

Who was St Weonard?

Nobody knows! In about 1652, a visitor to the church recorded that the north window of the chancel contained a picture of 'an old man in Hermit's array the remaynes of writing is onely Wenardus Heremita'. This text would seem to support the tradition that he was a local hermit and wood cutter.



The image in the chancel was removed, probably about 1840. There is now an image of Weonard in the east window of the North Aisle, but this window was restored in 1875 and we do not know whether he was depicted in that window before the restoration (or whether the current image is anything like the one seen in 1652).

Where is St Weonards?

Saint Weonards is in the part of south west Herefordshire historically known as Archenfield. Many local place names and present-day family names are of Celtic origin and until at least 1600AD Welsh was probably the common language of the people, though Archenfield became part of Herefordshire in the mid 1500s. Nearby Treago Castle, was built around this time and has for much of the last 550 years been occupied by the same family, the Mynors.

The church is in the parish of St Weonards in Hereford Diocese, and is part of the St Weonards Benefice, which also includes Orcop, Garway, Tretire, Pencoyd, Hentland and Hoarwithy churches.

St Weonards Church today

In 2008, a project involving over 40 local people created a stunning new set of "kneelers", designed by Artist Nicola Hopwood. These are used separately on the pews but can also be placed together in the form of a Celtic Cross. Fine new altar frontals and other embroidered works were also created at this time by choir member Margaret Taylor.

In 2009, the church was "re-ordered" to give us space for a kitchen and storage area, plus a toilet (suitable for disabled visitors). Improvements were made in the spaces in the chancel and the north aisle so that today the church can and does host many and varied events.

Primarily, of course, this wonderful church is used for regular worship by the people of our parishes. You can find details of services in the church porch or on our website—www.stw.org.uk.

If you have enjoyed visiting, please help us to maintain the church for future generations by giving a thank offering. There is a secure donations post. If you are a tax payer, please consider completing an envelope so that we can reclaim tax on your gift.

Thank you for your visit!

Contact information

The Vicar:
Revd Elaine Goddard The Vicarage
St Weonards Hereford HR2 8NN

For service times, local information and coming events, please see our regularly updated website:
www.StW.org.uk

WELCOME TO

St Weonards Church



Enjoy your visit, and please spend a little quiet time in the peace of this ancient holy place.

The building

There has been a church on this site for a long time and it was mentioned in a charter of Roger Earl of Hereford who died in 1155. The oldest surviving part of the present church is the lower part of the south wall of the nave, including the south doorway¹ (now the main entrance to the church) and the windows on either side. These date from the late 13th Century. The chancel arch² where the nave joins the chancel and the stonework in the east window³ behind the altar are 14th century.

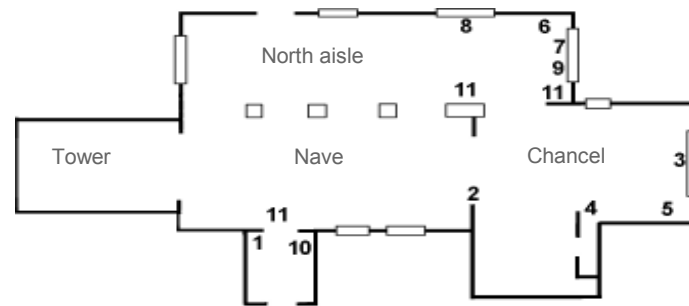
The building was enlarged in the 16th century, work being completed by 1521. The north aisle was added at that time, and still retains its original barrel form ceiling. The two end windows in the north aisle are offset. The south wall of the nave was raised at this time to give extra height to match the new aisle. A little later, the tower and the south porch were added, in 1525.

For 350 years, little changed in the building until in 1884 the chancel was lengthened eastward (by about the depth which is now the sanctuary), and the south vestry was added, re-using the old priest's doorway⁴ as it's entrance. The chancel arch was widened, as was the chancel screen, which has recently been relocated. The 14th century east window stonework was moved and new stained glass was installed. The piscina⁵ (the shallow basin in the sanctuary wall originally used to wash the communion vessels) was moved to its present position..

Woodwork

The oak screens, with 'linen-fold' panels and running vine ornament on the cornice are early 16th century, although the screen across the kitchen, which was originally fitted in the chancel arch, was extensively widened and altered in 1884. It is clear that the screens have been moved at some time – note that the fine long screen across the north aisle has been let into the stonework of a niche and the screen behind the choir stalls has its decoration facing the "wrong" way!

The pulpit (except for its cornice and base), the carved chair and the altar rails are early 17th century, as is the panel at the east end of the north aisle, which shows Abraham sacrificing Isaac.



The earliest furniture is the 'dug-out' chest⁶, made from a single tree trunk, now in the chapel. This is 14th century or earlier and retains some of its original iron work. Sadly, it is now very dilapidated – please do not try to lift the lid.

Windows

Note: Subject to change. We are researching more details about the stained glass in the church.

The east window⁷ of the north aisle dates in its present form from 1875, but includes some of the original glass of 1521, when the chapel was founded by Richard Mynors and his wife Sybil, who was the daughter of Sir James Baskerville and his wife Catherine Devereux.

At the top is Christ in glory, displaying the five wounds. The small figures in the tracery may date from the late 14th Century (although repaired in places) and show St Margaret, St Catherine, the annunciation with Gabriel standing and Mary kneeling, St Helen and St Leonard.

The shields of arms are Mynors, Baskerville, Devereux and Myll and are Victorian, the date shown merely indicating that the first three families were of Norman origin.

Of the four large figures, St Catherine on the left is partly original, as is Christ's crucifixion. The figure of John the Baptist (second from the left) and Weonard (on the right) are thought to have been made at the time of the restoration in 1875. The Victorian shields below commemorate family marriages.

A window⁸ on the north of the north aisle includes a late 15th century panel of Flemish glass, showing the call of St Peter. It probably originally came from Goodrich Court, but was picked up in a job lot at Hereford market and given to the church in 1952 by Sir Humphrey Mynors!

Also worth seeing

The cracked coffin lid⁹ in the chapel is late 13th century and shows the chalice and book of a priest. There is an unusual holy water-stoup¹⁰ in the porch, carved in the shape of a man's head. The bowl of the font dates from 15th century.

There are several hatchments¹¹ (lozenge shaped shields denoting particular achievements) – two in the chapel and one over the south door. The latter shows the Royal Arms.

High in the tower (not accessible to visitors) is a ring of six bells cast by Rudhall of Gloucester in 1801 at a contract price of £100. One of them was re-cast by Taylor of Loughborough in 1882 and they were re-conditioned and re-hung in a new frame in 1980. The bells are rung regularly by an enthusiastic team from these parishes and by visiting bellringers.

Also in the tower is the village clock, regularly maintained by the Parish Council, which was installed as the village's war memorial and which still rings out the hours throughout the day and night.

The Churchyard

In the churchyard, on the left of the path leading straight from the south porch, is the base of a 15th century cross now fitted with a small sun-dial.

The wall which divides the old and newer sections of the graveyard contains some stones with initials and date, which are the remains of an old arrangement whereby each farm in the parish was responsible for the upkeep of a section. The wall had become dilapidated and parts were missing, but these were restored in 2007 by a team from the charity "Caring for God's Acre".

Do take time to sit in the churchyard and enjoy our lovely village and its countryside – the view to the east is spectacular – you will be looking east towards Marcle Ridge and the very tips of the Malvern Hills.

On leaving the churchyard by the main gate and walking past Church Farm, you will see to the left a large mound or 'tump'. It was once believed that St Weonard lay there in a golden coffin, and the tradition says that it was the place for morris dancing. In fact the tump is pre-historic. It was opened in 1855 and the tree which had been used as the village maypole was destroyed. Two burnt burials were discovered, but no trace of St Weonard or a golden coffin!