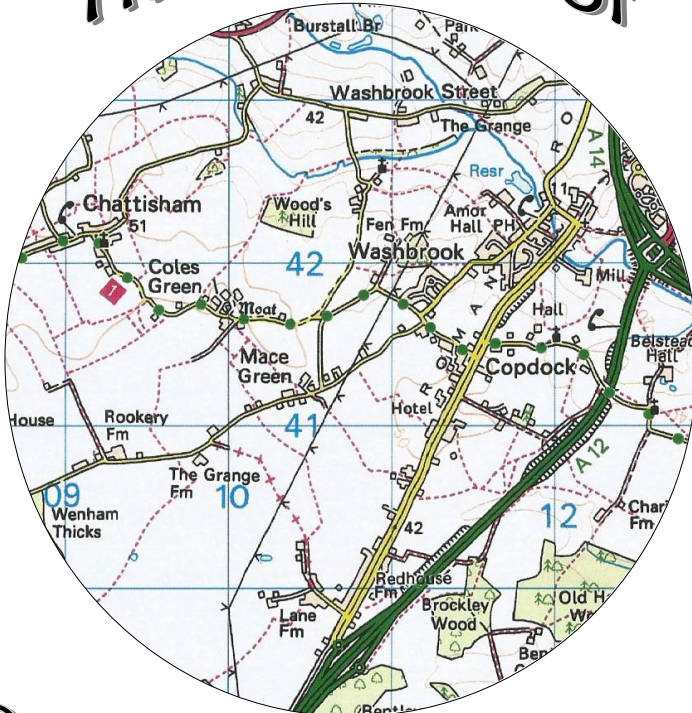


The Parishes of



Copdock & Washbrook

A BRIEF GUIDE TO



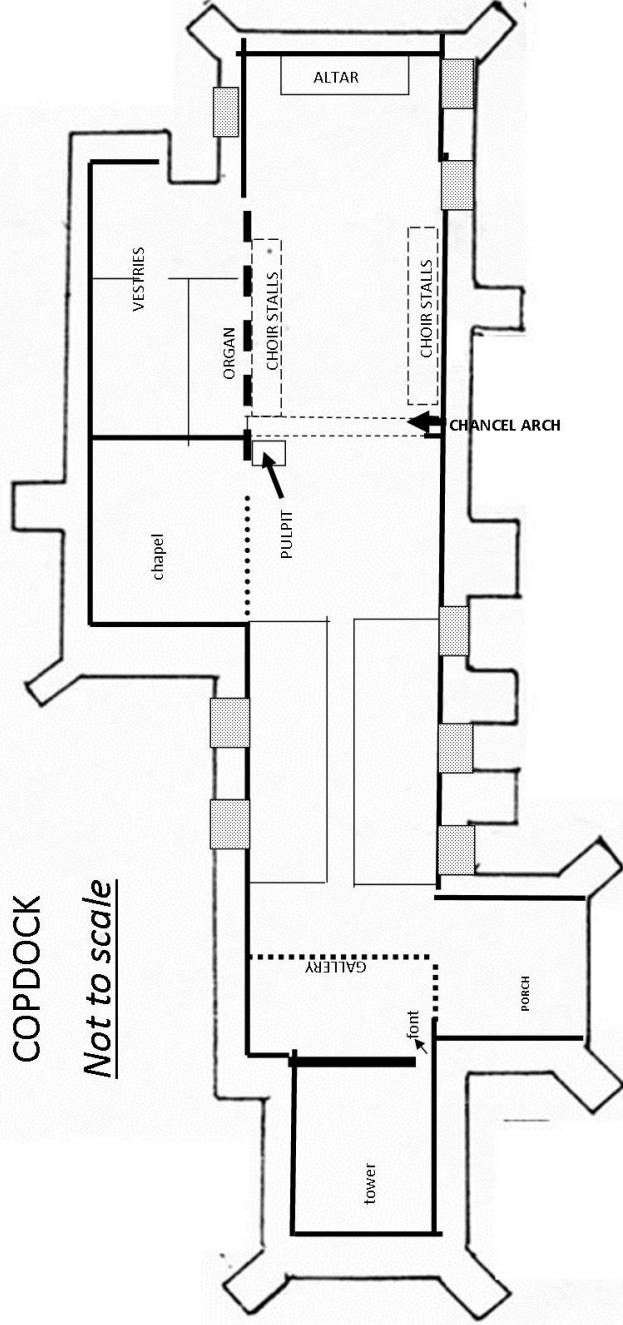
ST PETER'S CHURCH COPDOCK w. WASHBROOK

Being a combination of
the researches of Richard Pipe, local Historian
and the photographs of Jennifer Jones, Village Recorder

**PLAN OF
ST PETER'S CHURCH**

COPDOCK

Not to scale



St Peter's Copdock is part of
The North Samford Benefice of
Belstead, Bentley, Burstall,
Copdock with Washbrook,
Sproughton, Tattingstone

RECTOR

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A SHORT HISTORY OF COPDOCK, ST PETER.



The church in 1841 by Henry Davy

A brief explanation: The official name of the CIVIL parish is Copdock AND Washbrook. The name of the ecclesiastical parish is Copdock WITH Washbrook and St Peter's is the parish church.. The other church is St Mary's Washbrook which is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

The ecclesiastical parishes of Copdock and Washbrook were united in 1670 – the Rector of Copdock was also the Vicar of Washbrook. Since then there was always an emphasis on Copdock (being near the Hall and the bigger houses of the 18th century) and a certain neglect of Washbrook – being more attended by the cottagers.

There was a building on the St Peter's site in the 12th century when the parish was one large estate known as Belstead- later divided into Copdock, Washbrook and Little Belstead. The present building is largely Perpendicular in style dating its construction to the 14th century.

The church lies to the east of the village on the far side of the Old A12 and next door to Copdock Hall. This is not a question of "the plague moving the villagers away" but the link of the church with the lord of the manor. Why should he walk down to the village to go to church? Let the villagers walk up the hill! Until comparatively recent times the



only access to the church was by footpaths. The road to Belstead did not exist until the 19th century but went along The Avenue where both the rectories of Copdock (now Felcourt) and Belstead (Belstead Old Rectory) were built by their wealthy incumbents.

St Peter's stands proudly on the highest point of the village and can be seen from a distance – John Constable did a drawing of it on October 5th 1803, most likely on his way back from a day sketching in Ipswich. In his day there were no trees to obscure it from view.

It is a simple one aisled church with a later chapel to the north and its greatest external feature, the **fine tower** with its attractive **west door** built about 1478, is usually ignored by those who worship inside it– as it is no longer the main entrance to the church. There are flushwork panels in its angled buttresses, with more above the doorway and the **west window** has a crocketed dripstone with finial and angel head stops. The tower is topped with brick battlements and had a **weathervane** of King David playing his harp. This was designed and made by a local farmer-artist called William Trent in 1855 but for the moment has been removed for repairs.

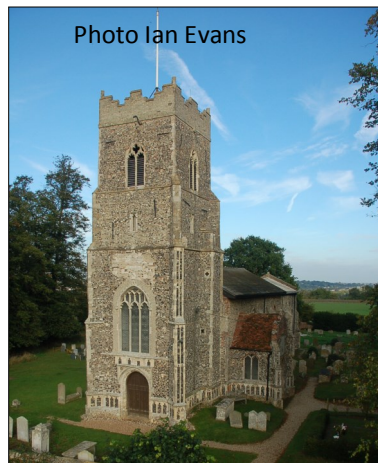
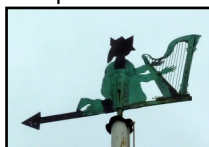


Photo Ian Evans

Another “hidden” treasure is the **north door** which dates from the early 15thC with keeled panels and interesting tracery.



The main entrance to the church is through the **south porch**, the stepped gable of which was added in the 18th century with a **sundial** 1935 erected to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of George V above the entrance. The door is still locked with its original key – a foot long.

The churchyard has an interesting **tomb to John Marven** (whose name survives in the newest road in the village). He was a celebrated bell-ringer who died aged only 34 in 1789. He was one of the early composers of the change ringing method and the head of the stone is carved with an oval relief of a woman holding a book and leaning against a bell.



To the north east of the church there is a **Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone**, the grave of Guardsman Ernest Harvey. Two of his grandchildren live locally and a Poppy Wreath is laid on his grave annually on Remembrance Sunday.



Nearby is a beautiful **modern headstone** for a girl who died tragically young.

Before you leave, do look at the **Second World War Memorial**



and notice that the **churchyard gate** was given in memory of a baby who lived only a few hours





Organ and its case were, with the gallery and the west door, part of the 1901 refurbishment in thanksgiving for the reign of Queen Victoria.

The **choir stalls**, like the pews, are 19th century with equally fine poppy-heads.



Behind the **altar** is a 19th century stone **reredos** with a central Last Supper tableau with attendant angels sculpted in relief which are rather obscured by the altar on its raised steps. There is also a **piscina** on the south wall.

There is no mediaeval glass left – the infamous Suffolk iconoclast, William Dowsing, came here in January 1643 and he recorded having broken down 150 ‘superstitious pictures’.



The **stained glass windows in the chancel** are full of interest but seem to have had no acknowledged makers, though from the adjacent plaques it can be seen that two are in memory of members of the de Grey family; the Hon. George de Grey and his brother the Revd. Frederick de Grey, Rector, and one in memory of Anna Matilda Wratishlow and her 3½ year old daughter Laura Matilda Ludmilla Wratishlow.

Inside the church is light and airy because of the tall plain glass perpendicular windows in each wall and the tall Chancel which is almost as high as the nave.

Immediately on the left on entering the church is the very fine 15th century **font** (recut in the 19th century) with kneeling angels holding open books, two pomegranates and a Tudor rose.



The shaft and the tall attractive cover are both Victorian.



Not all who enter the church realise there is a **gallery** (though in days past it was the preferred seating for the young people of the parish who there sang their own versions of the hymns). The gallery was installed new in 1901 at the same time as the **organ chamber**, the West Doors and the renewal of the **nave roof** as a thanks offering for Queen Victoria’s long reign.

On the front of the gallery are **five small C16 panels**. The two outer ones are carved with leaf patterns, the centre is a shield of arms, a lady plays a harp on the fourth, but the best one is carved with the little figure of Edward VI on horseback. It is somewhat difficult to see them in detail as hanging over the gallery is not only dangerous but also distorts the vision!





On the north wall is the **World War I Memorial**, designed by H. Munro Cautley – Surveyor to St Edmundsbury Diocese and notable architect. There is a tale that the then Rector (The Revd Mr Macpherson) did not want the memorial in “his” church but the villagers insisted; but more likely it was the influential father of Lt Bernard who had the final word. Laurence Bernard was killed in September 1914, the first Copdock man to fall and the only officer from the village to die.

On the table at the back is a pictorial record of the graves of the Fallen of the Six Parishes of the North Samford Benefice and a Memorial Book for the Copdock & Washbrook Fallen of both World Wars and the Copdock born VC - William Henry Hewitt. The World War II Memorial is in the graveyard.



There are two other **memorial plaques** on the north walls of the church - one from 1898 and the other from the Boer War; both men were related to William Henry Hewitt VC.



The **pews** are well worth a closer look. Although they are 19thC they are of very high



quality and each **poppy head** (from the French word “poupe”, dolly) is different. Although there is no evidence they could be the work of Henry Ringham, the notable 19th century Ipswich wood-carver, whose work can be seen in so many Suffolk churches.



The small **north transept** retains its 15th century roof with leaf and flower bosses. It was originally a chantry chapel associated with Copdock Hall. There is a blocked door visible from outside.



The existence of a chapel may explain the presence of the **squint** in the angle of the chancel arch. It would have enabled the priest celebrating mass in the chapel to see the priest at the High Altar .

There are shields in the moulding of the tall **transept arch**, three of which have traces of painted arms. The **shields in the Chancel roof** were painted in 1959:- the two easterly shields depict the emblems of St. Peter to whom the church is dedicated; next on the



right hand side, come the arms of the diocese of Norwich, of which Copdock and Washbrook parishes were part until 1914 when the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was created. Opposite are the arms of the Province of Canterbury. Next, on the right hand side, come the emblem of St. George, the pa-

tron saint of England, and, on the left, the arms of the “new” Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The two western most shields depict, on the right, the emblem of St. Mary, symbolising the long connection between Copdock and the church of St. Mary, Washbrook, on the left the emblem of St. Edmund, patron saint of the Diocese.