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SHORNE CHURCH, AND MASTER JOHN SHORNE.



"MR. JOHAN SCHORN standeth blessing a bote, whereunto they do say he conveyed the devil. He ys much sowgt for the agew." This was the official description of an image at Merston [North Marston], written to Secretary Cromwell, by Dr. London, one of his iconoclastic commissioners in the time of King Henry VIII. This pseudo-saint, of Kentish birth, whose image is represented in our woodcut, cannot be described in fewer words, or with greater accuracy. His reputation, as the patron of those who suffered from ague, was great in Kent, but it was, perhaps, greater still in Norfolk, Suffolk, Berks, and Bucks. In the latter county, about the year 1290, he seems to have held the Rectory of North Marston, where a well, blessed by him, was visited by multitudes of pilgrims from far and near. He is said to have been at one time a monk in the Augustinian Priory at Dunstable. In our representation, copied from the painted panel of a destroyed Suffolk rood screen, over which his name was written, he appears in the gown and cap of a Doctor of Divinity, and his head is encircled by a wide nimbus. His figure was often painted or carved upon panels or walls in the churches of Norfolk and Suffolk. About the year 1480 Bishop Beaufort, Dean of Windsor, removed his shrine by Papal licence, from North Marston to the south aisle of St. George's Chapel at Windsor, where it yielded as much as 500*l.* a year to the collegiate body. In Kent there were several places at which especial reverence was paid to Master John Shorne. To Halstow, for instance, pilgrimages were made in his honour, as I learn from a will in the Registry at Canterbury. It is that of Rest Redfyn, widow of Nicholas Redfyn, of Queenborough, and is dated May 26th, 1505. It contains this clause:—

"Also I will the same William Berd fulfill all my pilgrimages;
 first, to the Rode of grace, a woman of wax*
 To Mr John Shorne, in the parishe of Halstowe, j^d
 Item to Saynt Robert ob'
 Item to Saynt Thomas in Harteigh, a hart of wax."

This probably refers to Lower Halstow, in which parish there is a field which still derives its name from a well, as does a field and lane in the adjacent parish of Upchurch. Master John Shorne's remedy for ague seems to have been the water of such wells as he had blessed, to which the sufferers made pilgrimages.

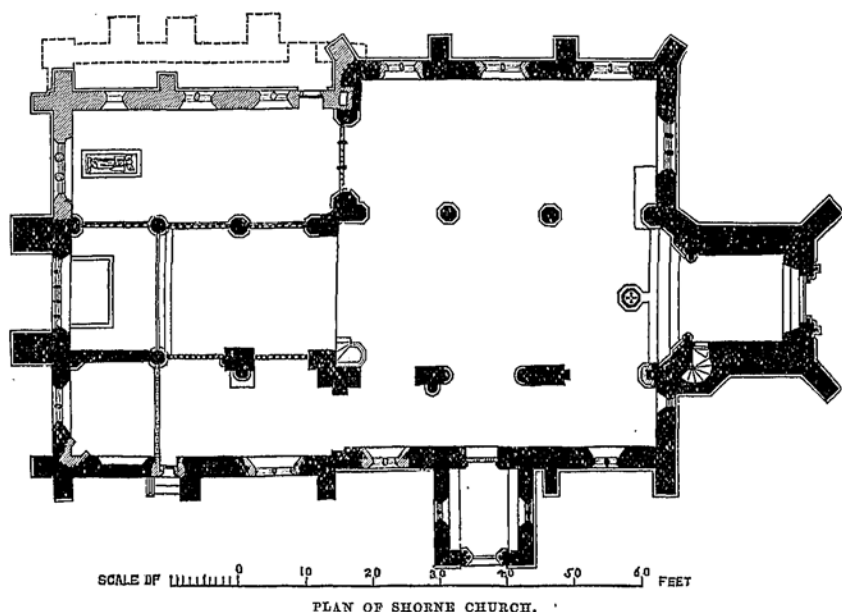
There was an image or shrine of Mr. John Shorne in Canterbury Cathedral. It is mentioned by John Heywood, in his play called *The Four P's* (i.e., Palmer, Pardoner, Poticary, Pedlar). Speaking of numerous shrines visited by a pilgrim he adds:—

"At Maister John Shorne, in Canterbury."

John Heywood died in 1565. At Gateley Church and at Cawston Church, both in Norfolk, "Master John Schorn" was represented on the rood screen. In the latter the imp, whom he imprisons in a boot, is represented with wings. Both these representations of John Schorn were engraved, and fully described, by the Rev. Jas. Bulwer (in *Norfolk Archæology*, vol. ii., pp. 280-290), who gathered much information respecting the pseudo-saint. In Chambers' *Book of Days*, also, there is a description of John Shorne.

The fine old church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Shorne, consists of three aisles (of strangely dissimilar widths), three conterminous chancels, a north porch, and a western tower. The total interior width of the three aisles is 53 feet; but the north aisle is only 9 feet wide in the clear; the nave is 20 feet wide in the clear; and the south aisle has a width of 18 feet in the clear. The narrow north aisle is 48 feet long, and has between it and the nave three unequal and dissimilar arches of different dates. The lowest and easternmost arch, round-headed, and apparently Norman, has a span of 8 feet in the clear; the middle arch, 9 feet in the clear, is of the Transition period; while the loftiest and westernmost arch, of 10 feet span, appears to be of the Early English period. Above this northern arcade, there is, nearly opposite to, but east of, the north door, a doubly splayed, round headed, small arch which has originally been an exterior window. It is exactly like the doubly-splayed

* These offerings of wax were very common. The "woman of wax" would be a little wax figure of the Virgin; it was to be given to the Rood of Grace at Boxley Abbey. The hart of wax would be a small waxen image of a hart or stag, having reference to the name Harteigh, or Harty.



south window in Swancombe Church tower, and is splayed like those in the Castle Church at Dover, which Sir Gilbert Scott pronounced to be Saxon work, of date anterior to the Norman Conquest. The principal entrance to the church is by the north door; a most unusual circumstance, likewise met with at Cobham Church, which was originally a chapel of Shorne.

It seems probable that in Saxon and Norman times this church was very small, consisting of a nave and north aisle of two bays, with a clerestory and a short chancel. During the thirteenth century it was probably lengthened at both ends. Traces of the Early English Chancel-arch are seen in the handsome fragments of dog-tooth mouldings still visible in both piers. An Early English lancet window remains in the west wall of the north aisle, and round piers suggestive of vaulting are seen, both in that aisle and the north chancel. The two easternmost arches of the chancel are lofty and handsome, with hood mouldings; they may be ascribed to the reign of Edward I, and to the munificence of Henry de Cobeham "le oncle," whose cross-legged effigy remains in the south chancel. He founded the family of Cobham of Roundal, or Randal, and having married Joan daughter and co-heiress of Stephen de Penchester, he adopted her armorial bearings, which appear upon his shield here.

His Randal Chancel was originally 23 feet wide by 40 feet long, but it was made narrower, when recently rebuilt by the Earl of Darnley.

The south aisle was probably added during the Edwardian period; its south wall was built of chalk and flint in alternate courses. Some of the original windows remain. The west window of this aisle is of three lights, each light being five-foiled, and each foil unusually large. But the south arcade of the nave seems, like the tower, to belong to the early part of the perpendicular period. There is good wooden screenwork of that period in the chancels, and on the north side of the high chancel some of the woodwork may be ascribed to the end of the fourteenth century.

The handsomely carved octagonal font, with fluted sides, is very similar to that in Southfleet Church. The bowl and stem are panelled, and on seven panels of the bowl there are curious carvings. On the eastern side appears a chalice with a large wafer whence issues *Corpus Christi*, the body of the Saviour. On the south-east we see the dove descending upon the head of our Lord, who is standing in a river up to His waist, to be baptised with water poured from a jug. On the South, St. Michael is shewn weighing souls. On the south-west is the sacred monogram *ī. ħ. s.* in a quatrefoil. The west side is quite plain, but on the north-west we see the *Agnus Dei* with the Cross. On the north St. Peter is shewn holding the keys in his left hand and the church in his right. On the north-east side is carved the Resurrection of our Lord, who holds in His hand a cross. This Font has been engraved by Mr. Thorpe, in his *Custumale and Antiquities of Rochester*, page 110, plate xvii.

In the junction of the north aisle with the north chancel, the north wall of the aisle overlaps the north pier of the chancel arch, and the north wall of the chancel projects beyond, instead of being in a direct line with, the north wall of the aisle. This suggests that the north chancel, even in its western portion, is not so old as the north aisle. No doubt this north aisle is the oldest and least altered portion of the church.

In the south aisle there is a curious arrangement of masonry, for adjusting the wall-pieces of the roof to the wall above the arcade between this aisle and the nave.

There are six good bells in the Tower. The numerous monumental inscriptions are printed by Thorpe, in his *Registrum Roffense*, p. 759.