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Mr T Warburton
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20 October 1990

Dear Tony,

All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard

I have at last prepared a "simple" list of the roof figure carvings. This describes the symbols they carry and identifications following the fire damage and after restoration as they appear now in 1990.

It was never quite that simple. In fact, one of the big surprises was the lack of good documentary information or even a reliable guidebook description of what is a unique and very good nave roof within a wide area. The Revd Keith Robinson undertook the initial identification and deserves all the credit for his part and then with myself, helped to literally raise the figures and give them meaning from the ashes of the fire. I think that when you read Keith's notes you will see it has been a puzzle not wholly solved because our 20th century knowledge does not fully extend to 15th century ecclesiastical building practice. Of course, there may never have been a formal structure or attempt at a logical, explainable layout. By way of illustration: the painted rood screens so common in Norfolk/Suffolk have series of painted saints, sometimes by different artists on the same screen and often a pretty mixed grouping. Why? The answer is money. Apparently the screen would be proposed but if a wealthy benefactor was not available then fund raising was started - (a very contemporary practice). Special events such as "Church Ale" days were held and sponsors sought for each panel painting. We assume the sponsors wished for their own favoured saint to be represented by an artist they either knew or could afford and so we get the patron saint of sore throats next to that for cobblers!

Keith has given the damaged figures "positive", "possible" and a few "unknown" identities and obviously my list should be read in conjunction with Keith's analysis - but Keith moved to his own parish before completion of the restoration and as the work progressed new ideas came forward and in one particular instance, the figure of St Peter on the NE wall of the chancel, cleaning showed him to be carrying a book, not a model as stated.

(a)

However people may see and appreciate the results, Keith and I would be strongly in favour of serious and well deserved publicity which might attract specialist visitors who could add a piece or two to the jigsaw of our knowledge of this great 'wool church' nave roof.

There were four main restoration tasks:

- (a) destroyed items were replaced. These included a completely new angel above the chancel staircase, thirteen new angels' wings, two lengths of brattishing and about 150 small carved insets;
- (b) severely charred figures were first soaked in a low viscosity epoxy resin then infilled with epoxy tooling before building up and carving the lost details;
- (c) the more lightly charred wood was consolidated and the reduced detail re-emphasised by carving deeper into the existing outlines;
- (d) new symbols were designed with the aid of cardboard cutouts then shaped in oak and fixed in position.

The restored roof figures were gilded and painted by Campbell, Smith & Co Ltd.

There are quite good photographs illustrating the carvings before, during and after the restoration. I think it would be a good idea if I showed you these negatives and "quickie" prints with a view to some decent reproductions for exhibitions and the parish records. Obviously there is the question of cost; a hundred or so enlargements do not come cheap but the possibility exists. I still have quite a bit of work in the Bedfordshire area and make the occasional pilgrimage to All Saints and so a meeting would be welcome and fairly easy to arrange. Please check the symbols *List on site before publication!*

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,



JOE DAWES

Enc: Copies of Rev Keith Robinson's reports on the Nave and Chancel roofs dated 1987.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, LEIGHTON BUZZARD

Identities of the roof carvings at October 1990

[Note: the number sequence always starts at the east and proceeds along either the north or south walls towards the west.]

NAVE

Ridge angels (or bosses) consist of four posts, each with a pair of demi-figures of angels. The underside is a heraldic representation of clouds.

No 1 facing E:	angel with chalice
2 " W:	" " sponge on reed
3 " E:	" " pax
4 " W:	" " pax
5 " E:	" " closed book
6 " W:	" " open book
7 " E:	" " shield
8 " W:	" " shield

Principal or "flying angels" are full size; each wears a full length alb, appparelled anices and pointed shoes.

No 1 North:	angel with hands flat
2 " :	" holding two candlesticks
3 " :	" with hands flat
4 " :	" with right hand in episcopal blessing

No 1 South:	angel holding two candlesticks
2 " :	" holding a book
3 " :	" with hands flat
4 " :	" with hands flat

Cornice angels a series of 32 demi-figures, each carries an article.

No 1 North:	open book
2 " :	crown
3 " :	closed book
4 " :	open book
5 " :	scroll
6 " :	open book
7 " :	closed book
8 " :	with hands flat
9 " :	open book
10 " :	bishop's mitre
11 " :	scroll
12 " :	pax
13 " :	shield
14 " :	four stringed lute
15 " :	simple pipe
16 " :	open book

No 1	South:	open book
2	" :	open book
3	" :	open book
4	" :	scroll
5	" :	portative organ of six pipes
6	" :	closed book
7	" :	open book
8	" :	chalice
9	" :	crown
10	" :	pax
11	" :	closed book
12	" :	shield
13	" :	portative organ of seven pipes
14	" :	trumpet
15	" :	pax
16	" :	portative organ of seven pipes

Wall post saints

No 1	North:	St Mary Magdalene with alabaster box
2	" :	St Jude with boat
3	" :	St Paul with sword
4	" :	St Simon with fish
5	" :	St James the Less with fuller's club
6	" :	St Phillip with three loaves
7	" :	St Edward the Confessor with sceptre and ring
8	" :	St Edmund of Bury with arrows
9	" :	St Peter with scroll

No 1	South:	St John
2	" :	St Andrew with saltire cross
3	" :	St James the Great with sword and staff
4	" :	St Matthew with money box
5	" :	St Bartholomew with flaying knife
6	" :	St Matthias with halberd
7	" :	St Thomas with spear
8	" :	St Hugh of Lincoln
9	" :	unknown

The stone corbels show objects associated with the Passion.

No 1	North:	Basin and sponge
2	" :	Scourges
3	" :	Tongue spitting
4	" :	Crown of thorns
5	" :	Cock
6	" :	Three nails
7	" :	Ladder
8	" :	Five wounds
9	" :	Three dice

No 1	South:	Pincers
2	" :	Sponge with reeds
3	" :	Hammer
4	" :	Seamless robe
5	" :	Bundle of rods
6	" :	Latin cross
7	" :	Maltese cross
8	" :	Pillar and cords
9	" :	blank

CHANCEL

Wall post saints

No 1	North:	St Peter with keys and book
2	" :	St Andrew with saltire cross
3	" :	St James the Less with fuller's club and book
4	" :	St Jude with halberd and book
5	" :	St James the Great with satchel and staff

No 1	South:	St Paul with sword
2	" :	St John with chalice and serpent
3	" :	St Bartholomew with flaying knife
4	" :	St Matthew with cross
5	" :	St Phillip with three loaves

Roof angels: there are eight of these. The one directly above the staircase which was above where the fire started in 1985 is completely new, the remainder all required restoration. The two most westerly carry scrolls, the remainder shields, one bearing a relief decoration of a lion rampant and all with heraldic clouds represented.

Stone corbels are Victorian replacements with small bunches of conventional foliage, two with grapes and one with acorns.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS LEIGHTON BUZZARD

THE NAVE ROOF

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THE PARISH CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS LEIGHTON BUZZARD

THE NAVE ROOF

1 HISTORY

The steep original pitch of the thirteenth century Nave roof, which, with the plaster removed above the Tower Arch is very clear, was raised and altered during the second half of the fifteenth century. The clerestory was added with the new roof, presumably as a single project.

I am unable to trace any documentary references to the construction of the roof, but a number of unusual features point to a possible link with the period 1467-1475. During this period the Manor of Leighton was held by Alice de la Pole, Duchess of Suffolk. It is known that she was a generous and devout patron of church buildings. The most outstanding example of this pious generosity is at Elwelme in Oxfordshire where she is buried, but her principle home was at Diss in Suffolk.

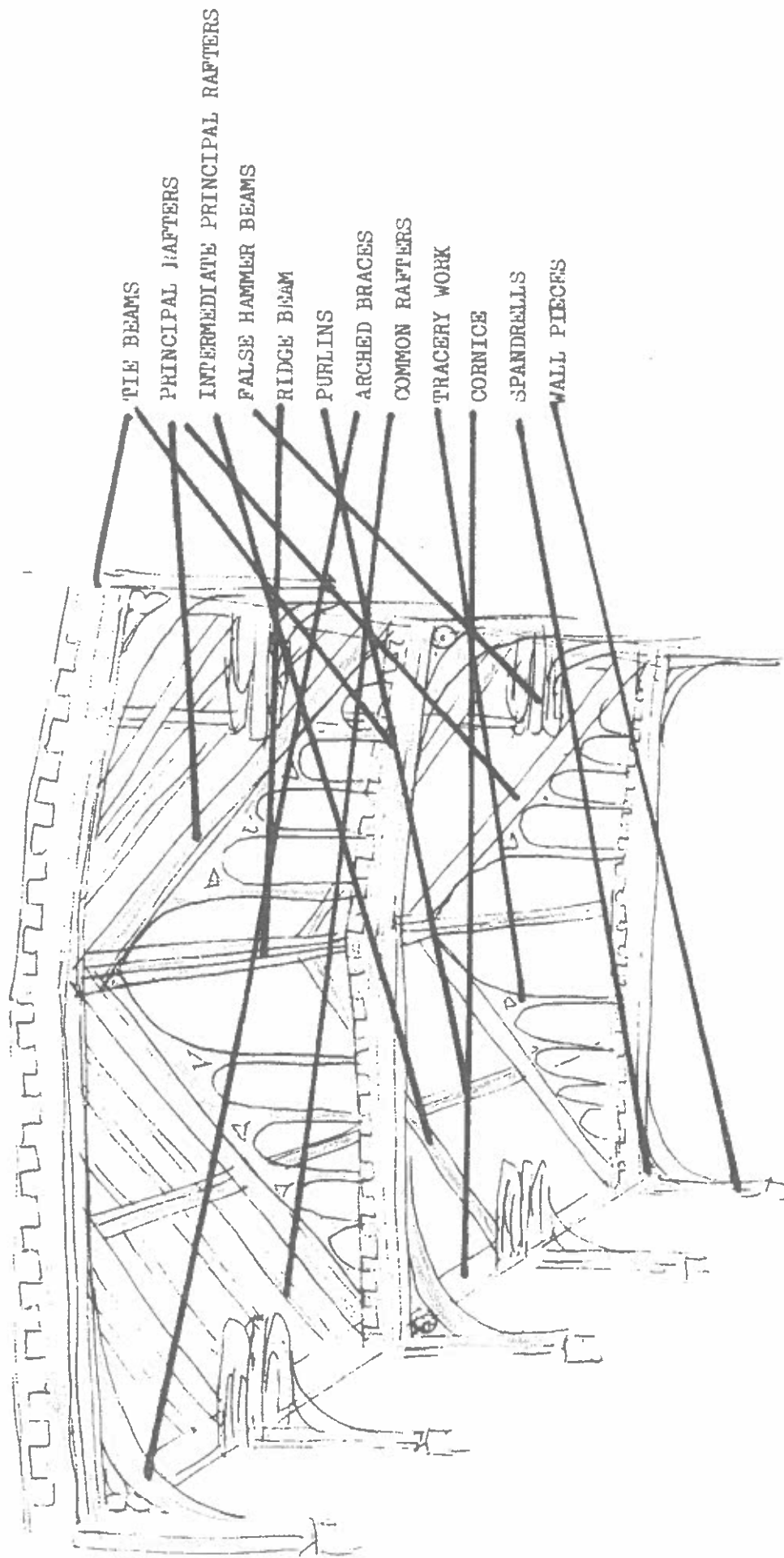
The most remarkable thing about the Leighton Nave roof and clerestory is the extent to which they are out of context. There is nothing like them at all within a very wide radius. In both clerestory and roof the general outlines, and the detail belong to the great 'wool churches' of East Anglia. In this respect they are quite different also from the other work in the church. The signs suggest, therefore, that they were built or at least designed by East Anglians imported for the purpose, and the wealthy Duchess, as principle lay patron at the time may well have been responsible for this work in the Nave.

Since its construction the roof has received major repairs. Restorations are recorded in 1781, 1840-51, and 1924-27. However, there is little doubt that the roof structure and its decoration are almost entirely original. Restoration appears to have been confined to strengthening the structure, with the replacement of some of the rafters, and the replacement of a very small amount of decoration. Even following the fire, it is surprising how much of the roof seems to belong to the period of its first construction.

Mention might be made of what I can only describe as the "feel" of the roof. When you stand in the roof space and contemplate the marvellous structure within which you stand, you get a distinct impression that it was put together in a quite short space of time by a sizeable team of highly competent, efficient and gifted joiners and carvers, who were used to working together on such projects.

The fire of 1985 has necessitated a far more drastic restoration than ever before, which is no doubt well documented elsewhere. However, it should be realised that had the fire been allowed to continue for only a few minutes longer, this whole roof would have been lost for ever, and its saving is remarkable in every way.

ROUGH SKETCH OF TWO BAYS OF THE NAVE ROOF, TO ILLUSTRATE THE TERMS I HAVE USED



2 THE STRUCTURE

The roof is divided into four bays (not three, as asserted by Richmond), with five massive tie-beams. These tie-beams are heavily moulded, and ornamented with rudimentary crenellating. Underneath, arched braces return into the wall pieces, and the spandrells thus formed contain cusped tracery motifs. From the upper sides of the ends of the tie-beams rise the principal rafters, which again, are massive and heavily moulded. Each bay is subdivided by what I will call 'intermediate' principal rafters, which match in design the principal rafters. In the place of a tie-beam, each carries a false hammer beam carved as an angel. The false hammer beams are supported by arched braces with plain spandrells, and wall pieces. The principal rafters support a purlin and the ridge, all of which are moulded to match the principal rafters. The common rafters are all of plain rectangular section. Screen-like arched tracery runs between the tie-beams and their principal rafters. At the juncture of the intermediate principal rafters with the ridge, arched braces support 'bosses' carved each with two demi-figures of angels.

The carved ornament of the roof, therefore, is to be found in these bosses at the ridge, the false hammer beam angels, saints applied to the wall-pieces, and the heavily moulded cornices which run on both sides, the length of the roof, and are decorated with demi-figures of angels and brattishing.

This is a complex but assured structure, in which the amount of decoration is perfectly balanced.

The joints of the tie-beams are all still clearly numbered I-III, showing how they were cut and fitted on the ground, and marked for reassembly when hoisted. At least one carpenter's mark has survived the fire on the principal rafter at the west end, though most will have perished in the fire. This will be worth recording, in case it may ever form a 'documentary' link with some other building elsewhere. (These marks were apparently the basis for piecework payments). * See Appendix

3 THE CARVINGS IN GENERAL

Apart from the moulded ornamentation on the beams, the carved work falls into two categories: figure work and what might loosely be termed 'tracery work'. In the latter category would fall the screen-like tracery, the spandrells and the brattishing.

The brattishing runs along the tops of the cornices for their entire length. It exemplifies perfectly the simple method by which gothic art succeeds in achieving so rich an overall effect - namely, the frequent repetition of a single, simple motif. Here, a simple, stylised, four-sided leaf and stalk is repeated hundreds of times to provide a distinct but ornamental line. Almost all of the brattishing has perished in the fire, due to its extremely fragile nature, but some has survived in the south-west corner and is an adequate model for what is after all a pretty common feature.

Those spandrells which contain tracery (specified above) show two different patterns: one is a simple, cusped triangle, the other contains a cusped circle. These are probably all original, and because of their protected situation are not in need of repair.

Much of the screen-work between the tie-beams and their principal rafters has suffered badly in the fire, and had to be replaced. At close quarters one can hardly fail to be struck by its extreme crudeness - plain, uncusped arches (mostly, but not all, round-headed), and strange, cut-out triangles. At first I thought they must all be post-reformation replacements. But it will probably now never be possible to know how much, if any of this work belongs to the original roof. In spite of its paucity of detail, however, the general proportions are extremely effective, and that, after all, is all that can be appreciated of it from the floor.

There are four distinct series of figures. There are the double, demi-figures of angels in the bosses associated with the roof ridge. There are the large, full-length figures of angels which constitute the false hammer beams. There is the series of demi-figures of angels applied to the cornice, and the series of saints applied to the wall-pieces. Not all are of the same quality, and it is possible to detect the hands of three, if not four different carvers. Generally speaking, those figures more easily visible from the ground are of better quality than the others.

4 THE RIDGE ANGELS

Structurally speaking, these are (I believe) bosses in the strict architectural sense, into which lock the sections of the ridge beam, and the top ends of the intermediate principal rafters, all reinforced by the arched braces, thus making a very strong junction. They are thus four large pieces of timber, placed vertically at the centre of each bay. They are carved on their east and west faces with demi-figures of angels holding various objects. There are thus a total of eight of these figures.

* and providing eyes.
All have been severely charred and disfigured by the fire. This is evidently where the heat was greatest. Yet it can be seen that they were rather crudely carved, with long, oval faces,* and in this respect they bear some comparison with the series of angels on the cornice. Could the same carver have master-minded both series?

Restoration of these figures has been very difficult, and the objects which they hold constitute a conjectural restoration. Comparison with the other series of angels in this roof reveals an arbitrary assortment of objects, which almost certainly do not follow any coherent iconographic scheme.

The easternmost angel, who faces east, carries without doubt a chalice. His companion figure, who faces west, carried a slender, sceptre-like article, held diagonally across the chest by both hands. On the basis that the stone corbels supporting the roof are carved with symbols of the Passion, this has been restored as a sponge on the end of a reed (Mark 15, 36), but there is no way of knowing what it originally was.

The next pair of figures to the west each carry the same sort of object. This object occurs many times along the cornice, and its identity is open to question. It is perhaps best described as a rectangular framed panel, held as though on display. With our present awareness of Eastern Orthodoxy, we might be tempted to jump to the conclusion that it represented an icon. However, icons, in the Orthodox tradition were quite unknown in fifteenth century England, and I do not believe that that

would be a correct identification. It is not a musical instrument, but it does have the appearance of a liturgical object. I feel confident that these objects are to be identified as Paxes, sometimes also called 'Pax Bredes' and Osculatoria. These were in general use in the Mass during the later Middle Ages in the western Church, and would therefore be familiar items to our roof carvers.

A Pax is a panel of ivory, metal or wood usually decorated with a representation of the Crucifixion or the Holy Trinity, kissed first by the celebrant, and then passed to the congregation for them to kiss in turn. They are now, of course, quite obsolete, but a number are preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum. (see entry in ODC) Since there is no sign on any of these objects of there ever having been any relief carving, this may be a pointer in support of the devotional scenes having been originally painted on them! (and therefore tentative evidence that the figures - and perhaps the whole roof - was originally coloured.)

The next pair of angels hold books, the first closed with a clasp, and the second open. This brings us into the uncertain area of angels holding books, of which there are no fewer than ten with open books, and six with closed books. The closed books are always bound with a single clasp. Either way, these books are always displayed in a formal fashion, and are without doubt intended to be understood as liturgical objects. Bibles as single volumes (as we know them today) were unknown at the time in parish churches; indeed the Bible was only very occasionally indeed bound into a single volume, because of its enormous bulk in manuscript. In any case a Bible had no use in a parish church until ordered during the Reformation by Henry VIII in 1538. Prior to that it was a rare reference work in some monastic libraries.

In the Mass, the service was read or sung from the Missal, which remained on the altar throughout. These books are unlikely therefore, to represent missals.

However, then as now, it was customary at High Mass, for a special Gospel Book to be carried in a formal procession into the congregation - or sometimes apparently onto the rood screen - from whence the appropriate passage was read to the people. Then, as now, the book was carried closed, but opened for the actual proclamation by the Deacon. Although the proliferation of gospel books is not hereby accounted for, at least we might here have an explanation of the two dispositions. In four instances an open book is placed next to a closed book, and it is quite probable that all the books were placed in pairs originally.

In the case of the ridge bosses in question, the angel facing the altar holds the closed volume, while its partner, facing the congregation, holds the open volume.

The final pair of ridge angels, at the west end, hold badly disfigured objects which were almost certainly shields. They have been restored as such. See elsewhere for a discussion of the shields.

In concluding remarks on this series of figures, it is to be noted that the underside of each boss is finished by being carved with the conventional, heraldic representation of clouds. The same device was used at the base of the Chancel angels. It was very common at the time both in sculpture and painting, and it forms a satisfactory underside to the bosses.

5 THE PRINCIPAL ANGELS

There are eight of these, the largest figures in the roof. Like the bosses, described above, but unlike the other figures they are structural, only their wings being carved separately and applied to their backs. They constitute false hammer beams, and are full length figures. In each case they wear simple pointed shoes, full length albs, gathered just above the waist, and apparelled amices. Their vesture is uniform, and there are no maniples or stoles &c. Being placed horizontally, and projecting, they appear to hover in silent suspension over the congregation, and they are undoubtedly the most prominent figures in the roof from that point of view. They are well carved, if perhaps a little monotonously, with great confidence, and are evidently from the hand of the same carver. It may be that these are the only figures in the roof carved by him. Might he perhaps have been a specialist in hammer beam angels?

In any event, the only distinctions between the figures are the dispositions of their hands, and any objects they might be holding, and it is all very puzzling.

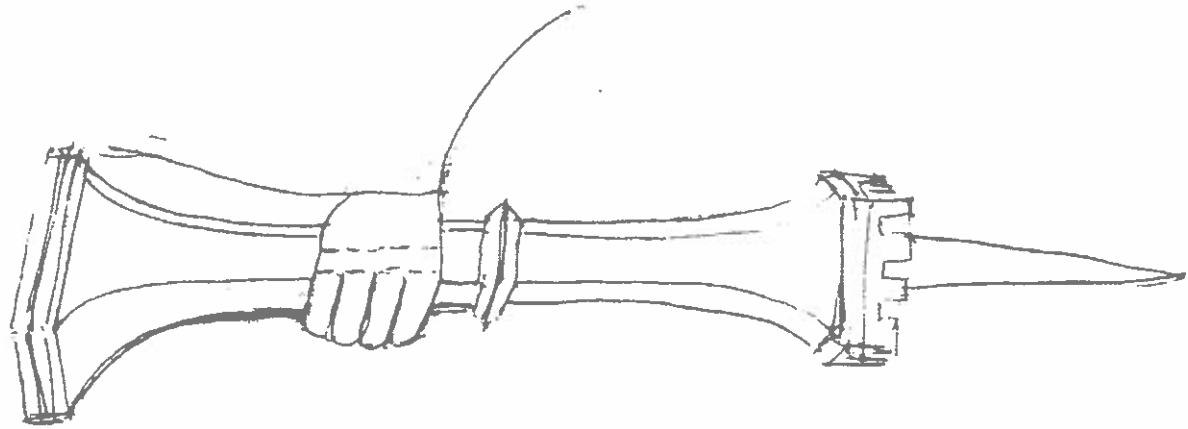
First, unlike some comparable roofs, the figures do not proceed in matching pairs from west to east. So we are not looking at a 'procession', unless the angels have been rearranged during some restoration or other. Although that is possible, it seems a little unlikely in view of their importance to the actual roof structure. Moving them would require a major dismantling and reconstruction of the roof. There is no reason why such a thing should have ever been done, and more to the point, no evidence of either a documentary or archaeological nature. So one assumes them to be in their original positions.

Four of the eight angels have both hands held out flat, over the congregation, in a position akin to that of a bishop's hands immediately before the act of confirmation or ordination. The hands have never held or supported any objects, and one can only take the gesture as an act of blessing or benediction. The hands are disproportionately large, as the hands of divine beings often were, suggesting the generosity of God in comparison with our own human generosity.

However, the westernmost of these figures on the north side extends his left hand in the same manner, but his right hand is raised in an episcopal blessing. (ie the two forefingers only are extended, the other two fingers being held down by the thumb) Priests do not bless in this way, but bishops and archbishops do. Why one angel only should be delivering an episcopal blessing is quite beyond me, although two bishops face him on the wall-pieces opposite.

The second angel from the east on the south side is unique in holding a Gospel Book (see the discussion above about books). The book is closed, and fastened with a single clasp which is decorated with a floral or foliate ornament.

There remain two other angels in this series, and they are identical twins. Their hands are clenched to either side, and each hand is perforated by a hole drilled right through. Originally these hands held some object or other, which has no doubt been lost for centuries, but what actually it was is a mystery. The holes are so small - in one case no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " that they must be for dowels. Furthermore, being so small, they could never have supported objects of any weight, (and therefore also, by inference, of any length).



VERY ROUGH DIAGRAM OF PRICKET CANDLESTICK HELD BY A
HAMMER BEAM ANGEL IN THE NAVE ROOF OF ST MARY,
BURY ST EDMUNDS

musical instruments would seem to be ruled out, as also would shields. That leaves us with liturgical objects. One runs through the list of possible items: chalice and/or paten, gospel books, and other small items, but they would all require the hands to be differently disposed; or larger items: processional crosses, banners &c, but these would all be too large or too heavy. The only possible objects I can think of are candlesticks. There are other precedents (notably at St Mary, Bury St Edmunds), though I do not know of another case where they are held in both hands. As for questions about flames, the matter is resolved at Bury by the candlesticks having long prickets, but no candles. In some ways this doesn't seem an entirely satisfactory solution especially for two figures, but not only does it have precedent, it would also be a visual improvement upon the present situation. (See sketch of the Bury prototype.)

(It is possibly worth noting that in the south aisle roof at Bury in a totally different situation from our angels, there is depicted a small demi-figure of an angel, crowned and dressed in feathers, holding in each hand a chalice with the Host appearing from the top. It is a very odd figure indeed, iconographically, and is more likely to be a carver's fantasy than a theological statement, but if four candlesticks were thought to be excessive, two chalices for one of our figures would not be entirely without precedent, though it seems to me to be theologically eccentric.)

The wing design of all of these angels is of a distinctly 'East Anglian' pattern, and quite different from any local patterns. Although of cruder work, the pattern is that of the Bury angels already referred to, and it is of interest that that very important roof is documented to the 1460s.

6 THE CORNICE ANGELS

This is a remarkable series of thirty demi-figures of angels applied to the coved bressumer of the cornice, only one of which is not original. Altogether, they constitute one of the most important decorative features of the whole roof. They are not individually great works of art, though they involve quite fine work, but, as in so much gothic work their effect depends upon them all ^{being} seen together, rather than as individual items.

When considering them iconographically, it is important to remember that it would be an easy matter to remove them and fix them in other positions, and so there is no certainty that they are now in their original sequence. Each angel consists of three separately carved pieces: the body, and two wings. They all wear the same garment, a round-necked loose fitting garment with half length sleeves, and no amice. What follows is a list of all the angels in this series, north and south, and numbered from east to west.

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| NORTH | 1 | an open Gospel Book |
| | 2 | a crown |
| | 3 | Gospel Book closed with strap |
| | 4 | open Gospel Book |
| | 5 | a scroll held across the waist |
| | 6 | open Gospel Book |
| | 7 | Gospel Book closed with strap |
| | 8 | both hands extended flat (in blessing?): of Principal Angels |

- NORTH 9 open Gospel Book
 (cont) 10 bishop's mitre, with carved decoration in relief
 11 a scroll held across the waist
 12 a Pax: cf Ridge Angels
 13 a plain shield
 14 four-stringed lute held across the chest
 15 in the act of playing a very simple pipe
 16 open Gospel Book
- SOUTH 1 open Gospel Book
 2 open Gospel Book
 (NB this figure is a softwood replacement, dating
 probably from the 18th century restoration)
 3 open Gospel Book
 4 a very curvacious scroll - broken in places
 5 a portative organ of six pipes
 6 Gospel Book closed with strap
 7 open Gospel Book
 8 Chalice
 9 a crown
 10 a Pax
 11 Gospel Book closed with strap
 12 a large, plain shield
 13 a portative organ of seven pipes
 14 in the act of blowing a trumpet
 15 a Pax
 16 a portative organ of seven pipes

This is an extraordinary mixture of objects, which appear to have nothing in common, and only the frequent association together of open and closed books suggests the possibility of any scheme. The objects fall into the following categories:

Liturgical Objects:	books, chalice, mitre, pax, act of blessing
Musical Instruments:	lute, organs, pipe, trumpet
Heraldic (?) Objects:	shields, crown, scroll (?)

The only subject one can imagine which could conceivably link these disparate objects together might be "The Worship in Heaven", and even that may be stretching credibility too far. To make such a description hold, the crowns would have to be interpreted as symbols of the King of kings; the shields would have to portray versions of a Sacred Monogram (thus desecularising them); and the scrolls would perhaps be inscribed with phrases from the heavenly songs, such as eg "Sanctus. Sanctus. Sanctus." &c. Obviously, the question really only arises if these figures are to be repainted. I think it could just be credible, though a modern mind might wonder why books should need to feature so prominently in heaven! (But, these were not placed there by a modern mind!)

7 THE SAINTS

The lowest sequence of figures in the Nave roof are all saints. It appears that they are all applied to the wall-pieces (unlike the Chancel, where they actually are the wall-pieces) but it is hard to be certain to what extent they may have been carved in situ, or down below.

There are eighteen of these figures, but only four of them can be identified with any degree of certainty at all. This is not so much due to damage in the fire, which has been relatively slight at this level, but more due to the loss, over a long period of time of identifying objects which they originally, evidently held. The quality of all these carvings is good, and some are exceptionally fine. It appears that two different hands may have been involved in the carving of this series. Certainly, some bear a remarkable 'family likeness', and the faces in particular are carved in great detail and with the utmost assurance. But again, they are not at all local in style.

It is immediately possible to identify four different classes of saint. There are two kings; two bishops or archbishops; one woman, thirteen male 'apostolic' figures. The latter include, with some certainty St James the Great, St John, and St Philip - so we could be looking at a series of the Twelve Apostles (including Matthias) and St Paul. I do not think it would ever be possible to prove this beyond all doubt, but all the circumstances are right, and I personally feel persuaded. The fact that the saints are a little jumbled - though probably not much - indicates that some of them may well not be in their original positions. My inclination is to believe that the north side originally started from the west with the two kings, which would match the two ecclesiastics to the south. One would then have had a run of apostles down both sides until the easternmost two figures, which I believe to represent the Magdalene and St John. I think they are probably in their original positions, and, apart from iconographic evidence, they would in this position relate satisfactorily to the Great Rood, which stood above the rood screen. If that is so, only the westernmost apostle to the north is out of place: he should follow the two kings.

Questions about the choice of such a selection of saints seem to me to be imponderable.

The most useful form of listing is probably to list them in the order in which they stand at present, with suggested identifications, and suggestions about restoration. Again, they are listed north and south, and 1-9 from east to west.

- NORTH 1 (by the tower arch, and therefore nearest the Rood)
 A graceful female figure, with a fine open face, and long, flowing hair. She wears only a plain, round-necked robe. Her left hand lies across her breast, while her right hand once held a small object which is now broken off.
 Identification: ST MARY MAGDALENE
 Someone, somewhere has speculated that this could have been a 'portrait' of Duchess Alice. However, no self-respecting Duchess of the 1460s would surely ever have allowed herself to be portrayed without headress, with loose hair, and in such a simple robe. The Duchess of Suffolk's own effigy on her tomb in Ewelme church will certainly confirm this! On the contrary, she is a woman of low birth, and judging from her hairstyle, perhaps

also somewhat loose-living. Far from suggesting a contemporary member of the English aristocracy, she is exactly how one would expect the Magdalene to be portrayed. In which case it would be appropriate to restore her right hand with an 'alabaster box' of the usual form.

(NB This relationship between the easternmost figures in the Nave roof and the rood is also to be found in the slightly earlier roof at Causton - where, incidentally, the Suffolks were also patrons.)

- 2 (Note on the 'Apostolic figures': Except where otherwise indicated, all these figures are bearded, and wear a full-length simple tunic, and a cloak falls discretely from their shoulders. The tunic has a wide, rounded neckline, with a small slit in the centre-front, the corners of which are folded forward, thus forming a small 'V' shape - obviously a contemporary fashion detail.)

This figure has an exceptionally fine face, and a curl on his forehead. Both hands are extended in an upright position, and there is no sign whatsoever that they ever held anything. They appear to be in an attitude of blessing/confirmation/ordination???

Suggested identification: ST JUDE

It is impossible to be certain about this.

The figure could either be left as it is, or a boat could rest between the two open hands. A boat would give the figure an identification as Jude. (One would suggest a simple, clinker-built rowing boat, rather than anything elaborate!)

- 3 Even after shot-blasting after fire damage, this fine figure retains clear 'worry lines' on his forehead, suggesting age. He holds a closed book with a strap in his left hand (and is the only figure in this series to carry a book). This is suggestive of a Biblical writer. The right hand retains an empty dowel-hole.

Identification: ST PAUL

No one wrote more in the New Testament than Paul, who is traditionally depicted as an older man. The right hand could be given his sword, with the blade above the fist, and the pomel below.

- 4 The index finger of the figure's left hand points to what was once held in his right hand. The right hand was evidently broken long ago, so that one cannot even be certain now whether it was dowelled or not.

Suggested identification: ST SIMON

In accordance with many East Anglian instances, this figure could be definitely identified as Simon by the right hand being restored with a fish.

- 5 The right index finger points to what was once held in the left hand, which is dowel-drilled right through.

Suggested identification: ST JAMES THE LESS

This identification could be secured by restoring a fuller's club to the left hand. A good prototype exists in the Chancel roof.

- 6 This figure points with his right index finger to three round-topped objects held in his left hand. These are

the three loaves in John 6, 5-7

Identification: ST PHILIP (see comparable figure in Chancel)

7 The first of two kings.

Both are wearing the same garments: a full-length under garment, with a dalmatic-like overmantel, and a tippet round the shoulders. Both wear crowns, but these are not identical. They also have different hair-styles.

This figure is unbearded, and is also distinguished by a high-standing collar above the tippet. The right hand seems to be clenched (it might once have held something), and the left hand is pierced to take a staff or sceptre.

Identification: ST EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

(These kings must surely be English kings, and if all these figures are saints, only two English kings are canonised - namely Edward the Confessor and Edmund. Edward the Martyr is a very improbable choice.)

For restoration purposes, this figure could satisfactorily be restored with a short sceptre in his left hand, and a large ring with an emerald in his right hand.

(This would be a particularly happy restoration in view of our historic links with Edwards Westminster, from Thomas of Leighton right through to Richard Watts, Keith Robinson and Philip Stopford!!!)

- 8 This king sports a beard. His left hand holds something indeterminate, which could either be a wide belt around his waist, or a short scroll - probably the former. His right hand is pierced and could be restored either with a sceptre, or in order to secure a definite identification with one or more arrows.

Identification: ST EDMUND OF BURY

- 9 Another enigmatic 'apostolic' figure, probably out of sequence. His vesture is distinguished by a stand-up collar like No 7 above. His right index finger points to a short scroll held diagonally in his left hand.

Tentative identification: ST PETER

No possibility of keys, but Peter at this point would complete the series. He could be very easily identified as Peter if ever repainted, by the scroll being inscribed with the text: "Tu es Christus" (Peter's confession. Being just inside the west door, such a text makes a dramatic contrast to Peter holding the keys and the church at the other extreme of the north side of the building, for that Chancel figure exemplifies the complementary text and its consequences: "tu es Petrus", which succinctly sums up Peter's life (see Matthew 16, 15-19)

- SOUTH 1 This figure appears to belong to the 'apostolic' group, but differs in certain respects: he has no beard, and his hair is short and curly. These two characteristics alone are probably sufficient to identify him as the youngest of the apostles. Unlike the John in the Chancel roof however, this figure holds nothing. Both hands are clasped together at the waist. St John is frequently shown in this posture when associated with the Cross (cf figure NORTH 1). Although there would almost certainly have been another image of this John in the Rood ensemble itself, the Nave figure not only relates to it, with the Magdalene opposite, but also stands here in his own right as one of the Twelve.

Identification: ST JOHN

- 2 This splendid figure is a mirror image of his opposite counterpart NORTH 2, and equally enigmatic.

Suggested identification: ST ANDREW

To fix this identity on him a saltire cross could readily be fastened between his two extended hands.

- 3 This is a characteristic pilgrim figure, wearing a large hat with an upturned brim, and a quite large satchel slung over his left shoulder. Each hand is perforated with a dowel hole.

Identification: ST JAMES THE GREAT

It is a little unusual for James to be holding two objects (cf the Chancel figure). One of these would certainly be a substantial pilgrim's staff say, in the left hand. His right hand might have held an erect sword, the object of his martyrdom by Herod Agrippa in AD 44.

- 4 The robes of this figure vary slightly from the others. Over a full-length undergarment he wears a tunic with cutaway sleeves, and from his shoulders hangs the usual cloak. The right hand is raised in blessing. The left hand supported some small object which has long since disappeared, though the nail which held it remains in situ.

Identification: ST MATTHEW

In England, Matthew was quite often shown holding a small money-box with a slit in the top (rather like some old church alms-boxes) in reference to his being a tax collector. (see entry for him in the ODS). This seems quite probable.

- 5 This apostolic figure also has his right hand raised in blessing. The left hand is grasping the handle of some object, the top of which has gone, though a small ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") dowel hole remains in the top only of the fist.

Identification: ST BARTHOLOMEW

Since the object in the hand extended only upwards, and not downwards, one may reasonably suppose it to have been a knife, the tool with which this saint was flayed alive.

- 6 While the left hand of this figure points to the right, the right hand is pierced with an empty dowel hole.

Identification: ST MATTHIAS

This identification would be secured if he is given a halberd.

- 7 This last apostolic figure with a very fine face, holds his right hand up in blessing. A dowel hole passes through the left fist.

Identification: ST THOMAS

Thomas should hold either a lance, or a spear.

- 8 The two bishops.

There is no way of identifying these two with absolute certainty; one can only conjecture. Both bishops are dressed in the same vestments: an alb, a dalmatic, a chasuble, an appparelled amice, and a mitre, but there the similarities end.

The mitre of No 8 is more elaborate than that of his counterpart. Both mitres are ornamented with relief foliate carving, but this one is also crocketted. This might represent a mitre pretiosa, and that could, but need not



CARPENTER'S MARK

necessarily imply a higher ranking bishop. The right hand is raised in an episcopal blessing (one of only three figures in the roof to be blessing in this way, see the Principal angels). The left hand has a dowel hole which held either a crosier or, less likely, a primatial cross.

Tentative identification: ST HUGH OF LINCOLN

It is hard to imagine that if any bishops are represented, St Hugh should not be here, with his strong historic associations with this church, and the preservation here of an important relic. In this case, he would of course carry a crosier. The fact that there is no swan - and never could have been with either figure - does not disprove that this is Hugh, for he is not infrequently shown without his swan.

- 9 This bishop's mitre is uncrocked! His right hand, which is damaged gives an episcopal blessing. His left hand is simply raised. It didn't look to me as though it had ever held anything.

Identification: This is the hardest figure yet to identify. There really is nothing at all to go on. We may wish to simply have him as an unidentified episcopal saint. A number of bishops of Lincoln had unofficial cults (eg Robert Grosseteste). Figures of St Thomas of Canterbury were very widespread, and there is for instance, impressive evidence of his cult as nearby as Tilsforth. If it seemed important, some object could probably be 'introduced' into his left hand, but it is hard to know who to suggest as a likely candidate. I do not know of any other episcopal saints who had especial associations with All Saints.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One thing perhaps only, is beyond dispute: the many figures in the Nave roof are exclusively denizens of heaven. We do not have any elaborate series of 'the Orders of Angels', or the representation of 'Liturgical Processions'. We do not have the Four Doctors of the Church, or representative groups of saints. We barely manage a complete set of apostles... unlike some of the great East Anglian wool church roofs. But in a number of instances it is possible to trace tentative connections and associations which indicate that the figures are more than just an arbitrary selection. I have tried to indicate where I think particular relationships exist, or existed, even if they are not now fully comprehended. More thinking, and comparison with comparable roofs and screens &c elsewhere, may yet bring more to light, but here - it seems for the first time ever - we now have an accurate account of the woodwork in our marvellous Nave roof.

Keith Robinson
13 August 1987

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON THE SHIELDS

There are four shields in the roof, all of which are carried by angels. Although in funerary architecture and memorials angels sometimes carry the arms of human beings, this roof is not a work of that type. None of the shields bear any ornament, so any ornament there may once have been would have been painted, and the question as to what it might have been therefore only arises now if the figures are to be painted again.

My inclination is to think that if the shields did once bear devices, they are much more likely to have taken the form of sacred monograms, rather than coats of arms or arms attributed to saints.

THE STONE CORBELS

The Nave roof is supported by a fine series of corbels in the form of angels bearing shields. The shields are carved in relief with objects associated with the Passion of our Lord. The angels themselves are quite awkward, with extraordinary hair-dos, and their wings bent at right angles, but they are vigorously carved in considerable detail. The shields were recorded by Richmond, but are listed again here for the sake of completeness.

NORTH

- 1 Basin and sponge
- 2 Scourges
- 3 Tongue spitting
(Richmond notes a comparable
example in Winchester Cathedral)
- 4 Crown of Thorns
- 5 Cock
- 6 three Nails
- 7 Ladder
- 8 Five Wounds
- 9 Three Dice

SOUTH

- 1 Pincers
- 2 Sponge with reeds (cf second
angel in roof ridge)
- 3 Hammer
- 4 Seamless Robe
- 5 Bundle of rods
- 6 Latin Cross
- 7 Maltese Cross
- 8 Pillar and cords
- 9 blank

Again, as in the roofs of both Chancel and Nave, we seem to have a theme which doesn't quite fit the available space. Is this a sign of haste?

CARPENTERS' MARKS

A second check leads me to think that only one of these is any longer visible, and following severe charring and shot-blasting that is remarkable. It is near the north end of the westernmost principal rafter. According to Brunskill (Timber Building in Britain) these marks were "not (except in rare circumstances) used as a means of identifying the craftsman due for payment as was done by masons, but as a means of identifying members whose joints have been tested, taken apart and subsequently reassembled". (op cit p. 34)