

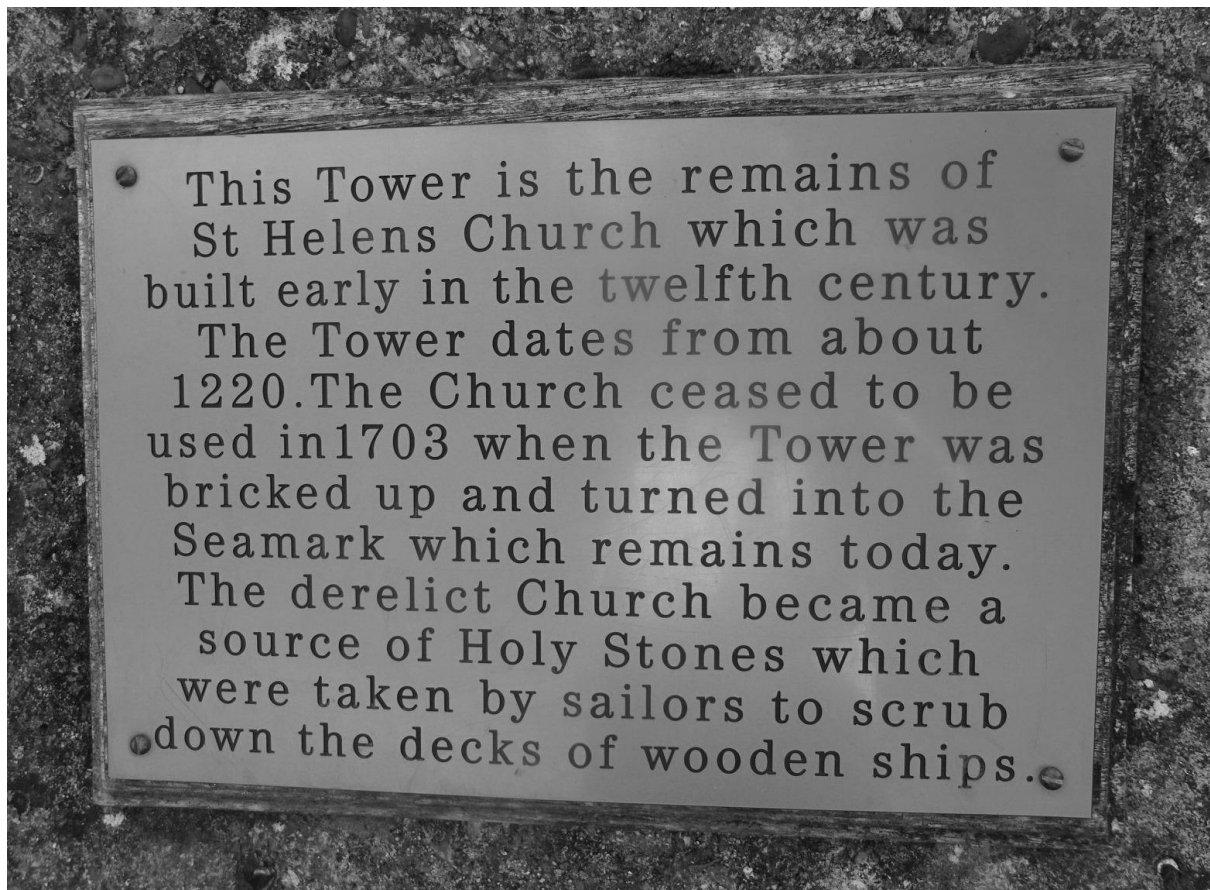
Holy Stone

Stone from the ruins of St Helen's Church on the shoreline were used in ships to scrub the wooden decks. The stones were known as Holy Stones.



Holy stone or holystone is a soft sandstone used for scrubbing wooden decks to prevent rot. The name may have come from stone removed from church ruins at St Helens, above, and Great Yarmouth. Ships anchored to take on provisions close to both places. An alternative (American) explanation is that sailors knelt to scrub the decks so the stone was called holy.

'We'll scrape her and we'll scrub her, with holy stone and sand. There blow some cold Nor'westers on the banks of Newfoundland ' From the Banks of Newfoundland sea shanty.



The Fairy Tree

The Fairy Tree on the Duver at St Helens appears to have a door in the side. It is frequently decorated with drawings and streamers.



Duver is a local dialect word for a low lying area of land close to the coast.



Thank you to Kev Cant and Sue Elliott for permission to use photographs.