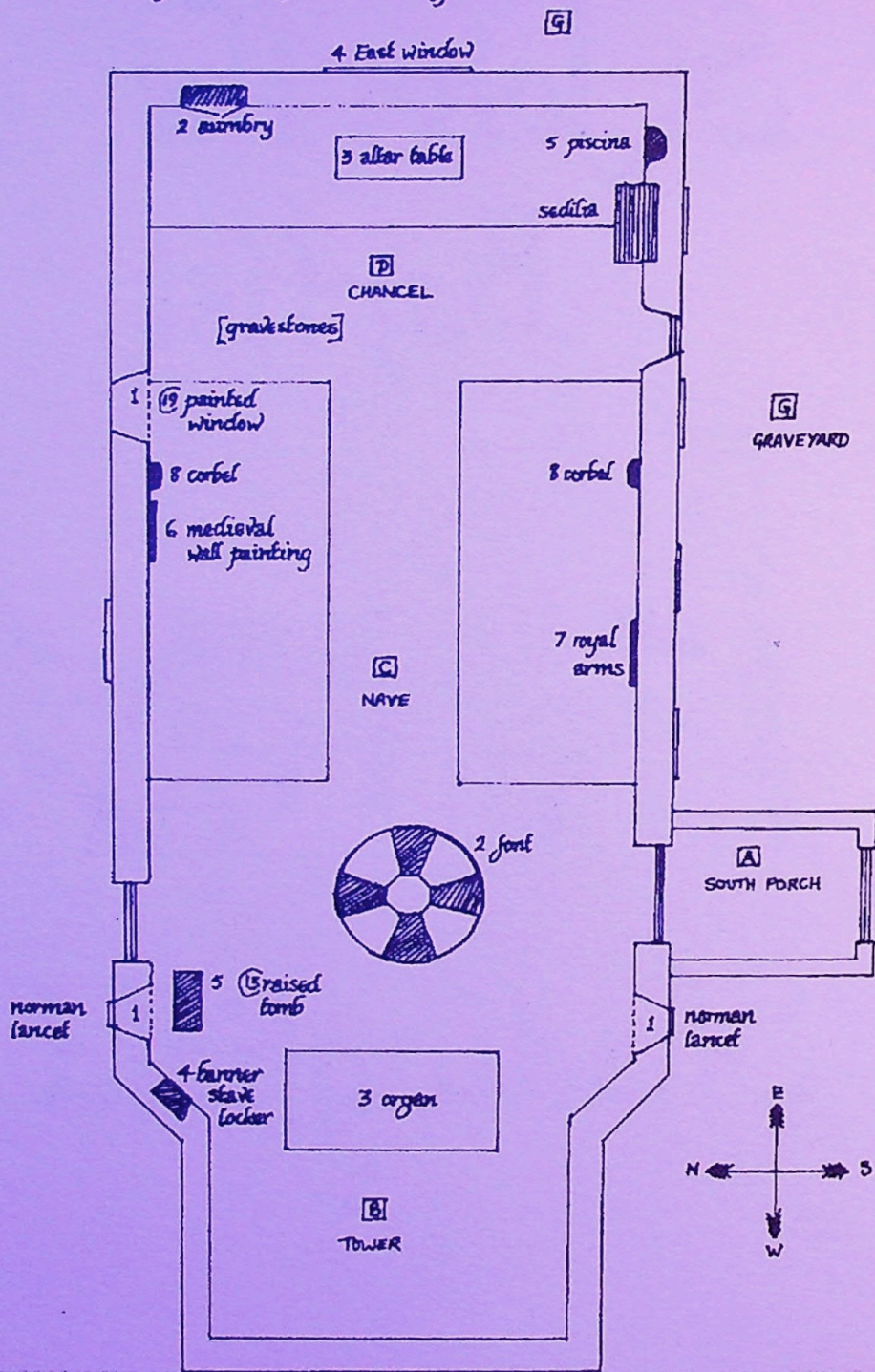


St John the Baptist



Shadingfield

St John the Baptist, Shadingfield



Welcome to the small parish church of St. John the Baptist, Shadingfield, which also serves part of the village of Willingham St. Mary.

There are 155 people in this parish. Many of them contribute to the life of the church and to raising funds for the constant needs of the building. We have put together these notes to assist you when looking at our church. If you enjoy your visit please remember us and help, if you can, with a donation.

Please read the notes with the plan opposite.

A. SOUTH PORCH

This unusual porch was added in the early 16th century and built in Tudor brick with polygonal buttresses and moulded terracotta brick decoration. Traces of the original colour can still be seen.

This type of terracotta ornament was a short lived fashion of the 1520's, notably at Hampton Court Palace, and in East Anglia, where elaborate decoration exists at East Barsham in Norfolk and Westhorpe in Suffolk, amongst others. We have found no record of the patron or builder of this grand porch.





Extensive conservation and repairs to the porch were carried out in 2001 supported by English Heritage, and funds raised by the PCC.

B. THE TOWER

The square west tower was built in the 14th century in Perpendicular style using local flint. There is one gargoyle beneath the parapet and some more noticeable brick patching from the 18th and 19th centuries. The tower underwent major restoration in 1983.

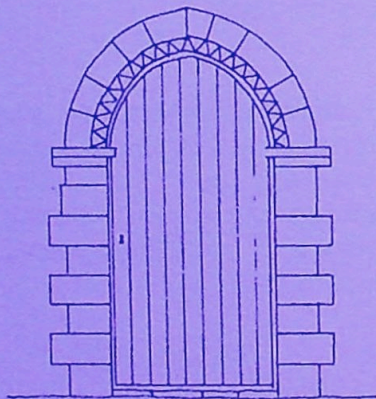
The west window shows the remains of delicate tracery and a roundel of red glass thought to be medieval and a rare survivor of the destruction wrought by the reformation and the Puritan government of the 1640's. The church was not visited by the famous East Anglian iconoclast William Dowsing but we know that Francis Verdon of Linstead Parva, his friend and deputy, visited area.

The tower has one bell which bears the inscription:

IAME?  EDBERE  1608 ~

The crown and arrows indicate Bury St Edmunds where James Edbury is known to have cast bells. There are references to three bells at Shadingfield in 1553 and two bells in place in 1706. This bell was declared unsafe nearly 40 years ago. In 1999 it was restored, and rehung to swing chime. The bell was rung for the first time in this way on 1st January 2000.

C. THE NAVE



The nave of this church shows the transition actually happening from Norman building style and decoration to that known as Early English, at the beginning of the 13th century. The north and south doorways have Early English pointed arches, but the dogtooth decoration on the exterior of the north door and the slight chamfers on the south are characteristically Norman.

D. THE CHANCEL

The chancel is of the same 13th century date as the nave. However, apart from the lancet window in the north wall, little evidence of 13th century building survives as it was extensively restored in 1841 by Charles Scott of Shadingfield Hall who became rector in 1839.

His grand daughter writes that he “added buttresses to strengthen it” and that he “rebenched the whole church.” Suckling, in his “History of Suffolk” in 1846, notes that the church had been “recently repaired” and the old pews replaced with “open benches and poppy heads of an uniform pattern, carved with spirit from ancient models”. Apparently the old pews were “mean and irregular”. Poppy heads were much used in the 19th century, but the two demi-figures on the ends of the front pews, a priest and layman wearing matching cloaks, are more unusual.

Suckling also describes two hatchments of the 17th century which are no longer in the church although one is in the possession of a member of the Cuddon family who lived at Shadingfield Hall until the 18th century.

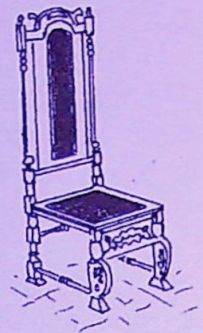
1. The lancet window in the north wall is an attractive example of Victorian glass painting with enamels, illustrating the text “all flesh is grass”.

The brass plaque on the wall below commemorates Mary Louisa Kilner, the daughter of Thomas Scott, who built Shadingfield Hall in 1814. It was erected by her husband James Kilner, who was chaplain of Chester Castle. It has been suggested that as Mary Kilner was buried at Chester, this window may be the work of Evans of Shrewsbury or another west country glass painter.

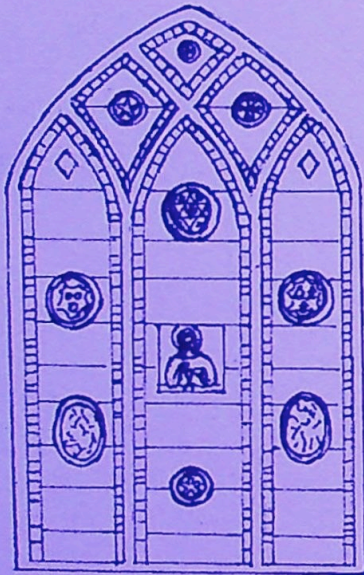


2. **The aumbry** (cupboard) on the east wall was reinstated with new doors in 1997.

3. **The altar table**, described as "very nice" by Cautley, dates from the 17th century, as does the bishop's chair

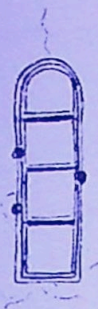


4. **The east window** was restored by Charles Scott in 1879, as indicated by the initials C.T.S. on a stone beneath it on the outside of the building. It was further restored in the 1950,s.



The borders of the window consist of fragments of 16th to 18th century glass and there are seven enamelled roundels including two coats of arms. One coat of arms is for the See of Norwich to which Shadingfield belonged until 1914, and the other for the Scott family of Shadingfield Hall. Ovals at the bottom depict the Holy Family and the Ascension. The central panel of Christ at the Last Supper is possibly the work of John Winter, an artist and glazier who worked in Bungay in the mid 19th century.

5. In the south wall the **piscina** (basin) and **sedilia** (priest's seats/bench), date from the 13th century.

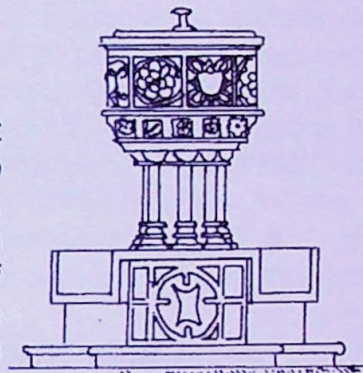


The nave has a plain arch-braced roof which is now plastered. The tower arch at the west end was obscured by a "modern" gallery in 1846, which has since been removed.

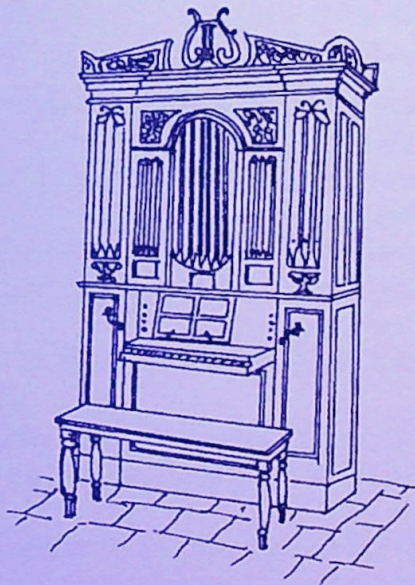
1. **The lancet windows** to the west of each door are entirely Norman.

2. The Font

The "extremely elegant" octagonal font (Suckling) stands on three steps, the top one being in the form of a Maltese cross. This third step has quatrefoil decoration and the sides of the bowl have designs of shields and Tudor roses. We have no authoritative date for the font although the Tudor roses suggest after 1485.



3. **The Organ.** This very nice 18th century chamber organ was given to the church in 1894 by the wife of Thomas Kilner.



The Kilners were a prominent land-owning family in this parish in the 18th century and owned Shadingfield Hall for a short time before selling it to the Scott family in 1804. The organ was made by George Parsons of Bloomsbury who worked between 1809 and 1829. Before it was brought to the church in 1894 it was adapted slightly and the pedals were added. In 1969 it was restored and moved from the south wall to its present position.

4. **The Banner Stave Locker** in the north wall, on the corner leading to the tower, is a very tall niche where the staves or poles used to carry processional banners were stored. Such processions were a frequent part of church ritual for hundreds of years.

This locker had a wooden door and the rebated door jambs remain. It is twelve feet high, twelve inches deep and a wedge shape extending to fourteen inches inside. Banner stave lockers are peculiar to churches in Suffolk, and it is even more extraordinary that all of the twelve which survive are here in north east Suffolk in a group of churches from Barnby and Henstead via Shadingfield and Sotterley to Wenhaston.

5. **A raised tomb** on the floor to the west of the north door is thought to date from the 13th century.

6. **The medieval painting** on the north wall was uncovered and restored in 1992.

7. **The Royal Arms** hanging on the south wall announce Carolus Rex, but without clarifying which King Charles.

8. **The Corbels** At the entrance to the chancel two pairs of heads form corbels suggesting the church had a wide low rood loft before the reformation. The narrow ledges on the south side suggest that a gallery may have built out here. Alternatively they supported statues or lamps for an altar.



6. There are seven **gravestones** on the floor of the chancel, two of which have brass plates. There are also two **memorial brasses** on the south wall. Nearly all of these are for members of the Cuddon family who lived at Shadingfield Hall for the 13th century until the early 18th century when their Jacobean house was left to fall into disrepair.

We have no information, as yet, about Mary Ange (d. 1728) in front of the altar, or William Clarke (d. 1775) in the central aisle of the nave.

E. THE ALTAR CLOTH

The most treasured possession of the church is a linen altar cloth edged with hand made lace in its original oak box, which has the following inscription on the paper lining:-

**This box with a cloath
for the Communion table
was given to the parish
church of Shadingfeild by
Elizabeth Cudden, the wife
Of William Cuddon gent
The XXV day of December
Anno Dmi 1632**

It is a rare survival from before the Civil War and, according to Cautley, was in regular use until 1892. Since summer 2002, Beccles & District Museum have kindly agreed to display the altar cloth and box. The museum is at Lemn House, Ballygate, Beccles and is open daily, except on Mondays, from April to the end of October from 2.30pm to 5.00pm. Entrance is free.

F. THE PARISH REGISTERS

The parish registers at Shadingfield begin with a baptism entry in 1539 and continue to the present day.

According to the register for 29th August 1650, "Thomas Williams, a trooper, was murdered on his march through (Shadingfield) by one

of his fellow troopers. He was buried by seven or eight of his fellow troopers next day."

The registers are now in the care of the Suffolk Records Office and are available for reference at their Lowestoft branch.

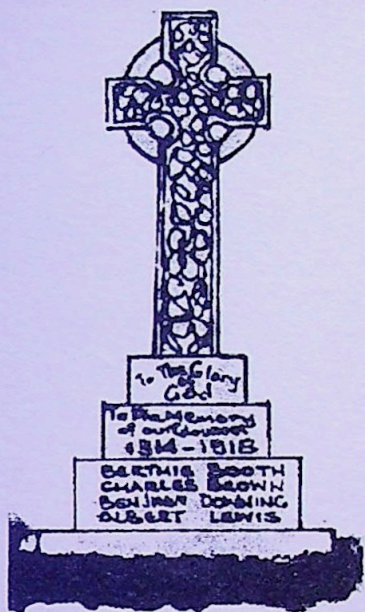
G. THE GRAVEYARD

In the graveyard are memorials to the families who have lived in Shadingfield for the past 300 years: Alexander, Blowers, Oakes, Goddard, Pierson, Bliss, Wells, Scarfe and Scott are names that appear frequently.

There are twelve members of the **Lewis** family who ran the shop and post office in Shadingfield for more than 150 years, until Mr John Lewis died aged 94 in 1969.

Under the yew tree opposite the east end of the church is the much neglected family vault of the Scotts. J.B. Scott's diary entry for 13th March 1855 says "T.C. Scott's body is borne from the Hall to the vault at the east end of the church.....The sons descend into the vault to take a last look at their parents' coffins". One of the sons was the Rector Charles Scott. He was buried there together with his wife and two sons who died in early childhood.

On the south side of the graveyard is the memorial to those who lost their lives in the 1914-1918 war. Fortunately no-one from the village was killed in the Second World War.



The illustrations and text in this booklet are by members of the Parochial Church Council.

April 2003

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CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Shadingfield

We welcome you to our parish church which also serves part of the village of Willingham St.Mary. Having been linked with Sotterley for many years, the church is now part of a much larger group of villages called the Hundred River Team Ministry.

The main part of the building is early twelfth century as shown by the north and south doorways, the arch of the north door being decorated with the dog-tooth mould of Norman times. The charming little brick-built south porch entrance was added in the days of Queen Elizabeth I. Notice the moulded roses in the brickwork.

The fourteenth century tower had a major repair in 1983, and is now secure.



Here are some other interesting features:

A banner stave closet 10 ft. high and 1 ft. square inside fitted for a door. A reminder of the great processions which, before the Reformation, took place on the feast days of the Church.

Curious carved heads, a pair either side on the nave walls from the fourteenth century are in fact the stone corbels which once supported the lower beams of the rood loft. Beyond here was all the chancel area. Probably a canopy projected westward from the rood to cover a side altar in the nave, since a corbel for a saint remains on the south wall. Another, slightly recessed on top, perhaps took a canopy brace from the rood (or did it serve as a piscina?).

The Holy Table and Bishop's Chair in the sanctuary, and possibly also the chest, were made in the Stuart period. So was the one really precious treasure of the church: a handmade linen cloth for the communion table, measuring 6 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. 6 in., in a box lined with patterned paper and inscribed in the lid "given to the Parish Church of Shadingfield by Elizabeth Cuddon, the wife of William Cuddon, gent the XXV day of December 1632". This is now loaned, and on view, at Strangers Hall, Norwich.



The early fifteenth century octagonal font standing on a bold plinth base shaped like a Maltese Cross, the arms panelled and traceried at the ends.

The Cuddons lived in the former Elizabethan manor house, and their family crest is incorporated in the east window. In recent years we have had visits from some members of the family.

In early days the church came under the jurisdiction of Framlingham and John de Bruisyard held a manor for the crown. He had to supply knights to serve the monarch, and some of them went to the Crusades. The interesting tombstones in the older part of the church are probably connected with him, but the brasses which would have helped to identify them have not survived.

The plain **Piscina** inside the communion rails, in the south wall (a little stone basin for the "ablutions" during Mass) is flanked by a dropped window **sedilia** (priest's seat). On the other side of the church in the east wall is an arched aperture, no doubt once an **ambry** with small double doors in which the Blessed Sacrament would have been kept. Notice the two front **pew ends**—two beautifully carved little wooden figures.

The organ, which has been restored, has an eighteenth century casing which is an excellent piece of work of its kind.

The church registers, which begin with a baptism entry in 1539, give details of the families in the village through four centuries until the present day. (The older records are now kept for us by the Ipswich Archivist.) The burial of two Cromwellian troopers is recorded in the registers. One was murdered in the tavern i.e. Bow Inn. For centuries the London to Norwich highway passed through here.

The bell. In the Return of 1553 three bells were noted to be in the tower. There is now only one weighing about 4¼ cwt., bearing the inscription (arabesque IAMES') crown and crossed arrows ED BERE (fleur-de-lys) 1608.

The crown and crossed arrows point to a connection with Bury St.Edmunds, where the bell was cast by James Edbury. His bells have now become quite rare.

The Royal Arms inscribed C.R. — probably those of Charles II.

This is a living church, working to promote good-will and Christian Unity. We thank you for visiting us.

Please accept this as a memento.

