

# Old Felixstowe Parish



## 1. Introduction to Old Felixstowe Parish

**Old Felixstowe Parish** is one Parish with three churches St Peter and St Paul, St Andrew and St Nicholas at the Ferry, in the lovely seaside town and port of Felixstowe, a flourishing growth town on the Suffolk Coast. Whilst it is Britain's largest Container Port Felixstowe offers much to all ages with a variety of community events as well as traditional seaside character.

Old Felixstowe Parish encompasses much of the central and northern parts of Felixstowe, bounded by the seafront and Felixstowe Ferry on the Deben estuary. The Parish includes the main shopping thoroughfare (Hamilton Road) and a substantial number of residential properties in Old Felixstowe. Further housing developments are in prospect, in the near future, though the inland parish boundary remains largely open farmland today.

Old Felixstowe Parish's oldest church, St Peter and St Paul, an Historic England Grade II\* listed building, has stood at the heart of Old Felixstowe for eight centuries, and its site has possibly been a place of worship for as long as 1,000 years.



[St Peter and St Paul](#) is the oldest building in Felixstowe.

Records show that its site in Church Road has been home to the current church since the 1300s though parts of it are much changed. Some historians though believe the land may have been used for worship – pagan rather than Christian – as far back as Roman times, nearly 2,000 years ago. The Parish church of St Peter and St Paul stood in Felixstowe Parish (not as now Old Felixstowe Parish) for over 700 years and now a grade II listed building. A priory was mentioned on the site in 1105 but the current building in former guises was mentioned in 1362. Remnants of this era include the [medieval carvings](#) in the choir area. There is a [pulpit](#) from Jacobean times, [a piscine](#), one small panel in the font, and the St Peter Pence [Poor Box](#) from pre reformation and reformation, as well as parts of the exterior including the main tower and south walls. Various parts were added over the centuries including the Victorian era. In 1829 the interior was called “a little rustic” but today's interior owes much to the interest of [Lady Login](#) in the 1860s and 70s in restoring the church and opening in 1872. Renovations included the rebuilding of the sanctuary area, the pews, [the font](#) remodelled, and exterior walls using the Bawdsey Martello tower bricks. In 1917 the organ took a direct hit from a [naval shell](#) that did not explode so the church was still standing today! The 6 distinctive stain glass windows of saints, connected with the site, date 1895-1905 in the arts and crafts movement style.



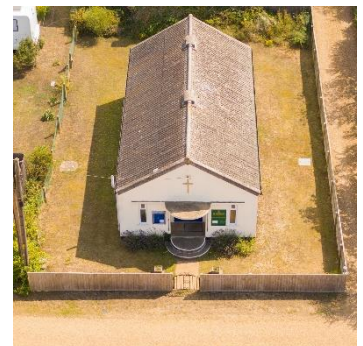
[The graveyard](#) offers a wealth of local and national history in the various persons buried. There may appear to be few changes apart from the building of [the Link](#) in 1987 and the [Remembrance Garden](#) in 1997 after the closing of the graveyard. Each successive generation have developed and changed the building to suit their worship needs. Many hold the place with special regard for the numerous family connections over the years in baptisms, weddings, funerals and burials as well as Christian faith services and events.

In 1907 in response to the development of the town centre [St Andrew's church](#) was built of wood and corrugated iron and affectionately known as the "[Tin Tabernacle](#)". Built on land donated by Captain [E.G. Pretyman](#), it was a second-hand structure as its erection was not meant to be permanent. In 1926 plans and funds to build a new church were in progress, the First World War having stopped the originally intended new building. The current building, opened in August 1931, is unique in its style using the then modern construction methods and materials that would be "high, light and airy looking" based on traditional Suffolk perpendicular style. [Hilda Mason](#) and [Raymond Erith](#) designed the building using the innovative methods for the time even after disagreements with the incumbent the Rev HB Greene. These materials are still causing great problems today and even with new technology, the renovation is continually being reviewed to solve the problem of the now infamous "concrete rot" although those in the know will agree that St Andrews will not fall down just yet or in this generations lifetime!. The interior features of [Wrinch's](#) wooden [communion table](#), choirstalls, [lectern](#) and [pulpit](#) complement the light airiness inside. The beautiful east [Ascension Window](#) above the Communion table attract the attention from the nave. Over the years St Andrews has contributed another facet to Parish life in that it often innovated, embraced and enhanced changes from the traditional "church" offered by the Parish. Its large capacity has enable it to host various big events whether for the Church or the community.



The third church building of the Parish is [St Nicholas Church](#), often known as "the Ferry Church."

In 1878 The Ferry church or as it was known then "[the Schoolroom](#)", was a wooden hut placed in the geographically isolated hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry as the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul was over a mile away and not the easiest to access on the dirt tracks via Ferry Road only. The Ferry has maintained its unique and distinctive character with the church serving the community there and now the united Parish. In [1943 a bomb](#) exploded near the church and caused sufficient damage for the Ferry church to be closed although the Golf Club kindly offered a temporary meeting hut. It was rebuilt and opened in 1954 which was fortunate as the Ferry hamlet and surrounding fields were severely flooded in 1953 in the East Coast Floods of January that year so would have suffered significant damage if built earlier. Much of the church has remained unchanged.



Inside it offers few traditional church items except wooden sanctuary chairs and a lectern plus the two ten commandment boards, St Nicholas offers mostly homemade textiles depicting the sea and hamlet in which it stands. In recent years it has survived closure reviews and whilst today a basic building, it still is as ever popular as a peaceful, fun loving place for the Parish to enjoy- even more so since the arrival of the "Milleniloo" (2003) giving a much needed modern facility to enjoy. The Ferry and its' church has always provided a welcome to the town and provides another facet of Parish life despite there being only a few of the original Ferry families now attending and is held with fondness by many over the years.

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## ST PETER AND ST PAUL CHURCH

### A 14<sup>th</sup> century building

Back in the 1300s the area we know today as Felixstowe was undergoing its second renaissance. It was home to a Plantagenet palace, a favourite place for the royal family to visit – and Edward III stayed there in 1338 and 1339 while he marshalled a fleet of 260 ships, oared galleys, in the Deben tributaries, the largest of which we today call the King's Fleet, before it set off in 1340 to fight the French – and win – at the Battle of Sluys in the 100 Years War. King John had been an earlier visitor to the palace. The remains of the building, called Walton Old Hall, stand in the corner of the sports ground between Colneis Road and Dellwood Avenue – and not far away stood St Felix Priory.



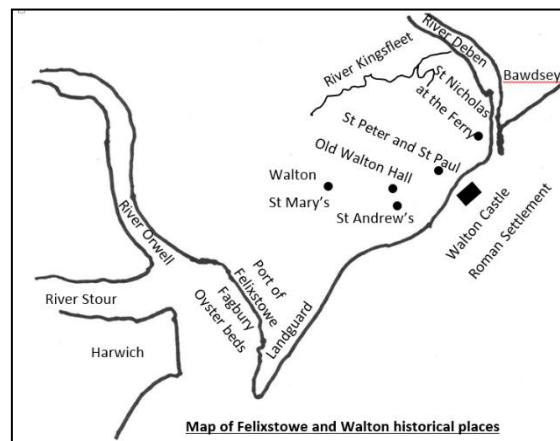
It was against this background that work began in the early 14th century on today's parish church of St Peter and St Paul.

### The Roman site and Domesday

To discover why the site for the church was chosen we have to look back to Felixstowe's first renaissance, 1,000 years before when the boundaries of Walton, today the northernmost part of the resort, stretched to the sea. The Roman invaders recognised the peninsula's importance in the 4th century, with Constantine the Great ordering the construction of a reasonably basic shore fort on a six acre site at the cliffs at The Dip – a key defensive position, situated between two estuaries. Established oyster beds in the Orwell (beneath Fagbury Cliffs) also provided a ready source of food for the garrison. In the early 300s AD the cliffs here stretched up to a mile further out to sea but erosion in this area has been rapid over the centuries, along with extensive excavation of septaria, a material used for building (and used in the construction of St Peter and St Paul). The Roman fort would probably have been about 170m long by 130m wide. Seven hundred years after the Romans left, the Normans built Walton Castle on top of the ruins of the old shore fort, most likely within its walls. King Henry II ordered the castle's destruction in 1174 – its stones were then used to create footpaths on roads around the area. Today at extreme low tide the seaweed-topped remains of the Roman fort can still be seen.

There is some thought among historians that the site of St Peter and St Paul may have been used for worship by the Romans – but not home to a Christian church, but a Roman temple.

Historian Phil Hadwen, a renowned expert on Felixstowe, wrote: "There would certainly have been a temple to the Roman gods near the fort, before the Emperor Constantine made a dictat in 313 AD that Jesus Christ could be worshipped. Such a Roman worship site may have been on the top of the cliffs nearby, now washed away by the sea. However, John Fairclough, former Roman expert at Ipswich Museum, believes that this is not necessarily so. The Romans liked to erect their temples at special or magical places, where a spring bubbles out of the ground for instance. Looking from The Dip back towards the area of the church we find Reed Pond valley, with a stream or small trickle of water. Is there a small spring near the present church to supply this



valley? Churches were often built on the sites of pre-Christian worship so it is not beyond the realms of possibility that worship has been ongoing in this area for well on 2,000 years.”

Today Reed Pond is a marshy area crossed by a paved footpath just below The Pines to The Dip, and its source watercourse has probably been buried over many years of housebuilding, particularly the creation of the Cliff Estate in the 1970s and 80s. Whether that source was in Church Road where St Peter and St Paul stands today it is impossible to tell. However, a number of Roman finds have been made on the land now occupied by St George’s Road – immediately next to the modern church – which could support the theory that a temple stood where the church now stands. These finds – recorded by E St F Moore in *East Anglian Notes and Queries*, Volume 1, 1885-86, included a splendid vase of Samarian ware, bone combs, a bone disc from the back of a mirror, flue tiles, glass phials, tweezers, rings, a gold chain, pins, brooches, the shells of oysters, mussels and cockles, and a small bronze bell from a chariot.

In Roman times, there was likely to have been a small resident population in the area, though likely only a scattering of farms. By the 1300s, there had been little change – the population of the area was more established but still not large. The *Domesday Book of 1086* recorded dozens rather than hundreds of people.

The landscape though was very different to today. Mainly fields and some woodland on the higher ground, while the lower levels bordering the rivers Deben and Orwell, which today house rich drained arable farmland protected by river walls, were marshes frequently flooded with changing topography due to water levels, and stitched together by a maze of inlets and navigable water courses used by those who knew them well and had the skills to negotiate such tricky conditions.

### **The Coming of Christianity – King Sigebert and St Felix**

Christianity did not come to the area until three centuries after the Romans left, leaving Britain in the Dark Ages.

In 630 AD King Sigebert requested that Canterbury (where St Augustine had arrived from Rome in 596) send missionaries to spread the Word in East Anglia. Bishop Felix, who came from Burgundy, responded to this call. He set up his centre at Dommoc, which was once thought to have been the thriving port of Dunwich, but is now believed to be Felixstowe, where with the Irish monk, Fursa, preached the Gospel very successfully for seventeen years.



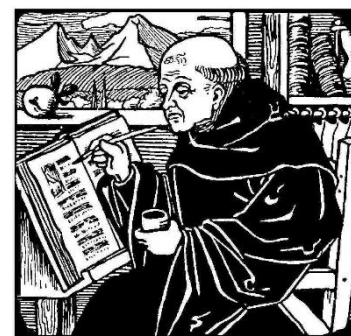
The *Domesday Survey* compiled in 1085-6 was a record of what people owned rather than which buildings existed, and although there is mention of Walton and its church, Felixstowe doesn’t feature. At this time the Felixstowe area would have been known as Walton and that area of town would dominate until Victorian times. A church at “Burg” or “Burch” is mentioned as being dedicated to St Felix and some historians strongly believe that this is Felixstowe’s first church, possibly a wooden structure on the site of St Peter and St Paul. The area did not become known as Felixstowe (named after St Felix) instead of Burch until probably the 1200s.

## **The priory 12<sup>th</sup> century dedicated to St Felix**

The first building of note in the town after the Roman occupation was a small priory or monastery, dedicated to St Felix and founded by Roger Bigod, the first Earl of Norfolk and major landowner in Suffolk as Baron, in 1105. The priory, Order of St Benedict, was built before the Norman castle and was possibly situated within the walls of the old Roman fort. Divers from the North East Essex Sub Aqua Club carried out an investigation of the fort remains in 1976 and found a building within the walls. Marine archaeologist Stuart Bacon, of the Suffolk Underwater Studies Unit, said they described it as a fortification and so it was probably the Norman castle, but may have been the priory. The priory was a cell of the cathedral priory of Rochester. This was confirmed by the Bigod family. It must have been a small insignificant cell with about four inmates, one of whom was the prior, elected by the mother house. Its dedication introduces the name of St Felix, the local saint and first bishop of East Anglia. St Felix Day, January 7, was celebrated annually in a certain "Stowe" or place in Walton. There would have been a church associated with this cell and both would have been built of septaria, scoured from the cliffs. Many of the churches in the area were built with this greyish brown material, which unfortunately breaks and crumbles very easily – not ideal for churches which would hopefully stand for centuries. In consequence many of churches have suffered badly, some even completely crumbling away.



Historian S D Wall said the priory grounds of Old Abbey Close, called Priory Meadow, appears to be the land in the vicinity of Golf, Marcus and Priory Roads with the ponds south of the meadow. Inhabitants of Old Thurlow House in Golf Road have always maintained that the lawn in front of the house and the area running down to the sea was the site of the priory's carp ponds.



The monastery was removed during the 13th century to a meadow at the rear of Walton Church, still called Abbey Meadow. This may have been because when Hugh Bigod built his Norman castle at Walton in about 1147-8 he used the remains of the old Roman fort. The Bigods fell out with Henry II and the castle was destroyed, which would have meant moving both the church and the monastery. The monastery went to Walton and the new church was most likely built on the site of today's St Peter and St Paul. However, nothing remains today of the "cell of Fylchestow".

## **St Peter and St Paul during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century**

The earliest records of the present St Peter and St Paul date from the 1300s and parts of today's building, including the tower and porch still survive from the medieval church. There is documentary evidence in 1362 which states that the Countess of Norfolk held the Advowson (right of presentation to the benefice) of the church. A church of St Felix together with St Mary's, Walton, is mentioned in 1339 in connection with a grant to the Priory of Rochester, and there is a possibility that this refers to St Peter and St Paul. Because this is not certain, we can only speculate that the present church was built between 1339 and 1360 – though Historic England's experts say the tower arch could be as early as 1300.



It is clear that much of the church was built sometime during the 14th century. Its oldest architecture is mainly from this time, but the building does convey the curious impression of being a rather remarkable mixture of old and new. The tower and porch are definitely ancient, and the nave dating from the same time retains traces of Norman workmanship.



What would it have been like attending church in the 14th century? Of course, England was a Roman Catholic country at this time. Whether St Peter and St Paul had a confessional is not known – there is no sign of a confession box or stall today and no record of such an item.

Seating in church was rare in the 14th century. Stalls and benches did not become commonplace in many churches in England until the 15th and 16th centuries. Where there were benches they were positioned around the walls. In medieval times people would stand in church, not in the nave necessarily, and sometimes wander around and mingle. Services would have been spoken in Latin with the priests facing the altar, backs to the people, and saying mass softly – and little of it would have been understood. Services were long, and, especially in larger churches, a variety of activities would be taking place at the same time. There could be a service taking place in the main nave, other services in the side chapels, people coming and going, merchants meeting for business purposes, pilgrims might be visiting shrines, and there could be beggars seeking charity. People were not compelled to go to church in the Middle Age, though some saw it as a break from long hard hours of manual work, and most services were held by and for those in the religious community: priests, aristocracy and community leaders. There was no sense that a personal relationship with God was possible at this stage.

Life was also unpredictable in the 14th century – a turbulent time. It began with Edward I invading Scotland and capturing William Wallace – and saw five monarchs, of which Edward III reigned half the century. He declared himself King of France in 1338 and started the 100 Years War. Later this led to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, partly against taxes raised to fight the war.



Production of paper started in Germany, the Black Death arrived in 1348, striking twice more in 1360 and 1369, killing one-third of the population in areas where it hit. In 1382 John Wycliffe began translating the Bible from Latin into English.

While parts of St Peter and St Paul's structure from the 14th century still survive – the tower, west doorway, nave and north doorway, south doorway, and south porch – the interior of the church provides lots of insight into church life and ecclesiastical buildings of the 15th century.



## 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century artefacts

The wonderful carved and tracery ends and poppy heads of the choir stalls – which were originally in the nave – were certainly the work of 15th century craftsmen. The stalls were placed in the chancel during the restoration and the Victorian woodwork can be seen in the fronts of the stalls and elsewhere in them; this matches the woodwork which screens the organ chamber. The stall ends include leaves, berries and four-petalled flowers. On the eastern poppy head of the priest's stall, facing east, is a little man sticking his tongue out. On the armrests are the remains of various mythological creatures. At the ends of the front bookrests are fine lions and what appears to be a horse though some claim it was originally a unicorn!



In the south wall of the sanctuary is a 15th century cinquefoil-headed piscine niche, containing an octfoil drain, down which was poured the water from the washing of the priest's hands and of the sacred vessels at the Eucharist.

The font, of the octagonal pattern found in many East Anglian churches, is also 15th century. The font was restored in the 1800s when some of the carved motifs on the bowl were re-cut. In the faces of the bowl are the instruments of Our Lord's Passion and Death, apart from the west face, which shows a 15th century ship (a symbol of the Christian church). The crown of thorns and the cross with INRI are entirely 19th century stone masonry.



Before the break with Rome instituted by Henry VIII in 1534, with the services in Latin, the only concession to the ordinary working worshippers, who couldn't even read English, would have been wonderful colour paintings on the walls, the stained glass windows and carvings. These would have been of biblical subjects and the lives of the Saints. The church itself would have been a sort of religious manual, which the congregation could try to interpret. Dividing the nave and the chancel was the rood screen, above which was the great Rood showing our Lord on the cross, with his Mother and St John on either side. The central fact of Christianity, Christ crucified, was always there for all to see.

Near the south door is an iron-bound almsbox, probably from the 15th century or early 16th. It was hollowed out of a solid piece of timber and may have served as a Peter's Pence box for the church's contribution to its medieval headquarters in Rome.

The south porch was added during the late 14th or early 15th century and was often used not just as a shelter but also as a meeting place. The first part of the baptism, church and wedding services also took place in the porch.

The church bell is nearly 400 years old. Its inscription reads "MILES GRAY MADE ME, 1627". It has a diameter of 31 inches (approximately 80cm) and weighs 5cwt 3quarters (approximately 292.5kg). The bell was restored in 1991.



The church registers date from 1652, providing historians with a glimpse of the lives of those who have lived and died in the parish. The earliest versions are in the Suffolk "Hold", the local Records' Office in Ipswich.

## Reformation and Changes

The Reformation in England not only changed how people worshipped at that time, but also the very structure and fabric of the majority, if not all, of the churches. Henry VIII's wish to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn led to the break with Rome and to England becoming a Protestant country. The dissolution of the monasteries happened soon afterwards, and the church was totally changed in just a few years. Although the attack by King Henry's ministers on the monasteries was mainly for financial reasons, there was no doubt that many of the monks were far too worldly and more concerned with wealth and extravagant living, rather than being dedicated to the worship of God. Consequently they were ripe for change. Also the Bible which had been translated into English became more accessible, and there were several religious factions all worshipping in their own fashion and believing it was the true way.

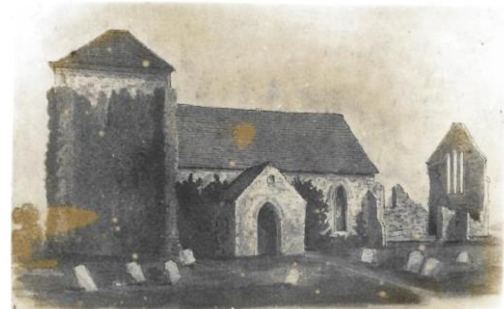
Most of the interior of St Peter and St Paul Church was changed in the 16th and 17th centuries in accordance with the new ideas and liturgies. Anything vaguely 'Catholic' would have disappeared, although it is recorded that fragments of the rood screen remained until 1829. What wasn't removed or changed by the reformers became of interest to the Puritan regime during and after the English Civil War. William Dowsing, whose picture can be seen in Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich, toured the churches of Suffolk during the late 1640s, and acting under orders from the Earl of Manchester gave instructions for any "superstitious images and inscriptions" to be destroyed.



The Reformation had new liturgical needs which required different furnishings. The church became furnished for the Prayer Book of Worship of the established Church of England, where the pulpit became the dominant focus. The pulpit dates from the early 1600s and is a fine piece of Jacobean carving, standing on what was believed to be part of the original nave arch, or even the priory church, and is 14th century. The Pulpit was probably the top part of what was once a triple-decker arrangement but was painted black by the Victorians to look like mahogany.

## 18<sup>th</sup> Century decline

From this point onwards the structure of the church changed greatly. For a long period restoration was not a priority and consequently the fabric would have suffered from neglect. Constructed of septaria, St Peter and St Paul would have needed ongoing repairs over the centuries but was described as a "mean building" by one commentator in the 1700s and in 1740/41 John Kirby's survey of the Felixstowe neighbourhood had a sketch showing the tower partly collapsed or reduced in height. It had a pyramid style roof which gave it the look it has today. The tower at this stage was two-thirds of the height it had once been. It was not unusual for church towers to be made lower as they were an obvious landmark for enemy invaders. The tower is now so patched up with brick that little of its original septaria remains. The tower walls are four feet thick compared with those of the nave, which are two feet six inches. The medieval nave and chancel remained but the windows had lost their tracery and really looked the worse for wear. The chancel had two windows on its south side and a tiny priest's entrance between them. It wasn't long before the chancel,



with its three-light east window, fell into total ruin. Drawings from the time show serious neglect and the church, effectively serving a hamlet at the end of a country lane leading to the sea, and very much secondary to the much larger population of Walton, in a perilously poor state.

Until comparatively recently the upkeep of the chancel was the responsibility of the rector, while the rest of the church had to be maintained by the parishioners. Felixstowe and Walton shared a lay rector, who most probably lived away from the area. Consequently the chancels in both churches suffered from a lack of hands-on attention. This culminated towards the end of the 18th century with the ruined chancel being demolished and a small brick one being erected. The nave was 61ft long and the chancel 20ft by 16ft.

David Elisha Davy visited the church in 1829, and from his notes it is possible to surmise details of the interior of the church at that time. At the east end of the plaster-ceilinged low chancel stood the communion table within its rails. Above on the east wall were the framed boards, one painted with the Lord's Prayer and Creed, while the other displayed the Ten Commandments. There was no ceiling to the nave and the timber framework of the roof was visible. The upright parts of the rood screen were still standing between the chancel and the nave, but quite likely in a poor condition. The royal coat-of-arms of George III were above the chancel arch, clearly reminding the congregation of the position of the monarch as the temporal head of the established church. It is a sad observation that the pulpit was painted to look like mahogany. Beneath the tower stood the historic font, which Davy's notes indicate may have had the carvings around its bowl slightly altered at a later date. There were box pews in the nave and chancel and a few carved benches at the east end of the nave (presumably those 15th century ones now in the chancel). A gallery under the tower contained a barrel-organ and also a gallery space for the singers. The area beneath was used as a vestry. In the floor was a Purbeck marble slab, which had once contained a brass.

The churchwardens' accounts illustrate that attempts were made to keep the church sound and comfortable. In 1795 a bricklayer was working on the tower, hardly surprising considering that more and more brickwork was necessary as the septaria slowly crumbled away. A new bell rope was also purchased. There were problems with the church fence and locals were hanging their clothes on it to dry. Parts of the graveyard were being used as a playground. Sparrows seemed to be a nuisance and large numbers were destroyed. In 1805 the windows were repaired and reglazed. Large structural bills were paid in 1800, 1810, 1816 and 1844, but there are no details of the work done. Mr Smith of Ipswich was usually employed for church repairs, but Woolnough of Walton and George Jackson were also used. In 1810 seven and a half yards of purple cloth, yellow silk fringes and tassels were bought for the new hangings for the pulpit and reading desk.

With the rather parlous state the church was in during the middle of the 19th century there were to be three factors that would help transform the church building and the parish, allowing it to become the fine establishment that it is today.

### **19<sup>th</sup> Century rebuilding and refurbishment**

Firstly, the third renaissance of Felixstowe – the major development of the town from a small village into a fashionable resort, shaping the way we see the core of the town today, its centre, seafront and port. In the early 1800s Felixstowe was a sleepy backwater. There was a small community at Felixstowe Ferry and quite a thriving one in Walton. The foresight of John Cobbold and Colonel George Tomline, medical recommendations about the health-giving properties of sea air and sea water bathing, and the gradual improvement of transport links, coupled with more time for the working man to take some form of holiday, and a summer holiday by the Empress of Germany in 1891, all resulted

in Felixstowe becoming a popular if rather exclusive resort. Not only were there wealthy visitors, but several people of means and influence came to live here. By the latter part of the century, upmarket new hotels were attracting the celebrities of the day, cabinet ministers, and minor royalty, many new homes were being built, and all this was helped by the construction of the railway line and direct trains to London.

Secondly, the new awakening within the church fuelled by the Oxford Movement encouraged the restoration of churches and a return to medieval architecture and fittings, which affected most English parish churches.

### **The Login family**

Thirdly, the connection of the Login family with St Peter and St Paul Church. During 1869-70 Lady Login, a Scot and the widow of Sir John Spencer Login, together with some of his influential friends, organised concerts, lectures and bazaars to raise money for a thorough restoration and rebuilding of the church. A faculty for the new chancel and transepts and organ loft was granted in August 1871. Historian Allan Jobson, in *The Felixstowe Story*, says that to enable the work to be done five mural tablets had to be taken down and refixed elsewhere, and 23 graves had to be moved and pathways altered. One of the reasons put forward for the need for the work was the growing population of Felixstowe – which totalled 641 at this time.



A Scottish firm of architects, Charles Edward and Thomas Robertson, of Bank Street, Dundee, were chosen by Lady Login to prepare designs for the new work. They had designed several new churches in Dundee and the surrounding area, but Felixstowe would seem to be their only major English church work. The building contractor was Mr RS Smith, from Northgate Street, in Ipswich. Mr Frewer, also from Ipswich, provided the carved stonework. The idea was to face the external walls with flint, the usual building material for Suffolk churches, but the architects suggested using bricks from the disused Martello Tower at Bawdsey Ferry. Permission to do this was obtained from the Government and the bricks were laid, not in courses, but in a haphazard herringbone fashion, which gives the impression from a distance of grey Kentish ragstone.

The chancel arch was built in the early 14th century style in 1870-72. It has foliage corbels, more of which support the chancel roof. Several of the 19th century corbels supporting the roof timbers inside, and window hood-moulds outside the church, are simple square stone blocks, still waiting to be carved. The new chancel, north transept, vestry and organ chamber were completed first and a dedication service was held in June 1872. The sermon was preached by the Rector of St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds. The organ, by Holdich, which had been moved from the west end of the church to its own purpose-built chamber, was played by Mr Holdich himself. The south transept was built in 1873. During the work the nave was shortened by 20ft.

One of the outstanding features of the 'new' church was the Login windows, which are simple, but so effective. Another feature, often overlooked and maybe not known, is the grave and memorial to Sir John Login. This can be found well to the right of the main path which passes under the lych-gate porch. This monument is one of the finest in the churchyard.

Dr John Login, a native of Orkney, started his military career in the Bengal army as a medical officer. He served in both medical and administrative capacities and his dedication earned him the respect of the civil authorities. One of his tasks was to be



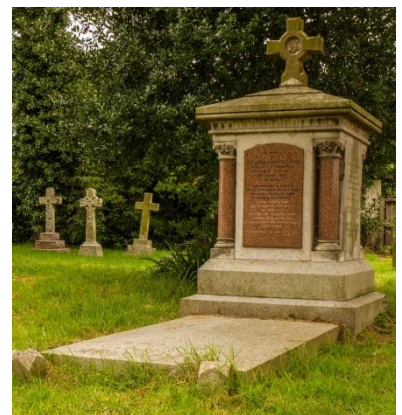
responsible for the treasury of the kings of Lahore. His high principles and moral fortitude were possibly the reason that he became the guardian of the Maharajah Duleep Singh, the deposed ruler of the annexed Punjab, who was about eleven years old at the time.

Duleep Singh's father was the owner of the Koh-I-Noor diamond, the greatest treasure in India, but the East India Company, acting for the British Government, acquired the diamond and thought that it would do their cause no harm if they presented it as a gift to Queen Victoria.



After about four years tutoring by Dr Login, Duleep Singh became a Christian and, probably for his own safety as well as removing a possible 'rallying figure' in India, was brought to England, still under the care of John Login. For his efforts Login was knighted. By the time that the Maharajah had achieved his majority at 18, he felt that Login was too old a companion, and purchased a country estate at Elveden, close to Thetford on the Norfolk-Suffolk border, in 1863.

Sir John and Lady Login retired to Felixstowe, but four months later on Sunday, October 18, 1863, Sir John died suddenly, quietly and peacefully at home. He was 54. He had appeared to be in reasonable health. He had been to church that morning, but in the evening, as was the family custom, they were joined by the other members of the household to sing their favourite hymns. Sir John was singing the last one, 'Jesu, lover of my soul', as he went upstairs to his room. He died soon after and was found sitting in his chair.



Duleep Singh was distraught and wanted Login buried in a mausoleum at Elveden, but Lady Login insisted that he be buried in Felixstowe, so with Queen Victoria's approval the Maharajah designed the monument, complete with the wording, and it is here he is buried. There were two cannons flanking the monument but the second was stolen in 1998 after the first went missing years earlier.

Lady Login lived in the parish for 15 years in the 1860s and 70s, during which time she worked tirelessly to improve the church. Not only did she raise considerable sums of money for improvements, as the church at this time was almost derelict, but as a devoted Christian she was a regular attendee at the services. Her writings, *Lady Login's Recollections* is a fascinating book which gives some idea what services were like at that time.

Just one vicar served the large parish of St Peter and St Paul as well as the adjoining one of Walton, at that time the much more populated area. The vicar of Walton-cum-Felixstowe had four churches to serve: the two parish churches, the chapel for the garrison at Landguard Fort (for which he drew pay from the War Office as a chaplain) and a mission-chapel at Felixstowe Ferry. Two curates were employed to help him. Unfortunately, the vicar – Rev Chas Maunder – strongly resisted the idea of planning his services or making any worthwhile arrangements, so his assistants didn't really know until Sunday mornings where they were supposed to be, or to whom they would be preaching: fishermen, coastguards, farmers and farm labourers, soldiers or a congregation of visitors from London. The vicar had no problem preparing sermons as it appeared that he had a number in hand, quite possibly written while he was at university, which were used in strict rotation and were as familiar to his listeners as they were to him. There was an obvious temptation for the regular members of the congregation to remind

him of the next few sentences when he forgot his lines! He certainly wouldn't have countenanced a service held before eleven o'clock!

On one hot summer's Sunday the vicar surpassed himself. Most of the congregation had had to walk for some distance to attend the service, as they were either visitors or lived some distance from the church. The very large gathering was sitting tightly packed in the high loose-boxes which formed the pews of the church, waiting for the service to begin. The younger members of the congregation were on forms which filled the aisle, overseen by a verger or beadle, who marched up and down to keep order armed with a seven-foot pole of office. This he frequently used to correct those whom he felt were not being attentive or reverent enough. Sadly his hearing and aim were not all that they should be, and he often damaged the headgear of ladies nearby or poked an unsuspecting and unoffending parishioner in the eye! In the gallery at the west end sat a few singers and a newly acquired barrel organ with about 14 hymn tunes. The church bell continued to sound well after the appointed time for the start of the service, the organ began its repertoire all over again, and still no clergyman appeared. Some members of the congregation had already started to depart when the vicar finally arrived, hot and bothered in his ramshackle pony-carriage. After racing through the morning service he came to the sermon, when he offered an apology for the inconvenience he had caused. He had given out contradictory instructions the previous day and both he and his curates had all turned up at Landguard Fort to take the service there.

Lady Login resided mainly in Felixstowe until the summer of 1878 when she moved to Aylesford in Kent. She died in the early morning of April 17, 1904, in her 84th year, and is buried with her husband, Sir John, in the churchyard.

The architect who carried out the work at St Peter and St Paul chose the Decorated style of architecture (early 14th century) for the new work, which was the style preferred by many Gothic Revival restorers as the purest form of Gothic architecture. It was also planned to raise the height of the nave roof to the level of the transept roofs, to put similar tracery to that in the chancel windows in the south window of the nave, and to rebuild the tower making it a stage higher, with two light belfry windows and an embattled parapet. However, this work was never done.



### **The latter 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

According to historian Allan Jobson, the parish was separated from Walton in 1893 with its first vicar being Rev William Seaver.

Many of the internal fittings and furnishings have been added since the restoration. The benches for the nave and transepts arrived during the 1890s and the parish clerk and churchwarden, William Versey, was sent to Ipswich with a wagon and three horses to fetch them from the docks, where they had arrived by boat in 1890.

The wooden wainscoting which lines the lower part of the walls was inserted in 1898.

In 1899 Ipswich builder RS Smith was employed to raise the level of the nave floor, remove all the box pews with the exception of two in the chancel and to move the pulpit from its position one third of the way down the nave to its current position near the chancel arch. It was during this work the ancient piscine was found.

The eastern nave windows built between 1895 and 1905 were designed by an unknown “Arts and Crafts” movement exponent remained without their mullions and tracery until 1908-9, when they were given Perpendicular tracery (15th century) to the designs of HW Buxton, a local architect and member of the congregation. Mr Buxton was also responsible for the designs of the Cliff Hotel and the Cottage Hospital in Felixstowe. He also carved the external corbels, which were dedicated in April 1909. The northwest nave window, which still lacks its tracery, is a reminder of what the other windows looked like before this was done. The 6 stained glass windows display characters associated with the history of St Peter and St Paul. A rare depiction of King Sigebert who requested help in the preaching of the Gospel to East Anglian, St Felix who came from Burgundy to set up the gospel preaching, St Edmund representing the mother Cathedral, St Nicholas, St Peter and St Paul, as the two churches at the time in the Parish.(No St Andrews yet!) To the south another pair of complementary windows are made to St Luke and Anna. All the windows were donated by the White Jarvis White family in memory of different members and include another later plain window in the North nave



The first, in the north-east, shows St Edmund carrying an arrow, which refers to the fact that he was martyred in 869 by the Danes, who used him for target practice. Next to him is a wolf and a shield showing the saint’s head. This refers to the legend that a wolf guarded St Edmund’s head. Above this are three crowns, the emblem of St Edmund’s kingdom of East Anglia. A reconstructed picture of the Abbey of St Edmundsbury is beneath. The second window depicts St Nicholas, the patron saint of seafarers, with a lamp, an anchor at his feet, and below that a ship.



Moving to the east there is St Peter, with his emblem of the crossed keys and, because he was a fisherman, a net full of fish. Then St Paul with a sword and a book. In the south east there is St Felix, the first Bishop of the East Angles, with mitre and pastoral staff. Below is an illustration of Norwich Cathedral. There is a local legend that St Felix’s body is buried beneath St Peter and St Paul. In truth, when he died his body was taken to Ely Cathedral, but his relics were later stolen by the Monks of Ramsey Abbey, and enshrined there; where they attracted throngs of pilgrims throughout the Middle Ages. Next is Sigebert, King of the East Angles, carrying an axe in full Saxon military dress which is considered unusual as he was a pacifist. He was converted by St Felix. Also pictured is a Saxon ship.



In the same style as these windows, in the south chancel window, is the prophetess Anna, and below her we can see Hadleigh Church and Deanery Tower. There is also St Luke, with his gospel and his emblem, an ox; beneath this is a picture of King’s College, Cambridge. These windows were added in 1914 as a memorial to Anne Spooner and Felix Cobbold.



The church had an almighty escape in 1917 when a British naval shell accidentally landed in the organ, but providentially it never exploded. Until recently it was preserved and displayed in a glass case in the church, but it can now be seen at Felixstowe Museum, which is housed in an annexe of Landguard Fort.



### The Memorials

Churches of similar age to the parish church, or even a little younger, often have walls covered with plaques to commemorate famous worshippers, the war dead or even the diligent, hardworking parishioners who have given long and loyal service. But the walls of St Peter and St Paul are surprisingly stark. There are memorials on the walls, but they are not in profusion and many are tucked away in the transepts.

### The 1939-45 War memorial

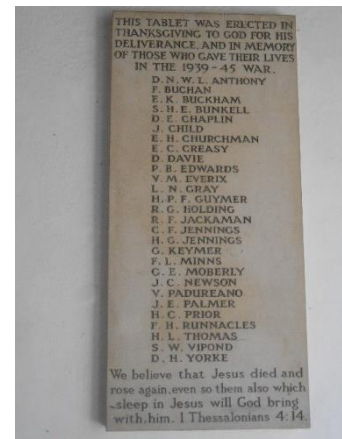
The first memorial is found on the east wall of the south porch.

‘This tablet was erected in thanksgiving to God for his deliverance, and in memory of those who gave their lives in the 1939-45 war.’

Of the 28 names inscribed, all, with the exception of C F Jennings and H G Jennings, are also on the town’s war memorial outside Felixstowe Town Hall on the seafront.

Much research has taken place to establish the stories and details of each person named and several have significance in Felixstowe.

John Child attended Felixstowe County Secondary School and whilst initially he joined the army, he transferred to the Fleet Air Arm. He serves as an Air Mechanic (E) 1st Class, Royal Navy, and HMS Sparrowhawk. He died 20/06/1943 aged 27 in an air crash with two other crew members in Scotland. He was son of Ethel Child of Felixstowe and is buried at St Peter and St Paul Churchyard. John is commemorated not only on the church memorial but on Felixstowe Sea front Memorial and the Felixstowe Grammar School War Memorial Lectern (currently in Felixstowe Society Archive in Harvest House).



Sergeant James Douglas Davie lived in Ranelagh Road and later Cobbold Road. He was an Air Gunner in 106 Squadron RAF Volunteer Reserve based in Coningsby Lincolnshire as part of a seven man crew on Lancaster Bombers. En-route to a bombing raid in Germany James’ Lancaster R 5683 exploded mid-air and crashed onto the mudflats at Butterwick, 4 miles from Boston in Lincolnshire on 26/07/1942. He was only aged 25 and is buried at Felixstowe New Cemetery Langley Avenue and commemorated on Felixstowe Seafront Memorial as well as in the church.

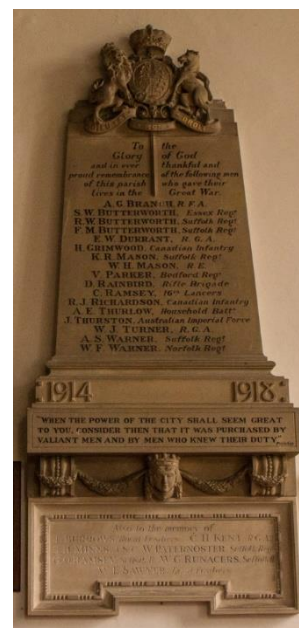
Joseph Chamberlain Newson’s father was a trinity house pilot and in 1939 Joseph was fisherman living at Fisherman’s Haul at Felixstowe Ferry. Married to Eva and with one child he enlisted as a Seaman in Royal Naval Patrol Service and was serving on HM Trawler Franc Tireur, which was sunk by an E-Boat off the port of Harwich on 25/09/1943. The torpedo killed 15 of the crew. Joseph is commemorated on Felixstowe Sea Front War memorial and the Royal Naval Patrol Service memorial in Lowestoft as well as in the Porch of St Peter and St Paul.

### The World War 1 Memorial 1914-1918



Inside the church in the south transept is the World War One memorial with 24 names on who had a connection with the Parish. Many had relative connections whilst some had connections with being based in Felixstowe like the Sea Plane Experimental Service (Felixstowe Sea Planes) or with the numerous hospitals in Felixstowe including the Cliff Hotel in Hamilton Gardens which was appropriated for the war effort for injured and recovering military personnel.

Alfred Thurlow was the 4<sup>th</sup> of 10 children of George Thurlow and Susannah Fairweather. Alfred was born in Felixstowe on September 25, 1880 and baptised at St Peter and St Paul. The family lived at Church Villa Cottage, High Road. In April 1900, Alfred married and had 2 boys and 3 girls. Before the war Alfred was a bricklayer and he and his family were living in High Road, Walton. He sang in the parish choir and during all this time his father George was the Sunday School Superintendent at St Peter and St Paul. In 1917, aged 37, Alfred was called up. His grandson remarked that Alfred, 'joined, 30 days later sent to Europe, 30 days later was dead.' As part of the Passchendaele battles, Alfred's battalion attempted to take their objective but were cut down by heavy shell fire. Alfred has no known grave. (Thanks to relative Annabel Brown for this information)



Another local lad with strong connections with St Peter and St Paul was Jack Thurston who was born in Felixstowe on August 13, 1894 living with his parents and 7 siblings in one of the houses opposite St Peter and Paul church. After attending Ferry County Primary School, it is thought that Jack worked as a clerk possibly in Ipswich. With one of his sisters he emigrated to Melbourne Australia on September 25, 1913. Another brother also later emigrated to Australia. Jack enlisted in the Australian Infantry on February 21, 1916. Australian forces including Jack's battalion, were involved in desperate fighting to stem the German advance which began in March 1918. Jack died of his wounds during a battle in the Amiens area. (Thanks to relative Janette Avery for this information.)

These amazing stories were uncovered for the 2018 Centenary Celebrations for the ending of World War I. The stories behind each names for World War II were researched in 2019 and are both recorded in files placed inside the church as are the stories of each the war graves heroes in the graveyard. This joint venture with Felixstowe Society means that future generations can remember and will not forget the heroes each Armistice day in November.

### Other memorials

On the south wall just, left of the south porch entrance there are two memorials, one rather grand and the other more homely.

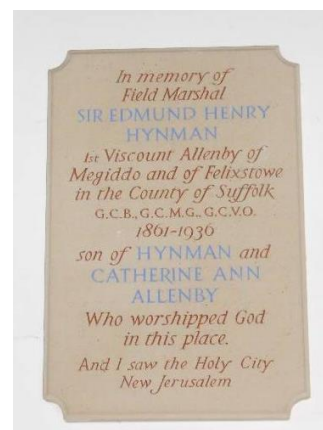
The large tablet informs us that the remains of Adam Wood, a gentleman, from the Independent Company of Invalids at Landguard Fort, are interred in the chancel. He died on 10th June 1773, and his widow who died on 5th January 1822, aged 85, is buried with him. The memorial plaque was erected as a mark of filial respect by Sir George Adam Wood, who was a real force in the military service of his country. This memorial is somewhat unusual in that it tells more about the person involved in erecting it than the people it commemorates. Sir George (1767-1831) became a Major General with the decorations KCB, KMT and KCH. He served under Sir John Moore at Corunna in 1809 and was in command of the Royal Artillery at the Battle of Waterloo. The Independent

Company of Invalids was made up of elderly British regular soldiers and in 1793 there were 36 such companies scattered around in various garrisons and forts.

Near the tablet there is a lovely homely brass plaque to Hannah E Versey, who was for many years the caretaker of the church. According to the 1901 census she is living in St Georges Terrace, the row of houses just beyond the lych gate and is the wife of churchwarden, William Versey who single-handedly collected the seating for the church from Ipswich docks. Hannah died on December 7, 1906.

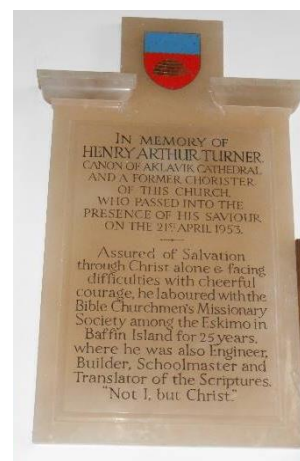


Just before the South Transept is the only memorial in Felixstowe to Field Marshall Sir Edmund Henry Hynman 1st Viscount Allenby of Megiddo and of Felixstowe. This tablet was unveiled on the south wall of the nave on October 21, 1967. Allenby, who recognised Felixstowe as his home for several years, was born on April 23, 1861, in Brackenhurst, Nottinghamshire, and died in London on May 14, 1936. He fought in the South African Boer war and served as inspector general of cavalry (1910-1914). In World War One he commanded with distinction in the Middle East and his victory over the Turks at Gaza in 1917 led to the capture of Jerusalem. He was invited to enter Jerusalem on his horse, but he declined, declaring that his Saviour enter on a donkey so he would enter on foot. His capture of Damascus and Aleppo ended Ottoman power in Syria. His success was partly due to his innovative use of cavalry and other mobile forces and he is remembered as the last great British leader of mounted cavalry. This memorial stone was erected in 1967 and apart from Allenby's tomb in Westminster Abbey is the only other memorial in this country. His parents are buried in St Peter and St Paul Graveyard hence the connection with the Parish.



On either side of the chancel arch two tablets commemorate Henry Arthur Turner and John Hudspith Turner, both of whom dedicated their lives to the service of the Lord among the Eskimo people, now universally known as the Inuit. These memorials give a brief description of their work for Christ, but much more can be found in a very interesting book written by Carol Charles and Christopher Trott called 'Felixstowe to Pangnirtung'.

In a well-written preface to this book we are told: "In 1926 Dr D H C Bartlett, one of the founder members of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, went to Felixstowe to talk about the society and to ask if there were any young people who would give their lives to God's service in the mission field. Arthur and Jack (John) both stepped forward." We are also told that by 1954 there were ten missionaries from the parish church working all over the world.



Both the plaques have the stars and igloo of the Diocese of the Arctic – yellow stars in the formation of the plough on a blue sky and gold brick igloos on a red background.

Arthur, a former chorister of our church, became Canon of Aklavik Cathedral, as did his brother Jack. They both worked among the Inuit on Baffin Island, Arthur for 25 years, facing difficulties with cheerful courage, and Jack for 18 years. Not only was Arthur labouring with God's word, but he was also an engineer, builder and schoolmaster. Jack made long journeys over frozen seas to Inuit camps, and both translated the Scriptures into the native tongue.

Entering the chancel there are four small plaques. One refers to the stained-glass windows, but the other three are homely reminders of the family history of the church. On the right of the altar we have a memorial to Frank Griffiths Howell, who was assistant curate from 1934 until 1939 and vicar of Felixstowe from 1947-1960, who died October 23, aged 54. On the left of the altar there is a touching plaque to Brian, youngest son of parish vicar Rev SR Cambie. Brian died on April 4, 1906, aged six years and six months, understood to have fallen into an open fire and never recovered.

Beneath Brian's memorial is quite an unusual plaque which announces the installing of electric light in the church in March 1949. It was paid for by Mrs A Elland in memory of her husband Walter who died just after Christmas in 1938. The words at the foot of the plaque tell us that he was a valued member of the church council and that he was a worshipper at St Andrew's.

Memorials in the north transept are probably the least well-known, because several are quite high and also somewhat difficult to read.

Starting on the west side, there is the honours board for the 1st Old Felixstowe Guides Queen Guides, an award which ceased in 1984. There are 15 names celebrated between 1972 and 1984, many well-known young women of the parish. The board shows the success of the Guide movement and credit must be given to the girls for their hard work in obtaining the award, but also to their leaders who obviously guided them extremely well.

There are two memorial plaques for members of the Login family. The upper one is to Sir John Spencer Login, mentioned previously, but beneath is a memorial to Vera Margaret Campbell, who died at Pau, South of France on February 20, 1866, aged 21, and her sister Mabel Douglas, who also died at Pau, on December 12, 1865, aged seven – the eldest and youngest daughters of Sir John and Lady Login. "They sleep together in the English cemetery at Pau." With Sir John dying in 1863 Lady Login lost three loved ones in 27 months.

On the opposite side of the transept there are a variety of plaques, the most obvious being that right in the north corner to "the glorious memory of the officers, NCOs and other ranks of the 3rd Battalion Loyal (North Lancashire) Regiment who fell in the Great War 1914-18". Details of their involvement in Felixstowe can be read on the memorial. The most noticeable plaque is that to George Sampson Elliston, a medical man, well decorated and a warden of the church for 10 years. Close by is the collection of memorials to the Dickens dynasty from the 1830s to 1860s, buried in a vault nearby, and finally the Bruce plaques, relatives of the Dickens.





Over the past hundreds of years a huge number of people have worshipped at St Peter and St Paul and some have left their mark on the fabric of the church – including the magnificent stained glass windows.

FC Eden, a noted 20th century stained glass artist, designed the stunning armorial glass in the south transept window. It dates from 1926 and the arms displayed are those of the Login family, for Sir John Spencer Login; King George V; and the Campbells of Kinloch, Perthshire for Lena, Lady Login who was a Campbell. These fine windows certainly deserve closer scrutiny.



### The reredos

The appearance of the east end of the church was greatly enhanced by the beautiful carved linenfold reredos and panelling around the sanctuary. 'With thanksgiving to God this panelling is dedicated to the beloved memory of Walter Horne, Vicar of Felixstowe 1911-1925. A gift of many friends.' Placed in position in 1947, it has a mellowed appearance because it was made from oak from an old derelict windmill. It was carved by Ernest Barnes of Ipswich to a design by H Munro Cautley, the Diocesan Architect and an authority on East Anglian churches. Another great improvement occurred two years later when electric lighting was installed, given in memory of Walter Elland, a valued member of the Church Council, by his widow.

The ministry of Rev HB Greene (1925-47) – who plays a key role in the history of St Andrew's Church – was used by God for the conversion and calling of men and women of Felixstowe to serve as missionaries in distant lands. Within six years, five men and a woman had joined the ranks of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS), founded in 1922 to carry out pioneering missionary work in faithful accordance with the principles of the Prayer Book and 39 Articles of the Church of England, as based on the supreme and unerring authority of God's Word, the Bible. BCMS is now known as Crosslinks. The Rev and Mrs RH Haste were in India from 1928-48, Rev and Mrs WS Jarrold went to Burma in 1931, Rev Cecil F Green to Morocco in 1934 and the Turners, already mentioned, lived and died in Baffin Land in the Arctic. Two further lady missionaries, Miss Ethel L Barkworth and Miss Betty Meadows (later Betty Young), went out from the parish in 1947 and 1948 to China and then Malaya.



### Post Second World War

Having an old historical building is always a heavy burden on any parish as it will constantly need repairing. Since the end of the Second World War there had been big repairs to the roof, a boiler house was erected, a new boiler installed, the organ had an overhaul, the interior colour washed, memorials placed, churchyard paths laid down, as



well as the rebuilding of the Ferry Church. So with more work needed in 1956, a plea was made 'to all parishioners, worshippers and other friends' for £2,000 for immediate urgent repairs. A door-to-door appeal throughout the Parish produced £408 and within thirteen months the total had been reached. The parish not only asked for cash gifts, but suggested that people could donate jewellery, silver, plate and antiques, which the Church Council would be quite willing to collect.

The required repairs were completed and there was a thanksgiving service for the restoration of the church on Sunday May 18, 1958. The vicar at this time was Rev Frank Howell and at this special service the preacher was the Rt Rev T Cashmore, Bishop of Dunwich.

The arched recess housing the organ is not at all ancient. The organ is a two-manual and pedal instrument built by Gray and Davidson of London and it has fifteen speaking stops. It was erected in 1900 and replaced a very small organ, which was originally a barrel-organ and sited in the west gallery before being modified by Holdich.

Behind the organ chamber is the vestry, which used to contain the large chest used for storing church and parish valuables. It was equipped with three locks, the keys of which were held by the vicar and churchwardens, so that the chest could only be opened when all three were present. This now has been repositioned into a store room where it houses many of the church's historical artefacts. On the vestry walls used to hang pictures of two 19th century bishops of Norwich, in whose diocese Felixstowe was situated until 1914, when the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was created. The picture of Bishop Henry Bathurst was from 1820 and the other was of Bishop John Pelham. There were also photographs of previous vicars of Felixstowe from 1855. Redecoration of the vestry has caused these artefacts to be moved. Now the vestry is rather a bare, but white walled, sanctuary. Probably more in keeping with the needs of spiritual preparation for a service whilst many of the photographs are now in the church archive.



### **Modern changes post 1980s**

In 1983 a faculty (the process by which churches have to obtain Diocesan approval before they can make alterations, a form of planning permission) allowed a number of changes to be made within the church. A platform was built, there were changes in the position of the Communion Rails and choir stalls, the Communion Table was repositioned and the 15th century font was moved. Derek Woodley, a local architect, designed the changes. The Communion Table was moved from the apse and placed on the raised platform beneath the crossing and the seating in the chancel and transepts was changed so that the pews faced it. This was in line with modern liturgical practice of the congregation being gathered "around the table" and suited the shape of the church.

In 1986 the church changed from oil to gas heating. The nave roof, probably mediaeval, is hidden by the 19th century plaster ceiling; some of the beams you can see are thought to be original, but some had to be replaced and treated in 1987. In adding the new Link extension the beams were examined and found to be full of the death watch beetle.

## The building of the Link

The greatest change to the church building in modern times has been the addition of an extension, now known as The Link, in 1988. The Rev Martyn Bateman, who came from Wickham Market, followed on from the good work of Rev Roger Taylor. While exploring the parish on his bicycle getting to know the people and generally sizing up the place, he had a vision. This was to extend St Peter and St Paul to accommodate the increase in numbers in the parish due to all the new homes appearing on the Cliff Estate. He had a three-year battle to gain permission to build onto a Grade II\* listed building, which included opposition from within the parish. However, a plan was finally approved to build an extension on the north side of the church, well away from the 14th century south porch.



This plan allowed more than even he had envisaged, because the building became two storeys and also allowed for some modern facilities to be added. The principle regarding this new extension was that it had to blend in with the existing fabric of the church. It was not an easy task to erect the extension because much work was necessary before building could start. The site chosen meant that several graves had to be removed and relocated in another part of the churchyard. Before this could be done permission had to be obtained and any objections made to the Diocesan Registrar in Ipswich. A stone has been placed on the site and a Book of Remembrance, provided by the family of the late Barbara Peacock, records all the names of the graves which were moved.



The money to pay for the new building, estimated between £90,000 and £100,000, was raised by parishioners through covenants, coffee mornings, prayer, praise, gifts and a 'buy a brick' scheme. A brick for the new extension could be purchased and then a picture was taken while it was laid. This proved extremely popular and there must be many households still with their photograph and brick-laying certificate. The children played their part by collecting coins in Smartie tubes and the then vicar, Rev Harry Boreham, undertook a sponsored walk from Saxmundham, his previous parish, to Felixstowe. The appointed architect was JR Edwards from Felixstowe and Hucol Bros Ltd were the builders chosen to carry out the work. The finished cost of the building was £107,529.95, which included the architect's fees.



The Link was dedicated in April 1988 and the Rev Martyn Bateman was invited back for the ceremony. The new extension provides a welcoming vestibule, meeting rooms, storage space, kitchen, toilets and cloakroom and has been regularly used for morning and evening prayer, choir practise, Sunday School classes, meetings of various church groups and social events. It offers a friendly, warm and welcoming entrance to the church.

In 1991 modern lighting was installed in the church.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century changes**

Over the past twenty years or so the PCC, churchwardens and others have striven to keep the church in working order even though the problems have at times seemed almost insurmountable.



During floor repairs in 2001 it was decided to conduct services in either The Link or the Old Felixstowe Community Centre. New wooden flooring was put into the transepts to replace the tiles, and the tiles in the nave reset. Pews in the transepts were removed and replaced with chairs – some ‘sponsored’ by parishioners who gave £80 to pay for a chair and have a suitable inscription fixed to it. Old radiators were removed and overhead electric heating installed. Meanwhile, the sound amplification system was greatly improved.

Although the Quinquennial Inspection Report for 2005 concluded that the church was in sound order, there had been considerable work done on various aspects of the church for this to be achieved. In 2008/9 the chancel needed reflooring and the interior of the church was redecorated.

### **The graveyard**

Very few churches in Felixstowe have their own graveyards. The full history of St Peter and St Paul’s graveyard is still waiting to be fully discovered, but with some research and by wandering around it is obviously a loving history of those who worshipped at the church.

### **The Lych-Gate**

The lych-gate is one of the best-known features of the church. ‘Lych’ is an old English word for ‘corpse’ or ‘body’, so what we really have is a corpse gate, under which the body entered on its way towards its final resting place. Coffins were sometimes carried to church, and sometimes a table or trestle would be placed under the lych-gate on which the bearers could rest the coffin while waiting for the vicar, who usually walks ahead of the coffin into the church. Today these gates are sometimes decorated for weddings, and couples who have been photographed under them may be oblivious to their original use. In past times parishioners would expect to be buried in the church’s graveyard, but St Peter and St Paul’s is now closed and only those with grave spaces booked or who are being added to family graves can be buried here. The maintenance of the area is now looked after by East Suffolk Council.



The lych-gate dates from 1914 and was erected by Samuel Alexander to the memory of his wife Mary Jane who died on 12th January 1911. There are very appropriate scriptures from the Old Testament carved on either side.



### **Every gravestone tells a story**

Old Felixstowe Parish graveyard is a tranquil and contemplative space, containing a number of graves reflecting the heritage of the town.

A grave near the lych-gate shows the frailty of life. Arthur Ryle of Dornoch, Sutherlandshire, third son of the Rt Rev JC Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool, is buried there. He died of spotted fever on 20th March 1915, contracted while working for the soldiers in the YMCA hut in Felixstowe. He was 57 and died, "Doing his little bit".

### **The oldest gravestone**

Just before the South Porch, on the right hand side, is what appears to be the oldest grave in the churchyard – that of George and Ann Driver, from 1783. The visible wording refers to Ann who died in April 1<sup>st</sup> 1783. There may be older graves, but due to the condition of many of the inscriptions they are difficult to read.

As you would expect many of the tombstones have a personal touch and this is what makes churchyards such intimate places. Almost hidden, and in the middle of all the other graves, we find the grave of Edward John Versey who was a chorister at the church for 83 years.

Apart from the many different crosses and types of headstones is one that is unique: that of Susanah Hampshire, her son William Gardiner Clarke and his wife. William was a member of Felixstowe Urban District Council for 50 years. Why is this one different? It is the only one with a photograph. This is a feature rarely found in English churchyards, though quite common abroad and caused some problems as to its legitimacy in correspondence between the Diocese and the church wardens!

The gravestone of Clifford Alfred Newson ("Billy"), a Trinity House pilot, and his wife Alice Daisy Newson, nee Scotcher ("Mickle") is also somewhat unusual as their nicknames are recorded.

Perhaps the most heart-breaking gravestone can be found near the gate leading to the Link. It reads:

"In memory of my dear husband Frederick Robert Jennings, who died Dec. 11th 1907 aged 32. Also of the precious little son Alec Douglas who so suddenly passed away 4 months later April 14th aged 11 months.

Forget them, no - nor ever will,  
I loved them then, I love them still  
Their memory is as dear today  
As in the hour they passed away.  
BUT  
(GOD KNOWETH BEST.)"

## Cotman graves- local architect and artist



Possibly the most significant tomb must be the [Login monument](#), which was approved by Queen Victoria herself (see earlier references about [the Login Windows](#)). Nearby we find two graves to the Cotman family. Thomas, the



wonderful local architect responsible for so many of Felixstowe's finest buildings including Harvest House (formerly the Felix Hotel), and his brother Henry. Both have quite imposing gravestones, but Thomas' is probably bettered by Frederic George Cotman whose artist's palette is carved on his stone.

Prominent local authors are represented: Alan Jobson (also church warden in the 1960s), whose local books are always a pleasure to read, especially *The Felixstowe Story*; and another writer, not so well known but certainly important to students of our town's history, is EH Symonds who wrote *Trial by Air and Sea*, a very fine account of Felixstowe air station and also the part played in war-time by HMS Beehive.

## War graves

The graveyard is a recognised Commonwealth War Memorial Graveyard. The graves and commemorative headstones of 14 World War I and 4 World War II servicemen feature in various parts of the graveyard. Members of the Blount family served in both wars and are buried in the family plot is John Hillier Blount who was training to fly with the Royal Flying Corps prior to joining his squadron in France in 1918. He died in a training accident in Yorkshire and his mother, who lived in Felixstowe, had his body brought back to St Peter and St Paul graveyard. John was only 19.

A poignant headstone located in a tree-lined path commemorates three brothers and their nephew who all lost their lives in WW1. The Butterworth brothers, Felix, Stanley and their nephew Eric Durrant are buried in the plot and another brother, Reginald, whose body was never found during the Battle of the Somme, is commemorated on the headstone. Opposite these four family members lies the grave of their parents James and Martha.



In another part of the graveyard is the family plot of members of the Minns family. Commemorated on the gravestone is Frank Minns who took part in one of the most significant actions in the early hours of D Day when he and his platoon were the first to land in France to secure what is now known as Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. Due to significant research in 2018 and 2019 all the war grave heroes and those of the memorials inside the Church have their history recorded in folders found inside the church and which will eventually be accessible on the website.

Although Viscount Allenby, who led British troops to recapture Jerusalem in 1917, is fittingly buried in Westminster Abbey, his parents Hynman and Catherine share a plot with an imposing gravestone.



### **Other Felixstowe Links**

Another prominent headstone, in the form of a cross and base, commemorates Ida Nancy Churchman, daughter of Sir William and Lady Churchman of Melton Lodge, Woodbridge who were the local cigarette manufacturers and whose family have a stand named after them in Ipswich Town Football Club.

An unusual gravestone is that of Wing Commander Frank John French OBE DFC and AFC and his Russian wife. Mr French was a highly decorated World War II hero and a highly respected customs official at the Port of Felixstowe. This gravestone has an inscription in the Cyrillic alphabet which states "Christ is risen" which is an appropriate comment and make his Russian connection overt!

Several well-known clergymen are buried in the graveyard including the Rev Walter Horne, vicar of Felixstowe from 1911 to 1925. There are many interesting and exciting stories behind these characters which can be enjoyed when, in cooperation with Felixstowe Society, Old Felixstowe Parish hold regular graveyard tours. See the Old Felixstowe Parish website for details. Also DIY tours on a theme will be available on the website for those with further interest. There are a plethora of stories about the locals and their influence not only in the town of Felixstowe but worldwide.

### **The Garden of Remembrance**

The Garden of Remembrance is home to plaques placed for those who have chosen to be cremated, and there are others, too, placed around the graveyard in the south and east.



The Garden of Remembrance was set up in 1996. The then vicar of Felixstowe Parish, Rev Peter Laurie said that for some time there had been a need for a secluded area where families could quietly remember their loved ones. "The garden gives people an attractive retreat for contemplation and makes good use of the remaining corner of the churchyard."

A problem had arisen when the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul was closed, meaning ashes were no longer able to be buried there. This matter was discussed by the PCC in 1993. There was an area in the north west of the churchyard, about 12 metres by 20 metres, which at that time consisted of grass, a shed, some stonework and an ever-increasing pile of rubbish. It was decided that this could be the new Garden of Remembrance.



A well-designed Garden of Remembrance should provide four main functions: a place where ashes can be buried, somewhere a memorial could be located to a loved one, a place where flowers could be placed and lastly a pleasant, quiet and peaceful environment. Also it was hoped that this place could be used for some considerable time. After a number of designs were considered and visits to other Gardens of Remembrance undertaken, a young parishioner named Wendy Martin presented the idea of brick crosses, and this was the chosen option. This



way a uniform type of flower container could be embedded in each quadrant of the cross and the memorial plaques would be the size of a brick face. It was agreed that a local stonemason would be awarded a contract, on a yearly basis, to produce all the plaques in a consistent style. Various local contractors were considered but eventually Notcutts Landscapes were chosen. Paul Baines, a designer with the company, was able to bring his Christian ideas to the project and he produced a garden plan based on the sign of the fish. He also believed that the garden was a natural extension of the churchyard. Before work could start the Church Authorities and Suffolk Coastal District Council had to consider and approve the plans.

Today the garden of Remembrance upholds the very functions for which it was built for and any one in the parish or attending services regularly is allowed to have their ashes buried there.



## ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

By the end of the 19th century, Felixstowe was growing rapidly – its third renaissance in full swing. The visit of the Empress of Germany in the 1870s had made it a fashionable resort at a time when the seaside was becoming a popular place to relax, away from the busy-ness of smoky, industrial cities. Felixstowe was attracting the 'London set' for holidays and weekend breaks, but also people looking to live by the sea. The opening of the Town Station in Hamilton Road in 1898 led to new residential development in and around the town centre, and along the seafront, as well as hotels, shops and seaside attractions. The early years of the 20th century saw construction of the promenade and pier (which at that time was half a mile long). As St Peter and St Paul Church saw the benefits of the influx of new residents and visitors, suggestions were put forward for the building of a new Anglican church in the town centre.



Land was given by Captain EG Pretyman at the junction of what today is St Andrews Road, Fleetwood Road and Croutel Road. There were few other houses around the site at all. In 1907 a temporary church built of wood and corrugated iron was erected – a second-hand church, in effect, as it had previously stood in Shepherd's Hill, London, where it had been dedicated to St Andrew. It was brought to Felixstowe and rebuilt. Although its structure was utilitarian, it was not without charm, with a "perky little tower", octagonal belfry stage and a spire. It had gothic windows and a stained glass east window. It was nicknamed the "Tin Tabernacle"



The temporary church was not expected to last forever, and the Rev Walter Horne raised £3,000 towards the building fund for a new church, but the project had to be postponed due to the First World War.

In 1925 the Rev HB Greene became vicar. He was a man of great determination and generated tremendous enthusiasm and commitment among church members to see a new building erected. He was Irish, with strong protestant leanings, and was determined that St Andrew's would be a centre for evangelism in the town and reflect this tradition.



He had decided views about the appearance of his church as well, and selected his building committee carefully, making it clear that he would not tolerate opposition. He dismissed H Buxton's designs, and commissioned Hilda Mason to prepare fresh plans. She was at the time a surveyor to the Dioceses of Ipswich and St Edmundsbury and an active member of the Church of England living in Felixstowe in the Parish in Maybush Lane. She designed parts of the Bartlett Convalescent Home on Bath Hill as well as Kings Knoll, a private house in Woodbridge. Her first designs were rejected by the architects to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, so she enlisted the help of Raymond Erith who had been responsible for restoration work of the buildings numbers 10, 11 and 12 in Downing Street, and whom she had met as a fellow student at the Architectural Association. Their



new plans were accepted in December 1929, and work started on the church in the spring. The old Tin tabernacle was sold to a local builder and used for many years at the Beach Station, Walton Avenue, Roger's builder's yard.

The years 1927 to 1929 had seen the preparation of the Revised Book of Common Prayer, and its rejection by Parliament. Extreme Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics alike were triumphant as its dismissal, and Rev Greene carefully composed a suitable inscription for the foundation stone: "in thanksgiving for answered prayer in the rejection of the Prayer Book measures..." This stone was laid by Viscount Brentford, who lived in Felixstowe, and had been a staunch opposer in Parliament of the Revised Prayer Book in 1930.



Hilda Mason wanted to design a church which would use modern materials and a modern construction, and would be "high, light and airy-looking". The local Suffolk style of 15<sup>th</sup> century perpendicular with large windows was used but the material of concrete was very much an unproven material in England despite the Church of Notre Dame du Raincy, near Paris, built in 1925, being heralded as the first major exploration of using this lighter more versatile material for buildings. Hilda Mason's father and brother owned the Mason's concrete works at Claydon, near Ipswich so this, instead of traditional brick and stone, which had been rejected on the grounds of cost, was to be the main material.



The frame of the ferro-concrete quickly took shape. The concrete window frames were positioned, and some of Miss Mason's stained-glass designs inserted. They were of geometric patterns in vivid colours of red, yellow and blue and the vicar was appalled, likening the result to an "ice cream parlour". He also disliked the shape of the east window. All worked stopped. The architects refused to alter their designs, and resigned.

The vicar then appointed Raymond Wrinch to complete the building and modify the design of the east window to be taller. The Ascension Scene, by Pearce and Cutler of Birmingham, was installed at a cost of £300. The central figure was based upon a window in Norwich Cathedral.





Wrinch also altered the plans for the choir stalls, lectern, pulpit and communion table to the wooden items we see today mostly made by James Gosling of Walton. All made in oak they complement each other. The communion table is a replica of a Suffolk Reformation design which replaced stone altars in the reign of Elizabeth I. Made by Wipple and Co, it was deliberately placed by the Rev. Greene away from the East wall as he did not want it confused with an altar of sacrifice but a table to draw near to remember the commemorative aspect of communion.

It did not have candles, crosses or other adornments except for communion vessels in line with Rev Greene's protestant stance. In fact, for many years any cross was noticeably absent from the church!

The oak panelling in the East behind the table bear the text "He is not here He is risen." This for many is an unusual choice when today's attitude is more open to the idea that Jesus is with us everywhere but again Rev. Greene was reflecting the theology that Christ was not physically present and bound to one specific place particularly during the communion (the theology of transubstantiation). The nave benches and the interior doors remained to Erith's design hence why they do not maintain the linen fold design. Greene insisted that the lectern be as high as the pulpit since the reading of God's word is as important as man's preaching of it. The pulpit is inscribed with the wording "We preach Christ and Him Crucified". The Lectern with the wording "The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit."



The Font was until the 90s at the rear of the church but it has been made a movable item in line with current baptismal practices. It is an old font from St Peter and St Paul encased in the oak linen fold design to match the lectern and pulpit.

The current organ by Norman and Beard was installed in 1938 replacing a smaller instrument which was moved and is now in Shottisham Church. The organ was another recycling initiative having come from a Nonconformist chapel in Great Yarmouth.

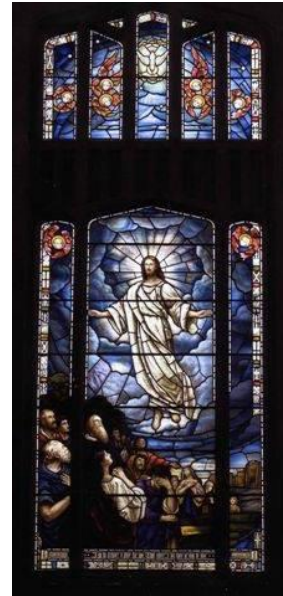
It is easy to miss the one painting on the west wall. This is of St Augustine landing on the shores of Kent and was a gift to the church which originally hung in St Andrew's Hall. A modern textile screen on the South side was made by Dorothy Stokes in 2008 for a talents event and against reflects a more modern approach to textiles in the church rather than stained glass windows to encourage symbolic meaning. Behind the screen is the original altar which was recycled from St Peter and St Paul and used in the "Tin Tabernacle" A movable altar on wheels doubles as a communion table when the communicants receive the bread and the wine at the crossing. This is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century feature made for the changes of bringing the communion closer to those seated in the nave much like St Peter and St Paul brings the communion table forward to the platform.



Several features were not accomplished, notably the tall tower, and pinnacles and turrets at the junction of the nave and chancel. This can be seen from the original Erith architectural drawings which hang either side of the main south door.

St Andrew's is an unashamedly 20th century building, using 20th century materials and construction methods, and though it has been much criticised it represents an interesting development in architecture, and is light, dignified and spacious. It is, in fact, a Grade II\* listed building, registered by the Department of the Environment in 1980 because of its distinction in being the first church in England to be constructed in this unusual manner.

Today the church still provides an opportunity for evangelism in the centre of the town and is much used as community centre for concerts and large scale civic events.



## ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

Walk at Felixstowe Ferry today and often the only sounds are the chink-chink of halyards whipped by the winds against boat masts and the screeching of gulls. The fishing hamlet at the mouth of the River Deben has changed little over the centuries. Its pub, the Ferry Boat Inn, dates back to 1680. It is home to fisherman, sailors, artists and writers.

Its connections to Bawdsey on the opposite bank are historically stronger than to Felixstowe – a ferry has connected the two communities for hundreds of years, first a boat and later a steam-operated chain ferry installed in 1894 by Sir Cuthbert Quilter of Bawdsey Manor, and later a motor launch. Back in 1740 only two houses were recorded at the Ferry. Since then a cluster of homes has been built, several on stilts to keep them above the possibility of flooding, the sailing club, boatyard and golf links. In summer its cafes and pub bring many visitors to enjoy the food, sea and events. It was about 1878 when it was felt the people of the Ferry needed their own place of worship. One story states the tiny corrugated iron building erected in 1879 was provided by Sir Cuthbert Quilter. The building also served as a school and was referred to as 'the Schoolroom'.





In the summer of 1943 a bomb exploded near the church, damaging it beyond repair. The golf club kindly lent a hut to provide a temporary place for worship.

After the war fundraising began for a new church. Hopes were bolstered by a promise of £2,000 from local building contractor Walter F Cross – however, Mr Cross died in 1949 and his solicitors were unable to recognise his kind offer as it had not been confirmed in writing. This meant the church had to be redesigned. The current building was designed by Harold F Walker, who designed the choir vestries in neighbouring Parishes at St John's and St Mary's Walton and was erected by local building firm Percy Chas Plant.



The aim had been to spend £4,000 plus furniture and architect's fees, but this was then cut to £1,500. The new church, which was opened on July 18th 1954, is a simple functional building dedicated to St Nicholas, the patron saint of seafarers. A marble tablet by the west door tells of the landmarks in its history and ends by referring to the text from the prophet Haggai; most aptly chosen: "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place I will give peace."



Inside much of the fabric is modern although the lectern and the prayer desk were recycled from St Andrews Church. Many of the banners and art work reflect the Ferry community and have been made by the church members. The addition of the Millennium loo in 2003 and the Millennium replacement windows did much to encourage continued worship at St Nicholas.

Today the church is used for evening worship in the summer months, and special events and occasions in the life of the Ferry community, including the annual Seafarers' Sunday Service. It also is used by visiting churches and community groups for retreats and as a social activity base.





With more than 1,400 new homes earmarked for sites in the area – some built, some underway and others planned – and a 2,000-home ‘garden suburb’ proposed for countryside on the edge of the town, Felixstowe is set for its fourth renaissance. The churches of Old Felixstowe Parish are looking forward to the opportunities for the future to spread the Word of God and bring more people into a relationship with the living Lord Jesus.

We cannot but mention the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020/21 when for the first time since each of the buildings opening, the churches had to be closed in the first Lockdown of March 2020. Opening sporadically and briefly during 2020 before closing again after the Christmas day service December 2020. St Andrews reopened for a spoken Sunday service as Government Guidelines did not permit singing in March 2021 whilst St Peter and St Paul remained open on two days a week for personal and private prayer only with no group meetings. Strict measures were in place for sanitising and social distancing with much of the movable items like hymn books and Bibles removed and pews cordoned off. Unusual times, never known but the worship so much part of the buildings of Old Felixstowe Parish continued with online worship into homes around the Parish from the Vicarage Study. Whilst people could not meet in the buildings as many missed this face to face and group worship Sundays and mid-week but some activities continued using Zoom conferencing as a way to stay linked. The Parish remained serving the community in ways perhaps not thought possible during this unique time in its history. As Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Reverend W Whittingham, when opening St Andrews in on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1931 said he “would be sorry if this beautiful church did not give rise to something exceptional in the Spiritual life of Felixstowe”. A message that the Old Felixstowe Parish still holds to in its purpose and vision for the twenty first century “We, Old Felixstowe Parish seek to: Live, show and tell the love of God, become like Christ and draw others to Him”



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Do not hesitate to contact Old Felixstowe Parish for further details of any parts of the church history or adding to it, or booking a tour for a group or any other faith questions or life milestone bookings you may require requiring baptism, wedding or funeral.

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