

St Clements, Outwell

A group of members, with a high tolerance of church visiting made a detour on their way home after the lunch on Sunday. They went to see St Clements, Outwell, believed by some to have been in part the model for the church bells and churchyard used by Dorothy L. Sayers for *The Nine Tailors*.

The church is close to a navigable staithe or inlet. Like so many English churches it is of mixed dates, but mainly 13th and 14th century. It has a fine roof decorated, as many are in East Anglia with carved winged angels, though here they are not only on the wall-plates but fitted across the roof trusses, their wings painted scarlet. Almost the first thing we saw on entering was a wonderful early 17th-century oak alms box, set on a turned stand (Fig. 20);

locally it has the tradition of the collecting box for the old practice of churching women after childbirth. Other pieces of note were an iron bound domed chest with a later fitted interior to hold parish monies (Fig. 21). Hidden away in the vestry was a very fine late 16th-century table with great bulbous turned legs but with a later top (?) (Fig. 22), also hidden away was a splendid turned bookstand, probably late 17th century.

As we left this delightful little church we saw a sad but strong reminder of the history of the area for there was a small shop, recently closed. However above the green painted shop front was a sign stating 'P. E. Carter/ Eel Fisherman/ Willow Merchant'. There in the shop window were still bunches of willow sticks and fishing paraphernalia.

Treve Rosoman



Fig. 20 Oak early 17th-century alms box



Fig. 21 Iron-bound domed coffer



Fig. 22 Late 16th-century table on turned legs