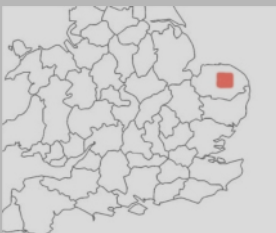


# Tour 1

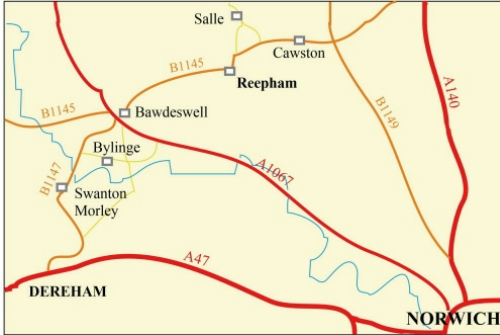
## NORTH NORFOLK CHURCHES



Swanton Morley Church from Bylaugh.



Bypassed by much of the industrial revolution the villages and old towns of this northern part of East Anglia have preserved much of their Medieval past. Nowhere is this more significant than in their churches with rustic walls, carved decoration and sumptuously decorated towers dominating the landscape. This tour introduces you to just a handful which display the drama and variety which are waiting to be discovered.



This short tour takes you to four outstanding Medieval churches within a few miles of each other. Their grand and imposing structures seem at odds with the tiny villages and hamlets they now serve but remind us that this was once a very wealthy county and Norwich was the most important city in the country after London. I took these photos on a cold winter's day in March 2008 unfortunately the doors were all locked so I could not get any shots of the interiors, but you should have more luck if you visit at weekends.

*To find the churches using Google Maps and Street View or your sat nav just enter the postcodes listed under each title.*



## ALL SAINTS CHURCH, SWANTON MORLEY, NR20 4PB.

*All Saints Church was built during the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and is an early example of the Perpendicular style. This is distinguished by tall towers without spires on the west end of the church and buttresses supporting the corners. The windows and belfry openings were tall as pictured here and were divided up by tracery with a strong vertical form. In this early Perpendicular example the arches are still quite steep but as the style developed during the 15<sup>th</sup> century they became shallower or had square heads as with the windows in this photo.*



*This detail from All Saints Church shows two ways in which the local flint could be used. It could be used in its natural form and set in thick mortar to make the rough walls in the upper half of this photo. Alternatively each stone could be skilfully 'knapped' by striking it at an angle with a harder stone so that the surface flaked away to form an almost square dark polished surface. These knapped flints as inserted here to make a chequerboard effect within the stone plinth is a sign of high quality work.*



*The east window of the chancel was usually the most impressive in the church. This example from Stanton Morley is early perpendicular in style with the tall vertical tracery but still retaining a steep arched head.*

*The tower and the main body of the church, the nave and aisles, were paid for by wealthy locals. The chancel on the east end (right of this photo) was financed by the clergy. You can tell by the grand style of the former that the locals in this period were far happier to splash the cash!*





ST MARY'S CHURCH,  
BYLAUGH,  
NR20 4RL.  
(South of Bylaugh Hall, just  
above a bend in the River  
Wensum)



*Norfolk is famous for its round towers which date back to the Saxon period. This ancient example is one of the most remote, hidden amongst trees in a lonely spot overlooking the River Wensum, the village it originally served has long since gone.*



*The upper stage of the tower is octagonal and was added at a later date. The body of the church was rebuilt in 1810 for the owner of nearby Bylaugh Hall. Although we like our churches today for their rustic appeal the patchwork of flint walls you see in these Norfolk examples was not how they originally appeared. Most would have been plastered over and coloured or whitewashed, with only the fine knapped flints and stonework left exposed. Medieval churches were an explosion of colour inside too.*



**ST PETER AND ST PAUL'S CHURCH,  
SALLE,  
NR10 4SE.**

*Another church like Bylaugh which has lost the village it was originally built to serve. It is regarded by many as the finest church in the county and was virtually built in one go around 1410-1440. Its magnificent tower dominates the flat landscape around it and is perpendicular in style with buttresses clasping the corners and vertical tracery in the tall belfry opening. The attractive square opening just below is a sound hole, which would imply they are to let more of the sound of the bells out but in fact were actually designed to ventilate the room below the belfry.*



*The west door in the base of the tower is beautifully carved with a pair of angels in the spandrels ( top corners of the arch).*



*Gargoyles are fascinating details along the parapets of a church but their primary role was just to throw water off the roof so it did not damage the wall and foundation below.*



*This magnificent church has a north and south porch with ogee arches (one which curves in and then out). Inside each is a vaulted ceiling with decorative bosses at the junctions of the ribs (one with an angel pictured above).*



**ST AGNES CHURCH,  
CAWSTON,  
NR10 4AG.**

*It seems incredible that within a mile of the magnificent church at Salle is another impressive edifice in the village of Cawston. They both reflect the ambitions of their wealthy benefactors and the confidence felt in the area during the 15<sup>th</sup> century rather than the size of the community they originally served. Again it is mainly perpendicular in style with a dominant west tower although at Cawston it is strangely stark and devoid of the parapet and pinnacles you usually find on the top. Inside is an excellent hammer beam roof with carved angels which the county is notable for.*



**ST MARY'S AND ST  
MICHAEL'S CHURCHES,  
REEPHAM,  
NR10 4JW.**

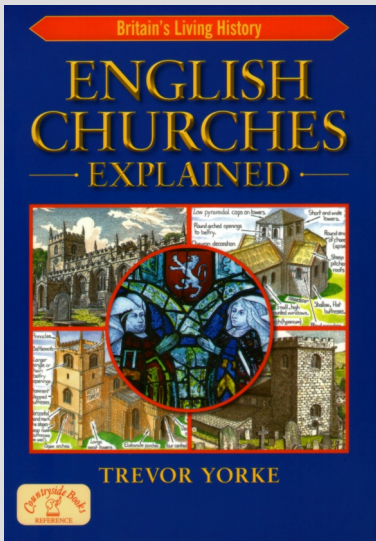
*While you are in the area or viewing online take a look at Reepham which has not one but two churches side by side in its churchyard. What is more incredible is that there was until the 18<sup>th</sup> century a third one, a fragment of the wall from which you can see on the south west side.*

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH,  
BAWDESWELL,  
NR10 4AG.**

*There is also a charming little church at Bawdeswell which is worth a view. It has been rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries but has an elegant and crisp form and an attractive colouring of fawn brick and grey flint infill.*

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*If you would like to discover more about English Churches then take a look at my book **English Churches Explained** which is available from Amazon, my publisher's website [www.countrysidebooks.co.uk](http://www.countrysidebooks.co.uk) and your local bookshop.*



*There are over 10,000 old English churches in a bewildering array of styles, materials and forms, some with parts dating back to the Dark Ages others deceptively modern. This book uses colour drawings, diagrams and photos to help explain in an easy to understand manner how the reader can recognise the styles, date the structure and understand more about the people who built it. The first section takes you on a journey through time from the first timber churches in the Dark Ages up to the Arts and Crafts style at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second section looks in detail at the body of the building from the nave, chancel and tower to the churchyard, tombs and gravestones around it, and explains the mysterious fixtures and fittings you see today, what they were used for and by whom. The final section includes notes on how to date a church, an illustrated timechart showing the changing styles, a glossary of unfamiliar terms and a list of some of the more notable churches to visit.*

**£8.95** from [www.countrysidebooks.co.uk](http://www.countrysidebooks.co.uk) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)