

Details of repairs to St Mary's Church Saffron Walden from the parish records from c 1790. Many thanks to Beryl Meehan who transcribed this from the Saffron Walden parish registers on-line at [www.essexcc.gov.uk/ero](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/ero)

**Memoranda respecting the great repair of the Parish Church of Saffron Walden which commenced October 1790.**

On the 4th day of the above month the scaffolding for repairs of the roof and walls of the Nave began to be erected. On the day -- of 1791 an Act of Parliament passed to empower the Committee named that to raise any sum not exceeding 4,000 pounds including a rate of one shilling six pence on the pound at the Vestry Meeting the year ending at Easter 1790 by bonds of/for 100 pounds for each at such rate of interest as it might be procured for...

Previous to these transactions on the day ...of 1790, the Right Honourable John Griffin, Lord Howard de Walden generously presented to the Parishioners the sum of 1,000 pounds to be laid out on the repair of the Nave of the said Parish Church and they voted him their thanks for the liberal gift.

The repair was carried on coolly from the very outset by the contractor who soon gave his evident proof of a predisposition not too upright which on the further progress of the business became unequivocally apparent and caused the Committee, the whole Parish to lament bitterly that they had ever entered on any agreement with Richard Dycke of West Ham in this county.

In the year 1792 the East Window on the North of the Parish Chancel was built at the sole expense of the Right Honourable Katherine, Lady Howard de Walden as may appear by an inscription therein under the Arms of Howard impaling Clayton, Her Ladyship. This living daughter of William Clayton late of Hartleyford un Bucks Elgre (sp?) Warde de Elgee by Mary Ward his first wife. May that inscription remain long to inform prosperity of her bounty! but lest it should come by fatal accident or lapse of Time, this Memorandum may serve to perpetuate that act of Piety and Liberality!

In the year 1792 on the second Sunday in January, the congregation shifted from the Chancel which has been used from a date in 1790 as a temporary church into the North Aisle which was finished, as to the repair (except paving and pewing) about the latter end of December fitted up for the Divine Worship, there they continued til about 2 December 1792. When the Nave and South Aisle being completed new pewed at the expense of 400 pounds inclusive of the Pulpit, North Aisle. The first sermon was delivered from it on Sunday, the ninth of December by Wm Gretton, the then Vicar. On the 19th October see his mark below.

On the 30 November in this year the contractor, Richard Dycke, laid onto the church the Yorkshire stone for paving the lane, precisely on the day when by his contract he sho'd have completed the work instead of producing the material als... And from the 1st December

he called off the workmen who were absent during the whole course of the month ...part of January 1793. On the 19th October 1792 the stained glass circular window in the Altar Piece (executed by Pearson after a design by Rebecca) was put up.

On 8 November 1792 the new weathervane cock was affixed to the spire.

On 13 November 1792 the stained glass Armorial Bearing of Lord & Lady Howard were fixed in the East windows of the North & South Chancels. On 15 February 1793 Mr Leech's Tomb was removed from its former situation where it stood...North Aisle in the Middle Chancel...placed against the pier between the two windows on the North Aisle. It is an Altar Tomb of grey stone with the following inscription on a brass round, the covering stone (nothing was found enclosed, nor any appearance of a grave, or vault): "Quo non aft nee erit nee clarior... (10 lines in Latin not included here in this transcription)

On the 4 March 1793 Lord Chancellor Audley's Tomb was removed from the Middle Chancel where it stood again for the most Eastern column; placed under the East Window of the South Chancel. It is an Altar Tomb of black marble. Nothing was spared in the clasp therein.

On a black marble tablet at the upper end of the sarcophagus are the Arms of Audley. The stroke of death is inevitable. Thomas Audley of the Garter Knights and Late Chancellor of the land. Under our Prince of Might Henry VIII Worthy, High Renown...and made by him Lord Audley of this town, Anno Domini 1544.

On 27 April of the year 1793 the carpenter and joiner's work on the church was finished. On the 14 May ...(by Peters) of Correggio's famous Holy Trinity. The original whereof is at Parma and has been valued at \_\_\_ (one would expect that the Vicar intended to fill in the amount at a later date), was presented by Lord Howard de Walden, the patron of the church, fixed up over the Altar Table, in the Middle Panel of an elegant Gothic Altar and screens erected in the Chancel, in this and the previous year 1792 at the sole expense of the above mentioned very magnificent benefactor...so the repairs of the whole...

On the same day an antique head of Henry VI in stained glass (which was found in the church and repaired by Pearson at Lord Howard's charge) was put up in the West Window of the South Aisle and also a head of George III in stained glass by Mrs Pearson (after a drawing by Rebecca from a portrait by Gainsborough) at Lady Howard's charge was put up in the West Window of the North Aisle.

In the reign of the former of these sovereigns the church was thought to have been built (or at least made much improved). In that of the latter it was saved (at a very great charge) from becoming a total ruin.

On the 18 May 1793 Lord Howard de Walden presented to (for the use of the parishioners assembling for Divine Service in the Parish Church Walden whereof he was then patron and still continues to be Patron) several valuable articles hereunder specified. That is to say-

1. One crimson velvet cushion with lace for the pulpit
2. A crimson velvet covering for the Communion Table, with a deep gold fringe
3. Two crimson velvet cushions of for the Communion Table with gold tassels
4. Two Fabric Common Prayer books for the Altar from Audley's End (made for the installation of the Order of the Bath) bound with gold in red morocco.
5. Two crimson velvet kneeling stools of curious workmanship in Olive Wood for the Altar.
6. A new silver cup and cover as a companion to that given by Lord Howard Chancellor James Earl of Suffolk, Lord Howard de Walden.
7. A carpet to cover the whole floor with in the rails, also the steps leading up to the Altar.
8. A correct copy of Correggio's celebrated picture of the Holy Trinity - at Paine by Peters from the original.
9. Over the Altar the stained glass by Pearson, the Holy Spirit (in the form of a Dove) encircled with the following words from St John Chapter 1 verse 32: I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a Dove and it abode upon Him..."
10. A few months after Lord Howard added to the above liberal donations, a silver-gold plate with an engraved glory - the letters IHS for the Sacramental bread.

On the 19 May 1793 being Whit Sunday, Bentley(sp?)...Lord Bishop of London preached in the morning from the Book of 1 Kings, Chapter 8 verse 22, 23; and afterwards administered the Holy Communion to a very crowded congregation.

In May 1793 the Engine House was erected in the churchyard at Saffron Walden by my permission on the SW angle thereof. The parishioners having by their officers agreed to pay to me my freecsors (sp?) in the Vicarage of the said parish the sum of two shillings, six pence yearly at the Feast of St Michael out of the overseers rate as an acknowledgement for the site (sp?) of the said Engine House.

Signed W. Gretton, Vicar.

On the 24 July 1793 the foundation stone of the new Vicarage House at Walden was laid by Lord Howard at the SE angle. The dimensions of the stone are length-wise 2 feet, 10 inches breadth 1 foot, 4 inches, 1 foot thick. The inscription Joa(h)nnes Dominus Howard de Walden, Patronus Lapidem have produced AD 1793.

In October about 12 or 13th in 1796 the flagstaff was fixed over the Oval Turret on Walden Castle in the NW angle. The turret was built in September that year by Lord Howard so resembling to rest of the Howard Castle to be scarcely distinguishable from it.

Signed, W Gretton, Vicar.