

The Parish Church of Castle Rising, Norfolk

The earlier stone church

Within the castle grounds lie the ruined remains of an early stone church. The layout comprises a nave, a central section and a chancel with an apsidal east end, typical of a parish church rather than a private chapel. Archaeological excavations carried out in the 1970s and 1980s revealed that the church was built over the remains of a timber building which appeared to be oriented on an east-west line as is normal with Christian churches. The excavations also showed evidence of human settlement on the castle site from as early as the Neolithic period.¹



According to Harrod² the remains, of the church which had been covered in soil, were visible in 1745 and were similar to ruins of an early church in the grounds of Norwich castle. They became more fully exposed in the middle of the nineteenth century when much of the earth covering them was removed. Harrod was able to examine the ruins in the early 1850s and was firmly of the view that they were of Norman origin. Taylor³, who was also able to view the newly exposed ruins in 1850, was convinced that they were of late Saxon origin. He based his conclusion on the layout and dimensions being similar to the earliest churches in England and Ireland and on the views of Salvin and Hadfield. Very recent examinations⁴ of what remains of the interior walls of the church show that the stonework of the apsidal chancel differs from the rest of the church and appear to be of a later date possibly Norman. If this is correct then the original church could have been a two cell church with a square east end similar to Saxon churches such as Escomb in Co. Durham.

The Saxon settlement at Rising, even though it was only an outlier of the Manor of Snettisham, would most probably have had a place of worship. It may have been built on the instructions of the Saxon Bishop, possibly Archbishop Stigand who held the Manor of Snettisham prior to the Norman invasion, or one of his predecessors.

The authors of the report into excavations carried out in the 1970s and 1980s were firmly of the view that the early church had been built by the Normans. The excavations had revealed the existence of a bell pit and foundry within the nave of the early church. This had been used to cast a bell. The casting process would have been carried out when the nave walls were erected but before the roof was in place. Once the casting was successfully completed the bell pit would have been back filled and the floor of the nave made good. The material used to fill in the bell pit could have been no earlier than about 1100 and hence their view is that the church dates from that period. An alternative scenario is that the bell was cast in the ruins of an earlier possibly Saxon church.

To arrive at the latest date for the construction of the church it is helpful to consider the date for the commencement of the castle, this is generally agreed to be c1140.⁵

The typical layout for a Norman castle would have included a chapel and this is the case at Castle Rising which has a chapel within the Keep. It seems improbable that an additional place of worship would have been provided within the castle grounds. Therefore it can be argued that the early church was in place before the commencement of work on the castle and would have been built before 1138. That is to say before or during the time when William D'Albini I was Lord of the Manor.

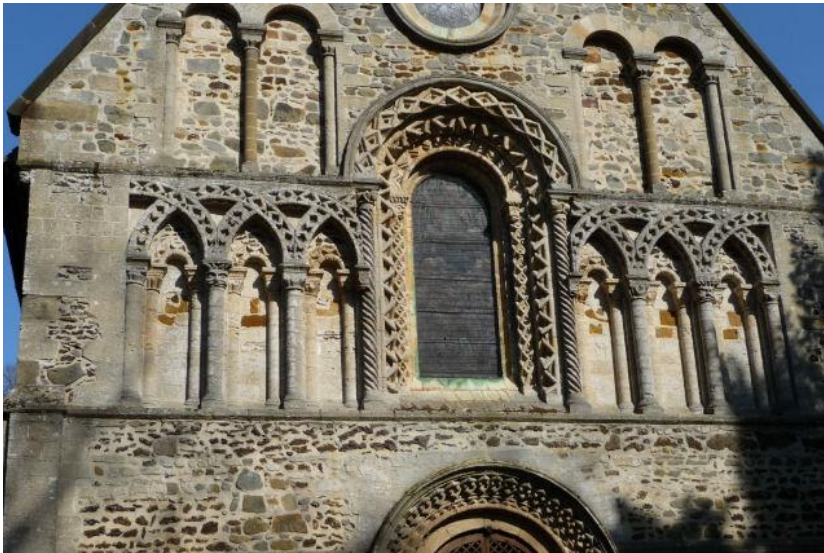
William had acquired substantial lands in Norfolk following his marriage to Maud Bigod, a ward of the king and daughter of a powerful East Anglian family. William's main Norfolk holdings were not at Rising but at Old Buckenham. It is not clear why he would choose to build a church at Rising although about that time he did endow a religious house at Wymondham in Norfolk. He may have felt that his settlement at Rising should have a grander stone church as a replacement for an earlier one. Perhaps he was seeking further divine grace and favour for himself and his descendants.

William D'Albini I died in 1139 and was succeeded by his son William D'Albini II.

William D'Albini II made an even more advantageous marriage than his father. In 1138 he married Adeliza (sometimes called Adelaide) of Louvain, widow of Henry I, a union which brought him enormous wealth and status. He demonstrated this status and that of his wife, the Dowager Queen, by building the castle at Rising starting sometime in the early 1140s. This would have been a massive project and taken several years to complete. However once William D'Albini II decided to build his castle on that site it would have been evident that the original church on the site was inconveniently located hence the need to build a new church outside the castle grounds.

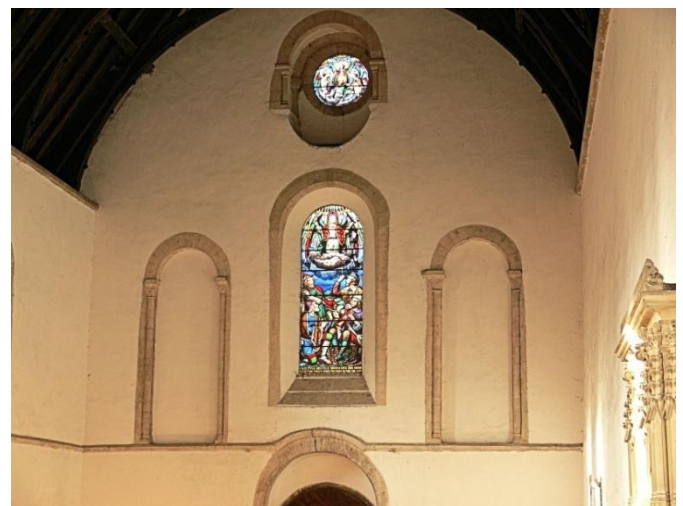
The new church

The new church was placed between the site of the castle and the haven and thus on the route taken by visitors to the castle arriving by sea. It would have taken much less time to build than the castle and would have been ready for use while the castle was still in the early stages of construction. This new church originally consisted of a nave, a central tower and a chancel with a square east end.



Although it was only a small parish church very high quality masonry skills were applied many of which are still evident today in the west front, nave and lower levels of the tower. These are considered by many to be among the finest surviving examples of late Norman style in the country.

There is visual evidence in the church to support the view that the Norman work was not all of one period. The interior view of the west wall of the nave (ignoring the circular window in the upper part of the gable which is a 19th century addition) displays a central window, in-filled with Victorian painted and stained glass, flanked on each side by blocked in window openings. The columns and capitals on the jambs of these openings are early Norman.



In addition it seems odd that the builders should choose to incorporate large silvercarr boulders in the lower reaches of the nave walls if the original design incorporated the very high quality west front now visible. The original exterior view of the west front may therefore have been of the west door and three windows above. The present day view is of a very flamboyant example of late Norman work complete with a single central window with complex mouldings and grotesque heads flanked by blank interlacing arcades.



Most surviving medieval churches will contain examples of the various architectural styles that have been incorporated since their initial construction as well as the impact of changes resulting from the sixteenth century religious upheavals and possibly the neglect that afflicted many churches in later centuries

Standing at the west end of Castle Rising church the nave, apart from its basic structure, can be seen to be typically Victorian with plain wooden benches and much of the floor covered in encaustic tiles of that period grounds.

The baptismal font standing between the north and south doors is ancient and is thought to have come from the earlier church in the castle



The nave arch and the triforium arch above it, the chancel arch and the lancet windows in the east wall display architectural styles of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Above the nave arch is a triple triforium arch displaying late Norman mouldings with variations on each of the capitals.



A close examination of the nave arch will reveal that it is not the more common semi-circular shape but is a horseshoe shape, a style thought to have been adopted from Moorish architecture. It displays a variety of decorative mouldings. It may have been an improvement on an earlier arch. It displays more complex mouldings than the chancel arch in the castle chapel which is of a similar date.

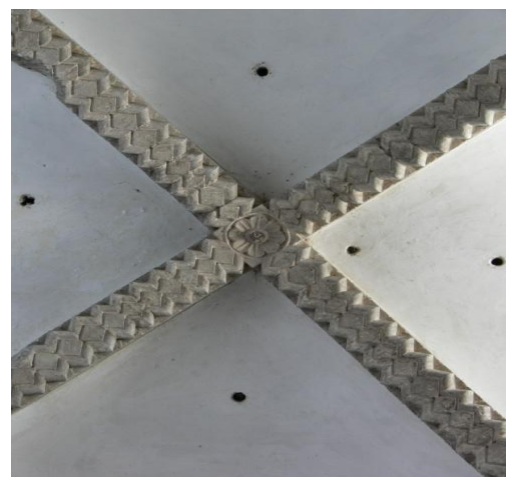
Nave arch with Chancel arch and East window in the background

The chancel arch is in the Transitional style, an early version of the pointed arch (later known as Gothic) but retaining some of the typically Norman mouldings. It is interesting to note that the decorative mouldings on both of these arches are applied only to the side facing the congregation.

The inside of the tower is groined and vaulted with diagonal ribs rising from the four corners. Each is decorated with zigzag i.e. double chevron moulding. This is rare in a small parish church.



y English Period



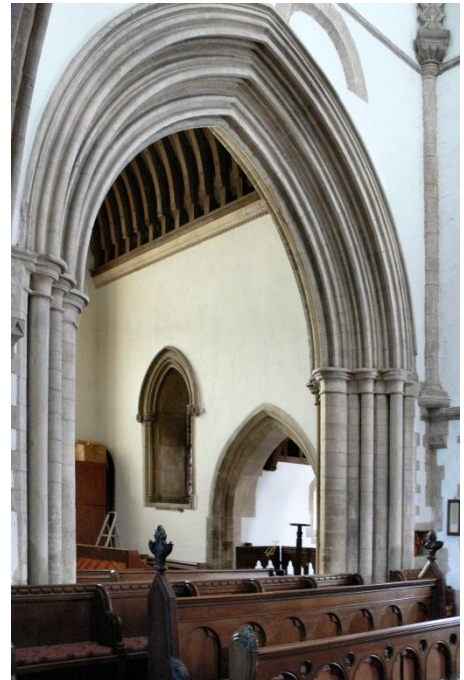
Earl

At some time in the 13th century it was decided, almost certainly by the Lord of the Manor, to update the chancel in the latest architectural style, now known as the Early English style. Three narrow lancet windows with very ornate and beautiful decorative stonework were installed in the east wall of the chancel behind the altar; a small chapel altar was inserted in the east wall of the nave adjacent to the Norman horseshoe arch and a south transept was added with access via a new arch in the south wall of the tower.

This arch is a very fine example of Early English work. It has five shafts, four of which are detached. The centre shaft is keeled i.e. has a ridge running vertically down the outer face rather like the keel of a boat. This type of decoration was more time-consuming and expensive to produce than a plain column.

Early English Transept Arch

The southern side of this arch shows obvious signs of weathering resulting from exposure to the elements as a result of the decay and collapse of the transept at some time in the past.



The archway was then blocked off leaving the outer face open to the weather. The arch cuts through two earlier Norman windows the top of one is just visible in the photograph. No records of the original transept have survived. It almost certainly would have had a window in the south wall, probably similar to that in the chancel.

Detail of the Early English Lancet window.

It is commonly believed that the church never had any windows in the north wall of the nave and various explanations have been offered as to why this should be so. Was it to keep out the fierce winds blowing from the north or even the Devil who apparently favoured the north side of the church yard? Whatever the reason, the church did for a period have one window in the north wall of the nave. This is shown in a rare engraving of the church viewed from the North, dated about 1800. This window is located at high level close to the position of the modern day pulpit.⁶

The church when completed would have been consecrated by the Diocesan Bishop and was dedicated to St. Lawrence. It would have had a number of consecration crosses adorning the walls both inside and outside but these have long since disappeared. An example of such a cross can be seen at St. Peter's at nearby Wolferton.

The earliest written record describing the church is contained in the *Norwich Domesday*, a record of all the parishes in the Diocese at that time. This record was produced about 1291 and is held in the Cathedral library at Norwich. The entry reads as follows:

*At the time of the Norwich Domesday (temp Ed. I) the church was a Rectory, valued at 10 1/2 Marks. It paid no Procurations and only 4d. Synodals, at Michaelmas, and was exempted from all Episcopal and archdiaconal jurisdiction except induction by the Archdeacon of Norwich . The lord of the Manor was always patron. The Rector had formerly the Probate of all Wills, not as Rector but as Commissary, nominated by the Lord of the Manor in right of his Castle etc.*⁷

The parish was therefore classed as a Peculiar from at least that date and remained so until the mid 19th century. This meant that the parish was free from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Norwich for almost all of its affairs. The fact that the Rector had Probate of all wills meant that the wills of the parishioners did not have to go before the Consistory Court of the Diocese but could be proved by the Rector.

Bradfer-Lawrence states that the Peculiar status applied to the four, parishes, Castle Rising, Roydon, South Wootton and North Wootton. The Rector of Rising had his own court for the Probate of wills. He was known as the Commissary and Corrector General within the four parishes and had a seal of office.⁸

The Lord of the Manor would be responsible for proposing the person to be appointed Rector who would then have been inducted by the Archdeacon of Norwich. The first recorded Rector was John de Cokermuth (sic), he was proposed by Sir Robert de Montealte (sic), Knight, in 1302. Sir Robert was Lord of the Manor of Rising from 1297 until 1329. The Montalts continued to propose the Rectors until 1349 when the Manor became the property of the Crown Manor. (see Appendix A). Many ancient churches display a list of their incumbents from the earliest to relatively modern times, usually in a glazed frame and situated close to the main entrance. At Castle Rising , despite the noble sponsors that add interest to the list, a small wooden glazed frame containing what appears to be a press cutting placed on the south transept arch and easily overlooked, is the only record of incumbents on display.



Generally the upkeep of the chancel was the responsibility of the Rector while the upkeep of the nave was the responsibility of the parishioners through the offices of the Church Wardens. A major source of support for the Rector was Tithes levied on the parish. Tithes were a tenth part of the annual produce of the land and included corn, hay timber, lambs, calves etc. They were frequently a cause of conflict in parishes. There were a number of other ways of supporting the upkeep of the churches and Eamon Duffy in *The Voices of Morebath*⁹ gives an insight into the role of the incumbent and the parishioner of that parish in maintaining their church. These included sheep belonging to the church which were looked after by parishioners, the income from the fleeces going to church funds; church ales, were a common way of raising funds; the

Young men's Store and the Maiden's Store (sometimes called Stocke) were in effect collections of money. The church also benefitted from time to time from gifts of goods and money.

In Castle Rising for example in 1425 Avelina Gunneld bequeathed in her will 6d to the high altar of St. Laurence's (sic) Rising, 2s to the fabric of the church, 6d to the rector, 3d to the clerk, and the residue of her goods to her husband. She also desired [that] 4 marks from their burghage to be equally applied to celebrating and to the fabric of the church.

Like many churches prior to the Reformation St. Lawrence had Guilds whose members (sometimes employed in a common occupation), supported each other in hard times and carried out charitable works and tried to ensure that deceased members received a decent burial. Many adopted a saint as their patron. They also raised funds and provided votive lights before a statue of their patron. According to Bradfer-Lawrence Castle Rising church had four Guilds: Corpus Christi, Our Lady, St. Lawrence and the Trinity Guild.¹⁰

In medieval times the interiors of churches would have been much more colourful overall than they are today. On entering the church the parishioner could be faced for example with a wall painting of St. Christopher carrying the child Jesus across a stream. It was a common belief that whoever looked on the likeness of St. Christopher would be safe from unexpected death that day. Above the chancel arch may have been a Doom scene i.e. Judgement Day graphically illustrated, a reminder that the danger of death was ever-present and of the need to be in a constant state of grace. There would be other paintings around the walls and stained and painted windows serving as visual reminders to a generally illiterate congregation of the lives of the saints and scenes from the Bible. Most churches had brightly painted statues of Christ, the saints and the Virgin Mary with votive candles burning in front of these.

From about the beginning of the 14th century Rood screens began to be erected across the east end of the nave. These were made of timber and resembled window tracery but were unglazed and with the lower panels filled in. They too were brightly painted, usually with representations of the saints in the lower panels. These served to separate the chancel from the nave which accommodated the congregation. Above the screen a rood loft would be situated. This was a narrow platform supported by a beam spanning the nave and resting on corbels on the outer walls. On this platform would stand the Rood i.e. carved figure of the crucified Christ. On either side would be a figure of the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist. This arrangement was a constant reminder to the congregation of Christ's sacrifice. It also played an important role in the Easter services. As with many parish churches there is now no firm evidence at Castle Rising church of a Rood screen ever having existed. However it most probably did since evidence for the existence of a Rood Loft is clear and screens and rood lofts tended to be built together. An access opening to a Rood Loft can be seen in the west wall of the nave above the modern pulpit and two corbels can be seen located in the walls of the nave, although that on the south wall appears to have been repositioned during later restoration work.

In all churches in which the Mass was celebrated there would be an Easter Sepulchre to hold the Blessed Sacrament from Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday. This would be located on the north side of the chancel. There was much ceremony involved in this major event of the Christian calendar. The Sepulchre may have been of wooden construction which could be dismantled until

needed the following year. In large well- endowed churches the Sepulchre may have been a permanent stone built structure owing much to the stonemason's art. Several very fine examples have survived the iconoclasm of later years.

The Reformation

Many of the manifestations of the religious beliefs and practices of medieval times could only have been created, installed and maintained at some considerable cost to the Parish. All of this was to change dramatically with the coming of the English Reformation in Tudor times. The Reformation is a very complex subject beyond the scope of this chapter. Consequently the emphasis in this chapter on the Reformation is limited to what is known or can be deduced about its impact on the Church of St. Lawrence in Castle Rising.

Henry VIII broke with Rome in 1534 and had himself declared the supreme head of the church in England. Between 1536 and 1540 he suppressed the monasteries and other religious houses and plundered their contents. His impact on parish churches was much less dramatic and when he died in 1547 the church in England was still essentially a catholic church although not answerable to Rome.

An injunction of 1538 banned the burning of votary lights and candles except before the altar, the sepulchre and the Rood. If the four Guilds in Castle Rising church had statues of their patrons, which is probable, they would have been removed. A copy of the bible in English had to be purchased and displayed in every church although an Act of 1543 restricted the reading of the bible to the upper ranks of society.¹¹ This act was repealed in 1547.

The 1538 injunction also introduced a requirement on the incumbent to keep a record of every christening, marriage and burial celebrated at his church. Copies of these registers that have survived are normally held in County Record Offices. They are a valuable source of information on individuals for historians and genealogists. Those appertaining to Castle Rising, although not complete, are held in the Norfolk Record Office at Norwich.

When Henry VIII died in 1547 he was succeeded by his son, who at the age of ten was crowned king Edward VI. He reigned with the support of a Council of Regents. His religious upbringing had been along protestant lines and his short reign was a period of far reaching religious reform that had major implications for parish churches.

Soon after of Edward VI accession to the throne the 1538 injunction was reiterated with fresh emphasis. All images and pictures were to be removed without trace from churches, including stained and painted windows. Walls had to be whitewashed, fortuitously preserving some of these paintings for discovery by later more tolerant generations. It is not known if Castle Rising church had any wall paintings although there are traces of lettering painted on the underside of the nave arch. Also under this injunction the Rood and its accompanying images of the Virgin Mary and St. John and any other statues had to be removed, Sepulchre and Rood lights were no longer permitted. The Easter Sepulchre rites were forbidden so if Castle Rising had a wooden sepulchre it would probably have been disposed of at that time.

In 1550 it was ordered that the altar should be replaced by a simple communion table. The altar was traditionally placed at the east end of the chancel. It consisted of a stone slab, the Mensa, set on top

of stone or wooden framework. The Mensa was inscribed with five crosses, one at each corner and one in the middle, symbolic of the five wounds of Christ. The communion table in contrast was usually of simple wooden construction and located in the nave where it was accessible to the congregation. Communion henceforth was to be offered in both bread and wine. However they felt about the changes this would have created considerable work and expense for the incumbent, the Church Wardens and the parishioners.

Enquiries about the goods held by parish churches were made of Bishops as early as 1547 and in 1549 Commissioners were appointed to oversee the making of inventories of church plate, vestments and bells. Churches that had sold off goods had to produce certificates listing any sale that had been made since the start of the reign of King Edward. The Crown concerned over the sale of church goods issued a proclamation preventing any further sales.

Faced with considerable expense in meeting the demands resulting from the various injunctions and Acts many churches had no option but to sell items of plate, particularly if they thought that the items that were part of the Catholic rites but not of the new protestant service and would therefore be confiscated by the Crown. At Castle Acre it was agreed, with the consent of the whole town, to sell an old cross weighing 40 ounces, worth five shillings an ounce realising a sum of ten pounds. Five pounds were spent on whitewashing the walls and mending windows. A further four pounds were spent on support of poor people, the remaining twenty shillings going into church funds.¹²

Castle Rising's inventory was dated 5th September, 1552 and carried out by the Rector, the church wardens and two of the parishioners. (see Appendix B) In summary it included one silver chalice and patten, three vestments and three bells together with two bell clappers that were in the hands of Sir Thomas Hollice. The church was allowed to keep the chalice and one of the three bells. The lack of church plate is noteworthy since it would have been far from adequate for the normal pre-reformation order of services.

Susan Yaxley in her publication *The Reformation in Norfolk Parish Churches*¹³ lists the basic items necessary to the performance of the various rites as.... *a chalice and patten, a pyx to hold the reserved sacrament, a pair of cruets to hold the wine and water, an incense burner or censer, a ship to hold the incense and a chrismatory i.e., a box to hold the oils needed for unction, baptism and confirmation. There may well have been other items such as candlesticks, spare chalice and pattens.*

There is some confusion about which of the three bells was allowed to remain in the Church on completion of the inventory. John L'Estrange in his publication "The Church Bells of Norfolk" states... *It has been too hastily concluded from the inventories of church goods taken in 6th Ed VI [1553] that only one bell or at most, in larger parishes, two bells were allowed to remain for the use of the parish. But the Royal Commission of 16th January, 6th. Ed VI, expressly states that the great bells and saunt's bells were to remain until the kings pleasure was made known concerning the same. The object of the Commissioners was to prevent the unlicensed sales by the parishioners or unlawful appropriations of church goods by the lord of the Manor.*¹⁴

So it would seem that all three bells were allowed to remain in the church. According to Bradfer-Lawrence, John Aleyn, the Norwich bell founder, made a treble and a tenor bell for the church of

Castle Rising, in the 22nd year of the reign of Henry VIII [1530-31]¹⁵. However the single bell remaining in the bell tower at the present time was made by Thomas Norris and dated 1660.

Interestingly, the 1552 inventory for the nearby church at Babingley in addition to the church plate, vestments and bells included “guyldestocke” (sic) i.e. Guild funds.¹⁶ These funds were held by three named individuals and totalled 18shillings. The number of Guilds existing at Babingley at that time is unknown.

With the death of Edward VI in 1553 and the accession of Mary Tudor, an ardent Catholic, to the throne a rapid return to Catholicism was ushered in. Papal authority was restored, the mass was re-introduced, roods and altars were re-built. But all of these reversals to earlier practices were short lived. Mary Tudor died in 1558 and Elizabeth ascended to the throne. The link with Rome ended, the mass was abolished and many of Edward’s reforms were re-established. Roods and images were once more removed and communion tables replaced altars. Both bread and wine were again offered to the congregation, incidentally requiring the purchase of flagons to hold the communion wine. Once more the practical problems faced by the incumbent, the church wardens and parishioners must have been immense. However it would be wrong to think of the impact of the Reformation simply in terms of the impact on parish churches. It was a time of much suffering with people being tortured and executed for their beliefs with martyrs dying for their catholic or reformist views.

One possibly unanticipated consequence of the Reformation was the problem of caring for the poor. Previously the religious houses and to a lesser extent the parish churches had played an important role in caring for the poor. The suppression of the religious houses ended that provision and the Crown found it necessary to make alternative provision. The method that evolved was to place the responsibility for the control and care of the poor on the parish. This was achieved by utilising the parish church and it’s vestry (the governing body of the church at local level). The vestries were given powers by an Act of Parliament to raise a levy, the Property Tax, and to appoint officials to oversee the application of the Poor Laws. The parishes were also required to appoint other officials including surveyor of the highways and parish constable. These officials were appointed by the parish vestry and were unpaid. Another secular activity carried out in the church was the holding of the ballots for parliamentary elections. Castle Rising sent two MPs to parliament from 1558 until the borough was disenfranchised by the Great Reform Act of 1832.

Like many throughout the land the church of St. Lawrence suffered a great deal from neglect and decay during the 18th.and early 19th centuries, even to the extent that at one time the chancel was in such a state of decay it could not have been used for services. The reasons for the degree of neglect are unclear. The church wardens were still carrying out their duties, both ecclesiastical and secular and rectors were still in office throughout the period and presumably tithes were still being collected. The growth of non-conformism may have resulted in less support for the established church but in a closed village such as Castle Rising it is unlikely that this was a factor.

The extent of the decay at one period is recorded in the publication **The Topography of Freebridge Hundred and Half in the County of Norfolk, by The Reverend Charles Parkin in MDCCLXI [1762]**, a continuation of the work commenced by the Reverend Francis Blomefield. The paragraphs referring to the church read thus:

The church of Rising is an ancient pile built in a conventual manner, with a tower between the

body of it and the chancel, which last is now in ruins, the walls only of part of it being standing; also a cross aisle joining the tower which is entirely in ruins; the west end is adorned with antique carvings and smaller arches. In the tower are 3 bells, but one is split, the roof of the church is flat, covered with lead, long but narrow, and is dedicated to St. Laurence. (sic).

The description of the roof of the church being covered in lead indicates that the description of the church was prepared before the 1749-50 restoration because during that restoration all of the lead was stripped off the roof and later only part of the roof was re-covered with lead, the rest being covered in tiles. It is probable that this report was prepared when Blomefield was writing his history. He died in 1752 before completing it.

It seems hard to believe that the church was allowed to fall into such a state but at nearby Snettisham, St. Mary's, the chancel decayed to such an extent that eventually, in the late sixteenth century, it was demolished and never replaced. Similarly the chancel at St. Mary and All Saints at Sculthorpe became so dilapidated in the eighteenth century that it had to be demolished and was only rebuilt in 1847. The growth of non-conformism arising from the Protestant reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to increasing numbers of worshipers not supporting the Established church and may have contributed to dwindling financial support for Anglican churches.

The 1749-50 restoration work on the church included stripping all of the lead from the roof, subsequently to be melted down and some re-cast as lead sheet and returned to re-cover the roof of the chancel. The rest was sold to help defray the cost of the restoration. New roof timbers were supplied and installed and the roofs, with the exception of the chancel were covered in tiles. A brick battlemented parapet was erected on the tower and presumably repairs made in the chancel to correct the deficiencies noted in the Rev. Parkin's publication. Repairs were also carried out on the seats and a new pulpit supplied.¹⁷ The total cost for all of this work was £114 14 3½ but this was offset by the sale of the lead not re-used in the restoration work. No further major restoration of the church was carried out until the Hon. Mary Howard inherited the estate.

It is fortunate for anyone researching the history of the church that it was a popular subject for a number of artists in the early 19th century. There is a plate in Bradfer-Lawrence's publication¹⁸ of a rare engraving showing the north elevation of the church. The artist is unknown and Bradfer-Lawrence gives the date as c1800. As stated earlier it has generally been assumed that there were no windows in the north wall of the nave however this plate shows a window at the east end of the nave just below the eaves near to where the present day pulpit stands. The tower has a battlemented parapet and also what appears to be a window at high level. The chancel has a priest's door about halfway along its north wall. The roof of the nave and tower are shown as tiled but the roof of the chancel is clearly shown as lead covered.

An engraving by John Sell Cotman from his *Excursions through Norfolk* series, dated about 1811, is another example of artists inadvertently aiding historical research. This engraving shows two large three light windows in the south wall of the nave, one on each side of the porch. In addition there are two similar sized windows in the south wall of the chancel the western one being blocked up. No traces of these remain today.

There is also a long narrow window high up in the south wall of the tower part of which is still in place today but partly obscured by the 19th century transept. The porch is an earlier version of the present day porch.



Castle Rising church by John Sell Cotman, 1811.

Mary Howard was born in 1785 the eldest of three children of the Hon. Frances Howard and Richard Howard. (formerly Bagot, he assumed the name Howard on his marriage to Frances). Her brothers, Henry and Henry Richard, both died in infancy. Mary married Fulke Greville Upton, second son of 1st Baron Templeton in 1807. Fulke assumed the name Howard on his marriage to Mary. In 1818, on the death of her mother, Mary inherited the estates of Ashstead in Surrey, Elford in Staffordshire, Levens in Westmoreland and Castle Rising in Norfolk. Her parents are commemorated in the twin lancet stained glass window that Mary had installed in the east wall of the south transept.

The Howards commissioned a considerable amount of repair and restoration work at Castle Rising church during the period 1841 – 1846, employing the well-known Architect Anthony Salvin. He increased the height of the tower, dispensed with the brick parapet and fitted the saddle back roof. He also replaced the roof of the nave with one of a steeper pitch and replaced the large windows in the nave with narrow Norman style windows at high level in the south wall. During this time two of the three bells were removed; one of these being cracked was sold for the sum of £17, the other was sent to Levens in Westmoreland to the church which Mary was having built on her estate. When Fulke died in 1846 the tenantry erected a large imposing memorial, made by the sculptor C. Raymond Smith, to his memory. This was originally mounted on the north wall of the chancel but was moved into the nave during the 1850s restorations.

Mary continued restoring the church for many years after Fulke's death

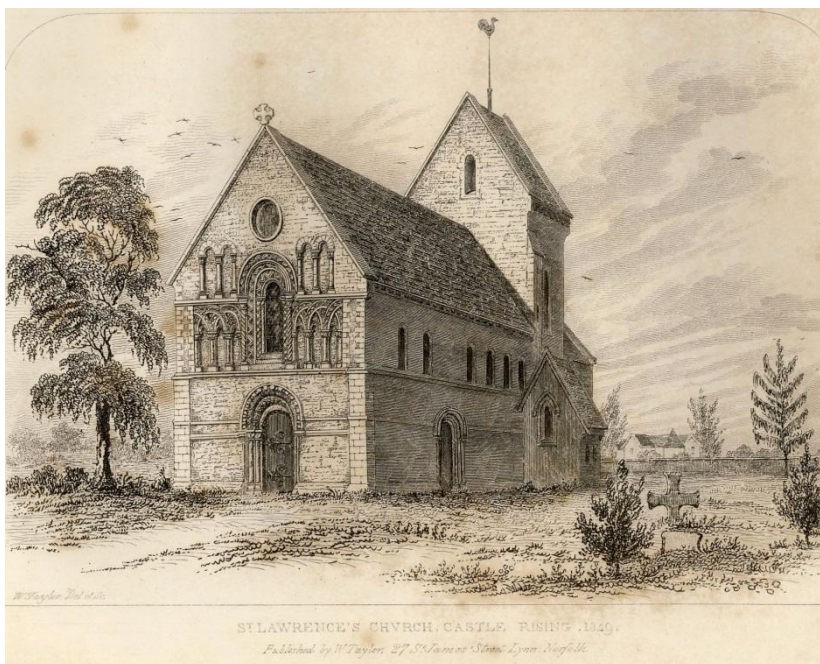
She had a stained glass window installed in the west wall of the nave, commemorating Fulke's contribution to the restoration of the church. The Latin epitaph reads :

THIS MONUMENT MARY ERECTED AS A MEMORIAL TO HER DEAR HUSBAND FULK GREVILLE HOWARD THE RESTORER OF THIS SACRED PLACE

This replaced an earlier one thought to represent St Mathias whose Saint's day is 14th February which is also the birth date of Henry Howard, the Earl of Northampton who founded the nearby Trinity Hospital in 1609 – 15.



Sketch of west window of Castle Rising church by unknown artist



Sketch of Castle Rising church in 1849 by W. Taylor

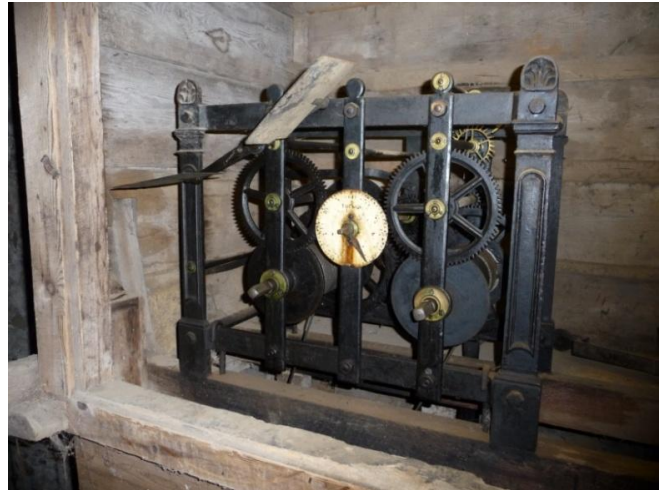
Mary and Fulke would seem to

have been benevolent and well thought of in their various estates. In 1828 Mary built a Chapel of Ease at Beathwaite Green at her estate in Westmoreland. The chapel was dedicated to St. John the Evangelist and later became the parish church of Levens. Mary also rebuilt All Saint at North Wootton in 1853 and All Saints at Roydon in 1857

During 1855 – 1856 the chancel of St. Lawrence's church was almost completely rebuilt. A narrow lancet window with stained glass by Lamb of London was fitted in the north wall of the chancel. The existing two lancets in the south wall of the chancel had been filled with stained glass by Lusson of Paris, thought to be the only glass by Lusson installed in East Anglia other than at Ely cathedral.¹⁹

Central heating was installed during this restoration and the floors laid with encaustic tiles manufactured by Minton. This major restoration was celebrated with a special divine service on 1st January 1857. It was reported in great detail in the Lynn Advertiser of that date. During the 1860s a clock manufactured by Tucker of London was installed in the tower. It is of particularly notable construction with ornate corner pillars, the effect being striking and very different from the work of other clock makers of that period. The only major restoration still outstanding was the re-building of the south transept. This was carried out in 1861 by the Hon. Mary Howard in memory of her late husband. The south porch was also rebuilt about that time.

Mary died in 1877 at the age of 92. On her death the Castle Rising estate passed to the Hon. Greville Theophilus Howard, second son of the 17th Earl of Suffolk and 10th Earl of Berkshire.



Although Mary was the major contributor to the restoration of the church there is no monument in her memory inside the church. The only memorial to her is the Lych Gate at the western entrance to the churchyard. This was erected by public subscription organised by the Rev. Charles Walter Bagot. The leading donor to that subscription was The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, who at that time was a frequent visitor to his nearby estate at Sandringham

The church she built at Levens in Westmoreland has memorials to both Mary and her husband and at the church she re-built at North Wootton the east window commemorates the re-building of the church in 1853 and Mary's death in 1877.

Greville Theophilus Howard married Lady Audrey Townshend in September, 1873. She bore him four children, two boys and two girls. The eldest son, Henry Greville Howard, was only three when he inherited the estate on his father's death in 1880. It was held in trust for him at first by his mother and then jointly by her and Henry Redvers Buller, V.C. whom she married in 1882. When Henry, a 2nd Lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifles, died in Calcutta at the age of twenty two the estate passed to his brother Charles Alfred Howard. Lady Audrey Buller had the south transept rebuilt and extended in 1882 – 1883 in memory of her first husband, Greville Theophilus. A

brass plaque on the east wall of the transept records the event There is also a large memorial in the west end of the churchyard commemorating the his life. There-building of the transept was mentioned in the village school log:

June 28th 1882. The children will not be allowed to attend church on Wednesdays and Fridays until after the south transept has been taken down and rebuilt.



By the end of these repairs and extensions the church looked from the outside very much as it does today.

A small simple organ located in the South Transept was replaced in the 1880s by a large organ, made by J.W. Walkers of London and installed in the base of the tower. This was the same firm that made and installed the new organ at All Saints at Roydon during the restoration of that church by the Hon. Mary Howard. In the 1860s electric lighting was installed in the church in 1934 in memory of The Reverend Herbert Edward Thursby who had served as Rector for 43 years. An electric organ blower was installed in 1947 in memory of Capt. E.A Knight who was killed in action in 1944

Organ renovations in September, 1995

By 1995 the church organ was in need of a major overhaul. Bower and Company, a Norwich firm of organ builders, were engaged to carry out the restoration work. During this work it was discovered that instead of the 29 Bourdon Bass pipes that should originally have been fitted only 13 were in place. The opportunity was taken to install the 16 missing pipes.

The triple lancet window in the chancel was fitted with stained glass in the 1850s as a memorial to Florence Caroline Bagot. The window was removed after it had been damaged during a storm in the late 1960s. The replacement window is in plain glass and displays in the bottom right hand corner a reference to the earlier memorial. The sad details of the death of Florence are recorded in a memorial plaque erected nearby in the chancel by her parents Richard, Bishop of Oxford and Lady Harriet Bagot. Florence was staying with her brother in the Rectory in October, 1840 when she became ill and died within a few days. She was aged twenty-one.

The two windows in the south wall of the chancel were filled with stained glass by the French expert, Lusson as a memorial to Sarah Beck, the young wife of John Redin Beck. She died in 1854. They lived at Castle Farm in Castle Rising. He farmed 500 acres and in 1851 employed about 50 farm workers. The stained glass was removed at the same time as the triple lancets were repaired in the 1960s and replaced with present plain windows. At the same time all of the windows in the south wall of the nave were re-glazed. The work was carried out by the firm George King of Norwich.²⁰

Other major repairs carried out included the cleaning of the stonework on the West front in the early 1980s and in 2010 the roof of the transept was repaired to remedy rain water leaks. This entailed stripping off the tiles, replacing the roofing felt and re-tiling. The cost was in the region of £20 000, a huge sum for such a small parish.

Diocesan changes

In 1857 the Peculiar of Castle Rising was dissolved and the individual parishes moved to the Archdeaconry of Lynn. The parish of Roydon continued to be annexed to Castle Rising.

In October 1963 the Sandringham group was formed. The group included the parishes of Sandringham, West Newton, Wolferton, Fritcham and Hillington. Castle Rising joined the group in January, 1964. These parishes share the services of the group Rector.

In 1965 the Bishop of Norwich informed Castle Rising Parochial Church Council that he intended selling the Rectory. It subsequently became a private residence now called The Hall.



The church of St. Lawrence, Castle Rising, Norfolk. 2010

The church having survived religious upheavals, neglect and the ongoing challenge of maintaining the physical structure of the building in an increasingly secular society continues to serve its primary function of providing for religious needs of its parishioners.

List of Rectors and their Patrons Appendix A

| Rectors | Presented by | |
|----------------|---------------------|---|
| c 1296 | John de Sandale | Sir Roger de Montalt |
| 1302 | John de Cockermouth | Sir Robert de Montalt |
| 1309 | John de Haydone | Sir Robert de Montalt |
| 1318 | Reginald de Thorp | Sir Robert de Montalt |
| 1349 | Hugh de Trykingham | Queen Isabella |
| 1350 | Robert de Congham | Queen Isabella |
| 1355 | William Rouse | Queen Isabella |
| 1361 | John de Rougham | Edward, Prince of Wales |
| 1377 | John de Stalham | King Richard II |
| 1381 | John Brune | John, V Duke of Brittany |
| 1385 | John Smelt | John, V Duke of Brittany |
| 1389 | William de Fryseby | John, V Duke of Brittany |
| 1393 | John Symond | John, V Duke of Brittany |
| 1398 | Richard Hopton | Edmund, Duke of York |
| 1416 | John Ellyswick | King Henry V |
| 1419 | Arnold Ymbrede | King Henry V |
| 1421 | William Gamelston | King Henry V |
| 1427 | Richard Trever | King Henry VI |
| 1443 | John Chapman | King Henry VI |
| 1448 | Robert Ferriby | King Henry VI |
| 1462 | William Hammond | The King |
| 1476 | Richard Craneworth | King Edward IV |
| 1487 | William Dyx | King Henry VII |
| 1491 | William Carter | Arthur, Prince of Wales |
| 1506 | John Toche | King Henry VII |
| 1509 | Richard Ball | King Henry VIII |
| 1530 | John Lane | King Henry VIII |
| 1545 | Thomas Chanon | Thomas Howard, 3 rd Duke of Norfolk |
| 1550 | Richard Hemmisley | King Edward VI |
| 1553 | Peter Smythe | King Edward VI |
| 1560 | William Goshawke | Thomas Stainings Esq. and Frances, Countess of Surrey |
| 15668 | Thomas Fairfax | Thomas Howard, 4 th Duke of Norfolk |

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 15?? | William Davy | ? |
| 1575 | Robert Gray | William Dyx and William Cantrell |
| c1588 | Richard Francklyn | Based on his Will, 1589 |
| 1606 | William Grimshaw | ? |
| 1640 | Hamond Baldwin | ? |
| 1662 | ? Calvert | ? |
| 1664 | Samuel Slipper | Henry Howard |
| 1665 | Thomas Lawson | Henry Howard |
| 1676 | Matthew Bolton A.M. | Henry Howard, Baron of Castle Rising, 7 th Duke of Norfolk |
| 1684 | Matthew Bolton | Simon Fox Esq. for Henry Howard 7 th Duke of Norfolk |
| 1707 | Elisha Smith | William Fielding Esq and Lady Diana his wife |
| 1740 | Henry Loftus | William, Lord Viscount Andover |
| 1754 | John Newton | William, Lord Viscount Andover |
| 1755 | Phillip Pyle | William, Lord Viscount Andover |
| 1799 | William Fawsett | Richard Howard Esq. |
| 1825 | William John Brodrick afterwards Viscount Midleton | Hon. FulkeGreville Howard & the Hon. Mary Howard, his wife |
| 1839 | Lewis Francis Bagot | Hon FulkeGreville Howard & the Hon.Mary Howard, his wife |
| 1846 | Charles Walter Bagot | Hon. FulkeGreville Howard & the Hon. Mary Howard, his wife |
| 1885 | Archibald Ean Campbell afterwards Bishop of Glasgow | Henry Greville Howard Esq. |
| 1891 | Herbert Edward Thursby | Trustees of Henry Greville Howard Esq. |
| 1934 | John Sigismund Arthur | Sir Charles Alfred Howard |
| 1941 | William Osborne Allison | Sir Charles Alfred Howard |
| 1945 | Percy Murthwaite Leach | The Archbishop of Canterbury |
| 1953 | Lesley Alfred Dennis. Woodland | Sir Charles Alfred Howard. |

The Sandringham Group of Parishes was formed in October 1963. Castle Rising joined the Group in January 1964.

Sandringham Group Rectors presented by Her Majesty the Queen.

| | | | |
|------|------------------|------|------------------|
| 1964 | Pat Ashton, | 1970 | Alan Glendenning |
| 1979 | Gerry Murphy | 1987 | George Hall |
| 2003 | Jonathan Riviere | | |

Inventory of church goods, dated 5th September, 1552.

Appendix B

Richard Hemysly*, clerk, parson there, George Wayte, and John Johnson churchwardens,
John Smith and Thomas Hanser, parishioners.

First, one Chalice of Silver with a paten containing 9 ounces valued at 3s 4d the ounce

Sum 30s.

Item one vestment of Blue Satin of Bruges valued at 4s.

Item one old Cope of Blue Satin valued at 2s.

Item a Cope of White Satin of Bruges valued at 5s.

Item 3 bells weighing by Estimation 6½ cwt.

The first bell at 2cwt, the second at 2½cwt. and the third bell at 2cwt, valued at 15s the cwt.

Sum £4-17-6d.

Item 2 bell clappers in the hands of Sir Thomas Hollice. 2s 4d

Reserved[permitted to be retained by the church]Chalice and bell of 3 cwt. (*sic*).

Signed by John Smith and Richard Hemisly.*Blomfield gives the name as Hammisley.

Source: Norfolk Archaeology, Vol. xxviii. p.136.

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- ¹Beric Morley and David Gurney, *Castle Rising Castle, Norfolk* East Anglian Archaeology, Report No. 81,1997.
- ²Henry Harrod, *Gleanings among the Castles and Convents of Norfolk*. Published in Norfolk by subscription, 1857.pp49-51.
- ³William Taylor, *The History and Antiquities of Castle Rising*, King's Lynn, 1857
- ⁴Norman Fahy, personal comment, 2009.
- ⁵Beric Morley and David Gurney.Opcit..p3.
- ⁶H.L. Bradfer-Lawrence.*a short history of the Castle Honor and Borough of Castle Rising*.King's Lynn 1932.
- ⁷T.H.Bryant, *The churches of Norfolk, St. Laurence, Castle Rising*.Norwich Mercury. 1902.
- ⁸H.L.Bradfer-Lawrence. Op cit pp108,109.
- ⁹ E. Duffy. *The voices of Morebath, reformation and rebellion in an English Village*.Yale University Press.London, 2003.
- ¹⁰H.L.Bradfer-Lawrence. Op cit.p18.
- ¹¹ Christopher Haigh. *English reformations, religion, politics and society under the Tudors*.Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991, p161.
- ¹²*Norfolk Archaeology*.Vol.xxviii, p136.
- ¹³ Susan Yaxley. *The Reformation in Norfolk Parish Churches*. The Lark Press, Dersingham, Norfolk, 1990.
- ¹⁴ John L'Strange.*The church bells of Norfolk*.Published by subscription. Norwich,1874.
- ¹⁵ H.L. Bradfer- Lawrence. Op.cit. p53.
- ¹⁶*Norfolk Archaeology*.Vol.xxviii, p134.
- ¹⁷NRO. HOW.668 /1-12.
- ¹⁸ H.L. Bradfer-Lawrence. Op. Cit. p50.
- ¹⁹BirkinHaward. *Nineteenth century stained glass in Norfolk*. Geo Books, 1984.
- ²⁰ NRO KNG 2/2/8/11