

looking east, towards Richard Palmer's chancel.

Finally, this, like neighbouring Burgh, is a graveyard worth exploring. One particularly moving set of three stones can be found east of the chancel. The first is *Sacred to the memory of Agatha, daughter of Reverend Richard Frederick and Julia Jane Palmer, 14th February 1873, aged nine weeks. Suffer the little children to come unto me.*

It is easy to console ourselves that one in every two children born alive in the late nineteenth century failed to reach adulthood, but this is no consolation at all. The death of a child hurt as much a century ago as it does now. This little girl must have been born at Christmas, to die on St Valentine's day. Her father was the energetic Rector of this parish, and we imagine this young man going about his liturgical duties, with his little daughter's life hanging in the balance. We can imagine the awful winter funeral, the Rector burying his own baby.

How do I know that he was young at the time? Simple. The middle stone records his death, six years later. It reads *Sacred to the memory of Richard Frederick Palmer, eleven years Rector of this parish. Died 8th May 1879 aged 38 years.* One wonders what carried him off in the spring, to die so young. This grave struck me first, because the 8th of May is my birthday. Typhoid? Cancer? A broken heart?

And so, the third tragic grave; which, as you have probably already guessed, reads *Sacred to the memory of Julia Jane, the beloved wife of Richard Frederick Palmer, who died 4th September 1884, aged 45 years.*

A quiet tragedy, then, in a forgotten corner of Suffolk.



The Palmer graves.

*St Mary, Clopton, can be found on the B1079 Woodbridge to Debenham road, between Grundisburgh and Otley. It is just to the north of the adjacent church of St Botolph, Burgh. I found it open, and am assured that it is kept so.*