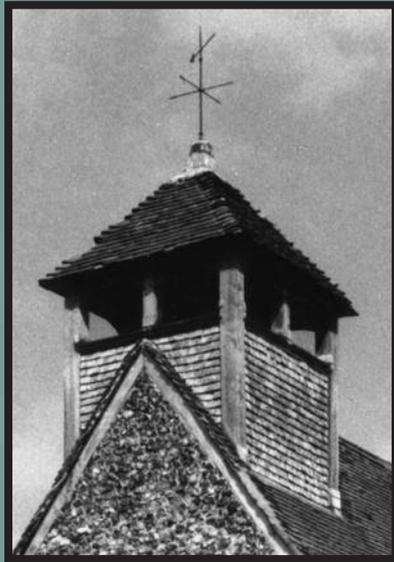


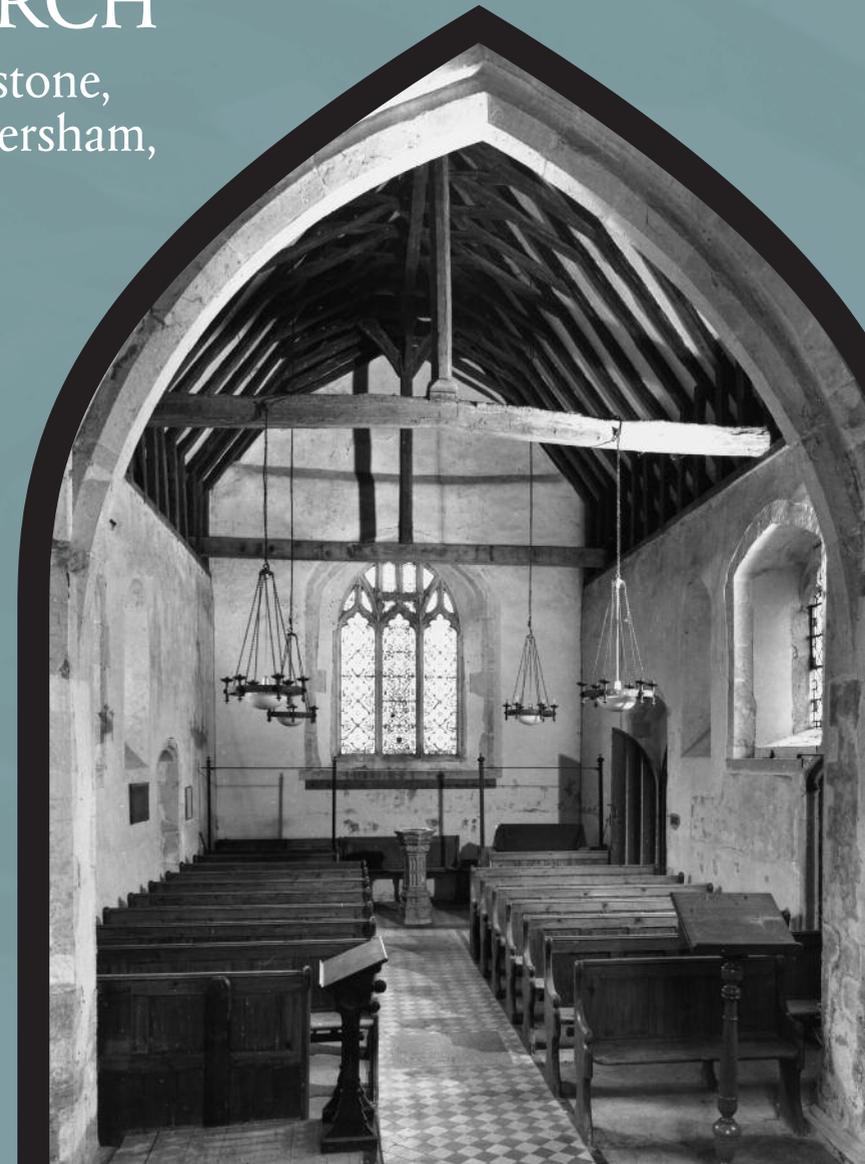


THE CHURCHES
CONSERVATION TRUST



ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

Goodnestone,
near Faversham,
Kent



THE CHURCHES
CONSERVATION TRUST

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Goodnestone, near Faversham, Kent

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

*by Roy Tricker (Field Officer with The Churches Conservation Trust 1991–2002,
church enthusiast, historian and lay canon)*

HISTORY

Goodnestone has always been a small community. It is situated about 1½ miles (2.4 km) east of Faversham, 2½ miles (4 km) south of Whitstable Bay and 1½ miles (2.4 km) northwards from the junction of the M2, A2 and A299. Less than a mile further north is All Saints' church, Graveney, which is now the parish church for both villages.

Goodnestone was called 'Godwineston' in 1242 – suggesting that it may have been the 'ton' (farmstead or settlement) of a person called Godwine. There is another village with the same name in east Kent, south of Wingham.

The size of the community through the ages is reflected in this small church. Apart from the later addition of a porch, it has remained the same size since the Normans built it about 1100. The nave measures 28 ft × 17 ft (8.5 × 5.1 m) and the chancel is 14½ ft (4.4 m) square. Only 33 communicants were recorded here in 1578 and 24 in 1640. There were 68 inhabitants in 1801, 84 in 1871, 55 in 1921 and about 50 people live here today.

This is one of only five (out of over 350) mediaeval churches in Kent dedicated to Saint Bartholomew, who is listed as one of Our Lord's 12 Apostles, but of whom nothing more is recorded in the Gospels.

Front cover: The nave, looking westwards (Christopher Dalton)

Left: Exterior from the south-west (Christopher Dalton)

Before the Reformation in the mid-16th century, this church was no doubt adorned with mediaeval colour and craftsmanship. It is known that Our Lady's image stood in the porch and that in 1491 William Bennett, the priest, provided for a lamp to be maintained before it. He was himself laid to rest beneath the porch. Inside the church there were votive lights before images or paintings of SS. Thomas of Canterbury, Christopher, Bartholomew, John the Baptist, Katherine and Margaret.

The churchwardens reported in 1590, however, that their chancel was 'unrepaired and unpaved' and in 1594 that the register book was 'defaced, rotten and illegible'. Evidently the old parish chest in which it was kept was very large and took up so much room that about 1592 it was sold and a new one made, 'which by reason it was of green wood, the sap and dampness thereof went through the book and spoiled it'.

Before the Victorian restoration and reordering of the church in 1874–75, the interior was

probably furnished with box pews (as may still be seen at nearby Graveney). There were framed boards, painted with the Ten Commandments, on the east wall and the sum of four shillings was spent on cleaning and varnishing these in 1860–61.

Much has taken place during the 20th century to keep St Bartholomew's in good order. In 1922 the wooden belfry was repaired and took on its present form, to the designs of Caroe & Passmore, at a cost of £144. TFW Grant, the Diocesan Architect, supervised a thorough restoration of the church by Fullers of Faversham in 1936–37. This work included the removal of a pitch-pine dado which lined the lower parts of the nave walls, the opening-up of the nave piscina, the transfer of the altar from Graveney church, and the provision of a concrete floor and new ends for the benches.

With the vast majority of Goodnestone and Graveney's combined population living in Graveney, it was decided in 1982 that St Bartholomew's should cease to be used for regular worship and in 1996 it was vested in The Churches Conservation Trust, to be preserved and conserved by and for the Church and the Nation. As such it continues its ministry as an historic and sacred building. Extensive repairs were carried out in 1997 by Fullers of Faversham, under the supervision of the Trust's architect, Mr John Sell.

EXTERIOR

This Norman church has a sequestered setting upon a small knoll, surrounded by fields and to the west of the village street. To the north is Goodnestone Court and to the east are distant hills. A narrow drive ends at the attractive **churchyard**, enclosed by a wall which was built in 1871 at a cost of £80 12s. 11d. In the western section of the churchyard is an unusually large collection of graves of members of the Murton family, who lived at Langdon Court in this parish.

The church itself is simple and unassuming, with a Norman nave and chancel, a north porch and a timber belfry over the west end of the nave. The rubble walls of the **nave** and **chancel** contain flints from the fields and pieces of Kentish ragstone. The total absence of buttresses to strengthen the corners enhances the simplicity of this country church.

Small original Norman windows, fashioned c. 1100, may be seen in the north and south walls. These admitted a certain amount of light through their wide internal splays, and also much-needed ventilation. Further windows were added later to let in more light and to give scope for artists in stained glass. In the chancel, the single-light north-west and south-west windows (the latter with an 'ogee' arch), and also the two-light east window, are in the style of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, but were renewed in 1871. About 1400, the nave was given two-light north and south windows and a large three-light west window, with good





The south side of St Bartholomew's, showing the original Norman windows (Christopher Dalton)

Perpendicular tracery, which was restored in 1997. At the east end of the north nave wall is a small abutment, which contained the staircase to the rood loft.

The simple blocked south doorway may well be 13th century. The north doorway is 14th century and in its stonework are faint traces of graffiti, including mediaeval pilgrims' crosses.

The present **north porch** is brick-built, but faced with flints which have been split, or 'knapped', to expose their shiny cores. It was totally rebuilt in 1837, as is recorded, together with the name (G Stone) of the churchwarden at the time, upon the worn and now almost illegible stone above the entrance. It is believed that the old porch was damaged as a result of an earth tremor and collapsed in a high wind. The outer facing of the inner doors is probably of 1871, but from inside it will be seen that this covers rather thin doors of 1837 or earlier.

The oak-framed **belfry**, with its shingled base and tiled pyramid cap, was greatly renewed in 1922, but it is probably not very much different from the 'small wooden spire' which Hasted noted here c.1797–1801. The **bell** was cast in 1920 at the Whitechapel bell foundry. An earlier bell from Goodnestone, dating probably from c.1325–50, is now at the west end of Graveney church.

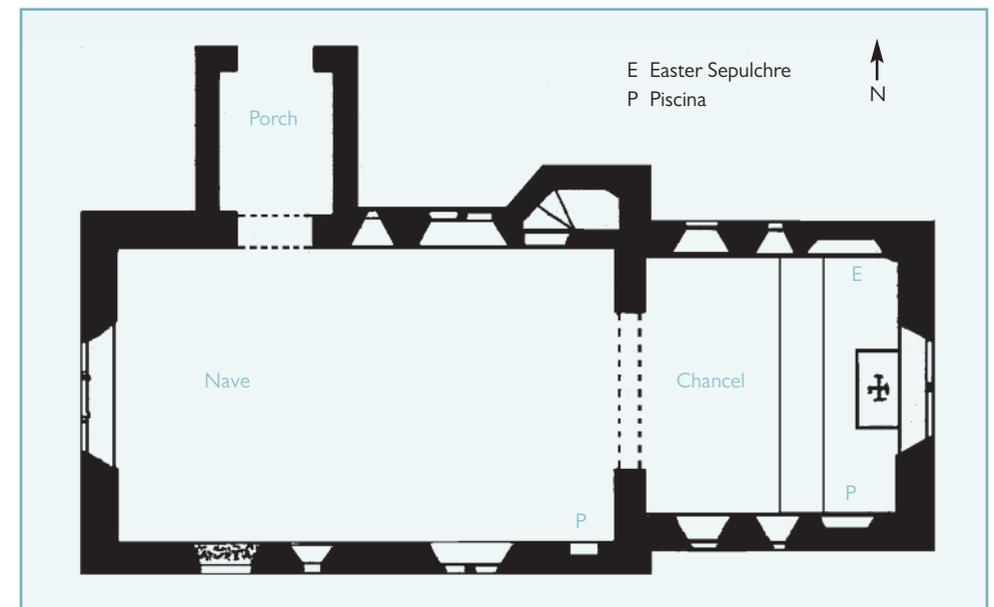
INTERIOR

The inside of the church contains craftsmanship from several periods, spanning nine centuries and reflecting a variety of tastes and Christian traditions. The original small **Norman windows**, with their wide splays, are high in the walls. The simple **chancel arch** appears to date from the 14th century.

The **roofs**, also 14th century, contain many of their original timbers. Two tie beams (the western one a later replacement) span the nave and support vertical crown posts, which in turn

support the rest of the roof timbers. The chancel roof has moulded mediaeval wall-plates at the tops of the walls.

At the east end of the nave, on the north side, is the entrance to the former **rood-loft staircase**, of which only the three bottom steps remain. It gave access to the loft which surmounted the rood screen in front of the chancel arch. The screen, loft and the great Crucifix which stood above it (and thus presented the central fact of the Faith to





*The nave roof, showing its vertical crown post
(Christopher Dalton)*

mediaeval people who could not read) have long been removed, but **notches** in the stonework at the springing of the chancel arch show where parts of this fitted. In the south wall of the nave nearby is the **piscina** for the use of the priest at one of the side altars which stood in front of the screen. Unusually in the case of a piscina, its arch is rebated for a door.

Most of the furnishings are 19th or 20th century, including the **font**, which is a small but beautiful piece of 19th-century craftsmanship, with concave sides and a traceried stem, opening out into a fluted bowl, decorated with foliage. The **lectern**, given in 1965 in memory of the Murton and Minter families, was made at the Faith Craft Studios in St Albans. The small 'American' **organ** is by the Bell Organ and Piano Co. of Guelph, Canada.

In the south wall of the chancel, let into the sill of a wide recess beneath a renewed arch, is a small **piscina drain**, into which was poured the disposable water used at the Eucharist. The 19th-century **altar table** was made for Graveney church and was transferred for use here in 1936. The splay of the east window has been lowered to provide space for a long-removed reredos. Set into the masonry of the east wall, to the north of the altar, is an unusual **stone**, pierced with two holes. Its original purpose and position are unknown.

In the north wall nearby is a beautiful 15th-century **tomb recess**, with quatrefoils beneath it and an elegantly carved arch. This may have also served as the **Easter Sepulchre**, where the Blessed Sacrament was ceremonially placed from Good Friday until Easter, to symbolise Our Lord's burial in the tomb.

The east window contains **stained glass** of 1864 by Thomas Willement, which is a memorial to members of the Murton family. It shows the emblems of the four Evangelists (the angel of St Matthew, winged lion of St Mark, winged ox of St Luke and eagle of St John) each having a scroll with the opening words of his Gospel. In the tracery is the emblem of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Foliage designs, etc., may be seen in other chancel windows. There are patterns and foliage in the west window of the nave, which is a memorial to Austin Neame (d.1837) and Anne Hilton (d.1875), of Homestall, Faversham. A **brass plaque** on the nave wall commemorates Lieutenant Denys Hardwicke Broughton, who died in Burma in 1944.

The first recorded rector on the **list of rectors** which hangs on the south nave wall was Robert des Man, who was instituted in 1279. The parish was united with Graveney in 1806, the Revd Athelstan Stephens (who was instituted in 1767) being the last Rector of Goodnestone alone.

Set into the floors are memorials to people of the past who were part of this church and community. Two **brass inscriptions** in the sanctuary floor commemorate Myldred and Thomas Pyke, who died 'in the fayth of Christe' in 1572 and 1573 respectively.

The following are commemorated on **ledger slabs**:

- A worn slab in the chancel floor commemorates Zanna, wife of John Hunt, who was rector here from 1608–36.
- In the nave floor, Richard Hougham of Goodnestone Court (d.1686).
- Also in the nave, William Adams of Goodnestone Court and Esther his wife, who died in 1827 and 1852 respectively.
- Near the north door, William Ellon (d.1727).

THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST

The Churches Conservation Trust is the leading charity that cares for and preserves English churches of historic, architectural or archaeological importance that are no longer needed for regular worship. It promotes public enjoyment of them and their use as an educational and community resource.

Whatever the condition of the church when the Trust takes it over its aims are, first and foremost, to put the building and its contents into a sound and secure condition as speedily as possible. Then the church is repaired so that it is welcoming to visitors and those who attend the public events or occasional services that may be held there (Trust churches are still consecrated). Our objective is to keep it intact for the benefit of present and future generations, for local people and visitors alike to behold and enjoy.

There are over 335 Trust churches scattered widely through the length and breadth of England, in town and country, ranging from charmingly simple buildings in lovely settings to others of great richness and splendour; some are hard to find, all are worth the effort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Joan Drury for sharing her considerable knowledge with me and for answering my many questions, to the Trust's former key holders, John and Barbara Burr and to Iain Foreman for their help, also to the Council for the Care of Churches, Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Canterbury Library for the use of material in their care.

*Right: The interior, looking north-eastwards (Christopher Dalton)
Back cover: The shingled bell turret, renewed in 1922 (Christopher Dalton)*

Many of the churches are open all year round, others have keyholders nearby; all are free. A notice regarding opening arrangements or keyholders will normally be found near the door. Otherwise, such information can be obtained direct from the Trust during office hours or from the website www.visitchurches.org.uk.

Visitors are most welcome and we hope this guidebook will encourage you to explore these wonderful buildings.

NEARBY ARE THE TRUST CHURCHES OF
St Mary the Virgin, Fordwich
3 miles NE of Canterbury off the A28 at Sturry

St Catherine, Kingsdown
SE of Sittingbourne, off the Doddington-
Milsted road

St Mary, Luddenham
2 miles NW of Faversham

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