



Walpole Old Chapel - December 2024



Carol Service

For the first time, this year, you will have an option to come to the carol service for free on the community bus, which will be leaving Halesworth Co-op at 2.20pm and Walpole Pavilion at 2.40pm. So, why not avoid the parking crowds opposite The Chapel, be green and give it a go? Places on the bus can be reserved www.ticketsource.co.uk (search for Walpole).

WALPOLE OLD CHAPEL

*in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust
Registered Charity No: 1017321
and
The Friends of Walpole Old Chapel
Registered Charity No: 1198030*

Carols and Readings by Candlelight

**SATURDAY 14th December
at 3pm**

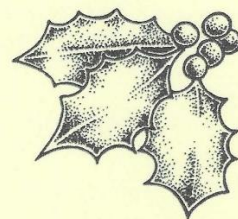
Wrap up warm, bring a torch and please join us afterwards for mulled apple juice and mince pies.

Walpole Old Chapel is on the B1117,
two miles southwest of Halesworth.

**Free parking opposite the chapel
or**

**Free Community Bus from Halesworth Co-op
at 2.20pm and from Walpole Pavilion at 2.40pm.**

**Reserve tickets on www.ticketsource.co.uk
(search for Walpole)**



www.walpoleoldchapel.org

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Chapel Accounts

A small but fascinating book has recently been unearthed among The Chapel archives. This is the 'Trustees' Accounts from April 1867 to December 1932'. We hope to arrange a transcription and analysis of these accounts in due course. In the meantime, the image below illustrates several points of interest:

1909		Found	225	14	5½
Apr 6	Walpole & Cratfield Fund		10	-	-
" 10	S. D. Woodyard's ac		1	3	3
June 8	Don Rate			12	9½
July 6	Walpole & Cratfield Fund		10	-	-
" "	Fire Insurance		1	4	3
Aug 17	Don Rate			12	9½
Oct 11	Tenant Allowances 5d/-			5	-
" "	S. Woodyard's ac		1	15	7
" "	Walpole & Cratfield Fund		10	-	-
" "	Bal ^{ce} of Loan P. B. Howard		5	-	-
" "	Rec ^t : stamps etc 2 years			2	6
Nov 9	Don Rate			12	9½
Dec 7	Tithe			6	-
" 21	Tree rent			2	-
" 24	S. D. Woodyard's ac		2	5	1
Jan 8	Mr. Saunders'		1	18	9
" "	Walpole & Cratfield Fund		5	-	-
Feb 8	Don Rate			12	9½
Apr 7	Mr. Webb's ac		1	13	0
" "	Mr. Gray's			15	7
" "	Ant care? found		£	279	17 4½

The most striking feature is that by far the biggest expenditure is the payment of £35, in four instalments, to the 'Walpole and Cratfield Fund'. We have no other records about this fund, and no firm idea what it was. Please get in touch if you can shed any light on this!



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Also of note are the quarterly payments of 12 shillings 9 and 1/2 pennies for the 'poor rate'. At this time, following the Poor Law Act of 1834, the rates collected would have gone towards provision of large workhouses which served many parishes - probably Blythburgh, in the case of the poor of Walpole (as opposed to the earlier provision of alms houses or poor houses within each parish).

Finally, it is interesting to see that an annual tithe of 6 shillings was also being collected from The Chapel trustees. We know, from another document in the archives, that the tithe rights over The Chapel land were held by the Scrivener family, who had bought most of the property formerly belonging to the nearby Sibton Abbey shortly after the dissolution of the monasteries. This suggests that The Abbey may once have owned the land on which The Chapel stands. Tithes were used mainly to pay for the clergy and property of the Church of England. So, we can imagine that the trustees at the Independent Chapel were not pleased to be contributing to the upkeep of the Parish Church and Vicar in Walpole as well as having to wholly fund The Chapel and its Minister!

Fundraising for the Repairs - Simon Weeks

Things are now moving fast as we try to secure the funding needed to carry out the repair and conservation work next year. We have now heard that, after all, The Chapel is likely to receive some funding from the £3.6m grant awarded to the Historic Chapels Trust by the National Heritage Memorial Fund. We understand that NHMF is to make its final decision on funding for Walpole on the 18th of December. This is fantastic news, and a real bonus, as we had originally been expecting to get nothing at all. Our thanks go to the organisations overseeing the use of this grant.

Our application to Historic England for a repair grant will be submitted after the 18th of December, when we know how much funding will be coming from the NHMF. This relates solely to the capital/construction costs of the work. From their perspective, it will contribute to Historic England's aim of removing buildings from the 'Heritage at Risk' register, so we are optimistic.

We will also be submitting our application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund after the 18th of December. This is slightly different, though. It will contain an element for capital repair, but it will also contain funding requests for 'activities' as well as for the repair work itself. If successful, this might allow us to carry out a variety of projects, including:

- Commissioning a short documentary film about the repair and conservation work
- Renewing and improving the website and installing broadband/Wi-Fi
- Converting the utility room next to the toilet into a proper kitchenette



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- Installing more effective performance lighting and a sound/hearing system
- An extended trial of using the community bus to transport people to The Chapel and back

In the meantime, you can still contribute at: [Support Walpole Old Chapel](#)

Heritage Open Days, September 2024 - Miriam Stead

In 2024, HODS celebrated how people and ideas have moved around and come together throughout history. The transport routes, communication networks, trade unions and social clubs. The travellers who have spread ideas and the hosts who welcome them. At Walpole Old Chapel we used this theme and asked the question:

HOW FAR WOULD YOU TRAVEL FOR YOUR FAITH?

As we know Walpole Old Chapel is the oldest Independent Chapel in Suffolk and the second oldest in the country. When it became a chapel in 1689 there was nowhere else for dissenting people to go if they wanted to worship together. Thus, they had to travel for miles across country at a time when there were no roads, not even a Turnpike until the mid-18th century. Using data from our Baptism Records, dating from 1706-1835, we created a map, based on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey to show how far people travelled to worship. We invited visitors over the weekend to marvel at the congregation's tenacity. We then asked them to share with us their journey and how far they had travelled and by what means of transport to visit the chapel. This weekend was both HODS and Ride and Stride.

Amongst the surviving original records of the Walpole Chapel are three registers recording baptisms from 1706 to 1837. The original records are currently held at The Hold, Ipswich. In 2022, the Halesworth and District U3A Genealogy group took on the task of transcribing the original Walpole Chapel baptism records and from the transcription created an Excel database of the information contained within. They also produced a detailed report that can be found on our website, <https://walpoleoldchapel.org/about/history/>

There are 1456 entries in the Walpole Chapel baptism records. After 1837, the register ceases to be kept, which coincides with the introduction of the General Record Office (GRO) national registration scheme for births, deaths and marriages.

There are 69 place names or parishes mentioned in the Walpole Chapel baptism records. The majority are located in Suffolk, a small number in Norfolk and an even smaller number out of East Anglia. Twelve entries in the baptism record do not mention a place-name.



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Within the 1456 baptisms noted in the chapel records, 932 (64%) are assigned to locations within 5 km of the chapel. These might be considered as the 'resident' congregation. Some baptisms from places distant from Walpole might be accounted for by those wishing a non-conformist as opposed to a Church of England christening. They happened to come from a town or village where there was no established Independent chapel. The distances travelled (assuming regular attendance on a Sunday) were often considerable bearing in mind that for all of the time-period covered by the Walpole baptism records, there was no railway or motor transport. Horse, carriage or by foot would have been the only means of travel.

This table shows the breakdown of places of origin, baptisms and distance from Walpole.

Place	Frequency	Date Range	Distance from WOC in miles
Walpole	302	1707-1837	0
Cookley	118	1707-1837	1.9
Bramfield	101	1709-1836	2.5
Halesworth	85	1706-1837	2.5
Chediston	70	1706-1837	2.4
Heveningham	53	1711-1836	3.3
Wenhaston	46	1707-1835	3.7
Peasenhall	45	1722-1837	4.4
Southwold	39	1710-61	10
Huntingfield	32	1727-1834	2.9
Wisset	21	1710-83	3.5
Wrentham	20	1707-64	11
Sibton	20	1720-1837	4.5
Linstead	14	1740-1818	4.2
Blyford	13	1708-79	4
Thorington	10	1749-63	3.8
Rumburgh	10	1706-26	5.5
Kelsale	10	1729-1819	8
Frostenden	8	1718-26	9.7
Badingham	7	1718-86	7.9
Southerton	7	1711-89	5.2
Spexhall	7	1714-43	4.1
Hinton	7	1739-89	5.7
Holton	6	1711-50	3
Yoxford	5	1710-1837	5
Withersdale	5	1745-54	8.6
Charlton? Carlton Colville	4	1743-45	15
Norwich	4	1809-11	26



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Sotterley	4	1738-50	9.8
Ubbeston	4	1788-1835	4.1
Beccles	3	1714-55	12
Middleton	3	1710,1735,1830	7.2
St James Elmham	3	1744-48	7,2
St. Margaret, Ilkes- ton	3	1720--35	7.9
Workwell	3	172-36	11
Yarmouth	3	1730 & 1761	26
Brampton	2	1707 & 1791	7.2
Bungay	2	1735 & 1757 (adult)	11
Cratfield	2	1741-61	4.8
Debenham	2	1761	18
Framlingham	2	1711 & 1748/9	11
Reydon	2	1710 & 1723	9.5
St Lawrence Elmham	2	1735 -1738	6.2
Walberswick	2	1723-25	9
Westhall	2	1811 & 1815	5.6
Aldeburgh	1	1774	15
Aldehollow	1	1723	
Botesdale	1	1735	23
Cove?	1	1726	
Cransford	1	1771	8.5
Denton	1	1731	13
Easton	1	1769	14
Finningham	1	1752	24
Flixton	1	1793	10
Higham	1	1834	?
Leiston	1	1811	11
London	1	1715	
Metfield	1	1754	7.2
South Cove	1	1726	10
St Cross	1	1731/2	9.3
Stoven	1	1739/40	7.5
Wangford	1	1717	7.8
Woodbridge	1	1833	20
Woodham Ferris	1	1803	



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There was also a second exhibition of photographs by Chris Wheeler which recorded graffiti carved into the wooden benches of the Chapel. An article about this by Chris was included in the September Newsletter.

Over the weekend, we welcomed 93 visitors to the Chapel who enjoyed the exhibition and the quiet simplicity of the building. Many were first time visitors and were interested in returning for our events programme during coming years.



Map showing how far people travelled to the Chapel for worship and baptisms



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Dr Kate Tiller

We regret to inform readers of the passing of Dr Kate Tiller, who died in May, aged 76. Kate was a distinguished academic, who specialised in local history, on which she wrote several books and pamphlets. Most of her work related to Oxfordshire, where she was Chair of the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire Trust, the Oxfordshire Records Society and the Oxfordshire Local History Association. In recognition of these contributions, as well as her academic work, Kate was awarded an OBE in 2019.

It was shortly after this that FWOOC trustees met Kate at Walpole Old Chapel, for which she had a deep love. She used to visit on occasions when she and her husband were at their second home in Aldeburgh, and she was a generous donor to The Chapel's repair and conservation fund. She also promoted Walpole's cause strongly as a trustee of the Historic Chapels Trust.



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Tendering for Contractors

We are nearing decision time on the contractors who will be carrying out the repair and conservation works at The Chapel (subject to the funding being secured). Four companies were deemed to have successfully met the conditions of the 'pre-qualifying questionnaire' and were invited to submit (priced) tenders for three 'phases' of work:

- Phase 1 - North and West elevations
- Phase 2 - East (front) elevation
- Phase 3 - South elevation

The figures submitted by these companies are commercially confidential, so we can't share them. However, the good news is that the three main grants we are applying for should, hopefully, be able to cover the costs.

It has now been agreed that we should interview the companies with the two most competitive proposals as the final part of what has been a very rigorous selection process. The interviews are likely to take place in the first part of this month.

Contact information

Simon Weeks, Secretary - 01986 784348 or info@walpoleoldchapel.org

To become a Friend of the Chapel - friends@walpoleoldchapel.org

To contact the Discovery Project team - discovery@walpoleoldchapel.org