



Fig. 7 Surviving pre-Reformation choir stalls and misericords

## St Margaret's Church

St Margaret's is the largest of Lynn's churches, towering over the heart of the medieval town. Most of what survives today is 15th century, at least on the exterior, but the church has suffered internally from natural calamity and man-made refashioning. In September 1714 a storm brought down the spire and the north-west tower onto the nave, whose outer walls only survived. The nave roof and interior were rebuilt to the designs of Matthew Brettingham, architect of nearby Holkham Hall. Brettingham's neo-Gothic nave is spacious and airy, with round-headed arches on cluster-column pillars. In the 19th century the nave was remodelled by George Gilbert Scott, who gave it a rather stripped-out look, save for a fine wainscot pulpit and sounding board, built and carved by unknown hands about 1740. Fortunately the transepts and chancel are more or less untouched. Fragments of the pre-Reformation choir stalls with carved misericords survive (Fig. 7), as does the wooden screen to the north

transept, erected in 1584 and altered in the early 17th century. Behind the screen is the organ in a fine carved wainscot case, installed in 1754.

In the centre of the chancel is a large brass eagle lectern, similar to that seen earlier in the Church of St Nicholas. More brass, in the form of East Anglia's two largest tomb brasses, survives in the south chapel. These are both Flemish and date from the middle of the 14th century. One records the life of Adam of Walsoken a former mayor of Lynn, dead of the Black Death in 1349, and the other of a successor, Robert Braunche.

In the south aisle is a pair of curious wainscot book presses, c. 1700, with segmental pediments; they resemble a pair of confessional booths. There is also an iron bound pine 'Danzig' chest, of the sort published by Chris Pickvance in *Regional Furniture* 2012. The north chapel was closed off, but we could see through its screen an intriguing carved table; from a distance we could not decide whether it was late 16th or a late 19th-century copy.



## Clifton House

At Clifton House Simon and Anna Thurley greeted us with a welcome cup of tea and a brief introduction to their house's remarkable history. For most of its life the house was the home of successive Lynn merchants, until falling into disrepair and neglect in the 20th century. The street front is baroque, about 1700, with a fine doorcase on Solomonic columns. This remodelled frontage by Henry Bell does not prepare the visitor for the complex and intriguing story within. The vaulted cellar is probably 14th century, part of a much older building. Most of the living quarters are late 16th century, remodelled c. 1700 with bolection moulded panelling and a generous staircase. Odd survivals and detached features occur at every turn, but none so remarkable as in the kitchen where a tiled medieval floor, the largest surviving in any secular building in England, is visible beneath hatches in the modern suspended floor. In the dining room is a Georgian shell-headed buffet niche, and opposite it (most unexpectedly), a

Cardiganshire *cwprdd deuddarn* of glorious colour (Fig. 8), with distinctive tulip-shaped finials to the canopy (an almost identical example is shown in Bebb, Vol. 2, fig. 823).

The most striking feature of the house is undoubtedly its five-storey brick tower, erected about 1570 by the merchant George Walden. It was accessible directly from Walden's riverside wharf and yard and provided comfortable accommodation from which he managed his business. Each floor has one room, two of them with extensive wall paintings of c. 1620 surviving (Fig. 9). The paintings follow the patterns of contemporary damasks, arranged in strips or panels framed by borders and finished with skirting and a frieze. From the roof we had a panoramic view of Walden's world, on one side the town of Lynn, on the other the river and the open sea. The whole, remarkable edifice is served by a wooden spiral stair, the newel being made of a single spar or mast of pine which extended almost the entire five stories.

Adam Bowett



Fig. 8 An oak *cwprdd deuddarn* probably from Cardiganshire



Fig. 9 One of the tower rooms that still retains its early 17th-century wall painting in the manner of 'paned' wall hangings