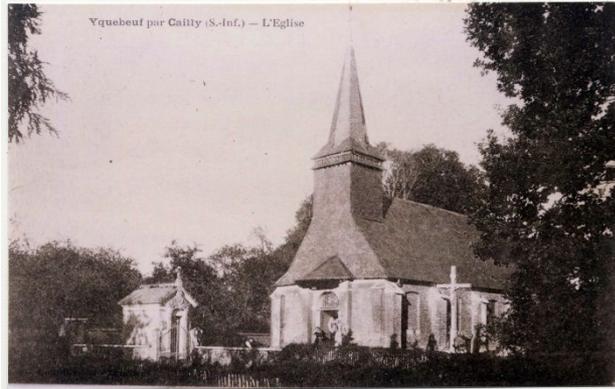


Saint Etienne's Church Yquebeuf



View from the west, postcard, n.d. private collection

The present church at Yquebeuf was built in 1769 and dedicated to Saint Etienne (Stephen). According to the earliest known records, the village already possessed a place of worship in the 12th century,

The former church had its bell tower between the nave and the choir. A porch surrounded the doorway in the wall of one side. The building's poor state of repair was remarked upon on several occasions in the 18th century by visiting archdeacons. Unfortunately, the repairs they ordered to be carried out were not adequate to avoid the church's condition deteriorating. And so in 1757, Monseigneur de Saint-Aulaire reported the need to carry out repairs to the building if its condition still allowed, or to rebuild it.

Father Grouard became parish priest in 1758 and called for the complete restoration of the building.

Some years later, the Marquis de Boniface, Mr. du Veneur (Master of accounts for the City of Rouen, Lord of Beaumont & Petit Rocquemont), Mr. Duval du Bailly and Mr. Jacques André Liberge met to inspect the building.

They decided to demolish and rebuild a new church of the same proportions, this time with a bell tower at the end of the nave. In 1767, the nave and bell tower were built, at the cost of 4,200 *livres*. In 1771, the parish priest built the choir at his own expense, and the church was then consecrated in 1772.

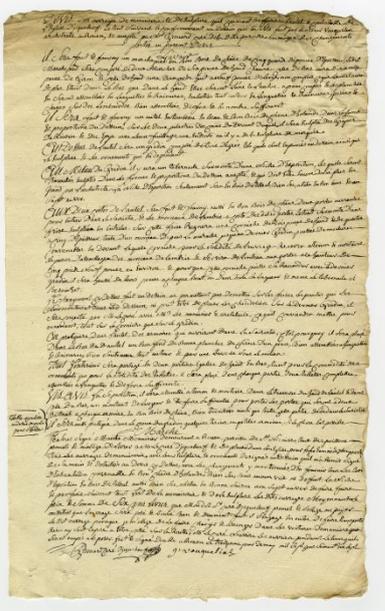
Above the door is a semi-circular stained glass window bearing a crest of *gueules à la croix fleurdelysée* held by two angels and crowned with a helmet. This window came from the original building and could date from as early as the 14th century.

The church, whose rectangular plan ends with a three-sided apse, is built on sandstone footings using St John's brick interspersed with glazed black bricks. The North and South walls each feature five window bays which are flanked by buttresses. Each features a stained-glass window from the Boulanger workshops.



Stained glass above the main door © Département de la Seine-Maritime

The following years saw the finishing of the interior's fixtures and fittings, with Father Grouard commissioning a high altar from an architect named Vauquelin in 1778. The original estimate is conserved in the Departmental archives and describes the altar just as we see it today. The altar is atop a step and decorated with "bunches of grapes and ears of corn and leaves", framed by panelling and with doors leading to the sacristy, decorated with arabesques. The three-part predella has a tabernacle at its centre, surmounted by a niche. This Louis XVI-style ensemble is in oak except for the niche, which is in limewood, and adorned with gold leaf.



Vauquelin's architect's estimate for Father Grouard, 13th May 1777, ADSM G8665 © Département de la Seine-Maritime



View of the high altar and a close-up of the niche © Département de la Seine-Maritime

Cherubs with garlands of wheat ears and bunches of grapes above them frame the rear panel of the niche, itself decorated with the shield of the Trinity. The altar has drawers, accessible from the vestibule, to store the priestly vestments: "the entire interior will be

divided into two parts, both for the convenience of the ornaments and the solidity of the shelves".

Statues, most likely from the previous church, stand side by side with others sold off in the early 1970s from the Colmare chapel. These 15th & 16th-century statues in wood or polychrome stone complement the furnishing dating from the time of the church's reconstruction, along with the eagle lectern and masonry bench.