



ST PETER'S CHURCH

NORTH BARNINGHAM
NORFOLK



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

89 Fleet Street · London EC4Y 1DH

Registered Charity No. 258612

PRICE: £1.50



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO
ST PETER'S CHURCH
NORTH BARNINGHAM, NORFOLK

Many years ago Christians built and set apart this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Here they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the holiness here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated; inspiring, teaching and ministering through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of more than 300 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1994, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its object is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received at the Trust's headquarters at 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH (Registered Charity No. 258612).

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16 miles N of Norwich and E of A140

ST PETER'S CHURCH

NORTH BARNINGHAM, NORFOLK

by DEREK A PALGRAVE

INTRODUCTION

This relatively small Norfolk church is situated, in a fairly remote position four miles south-west of Sheringham, on the Matlaske to Beckham Road at the point where a minor road branches off almost due west towards Baconsthorpe. When approached from the south, the church is prominent on high ground just to the east of a small clump of trees. At the road junction there is a farm track, immediately opposite the Baconsthorpe turn, giving access to the church. Beyond the end of the churchyard, the track leads on to North Barningham Hall which is private property.

Barningham means 'the village of Beorn's people', and this parish is called North Barningham to differentiate it from others of the same name nearby.

The building, consisting of nave, chancel, north aisle, north porch and west tower, is set in a small churchyard, hedged all around. The earliest parts of the church appear to be the south and west walls of the nave dating from about 1100. The latest phase of building seems to have been in the late 15th century when the west tower and north porch were constructed. The buttresses on the north and south sides were added much later.

The present patron saint is St Peter but in earlier times the church was dedicated jointly to St Peter and St Paul. They are commemorated by the emblems borne on shields supported by the two carved wooden angels decorating the wall-posts of the roof above the chancel step. The Palgraves, whose monuments are in the church, became lords of the manor in the 15th century, living in the nearby North Barningham Hall. When Sir Richard Palgrave died without issue in 1732 the association with that branch of the family ended.

The Windhams of Felbrigg purchased the estate and demolished part of the Hall. By 1745 there were only two inhabitants in North Barningham. The church had fallen into disrepair and, following damage by severe

weather, it continued to deteriorate so that by 1886 it went out of use for about five years. In 1893–94 considerable restoration was undertaken including the replacement of the arch-braced roof and improvements to the porch.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century the church seems to have been used regularly, but declining population and the reorganisation of the parish system, associating North Barningham with Matlaske and Barningham Winter, eventually led to fewer and fewer services being held there. To all intents and purposes the church was closed and a faculty was granted to allow some of the principal items of church furniture to be transferred to other churches.

In 1969, in accordance with the Church of England Pastoral Measure, a petition went forward to have the church declared redundant. It was anticipated that once the church had been removed from the parochial system it could be demolished although it was suggested that the Palgrave monuments might be presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum. However another option was for the church to be vested in the Redundant Churches Fund. This would guarantee its future and ensure the preservation of the remaining contents *in situ*.

A lengthy period of consultation ensued involving the Norfolk Society's Committee for Country Churches, led by Lady Harrod, members of the Palgrave Family and Diocesan officials. By 1973 there was sufficient support for a patronal festival service to be held in North Barningham church and this was repeated in 1974.

With no regular maintenance the church was then in dire need of attention so, within a few months, the necessary work to repair the fabric was put in hand. Routine internal cleaning and grass-cutting in the churchyard were undertaken by volunteers from the Palgrave Society who also organised further patronal festival services in 1975 and 1976. Following an official inspection by the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches in August 1976 the church was officially vested in the Redundant Churches Fund on 27 October 1976.

In 1974, the architect, Mr Peter Field Philips was commissioned by the RCF to prepare a detailed report specifying the necessary work. Tenders were invited in February 1975 and Messrs Wrights of Sculthorpe were awarded the contract to carry out the remedial work under the architect's supervision.

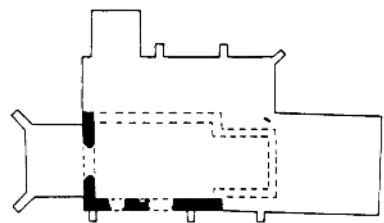
Since 1976 several items have been acquired to replace many of those which were removed earlier by faculty. Included among them are the altar rails, the lectern, the pulpit, and several pews. Furthermore the tradition of holding a patronal festival service has been maintained every year, with continued support from the Redundant Churches Fund (now renamed The Churches Conservation Trust), the Palgrave Society, several local and retired clergy, together with the organists and choir of All Saints' church, Beeston Regis. In addition, a few other events, including special visits, have been arranged from time to time.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

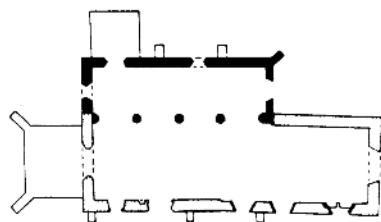
The structure is built largely of coursed flint with limestone quoins but in the earliest portion there is significant use of yellowish brown conglomerates and Roman brick. On the south side of the nave the masonry shows that the original wall was not as high or as long, suggesting that in Norman times there was a very much smaller and simpler building on the site. A large three-light Decorated style window, with intersected ogee tracery, was inserted here later, almost certainly in the early 14th century. The south wall is supported by 17th century buttresses.

The eastward extension of the nave and the addition of the present chancel both seem to have taken place in the early 13th century. In the vicinity of the present Perpendicular east window are fragments of earlier lancet window openings consistent with this date. In the north wall of the chancel is evidence of a former window, blocked up with flint pebble and 17th century brick, on the installation of the large monument to Margaret Pope (née Palgrave) inside. The two Perpendicular windows on the south side of the chancel and one similar window in the nave, ostensibly dating from the 15th century, appear to have been considerably restored in the 19th century. The most easterly of the buttresses on the south side may have been introduced when alterations were undertaken to remove the rood stair leaving an odd-shaped internal gap.

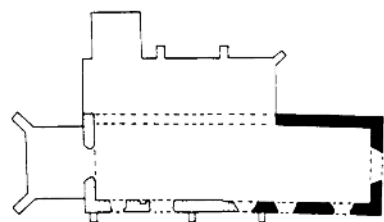
The north aisle, added during the 15th century, is separated from the nave by a four-bay arcade with octagonal piers. Its north wall required additional support in the 18th century by means of two sloping brick buttresses. There are three windows in the aisle: to the east is square-headed two-light Perpendicular window, matching that on the south side



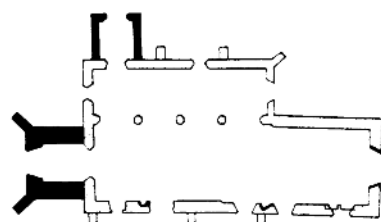
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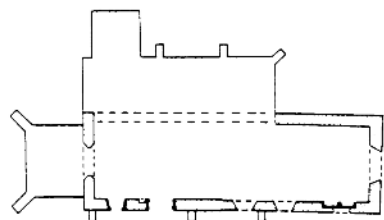
4 15th Century



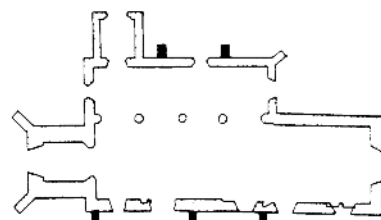
2 Early 13th Century



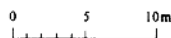
5 Late 15th Century



3 Early 14th Century



6 17th - 19th Century



Phase plan summarising historical development of the building. Areas shown in black are those contemporary with the period indicated.

(THIS ILLUSTRATION WAS PREPARED BY PHILIP WILLIAMS,

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of the nave; to the north and west are plain Y-tracery windows, the former being of early date and the latter similar in style but of the 19th century.

The final phase of building was towards the end of the 15th century when the west tower and north porch were erected. The interior of the three-storey tower is linked to the nave by an impressively tall arch which allows light from its Perpendicular transomed west window into the rest of the church. Above the middle section, with its two small cusped window openings, is the belfry. Originally there were two bells but one was disposed of in 1669 as it was cracked. The other, which had the inscription 'PETRIUS: E: PALVS: WILLS: R: CAT: I: NEF.', was transferred to Bawdeswell for installation in the new church built in the 1950s to replace the bell destroyed by enemy action in World War II. Each wall of the belfry has a two-light window opening. The parapet of the tower is crenellated and lined with brick and stone. The porch has a plain chamfered four-centred arch with no responds. Although there are no windows it is fitted with stone seats. The general state of the flintwork suggests that the porch was extensively refurbished at the time of the 19th century restoration.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Double piscina and sill-sedilia

This ornate feature on the south side of the sanctuary dates from the early 14th century. A crocketed ogee arch with large cinquefoil cusps, originally flanked by two pinnacles, spans the sedilia. The original design provided for another arch over the piscinae but this has not survived. Out of the three pinnacles in the overall design only one remains intact, another is truncated and the middle one is missing. Nevertheless, sufficient remains of the delicate tracery, with its insets of dark grey mortar producing an effect reminiscent of flushwork, to illustrate its intricate lines. The basins of the two piscinae differ in design, one having three lobes and the other four.

Wheel cross design in nave floor

This consists of an outer circle of stone sections, with a central boss 200 mm in diameter from which radiate eight stone spokes each 300 mm long. The intervening sectors which meet the peripheral stone sections to form



Stone and brick design in nave floor

(ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE
HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND)

tricuspid-shaped boundaries, are filled with red brick. Additional portions of brick are inset into the outer stone sections so that the overall pattern resembles a rose window approximately 1.4 m in diameter. Exactly why this is where it is has puzzled historians for over a century, although the immediate proximity of a stone, with a brass inscription to Robert Bacon, might imply the entrance to a vault. At the end of the 19th century, John Gunn commented that it reminded him of a stone cross at Sidestand but he could

offer no positive suggestions as to its significance. Gunn suggested a date of 1472 for the wheel cross and adjoining inscription.

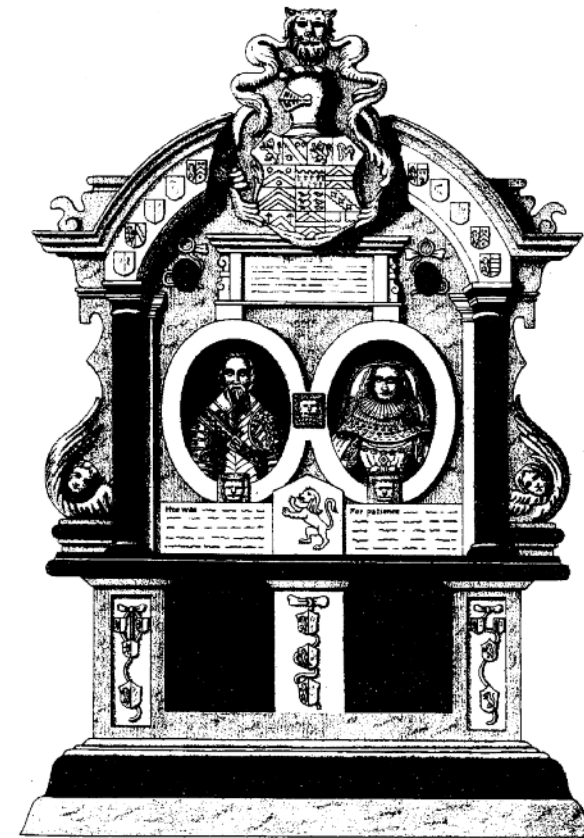
Pillar piscina

This is on the east wall of the north aisle immediately adjacent to the arcade. It is positioned so as to be convenient for a side altar, suggesting that in the 15th century the north aisle was probably in use as a Lady or Guild Chapel. The presence of the two elevated stone brackets north and south of the site of this altar, which may well have been used for statues, adds weight to this view.

Monument to Sir Austin and Dame Elizabeth Palgrave in north aisle

When Sir Austin Palgrave drafted his will, two years before his death in 1639, he specified that he should be buried 'in the grave where my good wife was lately buried, in the upper end of the north Ile of the Church of Northwood Barningham, my tenants and servants accompanying my body, and a small monument to be built in remembrance of us, what children I have had by my said wife, to whom they were married, my age and time of death'. It seems unlikely that he had in mind quite such a magnificent design, comprising a tomb-chest from which rise two Doric columns

supporting a curved pediment incorporating a fine heraldic achievement of 13 quarterings. Between the columns are two oval niches housing striking busts of Sir Austin and Dame Elizabeth Palgrave (née Willoughby). Linnell and Wearing (1952), who have commented on the very high quality of the carving, tried unsuccessfully to identify the sculptor. The remainder of the structure includes detailed memorial inscriptions plus ten more heraldic shields, of which five show impaled arms, four demonstrating known alliances with *Sturmer*, *Jermy*, *Saunders* and *Willoughby*. Of the 13 quarterings in the achievement, the first is Palgrave together with 12 other coats of arms attributed to: *Wigenall*, *Hetherset*, *Berningham*, *Sturmer*,

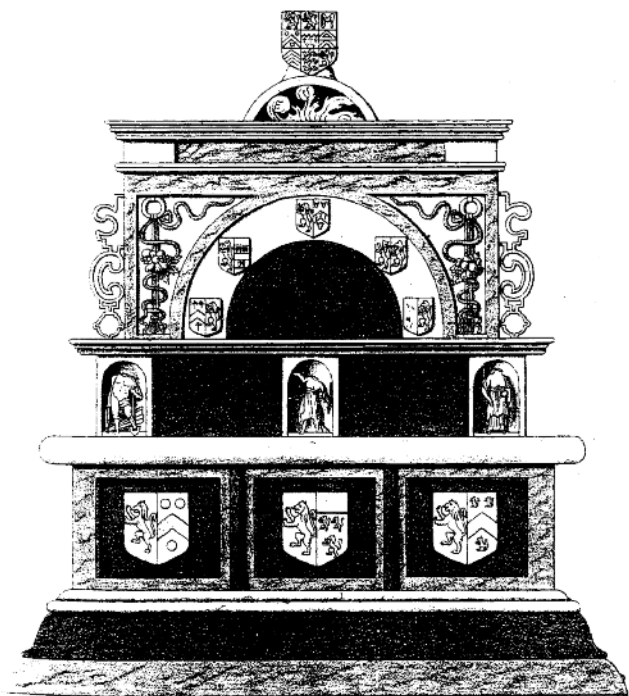


Monument to Sir Austin and Dame Elizabeth Palgrave in the north aisle

Hengrave, Baynard, Chaworth, Wren, Bosvile, Russell, Gerbridge and Ufford. Most of these families are connected to the Palgraves but so far it has not been possible to account for the presence of the *Hengrave, Wigenall* and *Wren* arms. Eleven of these quarterings occur on the earlier monument to Margaret Pope in the chancel.

Monument to John Palgrave in sanctuary

John Palgrave, who died 29 May 1611, was a prominent lawyer who became a bencher of the Inner Temple, serving in several of its senior offices there between 1569 and 1596. He was also a local magistrate in Norfolk. He married Urith Saunder of Ewell, Surrey, by whom he had six children. His monument, erected by his son Sir Austin, in the north-east corner of the sanctuary, is a large black marble tomb-chest having a superstructure with five heraldic shields and sculptured figures of Justice, Toil



Monument to John Palgrave in the sanctuary

and Peace, all unfortunately defaced. There are also five somewhat larger heraldic shields round the tomb-chest itself but four of these are modern replicas. The illustration reproduced from Palmer and Tucker (1878) shows another shield with nine quarterings at the top of the monument, but this is now missing. All the surviving shields display impaled arms: the upper five show *Riddlesden imp Palgrave*; *Palgrave imp Willoughby*; *Palgrave imp Saunder*; *Jermy imp Palgrave* and a blank (which should be Pope) *imp Palgrave*; these all symbolise the marriages of John Palgrave's children. The lower five shields show ancestral alliances: *Palgrave imp Reade*; *Palgrave imp Glemham*; *Palgrave imp Yelverton*; *Palgrave imp Lovell* and *Palgrave imp Sturmer*. The significance of Lovell in this context has not been identified.

Altar table

This is a modern oak table. The Stuart table originally in the church is now in the Lady Chapel at Letheringsett church.

Altar rails

The 17th century oak altar rails, with turned balusters, from St Mary Coslany Church, Norwich, replace the Victorian rails which were installed at Matlaske.

Monument to Margaret Pope on chancel wall

Margaret, the second daughter of John and Urith Palgrave, was baptised at St George's, Colegate, Norwich on 24 July 1570. She was married, quite late in life, to Dr John Pope of Over in Cambridgeshire. She died on Christmas Day 1624. Her husband erected a very fine alabaster wall monument to her memory. It portrays her as a figure kneeling in prayer at a lectern with an open bible. The sculpture is set within a baldachino with curtains held back by two angels. Inside the enclosure are four shields attributed respectively



Monument to Margaret Pope on chancel wall

to *Palgrave*, *Pope*, *Palgrave imp Reade* (but incompletely emblazoned) and *Glemham imp Brandon*. There is a curved pediment above with four small shields and very finely executed oval achievement of arms with 18 quarterings. Six of the quarterings in one half of this achievement shield relate to John Pope and his antecedents, whilst the remaining 12 have Palgrave associations. The former may be attributed as follows: *Pope*, *Walshe*, *Waller*, *Lansdale*, *Weston* and *Pichingham*. The latter also occur as part of the achievement on the monument to Sir Austin Palgrave and Dame Elizabeth so the details are listed with its description. Of the small shields on the pediment, the only one emblazoned is *Palgrave imp Saunder*.

Lectern

The present lectern came from St Nicholas, Brandiston, in 1983, the original having been transferred to Erpingham.

Pulpit

The Victorian pulpit was acquired in 1984, by the Palgrave Society, from the church at East Harling. The original carved Jacobean pulpit, which had a canopy marked with the date 1629, is now in Sustead church.

Brasses

At the east end of the north aisle is a large rectangular stone slab with nine brass elements of the early 16th century. It commemorates Henry Pagrave (*sic*) who died in 1516 and his wife, Anne, who are represented as full length figures wearing, respectively, armour and contemporary dress. In addition to the Latin inscription there are two small elements showing their kneeling children, five boys and seven girls, and four heraldic shields. These are reproductions of original shields which were stolen in the 1960s. The shields signify *Palgrave*, *Palgrave impaling Sturmer* (Henry's grandmother), *Palgrave impaling Yelverton* (Henry's mother) and *Glemham* (Henry's wife, Anne) impaling *Brandon* (Anne's mother).

Wall painting

It is possible to discern some early lettering fairly high up on the plaster of the north aisle, but elsewhere in the church, especially in the vicinity of the south doorway, there is evidence of a dark painted dado pattern.

Ledger stone to Sir Austin Palgrave in sanctuary

Sir Austin Palgrave II, grandson of Sir Austin Palgrave I and Dame Elizabeth, was also a lawyer at the Inner Temple. He was married three times, first to Barbara Gascoigne, second to Catherine Spring and third to Anne Grubham Howe. Altogether he had four children, two, one and one. He was a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber and as such was present at the coronation of James II. He died 17 March, 1710/11 and was buried at the north end of the sanctuary under a black tomb slab bearing an heraldic achievement with *Palgrave impaling Howe*.

Choir stalls and pews

The pews on the south side of the nave incorporate some mediaeval bench ends with typical poppyheads, but the furniture in the chancel was installed during the restoration of the 1890s at a cost in excess of £116. It seems likely that the Victorian tiles in the vicinity and in the sanctuary, some multi-coloured and bearing fleurs-de-lys and other floral motifs, were introduced about the same time. The simple movable pews in the main body of the nave were transferred from St Peter's, Sudbury, another redundant church, to replace a collection of folding chairs. Bryant mentioned that early in the 20th century there were oak open-bench seats for 65 people, but the majority of these have been removed.

Font

The elevated stone font, probably of the 19th century, is octagonal and fairly plain with a pleasing painted wooden cover.

Niches

One niche is situated high up in the south wall of the nave between the large Decorated window and the small south doorway. This may well have been to accommodate an image of St Anne to which Bryant referred. There is another small niche over the entrance to the porch in which there may have been an image of St Peter, not only co-patron of the church but also of the local guild.

Chest

A portion of a 17th century panelled wooden chest is on display at the back of the nave.

Organ

At the south-west corner of the nave is a small pleasantly decorated Canadian organ with foot-operated bellows.

Gable cross

The stone cross formerly mounted on the gable end of the roof is now on display at the back of the nave.

Registers

The ancient registers of the former parish of St Peter, North Barningham, were deposited in the Norfolk Record Office by Canon Alan Gates during the time in which he was priest-in-charge of the Matlaske Group.

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The line drawings on pages 7–9 are taken from 19th century lithographs by J A Burt, which first appeared in *Palgrave Family Memorials*, published privately in 1878.

Front cover: Exterior from the south-east in 1950 (NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD)

Back cover: Interior from the west end of the north aisle (CHRISTOPHER DALTON)

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