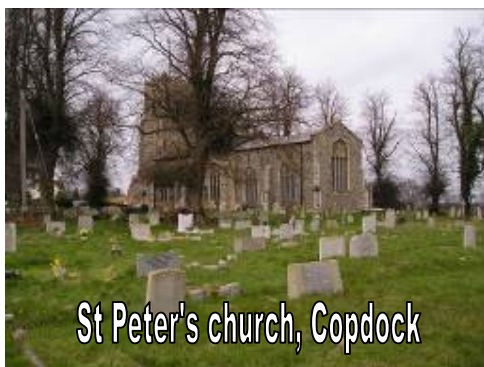


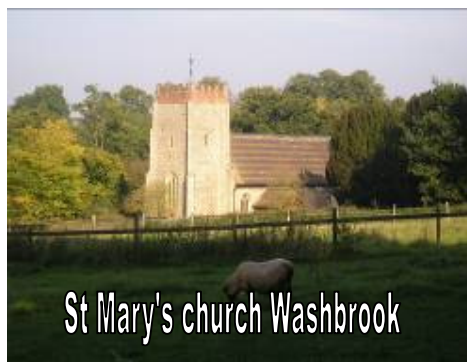
COPDOCK & WASHBROOK CHURCHES .

Not many villages blessed by possessing two churches – but here, Copdock has one to the east of the village and Washbrook has one to the west.

The elder of the two building is St Mary's Washbrook – St Peter's Copdock is younger by at least two hundred years. That is not to say that there wasn't a building on the site of Copdock church long before – but Copdock Church was the church of the Lord of the Manor (that's why he had it built right next door to his Hall) and so it was "modernised" in the 15th century while Washbrook church, the church of the peasantry, seems to have remained little developed, apart from one notable period in the 14th century



St Peter's church, Copdock



St Mary's church Washbrook

The ecclesiastical parishes were brought together in 1670 when the Rector of Copdock became also the Vicar of Washbrook. But it was not until 1982 that an Order in Council created the Parish of Copdock **with** Washbrook (in 1994 the civil parish became united under the name of Copdock **and** Washbrook!)

Both churches hide some delightful surprises and warrant close inspection.

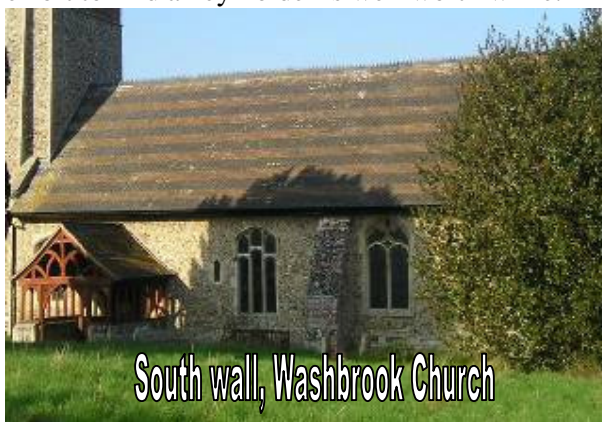
St Peter's stands proudly on the highest point of the village just off the Old A12 and can be seen from a distance – John Constable did a drawing of it from Swan Hill on the 5th of October 1803. In his day there were no trees to obscure it from view.

On the other hand St Mary's lies in its sleepy valley accessed by a green lane from Spring Road and is glimpsed briefly as you negotiate the bends of Swan Hill.

Both, sadly, have to be kept locked in these days of vandalism – but keys are available and the effort to find a key holder is well worth while.



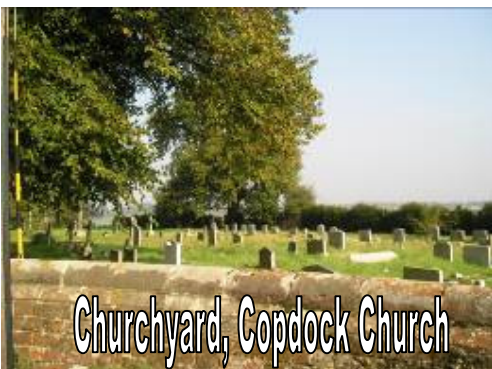
South wall, Copdock Church



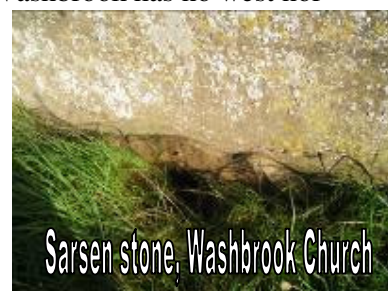
South wall, Washbrook Church

Move in closer and you will see that St Peter's is almost entirely of the Perpendicular period with tall wide windows along the length of its walls; St Mary's has a range of windows showing its development from the time of the Norman Conquest to the end of the Middle Ages.

Both are surrounded by God's Acre –where the villagers of the past lie with their ancestors and descendents.



A quick tour round their exteriors will show that Copdock has a fine porch and tower, a graceful west doorway and door, and another door on the north wall. Washbrook has no west nor north door and its tower is shorter and squatter than Copdock's but it has a sarsen stone at its base – perhaps a sign of a pre-Christian holy place. Washbrook's porch is 19th century, plain and simple.



Let's now go inside and find how different they are internally.

St Peter's is light and airy with the sun able to stream through the clear nave windows.



In contrast, the interior of St Mary's can be subdued – there is more stained glass and the two Norman windows reduce what light can pass through. However there is the large window in the south wall – most likely put in when the Rood was placed in the church in the 16th century..

There are treasures in both churches, some more hidden than others.



19thC font cover, Copdock church

In St Peter's on the left as you enter the building is the 19th century

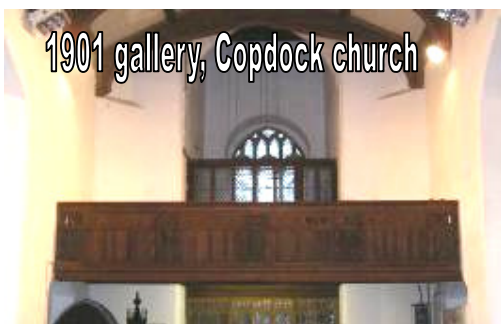
font cover – as fine as any mediaeval work. Further down the church on the north side is the transept or chapel. For many years this was the choir vestry – how generations of choir men, women



15thC transept roof, Copdock church

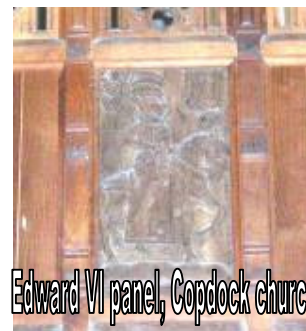
and children have been inspired by its majestic 15th century roof?

Turn round and look west up to the 1901 gallery, on it are five carved panels, two with leaf



1901 gallery, Copdock church

patterns, one a shield of arms, and two more with figures – a lady playing a harp and a figure of Edward VI on horseback. It is somewhat difficult to see them in detail as hanging over the gallery is



Edward VI panel, Copdock church

not only dangerous but also distorts the vision!

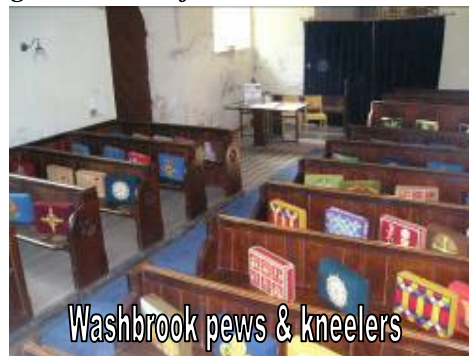
If anyone knows the original source of the panels we would be delighted to hear from them



Copdock pews & Poppy heads



Copdock angel



Washbrook pews & kneelers

St Peter's poppy heads of the pew ends and the little angels at the front are also of a high quality – perhaps an apprentice of the great 19th century Suffolk carpenter/carver Henry Ringham?

The pews at St Mary's are not as attractive as those at St Peter's but if you look closely you will see that each end has a roundel carving and what the pews lose in sophistication they make up in cheerfulness when all the kneelers made by devoted parishioners in the 1980s are on display.

Much of the embellishment of Copdock church:- the west and north doors, the gallery, the organ and other refurbishment - was done as celebration of the long reign of Queen Victoria.



If you now travel the two miles to St Mary's Washbrook you will find a fine heraldic memorial window to that same long reign.



Dedication, Queen Victoria window



Washbrook, Queen Victoria window



Monogram, Queen Victoria window

But, before you look for that you must find St Mary's Washbrook amazing choir stalls.

Here are some details – but a visit is essential to appreciate the surprise of finding such a treasure in so small and obscure a building



Washbrook, choir stalls



Washbrook, detail choir stalls

It is not quite certain why the church was so beautifully the manor of Amor Hall



Washbrook, head on choir stalls

chancel of this small village adorned but in the 14th century passed from the monastery of

Aumerle to the nunnery at Dartford and the chancel is of this date. It must be presumed that nuns of Dartford worshipped here for a time and left us this wonderful legacy.



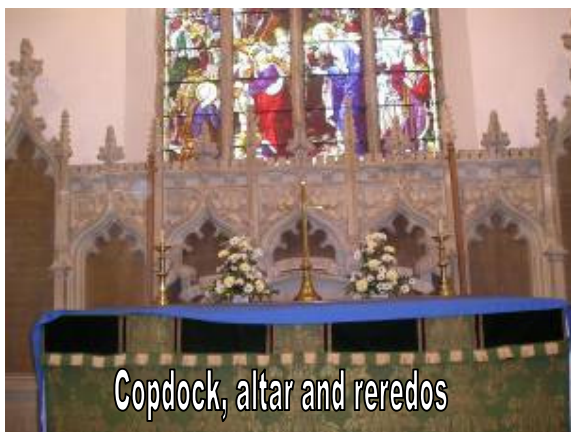
Copdock, 15th century font

Both churches have fine, though re-cut, Anglian style fonts, St Peter's under its 19th century cover and St Mary's in a baptistery built out from the north door also in the 19th century

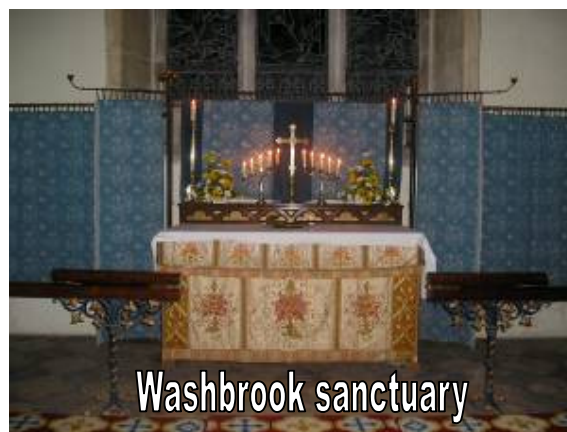


Washbrook, 15th century font

The altar of St Peter's is backed by an intricate 19th century reredos and the chancel is embellished with shields on the roof timbers and stained glass windows



Copdock, altar and reredos



Washbrook sanctuary

St Mary's, on the other hand, has nothing as grand behind the altar and its choir benches are sized more for children than adults – but it does have a sedile, piscina and Easter Sepulchre to match the



its ornate stalls.

What a fortunate community to have two such interesting churches. However, after devoted care by two 19th century patron-benefactors, Lord Walsingham of the de Grey family and the Revd James



Washbrook, de Grey Walsingham west window

Tooke- Hales-Tooke (both of whom spent hundreds of pounds of their own money on maintaining and restoring the churches) *and* the loyal support of generations of villagers, the dwindling late 20th century congregations found it too difficult to raise enough money to maintain both buildings.

Development along London Road, the easier access and installation of electricity in Copdock church meant better attended services there and fewer and fewer in Washbrook.



Washbrook, CCT repairs to east wall



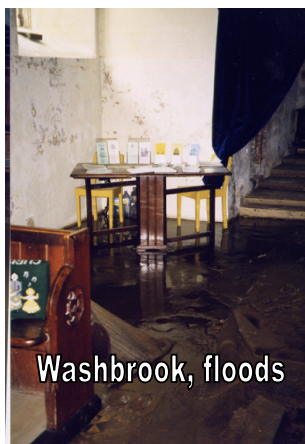
Washbrook, CCT roof repairs

felt that they owed it to their forbears to keep it open. Thankfully its position and architectural treasures meant that it would not be sold for housing or “light manufacture” so it became what Roy Tricker calls “a lady in Churches Conservation Trust. It had been postponed for many

In spite of the regrets at its CCT was responsible for repairs flooded the church up to a foot of potatoes from the Amor Hall

The crunch came in the early 1990s when St Mary’s Washbrook was voted into redundancy in spite of a rearguard action by those parishioners who loved the place and who retirement” in the care of the then had the substantial repairs that years

redundancy there was relief that the when two disastrously heavy storms water and the porch was filled with fields.

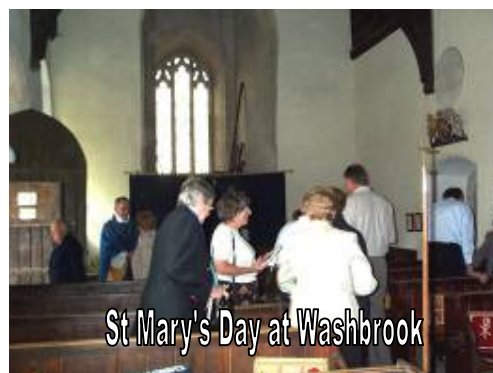


Washbrook, floods



And so we pass to the present stage of the history of the two churches. St Peter's Copdock takes its turn on the monthly rota of services with the other churches of the North Samford benefice.

St Mary's Washbrook welcomes a congregation of villagers for at least three services a year – Advent (weather and the field for car-parking permitting), May and September on St Mary's days.



Most baptisms, marriages and funerals take place in St Peter's but villagers have the right to be buried in Washbrook churchyard (still the responsibility of the PCC) – and for a fee to CCT can be married in the church – baptism are free!



Copdock church may have the sophistication of electric lighting, heating and organ blowing but an Advent Carol service in Washbrook church with its gas lighting and heating and the hand- (or more often these days foot-) pumped organ has its own aura. (Not to mention the increasing enticing aroma of mulled wine!)



Both churches have a devoted band of supporters (very many of them the same people!) – St Peter's with the *Copdock with Washbrook Church Heritage Trust* – and St Mary's with its *Friends* and both hope that the buildings will continue to provide places of reflection and worship for many future generations

CONTACTS

01473 730659 for Copdock Church

01473 730830 for Washbrook Church

PLEAS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION –

Has any one seen this table and/or this chair? They disappeared from Washbrook church, with a brass bound chest, during the CCT restoration.



Any information will be gratefully received – contact the Webmaster.

SECONDLY

CAN ANY ONE THROW LIGHT ON THE MIDDLE HERALDIC SHIELD IN THIS “HIDDEN WINDOW” behind the organ in Copdock Church? The outer two are connected to the de Grey family.



THIRDLY

WASHBROOK BRIDES

To fill in the gaps left by the loss of the chair, table and chest in Washbrook Church we have created a “Gallery of Washbrook Brides” in the vestry. Are there any more photographs out there? Again, please contact the Webmaster if you or a relative were married in the church.



AND FINALLY

THE COPDOCK & WASHBROOK FALLEN – WORLD WAR I



Laurence Bernard: Charles E. Grove: Ernest Harvey (buried in Copdock churchyard) Jack W. Newman: Walter Pinner: Frederick Rout : Frank Rumsey: John Stebbings..

This is the World War I memorial in Copdock Church - are any relatives of these men looking at this website? Some research has been done but we would like to find out more. If you have any details please contact the Webmaster to be put in touch with the Village Recorder who has researched, visited and photographed most of their final resting places. A copy of *The Book of the Benefice Fallen* can be found at the back of Copdock Church.

