



Medieval East Anglia

Cathedrals, castles, parish churches

29 June–3 July 2022 (MI 399)

5 days • £1,470

Lecturer: Dr Jana Gajdošová

Two cathedrals, Norwich and Ely, major Romanesque buildings with glorious Gothic additions.

Three great keeps at Castle Rising, Castle Heddingham and Framlingham.

Fine parish churches including Long Melford, Lavenham and East Harling.

Based in Bury St Edmunds.

Combine with *Music in Suffolk Churches*, 4–7 July 2022.

Famed for its medieval wool churches and for the virtuosic qualities of its Romanesque architecture, East Anglia boasts the greatest concentration of medieval buildings to survive in any region of England. It is also an area whose towns and villages have grown little since 1500, and whose medieval infrastructure remains relatively clear. This is perhaps most apparent in Bury St Edmunds, whose street plan is still that of the new town laid out, along with the abbey, in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. Thus Bury is an irresistible and ideal base for the tour.

The major buildings to be visited are, of course, East Anglia's two medieval cathedrals at Ely and Norwich. Both retain a substantial Romanesque core, and were magnificently refurbished between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Bury St Edmunds is also within easy reach of some of the finest castles and parish churches in England, and the majority of buildings visited fall into these latter categories – the great twelfth-century castles at Castle Rising, Castle Heddingham and Framlingham, and the incomparable late medieval churches of Lavenham, Long Melford and Gipping.

Itinerary

Day 1: Ely, Mildenhall. The coach leaves the hotel at Bury St Edmunds at 1.00pm and Ely railway station at 2.00pm. At Ely Cathedral study the Lady Chapel, monastic precincts and all, a complex whose Romanesque crossing tower famously collapsed in 1322 and whose replacement is quite simply the most inventive response to disaster 14th-century Europe has to show. Then to St Mary's, Mildenhall with its



Ely Cathedral, aquatint c. 1823 by Charles Wild (1781–1835).

naturalistic roof carvings and one of the largest porches in Suffolk. All four nights are spent in Bury St Edmunds.

Day 2: Norwich, East Harling, Bury St Edmunds. Visit Norwich Cathedral, beginning with the choir and progressing through transepts and nave to the superlative late medieval cloisters. Then to the aristocratically-financed parish church of East Harling (excellent 15th-century screen and glass).

A free afternoon to wander at leisure in Bury St Edmunds, suggestions include the parish church of St Mary's with magnificent hammerbeam roof and the remains of the Abbey of St Edmunds.

Day 3: Long Melford, Lavenham, Framlingham. A short drive south to Holy Trinity at Long Melford, a building dazzling not only for its scale but for the quality and quantity of its late 15th-century decoration, most famously the great run of stained glass donor portraits which light the north aisle. Then to that other 'rich clothier's church', Ss. Peter and Paul at Lavenham, whose heraldically-enriched elevations and screenwork make such an excellent foil to Long Melford. Framlingham, a striking complex of

church and castle that made the town the most potent symbol of seigneurial power in Suffolk.

Day 4: Gipping, Castle Heddingham, Thaxted. A morning in north Suffolk. Gipping, Sir James and Lady Ann Tyrell's jewel of a chantry chapel, remote, moated and all of a piece. The afternoon is divided between the de Vere Earls of Oxford's mighty 12th-century keep at Castle Heddingham and the stunning late medieval elevations of Thaxted.

Day 5: Castle Acre, Castle Rising. A morning in west Norfolk. Castle Acre, Cluniac priory church and proud possessor of the finest of all East Anglian Romanesque arcaded façades. Castle Rising, a stunning juxtaposition of a castle built for Henry I's widowed queen, Alice, and the sumptuously decorated late Romanesque parish church of St Lawrence. Break for lunch in King's Lynn. Return to Ely Station by 3.30pm.

Participants combining with *Music in Suffolk Churches* should stay an extra night in Bury St Edmunds on 3rd July. This will cost £180 for a double room, or £120 for a double for single occupancy. The festival begins with a concert in Bury St Edmunds at 4.00pm on the 4th July.

Lecturer

Dr Jana Gajdošová. Art historian and lecturer at the University of Cambridge and at Christie's Education. She obtained her MA at the Courtauld Institute and her PhD at Birkbeck College. Her research interests include late medieval art and architecture, especially in Central Europe, England, Germany and Italy.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £1,470. **Single occupancy:** £1,590

Included: coach transfers from the hotel in Bury or Ely railway station, and throughout the tour; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations; tips for drivers and waiters; the services of the lecturer.

Accommodation. The Angel Hotel, Bury St Edmunds (theangel.co.uk): 4-star hotel in an historic coaching inn in the centre of town. Rooms are warmly furnished with a contemporary décor in the public areas. There is a good restaurant. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

Medieval East Anglia
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How strenuous? There is a lot of standing around for the church and castle visits. You must be able to undertake the necessary walking at the speed of the group. There is quite a lot of driving and getting on and off the coach. You will need to arrange your own travel to Ely or to Bury St Edmunds. Average distance by coach per day: 75 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.