



Walpole Old Chapel - September 2021

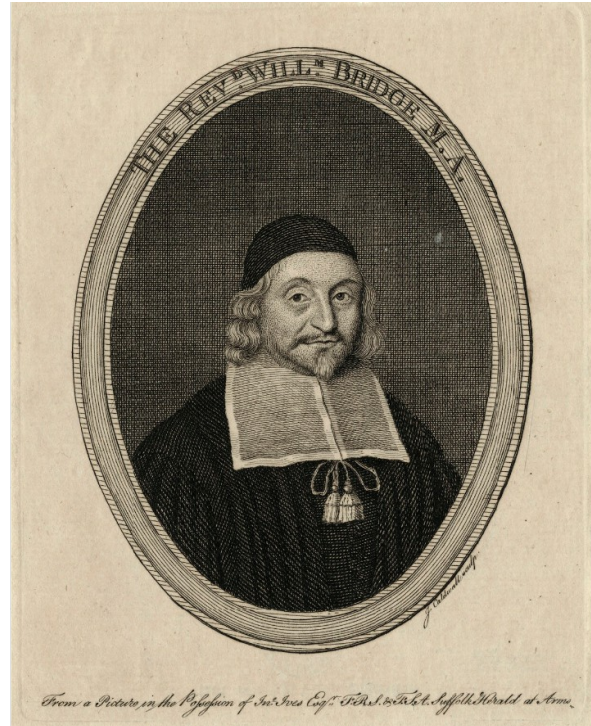


Heritage Open Days - Puritan Food Event - 11th & 12th September

See the recipes and taste the food that 'put the fire in the belly' of the religious independents who worshipped here from 1649.

Famously, Oliver Cromwell is said to have banned mince pies and Eccles cakes. But did he really? What were the Puritans' attitudes to food? Were they any different to anybody else's? Are there any Puritan recipes?

What better place to find out the answers to these questions, and to taste 'Cromwell's cake', than Walpole Old Chapel. The fiercely 'independent' congregation in Cookley and Walpole first 'gathered' in 1649 - the year of the execution of King Charles 1st. The Chapel was constructed in c1690, by converting an existing Suffolk farmhouse, and has been very little altered since then:



William Bridge - Independent Minister at Yarmouth, who supported the early Walpole and Cookley congregation

<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/event/puritan-food-at-walpole-old-Chapel>

A Service of Remembering and Thanksgiving - Revd Bill Mahood.

We are very grateful that this service, postponed from June, can now go ahead in September. Please join us, wherever you live, and whatever your connection with the Chapel.

It is likely that just about all of us will know someone who caught Covid, maybe someone who died, and we have been shocked by the huge numbers involved. Now is the time to stop for a moment together, to remember and to give thanks. This will be the purpose of the Service we will hold at Walpole Old Chapel on Sunday, 26th September at 3:00pm. I will lead the Service. A short address will be given by Revd Malcolm Doney - a regular contributor to *Pause for Thought* on BBC Radio 2, and *Something Understood* on Radio 4. He describes himself as an "agnostic Christian". He lives in Blythburgh with his wife Meryl, Dot the dog and eight chickens.



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Dr Kate Tiller - Patron

Dr Kate Tiller is a Patron of the Walpole Old Chapel 'Unwrapped' Project. And we are lucky to have her.

To anyone interested in the study of local history, she is remembered as the sometime editor of the national journal, 'The Local Historian'. She has been involved with the British Record Society, the Victoria County History of England and the British Association for Local History, all pillars on which local historical research in this country rest. In 2019 she was awarded an OBE for services to local history.

But it is for her particular interest in Chapel history that we are so pleased to have her interest at Walpole. For more than a decade she has been researching and writing about Chapel history and has become a Council member of the Chapels Society and a Patron of the Historic Chapels Trust.

Dr Tiller visited the Chapel on 11 August to discuss the 'Discovery Project' and left behind not only many valuable suggestions as to how the research might go, but also the assurance of assistance as the Chapel's life develops over coming years.



Fundraising Appeal

We are very pleased to announce that, due to the generous response to our appeal by many individuals and organisations, we have now raised £25,000 towards the 'Unwrapped' project. Our expenditure has mainly been on architect's fees and specialist reports required to support our application for Listed Buildings Consent. But we have also been able to 'launch' our community history project - 'Discovery,' and get the new website up and running.

We hope this wonderful demonstration of support for the Chapel will help to persuade national funders, such as the National Lottery, that Walpole Old Chapel is valued highly by a wide range of people and organisations, and is worth investing in.



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Listed Buildings Consent

Regular readers will know that we have submitted our proposals for the re-rendering of the Chapel to East Suffolk Council for 'pre-application advice'. This will allow us to provide any further information, or revise our proposals, before we formally apply for Listed Buildings Consent for the work.

An important meeting took place on 25th August, when Kirstie Robbins - our architect - met on site with a Conservation Officer from East Suffolk and an Inspector of Historic Buildings from Historic England.

We are now keenly awaiting their feedback on our plans.

'Discovery' Prepares to Set Sail - Vic Gray

The Walpole Old Chapel 'Discovery Project' will begin its work in September. A team of 13 local volunteers will begin work with the Project Leader, Vic Gray, to explore some of the avenues of the Chapel's history which remain largely uninvestigated.

Already, as preliminaries to the Project, a survey of the gravestones in the Chapel yard has been carried out so that we can learn more about the people buried there. The collection of papers and publications relating to the Chapel's activities and history across three hundred years has been put in order so that they can be used by the Discovery team. To our new partnership with the Halesworth & District Museum we can now add another, with Suffolk Archives, based in Ipswich (the former Suffolk Record Office). An early feature of the programme will be a visit to The Hold, the new building which houses the county's historical records where we will examine documents relating to the Chapel.

Alongside the digging and delving, it is hoped to arrange a series of public events where we can reveal our findings and share some of the interesting themes which have emerged. More details on this later.

In the meantime, we are keen to talk to anyone who has recollections of the Chapel and its past place in local life. If you think you can help, please contact Vic Gray on 07770 616500 or at VicGray8a@gmail.com.



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Changes to the Registration of Marriages

On 4th May 2021 the method of Registration of Marriages in England and Wales changed to an electronic system, which includes for the first time the name of both parents. Since the Marriage Act of 1836 the name, age and occupation of fathers were recorded : now details of mothers or a second parent – regardless of gender- may be included as well.


Until recently, couples and their witnesses signed the Chapel's Marriage Register during the ceremony – and were given a Certificate of Marriage to take away with them as evidence of their marriage.

Now, following a visit to a Register Office, the couple's personal details – full names, dates of birth, status, home address, occupation – are recorded and transferred to an A4 Marriage Schedule . This is passed on to the Minister, and then to the Authorised Person registering the marriage at the Chapel.

Following the solemnisation of the marriage the couple sign this Marriage Schedule , together with up to four witnesses – which may include 2 parents, and also the Minister and Authorised Person. The signed schedule is then taken by the Authorised Person to the Registry Office, from which a Wedding Certificate will be issued and sent to the couple by tracked post.

Although this new system is a secure and efficient means of administering and keeping marriage records, we decided that we would like to take our own and more personal approach as well. In addition to the legal record, we will be offering couples and their witnesses the opportunity to sign a Walpole Old Chapel Certificate to take away as their record of the ceremony, and will also keep a record of the marriage in our own Record Book. Neither of these is a legal document but a celebration and record of the solemnisation of their marriage for the couple, and also for future generations wishing to research and explore weddings held in the Chapel.

We welcome all- including same sex couples- who would like to marry in Walpole Old Chapel.
If you would like to discuss your wedding please contact Rev. Bill Mahood on
billmahood@btinternet.com



WALPOLE
OLD CHAPEL

THE MARRIAGE OF

..... and

was celebrated at
Walpole Old Chapel

✱

in the presence of

.....

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THIS.....DAY OF..... /



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Late Summer Flowers in the Chapel Yard - Dorothy Casey

Although small in size, the graveyard around the Chapel supports a wealth of wild flowers. Over 40 plant species have been recorded. Hare's foot clover, cat's ear, sweet vernal grass, hairy tare, meadow buttercup, sorrel and hop trefoil to name a few.

Lady's bedstraw with its short spikes of tiny yellow flowers carpets the ground near the Chapel entrance. Honey scented when fresh and smelling of new mown hay when dried, its name probably derives from the old custom of using the plant to fill mattresses and pillows with its sweet-smelling flowers. The orange and yellow flowers of Toadflax or Bunny mouths (as it is known locally) appear in the graveyard in August - a sign of the approaching end of summer.

Of particular note is a large clump of orpine growing alongside the mown path that leads to the Chapel entrance. Orpine is an uncommon Suffolk plant restricted to just a few sites in the county, mainly churchyards and the occasional road verge.

Without any maintenance, the graveyard would quickly become overgrown and the wild flowers would struggle to compete with the vigorous growth of bramble and suckering elm. So it is important to keep the graveyard open by cutting and clearing the vegetation once a year in the autumn when the flowers have set seed.



Yellow Toadflax

The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel: Update - Paul Simmons

The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel has now been launched; a 'soft launch', to people who were on the mailing list of events at the Chapel. We have welcomed 25 new Friends at the time of writing, including two whom the Members agreed should be Life Friends in view of their long and valued service to the Chapel: Christina Van Meltzen and Gilbert Burroughes. It is also appropriate that those who donate generously to the appeal should become Friends.



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The subscription has been kept low deliberately so that no-one felt the fee was a deterrent to joining (£10 pa). The aim of the Friends is to encourage a body of people who value the Chapel, commit to its continued existence and eventual restoration, but in particular to cover the ongoing costs of minor repairs and expenses of running the Chapel. It's been a difficult last 18 months, with little income from visitors or events. These are now starting up again and there are plans to expand the offering of activities to the wider population. In due course special events will be offered to the Friends. Over the autumn we plan to have a more concerted campaign to gain new Friends from the surrounding villages and Halesworth. This will not only help support the Chapel financially, but also show those funding bodies we may approach that there is a growing body of people who value the unique ambience and history of this wonderful building.

To become a Friend of Walpole Old Chapel, or to find out more, please contact Paul Simmons – Secretary to The Friends on friends@walpoleoldChapel.org

Did you Know?

The Chapel welcomes group visits from a wide range of organisations. We are always happy to give a talk to visitor groups and/or to show them around. If group organisers ask nicely, we can even provide teas/coffees!

We have hosted many specialist groups over the years – particularly those interested in history, architecture and religion. But we also welcome visits from groups with more general interests, such as U3A and Women's Institutes.

Our visitors tell us the Chapel is a place that inspires. So we are very pleased when we get visits from groups of poets, visual artists and musicians who want to use it as a place to stimulate their creativity.

Please do get in touch if you think your group might like to visit the Chapel.

Contact information

Anne Thomas or Simon Weeks – Secretaries: 01986 784348 or info@walpoleoldChapel.org

To become a Friend of the Chapel: friends@walpoleoldChapel.org

To donate on line: <http://easydonate.org/HCTE2>