and sorrow.

Photograph courtesy of Mr. Norman McIver.

Creake, South, St. Mary (map reference TF862357)

Late 13th century church, the Nave rebuilt after 1400, hammerbeam and archbraced Roof with 22 full-length winged wooden Angels on the hammerbeams. The Roof was restored in 1956 and 1970, the Angels were repaired and repainted in bright colours; they now all have long white robes, golden hair, and wings painted in red and white or green and white stripes. The Angels in the corners have been placed so tightly that there is space for only one wing. All the Angels are holding objects, the Instruments of the Passion, a shield with the arms of Edward the Black Prince (after 1415), and the rarely seen symbol of a large red heart.

Special feature: the opportunity to compare this church with its near neighbour at North Creake and note the treatment and arrangements of Angels on roofs of similar construction, and in the brightly painted restored Angels to obtain a glimpse of how the 15th century congregations saw their Angels.

Booklet obtainable in the Church.

Downham Market, St. Edmund (map reference TF614032)

Archbraced tie-beam Nave roof with 12 Angels at the foot of the intermediate principals, 6 on each side. They are all semi-Angels with wings in two distinct styles, alternately extended sideways and at shoulder height, and matching their opposite partners. 7 wear crowns, 6 carry shields, and 6 clasp their hands in prayer or hold them up in adoration. The Angels were repainted in 1898 when their wings were coloured grey.

Emneth, St. Edmund (map reference TF490073)

Archbraced tie beam Nave Roof with 14 full-length Angels, 7 on each side. These Angels are feathered down their arms and on their bodies to the knees from where robes continue to cover their feet. Their wings are folded flat against their sides with the tips coming up behind their curly hair. Their heads are thrown back and the Angels gaze upwards. Their hands are realistically well-carved, and they all carry objects to match those carried by their opposite partners; 4 carry open books, 2 censers, 2 pillars, 2 chalices with wafers, 2 frames and 2 caskets in the shape of ecclesiastical buildings. These Angels are not in good condition. The wood is very pale and appears desiccated. Visible splits, cracks and holes caused either by woodworm or shot, as well as bolts driven through some of the Angels. 39 demi-Angels are on the tie beams, 3 on each side of 6 beams and 3 on the east wall; they have outstretched wings and carry shields, crosses, scrolls and books, or clasp their hands in prayer.

Fincham, St. Martin (map reference TF688064)

Hammerbeam and archbraced Roof with collar, and recumbent Angels on the hammerbeams.

Gissing, St. Mary (map reference TM142855)

Double hammerbeam Nave Roof, the top hammers linked by tie beams with kingposts in the ridge and a double row of Angels with outstretched wings on the hammers.

Great Witchingham, St. Mary (map reference TG104208)

Archbraced Nave Roof with 9 wingless semi-Angels along the ridge. 3 are holding shields, 1 a banner and 1 a cross; 2 hold up their hands in blessing, 1 holds his hands at waist level, 1 crosses his hands over his heart. There are no vestiges of the original colouring and no signs of restoration on these Angels.

Harpley, St. Lawrence (map reference TF792258)

15th century Archbraced Nave Roof with the unusual feature of a panel carved with 18 winged semi-Angels placed along the ridge at the apex of the Roof. 34 little demi-Angels of head and wings only are carved along the deep wall-plates of the Nave, 17 on each side. None of these Angels are carrying anything and no vestiges of colouring or gilding can be detected.

Hockwold cum Wilton, St. Peter (map reference TL734975)

This Church has been redundant for some 30 years and is maintained by the Redundant Churches Trust. 15th century archbraced Nave Roof with tie beams alternating with hammerbeams. 8 wingless Angels, wearing full-length robes and either haloes or crowns, hold out their hands in blessing. No vestiges of colour or gilding remain on the bleached dry wood.

Holme Hale, St. Andrew (map reference TF889076)

15th century single hammerbeam Nave Roof with winged semi-Angels on the hammerbeams, their hands open in an adoring gesture or folded in prayer.

Howe, St. Mary (map reference TG277000)

15th century archbraced Nave Roof with 7 Angels and 1 head of a King on the very long wall posts which extend for about a metre down the Nave walls, 4 Angels on the south side and 3 Angels and the King on the north side. All the Angels are winged, 6 are half-length, the 7th, placed closest to the Chancel opposite the King, is head and bust only. 1 Angel carries a book, 1 a shield, and 5 have hands steeped in prayer. No visible vestiges of colouring or gilding remain.

King's Lynn, St. Nicholas (map reference TF621195)

A large church, 200 feet long and 70 feet wide, with a 15th century archbraced Nave Roof with queen posts. Big full-length angels with widespread wings and looking down on the congregation are positioned above the high clerestory windows.

Knapton, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TG307340)

Double hammerbeam Nave Roof, archbraced between the wall posts, with a wide span of 30½ feet. Exceptionally it can be dated exactly having been given by John Smithe in 1503. The Roof supports 138 Angels in three tiers; the lower ones are modern. Many of the Angels are coloured in red and green, with gilded hair and crowns, and some wear ermine tippets. They carry various objects and musical instruments.

Methwold, St. George (map reference TL734945)

Archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof with 5 large full-length Angels with long robes and small wings remaining on the hammerbeams, 3 Angels and their hammerbeams missing. On the north side 1 Angel holds a book in his left hand, his right hand is missing; the next Angel holds a crown with vestiges of gilding; the third Angel holds a crown of thorns. On the south side 1 Angel puts his left hand on his breast and holds a sword handle in his right. The second Angel holds three nails in his left hand and carries over his left arm a strap, scourge or maniple; there is a hole in his right hand where he may have carried a hammer. On each side of the first Angel on the north side is a half-length Angel, one feathered, one robed, with crossed hands. Small Angels with widespread wings are on the crossbeams; some have been damaged during repairs to the beams and have lost wings and bodies.

Necton, All Saints (map reference TF880098)

Early 14th century church, a major reconstruction in 1490 added the magnificent hammerbeam and archbraced Nave Roof, richly carved and painted, restored in 1982 when much of the original colouring was left. The result is soft gentle colouring over the whole Roof. 10 winged recumbent Angels lie on the hammer-beams. They wear long whitish robes, neat short yellow hair, have painted faces with clearly marked eyebrows and watchful dark eyes, and very unusual wings folded against the body. They are multicoloured in tones of blue, red, cream and fawn with a chequered effect. Eight carry objects, crowns, mitres, goblet and censor, and two fold their hands in prayer. The wall-posts under these Angels carry carved figures of the Apostles. Wallplates along each side carry a total of 32 small carved Angels in two rows, in a variety of sizes, head and shoulders, half-length and knee-length, holding objects or adoring. The Roof beams are decorated with bosses and bratishing.

Special feature: the detailed decoration and colouring of the whole Roof forming a background to the distinctive Angels.

Booklet available in the Church.

Northwold, St. Andrew (map reference TG226099)

Archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof with a total of 32 Angels. Six wear long robes and have a single pair of wings. They carry shields with different insignia: St. George's cross, St. Andrew's cross, a black cross on a red background, 3 gold crowns on a red background, 3 gold crowns on a pale blue background, and a white chevron on a dark background. 26 Angels have three pairs of wings covering most of their bodies. These Angels and their Roof were restored and repainted in the Victorian era, copying the original colours of which vestiges are still visible.

Norwich, St. Giles (map reference TG219083)

Early 15th century archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof with 12 large winged Angels, 6 each side on the hammerbeams, holding shields with the arms of France, England and Castile. 11 small winged demi-angels of very dark wood on the wall-plates along the Nave.

The chancel Roof was demolished in 1531 and rebuilt in 1866 with 6 modern Angels.

Norwich, St. Mary Coslany (map reference TG219083)

This former church is now private, and access is difficult. Its plain archbraced Roof has remnants of 4 Angels, at the intersections of the cross ribs with the purlins, arranged around the central boss of a rayed figure of the Virgin. Angels 1 and 3, opposite each other and wearing similar robes, are wingless, looking ahead, holding their right hands on their breasts and their left hands on their bodies. Angel 2, with remnants of his wings, and 4 with full-length wings, opposite each other and wearing similar robes with open collars, direct their gaze downward. Their curly hair is brushed back from high foreheads and their hands raised in adoration.

Norwich, St. Michael-at-Plea (map reference TG219083)

The archbraced Nave Roof of this former church, now open during normal retail hours as a SPCK bookshop in the nave and a small cafe in the chancel, has 9 half-length Angels with large outstretched wings arranged along the ridge at the apex of the Roof. These Angels all hold shields with various insignia; they have been recently repainted and gilded, with golden wings and hair and gilt-feathered upper bodies and arms.

Norwich, St. Peter Hungate (map reference TG219083)

This former church became a Church Museum, and is closed. Access is therefore difficult. The hammerbeam Roof was rebuilt about 1460 and has a total of 28 Angels, 7 a side down the Nave, 1 at each side near the Chancel, 4 at the crossing and 4 each in the side aisles. 5 of these Angels are feathered, 1 is in armour, the rest in robes. Some hold a variety of objects, books, scrolls, a mitre; the others hold up their hands in adoration, clasp them together or place them on their breasts. All the Angels were recently gilded.

Norwich, St. Peter Mancroft (map reference TG224094)

The hammerbeam and archbraced Roof, continuous though the Nave and Chancel, was completed in 1455. It has the unusual feature that the hammerbeams, which support 20 Angels on each side, are partly concealed below by a large area of fan-like groining supported on very long wall-posts. The waist-length hammerbeam Angels have widespread wings and very curly hair; 22 carry shields, 2 lutes, 2 mitres, 3 crowns, 1 a sword, 10 are folding their hands. In the Nave the intersections are decorated with bosses of Tudor roses. In the Chancel instead of bosses the intersections contain small Angels, 8 on each side, while the ridge is ornamented with 9 suns in splendour with the face of Christ, a blue sun to mark the beginning of the Chancel, the other 8 gold with alternating red and blue edges.

Special feature: the uninterrupted view of this magnificent Roof in its entirety since there is no structural division between Nave and Chancel. Also that this is a church where spreading outwards of the walls due to the immense weight of the Roof was treated in a radical way: in 1962-4 the Roof was jacked up on scaffolding and the walls literally pulled back into position.

A Guidebook is available.

Pulham, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TM210853)

Archbraced oak Nave Roof with 10 half-length winged Angels, 5 on each side; their hands are empty and arranged in varying positions.

Ringland, St. Peter (map reference TG108142)

A beautifully ornate Hammerbeam and archbraced Nave Roof with long archbraced wallposts and Angels on the ends of the hammerbeams. A possible dating for the 36 Angels is the length of tenure as Bishop of Norwich of Walter Lyhart, 1446 to 1472, since his initial W is carved on a bishop's mitre held by one of Angels. These robed Angels have sweet

expressions, curly hair and are carrying shields and books or holding their hands in clasped or adoring positions. Some Victorian repair work was carried out at the East end.

Salle, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TG110248)

15th century archbraced Nave Roof in this large church of which the nave is 28 feet wide and the total length 171 feet. 24 half-length Angels in the Nave Roof, 1 of which is headless and wingless; some have Victorian replacement wings and 2 are completely Victorian. 4 are holding shields, the others hold one hand, flat with straight fingers, on their breasts and the other at waist level, except for one of the Victorian replacement who clasps his hands in prayer. Vestiges of the original paint remain on some of the wings and bodies.

Sparham, St. Mary (map reference TG073197)

15th century archbraced Nave Roof with 9 Angels flying along the apex of the Roof, 8 flying towards the east and one turned to fly west. 4 carry shields, 5 carry Instruments of the Passion. During Victorian restoration the Angels were painted in bright colours.

Swaffham, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TF820090)

The Church was rebuilt between 1454 and 1490 on the remains of a previous church, and the double hammerbeam Roof of chestnut wood dates from this time. The craftsmen who designed the Roof calculated how to span a width of 51 feet with a minimum of thrust to prevent outward spreading of the walls. The result is a magnificent Roof carrying a total of 88 Angels on the double row of hammerbeams, and an additional 104 Angels on the wall plates along each side. The 88 half-length Angels have spread wings and crowns and all are holding shields, the instruments of the Passion and other objects including scrolls. The corner Angels are one-winged to fit into the tight space. The Chancel contains another 7 Angels in the roof and 5 on the underside of the ridge. Restoration work on the Roof in 1888-1895 uncovered small bullets or slugs embedded in the Angels. In the 1990's work carried out from scaffolding to stabilise the Angels showed that many of them had become very fragile and so they were pinned and glued *in situ*.

Special feature: A particularly lovely example of a double hammerbeam Roof carrying flocks of Angels, made of chestnut wood instead of the more usual oak.

Guidebook available.

Swainsthorpe, St. Peter (map reference TG218012)

Archbraced Roof with 12 winged Angels in the Nave and 8 in the Chancel, three-quarter length and all carrying objects. 2 Angels in the Chancel carry harps, the others a chalice, crown, scroll, book, shield and a medallion with 6-point star. In the Nave 2 carry chalices, 2 books, and the other objects include a harp, crown, and a medallion with 12-point star. Extensive restoration took place in the 19th century and no vestiges remain of the original painting and gilding.

Tasburgh, St. Mary (map reference TM201962)

Restored hammerbeam and archbraced Nave Roof with 14 winged demi-Angels on the hammer beams, head and bust only, 6 with closed eyes, 8 with open eyes. No vestiges of colouring or evidence remain to show they were ever painted.

Thorpe Abbots, All Saints (map reference TM192798)

The Chancel Roof has 6 half-length winged Angels. On the north side the centre Angel holds a cross, the 2 others clasp their hands in prayer. On the south side the 2 outer Angels clasp their hands in prayer, the centre Angel carries a beautifully carved lyre. These Angels are carved in very darkened wood and bear no signs of colouring or restoration.

Tilney, All Saints (map reference TF568180)

15th century double hammerbeam Roof with 22 demi-Angels in the Nave Roof, 11 on each side, some damaged, with spread wings and carrying shields. 14 half-length robed Angels in the Chancel Roof with drooping wings and long curly hair over which a band with a cross is placed; these Angels carry shields on which the Instruments of the Passion are depicted. 2 more Angels at the arch carry the sacred monogram and a star.

Trunch, St. Botolph (map reference TG287347)

Archbraced hammerbeam Roof with Angels with folded wings on the hammerbeams.

Upwell, St. Peter (map reference TF503021)

A fine 15th century arch-braced Roof with elaborately carved tie beams and large Angels with outstretched wings on the intermediate principals. There are 16 in the Nave, 5 in the North Aisle and 6 in the South Aisle. The Angels have curly hair, full-length robes, and prominent hands with which they hold the Instruments of the Passion, books and lutes or else they hold their hands up, palms outwards, in blessing or adoration. The wall-plates have rows of little half-length Angels with feathered bodies, curly hair and large outstretched wings positioned on each side of the large Angels.

Special feature: The Gallery in the North Aisle affords a rare opportunity to examine the large Angels at close quarters, enabling the visitor to get a good idea of their size, and weight, and the work involved in positioning them, as well as being able to study the beautiful carving.

Walsoken, All Saints (map reference TF480105)

Archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof with small hammerbeams close up against the Roof with winged Angels on the hammers; tiny wingless Angels along the ridge of which only 11 remain.

West Lynn, St. Peter (map reference TF610198)

15th century hammerbeam and archbraced Nave Roof with 12 winged Angels, wearing long robes and carrying shields, the Instruments of the Passion and the keys of St. Peter. No visible evidence remains of any colouring or gilding.

Wiggenhall, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TF596109)

15th century archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof with 10 wingless full-length Angels and figures, one of whom is a Bishop, on the hammers.

Wyndham Abbey, St. Mary and St. Thomas of Canterbury (map reference TG120023)

A beautiful 15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof distinguished by its height, the roof ridge is almost 70 feet from ground level, and its narrow span and consequent steep pitch. Nine full-length large robed Angels with huge folded wings rest on the hammers down each side of the Nave. These Angels carry musical instruments or raise their hands in adoration. Smaller Angels between the hammers and on the wall-plates. Interesting richly-decorated mid-15th century hammerbeam Roof in the North Aisle, much restored, wider than the Nave Roof but of much lower pitch, with Angels on the hammers and vestiges of the original colouring.

SUFFOLK

Badingham, St. John the Baptist (map reference TM308680)

Archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof whose Roof Angels, '16 superstitious cherubims', were destroyed by Dowsing, and were replaced by 16 modern carved Angels on the hammers at the end of the nineteenth century.

Badwell Ash, St. Mary (map reference TL989688)

15th century hammerbeam Roof with Angels on the hammers showing signs of rough treatment; some of the objects carried have been hacked away.

Bardwell, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TL942735)

A fine early 15th century archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof which originally had 26 Angels on the hammers. Only 4 Angels remain at the East end of the nave, 2 on each side. These Angels are wingless. They retain some vestiges of original colouring and carry objects probably associated with the building of the church. 1 holds a circular object, 1 a large mallet or hammer, 1 a document which may be a set of plans, and the fourth Angel holds an open book with the date: *MCCCCXXI* (1421) written on it, the presumed date of completion of the Roof.

Blythburgh, Holy Trinity (map reference TM451752)

Known as the Cathedral of the Marshes, this huge church is 127 feet long and 54 feet wide, and these proportions, and the light streaming in through the clerestory windows, produce a splendidly spacious effect, enhancing its Angel Roof. This is a 15th century arch-braced cambered tie-beam roof, continuous through nave and chancel; the beams are painted over the whole Roof with delicate tracteries of flowers and the sacred monogram picked out in red and green on a white background. The $\frac{3}{4}$ length Angels positioned in pairs along the ridge of the Roof and resting on elaborately decorated bosses still bear traces of the same colouring; They have golden hair, in some surmounted by a little cap and crown, serene faces, and little knee-length feathered skirts. They clasp shields to their chests with two hands and their spread wings are massive. Only 10 Angels remain where there must originally have been 20, and some of these have been repaired with new plain wings.

Special feature: The diversity in design of the original wings reflecting the individuality of the craftsmen, and the unusual paired positioning of these Angels on the high Roof ridge giving the illusion of endless flight.

Excellent Guidebook and postcards.

Bramford, St. Mary (map reference TM124463)

15th century hammerbeam Roof whose 16 original Nave Angels recumbent on the hammers suffered horrible mutilations presumably by Dowsing's men who visited this church in February 1644. 12 Angels were beheaded, 4 on the north side were apparently replaced later by blocks of wood. No vestiges of the original colouring or gilding can be seen.

Bruisyard, St. Peter (map reference TM329664)

Simple high archbraced roof mostly filled in with plaster. 12 very small Angel figures of dark wood, difficult to distinguish, 2 on each side of 5 small collars to the archbraces at the ridge, and 1 at each end.

Bury St. Edmunds, St. Mary (map reference TL857647)

One of the largest parish churches in England, St. Mary's has an impressive late 15th century single hammerbeam Roof with 22 recumbent life-size Angels on the hammerbeams, alternating with arch-braced principals also carrying carved figures. The Roof is further enriched with a cornice showing a double band of demi-Angels with spread wings holding musical instruments and liturgical symbols. The full-length hammerbeam Angels wear long robes with elaborate collars; their hair is arranged in a variety of styles, their huge wings are folded along their sides and in their hands they are all holding objects against their chests.

Special feature: These huge and imposing Angels are carved in matching pairs, one on each

side of the nave, and this arrangement. A study of their clothes some forty years ago, gave rise to interpretations that these Angels represent a procession forming for the Coronation of the Virgin Mary, or a procession forming for the celebration of High Mass in the presence of a King and Queen of England.

Excellent Guidebook and Postcards.

Coddenham, St. Mary (map reference TM134539)

Double hammerbeam Roof with 40 winged, half-length Angels on the Nave hammers; many have been restored. These Angels are carrying shields, some of which depict the Instruments of the Passion.

Cotton, St. Andrew (map reference TM071669)

15th century archbraced double hammerbeam Roof of pale oak, with 12 winged and robed three-quarter length Angels on the hammers. These Angels were restored and most of them renewed in the late 18th century. 10 are carrying shields and 2 have their hands steeped in prayer.

Earl Stoneham, St. Mary (map reference TM118590)

Late 15th century archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof of chestnut wood with a span of 17½ feet and with recumbent Angels on the hammers, some with their heads missing. These Angels carry shields depicting the Instruments of the Passion. Elaborately carved wall-plates with 2 rows of demi-Angels with outstretched wings.

Falkenham, St. Ethelbert (map reference TM295387)

Archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof with 10 full-length winged and robed recumbent Angels on the hammers, very much restored in the 19th century. These Angels carry shields depicting the Instruments of the Passion. There are no vestiges of the original colouring.

Gislingham, St. Mary (map reference TM074713)

Nave Roof has 4 damaged full-length Angels; their heads are missing and their wings have been broken off. Two of these Angels are carrying shields. Some vestiges of gilding remain.

Great Glenham, All Saints (map reference TM340617)

Archbraced Nave Roof with 14 half-length winged Angels; 1 Angel was recently restored and his wing repaired. 2 carry shields and 2 carry books. No vestiges remain of the original colouring and gilding.

Grundisburgh, St. Mary (map reference TM224504)

Fine archbraced double hammerbeam Nave Roof with over 50 Angels on the hammers, wall posts and on the collars below the ridge. Almost all these Angels have replacement heads and wings dating from restoration in 1888.

Haughley, St. Mary (map reference TM028620)

The early 16th century Roof in the South Aisle has 18 large half-length Angels with spread wings on the wall-posts. 2 carry shields, 2 lyres, 4 hold books, 6 hold scrolls, and 4 have empty hands. More Angels are at the East end on the wall-plates.

Hawstead, All Saints (map reference TL858589)

16th century archbraced and hammerbeam Nave Roof, 30 feet wide, extensively restored in 1858, with Angels on the hammers given new wings during this restoration.

Ixworth, St. Mary (map reference TL935706)

Late 15th century archbraced Nave Roof with a total of 42 Angels. 12 large half-length winged Angels, with wings pointing upwards, are situated at the base of the archbraces and in the corners of the Nave. 10 smaller half-length winged Angels, with wings pointing upwards, at the top of the clerestory windows; on each side of these smaller Angels are very small Angels with downward-pointing wings.

Kersey, St. Mary (map reference TM001439)

15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof with Angels on the hammers; terrible damage after the Reformation resulted in many of the Angels losing their heads. In 1888 the whole roof underwent drastic restoration, including repainting, making the originality of the Angels difficult to assess.

Kesgrave, All Saints (map reference TM245450)

False hammerbeam Roof with kingposts which originally had Angels on the hammers. These Angels, "18 cherubims", were smashed down by Dowsing's men on 27 January 1644 and nothing remains.

Lakenheath, St. Mary (map reference TL720824)

Early 15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof, low-pitched. Defaced Angels with outstretched wings on the hammers.

Little Whelnetham, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TL888600)

A hammerbeam and arch-braced Roof with 8 wingless full-length wooden Angels on the hammerbeams. Those on the ends at the east and west walls lie on their sides and face each other. The Angels were badly mutilated in the 17th century and restoration in 1842 did not include replacing their wings. They wear long robes with high collars, elaborate crowns on their heads, and have curled hair reaching their collars. Their faces are calm and serene. They are not carrying anything; their hands are either folded together or held up facing outwards in a blessing or adoring gesture.

Special feature: An example of the indestructible craftsmanship of the Roof Angels in that even after mutilation they retain so much of their original grace and beauty.
Photograph courtesy of Mrs. J. Attwood.

Mildenhall, St. Mary (map reference TL714750)

This is a church of noble proportions, 168 feet long overall and with a tower 120 feet high. It has a 15th century hammerbeam and archbraced roof, lavishly ornamented with carving. There are 10 large recumbent Angels on the hammerbeams in the Nave Roof, 6 on the beams in the South Aisle and another 6 in the North Aisle. The Angels in the Aisles have lost their wings and have been defaced. The Nave Angels are life-size, with long robes, curly hair, and they hold instruments of the Passion, books or lutes. Their huge wings, some of which have been restored, are held wide and raised, they fit into grooves on the back of the Angels' bodies and have no other support. Rows of half-length Angels are carved along the tie beams and cornices.

Special feature: These Angels illustrate the attempts made by 17th century iconoclasts to destroy them; arrowheads have been found in some of their bodies, as well as quantities of buck shot embedded in the Roofs.

Needham Market, St. John the Baptist (map reference TM085549)

An exceptional example of roof carpentry where a late 15th century Nave Roof replaced an

earlier construction and had to contend with a 30 feet span. The resulting archbraced hammerbeam Roof has very long hammers carrying tall storey posts partly obscured by a coved double cornice. Later hidden beneath a plaster ceiling, the wooden Roof was uncovered in 1880, and in 1892 16 Angels were placed on the hammers to replace the originals. These half-length Victorian Angels cross their arms on their breasts; their wings are alternately outstretched and pointing upwards.

Otley, St. Mary (map reference TM204551)

15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof where the spread of the walls has been halted by metal tie-rods. Visited by Dowsing's men in February 1644 who 'broke down 20 cherubims', leaving mutilated Angels.

Sibton, St. Peter (map reference TM365692)

Late 15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof with 14 tiny Angels of dark wood along the ridge, facing east and west, and 16 small Angels at the base of the wallposts on the side walls, holding books. No vestiges remain of the original colouring or gilding. The Angels on the ends of the hammers were replaced by shields in 1814.

Southcove, St. Lawrence (map reference TM501808)

Another church where the Angels, '20 cherubims', were smashed down by Dowsing from the hammerbeam Nave Roof in February 1644 and none remain.

Southwold, St. Edmund (map reference TM508764)

Impressive mid-15th century archbraced and hammerbeam Roof continuous from Nave through Chancel. The Angels suffered in Dowsing's visit in April 1644. They were replaced during the 19th century restoration of the Roof, 12 placed on the hammers in the Nave and 8 in the Chancel. All the Chancel Angels have brightly gilded wings to beautiful effect, 2 of them are gold feathered all over including their legs.

Thornham Magna, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TM104709)

15th century archbraced hammerbeam Nave Roof where the original Angels have vanished, leaving behind empty tenons with peg holes through them on the ends of the hammers where they would have been. Victorian restoration replaced the whole of the Chancel Roof and provided it with Victorian Angels. That these Angels might have been bought, like the altar and pulpit, from a Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of 1851, is an intriguing instance of Victorian admiration for and imitation of medieval artefacts.

Tostock, St. Andrew (map reference TL957635)

Late 15th century archbraced double hammerbeam Nave Roof with a wide span of 27 feet in a church which suffered badly at the hands of Dowsing on 5 February 1644. 10 Angels were taken down from the beams which still show evidence of their removal.

Wangford, St. Peter and St. Paul (map reference TM469791)

A church which suffered not only at Dowsing's hands in August 1664, but also during Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries since it was the priory church of the Cluny order established at Wangford. Although the present church retains part of its original archbraced Nave Roof there are no Angels, while the Chancel with its handsome hammerbeam Roof, with 10 Angels on the hammers, is a Victorian addition, completely built by the church architect Edward Blackburne in 1875.

Westerfield, St. Mary Magdalene (map reference TM191483)

Handsome 15th century hammerbeam Roof continuous through Nave and Chancel, of low

enough pitch to appreciate its construction, since when this Roof was added, the existing building was not heightened as happened in many East Anglian churches. The Chancel has 16 half-length winged Angels; the 2 pressed against the end wall have room for one wing only. One other Angel lost a wing through damage. These Angels, and the 18 figures of Kings and Queens in the Nave, are holding shields. Some renewal and restoration was done in 1901. There are no vestiges of the original colouring or gilding.

Wetherden, St. Mary (map reference TM007628)

15th century double hammerbeam Nave Roof visited by Dowsing in February 1644 when he ordered "68 cherubims" to be taken down. The 19th restoration replaced some of these Angels.

Woolpit, St. Mary (map reference TL974623)

Mid-15th century double hammerbeam Nave Roof and archbraced Aisle Roofs with over 300 Angels between them, half-length and head and shoulders only, on the hammers, wall-posts, on the ridge and in a double cornice. Dowsing visited Woolpit in February 1644 and left sufficient damage for an extensive restoration to be undertaken in 1844 by master-woodworker Henry Ringham, to whom many of the present Angels are attributed.

Roof Angels in some Churches outside East Anglia

Bedfordshire

Amphill, St. Andrew

A 15th century low pitched Roof, with Angels bearing his arms placed in the Nave by Sir John Cornwall, uncle by marriage to King Henry V. After several previous restorations, the whole Roof was rebuilt in 1967, when 19 of the original large Angels were restored, given new wings and repainted, and their shields repainted with arms of benefactors and local personalities.

Barton-le-Clay, St. Nicholas

In the 15th century the low-pitched Nave Roof was raised about 5 feet to allow the insertion of the clerestory, and the Roof received its carved Angels, each holding an emblem of the Passion.

Leighton Buzzard, All Saints

Fine 15th century Angel Roofs in the Nave, Chancel and North and South Transepts, those in the Nave and Chancel seriously damaged by a fire in 1985. Some of the original Angels remain. The others were painstakingly restored or replaced by craftsmen emulating the work of their 15th century predecessors.

The Good Samaritan Room (upstairs in the North Transept) has some of the original 15th century Angels whose feathered trousers recall those worn by actors depicting Angels in medieval pageants and plays.

Marston Moreteyne, St Mary

Early 15th century Nave Roof with Angels, much restored and taken down for repainting in 1873; one Angel at the West end of the church is missing.

Stevington, St. Mary

15th century oak Nave Roof with four bays, each with an Angel holding a shield. The shields confirm the importance of the 15th century wool trade, since on them are depicted woolsacks, the trademark of wool merchants, and the initials of two merchants. The other shields carry symbols of the Eucharist and Instruments of the Passion.

Cornwall

St. Ives, Parish Church

Among a group of figures of Apostles and Saints in the Roofs of the Sanctuary and Chancel, 4 feathered full-length Angels, folded wings, the bottom pair folded and crossed over the legs, beautifully restored, repainted and gilded in 1996 by local artists.

Hertfordshire

Furneaux Pelham, St. Mary

Early 15th century oak Nave Roof with Angels holding mandolins and shields, one with the arms of the Furneaux family. After the Angels' decayed wings were sawn off, new outstretched wings of Honduras mahogany were attached during the restoration of the Roof in 1964.

Oxfordshire

Ewelme, St. Mary

A 15th century church built in East Anglian style by the Earl and Countess of Suffolk for whom Ewelme Palace was a second home. The St. John the Baptist chapel on the north side of the chancel has three-quarter length Angels in the Roof, some feathered all over, with wide stretched wings.

Yorkshire

York, All Saints

Hammerbeam Roof, c.1470, in the Chancel with 9 half-length Angels, and full-length Archangel Gabriel, Archangel Michael and the Virgin Mary on the hammers. The 9 Angels carry musical instruments, a shrine, a church, a crown, a censer, and one carries a small soul in a cloth. The Roof was restored in 1977 when the Angels were repainted in bold colours, and all the wings, as well as the Archangels' feathered all-over costumes, brightly gilded.

Glossary

aisle: section of church parallel and adjacent to one or both sides of the nave

alb: full length white tunic with narrow sleeves worn by priest

apse: semi-circular recess, arched or dome-roofed, in church

archbrace: curved beam between the collar beam and the wall post in a roof

architecture periods: Norman 1066-1200, Early English 1200-1300, Decorated 1300-1350, Perpendicular 1350-1530

boss: projecting ornament placed at the intersection of timbers in a roof to disguise the join

censer: vessel in which incense is burned

chalice: wine goblet used in the celebration of holy communion

chancel: eastern continuation of the nave which normally contains the altar and is reserved for the clergy and choir

clerestory: structure formed by continuing the walls of the nave above and away from the roof of an adjoining aisle and adding windows to let more light into the church

collar beam: horizontal timber which connects a pair of principal rafters just below their highest point

cornice: projecting decorative feature along the top of a wall

demi-angel: angel depicted with head and shoulders

hammerbeam: projecting right-angled hammer-shaped beam or bracket at the foot of the curved member and principal rafter; **single hammerbeam roof:** structure with one stage of roof braces resting on right-angled, hammer-shaped supports; **double hammerbeam roof:** structure with two stages of roof braces resting on right-angled, hammer-shaped supports;

false hammerbeam: beam projecting from the wall but not supporting the roof

instruments of the Passion, commemorating the Crucifixion of Christ: crown of thorns, nails, scourges, dice and seamless robe, cock, lantern, five wounds, ladder, sponge on reed, hammer and pincer, pillar and cords, sword and staff

king post: vertical beam in a wooden roof which connects the tie-beam to the junction of the rafters above

mortise: hole cut into a piece of timber to receive exactly the end or tenon of an adjoining piece carved to fit into it

nave: main body or western arm of a church in which the congregation is seated; the area between the chancel and the west end

principal: any of the main rafters supporting the roof and taking the weight transmitted through the purlins

purlin: heavy horizontal beam which is set at a distance along the slope of a roof in order to take the weight from the common rafters to the principals

queen post: vertical beam which joins the main rafters of the roof with the horizontal tie-beam

ridge: line of junction at which two sloping surfaces of the roof meet

semi-angel: angel depicted to the waist

tenon: projecting end of a piece of timber carved to fit into a mortise or socket

tie-beams: horizontal beams spanning the nave and supporting the principal roof rafters

truss: rigid beam which supports rafters

wall plate: horizontal piece of timber placed on the top of either side of a wall in order to support the load imposed on it by the rafters in the roof above

wall post: vertical member placed against a wall to support the downward thrust of the roof

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