Renovating the Sacred

Renovating the Sacred:

Faith Communities and the Re-formation of the English Parish Church

By

Irena Tina Marie Larking

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Renovating the Sacred:
Faith Communities and the Re-formation of the English Parish Church

By Irena Tina Marie Larking

This book first published 2017

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2017 by Irena Tina Marie Larking

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-5196-5
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5196-1

To future history writers and story-tellers, who will continue the journey into our past and reveal even greater things than we know now

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Plates x

List of Maps, Graphs and Tables xiii

List of Abbreviations xiv

Acknowledgements xv

A Note on Dates for Churchwardens' Accounts xvi

Chapter One 1
Silver, Timber and Linen: Constructing a Material Cultural History of the English Reformation
1.1 A New Foundation Stone? 3
1.2 Surveying the English Reformation with Old and New Tools 5

Chapter Two 13
Ornaments of Piety: Furnishing the Late Medieval Parish Church
2.1 Building One's Faith: the Sacrament of the Mass, Purgatory and Images 15
2.2 Staging One's Faith: Physical Attributes of the Late Medieval Parish Church 21
2.3 Corporate and Individual Expressions of Faith: Fundraising and Wills 33
2.4 Challenges to External Piety 40
2.5 Conclusion—Faith and Things 45

Chapter Three 46
Let the Purge Begin: Destruction and Re-formation in Tudor England
3.1 Reforming the Sacred 48
3.1.1 And the Word was Made Audible 48
3.1.2 From Stone Altars to Wooden Tables 55
3.1.3 And the Images Came Tumbling Down 62
3.2 Out with the New and In with the Old 68
3.3 Conclusion—to Re-form or Not to Re-form? 74

Chapter Four 76
Salvation by the Word: The Re-formation of the Parish Church in Elizabethan England
4.1 Re-ordering the English Parish Church 79
4.1.1 The Chancel and Holy Communion 80
4.1.2 The Nave and Preaching 91
4.1.3 Right Words and Wrong Images 99
4.2 Conclusion—a Protestant space for Protestant Worship 110

Chapter Five 112
Staging Protestantism: Contesting Re-formed Rituals in Pre-Civil War England
5.1 The Performance of Obedience: *Adiaphora* and Bishop William Redman's Visitation of 1597 115
5.2 The Chancel and the Performance of Piety 119
5.2.1 Keenling for Holy Communion 120
5.2.2 Clerics and the Surplice 122
5.3 The Nave and the Performance of Belonging 126
5.3.1 Baptism 126
5.3.2. The Churching of Women 131
5.4 Rituals Beyond the Church Walls 134
5.4.1 The Performance of Rogationtide 135
5.4.2 Attending Church Services 140
5.5 Music and Worship 148
5.5.1 Psalm Singing in the Parish Church 149
5.5.2 Bells and the Call to Worship and Thanksgiving 153
5.6 Conclusion—Contested Gestures in Contesting Communities 159

Chapter Six 161
Purged Again: Destruction and Re-formation in Mid-seventeenth Century England
6.1 Holy Objects and Holy Gestures: the "Beauty of Holiness" and the Parish Church 164
6.2 Cleansing the Sacred: Iconoclasm II 186
6.3 The Directory of Public Worship and the Parish Church 202
6.4 A Church Fully Restored? The 1662 Book of Common Prayer 208
6.5 Conclusion—A Church Fully Purged? 210

Chapter Seven..... 212
Parish Churches Tell Timely Tales

Bibliography..... 216

Appendix A 244
Bishop Redman's Visitation of the Diocese of Norwich (1597)

Appendix B..... 248
Parish Church Floor Plans

LIST OF PLATES

All photographs taken by the author

Chapter Two

2.1 Woodcut depicting the Elevation of the Host, *The crafte to lyve well and dye well* (1505). *EEBO*
2.2 Detail of squint, Clopton Chapel, Long Melford, Suffolk
2.3 Chancel, looking east, Long Melford, Suffolk
2.4 Martin Chapel, Long Melford, Suffolk, looking south-east
2.5 Clopton Chantry Chapel, Long Melford, Suffolk, looking south-east
2.6 Lady Chapel, Long Melford, Suffolk, looking south-east
2.7 Roodscreen, detail, Redenhall, Norfolk
2.8 Chancel ceiling, Metfield, Suffolk
2.9 Brass double-headed eagle lectern, ca.1500, Redenhall, Norfolk
2.10 Wooden double-headed eagle lectern, ca. 1500, Redenhall, Norfolk

Chapter Three

3.1 Woodcut from Luke Shepherd, *Jon Bon and Massed Person* (1548)
3.2 Fourteenth-century pew depicting Talbot hound, Stockton, Norfolk
3.3 Roodscreen, detail, depicting Ss Dorothy (left) and Zitha (right) North Elmham, Norfolk
3.4 Font depicting St Augustine, Great Witchingham, Norfolk
3.5 Clopton Chantry Chapel, looking west, Long Melford, Suffolk
3.6 Font, detail, Great Witchingham, Norfolk
3.7 Memorial slab with missing brass, ca. 1520, Redenhall, Norfolk
3.8 South aisle chapel, Boxford, Suffolk
3.9 Remnant of alabaster altar depicting the Adoration of the Magi, Long Melford, Suffolk
3.10 Monument to Marian Martyrs, Bury St Edmunds
3.11 Tomb of John Clopton, looking south, Long Melford, Suffolk

Chapter Four

4.1 Communion Cup, Treasury of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, Norfolk
4.2a Communion Cup, Metfield, Suffolk
4.2b Paten, Metfield, Suffolk
4.3a Roodscreen, Cratfield, Suffolk
4.3b Roodscreen, Cratfield, Suffolk
4.4a Commemoration Boards, Boxford, Suffolk
4.4b Detail of 1714 Board, Boxford, Suffolk
4.4c Detail of the seventeenth century Board, Boxford, Suffolk
4.5a Ceiling, looking east, Metfield, Suffolk
4.5b Detail, chancel ceiling, Metfield, Suffolk
4.5c Detail, nave ceiling, Metfield, Suffolk
4.6 Dutch Tapestry, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, Norfolk
4.7 Detail, 1580 map of Long Melford, Melford Hall, Suffolk
4.8a Churchyard cross, top half, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk
4.8b Churchyard cross, bottom half, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk

Chapter Five

5.1 Richard Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*, V (1597), title page
5.2 Richard Day, *A booke of Christian praiers* (1578), f.41r, detail of Holy Communion
5.3 Richard Day, A booke of Chrstian praiers (1578), f.41v, detail of baptism
5.4a Font, Boxford, Suffolk
5.4b Font, Boxford, Suffolk, detail
5.5 Book of Common Prayer (1638), detail of text for churching ceremony
5.6a Sternhold and Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes...(*1601), detail of the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments set to music. Fryer Library University of Queensland
5.6b Detail of last page of the Bible (1609) and the title page of the Sternhold and Hopkins, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes... (*1601), bound together, Fryer Library, University of Queensland
5.7 Bible (1609) and *The Whole Booke of Psalmes... (*1601). Fryer Library, University of Queensland
5.8a Sanctus bell, Cratfield, Suffolk
5.8b Sanctus bell, detail, Cratfield, Suffolk
5.9a Boxford CWA, detail, record of maintenance to the "sance" [sanctus] bell

5.9b Boxford CWA, detail, record of maintenance to the “sance” [sanctus] bell
5.9c Boxford CWA, detail, record of maintenance to the “psalme” [sanctus] bell

Chapter Six

6.1a 1618 Roodscreen, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk
6.1b 1618 Roodscreen, detail, Tilney All Saints
6.2 Seventeenth century altar rails, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk
6.3 1636/7 altar rails, Stockton, Norfolk
6.4 1635 silver gilt alms basin, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich
6.5 1565/6 communion cup and cover, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich
6.6 Font and font canopy, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich
6.7 Font, detail, Metfield Suffolk
6.8a Font, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich
6.8b Font, detail, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich
6.9a Damaged angels, Tilney All Saints, Norfolk
6.9b Damaged angels, detail, Tilney All Saints
6.10 Damaged wooden boss, south porch, Metfield, Suffolk
6.11 Damaged Marian image, chancel, Metfield, Suffolk
6.12 Painted ceiling, nave, Metfield, Suffolk
6.13 Missing brass, unknown, Martyn Chapel, Long Melford, Suffolk
6.14 Monumental brass, William Birde d. 1599, Boxford, Suffolk
6.15 Brass rubbing, John and Isabelle Jermy, Metfield, Suffolk
6.16 Missing exterior cross, south porch, North Elmham, Norfolk
6.17 Missing exterior cross, gable at east-end of nave, North Elmham, Norfolk
6.18 Exterior showing crosses, chancel and nave gables, Redenhall, Norfolk
6.19 Exterior, south porch, Boxford, Suffolk

LIST OF MAPS, GRAPHS AND TABLES

Map 1.1: County of Norfolk, showing the parishes of St Peter Mancroft (Norwich), North Elmham, Tilney All Saints, Stockton and Redenhall
Map 1.2: County of Suffolk, showing the parishes of Long Melford, Boxford, Cratfield and Metfield
Fig. 4.1: Frequency of Holy Communion: Boxford and Tilney All Saints (1558–1660)
Fig. 4.2: Types of Holy Communion Services: Boxford and Tilney All Saints (1558–1660)
Table 5.1: Acts of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich, 1597: Surplice
Table 5.2: Acts of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich, 1597: Baptism
Table 5.3: Acts of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich, 1597: Churching
Table 5.4a: Acts of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich, 1597: Perambulation
Table 5.4b: Sub-Communities of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich, 1597: Lay Parishioners & Perambulation
Table 5.5a: Acts of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich (1597): Church Attendance
Table 5.5b: Sub-Communities of Non-Conformity in the Diocese of Norwich (1597): Holy Communion
Table 5.5c: Counting Recusants and Non-Communicants in the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, Diocese of Norwich (1603)
Table 5.6: Absence of Psalters in the Diocese of Norwich (1597)

List of Abbreviations

AOI	*Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*
CoE	Church of England
CWA	Churchwardens' Accounts
EEBO	*Early English Books Online*
LE	*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*
NA	*Norfolk Archaeology or Miscellaneous Tracts*
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
NMR	National Monuments Record
SA	*Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History*
SR	*Statutes of the Realm*
SRO	Suffolk Record Office
TRP	*Tudor Royal Proclamations*
Transc.	Transcribed
VAI-R	*Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation*
VAI-S	*Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Stuart Period*
VP	*Bishop Redman's Visitations 1597*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has spanned several years and as many ups and downs. It is the final result of a PhD thesis that started in 2009, and an answer to many prayers. I thank God for giving me perseverance, patience and for providing such great support along this journey. Any project that aims to be successful needs a team to get it across the line, and this book is no different. My parents, Ian and Helené, have been there from the beginning and their support has been invaluable, as it meant a career change and relocating to another country. I am also grateful to the University of Queensland for granting me an APA Scholarship that made this PhD possible, and to St John's College for providing my home base whilst I undertook my PhD. My PhD supervisors – Emeritus Professor Philip Almond, Associate Professor Rick Strelan, and Associate Professor Dolly MacKinnon – consistently supported, advised and encouraged me along the way, even when at times we may have initially disagreed. Their belief in this project meant a lot, as they sometimes saw what I didn't. I would also like to thank the many churchwardens – past, present, and future – who faithfully take care of these treasures of English history. Their friendly welcome, wealth of history, a cup of tea, and free reign to wander through their churches enabled me to experience this joy for myself. I would like to thank my friends, especially Antonia and Michele, and fellow PhD colleagues, for providing laughs to lift my day, escapes from the computer or transcriptions when needed, and their prayers. I would like to thank Cambridge Scholars Publishing for taking me on board as a first-time author, and I hope I don't disappoint them. Finally I would like to thank my employer, the South Queensland Seventh-day Adventist Conference, for supporting me on this project, and my partner, Neil Pule, for his encouragement, prayers and providing a quiet space to work. Thank you all once again – without you this book would not be possible.

A NOTE ON DATES FOR CHURCHWARDENS' ACCOUNTS

The calendar year for churchwardens' accounts will be taken as from March to March and will be shown as a split year, e.g. 1566/7, in order to account for the months of January and February.

Map 1.1: County of Norfolk, showing the parishes included in this study – St Peter Mancroft (Norwich), North Elmham, Tilney All Saints, Stockton (marked as Skotto), Redenhall (marked as Rednell). **Source:** William Camden, *Britannia*, 2 (1610), between 470-1.

Map 1.2: County of Suffolk, showing the parishes included in this study – Long Melford, Boxford, Cratfield and Metfield. **Source:** William Camden, *Britannia*, 2, (1610), between 458-9.

CHAPTER ONE

SILVER, TIMBER, AND LINEN: CONSTRUCTING A MATERIAL CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

> Let us know always that this was a world, and not a void infinite of grey haze, with phantasms swimming in it. These old … walls, I say were not peopled with phantasms; but with men of flesh and blood, made altogether as we are. Had thou and I then been, who knows but we ourselves had taken refuge from an evil time, and fled to dwell here.
>
> —Thomas Carlyle[1]

The year is 1529/30 and it is Easter Sunday. William Coo, a clothmaker from Boxford, Suffolk, is about to do what he has always done. He goes to his parish church and witnesses the miracle of the Mass, where bread and wine are mysteriously transformed into the body and blood of Christ. As he walks into the nave he finds a place to stand, perhaps somewhere in the south aisle that was often reserved for the men of the parish. The whole space is filled with sound from the newly purchased organ and the smell of burning frankincense. His surroundings are also filled with the images of saints painted on walls, as statues in niches and as embroidery on the priest's garments. At the east end of the south aisle are four images housed in niches and wall paintings, one of which may have been St Edmund. At the east end is the chancel and the stone high altar and it is adorned with elaborate objects: chalice, plate, candles, including the Paschal Candle, and cloths. The priest, his attendants and perhaps a choir are also in the chancel and they are chanting Latin prayers and responses. Coo and his fellow lay parishioners are forbidden to enter the chancel, physically and symbolically barricaded by the presence of the roodscreen and their lay status. Yet all of them, as a faith community, are about to join together on

[1] Quoted in Darren Oldridge, *Strange Histories: The Trial of the Pig, the Walking Dead, and other Matters of Fact from the Medieval and Renaissance Worlds* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 2–3.

the one Sunday in the year where the lay parishioners join with the clergy to eat Christ's body—Easter Sunday.[2]

The year is now 1564/5 and it is again Easter Sunday. As Coo walks into his parish church, he momentarily reflects on how different the interior is from 35 years ago. The painted images that once adorned the walls have been covered over with whitewash, perhaps in preparation for the painting of English biblical texts. The organ no longer sounds inside (nor outside) the church. The remnants of broken images and niches can still be seen in some places—the physical sign of the rejection of Roman Catholicism. No longer does Coo have to stand, as it is possible that the nave now has permanent seating for the congregation so he can listen to an English sermon delivered from the pulpit in posterior comfort. The parish, as a faith community, is about to partake of Holy Communion—not a sacrificial Mass, performed at the stone high altar, but a commemorative service in remembrance of Christ's crucifixion. In 1529/30, Coo and his fellow lay parishioners were barred from entering the chancel. Now all communicants join with their minister in the chancel and kneel around a wooden communion table, simply adorned with a white linen cloth, a communion cup, and paten. Once Coo was forbidden to consume the wine, which was the preserve of the clergy only. Now he is called, by both monarch and minister, to consume both the bread and the wine in this commemorative act of remembrance, at least three times a year, including Easter Sunday.[3]

The story of William Coo is, for the most part, the story of every man and woman who lived through the English Reformation. The transition from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism is not simply about doctrine or the dictates of monarchs and high-ranking clerics. It is also about the lived experiences of individuals in parishes acting as faith communities between c.1450–1662, and the complex nexus between objects, their placement within and outside the parish church, and their uses (and abuses) to

---

[2] Peter Northeast (ed.), *Boxford Churchwardens" Accounts 1530–1561* (Suffolk: Suffolk Record Society, 1982), 1–3, hereafter Boxford CWA [transc.]. Katherine L. French, "The Seat Under Our Lady: Gender and Seating in Late Medieval Parish Churches," in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place and Gender in the Medieval Church*, eds. Virginia Chiefo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 141–60, 141.

[3] Boxford CWA [transc.], 55, 70; Boxford CWA FB/77/E2/2 ff.136, 141, 142. From Northeast's brief biographical notes on William Coo and a reference in the accounts to a William Coo in 1560 and a "father Coo" after 1572, it is possible that the William Coo of 1530 was still alive in 1565. Boxford CWA [transc.], 72; Boxford CWA FB/77/E2/2 f. 173.

express and shape a faith practice. It is only when this nexus is explored that we can begin to understand William Coo's world and the faith community that he, and others like him, inhabited.

1.1 A New Foundation Stone?

Most lay people did not leave records about how they felt or what they thought about the Reformation, so the task of reconstructing this history is complex and challenging. Thus, we need to trace this process another way. One way in which this can be done is by using material culture with an emphasis on the complex interactions between objects and the society in which they are used. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie call for historians to break down the barriers between religious and social histories and propose that this can be done through cultural history. They remark that: "cultural history is awakening us to what we should have always known: namely, that religion and society interact, and do so in complex, unpredictable and at times perverse ways."[4]

The parish church and how it was used were central to the experience of William Coo. The materiality of religion was just as important for early modern Protestantism as it was for medieval Roman Catholicism.[5] William Cantwell Smith defines faith as "the religious experience or involvement of an individual," and something that is expressed outwardly and, oftentimes, within the context of a community.[6] In late medieval and early modern England, religious practice centred, for the most part, on the parish church and the material culture used to perform the liturgy or enhance the church space for worship. We may never know what most people thought about the Reformation and its impact on their lives, but we can analyse how communities practiced their faith. David Hall suggests the term "lived religion" as a way of exploring the daily religious lives of the Christian laity.[7] It is a concept that assumes that behaviour has

[4] Peter Marshall and Alex Ryrie, "Introduction: Protestantism and their Beginnings," in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, eds. Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–13, 1.
[5] See Shannon Gayk and Robyn Malo, "The Sacred Object," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44 (3) (Fall, 2014): 457–67.
[6] William Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind* (New York: New American Library, 1962), 156, 175.
[7] David D. Hall, "Introduction," in *Lived Religion in America: Towards a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), vii–xiii, viii.

meaning, but also allows for tension and the "messiness that leaks into everyday life."[8] Caroline Walker Bynum observes that the materiality of the object is an essential part of the spiritual experience that is had with and through that object.[9] Two recent examples of this are Dolly MacKinnon's in-depth study of the parish community of Earls Colne, Essex, and Alexandra Walsham's study on religiously-inspired objects within the domestic setting.[10] As Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson advocate: "The academic turn towards the everyday has prompted a renewed interest in material culture because everyday life is rooted in the experience of materiality … The historical study of everyday objects therefore allows access to the lived experience of people in the past."[11]

Archaeologist Jonathan Finch rightly states that understanding the use of material culture to establish new ideas is equally as important as the destruction of material culture to remove old ideas:

> the material impact of the Reformation within the parish churches has yet to receive the detailed consideration it deserves. The focus has tended to be on the loss of medieval art or material culture, rather than on the process of establishing a new religion within the archaeological framework of the old.[12]

By undertaking local or regional studies in aggregate and combined with the methodological trajectory of material culture, the complexity of faith communities at a parish level can be revealed. After all, no person or parish was an island. As Duffy remarks, the Reformation became "quite literally, part of the furniture."[13] It is true that the experience of faith did

---

[8] Ibid., x.

[9] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 67.

[10] Dolly MacKinnon, *Earls Colne's Early Modern Landscapes* (Surry: Ashgate, 2014); Alexandra Walsham, "Domesticating the Reformation: Material Culture, Memory and Confessional Identity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 69 (2016): 566–616.

[11] Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, "Introduction," in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 13.

[12] Jonathan Finch, "A Reformation of Meaning: Commemoration and Remembering the Dead in the Parish Church, 1450–1640," in *The Archaeology of Reformation*, eds. David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchirst (Leeds, Maney, 2003), 437–49, 438.

[13] Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 177.

not occur solely within the confines of the parish church, but it is here that individual experiences were collectively brought to bear on the experience of the community. It is in the parish churches scattered across England that the material traces of that experience can be found.

1.2 Surveying the English Reformation with Old and New Tools

Late medieval and early modern English society was inherently religious. Life was measured and experienced through religious events. The core events in one's life—birth, marriage, death, community, religious instruction—were all celebrated with rituals and services that took place at particular locations within the parish church using certain objects. These events were collective events in the sense that, for the most part, they were celebrated as a community. Thus, the community of the parish was a faith community; that is, the individuals of a parish came together as a collective body for the purposes of religious activity and adhered to a particular set of beliefs. These faith communities expressed themselves with and through the objects that surrounded them within the locality of the parish church—the site of collective religious expression.

This is not to say that the faith community within any given parish was always a homogeneous entity. They were often made up of complementary sub-communities, such as voluntary groups that functioned alongside and participated with the dominant faith community of the parish, and/or competing sub-communities or cohorts, namely communities that were in opposition to the prevailing faith practice of the parish. Similarly, the parish church was also not a homogeneous space but rather made up of several spaces that had specific functions within which certain objects were located and where certain rituals or ceremonies took place. It was through the complex relationship between space, object, and people that faith communities expressed their collective, sometimes competing, experiences. As England traversed the untravelled and unpredictable path of becoming a Protestant nation over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, faith communities, in the Diocese of Norwich as elsewhere, would be tested by what it meant to be Protestant and, more importantly, how being Protestant ought to be practiced as a collective experience.

The Diocese of Norwich—the traditional epicentre of the English Reformation—consisted of the two major counties of Norfolk and

Suffolk.[14] Yet, this reputation will be challenged by showing that the transition from Roman Catholicism to Protestanism was neither inevitable nor smooth. Diarmaid MacCulloch remarks that Norfolk and Suffolk formed the "heartland" of East Anglia and were connected by "strong links"—administrative, trade, and familial.[15] From about 1450 onwards, the production of wool became increasingly important to the country's economy as cloth became a major product for both internal and external markets. It was also during this time that East Anglia became one of the key centres of cloth manufacture, and clothiers like William Coo "came to exercise great control over the rural industry."[16] Norman Scarfe observes that in 1524 Norfolk was the second wealthiest county in England and Suffolk was the fourth wealthiest (equal with Essex).[17] It is for this reason that the churches in East Anglia are often referred to as wool churches, and their building, re-building or refurbishing coincided with the boom in the cloth market that often funded such projects.[18]

This book explores nine parish churches scattered across the Diocese, along with their surviving churchwardens' accounts and material remains over the period c.1450–1662. The material markers of one's faith were as important to the reformed yeoman sitting near the front of the nave by the pulpit as they were to the local gentry family who had established a chapel in the south aisle and were coming to terms with the fact that it had been ordered to be dismantled. These parish churches are: North Elmham, Stockton, Tilney All Saints, Redenhall, St Peter Mancroft, Boxford,

[14] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County 1500–1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 48.

[15] Ibid., 7. For a survey history on Norfolk and Suffolk see Peter Wade-Martins (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, 2nd ed. (Norfolk Museums Service: 1994), and David Dymond and Edward Martin (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk*, 2nd ed. (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council, 1989). See also Philippa Maddern, "Imagining the Unchanging Land: East Anglians Represent their Landscape, 1350–1500," in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005), 52–67.

[16] Alan R. H. Baker, "Changes in the Later Middle Ages," in *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600*, ed. H. C. Darby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 186–247, 210, 218–28, quote on 226.

[17] Norman Scarfe, *The Suffolk Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 151.

[18] Baker, *Historical Geography of England*, 226; Nikolaus Pevsner, *Suffolk* (London: Penguin Books, 1974), 31, 34; Nikolaus Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *Norfolk 2: North-West and South* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 57; Scarfe, *Suffolk Landscape*, 188–9; Derek Wilson, *A Brief History of the English Reformation* (London: Constable and Robinson Ltd., 2012), 20, 43–4.

Metfield, Cratfield, and Long Melford. The vast majority of the population of the Diocese of Norwich lived outside of Norwich city, so the experience of the Reformation for most people occurred within a rural setting. We will see that the pathways of reform for the Diocese of Norwich were complex, mixed, and contested.

The use of churchwardens' accounts is not new and historians have drawn on their valuable contents to reconstruct regional histories for both the late medieval period and early modern period.[19] Since the late medieval period, the office of churchwarden had been a local response to meeting the demands of parish government and the election process varied from parish to parish.[20] Churchwardens' accounts are essentially the financial records of expenditure and income for the parish church that were ratified by parish gatherings. At first glance such documents appear rather dull, as the records, with varying degrees of detail, note the payments of seemingly endless maintenance costs for church fabric and fittings, the receipt of rent money, or payments for the poor and needy. But amongst the records of bell ropes and nails, the churchwardens also recorded the income received from gifts and bequests, the sale of church plate, the purchase of a new Bible or the maintenance costs for the church pulpit—the material markers of early modern religious change and continuity. It is through these records that we are able to reconstruct the ongoing process of reform through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and determine how these changes were incorporated into the experience of faith communities within some of the parishes in the Diocese of Norwich. Churchwardens' accounts may not record all of the activity related to a parish's collective faith experience, but they certainly reveal what the

[19] See, for example, Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Andrew D. Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: The Diocese of Salisbury 1250–1550* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Beat Kümin, *The Shaping of the Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c. 1400–1560* (Brookfield: Scholar Press, 1996; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*; David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution 1640–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[20] Eric Carlson, "The Origins, Function, and Status of the Office of Churchwarden, with Particular Reference to the Diocese of Ely," in *The World of Rural Dissenters, 1520–1725*, ed. Margaret Spufford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 164–207, 169, 180–1.

parish, in general, believed was a worthy investment for the spiritual health of the community.[21]

Several sets or portions of churchwardens' accounts have survived in manuscript form and are the key primary resource for this book. This is the case for the parishes of Boxford (1529–1696), Long Melford (c.1547–1706), Cratfield (c.1517–late seventeenth century), Metfield (1510–1704 [fragments] and 1655–61), St Peter Mancroft (1580–1706), and North Elmham (1583–1629). Until recently, the Boxford churchwardens' accounts had only been transcribed for the years 1529–61. The Boxford accounts for 1559–1665 have been transcribed for the first time for this book, along with transcribed fragments of the accounts for Long Melford and Metfield.[22] There are also transcribed accounts for Boxford (1529–61) and Cratfield (1490–1660). Thanks to the efforts of earlier antiquarians or later historians, several transcripts of the original accounts have survived. These are Tilney All Saints (1445–1589), North Elmham (1539–77), St Peter Mancroft, Norwich (1580–1710), and Long Melford (1529–77).[23] Some antiquarians only provided extracts, which is the case for Redenhall

[21] For reference to this limitation see Duffy, *Voices of Morebath*, 21.

[22] Boxford: SRO—Bury St Edmunds FB 77/E2/2 and FB 77/E2/3 (hereafter Boxford CWA). Long Melford: SRO—Bury St Edmunds FL 509/5/1 and FL 509/5/1/15m (hereafter Long Melford CWA). Cratfield: SRO—Ipswich FC 62/A6 and FC 62/E1/3 (hereafter Cratfield CWA). Metfield: SRO—Ipswich FC 91/E5 (hereafter Metfield CWA). St Peter Mancroft: NRO—PD26/71(S) and PD26/72(S) (hereafter St Peter Mancroft CWA). NRO—North Elmham PD209/154 (hereafter North Elmham CWA).

[23] A. D. Stallard, *The Transcript of the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Tilney All Saints, Norfolk, 1443–1589* (London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1922), hereafter Tilney All Saints CWA [transc.]. Augustus George Legge, *Ancient Churchwardens' Accounts in the Parish of North Elmham from AD 1539–AD 1577* (Norwich: Goose Publication, 1891), hereafter North Elmham CWA [transc.].William Holland (ed.), *Cratfield: A Transcript of the Accounts of the Parish from AD 1490 to AD 1642, with Notes* (London: Jarrold & Sons, 1895), hereafter Cratfield CWA [transc. H]. L. A. Bothelho, *Churchwardens' Accounts of Cratfield 1640–1660* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999), hereafter Cratfield CWA [transc. B]. Norwich Diocesan Archives, "St Peter Mancroft Parish Small Book," H. G. B. Folland's transcripts, 1 and 2 (1967/8), hereafter St Peter Mancroft CWA [transc.]. Peter Northeast (ed.), *Boxford Churchwardens' Accounts 1530–1561* (Suffolk: Suffolk Record Society, 1982), hereafter Boxford CWA [transc.]; David Dymond and Clive Paine, *The Spoil of Melford Church: The Reformation in a Suffolk Parish* (Suffolk: Salient Press, 1989), hereafter Long Melford CWA [transc.].

(1573–1762), Stockton (1625–97), and Metfield (1547-1862).[24] Thus, the documents that they produced—churchwardens' accounts—reveal the parish's dominant faith community acting collectively through their chosen churchwardens. This book will also draw on and analyse a range of religious legislation, both national and diocesan, and the Book of Common Prayer. Such documents stipulated the requirements for how churches ought to be furnished and how individuals ought to behave, and so provide a key indicator of the level of compliance amongst the faith community.

Alongside the churchwardens' accounts and religious legislation, the material remains of each church, namely the fabric and fittings, will provide physical evidence for the process of reform. Such evidence becomes crucial especially when no churchwardens' accounts are available for a particular period or the accounts remain silent on specific matters. Yet the survival of material remains in churches is also problematic, because what is left is what the caretakers of the church, whether past or present, have deemed worth preserving, or what may have been gifted to the church from elsewhere at a later date. Numerous parish churches succumbed to the work of Victorian or later restorers, whether through the replacement of earlier objects with nineteenth-century or later pieces, or modifying earlier pieces to suit nineteenth-century or more recent tastes and/or functionality.

In exploring the churchwardens' accounts and the material remains and physical spaces of each church, we can see that they have their own particular stories to tell about the Reformation and how continuity and change became a part of the collective faith community of each parish. It is difficult to determine whether an entire parish was in favour of a particular change, adaptation or innovation, or whether the decision was made by a cohort of influential individuals. Nevertheless, what we can tell from the churchwardens' accounts and material remains is that the Reformation shaped the way in which these communities worshipped together. This was not limited to changes in theology, as important as

[24] Charles Candler, *Notes on the Parish of Redenhall with Harleston in the County of Norfolk* (London: Jarrold and sons, 1896), hereafter Redenhall CWA [transc. C]; George Rayson, "Extracts from Churchwardens' Books, no. 17: Redenhall with Harleston, Norfolk," *The East Anglian*, catalogued as NRO PD 295-172, hereafter Redenhall CWA [transc. R]; George Alfred Carthew, "Extracts from a Town Book of the Parish of Stockton in Norfolk Containing the Churchwardens' (and incidentally, other) Accounts from 1625 to 1712 Inclusive," *NA*, 1 (1847), hereafter Stockton CWA [transc.]; Norah M. Bower, "Extracts From Metfield Churchwardens' Account Book and Loose Bills from the Church Chest," *SA,* 23, no. 2 (1938), hereafter as Metfield CWA [transc.].

these were, but also took in the re-ordering of the church space, both the interior and exterior, and the objects within them. The surviving materials—both written and physical—indicate that all these parishes likely experienced conflict or disagreement over how parish worship should be conducted, and thus challenge a perceived perception that the Reformation was in any sense smooth or inevitable. The process of reform within the parishes depended upon local influences, customs, and financial capacity.

The chapters will be set out chronologically, starting in approximately 1450 and progressing until the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and the restoration of the Prayer Book in 1662. This acknowledges that the English Reformation was indeed a process rather than an event that had its roots in the late medieval period, and one which would impact the cultural and material makeup of parish churches and the faith communities that worshipped in them through the seventeenth century.[25] The book has retained the dating as given in the churchwardens' accounts (both the transcriptions and original manuscripts) and will take the year of the accounts as being from March to March. Each year will be shown as, for example, 1563/4 to denote the inclusion of the months January to March.

Late medieval religion was infused with the presence of images, Latin prayers and chants, sacred objects, and the distinct demarcation of church spaces. Both priest and people had specific roles in creating a community of the faithful. Chapter two will analyse the sensory environment of the late medieval parish church and examine how doctrines that were central to the Roman Catholic faith—the sacrament of the Mass and purgatory—were physically embedded in the fabric of the parish church. The organisation of spaces and how objects (statues, altars, plate, candles, cloths, screens) were placed within those spaces were determined by both law and local practice. Parishioners, both as individuals and in groups, also participated in the furnishing of their parish church through gifts and bequests, and therefore contributed to the spiritual life of the parish in tangible ways. Yet even before the Reformation there were individuals within some parish communities who questioned this experience of faith and rejected late medieval religious devotion and external piety in favour of a faith experienced increasingly through the vernacular Bible.

By the mid-sixteenth century the questioning of medieval modes of piety was gaining some momentum amongst the crown, leading clerics, and lay people. The questioning of late medieval religious practice,

[25] Peter Marshall, *Reformation England 1480–1642*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), xiii.

especially during the reign of Edward VI, started the process of overturning Roman Catholicism and its trappings in favour of a reformed religion. Chapter three will look at the central doctrines of the Reformation—*sola scriptura*, the rejection of transubstantiation, and the rejection of images—and how they were manifested within the sacred space of the parish church. This chapter will show that the process by which the Reformation came to be a part of the fabric of parish churches was through a combination of both state legislation and grassroots activity—both through iconoclasm and the introduction of new objects (such as communion tables and communion cups) required for collective worship. This chapter will also address the brief period of Counter-Reformation during the reign of Mary I, and the ways in which faith communities re-ordered their parish churches once more for Roman Catholic worship.

Having switched between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism several times over the course of about 30 years, and having experienced the turbulent process of iconoclasm, parishioners were faced with the reality of re-ordering their churches once again for Protestant worship. Chapter four will assess how Protestantism, under Elizabeth I, was re-established in parish churches through the re-ordering of church space and the objects (communion tables, seating, pulpits) used within it. From the maintenance or purchase of communion tables, the writing of scripture texts on the walls, to the removal or destruction of Roman Catholic imagery, churches were once again being re-formed for Protestant community worship with its focus and centrality on the Word.

The church space and the objects within it may have been re-formed for Protestant worship, but there was considerable debate over how exactly such objects should be used and how the new Protestant liturgy should be performed. Chapter five will explore the debate over *adiaphora* and how parishioners responded to the ritual and ceremonial requirements of the 1559 Book of Common Prayer and the 1559 Royal Injunctions. It will analyse the returns from the 1597 visitation of the Diocese of Norwich to assess the extent of non-conformity within the Diocese. It will be seen that there were a variety of ways in which both ministers and parishioners could express their disagreement with the liturgy, some of which were more disruptive than others.

The push to maintain the sacredness of the church intensified during the early part of the seventeenth century through the "beauty of holiness" programme that was promoted by several bishops, including Archbishop William Laud, who had the backing of the Crown. Despite the fact that the majority of parishioners conformed to the requirements of the 1559 Prayer

Book and the 1559 Royal Injunctions, it appears that many parishioners resented the invasive way in which these requirements were enforced. Chapter six will explore the "beauty of holiness" programme and how it became embedded within the fabric (such as altar rails and images) of parish churches, alongside the continued practice of maintaining the material culture of reformed worship. This chapter will also look at the intense reaction to the beautifying of the church interior and controlling of the actions of both minister and congregation, through the iconoclastic activity that occurred from the early 1640s onwards. The final part of the chapter will assess the implementation of Parliament's Directory of Public Worship (January 1644/5) as an attempt to provide an alternative liturgy for parish congregations. It will show that the Directory was not widely adopted by parish congregations, who sought, instead, to reinstate the Prayer Book, which happened in 1662.

In exploring the process of the English Reformation through the prism of material culture that was heavily embedded within faith communities of the Diocese of Norwich during ca. 1450–1662, this book aims to show that such an approach can bring a fresh perspective to a well-trodden field of historical enquiry. By exploring the English Reformation through such objects, the spaces within which these objects were located, and the people who interacted with the objects within the locality of the parish church, we can see how these faith communities actively responded to the twists and turns of religious change during the dynamic, and sometimes turbulent, ongoing process of reform.