

St Lawrence's Church Little Wenlock

CHURCH GUIDE

This church building has a complicated history of alteration and extension, the spiritual needs of a growing village giving us today a church of varying and interesting architectural design.

The tower would appear to be the oldest part of the building, for the date 1667 on the battlement seems to refer not to the building of the tower but simply to repairs made at that date. A window, now blocked up, on the west side has a distinctly Norman appearance. The tower houses a peal of five bells hung for full-circle change ringing from the ground floor, and a chiming clock mechanism dated 1891.

The Lady Chapel has very old walls; set in the floor is an intriguingly tiny, cast-iron tombstone dated 1611. The original church was the area which, until 1996 contained the font, organ and vestry; this has a collar-braced roof, probably of 16th century construction. The area which is now used as the main part of the church was built about 1865 when the church was enlarged to cope with the larger population of the parish.

The East window showing the Ascension of Christ is of striking design and colour. Hanging in the church is the original sketch for the window. Other notable contents of the building are the hatchment, showing the Royal Arms of George IV, the Smitheman and Edwards memorial plaques, and the East window of the Lady Chapel.

The Parish records date back to 1689, and they have recently been transcribed for computer access, the original registers being deposited in the Shropshire Records Office in Shrewsbury.

Today the parish church is not just an historic building. It is the home of a lively congregation.

St. Lawrence has always enjoyed the support of its parishioners; today that support is growing. There is a service of worship on virtually every Sunday in the year when we celebrate Holy Communion, have a less formal "Praise & Prayer for All" or worship in the more traditional form of Morning Prayer. The church is also used from time to time for other acts of worship.

On occasion there will be a gathering together with great joy as the village receives a newly-born child into the church at a service of Holy Baptism. A number of times each year the bells will ring out as bride and bridegroom are joined together in Holy Matrimony. The church is there for final journeys too, as a bell tolls for a funeral service.

St. Lawrence stands proud in the village as a sign and symbol of the presence of God's love in our lives. The church is there all the time; it is there when it is wanted, it is there when our busy lives lead us sometimes to forget it.



