

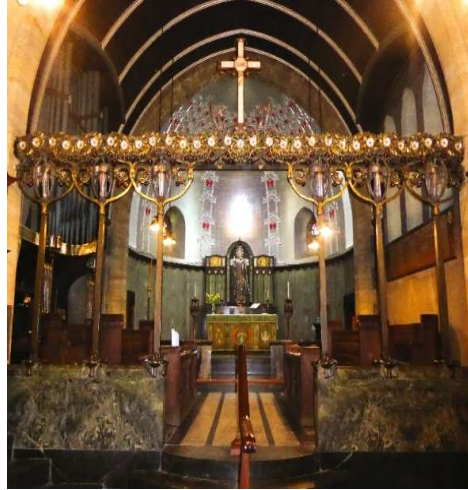
Local and Essex History January 2026 (Replacement)

Churches

1. Where is the “art nouveau” church?
2. A church, which was built in Southend in 1905 by Sir Walter Tapper, was at one time planned to become a cathedral for the town. To whom was it dedicated?
3. Where can you find the oldest stained glass in Europe?
4. Which Essex Church is best known for its 13th century wall painting of the Virgin and Child, which was whitewashed over during the Reformation but rediscovered in the 19th century?
5. Which church tower is said to have been erected as a memorial to men who fell in the Battle of Agincourt?
6. Where is the swearing font and why is it so called?
7. Many ancient Essex churches have an apsidal(semi-circular) east end, but where can you find one with a rare apsidal west end?
8. Which church has a link with the journalist John McCarthy and, consequently, commemorative “Hostage Windows”?
9. To which saint is the parish church at Mountnessing dedicated?
10. Where would you find a collection of monuments and memorials to members of the Poyntz family? What can you find out about the Family?

1. Where is the “art nouveau” church?

St Mary the Virgin, Great Warley. We visited for a tour some time ago – very interesting and well worth a visit. (The photos do not do it justice!)



Lee, Sue Q and her sister

2. A church, which was built in Southend in 1905 by Sir Walter Tapper, was at one time planned to become a cathedral for the town. To whom was it dedicated?

St. Erkenwald’s Church was built during the period 1905-1934 to a design by Sir Walter Tapper, one of the country’s foremost twentieth century ecclesiastical architects. It was built with cathedral-like proportions to serve Southend’s expanding population and summer visitors. St. Erkenwald’s enjoyed a prestigious position in Southend at a time when many influential people advocated the town as the diocesan centre for the new bishopric of Essex. In 1910, St. Erkenwald’s Church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of St. Albans. The clergy house and vestries were built in 1915, with the north chapel following in 1925 and the church room in 1934.

Original plans by Sir Walter Tapper included a tower on the south side, however rising costs and dwindling congregations meant this was never completed. In 1978 the church was declared redundant and closed. In 1992 a major fire made preserving the building unlikely and it was demolished in 1995.



3. Where can you find the oldest stained glass in Europe?

The East Window at St Mary and All Saints, Rivenhall

The 11th and 12th Centuries were probably the golden era of stained glass window production and some pieces at Rivenhall were manufactured during this period. The East Window at St Mary's is considered to be one of the finest examples of stained glass art still in existence today.

4. Which Essex Church is best known for its 13th century wall painting of the Virgin and Child, which was whitewashed over during the Reformation but rediscovered in the 19th century?

St Mary's at Great Canfield was fundamentally a manor church and famed for its treasure, a thirteenth-century painting of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Child in a niche behind the altar. This is said to be one of the best 13th century representations in the country and survived destruction during the Reformation. Fortunately, at Great Canfield it was whitewashed over, instead of being scraped down.

150 years later in the reign of Charles II, a sculptured monument to the Lord of the Manor was placed on the east wall, covering the niche and its forgotten picture. Two more centuries passed before a discerning vicar became convinced that the altar should not be surmounted by the figures of a bygone worthy and his wife. The monument was moved to the nave in 1888. Behind it was revealed the niche with traces of colour where the whitewash had perished and after 350 years the fresco of the Virgin and Child emerged.

5. Which church tower is said to have been erected as a memorial to men who fell in the Battle of Agincourt?

The Parish Church of St Nicholas in Canewdon with its impressive tower is a landmark for many miles around and was used as an observation and signalling post during the First World War. It stands on a ridge overlooking the Crouch estuary on an ancient site in a large churchyard. The Church's impressive tower is said to have been erected by Henry V in thanksgiving for his victory in Agincourt.

6. Where is the swearing font and why is it so called?

St Mary's Church, Tollesbury. In 1718 the local churchwardens were so appalled by the drunken swearing of a parishioner that they fined him £5. With the money they commissioned a new font, and had carved on it the words 'Good people all I pray take care that in ye Church you doe not sware As this man did'. An entry in the registers for 30th August 1718 explains: "Elizabeth daughter of Robert and Eliza Wood, being ye first child which was baptised in the new font which was bought out of five pounds paid by John Norman who some months before came drunk into ye Church and cursed and talked aloud in the time of Divine Service, to prevent his being prosecuted for which he paid by agreement the above said five pounds. Note that the wise Rhymes on the font were put there by sole order of Robert Joyce then Church Warden".



7. Many ancient Essex churches have an apsidal(semi-circular) east end, but where can you find one with a rare apsidal west end?

St. Giles' Langford is a unique Grade II listed building which dominates the centre of the village at the junction of Witham Road and Maldon Road. Roman tiles and bricks were identified in the fabric of the church during work in the 1930s, but most experts believe the building is of early Norman construction.

The Chancel and Nave were built in the late 11th or early 12th Century with apses both at the eastern and western ends; this was fairly common practice in village churches of the time. In the 14th or 15th Century the eastern apse was pulled down and a square extension added to the Chancel.



8. Which church has a link with the journalist John McCarthy and, consequently, commemorative “Hostage Windows”?

St Mary the Virgin, Broxted Occupying an ancient Celtic site, this 12th and 13th century building replaces, and incorporates parts of, an earlier Saxon structure. The church was extensively restored in 1876, when the weather-boarded belfry was completely rebuilt.

There is a fine carved wood pulpit dating from the 17th century. The stained glass “Hostage” windows by John K. Clark, which commemorate the five year ordeal of local journalist John McCarthy and his fellow Beirut hostages is a modern feature that draws many visitors. Two windows, dubbed The Captivity and Freedom windows. The windows commemorate the captivity and eventual release of John McCarthy, a journalist and resident of Broxted, who was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1986. McCarthy and fellow British captives Brian Keeler, and Terry Waite became known as the 'Beirut Hostages'. They were held for over 5 years in captivity, during which time Broxted church became a place of prayer and vigil for their release.

McCarthy's mother Sheila died during his captivity, and is buried in Broxted churchyard. When McCarthy was released in 1991, a celebration service was held in St Mary's and a pair of old Victorian windows were replaced with the current moving glass design to celebrate not only the McCarthy story, but as a monument to hostages all over the world.

The windows, designed by John Clark, show in moving detail the plight, not only of the Beirut captives, but their families back home. Information panels explain the symbolism of the scenes, and how the artist worked with John McCarthy to create them. The Captivity Window is largely black and white, with only spray splashes of colour. By contrast, the Freedom Window is blazing with colour, and symbolises not only the release of the hostages, but McCarthy's desire for reconciliation and peace.



9.. To which saint is the parish church at Mountnessing dedicated?

St Giles' Church in Mountnessing is a historic building renowned for its beautiful architecture and tranquil setting. The church dates back to the 13th century and features various architectural styles, including Norman and Gothic. It is situated in a picturesque village, making it a serene spot for visitors. The church's interior boasts stained glass windows and traditional stonework, reflecting its long-standing significance to the local community.



10. Where would you find a collection of monuments and memorials to members of the Poyntz family? What can you find out about the Family?

St Mary Magdalene North Ockendon. The church stands to the west of the village. The building is Norman. The north aisle and north chancel chapel are later, of the Early English period. The east arch is 15th century, as is the chancel arch. Of much interest are the numerous monuments to the Poyntz family, who were lords of the manor from about 1350, There are brasses and a fine alabaster tomb chest, with effigies of Sir Gabriel Poyntz and wife (1607) , together with other important monuments to them.

It seems that the Poyntz family connection started around 1390 and lasted into the mid 1700's. There were so many of them that my head was spinning between all the Johns, Thomases, Gabriels, Williams and Adams plus a variety of daughters and granddaughters!

Sir Gabriel Poyntz (d. 1608) erected several monuments to himself, his son and his daughter, and to many of his ancestors. Collectively, they are quite staggering. In 1644 his descendant Richard Poyntz found a rather more useful means of spending money: he left £200 in his will for the poor of North Ockendon. In 1647 the legacy, supplemented by £24 belonging to the parish, was used to buy about 40 acres of land at Horndon-on-the-Hill. The annual income from this land was used to provide clothing, coal, bedding, and money for the poor for the next 300 years.



Mavis Regan

Acknowledgements:

Essex Views, Britain Express, A Church Near You, Essex Churches, Sir Walter Tapper Churches, Broxted Parish Council

CHURCHES

Lyn and Alan Aldridge

1. Where is the "art nouveau" church.

It is the St Mary the Virgin Church in Great Warley, Essex and is a Grade 1 listed building. It is a premier example of an Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau church, often called the "Pearl Church."

The original church was further south and when in the 1890s it fell into disrepair a replacement wooden building was erected on higher ground at the current location. When the Rector died, it was bequeathed to the parish of Baildon in Yorkshire so was taken down and re-erected there.

In 1902, with money and the land donated by the Heseltine family, the present church of St. Mary the Virgin was built. The design and furnishing were entrusted to the architect Mr. C. Harrison Townsend and Sir William Reynolds-Stevens, sculptor and interior designer, both eminent artists in their fields, who could be expected faithfully to reproduce the contemporary Art Nouveau style for the interior.

Consecrated in 1904, it features a unique interior blending mother-of-pearl, marble, and metals with, notably, aluminium-leaf covered walls, flowing Art Nouveau motifs, a detailed organ case with hammered steel and copper, and a beautifully decorated apse.

It is one of only three churches in England in this specific style and is widely considered the best-preserved example. The church has been featured in BBC programmes and is open to visitors.



2. **A church, which was built in Southend in 1905 by Sir Walter Tapper, was at one time planned to become a cathedral for the town. To whom was it dedicated?**

It was dedicated to St. Erkenwald (675–693), an influential 7th-century Anglo-Saxon Saint. Born in Essex he became Bishop of London and founder of Chertsey and Barking Abbeys. Known as the "Light of London," he helped solidify Christianity in the region, acted as an adviser to King Ine of Wessex, and was buried in Old St. Paul's.

St. Erkenwald's Church was located on the north-east corner of the junction between York Road and Southchurch Avenue in Southend-on-Sea. It was designed by Sir Walter Tapper and constructed between 1905 and 1910. Known for its cathedral-like proportions, it was a major ecclesiastical, Romanesque-style building.

Built between 1905 and 1910, this yellow-brick church, closed in the late 1970s and subsequent demolition in 1995 following a fire. The church and saint are commemorated as the current building on the site named St. Erkenwalds Court.

3. **Where can you find the oldest stained glass in Europe?**

Are we missing something? Can only find the oldest stained glass in:

- **Europe:** the Prophet windows in Augsburg Cathedral, Bavaria, Germany, dating from the late 11th to early 12th century (approx. 1065–1100s).
- **UK:** in Canterbury Cathedral, with specific panels—including the "Ancestors of Christ" series and the "Figure of Nathan" - dating back to approximately 1130–1160.

These panels are among the oldest in the world, having survived a fire in 1174, and are located in the cathedral's Great South Window and West Window.

There is also apparently research using new methods that suggest it may be earlier than this.

- **Essex:** in the East Window of St Mary and All Saints Church in Rivenhall, featuring panels dating from the 12th century (c. 1170–1180), which were brought from France. These are considered among the finest examples of early stained glass in existence, with some potentially pre-dating 1150.

4. Which Essex Church is best known for its 13th century wall painting of the Virgin and Child, which was whitewashed over during the Reformation but rediscovered in the 19th century?

Copford Church, just south-west of Colchester.

Its full name is St Michaels' and All Angels Church.

The key uniqueness of this church is its remarkable Norman wall paintings.

The building was completed in around 1130, and the decoration scheme completely covered all wall and vaulted surfaces with a series of approximately 34 subjects.

Some of these were lost as changes were made or some deterioration of the building. The surviving paintings/frescos disappeared under a coat of lime wash applied in the increasingly puritanical reign of Edward VI.

The wall paintings were 're-discovered' during Victorian times, and a process of restoration appears to have been undertaken at different times through to quite recently.

The painting of Virgin and Child has been quite difficult to find but we believe it is the fresco below



5. Which church tower is said to have been erected as a memorial to men who fell in the Battle of Agincourt?

That is a very good question as it appears that two churches claim to have this link – one in Harwich and one in Canewdon! On balance we concluded that it is the St. Nicholas Church in Canewdon.

St Nicholas Church is a beautiful 14th-century Parish Church that is situated on top of a hill overlooking the River Crouch. The church was primarily built in the 14th century.

Its impressive 15th-century tower, a landmark for many miles, is said to have been erected by Henry V following his victory at the Battle of Agincourt in France (1415).

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the tower was used as a navigation point along the River Crouch. During the First World War the tower was used for observation and as a signalling post. The old village lock-up and stocks are located to the east of the church.

In 2008, following a very generous bequest from a member of the congregation, a new peal of 10 bells was installed complete with a new ringing chamber, which can be viewed from the main body of the church.



St Nicholas Church/Tower



Church Font

PS: the church is one of the most haunted places in Essex



6. Where is the swearing font and why is it so called?

The "swearing font" is located in St Mary's Church, Tollesbury, Essex.

It's origin is that in 1718, a local seafaring man named John Norman came into the church drunk, cursing, and talking loudly during a divine service.

To avoid prosecution for his actions, John Norman was forced to pay £5 (a substantial sum at the time, equivalent to a year's wages for a servant) to pay for the new font as a form of public penance.

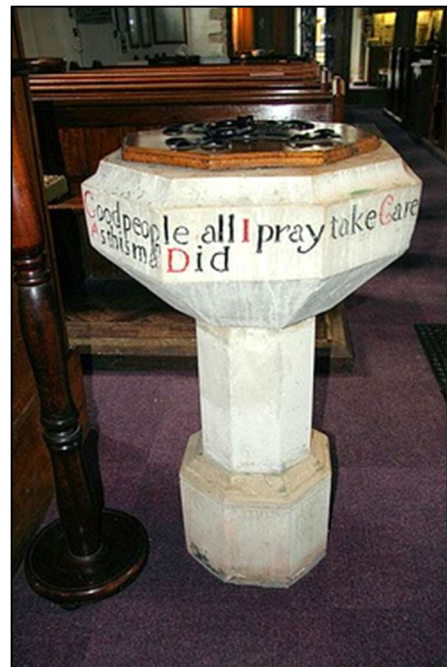
The font is famous for an inscription added in the early 18th century as a penalty for unruly behaviour:

*"Good people all I pray take Care.
That in ye Church you doe not Sware.
As this man Did."*

The font serves as a permanent "sermon in stone" against disrespect in the church.



St Mary's Church, Tollesbury



The Swearing font

7. Many ancient Essex churches have an apsidal (semi-circular) east end, but where can you find one with a rare apsidal west end?

St Gregory and St George church in Pentlow, (in Essex; north of Braintree; North West of Colchester) has a rare example of an ancient church with an apsidal west end. An APSE is a large semicircular or polygonal recess in a church, arched or with a domed roof and typically at the church's eastern end to catch the rising sun, unlike this church.

While many Essex churches feature a traditional Norman eastern apse, Pentlow is one of only a few churches in the region with a rare, semi-circular west end attached to its round tower.

The church is also noted for its Norman Round Tower, 12th century font and the unusual, probably Byzantine - influenced design, is exceptionally rare for the area.

Pentlow Church is a very old Saxon church, probably over a thousand years old, and possibly even dating from the middle years of the seventh century during the revival of Christianity in East Anglia.

The church, originally just a nave and apsidal chancel, was built to straddle a circular tumulus, or mound, in the valley floor of the Stour, in a landscape crisscrossed with prehistoric crop marks.



Church of St Gregory and St George showing the circular west apse to the right and the Norman round tower to the left.

8. Which church has a link with the journalist John McCarthy and, consequently, commemorative "Hostage Windows"?

St Mary's Church, Broxted, Essex.

Occupying an ancient Celtic site, this 12th and 13th century building replaces, and incorporates parts of, an earlier Saxon structure. The church was extensively restored in 1876, when the weather-boarded belfry was completely rebuilt. It has a fine carved wood pulpit dating from the 17th century.

Everyone will no doubt remember that John McCarthy CBE is a British journalist, writer and broadcaster, and one of the hostages in the Lebanon hostage crisis starting in 1982. McCarthy was the longest-held British hostage in Lebanon, having been imprisoned for more than five years.

John McCarthy lived in nearby Broxted Hall. Broxted Church commissioned the two striking windows by local artist John K Clark to celebrate their release. One is predominantly grey the other blue, to symbolise captivity and freedom respectively.



9. To which saint is the parish church at Mountnessing dedicated?

To St. Giles (c. 650 – c. 710). Supposedly born in Athens to King Theodore and Queen Pelagia of Athens.

He was also known as Giles the Hermit, was a hermit or monk active in the lower Rhône, France, most likely in the 7th century. Revered as a saint, his cult became widely diffused throughout Europe including Great Britain.

St. Giles was the patron saint of lepers and so his name often had an association with hospitals.

Other perhaps better known 'St. Giles' links are to Chalfont St. Giles, an area in Camden, London. St Giles Circus is where Oxford Street, Charing Cross Road, Tottenham Court Road, and New Oxford St meet in London – so St. Giles is still well represented across Great Britain.

Much of his history and activity appear to be 'legend' rather than firm fact.



St Giles Church, Mountnessing



St. Giles

10. Where would you find a collection of monuments and memorials to members of the Poyntz family? What can you find out about the Family?

The Poyntz family is an ancient Anglo-Norman noble house descending from Pons, a follower of William the Conqueror. Primarily established in Iron Acton, Gloucestershire, by the 14th century, they were prominent landowners and courtiers. Notable members include Sir Robert Poyntz, a courtier to Henry VIII, and Sir Nicholas Poyntz

The Poyntz family was a significant landowning family in Essex, primarily based in North Ockendon from the 15th to the 17th century. Key figures included Sir Gabriel Poyntz (d. 1607), who built a prominent monument in St Mary Magdalene Church, North Ockendon, and his father, Thomas Poyntz, a merchant who aided reformer William Tyndale.

The many monuments in and around the church are mostly associated with the local Poyntz family.

The main monument is a large stone effigy of Sir Gabriel Poyntz (1538–1608) and his wife Etheldreda, who are lying on a marble tomb chest. Over them is a wooden tester without column supports, decorated with images of the sun, moon, clouds and stars.

Gabriel Poyntz placed a series of smaller memorials to commemorate his family, including his father Thomas Poyntz and his uncle and aunt, John and Anne Poyntz.



St Mary Magdalene Church



Sir Gabriel Poyntz

CHURCHES – Denise Phipps

Question 1.

St Mary the Virgin at Great Warley is situated just outside the M25 near Brentwood , Essex.The church is a Grade1 listed building which was built on land with money donated by the Heseltine family in 1902.

The architect was Charles Hanson Townsend, inside the church you can see an Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts interior styles using mother of pearl, marble, aluminium and other materials these were designed by Sir William Reynolds Stevens.

If you are thinking of a visit to the church take a look at the Lynchgate it was erected in 1903 and also is listed as a Grade 11 structure and you are able to see carved barge boards with fruit and leaves and there is a inscription in the beam with a plaque commemorating the construction in the reign of King Edward V11. This structure is a timber frame with a stone base with Art Nouveau style gates designed by Charles Harrison Townsend.

Info :: stmarygreatwarley.weebly.com

Question 2.

During 1905 a forgotten Cathedral known as St Erkenwald church was constructed at the junction of York road and Southchurch Avenue.

The church was designed by a Sir Walter John Tapper in a Romanesque style.

It was built between 1905 and 1934 it was a level of grandeur and there were plans for a tower to be constructed as a landmark from the Thames and it would accommodate around 800 people but unfortunately it was never completed.

The church fell into a state of dereliction and redundancy in 1995 there was a fire and the church was demolished and replaced by residential flats which is known as St Erkenwald Court and the site is designated to Sir Walter John Tapper.

Info::Wikipedia

Question 3.

The oldest stain glass in Europe can be found in Augsburg Cathedral in Germany.

In the United Kingdom fragments of coloured stained glass dating back to the7th century can be seen in the Stained Glass Museum in Ely.

New research now indicates that some stained glass from Canterbury Cathedral may be among the oldest in the world.

Info:: [stained glass museum.com](http://stainedglassmuseum.com)

Question 4.

St Michael and All Angles is situated in a village of Copford near Colchester. If you visit the church take look at the rare and extensive medieval wall painting, they are of biblical significance and there are murals, which date back to around 1130-1150.

In 1547 there wall painting and murals were covered up with whitewash to hide them during the Reformation because they were considered idolatrous images.

In 1690 over three hundred years later these paintings were partially discovered and again were whitewashed over.

During 1871 it was decided to remove the whitewash and in 1872 they hired an artist called Daniel Bell to restore these murals and painting but unfortunately Daniel work was overzealous and inaccurate. Christ in Glory and other scenes including the Rising of Jairuss Daughter are in the original state and were not over painted. Also there are rare unique complete Zodiac signs above the Chancel arch.

In 1888 the nave paintings were uncovered and cleaned

There is a legend that the church door was once covered with a skin of a Danish Viking but it is believed with modern analysis the skin is likely to be of a local poacher who was punished under harsh Norman laws

Info:: copfordchurch.org.uk

Question 5.

St Peter ad Vincula (Tower of London) which is closely associated with memorialising Agincourt casualties

There is a church in Hockley called St Peter and St Paul and is mentioned in the Domesday Book and probably dates back to the Saxon period and is famous for its 14th century perpendicular style tower.

It is believed to be connected to John Wakering in the construction of the tower for his safe return from the Battle of of Agincourt and the official coat of arms of John Wakering are displayed on the tower

Info:: historicchurches.uk

exploring-London.com

Question 6.

The famous swearing font can be found in St Mary's church in Tollesbury which is a Grade 2 listed building and has a 18th century octagon font famous for its inscription warning the congregation against profanity

It reads

“Good People all I pray take care that in ye church you do not swear as this man did “

On 30/8/1718 an individual called John Norman who was drunk entered the church and cursed and spoke very loudly while the Divine service was taking place. The font serves as a historical reminder of 18th century social and religious discipline

John Norman was given a fine of £5.00

Info:: geograph.org.uk

tollesbury.org

Question 7.

The church of St Giles is 900 years old and a Grade II building. This church is unique as it has a medieval western apses and can be found in the parish of Langford.

St Giles is also famous for the bats roosting behind the organ and the community have little bother from them. The church is also famous for early Tudor carved poppy heads of birds and animals also angels.

Info:: achurchnearyou.com

Question 8.

The church which is linked to the British Journalist John McCarthyism is St Brides church in Fleet Street in London, the Hostage window is known as the journalist alter.

During the Lebanese siege where John was held captive for over 5 years (1986-1991) St Brides church held prayers all night for him and others who were captured .

The Hostages window refers to the altar area where they lit candles to remind them of the hostages who were being held.

When John and the other hostages were released a specific stained glass window was designed by John k Clark and was put in the church of St Mary the Virgin church in Broxted to commemorate John McCarthy release and the 5 year ordeal and the other Beirut hostages.

If you visit St Mary The Virgin there is a fine carved wood pulpit dating back to the 17th century.

Info:: achurchnearyou.com

Question 9.

Mountnessing parish church is dedicated to St Giles and has a long history with many features the oldest parts of the church date back to the late 11th century. It is Grade 1 listed and features a 15th century timber framed belfry and medieval arcades which are admired by all who visit.

Info :: mountnessingvillagecouncil.org.uk

Question 10.

The Poyntz family were an Anglo Norman noble family originated from Norman Conquest 1066. They became politicians, Influential courtiers, Landowners registered in the Domesday Book(1086).

The family had Tudor connections and were linked to royalty. Also they were known for being prominent courtiers and held military roles in the Tudor period

The Poyntz family have an Irish Coat of Arms Bear and a family Crest Teddy Bear

There is a large collection of monuments and memorials which are dedicated to the Poyntz family in St James the Less Church in Iron Acton in Gloucestershire.

They built a dedicated chapel and an elaborate 15th century preaching or memorial in the churchyard which was adjacent to Acton Court where the family lived.

You can see a significant tomb in St Mary Magdalene Church North Ockendon where Sir Gabriel and his wife Etheldreda are laid to rest on a marble tomb chest. Above them there is a wooden tester without columns supports decorated with images of the moon ,sun, clouds and stars. You can also find smaller memorials to father Thomas Poyntz, his uncle John and aunt Anne Poyntz.

The church is a Grade 1 listed building and is dedicated to Jesus companion Mary Magdalene

The Poyntz family have lots of connections in Ireland and many places in Britain.

Info :: ironaction.info

Wikipedia

Local and Essex History January 2026.

CHURCHES Lee and Terry King

St. Mary the Virgin

Is a Grade I listed parish church for Great Warley in the Brentwood borough of Essex, England. It is noted for its unique Modern Style (British Art Nouveau style) interior, designed by Sir William Reynolds-Stephens.

Built in 1902 with money and land donated by the Heseltine family, and consecrated in 1904, the church is Grade I listed. The architect was Charles Harrison Townsend.

The churchyard contains a war grave of a Royal Army Ordnance Corps officer of World War II.



St. Erkenwald's Church – Proposed Cathedral for Southend on Sea.

In 1992 the Trust endeavoured to find a use for the redundant, Grade II*-listed St Erkenwald's church in York Road, Southend-on-Sea, which was built in 1905 to the designs of the eminent architect, Sir Walter Tapper. The building had been bought by developers and was scheduled for demolition and replacement by flats. The Trust commissioned the architect, Chris Baranowski, to review options for the building and worked with Chris to identify potential new uses for it. The building was a difficult one to reuse, due to the vast space inside it and the regionally important Grade II* listing which made alterations to it problematic. A fire in 1995 sounded the death knell and it was duly demolished and replaced with flats by the developers.

New research indicates that some stained glass windows from Canterbury Cathedral may be among the oldest in the world. The panels, depicting the Ancestors of Christ, have been re-dated using a new, non-destructive technique. The analysis indicates that some of them may date back to the mid-1100s. The windows would therefore have been in place when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, was killed at the cathedral in 1170.

The "Ancestors Series" was created for the cathedral beginning in the late 12th century, as part of a rebuilding programme which took place after a devastating fire in 1174. And the installation of the windows continued from the late 1170s through until 1220.

St Paul's Monastery in Jarrow claims to have the oldest stained glass window in the world. Fragments of an ancient stained glass window, long since destroyed, were uncovered in 1973 and put together as a window in a random mosaic design.

St. Mary's Church – Great Cranfield.

The church is fundamentally a manor church and famed for its treasure, a thirteenth-century painting of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Child in a niche behind the altar. This is said to be one of the best 13th century representations of the subject in the whole country. It is the kind of thing that was destroyed during the Reformation. Fortunately, at Great Canfield it was whitewashed over, instead of being scraped down.

St. Nicholas Church – Canewdon.

St. Nicholas Church in Canewdon, Essex, is a 14th-century church, famous for its dominant 15th-century tower, allegedly built by Henry V to celebrate the victory at Agincourt. Located on a hill overlooking the River Crouch, the tower served as a landmark for navigation and a WWI observation post.

It is said to be one the most haunted places in England. Unlike other Essex villages where many innocent people were 'tried' for being a witch in every town, only three women ever met this fate. This suggests that perhaps witchfinder general Matthew Hopkins actually steered clear of the village in fear of its 'evil' occupancies. Stories say that people walking by the church have been known to have been grasped by an invisible headless ghost and thrown into a nearby ditch, and that a grey lady drifts from the churchyard to the River Crouch; the ghost of a witch who met a sorry fate hundreds of years ago. Others say that if you run around the church anticlockwise on Halloween or midnight, the devil may appear, you may be forced to dance with witches, see a ghost atop the tower, or even travel back in time through a portal!

The swearing font,

The "Swearing Font" is located in **St Mary the Virgin Church in Tollesbury, Essex, England**. Commissioned in 1718, this unique font features an inscription warning against swearing, created after a parishioner was fined £5 for drunken, abusive language in the church.

The font bears the inscription: *"Good people all I pray take care that in ye Church you doe not sware As this man.* It was installed following an incident where a drunkard disrupted a service with loud, inappropriate language during the reign of King George 1. The local churchwardens used the fine money from the incident to commission the font.

Copford Church – St. Michael and All angels.

Celebrated 12th century apsidal church with magnificent colour medieval wall frescoes cleaned and restored in the 20th century. The paintings show a strong Byzantine influence in content and design and were uncovered from behind a coating of 16th century whitewash.

A church has stood on the present site since around 1130 AD. Noted as architecturally interesting, St Michael & All Angels is situated in a pretty woodland setting.

The church with the link to John McCarthy is St. Mary the Virgin in Broxted.

Broxted is a small hamlet in lovely countryside a few miles from Thaxted, in north west Essex. The church of St Mary the Virgin stands in an ancient enclosure, possibly a Celtic holy site, and there was almost certainly a Saxon timber church on the site. Pieces of Roman brick are incorporated into the east wall of the chancel.

The present church dates to the 13th century, and is composed of a nave, chancel, south porch, and west belfry. The material is a mix of flint, pebble, and glacial boulders, with quoins of local chalk. The south porch retains some 16th-century timbers, though most of the structure dates from a Victorian restoration. There are four 17th century bells in the weatherboarded belfry, one by the famous Whitechapel Bell Foundry

Though Broxted church has much of historic interest, it is a modern feature that will draw many visitors; two windows, dubbed The Captivity and Freedom windows. The windows commemorate the captivity and eventual release of John McCarthy, a journalist and resident of Broxted, who was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1986.

McCarthy and fellow British captives Brian Keeler, and Terry Waite became known as the 'Beirut Hostages'. They were held for over 5 years in captivity, during which time Broxted church became a place of prayer and vigil for their release.

Mountnessing parish church is dedicated to St. Giles.

The parish church at Mountnessing, Essex, is dedicated to **St Giles**. Located on Old Church Lane, it is a Grade 1 listed building that serves the community within the Diocese of Chelmsford. The church is notable for its 15th-century timber belfry and 15th-century Jesse window.

Monuments and memorials to the Poyntz family.

Thomas was the son of [of William Ponyntz of North Ockendon and Elizabeth Shaa](#). His birth date is not known, and it has been guesstimated as about 1490. He may have been born in North Ockendon, Essex, where his father lived.

Thomas married [Ann Calva/Calba](#), whose father was German. They had four children, all said to have been born in Antwerp while their father was a merchant there: Gabriel, Ferdinando, Robert and Susanna.

Thomas was in Antwerp in what is now Belgium in the 1530s, when he sheltered [William Tyndale](#), translator of the Bible into English. It was by a visitor omas was the son of [William Poyntz](#) of North Ockendon, Essex and [Elizabeth](#) to Thomas's house that Tyndale was betrayed in 1535, leading to

Tyndale being arrested while Thomas was away from his Antwerp home, imprisoned and executed. Thomas laboured unsuccessfully to get the English government to help Tyndale. Thomas himself was imprisoned in Brussels for his association with Tyndale, and efforts to secure his release on bail failed. He was asked to find sureties for the payment of the costs of his incarceration. Eventually he made his escape, returning to England, where his wife declined to join him. In the Netherlands, a sentence of banishment was pronounced.

Thomas was subsequently assured of a pardon by the Netherlands authorities, and returned to Antwerp. We do not know how soon, but he must have been back in the Netherlands by 1541/2: that year his children were given denization (naturalisation) as English subjects by a 1541/2 Act of Parliament. The Act describes him as "Thomas Poyntz of London, Grocer [merchant, probably also meaning a member of the Grocer's Company of London], occupying the feat of merchaundise in the Partes beyond the See [sea], marrying there a Woman of that Countrey borne". His children were probably conceived before his imprisonment, or after his return to Antwerp.

A letter from the English Ambassador to the Netherlands recorded by Henry VIII's Council in December 1544 confirms that Thomas returned to Antwerp to resume his business affairs, after being promised a pardon, only to be rearrested by the Catholic authorities as a heretic. It does not say when Thomas went back to Antwerp or how long he had been in prison again. The ambassador described attempting unsuccessfully to intervene and suggested deferring attempts at further intervention.

Thomas was presumably released subsequently, given that he was buried in London - possibly by 1547 when he was heir to his older brother John and inherited the manor of North Ockendon, Essex. It was said that, because of his misfortunes in the Netherlands, he was too poor to live at North Ockendon.

What effect the inheritance had on his life, whether his financial problems were ever fully resolved, and what happened to his wife in later years can only be matters of speculation unless more evidence comes to light. His children all arrived in England at some point in time and despite their uncertain upbringing seem to have succeeded in life. Gabriel inherited the family estates, to which he added a house at Bevis Marks in London. Later he was knighted and served as Sheriff of Essex. Fernando followed a career in engineering, including work on Dover harbour. Susannah married Richard Saltonstall, Lord Mayor of London in 1597. Sir Richard and Lady Susannah are commemorated by a monument in South Ockendon Church.

Thomas died in London in May 1562, possibly suddenly whilst on a visit there. He was buried at Saint Dunstan's in the West, Fleet Street.

The memorial in North Ockendon Church is one of a series of tablets erected by Sir Gabriel Poyntz shortly before his death in 1607 in which he commemorated various members of his family. It is a reminder of the peril in which his father found himself through his support of Tyndale, but gives no hint of the troubles to follow. Thomas escaped burning as a heretic but his suffering was prolonged. By his determination to help Tyndale in 1535 he was caught up in religious and political currents beyond his control.

CHURCHES Willy Mott

1. St Mary the Virgin, Great Warley. Designed by William Reynolds. It's mentioned in The Atlas Obscura, a guide to the "most wondrous places in the world".
2. St Erkenwald's Church. Built in York Rd for the increasing population of Southend. Ceased services in 1978. It was damaged by fire in 1992 and demolished in 1995.
3. Canterbury cathedral. " Ancestors of Christ 1130-1160"
4. St Michael's Church, Copford. Rediscovered 1949
5. Tower of St Mary the Virgin, Little Wakering. Commissioned by the Countess of Stafford and John Wakering, bishop of Norwich after the Hundred Year war 1415
6. St Mary's Church, Tollesbury. It has a carved inscription : Good people all/pray take care/that in ye church you do not swear/ as this man did. It was added on the baptismal font by order of the church warden after a local , John Norman, purchased it for £5 in 1718 to avoid prosecution for swearing during divine service.
7. St Giles Church, Langford. The east end apsidal was removed in medieval times.
8. St Mary's Church, Broxted. The stained glass windows depict "Captivity and Freedom".
9. St Giles. It was built in 1653. Restored 1888-1891
10. Iron Acton, Gloucestershire. The name is medieval with Irish descent , but possibly originated in France as Ponte and mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086. A family member is mentioned as a Knight Templar 1185. .

Robert Poyntz was a supporter of Henry VII at the Battle of Bosworth 1485. His grandson Nicolas was a courtier of Henry VIII. The family were prominent landowners in Gloucestershire, the main branch being in Acton. They are mentioned as Sheriffs of Gloucestershire. The line there died out in the 17th century but the name spread to Glamorgan, Ireland and North America .