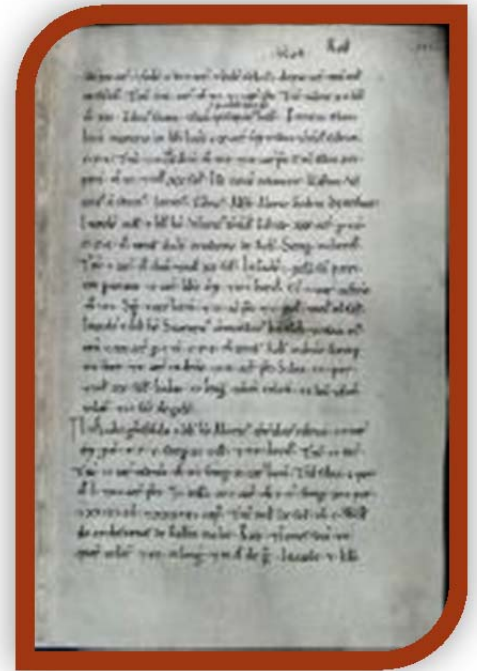


Statement Of Significance  
Redlingfield  
Parish Church of St Andrew



## General Information

**Parish:** Redlingfield  
**Dedication:** St. Andrew  
**Benefice:** Athelington, Denham, Horham, Hoxne, Redlingfield, Syleham, Wingfield  
**Diocese:** St. Edmundsbury & Ipswich  
**Address:** St Andrew , Redlingfield, Suffolk, IP23 7QY  
**Grid ref:** TM186707  
**Local Planning Authority:** Mid-Suffolk District Council  
**County:** Suffolk  
**Statutory Listing of church:** 2\* entry Ref no: 1032497  
**Scheduled Monument:** Ref SF 216: REDLINGFIELD NUNNERY



## Introduction

Recorded in the Domesday Book, St Andrew is Grade2\* listed (Ref: 1032497). It has a long and varied history. Originally belonging to the village of Redlingfield (known as Radinghefelda at that time), in 1120 a Benedictine Nunnery was created and the village church was appropriated by the nuns for their own use.

At the dissolution in 1536 it was granted to Sir Henry Bedingfield, Knight, whom Queen Elizabeth called her "Jailor". Subsequently the church was returned to the village as the Parish church

Of the Nunnery, only what is believed to be the guest house remains; that is Grade2 listed and belongs to Redlingfield Hall, a 19th Century farmhouse believed to have been built on the remains of the Nunnery. The Church of St Andrew is immediately adjacent to the Nunnery guest house.

The Nunnery site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. (Ref: SF 216: REDLINGFIELD NUNNERY)



## Part I: The church in its rural environment.

### 1.1 Setting of the Church

Redlingfield's parish church is situated at the edge of the village which at the 2010 census had a parish population of 90, the current population is around 130. The nearest building is Redlingfield Hall which is adjacent; this is built on the site of the convent that was at one time attached to the church. Architecturally this can be seen in the continuity of design between the one remaining convent building (now used as a farm building) and some features of the church.

It is a rural area of gently undulating hills.

The church is small with a tower stump and although on a slightly raised position does not make a significant contribution to the landscape and is easily overlooked, especially as it is currently obscured by high hedges.

There are not significant views either of or from the church in any direction. There are a few ancient trees and hedgerows in the general area; however the hedgerows surrounding the churchyard are modern.

There are no national or regionally significant graves though there are some from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The churchyard contains the village war memorial and is approaching an acre in size.

Aside from the one convent building mentioned above, the church does not have any shared elements with nearby buildings; many of these are farm buildings of varying age.

### 1.2 The living churchyard

The site contains no significant natural heritage.

### 1.3 Social History

Within living memory the village has lost its school, forge and shop, there is no village hall and as a result the church building is of great significance to the local community; although the regular congregation (2 services per month) averages 10 the wider affection for the church is seen in the care taken of the churchyard and the willingness of parishioners to help with churchyard maintenance in the working parties.

The community has not changed significantly recently and no significant housing or industrial developments are planned although gentle expansion is anticipated as this area of Suffolk is very popular.

### 1.4 The church building in general

The church is Anglo-Saxon in origin, though no one knows exactly when it was built. It is recorded in the Domesday Book and in 1066 belonged to Aelfric, the local Lord at that time. By 1086 it had been transferred - William d'Arques was the Lord in 1086 and Robert Malet was the Tenant .



In 1120, a small community of Benedictine Nuns was founded by Manasses, Count of Ghisnes and his wife, Emma, who was the daughter and heiress of William de Arques, Lord of the Manor of Redlingfield. At that time the nuns appropriated the church for their own use.

At the dissolution in 1536 it was granted to Sir Henry Bedingfield, Knight, whom Queen Elizabeth called her "Jailor". Subsequently the church was returned to the village as the Parish church. The Ledger Slab of Francis Bedingfield (died 1697), Sir Henry's great, great grandson, is alongside the alter.



The church is a simple building, with a stump tower, a nave, a chancel and a porch. The Nave is predominantly medieval flint rubble with stone dressings; the walls were heightened in Tudor times with red brick. The south side of the nave roof has plain red tiles whereas the north side is covered with black pantiles. The tower is Tudor and red brick. The chancel was rebuilt in brick sometime between 1818 and 1827, the original windows and doors were reused.

Redlingfield has never been in an affluent part of the country and as a result there have been no wealthy patrons or benefactors.

Heating and lighting are electric, the pew and choir stall electric heaters being supplemented by gas stoves.

The overall impression in the church is of a peaceful, light filled, friendly, uncluttered space.

## 1.5 The church building in detail

### Externally

In the Chancel, the east window with its reticulated (net-like) tracery from around 1330. The hood mould which traces the arch of this window rests upon original male and female corbel-heads. The north window has a 14th century stone frame but its tracery has been replaced by a single vertical division.

The small priest's doorway on the south side is also 14th century, its hood mould (or dripstone – because it deflects rainwater from the arch) rests upon corbel heads. In the wall nearby is a stone memorial to John Garneys (the son of Charles Garneys of Kenton), who died in 1697.

The nave walls were heightened during the late 15th or 16th centuries with Tudor brick. At the same time the elegant Tudor brick window was built in the north wall. It is interesting to compare the mellow, slender Tudor bricks with the stockier 19th century bricks in the chancel.

There is a blocked 14th century north doorway. The south-east window has cusped "Y" tracery of around 1310, but the tracery of the south-west window shows that this window was added later in the 14th century. Its corbel heads are animals and one is sticking out his tongue.



The tower base is around 10 feet high and made of Tudor brick in a diamond-shaped “diaper” pattern, with western buttresses. The west window is simple, wood-framed and cottage-like. The upper parts of the tower are of lath and plaster, possibly 17th century. There is now one small rectangular window and the structure is capped by a gabled “saddleback” pantiled roof, the same height as the nave roof, but with a slightly steeper pitch. We do not know whether the Tudor tower collapsed or whether it was started but never completed. There appears to be the remains of an earlier stone tower.

The south porch, of flint is 14th century and has blocked “Y” traceried lateral windows of around 1300. In the stonework of the 14th century south doorway are faint traces of graffiti of considerable age

### Internally

The interior of St Andrew’s has altered over the years and what we see here today represents craftsmanship of several periods.

The nave walls appear to originate from the 12th century with many Y tracery windows remaining and reused in the chancel, there is also long and short work at the north and south doors and window openings. The 14th century windows to the south nave were enlarged and window stonework distorted with unequal window reveals. There is possibly an original Saxon opening towards the west end of the south nave wall but this could equally have been an alteration at fitting the tie rod.

When David Elisha Davy visited the church in 1817, the nave and chancel were of equal width. At the east end, the simple Communion Table was railed off but was not raised on a step. Flanking the east window were boards printed with the Ten Commandments, similar boards, with the Creed and Lord’s Prayer, faced each other in the nave. The remains of the base of the mediaeval screen then stood in the division of nave and chancel – these have sadly now disappeared, as has the rood-loft staircase which ascended from the north-east nave window.

At the west end we can detect the simple tower arch which has been completely blocked. A door beneath it leads to the vestry at the base of the tower, which is not usually open to the public. It contains a bier, which was used to carry coffins to funerals,

also a benefactors board, made in 1828. This records 40 acres of Town Land in Redlingfield, Denham and Hoxne, yielding an annual rent of £45, to be used for repairing the church and churchyard gates and fences, and the residue to be used for the benefit of the poor. In this vestry were stored, for many years, the stocks, which may now be seen in the porch.

In 1873 the church was closed for three months for a thorough restoration and many of the furnishings that we see today date from that time. New tiled floors were laid and the old box-pews replaced by the current pews and Choir stalls. The church also

received a new carved pulpit and lectern. The work was carried out by Daniel Day, a builder from Eye. The plans, which were signed by him, were approved by the Bishop of Norwich in March 1873 and the reopening service took place on Thursday, November 2, 1873.



St Andrew's contains several features which are a great deal older than this restoration. The arch-braced roof of the nave is probably 15th century and has 12 original carved wooden heads (six each side). At the south east corner of the nave is a trefoil-arched piscine.

On the north wall of the nave hangs the Royal Arms, which are inscribed for King George III, but the arms themselves are those in use from 1714 to 1801 and were probably made during the reign of George III with the number simply being adjusted when George IV came to the throne. During recent years, medieval wall paintings were discovered on the north wall, these are now covered over to preserve them, awaiting restoration.

The font is a fine piece of 15th century stone carving and is of the type found in many East Anglian churches. Around the stem are four lions and four wild and hairy men known as the wodewoses. Above them is a band of flowers. Angel faces with outstretched wings support the bowl, the eight panels of which are beautifully carved. Here we see the emblems of the Four Evangelists (the angel of St Matthew, the winged lion of St Mark, the winged Ox of St Luke and the Eagle of St John). These alternate with angels bearing shields which were once also carved with emblems. Two



have worn away or been defaced but on the remaining two we see the Instruments of the Passion and the Crown and Arrows of St Edmund. The font is crowned by an attractive 17th/18th century wooden cover. Some small fragments of medieval glass remain in the south nave windows (the brightly-coloured glass is 19th century). The south-west window contains a few small pieces but in the south-east window look for the little 15th century sheep.



Nearby in the south wall of the nave is a 14th century trefoil-headed piscine showing that there was an altar there in mediaeval times – possibly this was one of two altars that stood either side of the nave in front of the screen. The seat nearby, which fills two sides of the space occupied by the little American organ, incorporates three surviving 15th century poppyhead bench ends.

Several leger slabs remain in the sanctuary floor commemorating people who were part of the church and parish. Unfortunately other burial slabs once here are now missing, including a large slab in the chancel which Tom Martin noted in the 18th century as containing the brasses of a knight and two ladies and five coats of arms. David Elisha Davy saw this slab in 1817 but its brasses were gone. Another slab had a brass inscription asking prayers for the soul of Clemence Lampet (maybe related to Alice Lampet who was the Prioress from 1427 to 1459). This was in place when Davy visited in 1817 but he noted it had gone when he returned ten years later.



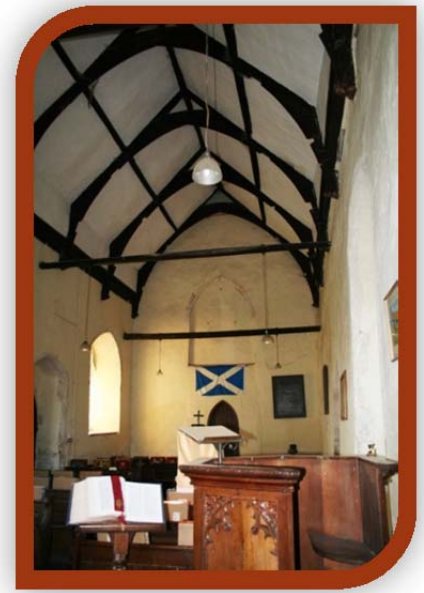
The four ledger slabs which remain today commemorate: John and Margaret Lomax both of whom died in March 1725. Susannah Everard, 1670. Francis Bedingfield (Lord of the manor), 1697. John Willis (Lord of the Manor), 1761.

St Andrew's possessed three bells in 1553. In 1890 Canon J J Raven, noted there was only one bell with no inscription to identify or date it. This bell still hangs in the tower but it has been joined during recent years by the bell from the redundant church at Debach near Woodbridge.

### 1.6 Significance for mission

The simplicity of building and contents lend themselves to gentle and reflective forms of worship, however the lack of facilities and warmth in the winter months limit its effectiveness for mission and service to the community.

The building would lend itself to sympathetic adaption to accommodate wider community use.



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*We gratefully acknowledge the help of  
Roy Tricker, the Suffolk Church historian,  
in compiling this document*

