

A short guide to the CHURCHES in Date Order

ANGLO-SAXON/DANISH architecture

Although the very top is Norman, the strong tower of **Clapham** church, dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury, and the crossing tower of St Peter at **Thurleigh** indicated by the proportions of the south doorway, are the oldest buildings in the area.

NORMAN PERIOD from 1066

The tympanum with Adam & Eve, the tree and the serpent at **Thurleigh**, and the chequerboard decoration over the south door way at **Ravensden** show the Norman influence. All Saints, **Milton Ernest**, has a Norman chancel and St Peter's **Pertenhall**, a three bay arcade of the period. All Saints **Renhold** boasts a Norman font and St Mary's, **Oakley** has a late 12th century tower. The Augustinian Priory of **Bushmead** was founded in 1195.

THE DECORATED PERIOD 1280-1380

The churches of All Hallows, **Dean** and St Nicholas, **Swineshead** are fine examples of this period but difficult to date. St Mary's, **Yelden** also has detail in form of tomb motifs. In the 13th century, St Mary's, **Keysoe** has an inscription on the font in French, St Margaret's, **Little Staughton** has a three bay arcade and St Dunstan's, **Bolnhurst** has a beautiful chancel. St Mary's, **Shelton** is un-restored and possibly the most beautiful church of all.

PERPENDICULAR 14th-16th Century

St Denys, **Colmworth** is the finest example of perpendicular architecture, reputed to have been built over four years by Sir Gerard Braybrooke between 1425-1429. St Nicholas, **Wilden** is also a perpendicular building.

GEORGIAN

St Mary Magdalene, **Melchbourne** has a medieval tower and early masonry but a restored Georgian interior.

*Footnote: Many churches are an amalgam of various periods. All Saints, **Riseley** is the best example of this category.*

Information: Nikolaus Pevenser

Front cover: The fine tall spires of Little Staughton, Keysoe, Swineshead, Pertenhall and Colmworth can all be seen from high ground near Keysoe.

The North Bedfordshire Evangelist

In 1819, the Rev. Timothy Matthews, B A was appointed curate of Colmworth, with Bolnhurst. He died in September 4th 1845 and his tomb is in Colmworth churchyard. Influenced whilst at Cambridge and by a Methodist wife, he had a vision after which he decided that he must follow his Master into the highways and byways to preach the gospel. He bought a bugle and then travelled great distances. A charismatic clergy-man, he fell foul of his bishop, but his many followers built him a chapel in Bromham Road, Bedford. He became the first Chaplain to Industry. His bugle is preserved in the chapel at Ravensden.

In north Bedfordshire, there are many fine early Victorian chapels. Some have become private houses, but many are still used.

For full details of walks and rides throughout Bedfordshire, visit www.letsgo.org.uk

Public Transport

There are regular bus services from **Bedford, Rushden and St. Neots on Bus No. 125/126/153.**

Bedford Bus enquiries: Tel: 01234 228337
Traveline Timetable Info: Tel: 08712 002233

Accommodation

There are a number of bed & breakfasts in the area. Please contact: Bedford Tourist Information Centre
Tel: 01234 215226.

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BEDFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



A walk around HISTORIC CHURCHES

*Built over a thousand years...
in the North Bedfordshire Wolds*



Parish Council websites
often give interesting
Historical Information.

Contacting the churches:

Websites have been given, because constant change is taking place within the church. It may be possible that some churches are open. For other churches, the church-warden or caretaker must be contacted.

Many churches have Guide-books.
Look for them on the bookstall and there is usually
a box for payment.

Note: **KNOTTING St Margaret** is now a Redundant church.

BLETSOE St Mary (with Riseley)
www.riseleyallsaints.co.uk
www.achurchnearyou.com/bletsoe-st-mary

MELCHBOURNE St Mary Magdalene
www.stodden.org/church

PERTENHALL St Peter
www.stodden.org/church

BOLNHURST St Dunstan
www.achurchnearyou.com/bolnhurst-st-dunstan

MILTON ERNEST All Saints
www.achurchnearyou.com/milton-ernest-all-saints

SHELTON St Mary
www.stodden.org/church

CLAPHAM St Thomas a Becket
www.claphamparishchurch.org

OAKLEY St Mary's
www.bromhambenefice.org

SWINESHEAD St Nicholas
www.stodden.org/church

COLMWORTH St Denys
www.achurchnearyou.com/colmworth-st-denys

RAVENS DEN All Saints
www.achurchnearyou.com/ravensden-all-saints

THURLEIGH St Peter
www.achurchnearyou.com/thurleigh-st-peter

EATON SOCON St Mary's
www.stmaryseatonsocon.org.uk
vicar@stmaryseatonsocon.org.uk

RENHOLD All Saints
www.all-saints-church-renhold.org

UPPER DEAN All Saints
www.stodden.org/church/dean

KEYSOE St Mary the Virgin
www.keysoe.net/stmv.html

RISELEY All Saints
www.riseleyallsaints.co.uk

WILDEN St Nicholas
www.achurchnearyou.com/wilden-st-nicholas

LITTLE STAUGHTON All Saints
www.achurchnearyou.com/little-staughton-all-saints

**No charge is made to visit these historic buildings,
but they are our heritage and require much
maintenance by the local community.
Your donations will be much appreciated.**

YELDEN St Mary
www.stodden.org/church