- Fragments of 14th century glass showing grisaille foliage, yellow oak leaves and borders.
- The 12th century font which has an unusual square bowl and is made of Purbeck marble. Each angle of the rim is decorated with a fleur-de-lis. It came either from a previous church or the Priory at Prittlewell.
- Part of a Saxon coffin cover late 12th or early 13th centuries, ornamented with the capitals GRE.
- The churchwardens’ chest of the 15th century has a lid made from a door.
- George the First’s Royal Coat of Arms (recently restored) on the west wall dates from his reign during the 18th century. After the Restoration in 1660 of King Charles II to the throne, it became compulsory for all churches to display the coat of arms as a pledge of loyalty to the Crown after the Cromwell’s Commonwealth.
- The Chancel has 13th century lancet windows.

**Historic Churchyard**
Two groups of interesting graves are in the churchyard, both close to the church porch. To the south-west are former incumbents. To the south-east are members of the Parsons family, a notable local family. A magnificent copper beech tree shades the garden of remembrance and entrance to the modern church hall.

**The Future**
From serving a population of 192 in 1851 the congregation was reduced to 5 elderly ladies at the end of World War II. Presently the population is 11,500 and rising, and the Church is finding new ways to serve the new community.

The year 2004 will be the 750th anniversary of the first recorded rector of North Shoebury, Peter de Hadam, when the church will be holding special celebrations of its historic role in the local community.
St. Mary’s Church is a small 13th century country parish church, typical of the period, which has retained much of its original character and attractiveness. Despite surrounding modern urban development, its setting has also kept something of its past rural appearance. It is now protected as a Grade II Listed Building.

**Church Name: St Mary the Virgin**
The church is one of many English churches dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, mother of Jesus.

**Historic Development of the Church**
The present church dates from the 13th century, and is believed to be the third church built on this site. Its modest size and architectural development reflects the small scattered rural community in North Shoebury which it served for more than 700 years.

The first written evidence for the church comes from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles AD 894, and this is backed up by archaeological evidence of scattered pre-Norman settlement in the area. Around the year 1165 Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, took what was probably the second church under his protection. Shortly after his death in 1170 the church came into the possession of the Cluniac Priory of Prittlewell.

The present church dates from about 1230 with its foundations on a reed bed. The walls are built almost entirely of Kentish ragstone rubble and flint with limestone dressing around window and door openings. In contrast to most domestic and farm buildings, parish churches were traditionally built of the best and most permanent materials which, if possible, would be stone. Our part of Essex has no natural stone, other than some flint. But a coarse type of limestone (ragstone) from Kent is readily available and transporting it by boat is easy. So, many churches in our area are built in ragstone.

The Chancel (the area for the priest) and the Nave (the area for the congregation) are roofed with hand made clay tiles but there is evidence of thatch underneath. Clay tiles were rare at this time and thatch is likely to have been the original roofing material. The present Nave roof dates from the 15th century and is supported by two king posts.

The Chancel was the first part of the church built in about 1230 and the nave and a south aisle, were probably added shortly after. The church has an early English style typical for this period. The lower part of the church tower was added at around the end of the 13th century. The top stage of the tower was added or rebuilt in the late 14th or 15th century with a timber frame and weatherboarding to form a pyramid roof and small broach spire. The bell tower is a later addition or rebuild. This type of design is an attractive feature of many churches in Essex.

Diagonal buttresses were added to the tower, and the north wall of the Nave was rebuilt in the mid-14th century, indicating possible problems with the foundations. The South Aisle was also demolished at an uncertain date and the arcade between the Nave and Aisle filled in. Its octagonal piers and capitals are still visible on the external south wall.

The south porch was added in the 18th century although the paving is older. But otherwise the church has had no significant additions and externally it remains as it has done for many centuries.

In the years 1884-1885 the church was extensively restored, the old gallery at the west end removed and the pulpit and pews replaced.

**Significant Features**
The interior is full of interesting features. The low, rather wide, structure of the Chancel still retains a priest’s doorway in the south wall, a rectangular arched (the ambry) in the north wall, and a piscina (a small basin in a niche used for washing Eucharist vessels) of c. 1230 on the south side. In the Chancel below the altar step there is a pavement of square red tiles, medieval, originally patterned and glazed. In the Nave are four large head corbels probably of the fourteenth century.

Features to note especially include:

- The East Window by Sir Ambrose Poynter with a medallion of the Ascension. It dates from 1866.