

Note:

In 1801 the population of Shenley Church End was 166 people living in 31 properties.

In 1911 the population of Shenley Church End Civil Parish was 217 living in 52 properties with 4 properties uninhabited. In Shenley Church End village there were 84 people with 47 people living on the London Road part of Shenley.

In 2011 there were 12,961 people in Shenley Church End Civil Parish living in 4,591 properties.

Various figures from the history of Shenley Parish have been remembered in the roads and streets of the grid square of Shenley Church End.

Lords of the Manors & Landowners: Burghard/Burchard, Daubeney, Duncan, Engaine, Fortescue, Gramwell, Kirke/Kirkham, Knapp, Lowdnes, Mansell/ Maunsell, Morrell, Peers, Pigott, Selby, Vache.

Vicars: Baily, Oville, Robertson, Thirlby.

Villagers & Farmers: Bateman, Dudley, Hedges, Jenkins, Shouler, Stafford, Sutleye, Willets.

For more information see 'Street Names of Milton Keynes West' by Anne Baker

(ISBN 1-86077-410-5)

We hope that you have enjoyed your walk and you will agree that Milton Keynes is not a town without any history.

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SHENLEY CHURCH END VILLAGE

A WALK THROUGH TIME



Shenley Church End in the Saldon Estate Map of 1599

INTRODUCTION

Shenley Church End village existed centuries before the grid square with that name was developed during the 1980s.

To walk around the village is to walk through time, seeing much that tells of that early history when it was a small rural settlement in the claylands of north Buckinghamshire. The planners of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC) created new “village lanes” to keep traffic away from the core of the old village which today remains much as it was before new city development began. Indeed, the basic structure of the old village is still recognisable in the map on the cover adapted from the Salden map of 1599.

The name “Shenley” comes from the Old English for “bright (or beautiful) woodland glade” indicating that a clearing in a forest was made for a settlement here long before the Norman Conquest. Nearby Shenley Wood is the remains of that forest. In 1086 when the Domesday Book was compiled the Parish of Senelai was well established. The Parish contained four manors each with a manor house. Two manors were in the Shenley Church End grid square, one was in Shenley Brook End and one in Shenley Wood. Both manors in Shenley Church End were held by the Earl of Chester in 1086.

As there was no stone in the Parish to be quarried nearby, all the early buildings, including the Church, would have been constructed of wood and there are no visible remains of these.

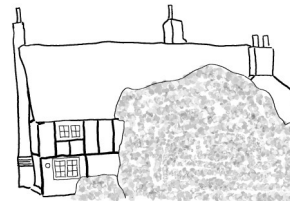
Note: In the following text , * signifies a Grade II Listed Building.



O. Shenley Village School was built in 1869 to provide elementary education for the children of both Shenley villages from the ages of 5 to 14. When it closed in 1987 it was a First School for children 5-8 years old. The building has high windows to maximize light in pre-electric times and the lower edge of the windows is above the eye level of pupils when sitting.



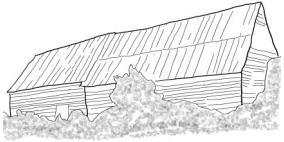
P. Cottages on the east side of Shenley Road. These nineteenth century cottages, originally of brick and slate, were shallow in depth and built very close to the roadway which is much narrower in this part of the village. It seems that they are encroachments on the road verges or common land, built without permission from the squire. The building of the house would have been funded by the villager who usually then had to pay ground rent to the squire. This was a frequent practice in villages where the local squire was not residing in the village.



Q. The Homestead* is a 17th century timberframed and thatched farmhouse which over the centuries has had additions including a dairy. There was a stream running through the garden, providing water and drainage before 20th century piped water and main drains.

The only recorded public house in Shenley Church End was on Watling Street, the west side of which was in Shenley Church End parish until after the construction of the Watling Street viaduct in 1955. That public house, the Old Plough, is now a private dwelling with the address of London Road, Loughton.

SHENLEY ROAD NORTH OF THE GREEN



M. Manor Farm Barns. * Two oak framed barns, originally separate but later joined, and now in disrepair, are behind Manor Farmhouse. The older barn is 17th century and was thatched: the other is 18th century. The barns can be seen from the path opposite the Green which passes the Parish Offices. (The Parish Offices are in a renovated and extended 19th century shelter shed for young cattle that was also part of Manor Farm which was a dairy farm until the 1980s).



N. Reading Garden. On this site stood the Reading Room - a corrugated metal building where small meetings could be held and villagers could come to read books in its library. The Room was destroyed by fire in the 1990s and this garden was created on the site in 2011.

CHURCH AND GREEN



A. The oldest building in the village is the stone **Church of St Mary** standing in a raised position near the old Roman road of Watling Street. The oldest part of the Church dates from the 12th century and the building has features of all periods from then until the 16th century as the Church was extended and altered. It has an unusual plan with the tower in the centre of the building; there is evidence in the present structure that the original tower fell down. The Church is rich in detail and interest, outside and inside, and it has been described as “a document of English medieval architecture”. **It is a Grade I listed building.**

For more information about the building see <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3158/>

The tower contains a peal of 6 bells, the oldest of which is believed to date from the 15th century. The bells are rung every Sunday as they have been for hundreds of years.

In the Churchyard among the headstones of the last two centuries there are 3 unusual grave memorials: a tall broken marble column, a life-sized crucifix, and a short iron cross on the grave of a villager who died in World War I.

B. The Green The village grew up around the Church, a road junction, and the green of which only a small section now remains. A survey made in 1693 showed a rectangular green alongside the churchyard stretching along its length. The rest of that original green is now occupied by the former rectory and a new gateway to the churchyard must have been formed. The Memorial in the centre of the green lists all the men of Shenley ecclesiastical Parish who fought in World War I with a small cross by the name of the four who died.



C. Facing the Green is **White Cottage*** a typical early 19th century brick and tile cottage. When built the cottage had land enough to sustain a family with space for a large vegetable garden and room to keep an animal or two.



D. **The Old Rectory*** was built in the late 18th century of rendered brick with a slate roof. It is an imposing 3 storey house with a high basement; the pillared front entrance is approached by a double set of curved stone steps with elegant iron railings. The Old Rectory is now largely hidden by trees but part of the house and the range of stables and outbuildings, including what may have been a laundry house, can be seen from the old orchard which can be accessed through the west gate of the churchyard. The garden walls along Oakhill Road are early-mid nineteenth century of hand-made bricks with blue coping stones and are also listed.

SHENLEY ROAD SOUTH OF THE GREEN



E. **Manor Farmhouse.*** The taller part of the house dates from the 18th century and the steep angle of the roof suggests that it was originally thatched. The lower part of the house is 19th century and was possibly a rebuild of the part of the original thatched house which was destroyed by fire – a common occurrence in thatched houses of north Bucks villages before the start of the fire service.



J. **The Old Malthouse** in Oakhill Road had an outbuilding where barley was fermented into malt for making beer in the 19th century. It seems that beer was not brewed here but the malt was supplied for public houses in the locality to brew beer themselves.



K. **Shenley Park Lodge** was built in the 19th century at the gates of Shenley Park House. Originally the house was a simple 2 storey building with 4 windows at the front and a side door for the lodge keeper to quickly open the gates.

L. **Shenley Park House*** was constructed about 1800 for the squire after the old manor house in the Toot field was demolished. Leading from the Lodge to the mansion is an avenue of mature limes; new roads and pathways in Shenley Church End have also been planted with lime trees. Unfortunately only the gate and the avenue can be seen from Oakhill Road. (The mansion can be glimpsed through the trees from the public green area on Vache Lane or from the top end of Daubeney Gate but that would add considerably to this walk.)

Shenley Park House is a stone-faced Regency style building with the addition, in about 1937, of a garden room by noted architect Oliver Hill.

Adjoining the rear of the mansion were 2 wings containing stables, a carriage house and accommodation for the hunt. These were built when the Whaddon Chase Hunt was one of the leading foxhunts in England: they have now been converted into private homes.

The parkland for Shenley Park House in the early twentieth century stretched across what is now Portway (H5) into part of Crownhill. There were also large kitchen gardens and an orchard and Home Farm where there are now houses on the north side of Oakhill Road.

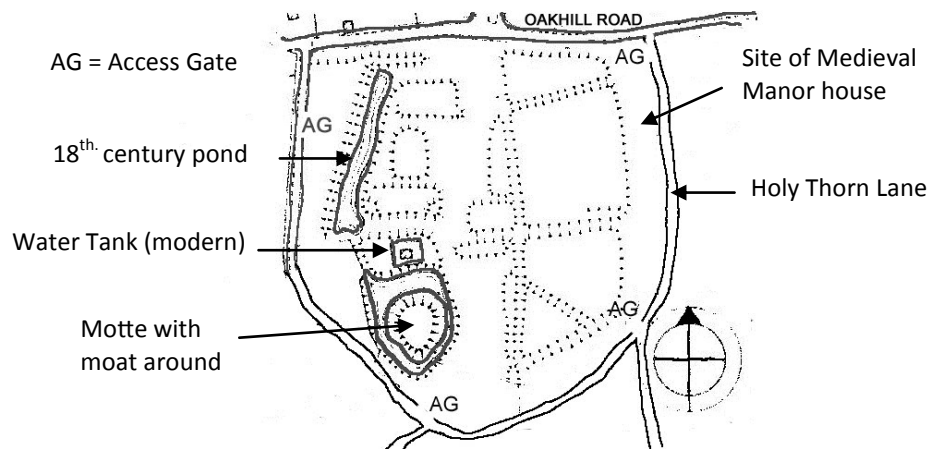
OAKHILL ROAD

I. The Toot.

These earthworks are regarded as of national importance and are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). 'Toot' is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a look out hill so it is probable that this was a significant place before the Norman Conquest. One possibility is that it was constructed in the ninth century as a lookout and stronghold in the land ruled by the kings of Wessex. The Danelaw, which was the area controlled by the Danes, was just north of Stony Stratford. The Toot could have been constructed to prevent raids and incursions by the Danes across the boundary.

The first written record of Shenley Toot is in the pipe rolls for the year 1167 showing that it was already in existence then. The oldest part of the earthworks is the motte surrounded by a moat. (The nearby mound covers a 20th century water tank, but it is now a better lookout than the tree-covered motte.)

The earthwork in the north-east corner of the site is the platform on which stood the medieval manor house which was demolished in 1774. The other earthworks in the Toot field are mostly the remains of 18th century garden landscaping and ponds for the manor house.



Please note that, at times, the Parks Trust put grazing animals on the Toot field.

(The second Shenley Church End medieval manor house was in Oakhill Close but there is no public access to the less extensive earthworks there. That manor was given to the abbey at Woburn in the 12th century and it became known as the Grange as it was a farm belonging to a monastery. The manor house fell into ruins over time but until the 1980s there was a farm called Grange Farm nearby).



F. Fingerpost. This is an example of a 19th century cast-iron sign post once common in rural areas. In the Middle Ages this was a significant junction. Oakhill Road was part of a pilgrim route from Snelshall monastery, near Whaddon, to the Abbey at Bradwell. Medieval badges that showed a pilgrim had visited sacred places have been found in the parish. The fingerpost has recently been restored by the Parish Council.



G. The Dower House* is a substantial 17th century farmhouse with stone and brick lower walls and a timberframed upper storey infilled with brick. This and the other farmhouses within the village were built before all the land around the village was enclosed into fields with hedges. In the nineteenth century the house had been divided into two cottages. It was restored in the 1970s.

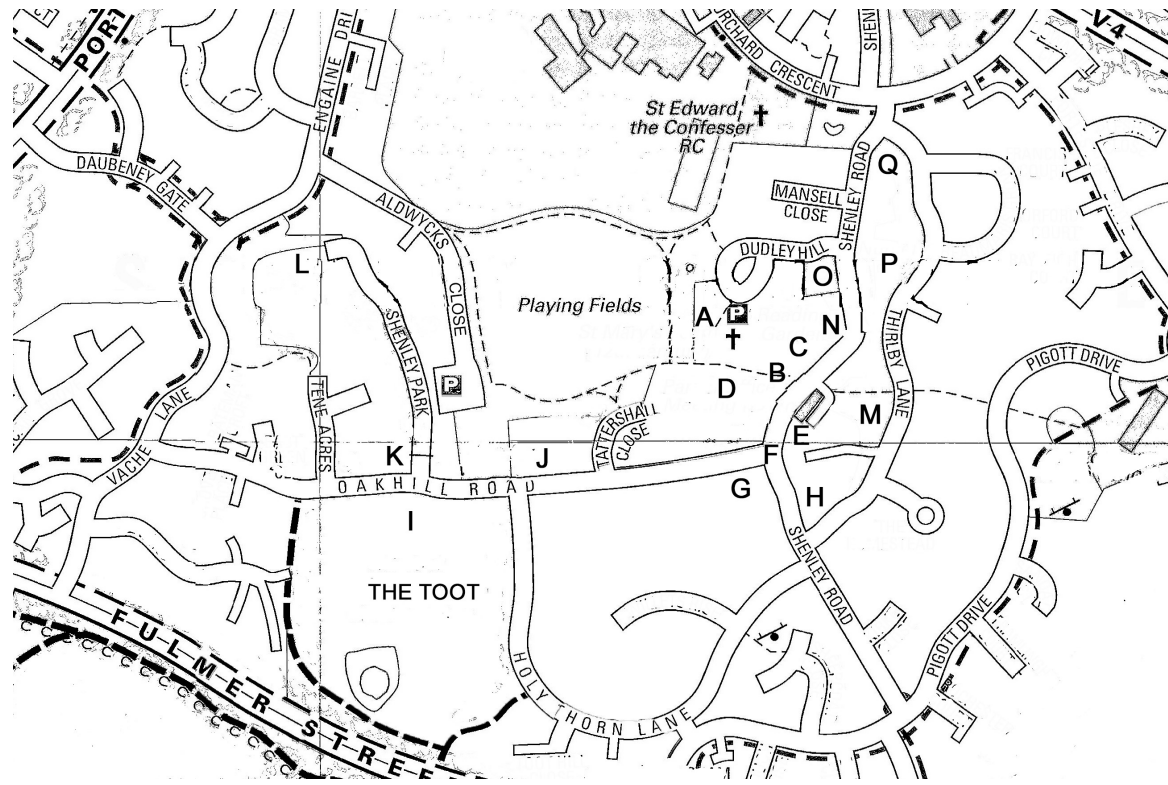


H. The Almshouses.* The six limestone and tile Almshouses were erected on the edge of the village in 1614/5 for the use of four poor men and two poor women who were "unmarried and of good age and honest conversation". Each man received 3 pence and each woman 2 pence per week to live on. Both received a gown to wear every year. If they married or did not attend Church weekly they could lose their home. Each house had a room with a fireplace downstairs with a ladder to the attic, a wash place and a garden at the rear. The dedication stone in the small front gable is no longer legible but in St Mary's Church is the tomb and effigy of Thomas Stafford of Tattenhoe who left money in his will to build the Almshouses and fund the charity. After the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII there was little provision for the poor of an area and Almshouses were one means of trying to meet this need. The Stafford charity provided these Almshouses for over 300 years.

Shenley Church End Village Location of Key Sites

- CHURCH—GREEN**
- A. Church of St Mary
 - B. The Green
 - C. White Cottage
 - D. Eagles Wings (formerly The Rectory)

- SHENLEY ROAD
SOUTH OF THE GREEN**
- E. Manor Farmhouse
 - F. Fingerpost
 - G. Dower House
 - H. The Almshouses



- OAKHILL ROAD**
- I. The Toot
 - J. Old Malthouse
 - K. Shenley Park Lodge
 - L. Shenley Park House

- SHENLEY ROAD
NORTH OF THE GREEN**
- M. Manor Farm Barns
 - N. Reading Garden
 - O. Shenley Village School
 - P. Cottages
 - Q. The Homestead

The 'Walk in Time' can be walked in any order and is approx. 1.25 miles long.
(some retracing of the route is necessary to see all Key Sites).
Free parking is available at Dudley Hill, adjacent to St. Mary's Church and at Aldwycks Close.

Public transport: Nos 7 & 28 buses stop in Burchard Crescent.

- - - Redway - - - - - Footpath