

In the tower hang two bells. One is a small Priest's bell, which has no inscription by which to identify it, but it dates probably from the 17th century. The larger bell was probably cast by Thomas Newcombe II, between 1562 and 1580.

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Whilst in the area, why not enjoy two more churches which are cared for by the Redundant Churches Fund?

SS. Peter and Paul PRESTON DEANERY is just off the B526, about 4 miles south-east of Northampton. There are Pre Conquest carvings here, a sturdy Norman tower, and much else to see.

All Saints HOLDENBY is situated about 5 miles north-north-west of Upton (as the crow flies). This is a gem of a church in an idyllic and isolated setting, with so much to see and enjoy both outside and inside.

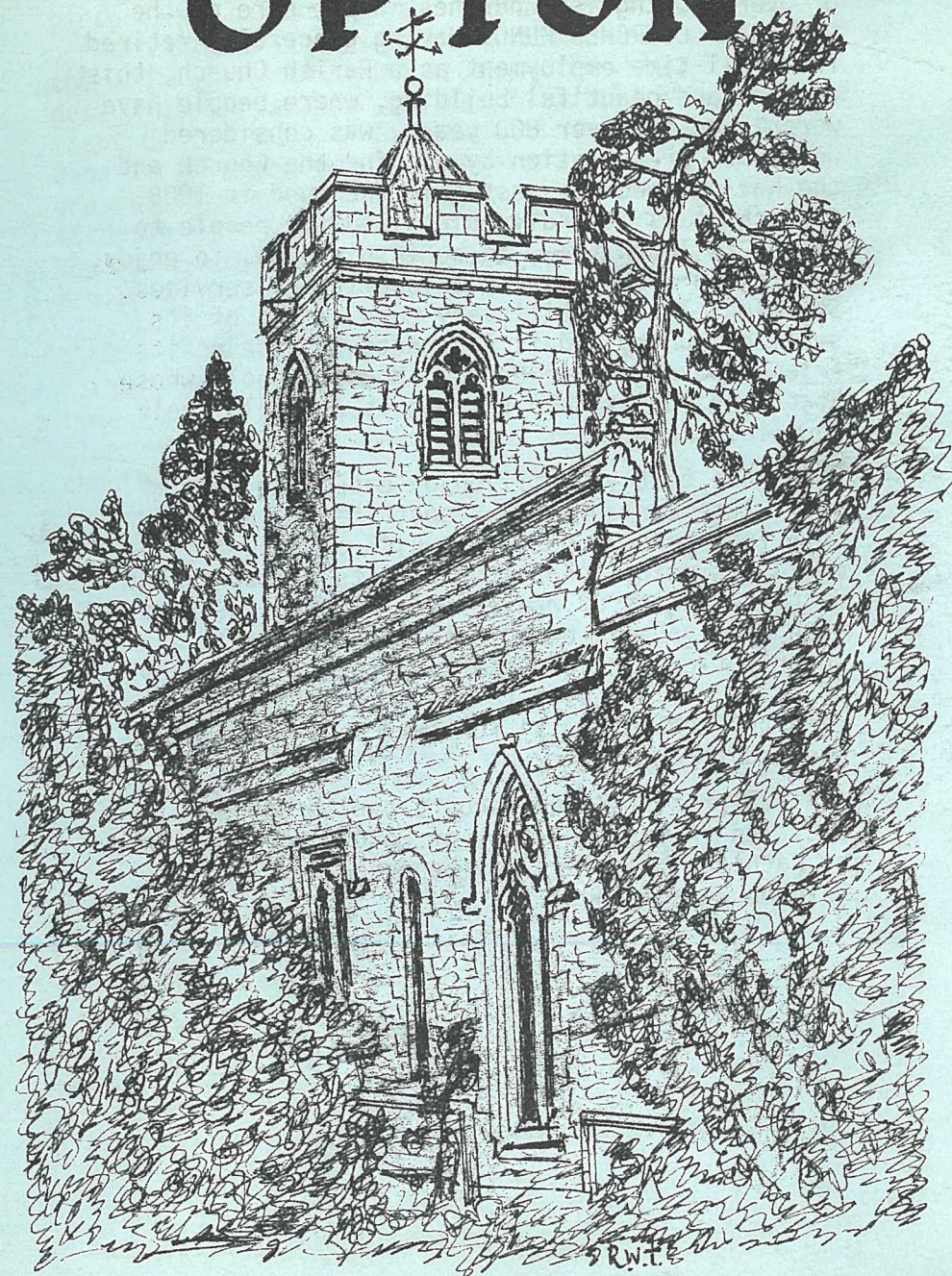
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Wherever your journeys take you, please remember that you are always welcome in our churches and may God bless and protect you.

Roy Tricker
May 1992.

Exploring St. Michael's UPTON



heightened in the 14th century, when two tiny quatrefoil windows were inserted beneath the south parapet. The nave and chancel walls received their stone parapets probably in the 15th century, when the roofs were given their present shallow pitches and several new windows were added to give more light. A pair of elegant two-light windows pierce the south chancel wall and beneath the westernmost is a rectangular "low-side" window. This was originally equipped with a shutter so that a small bell could be rung at the climax of the Eucharist to enable those who could not be present to pause and join in prayer. Several square-headed 15th century windows may be seen, also a handsome three-light late Perpendicular window in the north nave wall.

The three-light east window dates from a restoration of the chancel, executed in 1850 to the designs of Mr. Eden Law of Northampton (whose work may be seen in other churches and secular buildings in the area). The stonework of several of the windows was renewed during the church's major restoration in 1893, under the direction of the versatile Northampton architect, Matthew Holding, who created the memorable churches of St. Matthew, Christ Church, Holy Trinity and St. Paul, Northampton and St. Mary's Far Coton. The work cost £1034.4s.9d, the builder was Mr. J.T. Wingrove and the collection at the Re-Opening Service on March 16th 1893 was £75.19s.

The south porch was built (or rebuilt) in 1594. Over its doorway is a shield, sets of initials, and the date.

WHAT TO SEE INSIDE THE CHURCH.

A door, fashioned in the 18th century, admits us to a colourful interior, full of character and interest. The walls were scraped of their plaster and their stonework exposed during the 1893 restoration. Of this date also are the shallowly-pitched tiebeam roofs, which are very worthy replacements of the 15th or early 16th century ones. In the west wall, each side of the 14th century tower arch, are two tiny openings (a quatrefoil to the south and a cross-shape to the north), through which people could look into the church from the upper floors of the two chambers each side of the tower. Such chambers are uncommon, but not unique. It is thought that they had upper floors and maybe provided accommodation, when needed, for a priest or sexton. Beneath the southern

quatrefoil is a rectangular opening, which is filled with 15th century traceried woodwork - possibly from the former rood screen or maybe even made especially for it.

The only evidence left of the Rood, its screen and loft, which stood at the division of the nave and chancel, are the four steps of the rood loft staircase, which rise where the wall has been cut away beneath the Norman window on the north side of the nave and which gave access to the loft (or gallery) above the former screen, effectively lit, no doubt, by the window.

Three recesses may be seen in the chancel walls. On the south side of the sanctuary is what was probably a piscina, (although its drain has now gone) beneath a trefoil-headed arch. Beside it is a small opening which extends through the thickness of the wall. In the east wall is a rectangular aumbry (another may be seen in the north wall, behind the tomb), which was a cupboard for storing the Sacred Vessels.

Near the north doorway is a 17th century oak chest, where parish valuables and documents were stored. Near the south doorway is the 17th century Communion Table, which served as the altar here, until the present altar arrived in 1907.

The 18th century font and the lectern are now at St. Mark's Wellingborough and some of the nave benches are now in use at St. Benedict's Church Hunsbury. The eight nave benches which remain have beautifully carved ends, with coats of arms. These were designed by Holding, as were the choir and clergy stalls (the latter with the arms of the Province of Canterbury and the Diocese of Peterborough), which were dedicated in 1899 and were made in oak by Mr. Henry Martin and carved by Mr. L.S. Reynolds of Northampton. They were Upton's memorial to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, thanks to generous donations by Mrs. Thomas of Upton Hall and the Women's Guild of St. Peter's Northampton towards the clergy stalls.

Other fine woodwork which adorns the church was made by Messrs Jones & Willis of Great Russell Street, London in 1907-8. This includes the pulpit, with its splendidly carved panels of crocketed ogee arches framing linenfold designs, the arcaded Communion rails, the altar and the fine reredos, where we see the Archangels Michael (with dragon), and Gabriel (with scroll upon which is "Ave Maria"), carvings of wheat and a grape-vine (for the Blessed Sacrament) and a central recess with diaper-work. Here has been placed a

plaster relief carving of St. Michael (c.1910), with his flaming sword and surrounded by angels. In 1907-8 the western vestry screen was made by Jones & Willis, who also produced the woodcarving which lines the north door.

Two windows contain pictures in stained glass. The east window, by O'Connor of London and made in 1872, shows Christ crucified, flanked by panels with the Instruments of the Passion. In the south-east nave window we see Jesus with the Woman of Samaria, in glass of 1935, which was given in memory of William and Mary Hudson of Upton Hall.

MEMORIALS. There are several memorials in the church to people of the past who have been associated with it. Most of these are to past occupants of the Hall. Amongst the most interesting are:-

The tomb chest in the north-east corner of the sanctuary, upon which lie the recumbent effigies of Sir Richard Knightley and his wife Jane (formerly a Spencer of Althorp). He died in 1537 and we see him in armour and his lady in lovely clothes of the period. The western side of the tomb chest (which has traces of colour) has three angels with shields and is a splendid piece of carving in alabaster. This tomb was re-assembled in the 19th century, before which the effigies stood against the south wall.

The Samwells, who bought the Manor of Upton from the Knightleys in 1600, have several wall-plaques here.

Chancel, north wall.

1. A plaque tells us of 16th and 17th century members of the Samwell family, including Sir William, who purchased Upton.
2. Thomas Samwell Watson Samwell, J.P. (died 1831) has a plaque by Whiting of Northampton, with a long biography and an epitaph.
3. Wenman Langham Watson Samwell (died 1841), also by Whiting.

Chancel, east wall.

4. Clarissa Woodford, grand-daughter of Sir Thomas Samwell (died 1846).
5. Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Samwell (died 1790) and her husband, Thomas Atherton Watson (died 1793).

6. Small rectangular 19th century plaque to Sir William Samwell (died 1627).

7. A plaque by Austin & Seeley of London, with an urn at its summit, to Frances Watson Samwell, widow of Thomas (died 1841).

8. Camilla, sister of Wenman Langham Watson (died 1817); beneath it is a tablet to her, once set in the floor.

Chancel, south wall.

9. Sir Thomas Samwell (the 3rd Baronet of that name, who died in 1779).

10. An oval inscription under glass to James Harrington (died 1677), whose mother was the sister of Sir Richard Samwell. He was a friend of King Charles I and of King Charles II and was the author of a book entitled "Oceana". His very distinctive memorial was erected in 1810 by Wenman Langham Watson.

11. A fine plaque with a coat of arms in a cartouche at its apex, to Sir Thomas Samwell (the 2nd Baronet), who died in 1757 and who enlarged and remodelled the Hall. There is a long inscription to him and, beneath, a message to the reader - "Courteous stranger, disturb not his ashes, which are here deposited in expectation of the great and tremendous Day of Judgment, what a man he was that day only shall testify".

12. George Turner (died 1892), a Northampton shoe manufacturer, who resided at Upton Hall.

Four diamond-shaped hatchments hang in the western part of the nave. These escutcheons, with coats of arms (notice in them the back-to-back squirrels, cracking nuts - the arms of the Samwells) were displayed outside the home of a deceased person for a period of time, before being permanently displayed in the parish church. They commemorate:-

1. Elizabeth, wife of Sir Wenman Samwell (4th Baronet), who died in 1789. (South wall).
2. Sir Thomas Samwell (1st Baronet), who died in 1693. This hatchment (west wall, south) is probably a later replacement of the original.
3. Sir Thomas Samwell (3rd Baronet) - a bachelor, who died in 1779.
4. Sir Thomas Samwell (2nd Baronet), who died in 1757.