

## **Halesworth Church Crawling Group 2015.**

We have had another enjoyable summer season of church visiting with numbers varying between 15 and 25. Following a winter lunch, which was also a planning meeting, we decided to cut out the August visit as so many people were otherwise engaged and carry on into October. This seemed to work and we were lucky with our last visit to **Leiston** and **Friston** as it was dry and the sun did manage to glimmer.

We started off with **St Mary's, Grundisburgh** with some interesting wall paintings.

The star of the season was **The Great Hospital in Norwich** (see report by John Hewlett)

**All Saints, Laxfield** with its interesting old seating arrangements was followed with a visit to their museum in the Guildhall.

The following month saw a visit to **St Botolph's, Iken** and **Sudbourne** (see notes compiled by Ken & Jan Derham).

We cancelled the visit to East Bergholt but intend to fit it in in 2106.

**The group at St Margaret's, Leiston**



Our last visit was to **St Margaret's, Leiston** which doesn't sound very exciting but is a church quite by itself in more ways than one. Away from the town the 1850 rebuild is an amazing historical story of the prosperity of the town due to the late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the agricultural engineering company of Garretts. The town grew from about 400 in the mid 1700's to 2,000 when people flooded in from all over East Anglia to work in Richard Garrett's expanded blacksmithing business, the population eventually reaching 4,000. Apart from the 14<sup>th</sup> century tower the church was completely demolished and the new church built by an individualistic architect who was not much admired by the powers who were in the forefront of the Gothic revival in Victorian churches. An enormous roof area does not lend itself to easy maintenance but the newly developed crossing has made an amazing space much enhanced by very good lighting.

Sadly, being a town church and rather remote from the centre of population the church is locked so it cannot be visited casually but it would be very worthwhile attending a service to see it in action.

**We shall be starting our visits again April 2016 and in the meanwhile we will have a planning lunch in February. New members are very welcome.**

June Brereton