

SUFFOLK

Suffolk can hardly be recommended to tile enthusiasts. In terms of medieval tiles, Icklingham Church is the most notable site with a good display of plain and line-impressed designs, and there are several other churches with small numbers of medieval tiles on display. A handful of locations have good early sixteenth century Italian-style terracotta; however, better examples of this short-lived fashion in building materials exist to north and south of the county in Norfolk and especially Essex, where it first took root in East Anglia.

Heveningham Hall and Great Saxham Hall (although access to both is difficult), and to a lesser extent Ickworth, have good Coade stone, while the Ancient House in Ipswich has an unusual delft tile panel. As to Victorian tiles, Suffolk had its share of church restorations, often carried out by the local diocesan architect Richard Phipson, and some new churches were built, but in most cases the tiles (usually by Minton or Maw) were pretty unremarkable; an exception is St Agnes, Newmarket, where the extensive Spanish-style tilework may be by Frederick Garrard. The pick of the few Victorian secular sites must be the lavish Maw's dairy at Easton Farm Park. The most modern of the substantial sites listed is Lowestoff's Boston Deep Sea Fisheries, with its pair of (probable) interwar Doulton murals; after 1950 there is nothing to report from this ceramic backwater. Suggested reading: David Sherlock, *Medieval floor tiles in Suffolk churches* (Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, 1980); Anne Riches, *Victorian church building and restoration in Suffolk* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1982). The *Gazetteer* entry for Suffolk covers the administrative area of Suffolk County Council.

BARHAM

The large, four-light window in the vestry of **St Mary's Church** is made from terracotta and dates from about 1525. Its style, early Italian renaissance, is similar to that of other Suffolk windows at Barking and Henley churches and at Shrubland Old Hall, Coddendam. These four sites are grouped together just a few miles north of Ipswich and lie about twenty miles north-east of Layer Marney in Essex, where Sir Henry Marney began to build a palace on his country estate around 1520; the gatehouse is notable for its use of near-renaissance style terracotta decoration. The Layer Marney terracotta workshop was broken up around 1523-5, after which the craftsmen appear to have been responsible for creating a series of Italian-style terracotta structures in Suffolk (the windows of the Barham area) and Norfolk (the north-west Norfolk halls and four related church monuments).¹

BARKING

A window on the north side of **St Mary's Church** has early Italian renaissance style terracotta mullions and jambs, with decoration made from the same moulds as used at Barham (see above).

BARSHAM

In **Holy Trinity Church** is the fine terracotta tombchest of Sir Edward Eckingham (d1527), its early renaissance decoration identical to that found on the Oxborough Church tombchests in Norfolk. There are also plain black and yellow glazed medieval tiles by the church's north doorway (and do not miss the extraordinary flint latticework east wall exterior).

CODDENHAM

In the grounds of Shrubland Park, south-west of Coddendam, is **Shrubland Old Hall**, which has a pair of three light terracotta windows in early Italian renaissance style. They date from around 1525 and have decoration made from the same moulds as used at Barham and Barking (see above).

EASTON

The octagonal dairy in the grounds of **Easton Farm Park** was built in 1870 for the Duke of Hamilton; the floor tiles surrounding its octagonal marble fountain incorporate the family crest, while stained glass in the doors shows the Hamilton monogram. The wall tiling includes vertical panels of flowers and birds in low-relief white slip on buff ground in the manner of the hand-made French *pâte-sur-pâte* technique, but in this case created by means of a mechanical process devised by Maw & Co. This lavish dairy was built during the aristocratic vogue for such buildings following the completion of the Royal Dairy at Windsor in 1861.²

HENLEY

The large, three-light south nave window in **St Peter's Church** is made from terracotta and dates from around 1525; it is in early Italian renaissance style and was made by the same craftsmen who worked at Barham, Barking and Shrubland Old Hall, Coddendam (see above).

HEVENINGHAM

Heveningham Hall (no public access), about a mile north-east of the village, is one of England's most important country houses. The twenty-five bay Palladian exterior of the Hall was designed about 1778 by Sir Robert Taylor, while the interior, completed in 1784, is the work of James Wyatt. The stuccoed brick exterior has a fine display of Coade stone including urns, recumbent lions, caryatids and griffin plaques. There is more Coade ornament on the orangery, designed in the 1780s by Wyatt.³ The east wing of the Hall suffered extensive fire damage in 1984; restoration of the Hall and its parkland began in 1994 and still continues.

ICKLINGHAM

All Saints Church, now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, has attractive early fourteenth century plain and line-impressed tiles on the floor of its chancel. The tiles vary in shape, colour and design forming a complex mosaic, while individual motifs include a lion's face and an earless man wearing a coronet. Some tiles are pseudo-mosaic, in that they appear to be two tiles but are in fact a single tile. The tiles were supplied by Ely Cathedral, about fifteen miles to the west, where the ornate floor of Prior Crauden's Chapel was probably completed around 1324.⁴

IPSWICH

Behind the unmistakable seventeenth century pargetted facade of the **Ancient House** (now a shop), in the centre of Ipswich on BUTTERMARKET, are two Dutch delft tiled fireplaces dating from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The images on one have an equestrian theme while the other displays mostly landscapes and animals. However, the main ceramic attraction of this unusual building is a 6' by 4' Dutch delft tile panel in dark blue and off-white showing the Greek gods Pallas and Mars; it was possibly originally intended for a country house. Just north in TOWER STREET is the **Church of St Mary-le-Tower**, which was completely rebuilt in 1863-7 by Richard Phipson (1827-84), who was to be diocesan architect during 1871-84. Although the nave wall tiling has been removed, there is lavish chancel tiling and the floor tiles bear the boar symbol of local banker Edward Bacon, who funded part of the rebuilding. The floor of the tower was laid with Minton's encaustic tiles during the restoration.⁵

Further from the centre, **St Pancras R. C. Church** (1861-2, architect George Goldie), ORWELL PLACE has panels of embossed majolica tiles, possibly by Maw's, below its reredos. To the north-west at 46 NORWICH ROAD is the **Maharani Restaurant**, which started life as a fishmonger and purveyor of game and has an excellent pictorial tile panel to prove it. The 8' by 4' mural, which shows a hunting scene and is signed 'Carter & Co., Poole, Dorset, 1897', is set on a wall of relief pattern tiling in grey, blue and green with brown border tiles. It is known that Carter's provided three murals for the shop, but two have been lost. Further out on CHEVALLIER STREET - the inner ring road, which crosses Norwich Road - is **All Saints Church** (not normally open), built in 1886-7 and designed by the Morecambe architect Samuel Wright, who won the commission in competition; its interior, with terracotta columns and much red brick, has been described as a 'clayworkers' paradise'. Wright's use of terracotta may have been influenced by his proximity to the third of Edmund Sharpe's terracotta churches, St Paul's (1874-6), Scotforth, Lancaster.⁶

LANGHAM

St Mary's Church (not normally open) stands in the grounds of Langham Hall. The Essex architect-priest Ernest Geldart rebuilt its nave and restored its chancel in 1886-9, installing encaustic floor tiles supplied by W. B. Simpson & Sons of London; they were most likely to have been made by Maw & Co, for whom Simpson's were London agents.

LOWESTOFT

The **Boston Deep Sea Fisheries** building (architects Dalton & Cockrill) in WAVENEY ROAD, overlooking the harbour from the north, is a little gem amidst the general dross of Lowestoft's built environment (Fig 270). It was put up by Consolidated Fisheries, probably between the wars but possibly a little earlier, and taken over by Boston Deep Sea Fisheries around 1945. Its original name was Columbus Buildings, which explains the presence of two large, colourful (perhaps tube-lined) murals showing galleons - presumably the *Nina*, the *Pinta*

and the *Santa Maria* - on its otherwise white faience facade, which could be of Doulton's Carraraware or Carter's Ceramic Marble.⁷ The panels do not feature in the catalogue of Carter's photographs of their installations, thus are more likely to be by Doulton.

NEWMARKET

St Agnes Church (not normally open), BURY ROAD, was built in 1886 as a private chapel for Agnes, Duchess of Montrose; her architect was R. H. Carpenter. The red brick structure sports an unusual tower, while the high church interior is almost exotic in its decoration, with a huge marble reredos, much Salviati mosaic, windows by Clayton & Bell and a dado throughout in what *Pevsner* describes as 'Spanish tiles'; these may well be the cuenca tiles made by Frederick Garrard of Millwall.

SOMERLEYTON

Somerleyton Hall was designed by John Thomas and erected during 1844-57 for the building magnate Sir Morton Peto. The entrance hall is paved with panels of Minton encaustic tiles set between marble strips. Although this floor is relatively early, dating from around 1850, it incorporates green and bright blue tiles as well as the more usual buff, red, brown, black and white. Several passages in the Jacobean-style house have early Minton dust-pressed geometric pavements which include tiny and very decorative tiles. In the ballroom, colourful 12" square transfer printed dust-pressed Minton tiles (using the technique developed in 1851 by Minton's in conjunction with Collins & Reynolds) adorn several fire surrounds, and there are more of these in the winter garden along with further encaustic and geometric tiles.

Suffolk Roundup

Mustow House, 1 Mustow Street, **Bury St Edmunds** has an encaustic tiled floor (designed specifically for this site) with rich classical motifs. The east wall decoration of St John Baptist (1894-5, architect Sir Arthur Blomfield), Orwell Road, **Felixstowe** was supplied by Powell's in 1899; it includes alabaster, opus sectile, mosaic and stencilled glass tiles.⁸ The moorish gothic garden building in the grounds of Great Saxham Hall, **Great Saxham** is made from Coade stone and marked Coade and Sealy. There are Victorian and medieval floor tiles in the sanctuary of St John's Church, **Great Wenham**. St Mary's Church, **Harkstead** (restored 1867, architects Slater & Carpenter) has a Minton encaustic pavement and a mostly mosaic reredos by Powell's.⁹ Part - it is not clear exactly which part - of the top frieze on the rotunda of Ickworth House (NT), **Ickworth** is of Coade stone, as are the capitals and bases (1821) of four columns in the library. Inside All Saints Church, **Lawshall**, on the west wall of the nave close to the tower, is a blue and white-tiled war memorial plaque dating from 1947; it commemorates a Dutch pilot killed nearby in 1945. St Nicholas Church, **Oakley** has a tile and mosaic reredos (1882) of the *Last Supper*. In the churchyard of St Edmund's Church, **Southwold** is a substantial tomb decorated with encaustic tiles whose

lettering includes the names and dates of the deceased. Medieval tiles have been reset in a piscina in the chancel of All Saints Church, **Sudbourne**; restoration of the church in 1878 included the installation of tiled floors throughout. There is a terracotta reredos (1883) of the *Last Supper* by George Tinworth of Doulton's at St Mary's Church, **Walsham-le-Willows**; there are also medieval floor tiles at the east end of the south aisle.

In addition, there are medieval tiles at the following churches: All Saints, Acton (behind north-east altar); St Michael, Boulge (reset in niche in north wall of chancel); St Mary, Brent Eleigh (east end of south aisle); St Mary, Coney Weston (reset in north-west corner of nave); St Mary, Dennington (reset beside Bardolf tomb, south chapel); and All Saints, Drinkstone (east end of nave).

References

1. Nikolaus Pevsner and Enid Radcliffe, *Suffolk Buildings of England* (Penguin, London, 1974).
2. Tony Herbert and Kathryn Huggins, *The Decorative Tile in Architecture and Interiors* (Phaidon Press, London, 1995), pp96-7.
3. Alison Kelly, *Mrs Coade's Stone* (Self Publishing Association, Upton-upon-Severn, 1990).
4. Laurence Keen and David Thackray, 'A fourteenth century mosaic tile pavement with line-impressed decoration from Icklingham', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 33 (1974), pp153-167.
5. *The Builder*, vol 25, 2nd February 1867.
6. Anne Riches, *Victorian church building and restoration in Suffolk* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1982).
7. Diana Clegg and Peter Clegg, 'Tile Panels at Lowestoft', *Glazed Expressions*, (1985) 10, p9.
8. Dennis W. Hadley, *James Powell & Sons: A listing of opus sectile, 1847-1973*, (2001).
9. *The Builder*, vol 25, 21st December 1867.