

St Nicholas' Sholden

draft



Sholden – the Parish

In 1176 this little unit of land was known as 'Shoueldune' and since Seuldun, 'Schoweldun', 'Shoueldon'; the first form of the name being possibly due to some fancied likeness of the hill to a shovel – 'Shovehill'. It is a topographical unit, a physical unit, a parochial unit and an historical unit. It is small in area as a parish without a coastal strip. 1813 acres of land, with a population in 1801 of 238, in 1858 it had increased to 465, in 1931 to 615 and by 1991 it was 815.

As a place, Sholden has taken little part in national affairs or even Kentish history, squeezed as it is between Sandwich and Deal. Historically it has been an ecclesiastic unit with its own priest from time immemorial, although under its richer neighbour, Northbourne, from which it could not branch out independently. Northbourne itself was only a unit, until the Reformation, of the great Abbey of St Augustine at Canterbury. In fact Sholden was a necessary offshoot of Northbourne, as it possessed that great area of marsh with its dykes which were a valuable summer grazing ground for the Abbey cattle.

The early topographers, Leyland in Henry V's reign, Lambard and William Camden, who might have been expected to mention us say nothing. First comments are in 1659, but then all that Richard Kilburne of Hawkshurst could say was that Sholden "lieth at the E. end of the county, adjoining to the sea, about 3 miles towards the SE distant from Sandwich: in the bailiwick of Eastry, hundred of Cornilo; Lath of St Augustines."

From 1128 the church of Northbourne, with its chapels at Cotmanton (Cottington) and Sholden, was attached to the manor of Northbourne, and so to the Abbey of St Augustine. In 1272-3, the first year of the reign of Edward 1, the vicarage of Northbourne, the chapel was endowed with all the small tithes by the Abbey. It was also agreed that the vicar should have a house and garden with two acres of land. In Hasted's time (1800) there was also nine acres of glebe. With these allowances,

as the vicar was only a nominee of St Augustine's, the burden of the repairing and rebuilding the chancel church of Northbourne church, and that of Sholden, and of finding and repairing the books, vestments and ornaments of the chapel, and of the chapel of Sholden should be acknowledged as the duty of the Abbey forever.

Earlier references to the parish include the following;

- Thornes Chronicle of St Augustine's Abbey (Davis' Translation 1934 p18))



records that Edbald, who had been a pagan, after his conversion by Archbishop Laurentius, endowed in 618 the Abbey with the manor of Northbourne, with which went Sholden.

- Letters relating to the condition of the church in Kent during the primacy of Archbishop Sandcroft were written by Dr Henry Ullock, who had been appointed Rural Dean of Sandwich. The report on the vicar, Mr Balderson is that he "hath Northbourne and Shoulden which is annexed to it, lives at Northbourne, officiates at both places, is Master of Arts, was bred in Emmanuel College, is not married." He died in 1702.
- The sole literary reference to a Sholden family that has been unearthed is that Colonel William Wyborn, eldest son of Daniel who altered Hull Place, was one of the subscribers in 1758 to Elizabeth Carter's great quarto translation of the Greek philosopher, Epictetus.

Sholden – the church

The church, dedicated to St Nicholas', is an undistinguished example of the thirteenth century in its present state. It is built of flint with Caen stone dressings and Hythe stone buttresses. It shows in the flint work patches of reconstruction. Of its foundation of a single fragment of moulding built in as a top stone of a 'putt log hole' high up in the north wall might be 12th century work and so suggests that there was a small church of that date.



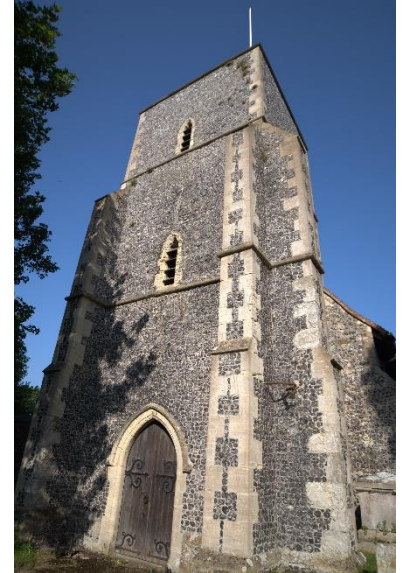
The original Deal to Sandwich road passed the church through what is now the present graveyard with the doorway being on the north side of the church. This doorway has been enclosed and is now the vicar's vestry. The current road or turnpike was approved by parliament in 1795 and it was constructed shortly afterwards deviating from the old path at Jenkins Well. This is between the public entrance to Warden House school and the hairdressers.

The following is a copy of the first **Quinquennial Report** to be produced after the Second World War during which the building was substantially damaged on Saturday 19th April 1941 by a parachute mine which landed in what is now Five Ways Rise. Services were held in the Baptist chapel in the village and did not begin again until November 1947.

- The chapel is built of napped flint with stone quoins and comprises Chancel, Nave, West tower and vestries on the north and northwest angle. The roof is of old Kent tile. The whole of the external flintwork appears to be 19th century cladding except the recent building which is the top part only. Nearly all the quoins are 19th century.
- The vicar's vestry is the old north porch converted and now it contains a Victorian window with a 15th century label but still has the original 15th century doorway which is considered to be "very fine". The choir vestry is a post war addition.
- The East End of the Nave has some Norman quoins above the buttresses. The West door to the tower is 19th century and in good condition and the windows in the tower are of the same period but have severely weathered. On the North side of the Tower there are two original windows, one is older than the other, but both are about 13th century and in good condition.
- The window on the North side of the Chancel is 19th century and transitional in style whereas at the East end of the Chancel the window is of the same period but Early English in style. The label of the East window would seem to be 13th century and both North and South windows appear to have been lowered, maybe following the post war rebuild. (These windows now depict before and after the night of the bombing.) The windows on the South side of the Nave are 19th century in a 15th century style and in fairly good condition.
- The South door is 19th century and in quite good condition. The Transitional window on the East side of the Tower is original.
- The basin of the font is of Kentish Rag and probably 14th century on a perpendicular stem of the 15th century but the base and step are both 19th century.
- The pulpit and the pews are of pitch pine and the lectern look of oak and are all 19th century.
- The reredos and tiling behind the altar are Victorian.



- The mid 13th century tower is divided into three unequal stories – the bellchamber, the ringing chamber and the base of the tower. The bell chamber walls are of flint and the windows have slate louvres. The floor is Tudor with chamfered joists borne on stone corbels. The ringing chamber is actually no longer used as such, as the bells are rung from the base of the tower. The floor was replaced in Victorian times and is in fair condition. The walls are flint and in good condition. The whole of the East wall in of this chamber is rendered with what one must call external rendering. There is the clearest evidence that the Tower is later date than the nave, since the tower is not bonded into the West wall of the Nave and Chancel. This West wall also contains a small window, which is undoubtedly very early in date and is probably early Norman or late Saxon much repaired. This window was crudely blocked on the East face of the West wall of the Nave and should be unblocked. It would then look down into the Nave.



- A blocked entry to the now removed gallery remains high above the Tower door.
- **NB** the bells and tower were renovated in the early 1980's and therefore some of the foregoing is now inaccurate.

Thank you for visiting our church today. If you would like to take this leaflet with you, a suggested donation of £2 would be much appreciated.

A DEDICATED JUST GIVING PAGE has been set up to raise money for essential repairs across the parish – two heating systems, one in this church and one in St Leonard's in Upper Deal and a roof replacement at St Martin's in Great Mongeham. We need to raise £100,000.

We would be grateful if you would share the link whenever you can.

<https://www.justgiving.com/charity/Ecclesiastical-Parish-of-Upper> Thank you.

Three of our churches in the parish of Upper Deal & Gt Mongeham, St Leonard's, St Martin's and St Nicholas' are open each day – please feel free to visit them.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list to hear about all our activities, please send an email to stleonardsoffice@btinternet.com

