

About All Saints'

All Saints' church lies within the earthworks of a former village which was largely abandoned by the 15th century, probably due to a combination of poor harvests, plague and a move towards intensive sheep farming. When originally built, probably in the late 11th or 12th century, the church was the centre of a prosperous village – at the time of Domesday Book (1086) it was valued at 100 shillings (a not inconsiderable sum) and had its own priest.

By the 17th century even the church was dilapidated and the mid-12th century north aisle had been pulled down. In 1689 the manor was bought by Bernard Whalley and in 1692 he virtually rebuilt the church, adding a south transept, a gallery, new windows and box pews. The main entrance was now at the west end rather than on the south side. In 1721 the manor was sold again and in about 1789 it was acquired by John Mills, whose family owned it until 1899. Many of their monuments adorn the walls of the church.

Features of the medieval building still visible include: a blocked 13th/14th-century doorway on the north wall, some herringbone masonry on the south side, part of the column of the former north arcade and two fine 12th-century stone carvings.

Tradition says that William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway here in 1582 and that his grand-daughter married John Barnard at Billesley in the 1640s, though no records survive to corroborate this.

With an ever-declining population and consequent difficulties in maintaining the church, in 1976 it was placed in the care of The Churches Conservation Trust.

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The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk.

We've saved over 340 beautiful buildings which attract more than 2 million visitors a year. With our help and with your support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.



Access

Due to their age, historic church floors can be uneven and worn, and lighting can be low level. Please take care, especially in wet weather when floors can be slippery.

Help us do more

To protect and conserve these churches, and others like them, we need your help. If you enjoy your visit please give generously, and if you would like to become a CCT Supporter please pick up a leaflet or go to our website.



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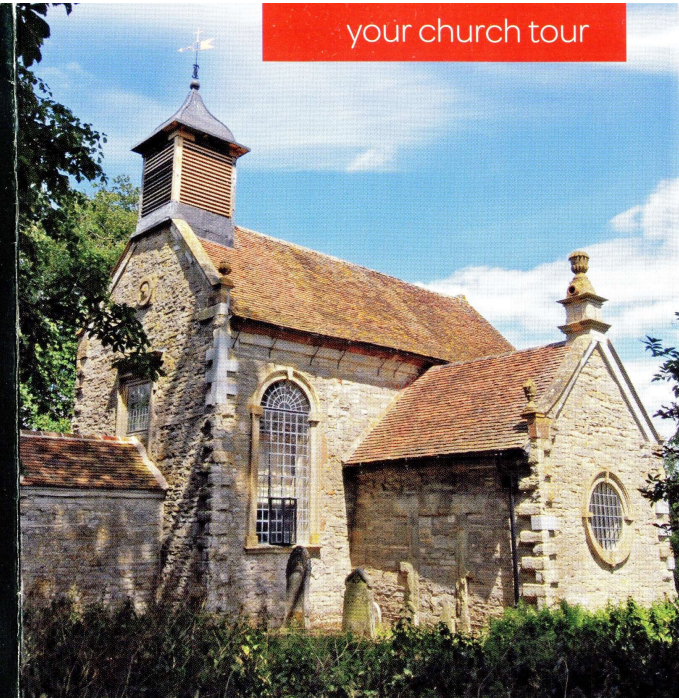
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The Churches Conservation Trust
1 West Smithfield London EC1A 9EE
Telephone 020 7213 0660

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your church tour



Church of All Saints

Billesley, Warwickshire



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