

THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST
LONDON

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PRICE: £1.00



ST MICHAEL'S
CHURCH

LONG STANTON
CAMBRIDGESHIRE





THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION
TRUST WELCOMES YOU TO
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
LONG STANTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Many years ago Christians built and set apart this place for prayer. They made their church beautiful with their skill and craftsmanship. Here they have met for worship, for children to be baptised, for couples to be married and for the dead to be brought for burial. If you have time, enjoy the history, the peace and the holiness here. Please use the prayer card and, if you like it, you are welcome to take a folded copy with you.

Although services are no longer regularly held here, this church remains consecrated; inspiring, teaching and ministering through its beauty and atmosphere. It is one of more than 325 churches throughout England cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust. The Trust was created in 1969 and was, until 1994, known as the Redundant Churches Fund. Its object is to ensure that all these churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

Please help us to care for this church. There is a box for donations or, if you prefer to send a gift, it will be gratefully received at the Trust's headquarters at 89 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1DH until 30 September 2002. We will be moving to new offices in the autumn of 2002, so please look out for announcements in our churches or visit our website www.visitchurches.org.uk for details of our new address.

We hope that you will enjoy your visit and be encouraged to see our other churches. Some are in towns; some in remote country districts. Some are easy and others hard to find but all are worth the effort.

Nearby are the Trust churches of:

CAMBRIDGE, ALL SAINTS

Jesus Lane

CAMBRIDGE, ST PETER

Off Castle Street

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

LONG STANTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

by PAUL BINSKI

Long Stanton lies off the road to Huntingdon about six miles (9.7 km) to the north-west of Cambridge. Seen from afar, the village is strung out long and low in the landscape (the name, adapted from the mediaeval Stantune, is well deserved), and its most prominent feature is the spire of the other church in Long Stanton, All Saints, set at the crossroads.

The two churches are some distance apart, a different arrangement from Swaffham Prior to the north-east of Cambridge, where two churches are set strangely side-by-side, the result of mediaeval manorial division. At Long Stanton the situation arose because there were two separate villages on the site from the Middle Ages, the civil parishes being united only in 1953. Hence the attenuated plan of the village. All Saints is now the parish church and is the larger and indeed the finer of the two. It has a Perpendicular west tower and spire, and a capacious interior displaying good 14th-century work. Especially notable is Sir Thomas and Lady Hatton's tomb of 1658, by Edmund Marshall, located in the south transept next to an impressive, if slightly overwhelming, Hatton family vault.

A few hundred metres to the south-east of All Saints lies the small church of St Michael, described by Pevsner as 'a very remarkable little building'. It has been copied at least twice in the United States, once in Philadelphia and again in South Dakota.

The church consists of a nave, aisles and chancel, and is a good example of the 13th-century church design of the area. It is situated in a neat churchyard set back a little from the road. At the gate the visitor is greeted by a large chestnut tree and a well to which one descends by steps. The well has a brick vault and iron railings. Its presence suggests that this site may have been a centre of worship of some antiquity and perhaps the reason for the church being built here.

EXTERIOR

The west wall, composed of flush-pointed rubble stone with Barnack dressings, is supported by two buttresses, to either side of the 14th-century west window, set so close together that they give a false impression of the width



The church from the south-west

of the nave inside, to the arcades of which they do not correspond. At the gable top is a small disused twin bell-cote with two round arches, doubtless a renewal of the 17th-century, to judge by the spare but basically classical detailing. Broken woodwork indicates the aftermath of the theft in 1969 of the bells, one 15th-century.

The nave and aisles are thatched; the effect is quaint and domestic. On the south side is a 15th-century porch with a niche (now restored); the inner doorway, along with the fabric of the nave, dates from the 13th century. The south aisle presents a charming aspect, as the easternmost window in its south wall is filled with curving Decorated tracery and is gabled, creating the effect of a miniature transept. This is the result of a 19th-century reworking. It is matched on the north side. The blocked east window of the aisle is a simple lancet patched with red tiles, the string-courses around the aisle buttresses breaking off irregularly on the east aisle wall. The regular pointing of the tiled chancel and its tidied-up, 13th-century appearance indicate a conservative rebuilding which occurred in 1884 at the hands of Robert Speechly of Stoke Newington. In the Bishop of Ely's visitation returns of 1662 the stonework of the chancel had already been noted as being 'much decayed'.

The exterior of the north aisle is of greater archaeological interest. It has a 13th-century shafted doorway like that on the south side and, since disused quoins are built into the north wall, a change must have occurred to the layout of its windows. One of the quoins towards the west end has part of a round-headed arch, which might be the remains of an earlier, 12th-century build-

ing. There appears here to have been another 14th-century window matching that to the east of the north door. At the west end of the north wall is a rectangular 17th-century window corresponding to one on the south side.

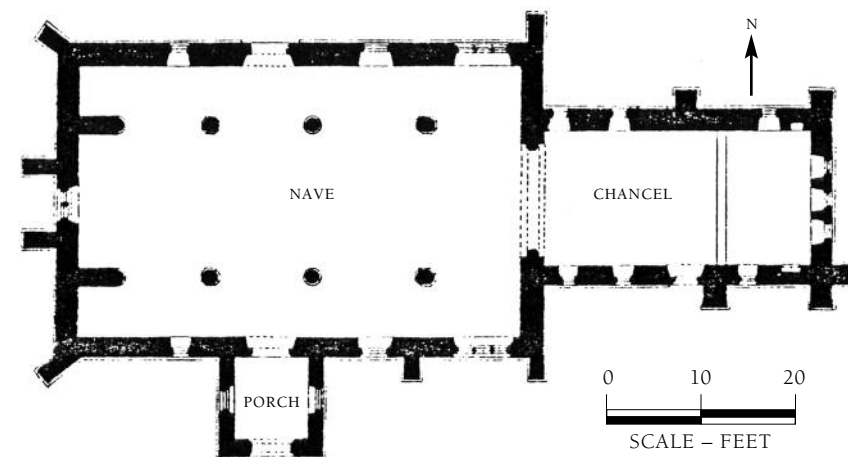
The church's building history may have been as follows: in the first half of the 13th century (if the chancel rebuilding was accurately following earlier traces) an enlarged chancel was added to a 12th-century nave; then the nave was rebuilt. The tracery of the aisle windows was altered in the first half of the 14th century. In the 17th century the bell-cote was rebuilt and changes were made to the fenestration of the north and south aisles, leaving the building much as it is now seen.

INTERIOR

The interior is plain and limewashed. The nave is of four bays; the bases and abaci of the piers are alternately round and octagonal, and the arches are double-chamfered. There is no clerestory – indeed, in a church with so much roof one would not be expected – and the open roofs have been close-boarded and so cannot be seen. The window tracery of the aisles is ogival and must date from the early-14th century. Presumably the aisle walls were rebuilt around this time.

The chancel, entered under a double-chamfered arch, has stepped triple lancets in its east wall. One of the most attractive features of the church is the unexpectedly splendid double piscina in the usual place to the south of the high altar. Its two round arches have intersecting tracery with fleurs-de-lys

Plan of Long Stanton Church, Cambridgeshire (Parish Churches, R & JA Brandon 1848)



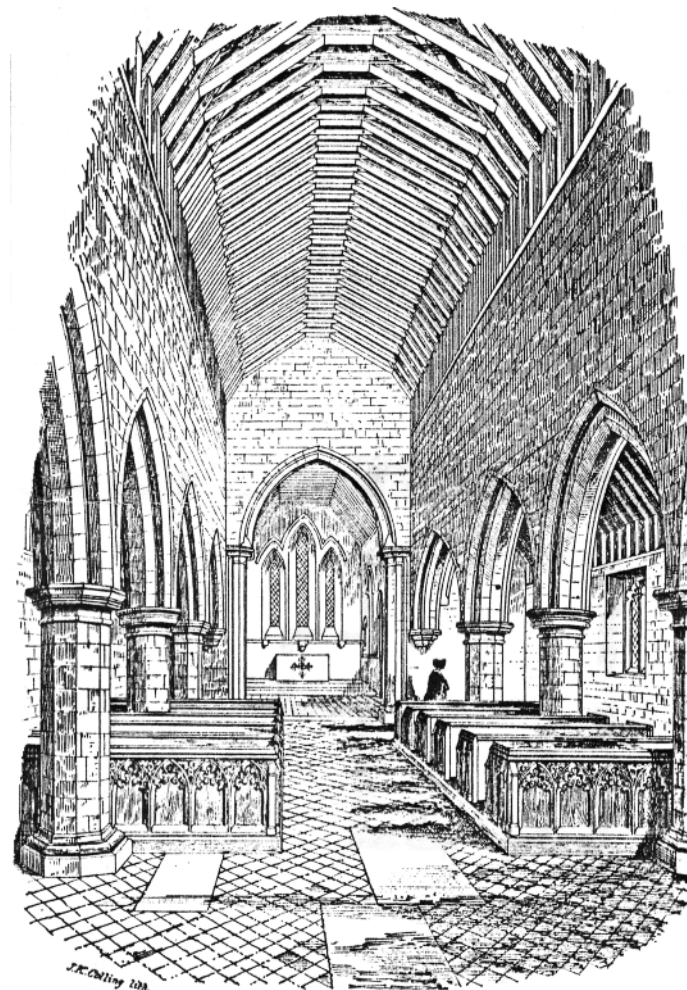
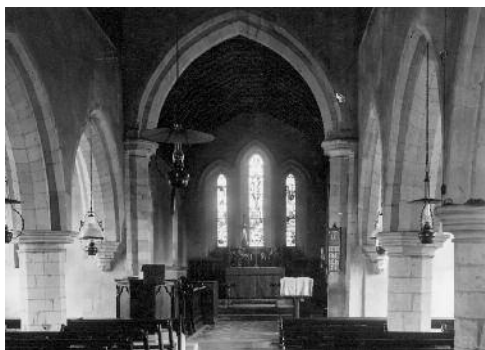
in the spandrels. The arches are of the same type as the piscina in Jesus College chapel, Cambridge, and the piscinas in the transepts of Histon church in the same county, both considerably more ambitious 13th-century schemes into whose orbit St Michael's, Long Stanton evidently fell in the 1200s.

The east window is filled with Victorian glass dated 1883. A sign of the original decoration of the church are remnants of mediaeval grisaille stained glass in the western window of the north chancel wall. Grisaille glass, which, as here, is basically clear glass painted with grey or grey-green tones and decorated with foliage devices, was a common element in mid-13th-century English stained glass design. This glass must be of that date since the foliage forms have simple trefoil pads. There are pieces of blue glass set into the pattern. In this window only the top half of the glass is mediaeval; the remainder, a faithful copy, was executed in 1917.

On the chancel step is a brass inscription commemorating one Thomas Burgoyne, esquire, once patron of the church and lord of the manor. It dates from the late-15th century and contains the typically grim late mediaeval sentiment 'As you are now so once was I; as I am, so will you be'. At the west end of the church is a wooden funeral bier. There is a font of odd, indeterminate 18th- to 19th-century design. Until recently, the church contained a stout oak chest decorated with two chip-carved roundels on its front, work probably of the 14th century. This is now kept at All Saints, near the Hatton memorials in that church. The bulk of the furnishings are simple, dating from the 1883 restoration.

St Michael's was vested in what is now The Churches Conservation Trust on 25 June 1975.

Repairs, mainly to the thatch and the glazing, have been carried out for the Trust under the supervision of Mr Peter Foster and subsequently Mr Julian Limentani of Marshall Sisson of Huntingdon.



Front cover: *Caption to come* (CHRISTOPHER DALTON).

Back cover: *Interior looking west. Drawing of the church by Robert Speechly who was responsible for the repairs in 1884.*

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