

householders are small, a contribution to a street sign if one is required and to make available eyes and ears to watch and listen and report. You may also have to allow your neighbour to mow your lawn, push things through your letter box when you are away, to avoid making an empty house too obvious. Reciprocal services are often welcome. Some insurance companies offer discounts on contents insurance so why not join a neighbourhood watch scheme.

John North Chairman 843369

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH**

### **Early Origins**

In the Domesday Survey it is noted that Hardwin (de Scalers) had in Shelford 2 1/2 hides and 9 acres, and a church which in 1066 had been in the demesne of Ely Abbey. The Victoria History (of Cambridgeshire) mentions that the church at Shelford, belonging to the monks at Ely, had been seized by Hardwin around 1086 and that this was probably Little Shelford church. Further evidence of a church being in existence at this time can be found in the discovery of several stone coffin lids of varying designs in the restoration in 1878. These were reputed to be of Saxon origin and some of them can still be seen built into the west wall of the side chapel and also in the wall of the south porch. In an article by Dr Cobbett of Cambridge, mentioned in the Cambridge Chronicle in 1931, he suggests that these grave covers may be dated between 970 and 1066. The Norman influence is also apparent in that there remains today the plain Norman door of the Nave, now filled up and a small Norman window set very deeply in the thick wall also on the north side of the Nave. This was originally a plain window and it would appear that a new window was installed in 1894. Hence it can be assumed that there was a church on the present site at least quite early in the 12th century, and possibly earlier, and that parts of the church building are at least 900 years old.

### **The Church Today**

#### **Exterior.**

In the restoration work over the centuries many alterations have been made. Viewed from the outside it can be seen to be largely built of cobble and flint facings, with stone finishings to the corners, plinths, door and window surrounds, and with pitched tied roofs over the Nave and Chancel. The west tower is embattled with a needle spire and is covered in lead, some rendering to the facings has been undertaken. The side chapel is partly made of brick and was added early in the 15th century. It is attributed to the successors of Sir John de Freville (d. 1312) and like the tower is embattled but is covered with copper sheeting. The south porch was rebuilt in 1878.

The lean-to vestry on the north side of the church was probably added in the 15th century.

### **Interior**

Viewed from the inside of the church owes much to the restoration work of 1854 and 1878 when concerted efforts were made to offset the ravages of the past. Earlier work had been undertaken as it is recorded that by the mid - 15th century the Nave and tower needed to be partly rebuilt and new windows put into the Chancel. In 1728 part of the side chapel was rebuilt, and later around 1760, the Chancel which had become much dilapidated also had to be rebuilt. In 1854, a new larger Chancel arch was erected to replace the smaller one and the two much smaller side arches. However by 1728, it appears that the church had again become very dilapidated and to all accounts restoration work was needed of monumental proportions. The Chancel received most of the attention where the old walls were taken down and a new structure erected on the original foundations. New roofs similar in design to the old ones were placed over the Chancel and Nave and then covered with old tiles. The old pews were taken away and replaced by new ones in oak; other woodwork was renewed. In all the church was once again a fitting memorial to its earlier benefactors, and was re-opened by the Bishop of Ely on 24th April 1879.

### **The Tower and Bells**

In the mid-16th century it is recorded that there were three bells in the belfry. At the beginning of the 17th century of bells was increased as a notable addition was made in 1612. The 3rd Earl of Southampton had his name inscribed on this bell "HENRIE WRYESLE, EARL OF SOUTHAMTON" - his correct name was Wriothesley! Further re-castings and additions were made about a hundred years later. Around 1884 an English oak bell frame was installed and the bells re-hung. Finally six bells were hung in the tower in 1961. In 1974 the ringing chamber was raised from the floor of the tower. In 1992 the Baptistry was converted into a Prayer Room by removing the existing stairway to the ringing chamber and building a Minstrel's Gallery with a door directly into the ringing chamber, together with the installation of spiral wooden stairs and a new glazed screen with folding doors. The whole church was carpeted. All this transformation was done by means of the bequest of the late Decima Church in memory of Dr Joe Church.

### **The Font**

The font which stands at the west end of the Nave, now enclosed in the Prayer Room, is plain, octagonal in shape with five shafts, and probably dates from the

early 14th century.

#### **The Nave**

The wagon roof with boards divided into panels is a copy of the old one which at one time was painted. There are several stained glass memorial windows to be seen today. The south window has the Wale Crest and the text: Micha 6:8 "... to love mercy, to walk humbly..." On the north side at the westend is a window with the St Matthew text: "He is not here: He is Risen." Further along is the 'Norman window' and both are in memory of the Rev. H.J. Wale. In the corner above the Wale pews is the 'Wale Window' in memory of Fanny Wale. There are several plaques in memory of members of the Wale family to be seen on the north wall

#### **The Pulpit**

The carved oak pulpit probably dates from the early 17th century, as the canopy bears the date 1633.

#### **Side Chapel ( or Chantry )**

An oak parclose screen forms a division between the Nave and the side chapel. This is a small perpendicular chapel, slightly raised above the level of the Nave, with two perpendicular windows. It has two niches, one of which contains an alabaster figure originally found buried on the south side of the Chancel. Two brasses on the floor commemorate most probably Robert de Freville ( d. 1392 ) and his wife Claricia (d. 1399); and their son Thomas de Freville ( d. 1405 ) and his wife Margaret ( d. 1410 ). It is likely that the latter was instrumental in aiding the erection of the side chapel. There are various memorials on the west wall, including one of the incumbents the Rev. Samuel Ingle ( d. 1794 ).

#### **The Chancel**

Perhaps the most striking feature is the Victorian east window of the crucifixion which is in memory of James Edmund Law. The white Italian marble cross under this window has superimposed on it one of a modern design. In the north-east corner are two arches with decorative mouldings. The more elaborate one contains the recumbent effigy of Sir John de Freville, the inscription above in Lombardic characters can be roughly translated ; " Here lies Sir John de Frevil Lord of this village, you who pass of your charity pray for his soul." The other arch, probably meant for a tomb, is the entrance to the vestry. The backs of the choir stalls are painted in the de Freville livery colours depicting the family arms, "Gules, three crescents ermine".

### Later Restoration

During the period from 1930 to the present day many improvements have been made to the church. With electric lighting and heating the days of a dimly lit and sometimes smoky Nave have long since gone. The reconstructed organ which incorporates the console and the pipe case being moved to the opposite side of the Chancel, the music of the church has been much enhanced. Additionally the public address system has made the acoustic problems of a large high building much more acceptable

### The Churchyard

A few ancient headstones still remain in the older parts of the churchyard. The cross in the south-east portion of the churchyard once stood at the junction of Whittlesford Road. During the restoration of 1878 the cross having fallen into disrepair, was reassembled and placed on the present site. The top part was replaced, the original piece of shaft having been made into a sundial for the Wale family garden.

### Rectors

Early records do not appear to exist and the much-researched list compiled by the late Dr Hugh Plommer is by far the best available. The framed list can be seen hanging on the west wall of the Nave near the church door.

Kenneth J. Hurst

### THE "de FREVILLE" BRASSES and a CHANTRY

Many have heard the name "de Freville" associated with the Shelfords. Indeed, Great Shelford rather impertinently appropriated the name of these quondam lords of Little Shelford for their own public house "The de Freville Arms" ( and more recently, the de Freville Close ), despite the fact that this family always had our own village as their principal seat - where they held the advowson of the Church, and chose to be buried. Their strategy for advancement was a common one - marriage to an heiress - for one Baldwin de Freville ( d.1257 ) had shrewdly married Lucy, daughter and heir of Richard de Scalers ( d. 1231 ) last of the family who had held the manor of the Shallows since the Norman Conquest, thereby securing the manor and advowson for himself and his wife during their lifetime - and for the "heirs of their bodies" in perpetuity. They were to hold it for 300 years, until George de Freville sold out to John Banks in the late 16th century. Traditionally the last resting place for the lord was within the Chancel - where in an apse we still find the marble effigy of Sir John ( d. 1312 ). But by the end of that century the ceaseless medieval pre-occupation with

the fate of their immortal souls had made it fashionable to endow a Chantry - where masses could be sung to ameliorate the duration and rigours of their purgatory.

So it is that All Saints gained its characteristic "South" or "Lady" Chapel - now, with its original function long forgotten, little more than an architecturally pleasing "spare room" to the body of the church itself. Nevertheless, with in it survive the memorial brasses of two ( there were once many more ) de Freville couples interred there soon after its construction - Robert de Freville ( d. 1393 ) and his wife Clarice (d.1399), and their son and daughter in law Thomas (d. 1405) and his relict Margaret (d. 1410 ) Medieval widows could be formidable. We are told that it was the latter lady who ordained the endowment and construction of the Chantry with its very generous window tracery. On the premature demise of her young husband, and with her infant son William ( d. 1460 ) yet a minor, she was indeed the "Lady of Little Shelford" - imbued in her "femme fatal" state with all the powers of lordship. She put it to good use.

Ian Cox

### DONATIONS RECEIVED

We are grateful to the following individuals, business and professional establishments who have generously contributed towards the costs of printing this Parish Guide.

Auto Quick, Barclays Bank plc, Barker Bros, Cambridge Building Society  
Cambridge Fine Art, Coulson and Fisher (Shelford), C J Craig Engineering,  
Douglas of Shelford, Forbuoys plc, Great Shelford Post Office, Julia Ann  
Harvey and Son, Lay Electrical, Lloyds Bank plc, Neil's, Andy Rayment,  
Sawston Cars Executive Hire, Sawston Hardware, Christopher Maguire,  
Scotsdale Garden Centre, Second Glance Shelford Hair Studio,  
Shelford Taxi Service and Limousine Hire, Tony's, Victoria Wine,  
The Tucker Partnership, Wendy's