

Stoneleigh History Society

# Stoneleigh Church



## Centuries

## of

## Change & Renewal



### A Timeline of the Church



Welcome to the Stoneleigh History Society's Summer Exhibition 2017:

# Centuries of Change and Renewal

In the long history of the church of St Mary the Virgin in Stoneleigh, there have been enormous changes to the fabric of the building and its fixtures and contents. The latest major restoration of the building prompted us to record these changes.

Beginning with architectural drawings and plans by Melanie Dearing, we have considered what the church may have looked like in its earliest, pre-Conquest days, and then examined the many alterations made since the 12th century.

Of course, the church has been much documented by eminent historians and architects from Sir William Dugdale in 1665 right through to the very latest revisions of "Pevsner's Guide to Warwickshire" which was published in 2016. The memorials, furniture and other features of the building were thoroughly documented by a team from the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts (NADFAS) in 2004.

Our aim has been, not to replicate the findings of previous writers and researchers, but to provide a straightforward timeline of the changes to the building over the centuries. We have been particularly interested in discovering how the church has served its people, and the people their church: in other words, we wanted to show how the story of the building is linked to those who have worshipped in it.

We have looked at who those people were whose names are recorded in stone and glass; who ordered the major building operations, but also who carried out those plans; who donated or created the artefacts within the church, and which people contributed through their generosity to the village as a whole. We hope to have paid tribute, too, to some of those who have enhanced the experience of worship through their music or their words.

It has been an enjoyable process for our team of researchers and writers to learn about the history of this beautiful place. From the Saxon structure which might have appeared as we imagine, to the present building which reveals features from Norman times to the twenty-first century, the church at Stoneleigh is many-layered, speaking to us of our past but also looking forward into the future.

## Our Thanks

In assembling this exhibition we should like to thank all those who have helped provide or verify information, or given permission to reproduce photographs or documentary evidence.

Among the many, are:

Christopher Pickford, the recent editor of "Pevsner's Guide to Warwickshire"

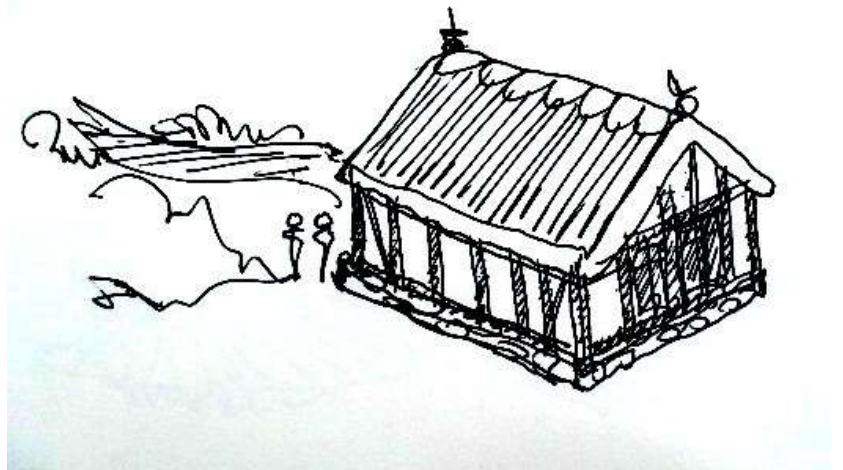
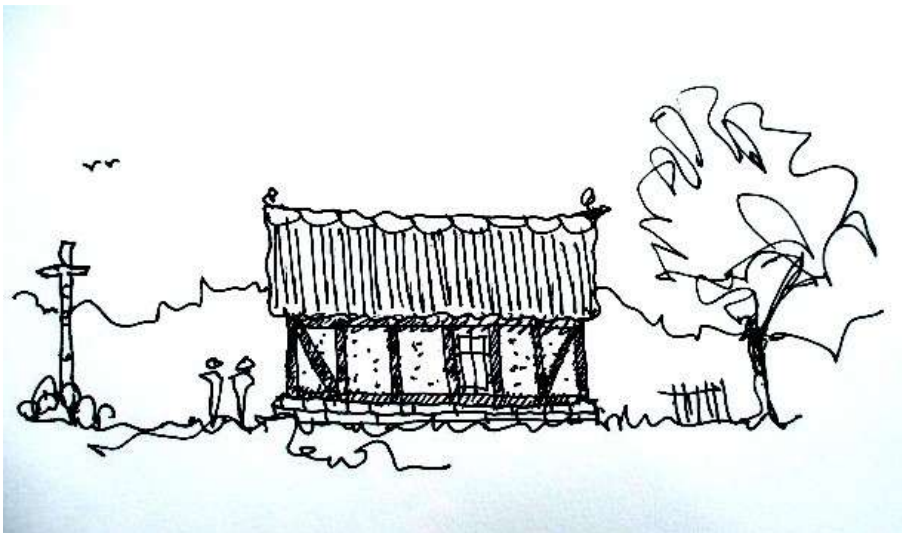
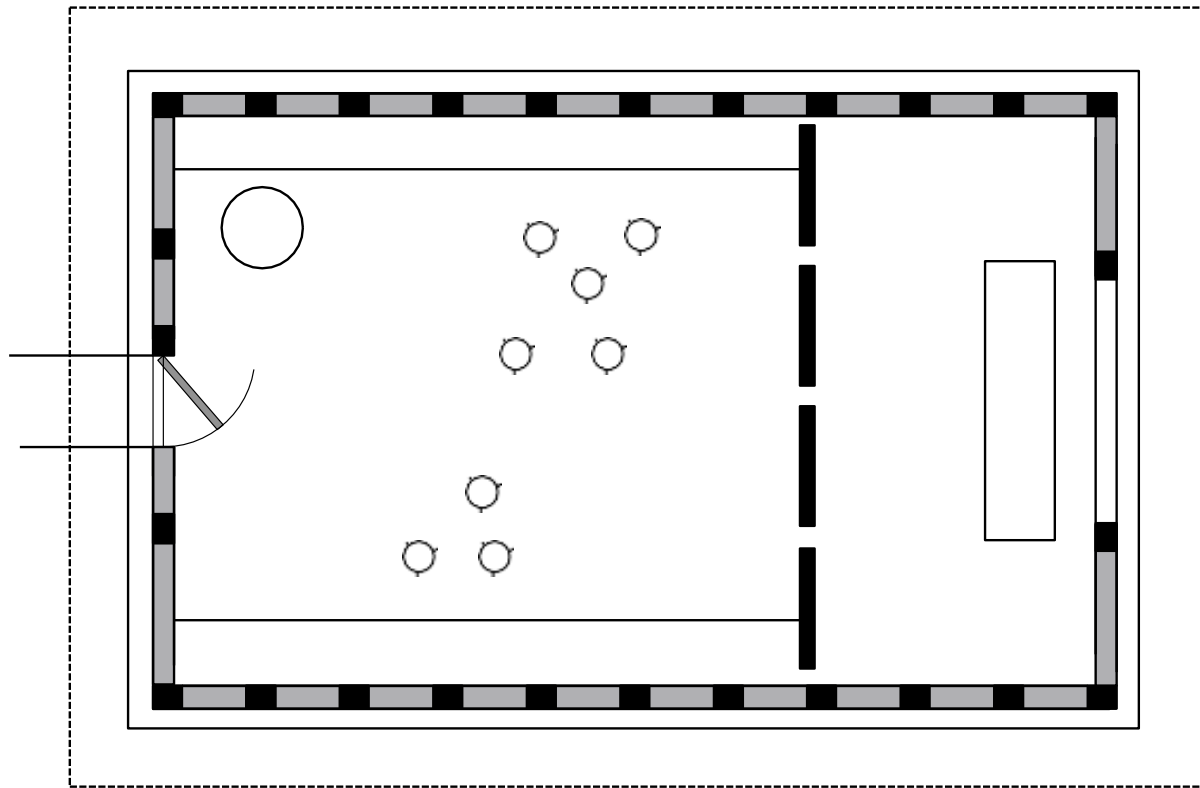
Leigh Papers, Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives : Stoneleigh Abbey

"Immanuel's Ground – West Gallery Choir", for information about 1784 music

Sarah Ballinger : Shirley Ball : Reverend Sharon Goble : Ron Binnie : Rod Wheat

Jeremy Thomas : Abigail and Mary Wills : Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology

# Saxon



# Saxon

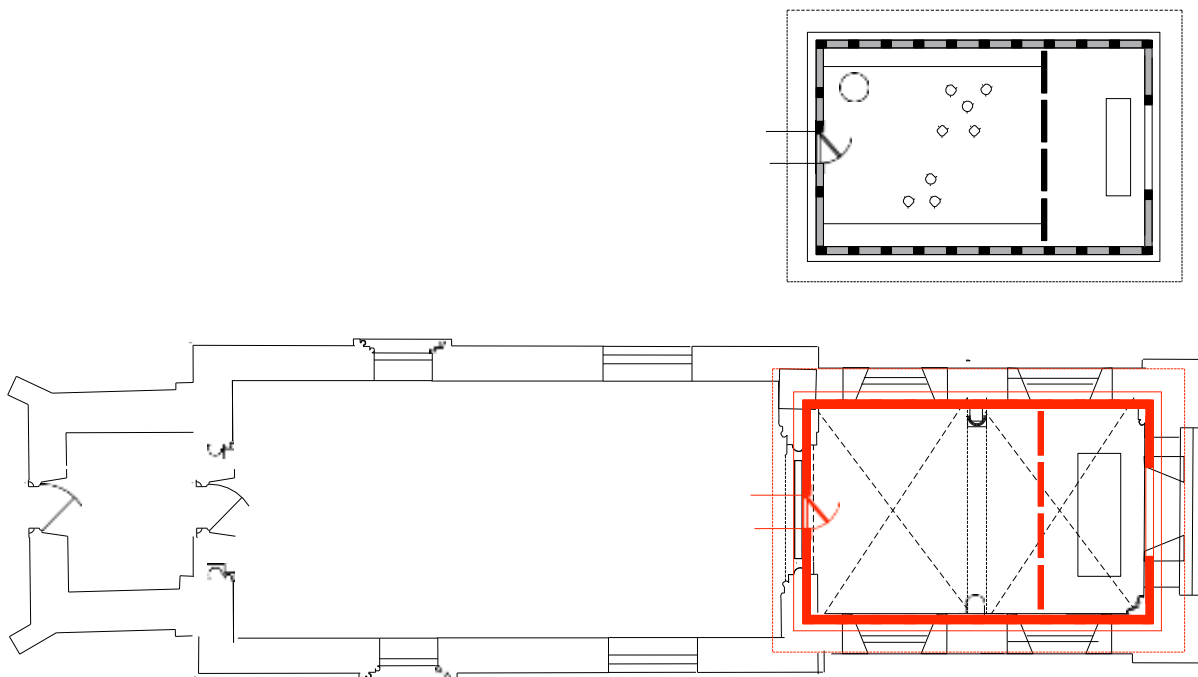
Our idea about the appearance of the Saxon church can only be an educated guess. It could have been built like the old cottages you see in the village today, perhaps with a local stone base, mud floor and timber construction with mud infill. A thatched roof on a truss frame would be likely with the overall size limited by the spans of the timber truss frames – i.e. the size of locally available trees.

The location of the early church is also unknown. Most early churches were built at the top of a hill and on Motslow Hill there was certainly a settlement, perhaps fortified, where the medieval manor courts and moots were held. So it is unusual that the church was built in the valley instead.

There is no doubt that at some stage, the villagers on the hill moved down to the valley with its easy access to water, despite the associated risk of flooding.

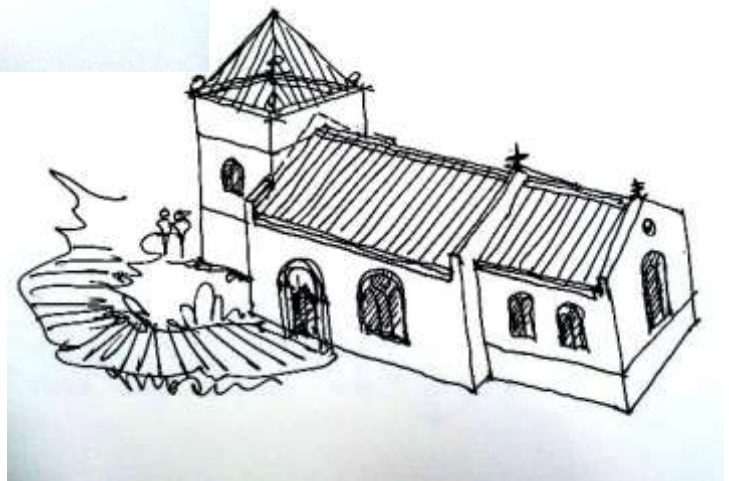
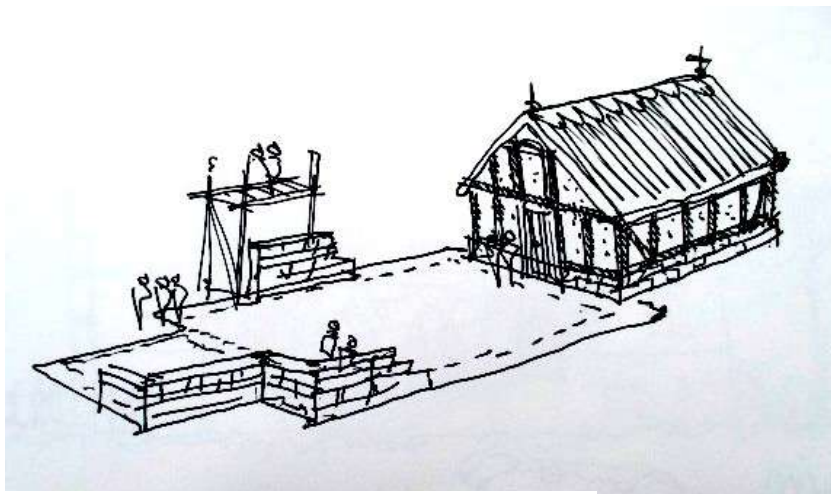
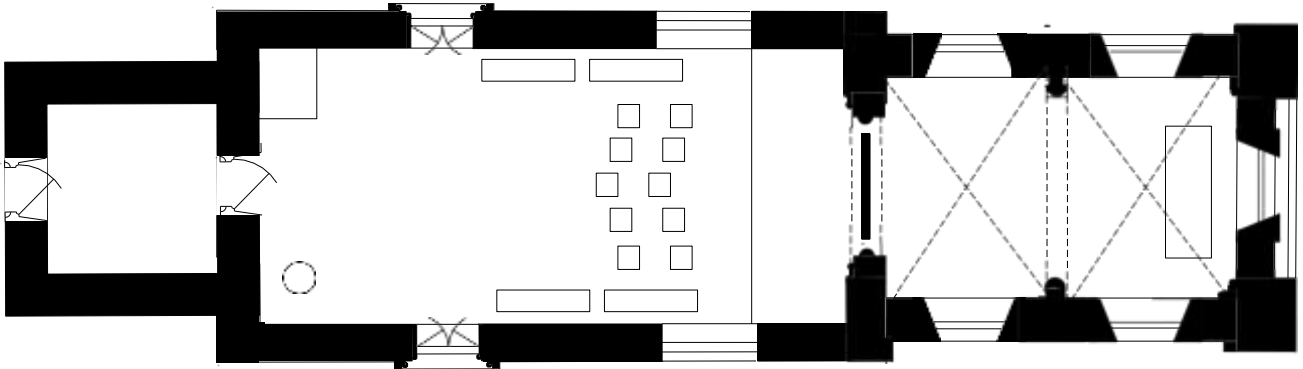
The Domesday Book of 1086 notes that there were 68 villagers and 4 smallholders with 2 priests, also 2 mills and 20 acres of meadow.

It is interesting to note that as we move from the Saxon to the Norman period, the size of a timber frame church barn as envisaged in the Saxon plans would be about the same size as today's chancel.





# Norman



# Norman

1066 - 1154

The Norman church design is based on the existing Norman parts: the chancel, nave, tower and north door arch.

If the Saxon church were located within today's churchyard there could have been a quandary: to build near to the existing church allowing services to continue or to build on top of the holy site with services held elsewhere. No bases for a Saxon church have been found in the churchyard to date. So perhaps we might speculate that a temporary church was erected nearby? The new, ultra-modern, state of the art stone construction may have taken 30 years to build.

Inside the church the floor plan of the chancel with two bays and the nave would have been much as they are today (without the south aisle). The original windows were little Norman lights on the walls, over time replaced by the larger windows and the clerestory windows high up on the wall. There was a north and a south door and another on the west through the tower. The south door would have been the main entrance.

Externally it would have had a steep pitched roof with gable parapets (low protective walls along the edge of the roof), with probably some beams across as there are no buttresses on the outside walls, which would have been necessary to stop the walls spreading out and collapsing.

The remnants of the parapet are on the north-west corner of the nave/tower junction and you can see the projection at the bottom where the old line of the eaves would have been. Then it follows the line up the east wall of the tower where you can see a line of stone, however these don't quite line up with each other and also the pitches are different. The parapets on the chancel/nave junction would have needed to be higher, as the nave roof would have been higher than the chancel roof.

The tower was built square (without the belfry top layer) so it would have looked quite squat. It may perhaps have had a tall pyramid roof on it.



A Norman church in France with stone floor and benches.

# Norman

Excitingly, several features of the Norman church, with its remarkably wide nave, remain: still visible is a blocked north window in the west tower, and the east, north and south walls of the tower are essentially Norman. Partly hidden below the gallery on either side of the modern door are half-round responds and detached shafts with fluted capitals, contemporary with the arch to the chancel. The west door has been extensively restored.

## The Chancel

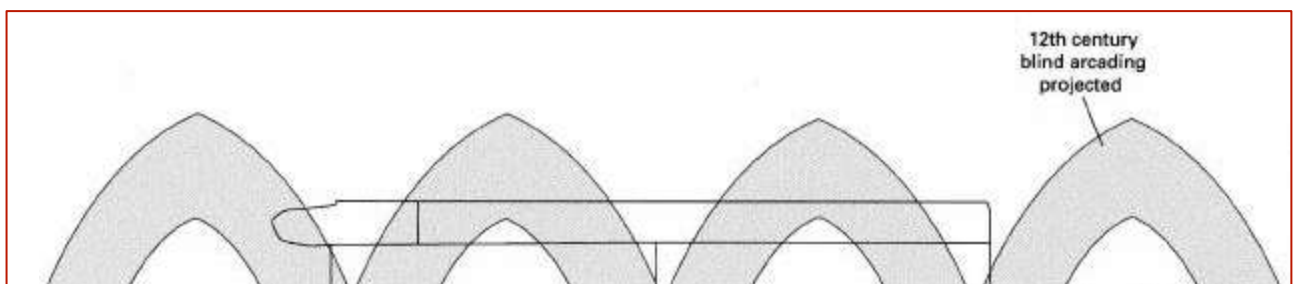
The chancel itself is of two bays, with Norman north and south piers about half way down the chancel, that probably originally supported an arch forming an inner chancel sacarium, or "holy of holies."

## The Chancel Arcading

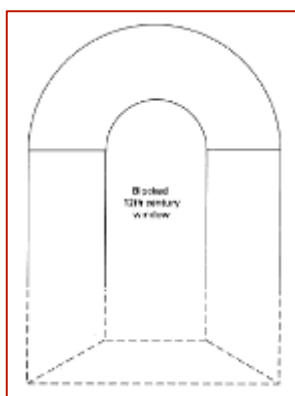
The east and the south wall of the chancel has blind arcading, with pointed arches, showing its installation during the transitional period i.e. that time when the Norman was gradually being superseded by the early English style.



This is basically Norman although the work appears to have been somewhat restored in 19th century. Nevertheless it must have extended around all three sides of the chancel as traces were found behind the monument to Duchess Dudley during conservation work in 2003 by Warwickshire Museum Field Archeology Projects Group



*North wall of chancel Drawn by Andrew Isham, Warwickshire Museum.*



Also found in 2003, above the hidden north arcading drawn above, was a blocked, round-headed, splay-sided, 12th century window opening, containing a small round-headed window. An original Norman 'light' which may have been repeated around the church.



## The Chancel Arch

The chancel arch has, on its western side, chevron carving of a most lavish nature in three distinct orders; the inner a half-round roll, the intermediate decorated with zigzag, the outer with double cones and zigzag, and a hood-mould of alternate billets.

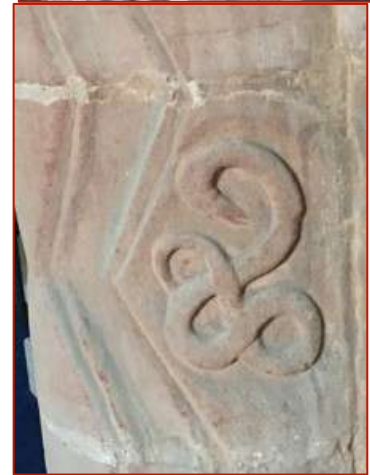
The inner order is supported on half-round responds with fluted capitals, the zigzag ornament carried down to a moulded base decorated with trellis pattern.

The outer order has attached shafts with fluted capitals and moulded bases, the shafts being connected to the wall-face by bands decorated with pellets.



On the north column is a tiny bird which has variously been thought to be either a dove or a pelican,

On the south column is a serpent.



## The North Doorway



The blocked north doorway, although the sandstone is now badly eroded, is noteworthy for its depiction of two dragons, their necks interlocked, biting their own tails. Two snakes, equally, perform the same acrobatics within a small panel.





# The Font

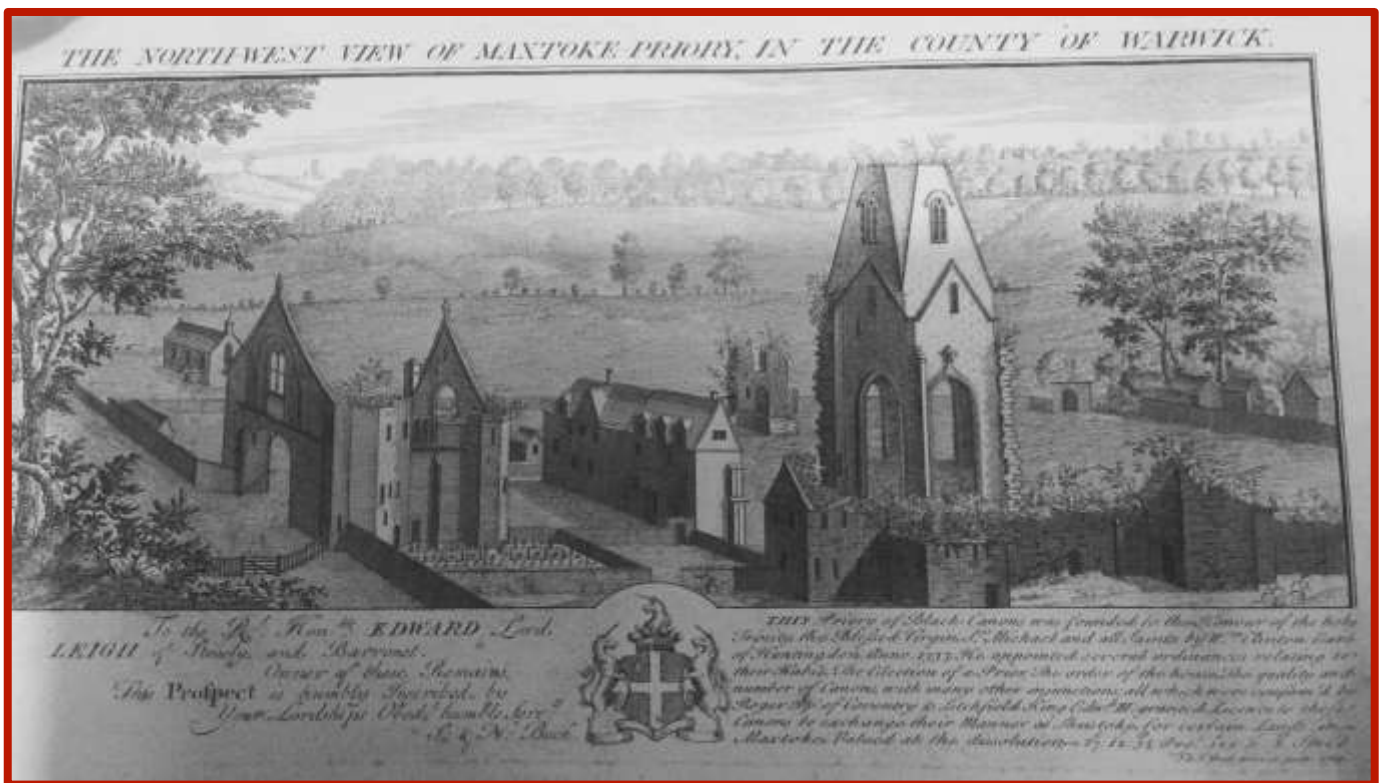
Tradition has it that the fine Norman font was brought to Stoneleigh Church in Victorian times, and replaced another Norman font, which was probably removed during the extensive repairs between 1811 and 1825. What happened to the previous one is unknown.



The provenance of the current font is also rather mysterious. It is of Romanesque design, of circular form, sculptured with semi-circular arches on shafts having spiral or cable mouldings & within each of its twelve arches is a carved figure of an Apostle.

These figures are stylized in the manner of Anglo-Saxon carving, which gives the possibility of their being older still than late 11th century.

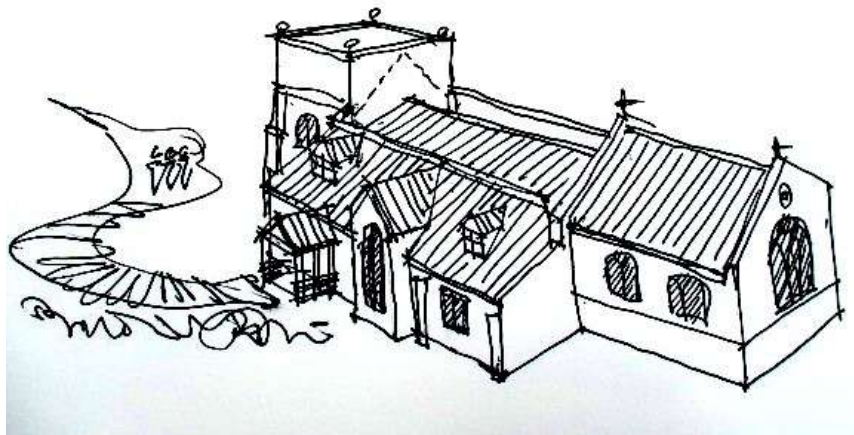
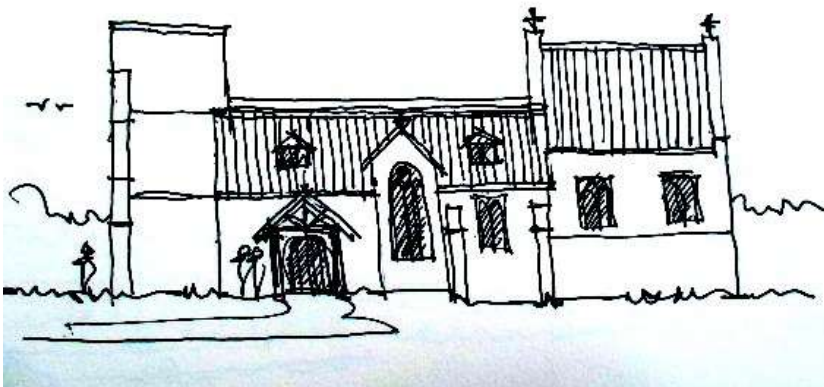
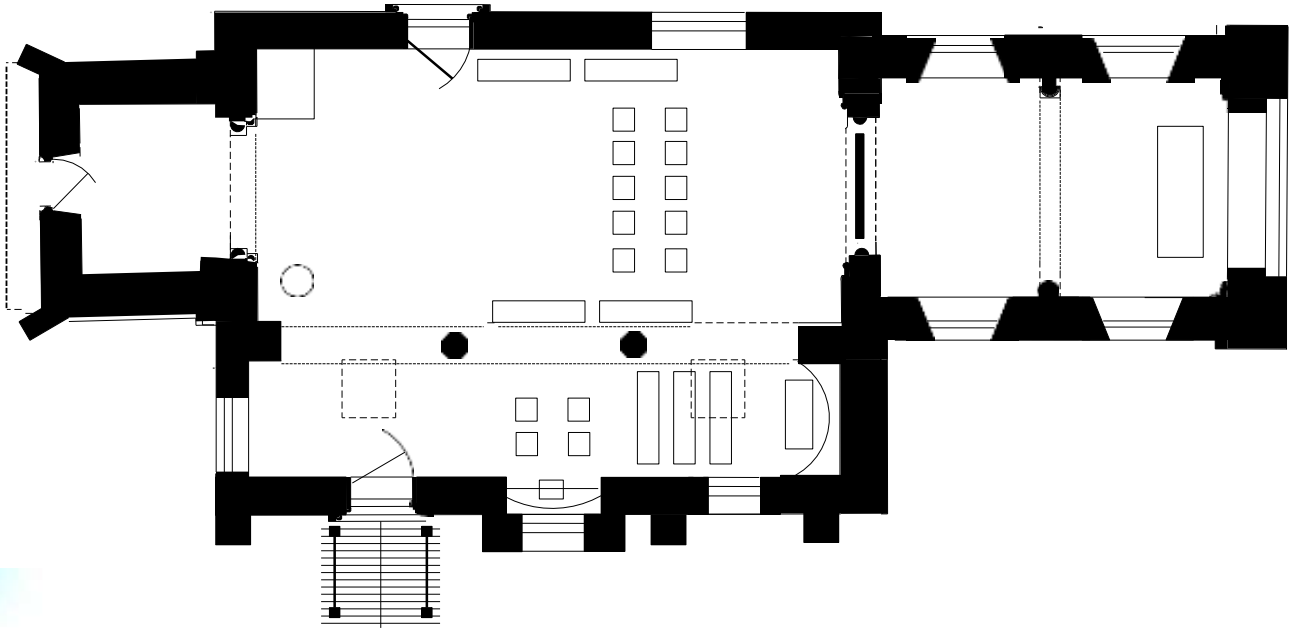
So where did the font come from? It was reputedly found in the farmyard at Maxstoke Priory, associated with lands held by the Leighs in former times. The Priory itself was not founded until the mid-14th century however, so the reputed provenance of the font doesn't help to explain its origins.



## Maxstoke Priory

To the R<sup>t</sup>. Hon<sup>ble</sup>. EDWARD Lord LEIGH of Stonely, and Baronet. Owner of these Remains.  
This Prospect is humbly Inscribed by Your Lordships Obed<sup>t</sup> humble Serv<sup>ts</sup> S. & N. Buck 1729.

# Plantagenet to Elizabethan



# Plantagenet to Elizabethan

1154 - 1603

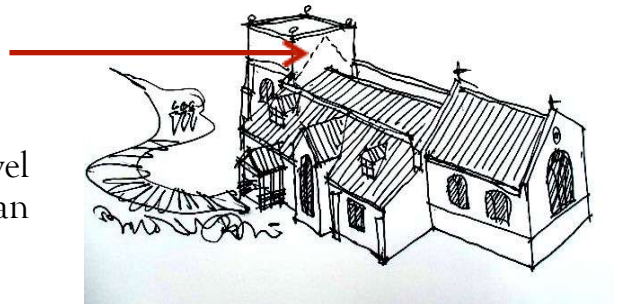
In this period there were lots of changes in the design and layouts and construction.

There was increased height to the outer walls and a new flatter roof on the nave, replacing the steeper pitched Norman roof.

New windows in the north wall of the nave; c.1300 the nave north window nearest the chancel was added and 14<sup>th</sup> Century large windows replacing small Norman lights.

**Most importantly a new south aisle and new arches were built to add more seating space.** However, putting three large arches into the south wall meant taking the whole wall out and rebuilding it. As a consequence the roof had to come off too. So they re-roofed it with a more modern low pitch lead roof and then added height to the external walls as can be seen on the north wall to cover the roof design.

Note the earlier roof lines on the tower east wall



The chancel parapet gable was reduced also to level up with other end. The chancel is now higher than the nave.

The tower was made smaller and rectangular.

But why reduce the size of the tower? This makes no sense unless it needed rebuilding due to damage, maybe to subsidence. But why go from a square to a smaller rectangle? We just don't know.

The new south aisle had a porch in timber which is shown in one old sketch. It also had two roof dormers to let light into the south aisle as they continued the roof down so low that the windows did not light the aisle. There was also a small gable on the south wall, which could have been a small chapel or apse.



Old sketch showing the south porch

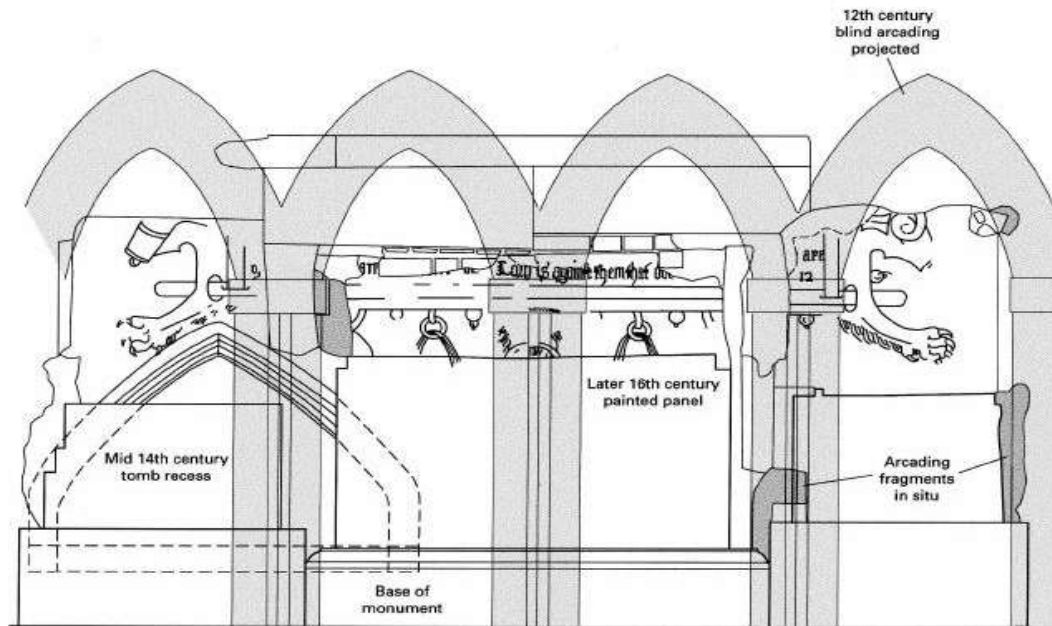


Old sketch showing the low roof before dormer windows

(These sketches also show the as yet unbuilt vestry)



# Medieval Discoveries!



*North wall of chancel Drawn by Andrew Isham, Warwickshire Museum.*

The 2003 restoration of Duchess Dudley's tomb on the north wall of the chancel made some exciting discoveries, recorded but no longer visible.



A mid 14th century tomb recess containing a short worn sandstone effigy, perhaps of a child, wearing a long garment with a low neckline and a pleated skirt.

Traces of a medieval wall painting, a black border and areas of red with white decoration were visible, and some medieval floor tiles, dark green and brown monochrome and a single decorated example, reused as packing in the monument, will have come from the church.

The medieval wallpainting was overlaid by a later 16th century painted strapwork panel surrounded by a stretched lionskin with a number of globular finials and containing fragments of the inscription: *'For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are opened up unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil'*

Also two suspended rings with ribbons hanging off below.

*Photograph by Mary Beagrie 2003*





# The Lady in the Porch and the Unknown Priest

## LADY & CHILD

Believed to be from the 14th century, this sandstone monument is in the porch. It had been brought in from the graveyard where it had been for hundreds of years, hence its poor condition. A local legend says that her husband was a knight who died on the battlefield. She was pregnant and on hearing the news she ripped open her stomach.

In 1637 the vicar of Stoneleigh Edward Maunsell wrote “ There is a tradition amongst the comm people at Stonely yt enty there was a goodly house standing upon the hill the Motslow-Hill on the South pte of the Church wch was the habitacien of a knight who going to the warre left his ladey great wt childe and that upon the news yt he was slayne she ript up her own belly and was buried therefore on the North side of the Church in ye churchyard under a stone whereupon is pourtraied the figure of a woman & a childe wh remaynes to this day” Others believe it could be a monument to someone who died in childbirth.



## UNKNOWN PRIEST

This is a sandstone monument situated on the north side of the chancel dating from around 1400. The medieval sculpture is believed to be a memorial to an incumbent priest. It was found buried in a vertical position when foundations were being dug for the Leigh Chapel. In 1840 Sir Stephen Glynne wrote “There is a monumental effigy to an Ecclesiastic, with a dog at his feet, in rather plain habit, but very well executed.”



# Stoneleigh Church Bells

## The Church Belfry has 6 Bells

The **Treble** cast in 1962 by John Taylor of Loughborough at 3½ cwt.

The **2nd** cast in 1752 by Thomas Eayre at 4¾ cwt.

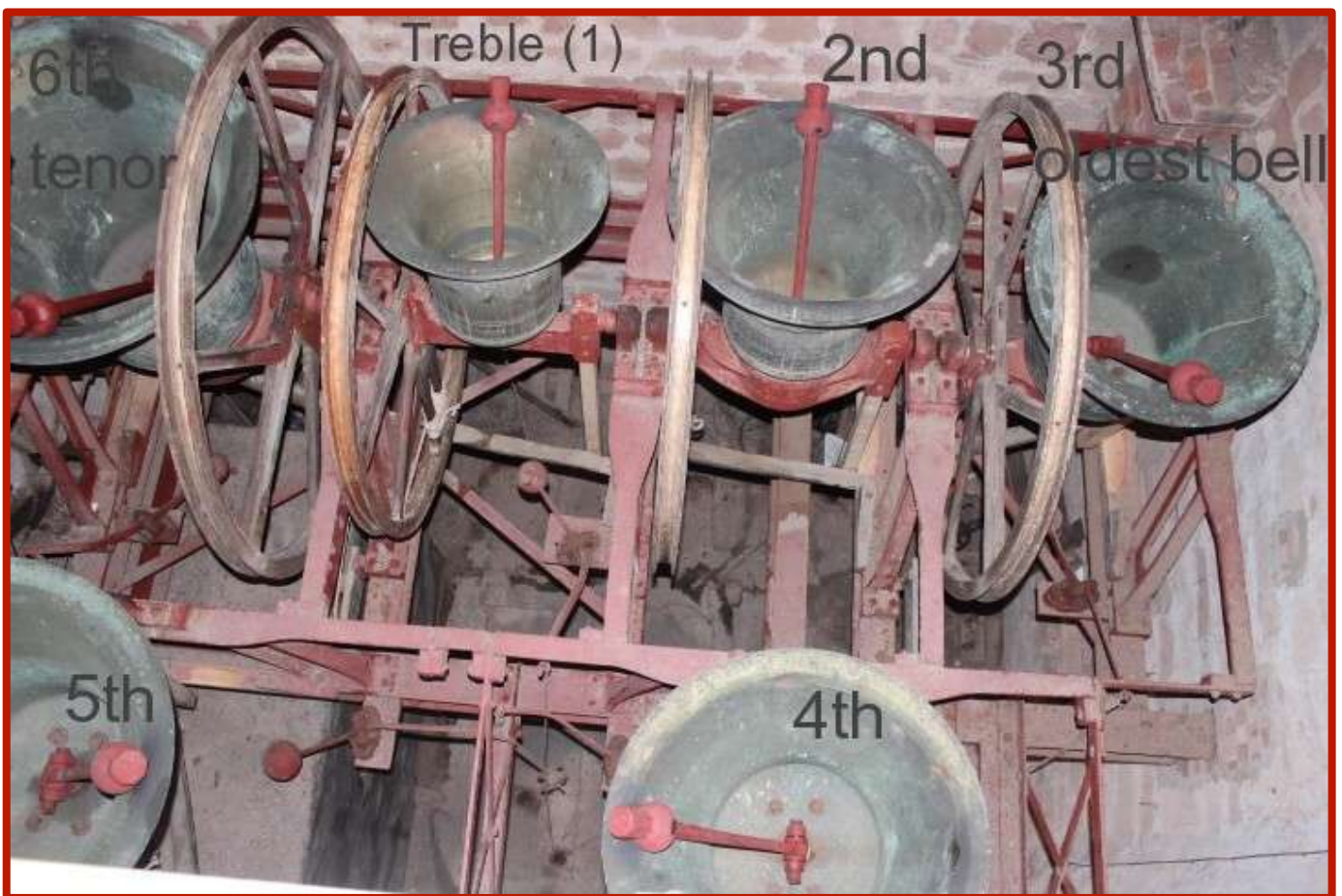
The **3rd** is the oldest, a rare 1530 bell cast by John Woolley weighing 5¾ cwt.

The **4th** cast in 1632 by Hugh Watts weighing 6 cwt.

The **5th** cast in 1792 by John Briant weighing 8 cwt.

The **Tenor** cast in 1632 by Hugh Watts weighing 10¼ cwt. or over ½ a ton.

The bells are numbered from the highest note Treble 1st to the lowest note Tenor 6th.



The bells in chronological order of casting

- 1530 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bell
- 1632 The Tenor Bell
- 1632 The 4<sup>th</sup> Bell
- 1752 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bell
- 1792 The 5<sup>th</sup> Bell
- 1962 The Treble Bell

# 1530 The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bell

**The 3rd is the oldest, a rare 1530 bell cast by John Woolley weighing 5¾ cwt.**

The oldest bell, cast in or around the year 1530, is of particular interest. It has the initials "R K" on the waist of the bell and these are presumed to be those of Richard Kidderminster, abbot of Winchcombe, who held office from 1488 to 1525 and died in 1531. It is also presumed that this bell was cast by John Woolley (sometimes spelled Wolley). He had been a servant in the foundry of Richard Seliok, Long Row, Nottingham, up to 1524 but was a bell founder in his own right in the 1530s, retiring in 1539-40; bells made by him are not common. Richard Kidderminster (1488-1531) was a man of affairs, a trusted servant of Henry VIII and Wolsey, as well as a truly religious man, a scholar, and an able administrator.

Why is there a Winchcombe connection with Stoneleigh? Winchcombe was a Benedictine foundation, dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539, and had been at one time the capital of Mercia; Richard Kidderminster was its penultimate abbot, having resigned in 1525. The third bell at Stoneleigh was, it seems, cast just 5 years later by Woolley, bell-founder at Winchcombe.

A document at Stratford Record Office – DR 18/3/47/1a – notes:

*"lands bought by Sir Thomas Leigh formerly belonging to Stoneleigh Abbey, Kenilworth Priory, Coombe Abbey, Pipewell Abbey, Winchcombe Abbey, Evesham Abbey, Hailes Abbey and the Knights Hospitaller..."*

We do not know whether Stoneleigh Church possessed any pre-Dissolution bells, but we do know that the church at Stoneleigh Abbey, which Sir Thomas Leigh bought in 1561, had been pretty well stripped by then of everything. It is not impossible that Sir Thomas Leigh, in true post-Dissolution country-squire style, bought the bells of Winchcombe Abbey. Teams of men were employed to strip the assets from the monasteries at this time. Sir Thomas and family worshipped at the church in Stoneleigh ... why not present it with a bell – the Woolley one from Winchcombe?

The inscription on the bell is interesting:

**Michaele te pulsante Winchelcumbern a fetente demone tu libera**

The most plausible translation for this odd Latin seems to be:

**Michael, as you strike, free Winchcombe from the stinking evil spirit**

Indeed in the church porch, the translation is given as:

**Michael, when you ring, deliver Winchcombe from the foul demon**

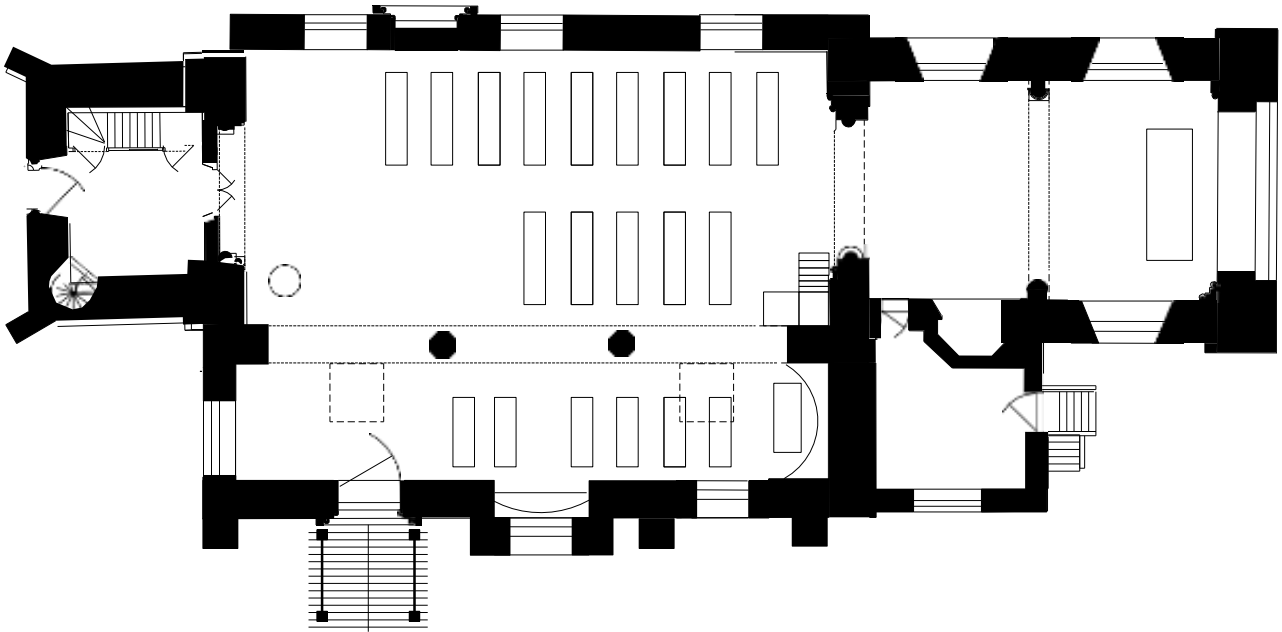


The bell itself is given the name Michael. It was not unusual to give a bell a name – other examples in England are Gabriel, Tom, Paul and Peter. Perhaps we are seeing the traditional opposition between Michael and the Devil, here. With its exhortation to “free Winchcombe from the stinking evil spirit” we see a typical pre-Reformation sentiment.

This bell weighs five and three-quarters hundredweight, is the third bell in the peal and is tuned to the note “C”. It was recorded at Stoneleigh in the earliest church register as the 1st of the peal.



# Stuart





# Stuart

1603 - 1714

The main alteration to the church at this time was the addition, on the south-east corner, of the Vestry and Vault beneath in 1665. "the one for the use of the parishowners and the other for a burying place for himselfe his lady and their desendents 1665"

The vestry addition was designed in a castle like square format not in keeping with the church at all. Why was that? ...perhaps fashion? It was the renaissance period, so perhaps the decision was taken to square things off , see no roof and add some feature finials on the top.

{The belfry was added on top of the tower with similar feature finials but whether before, during or after the 1665 vestry addition is uncertain. The 1530 bell and two 1632 bells were in situ by 1663.}

## Victoria County History

### A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 6, Knightlow Hundred 1951

The vestry was built in 1665 by Lord Leigh as a burial vault for his family and a vestry for the use of parishioners. It has a splayed plinth, moulded stringcourse, and a very high parapet wall with pinnacles at each angle and intermediately, giving the appearance of having an upper floor. In the east wall is a combined door and tracery window with a four-centred arch and hood-mould, probably a later insertion. On the south side is a traceried window of three trefoil lights with a pointed arch and hood-mould, and stops representing angels' heads. ... The vestry (14 ft. by 14 ft.) was built in 1665 in the Gothic style; the walls are plastered and lined out in imitation of ashlar, the floor stone-paved, and the ceiling a plaster vault with splayed ribs springing from attached angle shafts with moulded capitals and bases. On the south and west side there are stone benches. There is an enclosure on the north side for the 1850 tomb recess.

# 1632 The Tenor and The 4th Bells

**The Tenor cast in 1632 by Hugh Watts weighing 10¼ cwt. or over ½ a ton**

Two bells certainly came originally from the foundry of Hugh Watts – and possibly a third. Watts came from a family of bell-founders, and his son, also called Hugh, continued in the work at Leicester Bell Foundry. Hugh Senior became Mayor of Leicester in 1634. Watts bells are admired for the beauty of their tone.

The first of these bells, from 1632, has an inscription which reads:

**Jesu Nazarene Rex Judeorum fili Dei Miserere mei 1632**

translated as

**Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, Son of God, have mercy upon me**

This is Watts' favourite inscription, known as a Watts Nazarene as there were so many cast at Leicester with this inscription. Some documentation relating to this bell mentions an inscribed date **1626**, which perhaps commemorates the inheritance as head of the Leigh family of Thomas Leigh, later to be created the first Baron Leigh by King Charles I in 1643. Thomas' grandfather, Sir Thomas 1st Baronet Leigh, had died on 1 February 1625, wishing, as stated in his Will, to be buried alongside his mother Dame Alice at Stoneleigh Church.



This is the heaviest of the bells, weighing 10 hundredweight 2 quarters and 14 pounds.

The tenor bell is the sixth in the peal and is tuned to the note of "G".

The Bell Ropes tied to the wheels with the Tenor at the back

**The 4th cast in 1632 by Hugh Watts weighing 6 cwt 15lbs**

The other bell from 1632 has an identical inscription.

It weighs 6 hundredweight 15 pounds and is the fourth in the peal.

It is tuned to the note of "B".

Two bells with this inscription but with the date 1626 were recorded in the earliest church register.



The 4<sup>th</sup> Bell

# 1663 Repairs

Tucked inside the front cover of the earliest surviving Stoneleigh Church Registers is a page entitled "The Disbursements of the Churchwardens 1663", giving an itemised breakdown of where the money was spent.

After the disruption of the civil war the churchwardens received a generous £1 donation from Thomas the 1st Baron Leigh to make repairs to the church and churchyard prior to the 1665 building of the vestry and the vault beneath.

They spent £4 9s 3d for:-

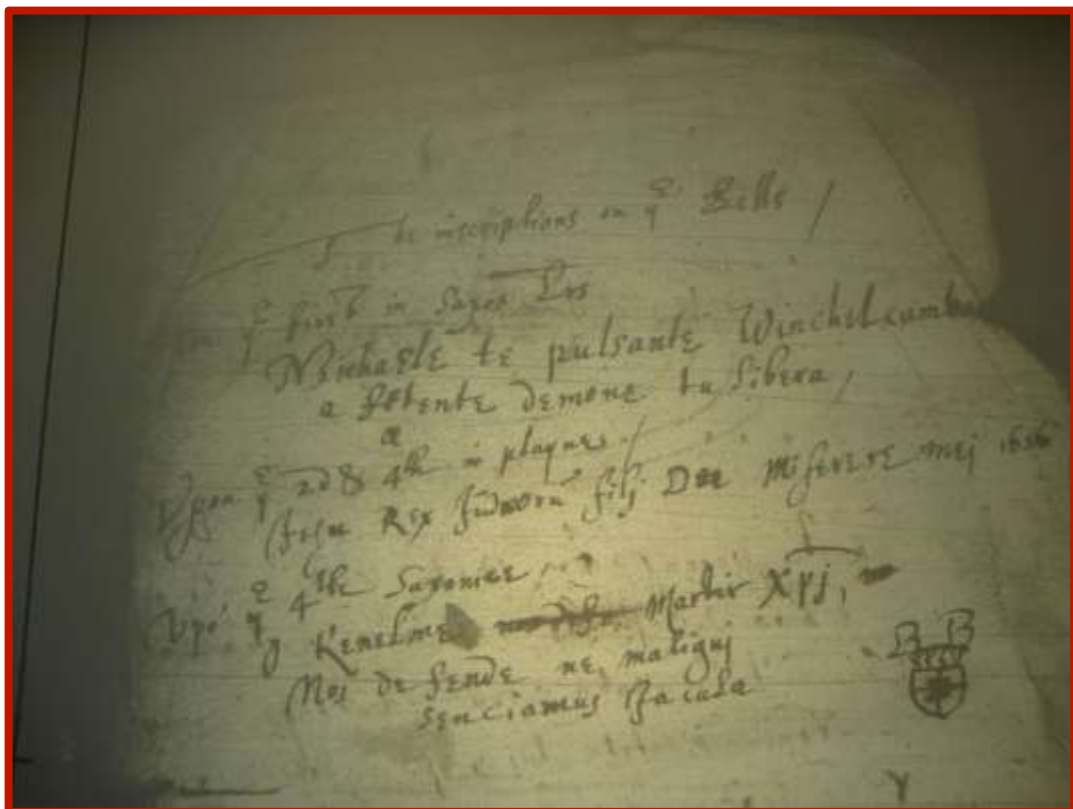
*Lime tile and to the tyler for Mending the tyleings and poynting the church and steeple and Mending within the Church and beere*

*Pales post and Rales and paleing the Church yard and Mending the Church yard pales*

*Glazeing the church windows*

*Mending the Reading pew*

A new sett of bell ropes (prompting the vicar, Edward Maunsell, to note the inscriptions on the bells referred to by him as the 1st, 2nd and 4th)



Major repair work on the church had possibly not been done for about 30 years since the installation of two new bells in 1632. These accounts are interesting in that they show that the church had a 'steeple' not just a short tower and a belfry with three or may be four bells.

# 1665 The Vestry

Within the vestry an inscription reads (original spelling given):



“This vestry and vault under it, were made by the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneleigh in the seaventyeth year of his age and in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand six hundred sixty five, the one for the use of the parishowners and the other for a burying place for himselfe his lady and their desendents 1665”

King Charles I had created Thomas the 1st Baron Leigh in 1642 as a reward for his hospitality at Stoneleigh Abbey when the King was refused entry to Coventry. The Barony descended from him until the death of Edward, the 5th Lord Leigh, in 1786.

Thomas clearly wished to commemorate members of his own family as he was also responsible for the memorial plaque above the Leigh Chapel door, to his ancestors Sir Thomas and Dame Alice Leigh.

The architecture is described in Pevsner's Guide to Warwickshire as “a surprise” as it is “raised to the outside and with obelisk pinnacles”. The south window tracery is Perpendicular with trefoil lights and there are stops representing angels' heads. The Victoria County History comments “The vestry is 14ft by 14ft and was built in the Gothic style, and Pevsner says “inside the vault looks convincingly medieval”. However, Charles Hanbury Tracy of Toddington who was working on the Mausoleum, or Leigh Chapel, from 1820, re-worked the vestry in 1823 and some elements are his, such as the tracery over the east doorway.

The vestry is used as the parish office, but the vault is sealed.

In the early 19th century when ownership of the Stoneleigh estates transferred to the Gloucestershire line of the Leigh family, it led to challenges from other members of the family who felt they were more entitled to the inheritance. On 2 June 1786, just after Edward's death in May, a list of all the coffins in the vault was made. Some coffin inscriptions were even then difficult to read, or impossible to access under other coffins.

By the time Edward's sister Mary died in 1806, questions of ancestry were paramount and as “The Leigh Peerage Case” began to run its thirty-year course, in 1813 a sketch of the burials within the vault was made, complete with descriptions and dates. The compiler was the Reverend Thomas Warde who hailed from Barford but who was vicar of Weston under Wetherley. His compilation differs slightly from the 1786 one, perhaps because coffins had been moved around and wording therefore became more accessible. It emphasises the richness of decoration to illustrate the fact that nothing of value –genealogical or financial– had been removed.

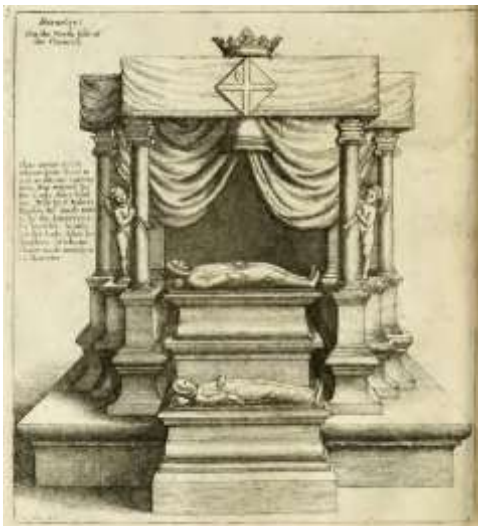


# 1668 Alice Dudley & Alicia



The most impressive monument in the church is the tomb of **Alice Duchess Dudley** and her daughter Alicia (d.1621), situated on the north side of the chancel. Alice was born in 1578, the daughter of Sir Thomas Leigh. She married Sir Robert Dudley the illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth's favourite Sir Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester. Alice's husband deserted her and ran off to Italy with Elizabeth Southwell whom he later married. Alice was made a duchess in her own right by Charles I in 1644. She spent her whole life doing charitable work & the sermon at her funeral was entitled "A mirror of Christianity and a miracle of charity".

The Dudley monument was created in 1648 and is believed to be the work of William Wright. It is a very large marble structure with a canopy supported on 8 columns. Two cherubs holding trumpets stand on either side holding back curtains. The white marble figures are dressed in shrouds with the daughter Alicia below her mother. It was removed for refurbishment in 2003 and medieval murals were discovered on the rear wall.



Alice Duchess Dudley lived at Dudley House, St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London and her body was escorted to Stoneleigh by Sir William Dugdale.

She was buried in Stoneleigh 20<sup>th</sup> March 1668/69, so her monument was prepared well in advance and was depicted in Dugdale's 1656 *Antiquities of Warwickshire*.

# 1670 Memorial to Leigh Ancestors



Memorial in the Chancel on the North Wall

*Here lieth interred within this chancel Alice the Lady Leigh who built and endowed the almshouses in this town of Stoneleigh and was relict of Sir Thomas Leigh, knt Lord Mayor of London anno domini MDLVIII when Queen Elizabeth came to the crown and who was buried under his monument in Mercers Chapel. And also Sir Thomas Leigh baronet their son, and Katherine Lady Leigh his relict and Sir John Leigh their eldest son and father of the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneleigh now being, and Sir Thomas Leigh knt, eldest son of the said Lord Leigh and others of their children and grandchildren. To the memory of these ancestors the said Lord Leigh hath erected and dedicated this monument anno domini MDCLXX*

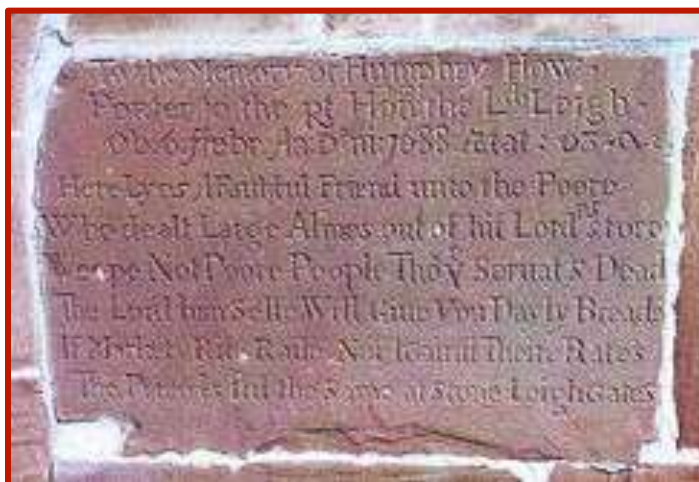
# 1688 Humphry How

The How plaque is located on the outside of the church in the blocked south doorway. It used to stand inside the old south porch which was destroyed in the early 19th century. The parishioners complained and the memorial was moved to its current location.



Humphry How was porter to the first Lord Leigh and a member of a family who had lived in Stareton since at least the middle of the 16th century. As porter to Lord Leigh he was responsible for 'keeping the gates' which involved preventing the entrance of undesirables. This was in addition to distributing alms to poor travellers.

The How family were fullers and Alexander 1549-1582 was Undermaster of the Coventry Guild of Fullers. In 1586 Alexander, James and a different Humphry How were all members of the guild.



To the Memory of Humphry How  
Porter to the Rt Hon<sup>ble</sup> the L<sup>d</sup> Leigh  
Ob: 6 Febr: An:D<sup>o</sup>ni 1688 Aetat : 63

Here Lyes A Faithful Friend unto the Poore  
Who dealt Large Almes out of his Lord<sup>RS</sup> store  
Weepe Not Poore People Tho'y<sup>R</sup> Servant's Dead  
The Lord him selfe Will Give You Dayly Breade  
If Markets Rise Raile Not Against Their Rates  
The Price is still the same at Stone Leigh Gates



# Early Pews

In Anglo Saxon times there were no pews. The congregation stood or sat on the floor which was covered in rushes, and occasionally brought their own three-legged wooden stools. There was also often a stone bench in some churches, running around the interior walls, apart from the east/chancel end.

Wooden seats appear to have been introduced soon after the Norman Conquest. If there were any seats, they were generally such as were moveable, and the personal property of the incumbent, including some being bequeathed in wills.

About the period of the Reformation 1517-1648, a parish-church would probably have presented the appearance of a floor partially covered with moveable seats, open benches, chairs or stools, with here and there one or more detached pews appropriated to the principal parishioners. Wooden seats began in some instances to have cross bars by way of doors.

After the Reformation, the services changed and the forms prescribed for worship were then rigid dictates of the law, including more readings to the congregation and increasingly long sermons, more sitting than standing, compared to the Catholic mass of standing and kneeling. By having high enclosed seats, the congregation would be screened from the observation of those officers whose duty it was to report if anyone disobeyed the behests of the law, and also screened from their neighbours, in the event of a brief nap. The fashion for high-sided box pews spread widely.

Over time it became the obligation of the churchwardens to provide pews for the congregation. With a regularly packed church it then became necessary to have a seating plan, which was regularly updated.

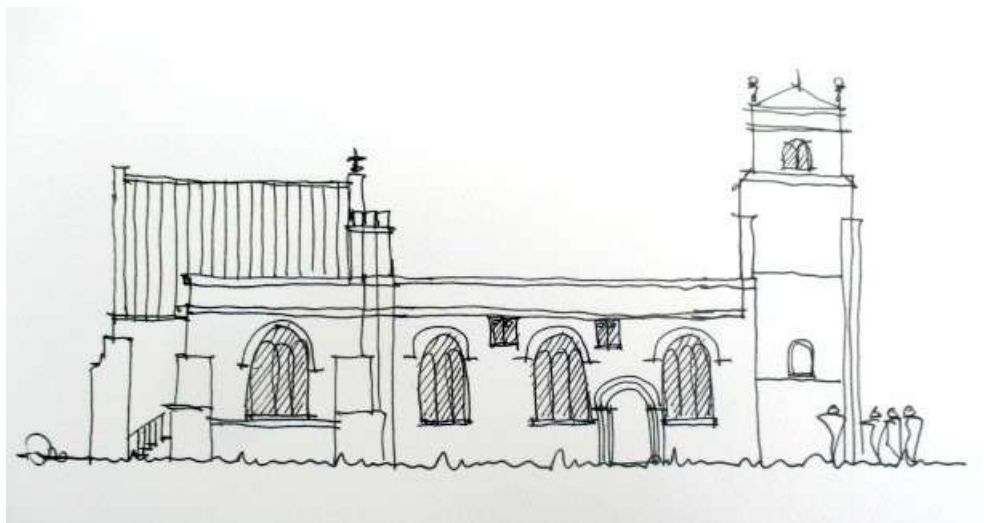
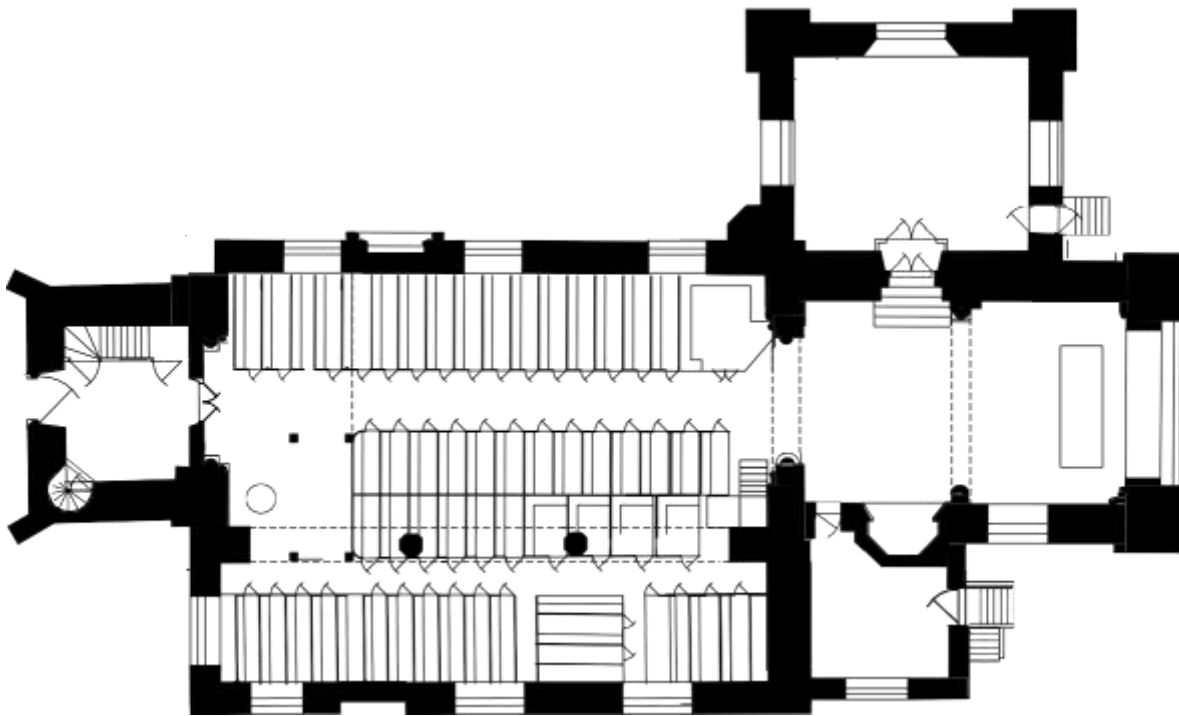
This problem of who sits where had been addressed as early as 1287 at a synod in Exeter. It was stated that *"We have also heard that the parishioners of divers places do oftentimes wrangle about their seats in church, two or more claiming the same seat; whence arises great scandal to the church, and the divine offices are sore let and hindered: wherefore we decree that none shall henceforth call any seat in the church his own, save noblemen and patrons; but he who shall first enter shall take his place where he will"*.

In Stoneleigh in 1663, the churchwardens paid for Mending the Reading Pew. This was separate from the pulpit, usually located near the nave and used for reading the litany, epistle and gospel. The accounts did not mention any repairs to pews in general, so we do not know what type of pews we had, simple benches or high sided box pews.

However, in 1755 there was a plan for erecting 20 Seats of good oak, in an arrangement of 10 rows of pews either side of the central aisle. These were to replace existing pews which were 4ft 5½ inches in length.



# Georgian to Edwardian



# Georgian to Edwardian

1714 - 1910

After a period of repairs undertaken from 1755 to 1812, including taking down the roof and the south wall and rebuilding them, plans for a major renovation commenced with a Lichfield Diocesan Faculty Plan in 1814, shortly followed in 1819 with the initial ideas on building a Mausoleum for the Leigh family.

The 1820s saw major changes within the church; a new gallery, new pews, new floor, new organ, and repaired east window. Then came the building of the Leigh Chapel, with its family vault beneath, and the stained glass windows showing the family's heraldic lineage.

All works were closely monitored by Julia Judith Leigh, whose husband James Henry had inherited the Stoneleigh estate in 1813. James Henry died in 1823 aged 58 but Julia Judith continued to run the estate with her son Chandos.

## Repairs Repairs Repairs !

Following the building of the vestry in 1665 and the continued interest in the church by the Leigh family, a number of receipts are found in the Leigh archives at Stratford for repairs prior to the 1820s renovations and the building of the Leigh Chapel.

1755 Thomas Wormleyton £30 for building repairs (DR18/5/3589)

1755 New pews considered £55 10s but not installed (DR18/3/50/09)

1756 Receipted bill 16s 8d in respect of church expenses (DR18/5/3644a)

1784 John Brame £3 13s 6d painting & gilding a monument (DR18/5/5582)

1784 Robert Johnson £7 13s 11d in respect of making a new pew (DR18/5/5593)

1796 Samuel Jones in respect of work done at Stoneleigh Church (DR18/5/6211)

1798 J Butler 16s 8d in respect of the Church at Stoneleigh (DR18/5/6383)

1800 John Perks 10s in respect of glazing (DR18/5/6523)

1807 Richard Perks masons work in the vestry and chancel (DR18/3/50/10)

1810 John Perks £20 on account of £50 10s 6d for recasting the lead (DR18/3/50/06/01)

1811 John Bradford £74 16s 8d for church roof including oak beams (DR18/3/50/06/02)

1811 John Hadley £10 14s 6d for transporting materials (DR18/3/50/06/03)

1811 George Hadley £2 3s 6d for carriage (DR18/3/50/06/04)

1811 William Walton £5 14s 9d for three swing casement windows (DR18/3/50/06/05)

1811 Richard Perks £2 for clerical work, 10 meetings (DR18/3/50/06/06)

1811 John Perks £19 9s 3¼d for lead work on window flashings etc (DR18/3/50/06/07)

1811 John Alcott £118 17s 3d for **“taking down roof and south wall of Stoneleigh church”** work including cutting holes for beams and assisting carpenters with the same, working off the wall at west end and south side to fit the new work, cutting grooves for lead flashing and at the old battlement walls, work on the roof next the tower, assisting Wm Worton at the casements etc.

(DR18/3/50/06/08) (DR18/5/6958a) (DR18/5/6975a)

1811 John Bradford £14 1s 8½d for timber (DR18/3/50/06/09)

1812 John Soden £3 3s 1d for carpentry (DR18/3/50/06/10)

1812 John Soden £1 10s 8d for carpentry and materials (DR18/3/50/06/11)

# 18<sup>th</sup> C. Memorials in the Aisles

Fifteen very worn memorial stones are faintly visible in the aisles of the church. Their transcription is today almost impossible and even the W.I. in 1981 and the Nadfas recorders in 2003 had difficulties. However, c.1824 a transcription was made (*DR662/8*) and it appears that burials within the church had not just taken place for the Leigh Family in the vestry, but also for some other prominent parishioners and their families.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Leighs had refrained from attending church owing to their Jacobite leanings. From 1749 when the young 'lunatic' Lord Edward inherited age 7 until the death of his sister Mary in 1806 the Leighs were largely away from Stoneleigh and less involved with the church. These burials within the church ceased in 1810 under the new ownership of the Leighs from Adelstrop.

**Francis Symcox** d.1666/67 of Canley and **Sarah Symcox** d.1672/73 his wife with their son **Joseph Symcox** d.1704 who was High Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1698.

**John Webster** d.1726/27 of Canley and his wife **Sarah Webster** d.1729 are interred 'near this place'. Also **Sarah Webster** d.1710 daughter of John Webster of Canley and Sarah his wife is interred beneath a stone nearby.

**Richard Farmer** d.1751/52 and his wife **Elizabeth Farmer** d.1747/48 have a stone 'to the memory of'. Richard and Elizabeth moved to the Manor House on Vicarage Road in 1715.

**Thomas Garlick** d.1763 and his wife **Elizabeth Garlick** d.1777 have a memorial stone and nearby is interred their son **Thomas Garlick** d.1751 age 1 year old.

**Christopher Williams** d.1768 who is noted in the burial register as 'gamekeeper to Lord Leigh verus amicus'.

**William Harborn** d.1769 of Cryfield Grange was interred and there is a separate memorial stone to his wife **Jane Harborne** d.1791.

**Elizabeth Bennett** d.1750 the daughter of Mr. Samuel Harbourne (Harborne) and the wife of Dr. Thomas Bennett of Coventry.

**Robert Denham** vicar of Stoneleigh 1753-1771, was interred 18 July 1771 together with his wife **Mary Denham** d.1776 and two of his infant grandchildren **Eleanor Adkins** d.1777 aged 6 months and **Jane Adkins** d.1778 aged 8 months, the children of Eleanor and William Adkins below.

**Eleanor Adkins** d.October 1810 the daughter of vicar Robert Denham with her husband **William Adkins Senior** d. February 1810 of Dale House and their other children **Deborah** d.1757, **Elizabeth** d.1797, **Thomas** d.1797. Also **William Adkins Junior** d. August 1810 age 29.

**Hannah Grindon** d.1791 the wife of **Edward Grindon** d.1794 of Whitely.

**John Camill** d.-88 the son of Richard and Elizabeth Camill.

# 1752 The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bell

**The 2nd cast in 1752 by Thomas Eayre at 4¾ cwt.**

The second bell, cast in 1752, is the work of Thomas Eayre, a Kettering bell founder and clockmaker. The bell is tuned to the note of “D”

There is some confusion about whether the “Rex Judorum” inscription at Stoneleigh is on this bell or the tenor, cast by Watts. Eayre of Kettering was a great admirer of Watts, who had hailed from nearby Leicester. Eayre often inscribed his bells with Watts’ favourite inscription, and it seems he set himself to copy Watts’ bells. When Eayre recast a bell at St Margaret’s Leicester he actually put on it:

*“Hugh Watts of Leicester the foremost in his art cast the 6 largest bells 1633.*

*T Eayre Kettering recast this 1739.”*

It seems therefore that there is a closer relationship between the 1752 bell and the 1632 bells than previously realised. In addition, Eayre worked for the Isham family of Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire, who were related to the Leighs of Stoneleigh.

E.H. Lingen Barker, in his *Warwickshire Churches* of 1890, states that on this bell there is the inscription:

**T.Eayre – Fecit: Ex Dono Johanes Hudson Generosi De Stoneigh 1752**

which can be translated as:

**T. Eayre made this, through the generous gift of John Hudson of Stoneleigh, 1752**

(There was a John Hudson, who died in 1754, who was “Park Keeper to the Right Honourable Edward Lord Leigh” according to the burial register.)

Another Latin inscription follows:

**Voce mea viva depello cuncta nociva**

Which may be translated as:

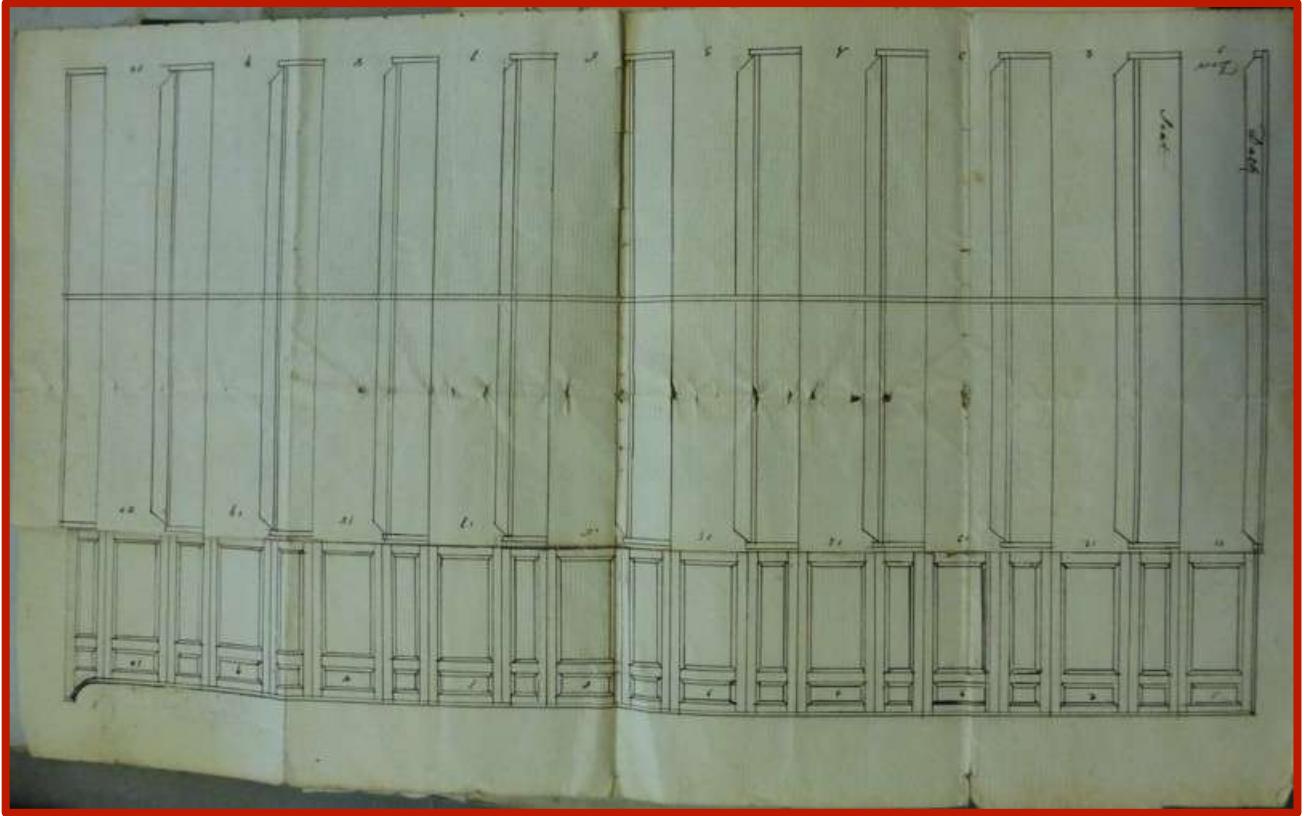
**By my living voice I drive out all that is harmful**





# 1755 Pews

In 1755 Thomas Wormlayton of Coventry provided an estimate and plan for erecting Twenty New Seats of good oak, with seat, deskboard, and doors with inside bolts, at a cost of £55 10s. This was to be a straight arrangement of 10 rows of pews either side of the central aisle.



Thomas Wormlayton's plan for the Pews c.1755 (DR18-3-50-9)

Wormlayton provided 2 detailed specifications:

The first :- Each Seat to be 6 foot Long in the Clear 2 foot 11 Inches wide in the Clear

The second:- Clarifying that the existing pews are but 8 foot 11 inches for a pair, {i.e. 4 ft 5½ inches each}. The additional length of the 6ft pews would be accommodated by reducing the central aisle by 2 ft 10 inches and the south aisle by 3 inches. "Then the Iles will be about 5 foot 9 or 10 Inch wide Which is Width Enough for a Church Much Larger"

It is believed that this particular set of pews was not installed, as a plan from 1820 showing existing pews at that time appears to match Wormalyton's 4 ft 5½ inches long pews, rather than 6 foot pews.

# 1768 John Webster



A marble and slate memorial commemorates John Webster. It reads:

Near this place lies interr'd the body of John Webster of Canly (sic) in this parish Esq. High Sheriff for this county in the year 1754. He died November the 20<sup>th</sup> 1768 aged 69.

John Webster Junior was a gentleman farmer on the Stoneleigh Estate, who had inherited the farm at Canley after his father's death in 1726. His father had been the originator of a famous "Canley" breed of beef cattle and had been a noted horse-breeder. His mother, Sarah, had inherited a half-share of a 100-acre holding from her uncle Joseph Symcox, also of Canley. John was buried in the churchyard on 23 November 1768. (Parents John and Sarah Webster feature on the west gallery panels)

John and his wife Mary had one son, also called John, born in 1734, and who died in September 1776. He too is buried at Stoneleigh, the register remarking that he is "of Warwick, formerly of Canley". In 1784 Mary's death appears in the register at Warwick St Mary, but with the note of her burial "at Stonley".

*Note: The memorial appears unfinished with a space for John's wife and son still blank.*

Map showing the land farmed by  
John Webster Esq. in Canley.

From the 1766 Survey of the Leigh Estate  
by Matthias Baker.  
(DR 671/30)

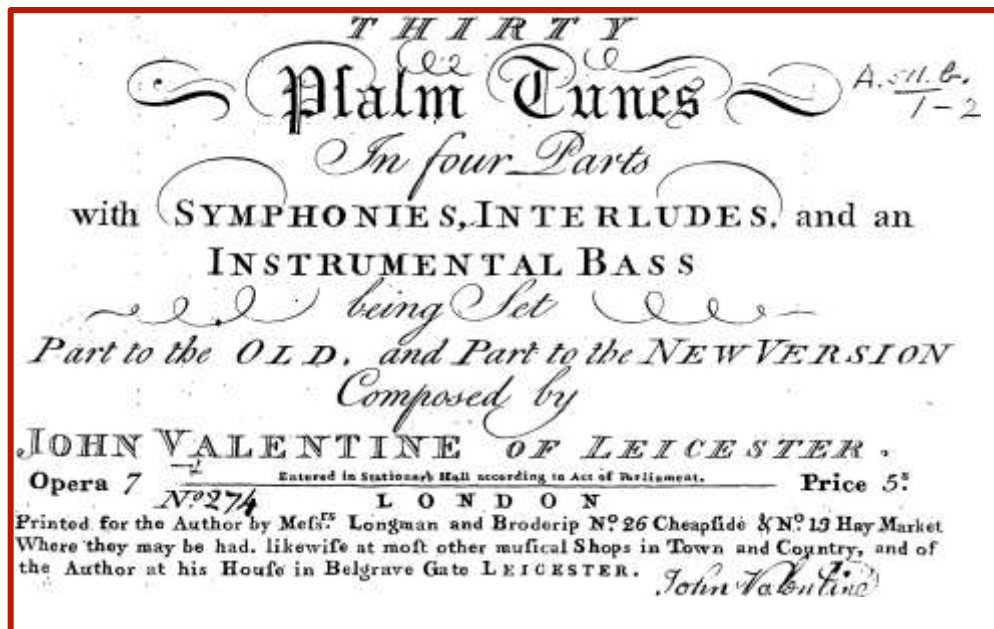


# 1784 Music in the Church

Music in the church before the nineteenth century was probably provided by unaccompanied singers, later augmented by a small band of local amateur musicians who played, for example, the violin, cello (sometimes referred to in contemporary accounts as 'bass viol'), clarinet, flute and bassoon.

Use of this "West Gallery" music – for that is where the musicians were usually sited – dwindled when the organ became popular, since it was cheaper to keep up one instrument than a West Gallery group. It has also been suggested that the old church bands were often difficult for a vicar to control, while influence over an organist was a much easier task! Such an ousting of the band by an organist is given a fictional treatment in Thomas Hardy's early novel *Under the Greenwood Tree*, which reflected actual events at Hardy's church at Stinsford. By the Victorian era the music was often disapproved of because it was considered not solemn enough for worship.

John Valentine composed instrumental music in four parts for church musicians. The Choir of Singers at Stoneleigh, subscribed to the 1784 book of Thirty Psalm Tunes, buying 3 Books at 5s each. Lord Leigh and a number of the Abbey residents also subscribed.



LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.	
Choir of Singers at Great-Glenn, Leicestersh. 2 Books	G.
Glenfield, ditto.	Rev. Mr. Griffin, Dingley, Northamptonshire
Great Brington, Northamptonshire	Rev. Mr. Greenaway, Nether-Broughton, Leicest
Harpole, ditto. 4 Books	Rev. Mr. Glover, Hinckley, ditto. 2 Books
Knighton, Leicestershire	Mr. Alderman Gamble, Leicester
Long Whatton, Leicestershire	Mr. William Gardiner, Lapworth, Warwickshire
Margaret's (St.) Leicester 2 Books	Mr. John Gerey, Hartshill, ditto.
Mountforrel, Leicestershire	Mr. John Garner, Bilson, Leicestershire
Measham, Derbyshire	Mr. James Glover, Ibstock, ditto.
Markfield, Leicestershire, 4 Books	Mr. Humphrey Gamble, Thornton, ditto.
Neatherfeal, ditto.	Mr. Thomas Goodwin, Stathorn, Leicestershire
Rempstone, Nottinghamshire	H.
Rothley, Leicestershire	C. G. Hudson, Esq. Wanley, Leicestershire, 2 B
Ryton upon Dunsmore, Warwicksh.	Rev. Mr. Haines, Leicester
Sapcoate, ditto. 3 Books	Rev. Mr. Howlette, Bedworth, Warwickshire
Stoneleigh, Warwickshire 3 Books	Rev. P. Hackett, Rector of South-Croxtton, Leicest
Snitherfield, ditto,	Mr. Thomas Hurst, Hinckley, ditto.
Woolfton, ditto,	Mr. Thomas Holland, Stokegolding, ditto.
Water-witacre, ditto,	Mr. Harrod, Bookfeller, Harborough, ditto. 6 B
	Mr. Thomas Hollin, Thraughton, ditto.



# 1786 Edward 5th Baron Leigh

Edward 5th Lord Leigh was the third son of Thomas 4th Lord Leigh and his wife Maria Rebecca Craven, but the first to survive infancy. His father died in 1749 and Edward became a ward of his mother's family, the Cravens of Coombe Abbey. A brilliant and gifted intellectual he attended Westminster School and Oriel College Oxford and was elected High Steward of Oxford, second in rank only to the Chancellor, when he was just 25.



By 1763 Edward was spending large sums of money on refurnishing Stoneleigh Abbey in the latest taste, and in particular finishing the refurbishment of the West Wing. The astonishing plasterwork in the saloon there is perhaps his greatest artistic legacy to the building. Sadly his health failed and ultimately – and tragically – he was declared a “lunatick of unsound mind” by an Inquisition of Insanity which sat in 1774. Thereafter he was attended by doctors in Lincoln, London and at Stoneleigh. He died at the age of just 44 in 1786.

Perhaps Edward's greatest legacy is his collection of books and scientific apparatus, all of which he left to Oriel College as “the Leigh Library”. It is unique in Oxford as the collection of an eighteenth century aristocrat with an interest in fine art, music, antiquities and science.

With his death, the Leigh Barony came to an end and initiated many years of wrangling over the succession to the peerage and the estate.



The marble memorial by Joseph Nollekens to Edward 5th Baron Leigh contains his arms and the Leigh motto, and reads:

The Right Honourable  
Edward Lord Leigh  
born 1st March 1742/3  
died 26th May 1786



# 1786 Coffins in the Vestry Vault

Situation of the coffins in the vault at Stoneleigh taken 2 June 1786.

{Transcript of original}

Upon entering the vault – the first on the left hand is

Edward Lord Leigh, dyed 9 March 1737 aged 53 years – {3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Leigh}

Dowager Lady Leigh (wife of the above Ld Edwd) dyed 1 September 1743 aged 56

Mary Leigh – obit 5th May 1713 –

Mrs Ann Leigh – dyed 4th August 1728 aged 15 years.

Under this coffin another with the following Inscription Lord Leigh who married Eleanor eldest daughter of Lord Rockingham Dyed 10 Nov 1710 aged 59 – {2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Leigh}

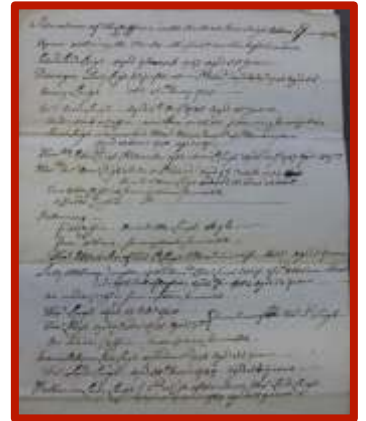
Honble Edward Leigh (eldest son of the above Lord Leigh) dyed 3rd August 1737 aged 28 years

Honble Mrs Ann Leigh (sister to Ld Edward) dyed 9th October 1734.

This Mrs Ann Leigh endow'd the Free School

Two other coffins Inscriptions Invisible

A Child's coffin ditto



Returning –

First coffin Arabella Leigh 1696

Four others – Inscriptions Invisible

Thomas, eldest son of Thomas Lord Leigh and Eleanor his wife 1685 aged 3 years

Lady Altham, daughter of the Honble Charles Leigh and wife of Lord Altham eldest Son of the Earl of Anglesey dyed 4 June 1684 aged 24 years –

An under coffin Inscription Invisible

Thomas Leigh dyed 12 October 1738

Thomas Leigh dyed 7 December 1741 aged 24 years } Two sons of Thomas Lord Leigh

An under coffin Inscription Invisible

Maria Rebecca Lady Leigh dyed December 2nd 1746 aged 32 years

Thomas Lord Leigh dyed 30th November 1749 aged 36 years – {4<sup>th</sup> Lord Leigh}

Katherine Lady Leigh 2nd wife of the above Thomas Lord Leigh dyed 5th April 1769 aged 51 years

10 Coffins on the left and 14 coffins on the right

# 1792 The 5<sup>th</sup> Bell

The 5th cast in 1792 by John Briant weighing 8 cwt.

1792 – ringing the changes!

Another bell believed to have originated in the Watts foundry in the 1630s was once the fourth in the peal, and once had the inscription:

Saxonice O Kenelme Martir    Xpj Nos defende ne malignj senciamus Jacula  
which can be translated as

O Kenelm, Saxon Martyr of Christ, defend us lest we feel the darts of the evil one.

The church porch translation reads:

O Kenelm, Saxon Martyr of Christ, guard us against the torches of the evil one.

This refers to St Kenelm. A Saxon martyr, who was killed in the Clent Hills on the order of his sister, and his body buried. When the monks of Winchcombe retrieved the body and carried it back to their abbey, the bells sounded “without the hand of man.” According to the 12th century writer William of Malmesbury “there was no place in England to which more pilgrims travelled than to Winchcombe on St Kenelm’s Feast Day” (July 17th). So, again, there would seem to be a suggestion that the bell venerates a pre-Reformation “hero.”

Two of our bells, therefore once had a connection with Winchcombe. Maybe the staunchly-Protestant Elizabethan Sir Thomas Leigh, chosen as Lord Mayor of London in 1558 partly for his opposition to the erstwhile Catholic adherents of Queen Mary, may simply have re-used a bell – the 1530 one - from Winchcombe for his newly-acquired church at Stoneleigh, without consideration for its having once been associated with pre-Reformation England.

In 1632, Stuart rule was firmly Anglo-Catholic, and the Leigh family of Stoneleigh were strong supporters of the Crown. The “Kenelm” bell in the church at Stoneleigh echoed, in its inscription, Catholic sentiment. Further, the new vicar of Stoneleigh, arriving in 1632, was Edward Maunsell, who was also a chaplain to King Charles I. His arrival coincided with a new Coventry and Lichfield Diocesan incumbent, Richard Wright, and so it is possible that a new regime was beginning in churches throughout the diocese – an anti-Puritan one.

Perhaps this is why, some eleven years later, Cromwell’s soldiers came to Stoneleigh and disrupted Maunsell’s Sunday service, finally retreating to the hillside from which they fired on the church below. It is perhaps no coincidence that Stoneleigh’s parish registers began in 1633, possibly suggesting a “new broom”.

The “Saxonice O Kenelme Martir” inscription was recorded by the vicar on a page in the earliest church register, noting that it also had the “Jesu Nazarene Rex Judeorum fili Dei Miserere mei” inscription, attributed to Watts.

However, all was to change in 1792 when this bell was re-cast, by another notable bell founder, John Briant of Hertford. He was responsible for a great many bells throughout Hertfordshire, as well as being a noted clockmaker.

The Leigh family at this time had connections with the county of Hertford and this may explain their choice of founder. One source has it being inscribed:

**Dilexi domine decorum domus tuae,**  
which may be translated as  
**Lord I have delighted in the glory of your house**

Why this old bell was re-cast is hard to say. The date, 1792, coincided with a period when the Hon. Mary Leigh was responding to the village's needs, building a new workhouse and providing money to celebrate victory at the battle of the Nile, for example. It may have been that she agreed to have one of Stoneleigh's bells re-cast. The churchwardens of the day were evidently proud of their new bell as their names, along with the maker, are inscribed on it:

**J. Judd and J. Simpson C Wardens J Briant fecit 1792**

In other words, J. Briant made the bell (or re-made it!) and the two churchwardens wished to have their names upon it!

The bell, which is now the fifth in the peal, weighs almost eight hundredweight and is tuned to the note of "A".



# 1806 The Honourable Mary Leigh



The Honourable Mary Leigh, born in 1746, was, like her brother, brought up by the Craven family. When her brother was declared a lunatic she became his Trustee along with their uncle William Craven of Coombe Abbey.

After Edward's death in 1786 she was left a life interest in the estate and survived him by twenty years. During this time she was responsible for many charitable activities locally, not least the construction of a workhouse at Stoneleigh.

She lived largely at Grove House, Kensington, which no longer exists, having provided the site for the Royal Albert Hall.

She died in Kensington and her body was brought to Stoneleigh for interment. After her death the Warwickshire estate passed to the Gloucestershire branch of the family, from whom the present Leighs are directly descended.



The memorial, in white marble, by Nollekens, reads:

Sacred to the memory of the Honourable Mary Leigh,  
daughter of Thomas the Fourth and Sister and sole heiress of  
Edward the Fifth Lord Leigh.

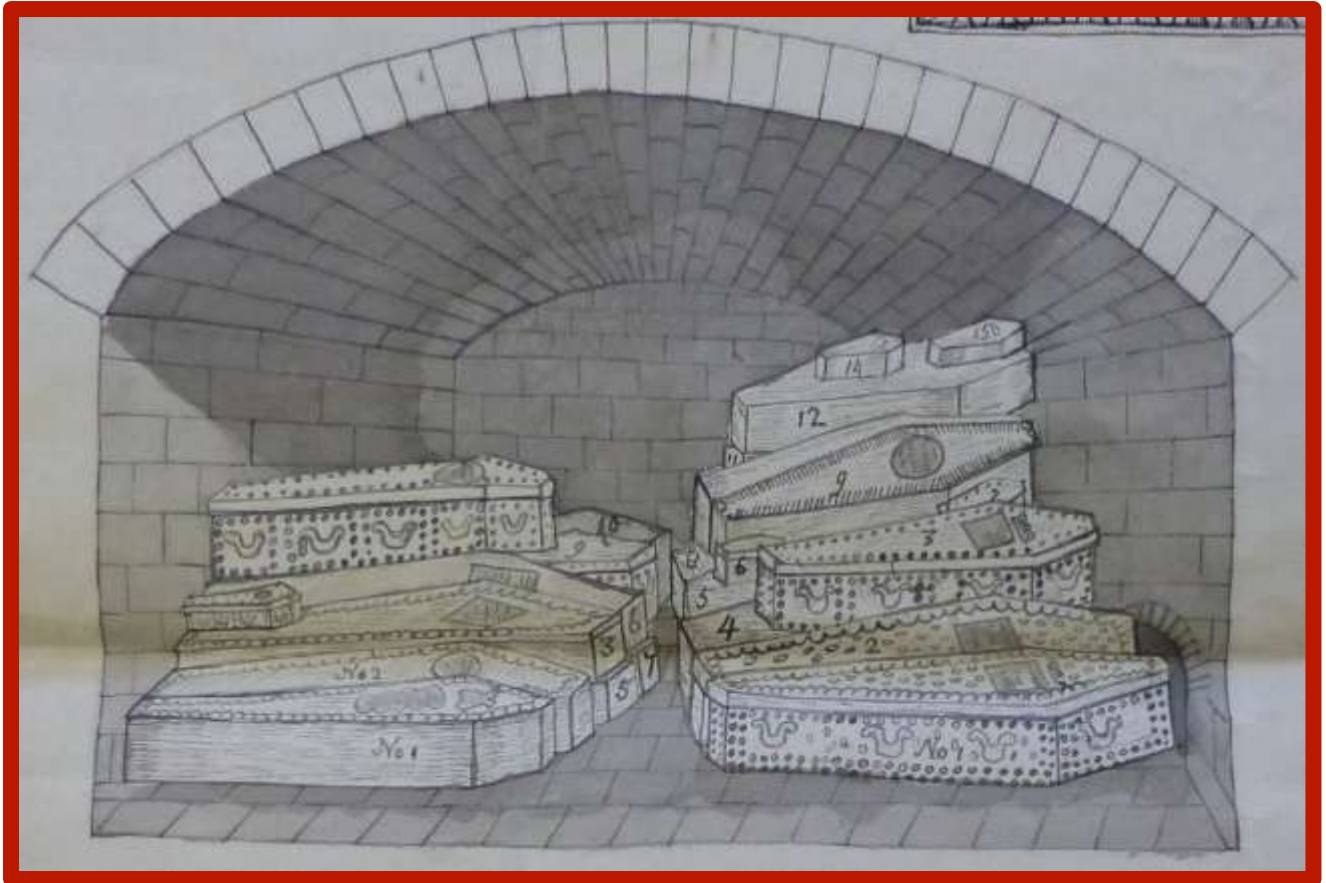
Having survived her brother twenty years, she died July 2nd  
1806 aged 70 and lies interred in the family vault beneath.

She was eminently religious and constant in the practice of  
every moral duty and, by her extensive charities and liberality,  
became, under Providence, a munificent dispenser of good to  
all around her.

Go, reader, follow her excellent example, and share with her,  
through the merits of Christ, the high rewards of immortality.



# 1813 Coffins in the Vestry Vault



A Transcription of the writing in the sketch of the vault,  
done by Rev. Thomas Warde in 1813. (DR18/3/50/1)  
(Abbreviations have generally been given in full for clarity's sake.)

## Left side of the Vault at Stoneley

**No 1.** Upon a Plate of Brass Laid upon the Lead on Coffin this Inscription. The Right Honourable Edward Lord Leigh died March the 9th 1737 aged 53.

Letters cast in lead upon the Lid

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD LORD LEIGH

DIED MARCH THE 9TH 1737 AGED 53

**No.2** The Honourable Mary Lady Dowager Leigh Died ye 6th of September 1742 aged 56.

**No.3** The Honourable Ann Leigh obit August 5th 1728 aetatis suce 15.

**No.4** M:L OBIT MAY 5 AD 1713.

**No.5** one Coffin underneath cast in the Lead.

**No.6** Upon a Brass Plate with Mantle Arms & Crest Laid upon the Leaden Coffin this Inscription: The Honourable Edward Leigh Esq eldest Son of the Right Honourable Edward Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneley in Warwickshire Died ye 3rd of August 1737 in the 28th year of his Age.

Upon the Same Coffin cast in the Lead The Honourable Edward Leigh Esq. eldest son of the Right Honourable Edward Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneleigh in Warwickshire died ye 3rd of August 1737 in ye 28th year of his Age.

**No.7** one Coffin underneath cannot be read.

**No.8** An Escutcheon with the Arms of Leigh alone. The honorable Mary Anne Leigh died 9th of September 1734.

**No.9** one Coffin underneath No. 10.

**No.10** The Right Honourable Thos Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneley who married the Honourable Mrs Eleanor Watson eldest Daughter of ye Right Honourable ye Lord Rockingham Died November ye 12 1710 aged 50.

**No.11** This Coffin underneath. Here lieth the Body of the Lady Eleanor late Wife of the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneley who departed this life July the 23rd Anno Domini 1705.

### **On the Right Hand at Entrance**

**No.1** Upon a Coffin of Crimson Velvet with the richest Silver Ornaments this Inscription upon a silver Plate. The Right Honourable Edward Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneleigh and Baronet. Born the first of March 1742-3. Died 26 of May 1786.

**No.2** The Honourable Mary Leigh Born May 4th 1736 Died July 3rd 1806.

**No.3** now placed upon No 4. Upon an elegant Silver Plate highly ornamented. The Right Honourable Lady Leigh died 5th of April 1769 Aged 51.

**No.4.** one now underneath to make room For the late Honourable Mistress Leigh. The Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh Died November 30th 1749 aged 36.

**No.5** with a Coronet upon the Plate. The Right Honourable Maria Rebecca Lady Leigh Died December 7<sup>th</sup> 1746 aged 32.

**Nos. 6 and 7** Two children.

**No.6** The Honourable Thomas Leigh 2nd Son of The Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh died December 7th 1741 in the 2nd year of his age.

**No.7** The Honourable Thomas Leigh son of the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Leigh and Maria Rebecca his Lady Died ye 12th of October 1738.

**No.8** one underneath cannot be read it is under No 9.

**No.9** Cast in Lead this inscription Here lyeth the Body of the Lady Altham Wife of The Right Honourable ye Lord Altham Second Son to the Earl of Anglesey and Daughter to the Honourable Charles Leigh Esq and Ann Leigh his Lady. SHE DEPARTED this life ye 4th day of June aged 24 years March 30th 1684.

**No.10** one underneath.

**No.11** Christopher Leigh Esq. 4th Sonne of the late Thomas Lord Leigh & the late Lady Mary his Wife Deceased September 15: Anno Domini 1672.

**No.12 and No.13** Two large leaden coffins With no Inscriptions.

**No.14 & No.15** Two Small Coffins.

**No.14** Thomas Filius Nat Max Th. D. Leigh De Stoneleigh et D ELEANOR UX; OB IVN 17 AD 1685 AET 3 (ie Thomas eldest son of Thomas Lord Leigh of Stoneleigh and Lady Eleanor Leigh his Wife died June 17 1685 aged 3).

**No.15** ARABELLA LEIGH 1696

Observe those Coffins that are plain are all lead only the others are Covered with Black Velvet richly ornamented with Silver Except the late Lord Leigh's which is covered with Crimson Velvet. There are 26 Coffins in the Vault.

Edward Leigh was one of the largest men in the Kingdom his Coffin is 7 feet 3 inches in length, in Breadth 2 feet 10 inches, in height 1 foot 8 inches.

LEFT SIDE of the Vault at Stoneley. No. 1.  
Upon a Plate of Brass laid upon the head.  
On Coffin this inscription. The Right  
Honble Edward Lord Leigh died March  
2<sup>nd</sup> 1737. aged 53.

Letters cast in lead upon the lid.  
THE RIGHT HONORABLE EDWARD LORD LEIGH  
DIED MARCH THE 2<sup>nd</sup> 1737. AGED 53.

No. 2 The Honorable Mary Lady Dow-  
ager Leigh Died 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1742  
aged 56. No. 3. The Honorable Anne Lady Dow-  
ager Leigh Died 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1728. Aged 55. No. 4. No. 5.  
No. 5 one Coffin underneath OBT. MAY 5.  
cast in the lead.

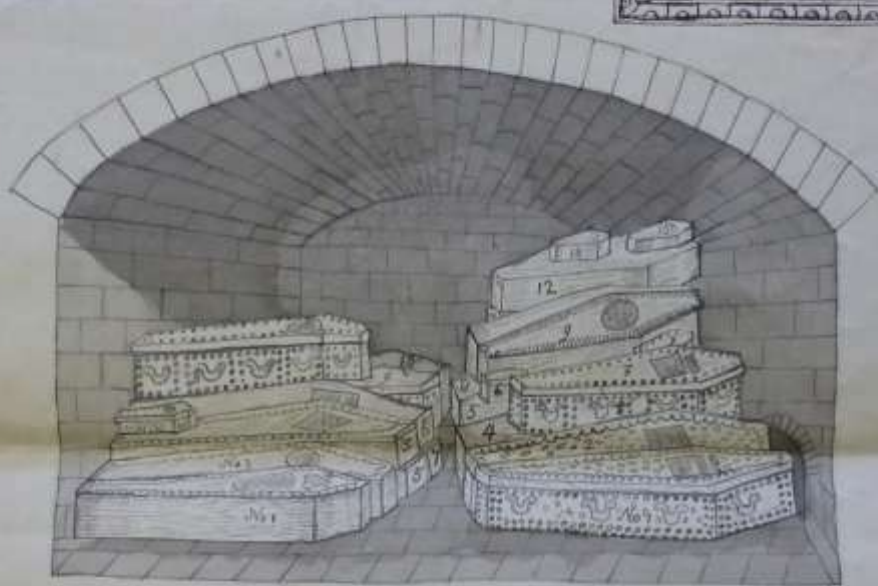
No. 6. Upon a Brass Plate  
1709. with Mantle Arms & Crest  
laid upon the head in  
Coffin this inscription  
The Honble Edward Leigh Esq<sup>r</sup> eldest  
Son of the Right Honble Edward Lord

Leigh Baron of Stoneley in Warwickshire  
died 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1737. in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of  
his Age.

Upon the Same Coffin cast in the lead The  
Honble Edw: Leigh Esq<sup>r</sup> eldest Son of the Right  
Honble Edward Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneley  
in WARWICKSHIRE died the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1737.  
in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of his Age.

No. 4. one Coffin underneath  
cannot be read. No. 8. an Escutcheon  
with the Arms of Leigh alone No. 9. one Coffin  
underneath No. 10

The Honble  
Edward Leigh Esq<sup>r</sup>  
died 3<sup>rd</sup> of August  
1737.



This Coffin underneath No. 11.  
Here lieth the Body of the Lady Eleanor late wife of  
the Rt Hon: Tho: Lord Leigh Baron of Stoneley who  
departed this life July the 23<sup>rd</sup> anno Dom 1708.  
On the Right hand at Entrance No. 1.

Upon a Coffin of Crimson Velvet with the richest  
Silver Ornamented this inscription Upon a Silver  
Plate. The Right Honble Edward Lord Leigh  
Baron of Stoneley & Baronnet.

Born the first of March 1742. 3. Died 26 of May  
1786.

No. 2. The Hon. Mary Leigh Born May 4<sup>th</sup> 1736  
Died July 3. 1806.

No. 3. now placed upon No. 4. Upon an elegant  
Silver Plate highly Ornamented. The Right  
Honble Lady Leigh died 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1769.  
aged 51.

No. 4. one now underneath to make room  
for the late Honble Mrs Leigh.

The Right Honble The Lord Leigh died  
Nov. 30. 1749. aged 36. No. 5. with a monument  
Upon the Plate. The Right Honble Maria  
Rebecca Lady Leigh Died Decemb. 4<sup>th</sup> 1746.  
aged 32. No. 6. & No. 7. Two Children

No. 6. The Honble Thomas Leigh 3<sup>rd</sup> Son of  
The Right Honble Thomas Lord Leigh died  
Decemb. 4<sup>th</sup> 1741. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of his Age

No. 7. The Honble Lord Leigh Son of the Right Honble  
Thomas Lord Leigh & Maria Rebecca his lady  
Died 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1758.

No. 8. one underneath cannot be read it is under  
No. 9. No. 9 cast in lead this inscription

Here lieth the Body of the Lady Altham wife of  
The Right Honble Lord Altham Second Son of the  
Earl of Anglesey & daughter to the Honble Charles Leigh  
Esq<sup>r</sup> Ann Leigh his lady SHE DEPARTED this life 2<sup>nd</sup>  
4<sup>th</sup> Day of June aged 24 years March 30. 1684

No. 10. one underneath. No. 11.

Christopher Leigh Esq<sup>r</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Son of the late  
Thomas Lord Leigh & the late Lady Mary his wife  
deceased Sept 15. anno Dom. 1672.

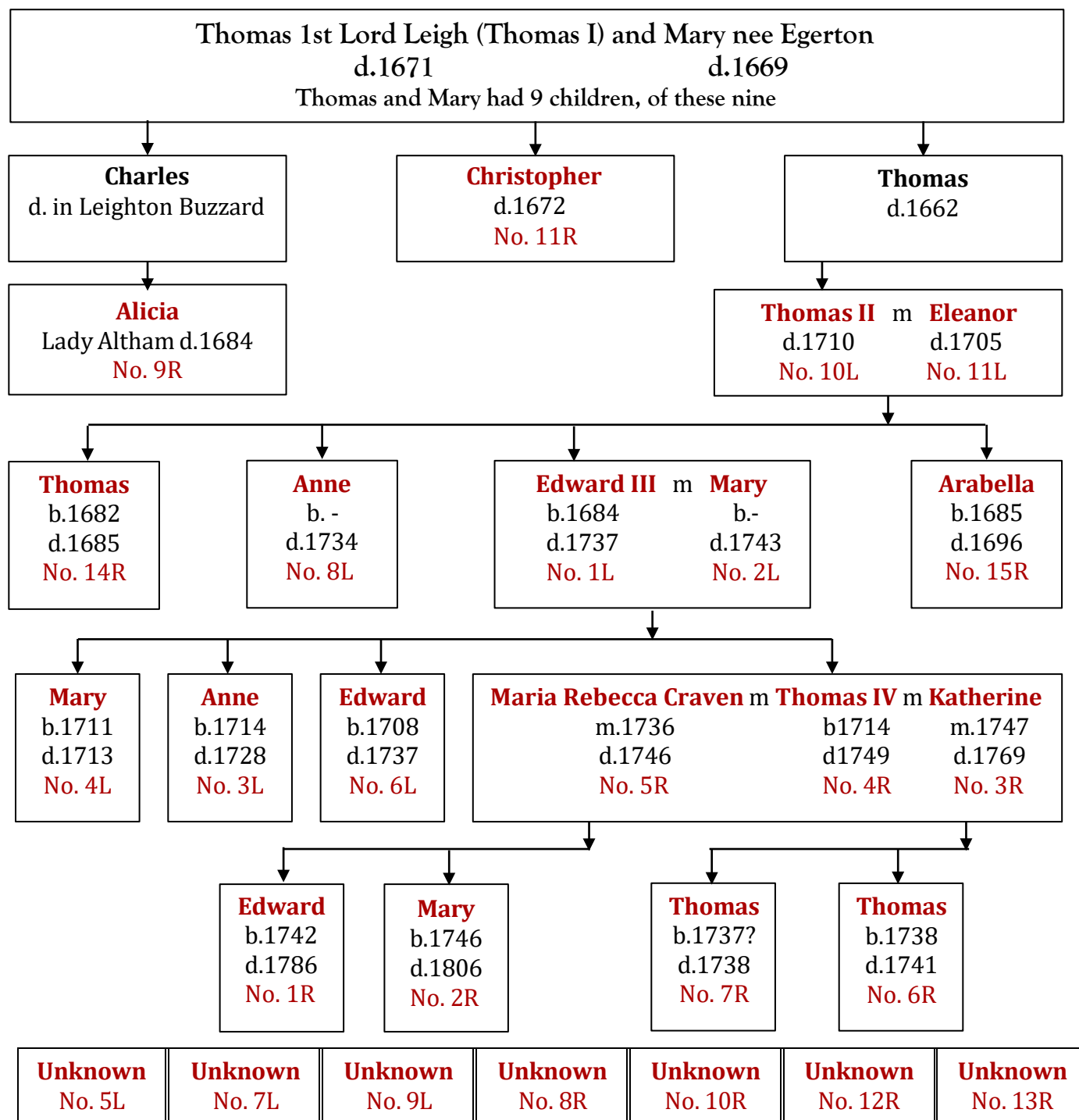
No. 12. & No. 13. Two large leaden Coffins  
with no inscription's No. 14. & No. 15. Two  
small Coffins. No. 14. The Honble Nat. Max.

The Honble Thomas Leigh Esq<sup>r</sup> & DELBA No.  
RAVX. OB. IVN. 17. AD 1685. Et. 3.

No. 15  
ARABELLA LEIGH  
1696.

Observe those Coffins that are plain are all lead only the others are covered with  
Black Velvet richly Ornamented with Silver except the late Lord Leigh's which  
is covered with Crimson Velvet. There are 26 Coffins in the Vault. Edward  
Leigh was one of the largest Men in the Kingdom his Coffin is 7 feet 3 inches in length  
in breadth 2 feet 10 inches. in height 1 foot 8 inches.

## Who were those buried in the Vault under the Vestry ?



Although there are 26 coffins in the vault only 19 are identified in the 1813 document and shown above. The oldest are naturally furthest from the entrance.

**No. 8L** Anne d.1734 endowed the Free School.

**No. 3R** is Katherine Berkeley the second wife of Thomas 4th Lord Leigh - he is therefore buried between his two wives!

**No. 8R** or **No. 10R** could be Lewis Leigh who died aged 16 in 1706 and is recorded as being buried in June. Lewis was a son of Thomas, 2nd Lord Leigh who was buried in November 1710.

**No. 12R** and **No. 13R**, two unknown large coffins at the rear right of the vault, could be Thomas 1st Lord Leigh (Thomas I) d.1671 and his wife Mary nee Egerton d.1669, the parents of nine children.



# 1814 Major Renovations Plan

In 1814 when the planning for the church alterations started, there was a Lichfield Diocesan Faculty for the proposed alterations inside the church.

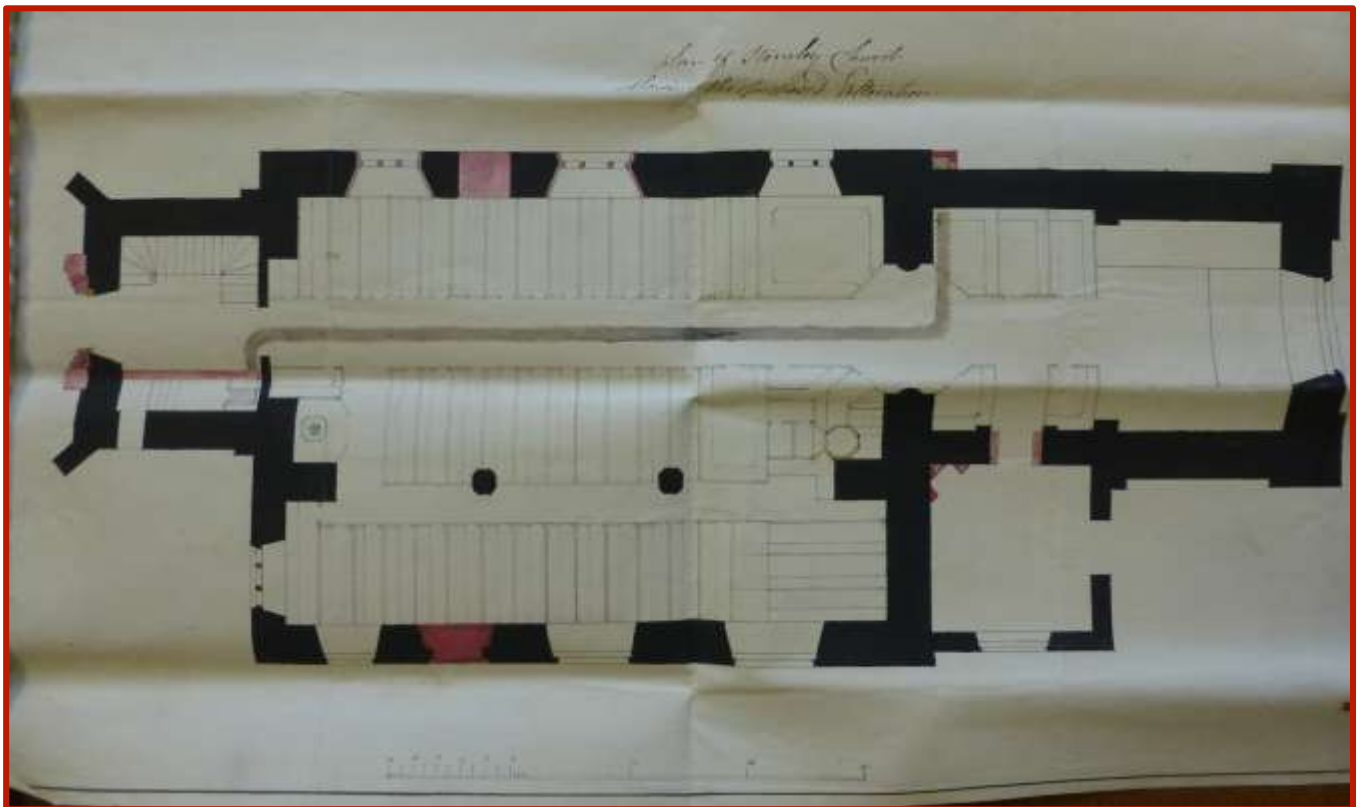
The plan shows (in pink) blocking the north and south nave doorways; new outer stonework to the west door; bricking up the arch between the body of the church and the belfry; rebuilding the porch with stone.

There was also to be a fireplace in the vestry, but no other heating in the church for another 40 years!

The Faculty also allowed for a new extended balcony, new window tracery for the north windows and for the pulpit to be moved to a central position from the north east corner of the nave. This is shown on the plan together with the font by the west door.

The plan shows the nave positively packed with pews. 15½ along the north wall with a square arrangement at the front, pew No.1 for the Leigh family; 10 in the centre with a rectangle at the front near the central pulpit; 13 along the south wall; and an additional 3 pews, without doors, in the bay where the font now is.

Each set of pews is longer than previously and the aisle widths are reduced.



The Diocesan Faculty Plan (*Lich BC-5-1814-127*)

# 1821 Old Pews

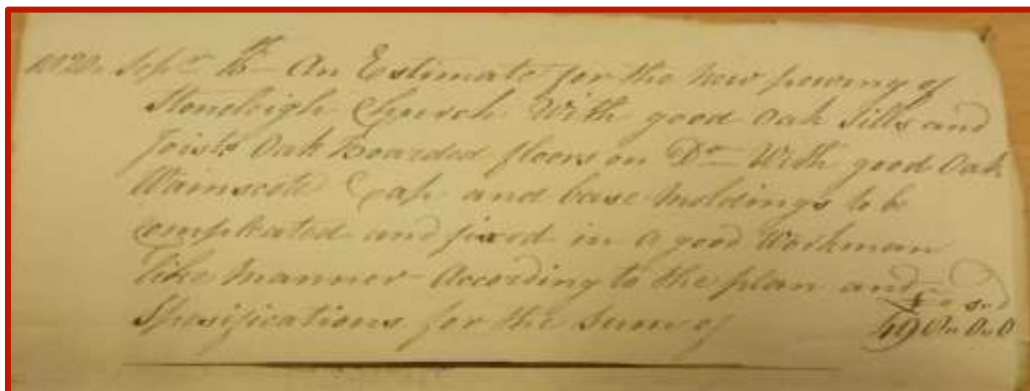
In 1821, as part of his preparation for installing new pews, John Whitehead carpenter of Stoneleigh drew up a now rather faded plan showing the existing layout of the pews before alterations (the plan is marked up in red to give a clearer idea).



John Whitehead's plan of the existing old pews (DR662-5)

This does appear to show shorter 4ft pews corresponding with Thomas Wormlayton's measurements in 1755, together with wide aisles, rather than Wormlayton's proposed 6ft pews.

In this plan the pews are numbered and the names of the occupiers were provided. The plan also shows that at this time the **Font** was located by the west door and the **Pulpit** was at the north-east corner.



John Whitehead's estimate for new pews £490 (WDR DR600/2)

# 1821 The Barrel Organ

At Stoneleigh, in 1821, when the current west gallery was added as part of a complete refurbishment, a barrel organ was installed in the gallery. It was manufactured by James Ball & Son of Grosvenor Square, London.

In a letter to Mrs. Julia Judith Leigh from her relative Edward Cooper of Hamstall Ridware, he advises her on organ makers:

*Hamstall, Nov 14th 1820, Dear Madam, According to your request I wrote to Mr Charles Knyvett {This is Charles Knyvett (1752–1822), musician and singer }, and in reply he writes me word, that the best maker of Barrel organs and the one he has always employed to build, is Ball of Duke St, Grosvenor Square, a very honest man. He has one Barrel Organ of the largest Compass nearly finished and a very fine Instrument it is, the price 110 Guineas. It has a handsome Mahogany Case. He has two smaller ones, but they are not in a state yet to be heard. (DR18/3/50/12)*

A few months later, on Feb 16th 1821, James Ball himself wrote :

*27 Duke St, Gro. Sqr., Sir, We have sent you the particulars of the barrel Organ you saw at our manufactory this Morning which are as follows. A barrel organ in a neat mahogany Case with Gothic front and gilt Pipes, containing 5 Stops viz Open Diapason Stop Diapason Principal Twelfth and Fifteenth, plays the tunes. Price for ready money one Hundred ponds, the purchaser to pay for the packing & packing Cases, carriage, and travelling expenses for the person who puts it up, no charge to be made for his time. Dimensions 11 feet 10 Inches high 5, feet 8 Inch wide, 2 feet 9 Inch deep. We are Sir, Your Obedt. Humble Servts. James Ball & Son. (DR18/3/50/13)*

The phrase “plays the tunes” in Ball’s letter refers to the fact that hymn tunes were played by turning a handle which in turn rotated the barrel. The number of tunes the organ was capable of playing is not known, but each tune required a different barrel and so the barrel organ’s repertoire was necessarily limited.



A gothic-fronted barrel organ, typical of the period.

# 1821 The Gallery

The gallery was originally built across the nave but was not extended when the south aisle was added. It was used for the West Gallery musicians.

In 1811 it was proposed to have inscriptions lettered on the front of the gallery:

*The Reverend Thomas Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey gave £300 towards the new roofing of this Church*

*Mrs Lucy Price of Bagginton gave £100 towards the repewing of this Church*

*James Henry Leigh Esq. of Stoneleigh Abbey gave £100 towards the repewing of this Church – and made the North Window next the Tower – and gave the organ.*

Generous donations indeed to the ongoing building works, however, it is not certain that these inscriptions ever made it to the gallery, prior to the later major church renovations.

In 1814 the Diocesan Faculty plan included an extension to the gallery and in 1820 John Whitehead, carpenter, gave an estimate for £72.

*An estimate for the gallery to be continued across the Whole of the Church. With a good Oak framing and Oak boarded floor. With front Wainscote to be fitted up with cap and Other Modings to correspond with the present gallery, including the two New Oak Doors. With frames to be fixed at the West end of the Church According to the Specifications. For the sum of £72 0s 0d*

A copy was made of “the inscriptions in Stoneleigh Church containing a list of the Benefactions to the Poor of the parish, which inscriptions were destroyed in repairing the said church in 1814”. Then in December 1821 there was a bill from James Cherry, coach-, herald-, sign-, house-furniture- and ornamental- painter, carver & Gilder & picture frame maker, Cross Cheaping, Coventry, to the Hon. James Hen. Leigh Esq, “to writing 45½ Dozen Gold Letters on Pannel for Stoneley Church”. [N.B. pricing was per letter, but the letters on this panel do not quite tally with 45½ dozen!].

This bill relates to the first part done for the gallery, the largest containing the charges from Milburn Grange & Dame Alice Leigh’s endowment of the Almshouses. There was a note filed with the bill:

*this lettering a gift from Mr. Leigh to encourage the parish to have the other donations properly lettered.*

This encouragement was apparently effective, as shown by the current panels on the gallery.

The new wider gallery contained seating for 54 worshippers.

Edith Maud Cooke, the wife of the vicar Herbert Cooke who was here from 1910-1948, recalled the choir in the gallery on one side of the organ and the Sunday School children on the other side. Geoffrey Parks the vicar from 1948 to 1975 noted in 1966 that the choir was in the chancel where the choir stalls were in front of, and for the most part concealing, the sandstone effigy of a priest on the north side of the chancel.



# 1821 The Gallery People



One of the most prominent features within the church are the gold lettered inscriptions on the gallery panels. In addition to the centrepiece, showing the Royal Coat of Arms and the Leigh endowments, other panels record the old major charitable donations of parishioners. The more recent donations towards the 1820s renovations were not recorded on the panels.

**Thomas Dunton** was very much associated with Stoneleigh Grange in the mid-sixteenth century; he had occupied it prior to 1554. Manorial records of 1573 and 1574 describe Thomas Dunton as “steward of Stoneleigh”, keeping account of the rents.

**Mary Turner.** In her will dated 24 September 1607 Mary charged certain property in Solihull with the annual payment of £3 6s 8d for the relief of the poor, impotent, and most needy people living in Stoneleigh and other nearby parishes, together with 6s 8d to be paid to the churchwardens for distribution.

**Thomas Sothern(e)** came from Stareton, where his family had lived for some time. He was described in the burial register on 18 January 1635 as an “engineer”. Perhaps he was particularly exercised by the state of the roads – hence his bequest “towards the repair of the bridges between Stoneleigh and Stareton, the residue to the poor”.

**Thomas & Sarah Davis, Samuel & Mary Collins, John & Sarah Webster, Mrs Hannah Lycet, Joseph Symcox.** Thomas Davis farmed at Bokendon Grange with his wife Sarah, and died in 1706. Mary Collins, wife of Samuel, died in 1717 and was a sister of Joseph Symcox, gentleman farmer of Canley, and his wife Sarah. The Symcox family had farmed at Canley since 1578. Another of Joseph’s sisters married and had a daughter Sarah, who became the wife of John Webster Senior, of Canley. It is these three couples who with Mrs Hannah Lycet, gave the charitable gift above.

**Francis Casemore or Cashmore** was one of a family who had farmed at Park Farm in Stareton for many years. When he died at the end of 1723 he was a Yeoman with 153 acres, his house having nine rooms.

**Fletcher Bates** married Sarah Hughes on 14 March 1760 in Stoneleigh, when he was a widower. His wife Mary had been buried in 1759 at Lillington. He too was buried at Lillington, on 15 February 1761, and in the register is described as “of Stoneleigh Abbey, miller”.

**Mary Davis** (for the repair of her tomb). Mary Davis of Stareton did not die until 1786 but she had been widowed in 1772 and her daughter Elizabeth had died in 1778. The family gravestone comments on the loss of two other children in infancy. Perhaps Mary was concerned that there was no family member left after herself to keep her tomb in good repair.

**Mr Ryton and Mr Griffin.** No further information has been found about these gentlemen.

The above charities have been regulated by a scheme of the Charity Commissioners since 1915 under the title of the United Charities.

# 1821 A Sensitive Subject of Seating

The new pews planned for the church increased the seating available by widening the rows and reducing the width of the aisles, so the commissioners of Stoneleigh church met to discuss the allocation of seats. All the pews were numbered with a little brass disc.

Richard Darley the Leigh Estate Manager reported back to Julia Judith Leigh in a letter of 29th April 1821.

The agreed plan was that the rows along the north wall would be allocated to the Leigh family and their servants, with the Boys School seats at the back. With the exception of Pew No. 8 allotted to Mr Solly and Mr. Russell's tenants at Canley, and half of No.13 to Mrs Purvis for Bockendon Grange.

The central rows had an allocation for the vicar and another under the pulpit for his servants. Seats near the front were allotted to Mrs Price, Mr Neale, Mr Lant, Mr Wade and Mr Ryley. Also at the front Col. Gregory, who "gave up his claim to the seats adjoining Mr Leigh's on the impropriety being stated to him by Mr Vyner and on showing that his tenants would receive sittings for fourteen persons, in the most eligible part of the Church, in lieu of eight or ten dispersed and mostly inconvenient". The remaining 12 rows were for Mr. Leigh's tenants.

On the south side 2 large seats for the farmers' female servants, 5 for the cottagers, 2 for the Alms poor, the large one for the School mistress and girls, and 7 for Mr Leigh's small tenants, particularly the small renters who usually attend.

The Galleries were reserved for the singers, farmers men servants, boys ditto.

It was a normal practice at this time to allocate all the seats in order to pre-empt any altercations which may arise from a church filled with parishoners each Sunday.

Mr Darley also noted in his letter:

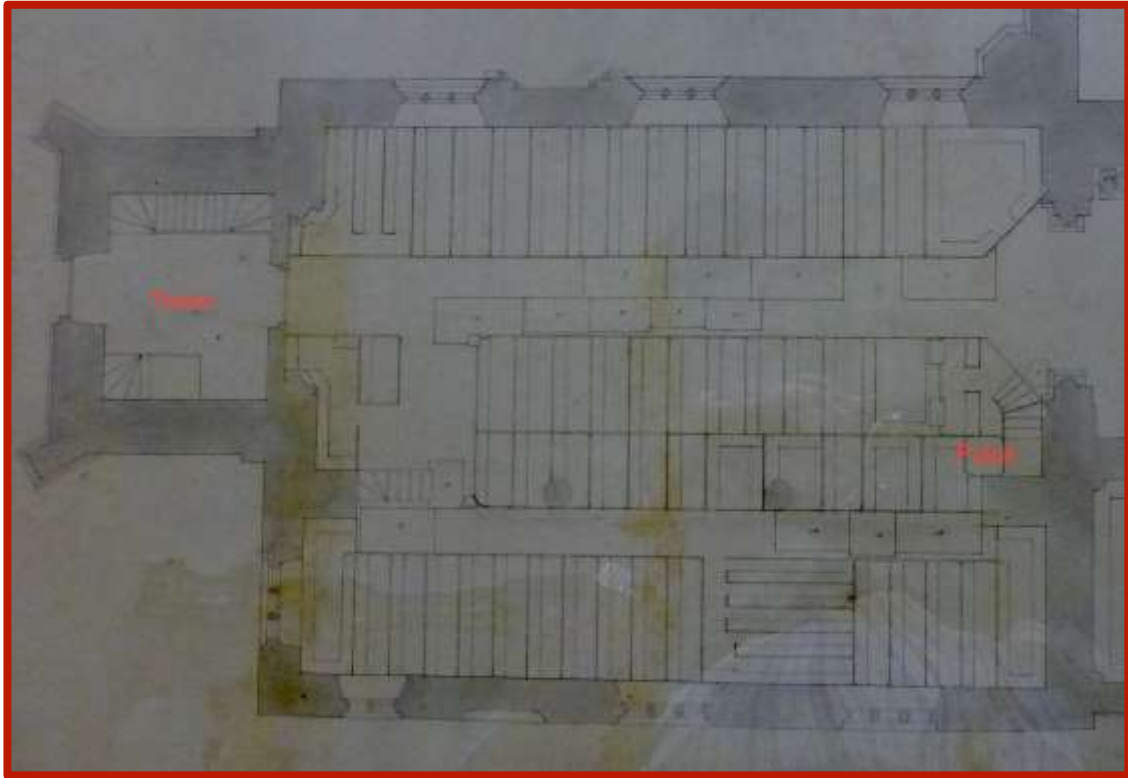
"The Award will not however be signed for a few weeks until it is seen where there are any omissions in the accommodation, the Commissioners having reserved a power to make any small alterations, should such appear proper".

In an article many years later for the Stoneleigh & Ashow News, Mrs Cooke the wife of Vicar Herbert Cooke recalls the church services in c.1910: "The farmers drove to Church in their 'gigs' or horse-drawn carriages. They were regular attendants - dressed in their Sunday best and all with top hats".



# 1826 New Pews

In 1826, after the alterations, a plan of the church by C. Jones, shows the new pews in an arrangement quite similar to the 1814 Faculty Plan of 12 years earlier. The pews are longer and the aisles narrower than depicted in John Whitehead's 1821 plan of the old pews.



Church plan, drawn by C Jones 1826 (DR662/10)

This also shows that the **Pulpit** has been moved from its previous location in the north-east corner, to its current position in the centre. The **Font** is conspicuous by its absence! The burial slabs in the aisles are also shown.

In 1890 E.H. Lingen Barker in his work on Warwickshire Churches stated that Stoneleigh Church “contains sittings for 363 worshippers, including 54 in the western gallery.”

**Made by John Whitehead in 1820 the pews are nearly 200 years old.**

Their excellent condition is in large part thanks to “The Stoneleigh Mixture”. This recipe for the preservation and polishing of the wood was held in the records of Dudley Taylor the pharmacist in Kenilworth and made up regularly for Stoneleigh Abbey. It was based on a very old potion with which they cleaned panelling and doors etc. The cleaning girls at the Abbey passed the recipe onto Jayne Brooks, Madeline White and the other ladies who took on the church cleaning rota and who had decided to do more than just dusting and Hoovering!

## **The Stoneleigh Mixture**

Boiled Linseed Oil 500 ml

Pure Turpentine 500 ml

Methylated Spirit 500 ml

Ascetic Acid 45 ml (Vinegar)

Dilute to 2 litres

# 1820s

## The Leigh Chapel Mausoleum

In the early years of the tenure of James Henry Leigh and the Gloucestershire branch of the Leigh family, a decision was made to erect an extra space for burials of members of the family.

The Reverend Thomas Leigh, who had taken over Stoneleigh from 1806-1813, was nevertheless an Adlestrop man, and was buried “back home” in the village where he had been Rector for so long. A sketch of the burial vault beneath the church at Adlestrop shows that he joined the rest of his Adlestrop family. Indeed, although James Henry Leigh was to provide a burial place at Stoneleigh for his family, he too was in fact laid to rest at Adlestrop. It is likely that the scheme had not yet been completed by the time of his death.

On 6 August 1820 the architect C.S. Smith, who was responsible for Leamington's Pump Rooms, was involved in much work at the abbey including the Riding School; he is also thought to be responsible for the Grecian Lodges. He wrote to Julia Judith Leigh (wife of James Henry) with ideas for the design of a mausoleum.

*One suggestion I have to make is to ascend two or three steps from the Chancel into the Mausoleum which might be intirely devoted to the reception of Monuments & Inscriptions if the Saxon doorway was glaizd or perforated (similar to the screens in many of our older churches) it would have an impressive effect, the window should of course be of painted glass, the ceiling groined & no woodwork whatever introduced. According to this idea I should place the Catacombs beneath the floor of the Mausoleum having a large stone in the floor to take up by which the coffins might with solemnity & facility be lowered into the Cemetery below, placing them in an apartment level with the church.*

A plan was created in September, and by the end of the month a faculty was applied for, and was granted in November. Thus began a large extension to the existing church, continuing a great deal of restoration which had begun in 1811.

It seems that by mid-1823 there were still ideas for amendments to the original plan. Charles Hanbury Tracy of Grygynog was suggesting improvements to the as-yet-incomplete design, and added further to the earlier vestry on the south side of the chancel. As the Victoria County History describes the finished chapel:

*It harmonizes with the chancel, repeating the shallow buttresses and the plain parapet of the nave. It is lighted on the north by a three-light tracery window, and on the east and west by a single tracery window of three ogee lights. ... it has walls of ashlar and a floor paved with stone. It has a plaster vaulted ceiling with moulded ribs springing from moulded corbels in each angle and a central octagonal boss with a plain shield surrounded by cusps.*

It is believed that most of the Leighs memorialised in the chapel are buried in the vault beneath; several more recent family members have, however, been cremated, or buried in the churchyard either at Stoneleigh or Ashow.



## C. S. Smith's first ideas for the Mausoleum



DR18/25/62 1819

## c.1826 Scale drawing of the Mausoleum



DR18/25/61 c.1826

# 1826 Leigh Chapel Stained Glass

Under the auspices of the Hon. Julia Judith Leigh, a series of stained glass windows was commissioned for the east and west windows in the new mausoleum, showing the lines of descent of the Leigh family with the appropriate coats of arms.

The windows date from 1826, when a sketch of the coats of arms was first made, to approximately 1830. The last panel includes the names of Chandos and Margarett Leigh, and Chandos' rank is given as "Esquire". As he was created 1st Baron Leigh of the 2nd Creation in 1839, the window must have been finished before that date.

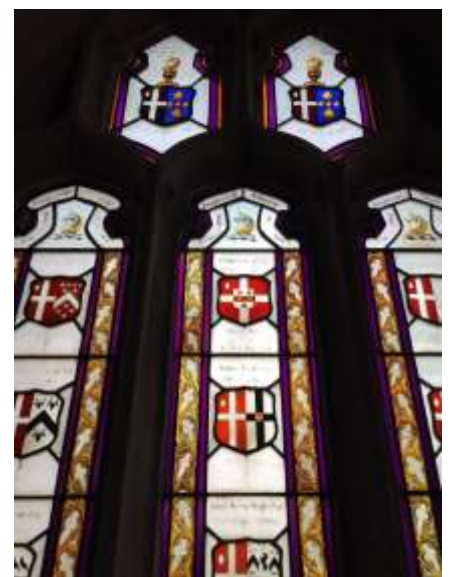
The glass itself was possibly made by Charles Pemberton of Birmingham, the heraldry based on sketches by Sir George Nayler of the College of Arms.



For example, the east window gives the Warwickshire line of descent from Sir Thomas Leigh, Lord Mayor of London, who made the original purchase of Stoneleigh Abbey and Estate after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. With the name of Sir Thomas at the top of the central panel, it begins in the left panel with each generation of male heir, descending through the central panel to the last of the barons Leigh of the 1st Creation, Edward 5th Lord Leigh, who died in 1786. The right-hand panel gives the line of descent from Sir Thomas Leigh's third son, through to the children of Sir Francis Leigh, Earl of Chichester. Both of Francis' daughters made grand alliances, one to the Earl of Southampton and the other to George Villiers, Viscount Grandison.

In the nineteenth century were keen to reveal their aristocratic connections!

In the west window the line of descent from Sir Thomas Leigh is the Gloucestershire branch, descending from his eldest son Rowland. This branch had lived at Adlestrop and Longborough since the late sixteenth century, before inheriting in addition the Warwickshire estate in 1806. It notes in particular that James Leigh Esq married the daughter of Henry Duke of Chandos, and that his son, James Henry Leigh Esq, died in 1823 at Stoneleigh Abbey. He had married the Hon. Julia Judith Twisleton, daughter of Thomas Lord Saye and Sele. Again, clearly, finishing with the names of Chandos and Margarett Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey, the stained glass proclaims the aristocratic connections of the family and finally their possession, through both county lines of descent, of Stoneleigh Abbey.



# 1826 Leigh Chapel Stained Glass Inscriptions

The inscriptions on the windows are now very faded. However, there is a handwritten copy from c.1828 and a typed copy with many gaps from 1980. Combining these we get an approximate transcription, omitting the coat of arms linking each couple.

N.B. Sir Thomas Leigh Kt., repeated in the separate panes at the top of each window, did not die in 1558 which was when he was Lord Mayor of London. He died in 1571.

## East Window

**Sir Thomas Leigh Kt.**  
of Stoneleigh Abbey  
ob 1558  
Tout Vient de Dieu

**Sir Thomas Leigh Kt.**  
of Stoneleigh Abbey  
ob 1558  
Tout Vient de Dieu

**Sir Thomas Leigh Bart**  
ob 1625  
Catherine Spencer  
Dau. of  
Sir John Spencer Kt.

**Thomas Baron Leigh**  
ob.1710 at 58  
Hon. Eleanor Watson  
Dau. of Edward Baron  
Rockingham

**Sir William Leigh Kt.**  
  
Frances Harrington  
Dau. of  
Sir James Harrington Kt.

**Sir John Leigh Kt.**  
ob vita patris 1608 at 32  
Ursula Hoddesdon  
Dau. & Heiress of  
Sir Chr Hoddesdon Kt. of  
Leighton Buzzard

**Edward Baron Leigh**  
ob 1737/8 at 53  
Mary Holbech  
Dau. & Heiress of  
Thos Holbech Esq of Fillongley

**Sir Francis Leigh K.B.**  
  
Hon. Mary Egerton  
Dau. of Thomas Lord Viscount  
Brackley, Lord Ellesmere

**Thomas Baron Leigh**  
ob1671 at 77  
  
Mary Egerton  
Dau. & Cs of  
Sir Thos Egerton Kt. son of  
Thomas Viscount Brackley

**Thomas Baron Leigh**  
ob 1749 at 36  
  
Maria Rebecca Craven  
Dau. of John Craven Esq and  
Sister of William Baron Craven

**Sir Francis Leigh Bart**  
Baron Dunsmore & Earl of  
Chichester ob 1653  
Hon. Audrey Boteler  
Eldest Dau. and Cohs of  
John Lord Boteler of Bramfield

**Sir Thomas Leigh Kt.**  
obit vita patris 1662 at 46

Jane Fitzmaurice  
Dau. of Patrick Fitzmaurice  
Baron of Kerry in Ireland

**Edward Baron Leigh**  
ob. 1786 at 44  
Caelebs

**The Lady Elizabeth Leigh**  
Eldest Dau. & Cohs of  
Francis Earl of Chichester  
Married Thomas Wriothesley  
Earl of Southampton  
**The Lady Mary Leigh**  
Second Dau. & Cohs of  
Francis Earl of Chichester  
Married George Villiers  
Viscount Grandison

## West Window

**Sir Thomas Leigh Kt.**  
of Stoneleigh Abbey  
ob 1558  
Tout Vient de Dieu

**Sir Thomas Leigh Kt.**  
of Stoneleigh Abbey  
ob 1558  
Tout Vient de Dieu

Longborough Adlestrop  
Tout Vient de Dieu

Longborough Adlestrop  
Tout Vient de Dieu

Longborough Adlestrop  
Tout Vient de Dieu

**Rowland Leigh Esq**  
Superstes 1596  
Catherine Berkeley  
Dau. of  
Sir Richard Berkeley Kt.

**William Leigh Esq**  
ob 1757 at 66  
Mary Lord  
Dau. & Cohs of  
Robert Lord Esq

**Sir William Leigh Kt.**  
ob 1632 at 46  
Elizabeth Whorwood  
Dau. of  
Sir Thos Whorwood Kt.

**James Leigh Esq**  
ob 1773 at 49  
Rt. Hon. the Lady Caroline  
Brydges  
Dau. of Henry  
Duke of Chandos

**William Leigh Esq**  
ob 1690 at 86  
  
Joanna Pury  
Dau. of Thos Pury Esq

**James Henry Leigh Esq**  
Stoneleigh Abbey  
ob 1823 at 58  
Hon. Julia Judith Twistleton  
Dau. of  
Thos Lord Saye and Sele

**Theophilus Leigh Esq**  
ob 1724/25 at 78  
Hon. Mary Bridges  
Dau. of  
James Baron Chandos  
of Sudeley

**Chandos Leigh Esq**  
Stoneleigh Abbey  
Margaret Willes  
Dau. of  
Revd Wm Shippen Willes

### Notes:

ob is the abbreviation for obit – died

ob vita patris – died in his father's lifetime

superstes – he was still alive at that date but the date of death is unknown

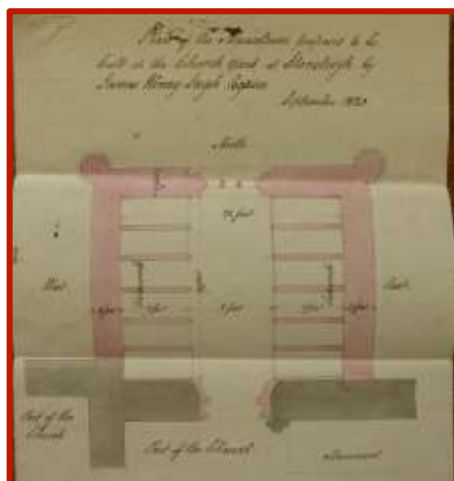
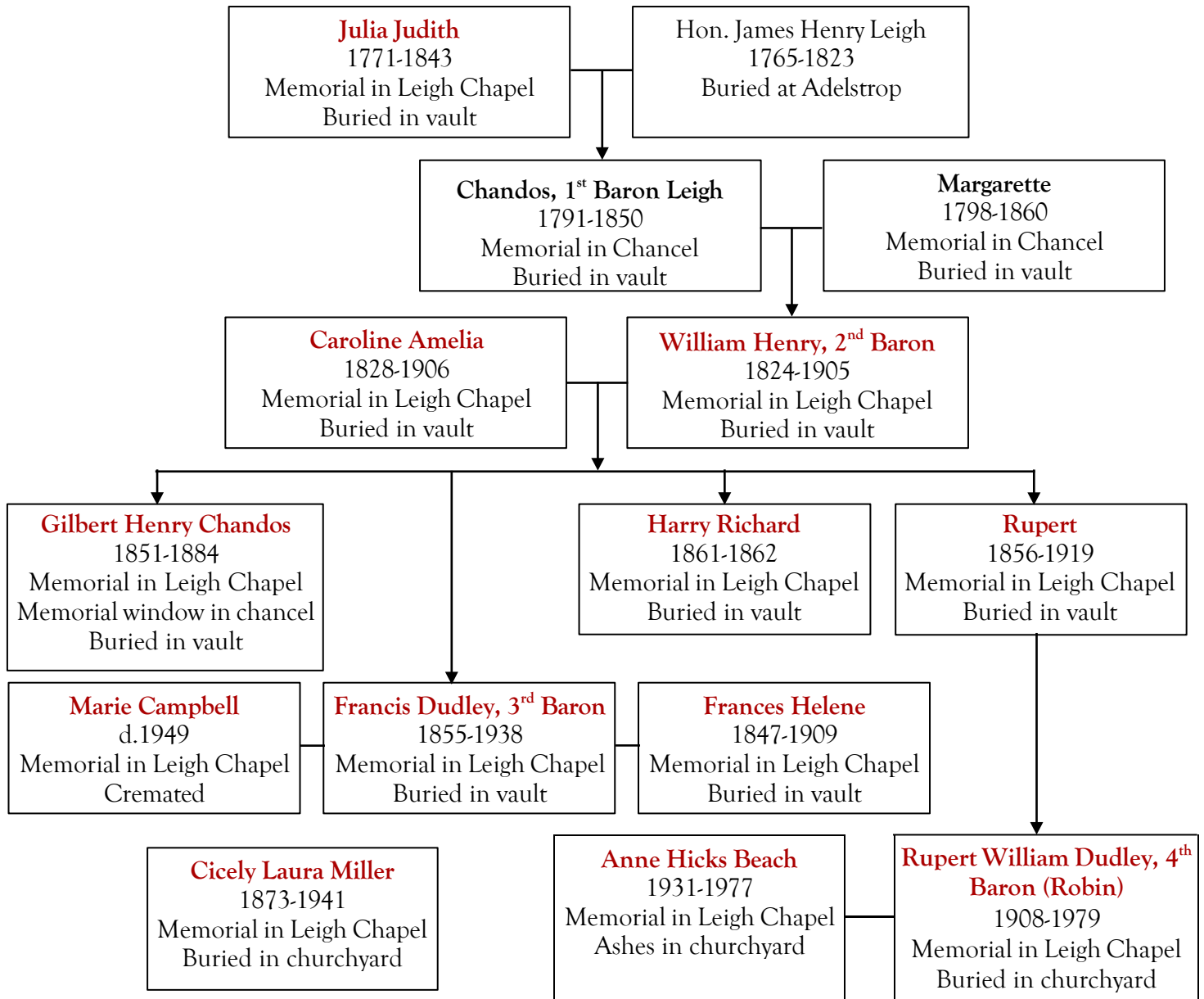
caelebs – unmarried or celibate



# Leigh Chapel Memorials

## (1843-1979)

To complement the burials in the vault beneath, there are several memorials to the Leigh family around the walls of the chapel as well as heraldic glass in the east and west windows.



1820 Plan of the Vault  
beneath the Leigh Chapel  
(Lich B-C-5-1820-155)  
The plan shows 12 catacombs

# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

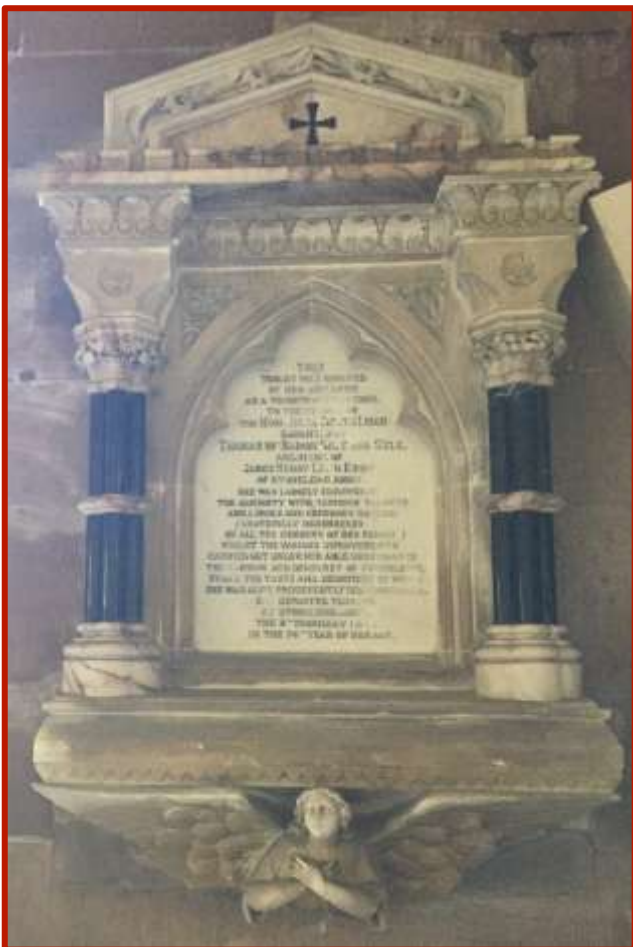
## 1843 Julia Judith Leigh

The earliest burial in the vault seems to be that of Julia Judith Leigh, wife of James Henry Leigh.

Julia Judith Twisleton Wykeham Fiennes, the eldest daughter of Thomas Twisleton 13th Lord Saye and Sele, was born on 21 October 1771. Her mother was Elizabeth Turner nee Leigh. Julia Judith and her future husband James Henry Leigh were thus closely related. She was baptised at Broughton Castle on 24 October 1771, and married there, somewhat sensationally, at the tender age of fifteen on 8 December 1786, having captured the heart of James Henry Leigh.

During their marriage she controlled much of the family business, particularly following their inheritance of the Stoneleigh estate in 1813 from the Reverend Thomas Leigh, James' uncle and guardian.

Julia Judith was subsequently largely responsible for the refurbishment of Stoneleigh Abbey and of the rebuilding and refurnishing of Stoneleigh church. This included the building of a new family mausoleum, the Leigh Chapel. Unfortunately when James Henry died in 1823 it seems that the building was incomplete and he was buried at Adlestrop, where he had spent most of his earlier years. Julia Judith lived, following his death, mostly in London, but when she died on 8 February 1843 she was resident at Stoneleigh Abbey. She was buried on 15 February, probably the first member of the family to be interred in the new vault.



Her monument is Gothic in style and is described by Pevsner as a “bold architectural tablet with serpentine columns and chunky carving, supported on a broad-winged angel with hands crossed.”

Julia Judith died in 1843, but her memorial was not made by Forsyth of Worcester until 1867. *The Worcester Journal* reported in February 1867 on a visit to the studio of Mr. Forsyth “where there are on view some excellent specimens of local sculpture in various stages of completion. One in particular attracted our attention, a very beautiful monument to the late Lady Julia Judith Leigh.”

It was probably commissioned, therefore, by her grandson **William Henry**, 2nd Baron Leigh, who succeeded his father Chandos in 1850.

# 1845 George Jones C.E. & Family



George Jones, C.E. is commemorated along with his wife Elizabeth, their elder son Charles and their daughters Augusta Sophia and Mary Ann. His younger son George is commemorated on a separate stone.

George senior was a chartered engineer who assisted in the construction of the royal military canal from Shorncliffe to the River Rother in Kent. This was meant to provide a barrier in case of foreign invasion during the Napoleonic wars, and was about 30 miles long by 30 feet wide.

George Jones was certainly working on the project in 1804, but by 1814 had become employed by the Leigh family as a clerk of the works for their grandiose building schemes. Working under the instructions of the Hon. Julia Judith Leigh, wife of James Henry Leigh, and in consultation with Leamington architect C. S. Smith, Jones helped implement much of the new building work at Stoneleigh. He had previously worked with Rennie, who was responsible for building the bridge over the Avon at Stoneleigh Abbey.

Resident at Stareton House, the property reserved for the family land agent, George may have been responsible for the beautiful scale drawings of the church made in 1826, and attributed by the Stratford Record Office to C. Jones. Certainly in 1821 George Jones of Stareton was providing sketches of the chancel window (DR18/17/47/28). He died in 1845.

On 20 July 1846 the vicar Vaughan Thomas wrote a formal letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Jones at Stareton, refusing permission for a memorial to be erected in Stoneleigh church in memory of her late husband (DR675/27). The permission was eventually given.

His son, George Jones, born in Kent in 1808, became a lawyer who also worked tirelessly for the Leigh family, supporting Chandos Leigh wholeheartedly in the infamous Leigh Peerage case of 1848. He continued to work as land agent when William Henry Leigh succeeded his father in 1850, a role which he held until retirement in 1871. He died in 1876 and is commemorated along with his wife Mary Ann, who had been Lady Leigh's personal maid, and their son Charles.



These two monuments were originally erected on the east wall of the south aisle, and later moved to their current position, possibly in 1924 after the organ had been moved from the gallery to this location where the font now stands.

# 1850 Chandos Leigh



Chandos Leigh was born on 27 June 1791, the first child of five, and only son, of James Henry Leigh and Julia Judith nee Twisleton. He was privately baptised the same day, in Queen Ann Street, Marylebone, and subsequently baptised again on 22 July in Marylebone. He was educated at Harrow, where he became a close friend of Lord Byron, and later studied at Christ Church Oxford.

He became a poet of some repute, and was part of the "Holland House Set". His various collections of poetry, much influenced by the Classics, became "much prized by the scholarly few."

He married on 8 June 1819 Margarett Willes, the daughter of the Reverend William Shippen Willes of Astrop House in Northamptonshire, having, as legend tells, proposed to her under the Lillington Oak, supposed at the time to be the most centrally-planted tree in England!

He was raised to the peerage in 1839 in Lord Melbourne's government, reviving the title of Baron Leigh which had become extinct in 1786. He thus became the 1st Baron Leigh of the 2nd Creation.

He and his wife made their home, initially, at the family's Gloucestershire residence, Adlestrop House, before he succeeded to the Stoneleigh estate on the death of his father on 27 October 1823. Thereafter they shared their time between London and Stoneleigh. They had ten children.

Never strong physically, he travelled to Bonn in Germany as part of a health regime, but died there on 27 September 1850. He was buried at Stoneleigh on 8 October.

This tomb built in 1850 is believed to be by George Gilbert Scott and is an alabaster chest embellished with vine and oak branches placed inside a multi sided recess. Although built in the 19th century, the style is 13th century Gothic.



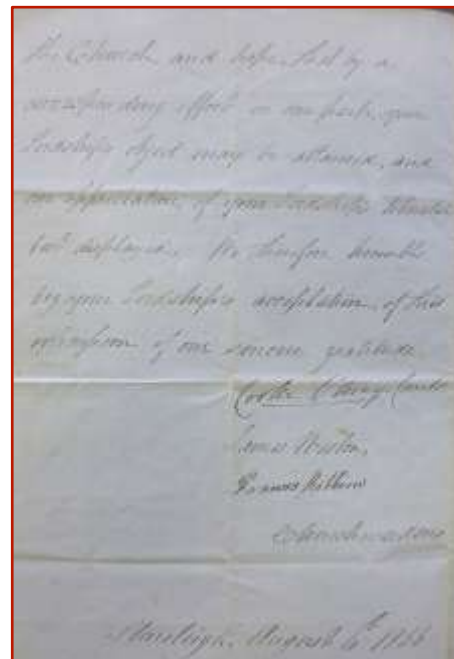
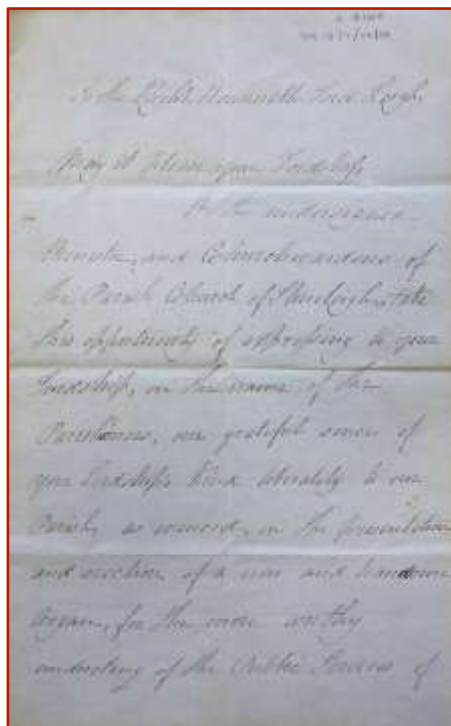


# 1856 A Keyboard Organ

After 35 years of the Barrel Organ, played by turning a handle with a different barrel for each hymn, a new organ was bought in 1856 by William Henry, Lord Leigh, for the church, at a personal cost of £100. This would certainly have had a keyboard so that all hymn tunes were now playable.

The Curate and Churchwardens of Stoneleigh wrote a letter of thanks for the organ to Lord Leigh.

*To the Right Honourable Lord Leigh. May it please your Lordship, We the undersigned minister, and Churchwardens of the Parish Church of Stoneleigh, take this opportunity of expressing to your Lordship, in the name of the Parishioners, our grateful sense of your Lordship's kind liberality to our Parish, as evinced, in the presentation and erection of a new and handsome organ, for the more worthy conducting of the Public Services of the Church, and hope, that by a corresponding effort on our part, your Lordship's object may be attained, and our appreciation of your Lordship's liberality best displayed, we therefore humbly beg your Lordship's acceptance of this expression of our sincere gratitude, Cooke Otway, curate, James Weston, Francis Robbins, Churchwardens. Stoneleigh August 4<sup>th</sup> 1856.*



(DR18/3/50/19)

In 1868 the organ was enlarged at the expense of the vicar, the Reverend James Wentworth Leigh, and in 1875 Lord Leigh paid for a pedal board to be added.

A year later, a Bourdon stop was added, again at Lord Leigh's expense, which would have added depth to the pedals and made them much more effective.

The organ was repaired in 1892 and with further intermittent repairs, was not replaced until 1968.

# 1860 Margarett Leigh



Margarett with her daughters Mary and Louisa Georgina

Margarett Leigh, nee Willes was born on 6 April 1798 in Clifton, Bristol, the eldest of the nine children of the Reverend William Shippen Willes and his wife Margaret nee Vanderwell Williams.

She and Chandos Leigh were married on 8 June 1819 and she bore him ten children. After his death in 1850 she divided her time between Adlestrop and Stoneleigh, and was responsible for the building of four new almshouses in Stoneleigh, specifically for widows. She died on 5 February 1860 and was buried on 11 February at Stoneleigh.

The monument features a carved alabaster relief by J. Birnie Philip from about 1860 which shows Margarett visiting the sick.

There is a woman sitting up in bed holding the hand of another woman and a small child standing by the bedside, with Margarett visiting.

It is set in a Gothic stone surround designed by George Gilbert Scott.



# 19<sup>th</sup> Century Repairs

Following the major renovations of the 1820s and the building of the Leigh Chapel ongoing repairs recommenced. In 1877 a Church Restoration Return was compiled showing the costs 1857-77 and who had contributed to them.

1857 £100 original cost of organ

1866 £20 cover for the holy table

1866 £25 east window

1866 £12 10s for 5 windows at £2 10s each

1867 £50 hot water apparatus in chancel

1868 £65 enlargement of organ

1869 £168 14s 9d + £110 rebuilding south wall and repairing church throughout. Part of south wall and tower rebuilt

1873 £50 repair of roof

1874 £100 extension of hot water apparatus through church and renewal of flooring

1875 £5 new books (paid for by the vicar)

1875 £10 pedal frame to organ (paid for by the vicar)

1876 £23 Bourdon stop to organ

1877 £8 repair to roof

1877 £14 belfry new floor

1877 £29 repair of clock

**Total £790 4s 9d** (DR 600/31)

Of which:

Lord Leigh contributed £404 10s

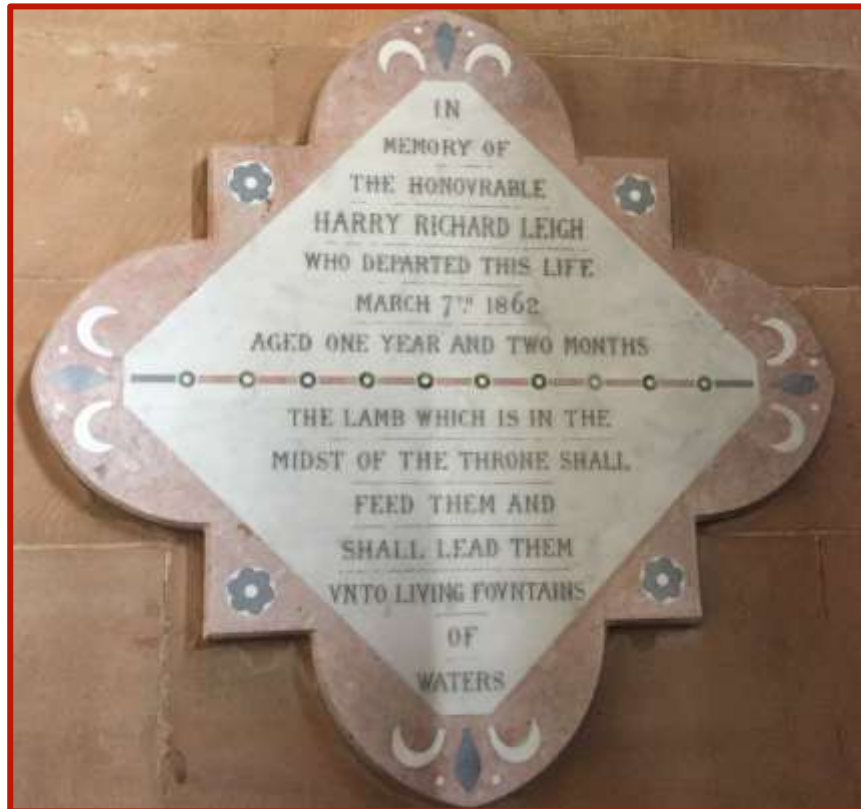
Voluntary Rate contributed £305 14s 9d

Private subscription by Hon. Rev. J.W. Leigh and the vicar contributed £80



# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1862 Harry Richard Leigh



A small tablet of coloured marble with inlays commemorates little Harry Richard Leigh, the infant son and seventh child of William Henry and Caroline Amelia. He was born on 13 January 1861 and baptised on 24 March. Sadly he died on 7 March 1862 at the age of one year and two months.

The monument is by W. Butterfield and was completed in 1863.

The quotation on the stone is from Revelations 7:17.



# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

1884 Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh



William Henry and Caroline Amelia had eight children, of whom four are buried within the vault and commemorated within the chapel.

The eldest son, Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh, died in America in 1884. His body was brought to Stoneleigh for interment in the vault, and initially a monument to him was erected over the family pew in the main body of the church. However, it was removed to the mausoleum, “over the burial-stone of the deceased” as was reported in the Leamington Spa Courier, in the summer of 1886, since earlier that year the existing east window in the chancel was replaced by a magnificent stained glass window in Gilbert’s memory.

(See descriptions of monuments in the main body of the church).

The memorial is said by Pevsner to be “in the Quattrocento taste” and is signed by E. Orlandini of Florence. An angel in the attitude of prayer presides over a tablet which is inscribed:

*To the Dearly loved Memory of the Honourable Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh MP for South Warwickshire, son of William Henry Baron Leigh Born September 1 1851 Died September 14 1884 by a Fall from a Precipice in the Ten Sleeper Canyon in the Big Horn Mountains Wyoming USA*

*A Gentle Lover of Nature Most fearless Most Affectionate Most Unselfish he left a name without a spot to be held unceasingly in the fondest remembrance by his father his mother his brothers and sisters and his friends.*

*The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away  
Blessed be the name of the Lord*



# 1884 Gilbert Leigh

Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh was born on 1 September 1851 in Marylebone, London, the eldest of the eight children of William Henry, 2nd Baron Leigh and his wife Caroline Amelia. He was baptised on 16 September at Ashow.

He attended Harrow before studying first at Trinity Hall and then Magdalene, Cambridge.

After Cambridge he travelled extensively through India, China, Japan and America, where he became interested in ranching in the mid-West.



A popular Warwickshire character, he gave lectures in the Stoneleigh Reading Room about his travels, and was a keen cricketer. He was elected MP for South Warwickshire in 1880.

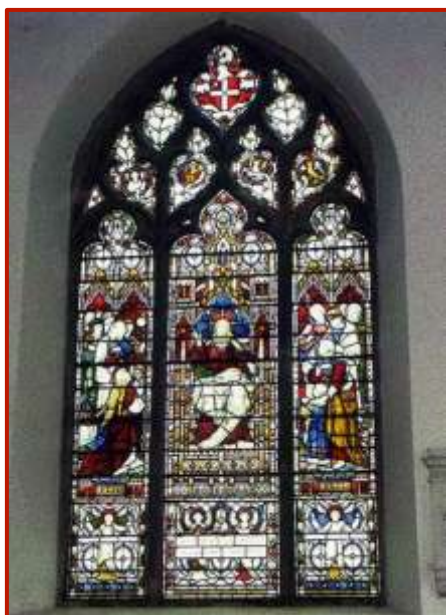
He met his death on 14 September 1884 in the Little Bighorn Mountains of Wyoming after apparently falling over a precipice whilst out hunting. The spot is marked today by an obelisk in a place now known as Leigh Creek.



"At the rim above Tensleep Canyon is the Leigh Creek Monument, erected in 1889 in memory of English nobleman Gilbert E. Leigh, a lifelong big game hunter and outdoor enthusiast, went missing in the fall of 1884 during a hunting expedition. Following his disappearance, men from the local area searched for Leigh: unfortunately, after a week of searching, they found Leigh's body and discovered that he had fallen 100 feet to his death over the canyon wall while in pursuit of mountain sheep. The monument, erected by well known Sheridan area guide

Robert Stewart, is laid up of native stone in dry mortar and is approximately ten feet square at the base. It contains a marble slab with an inscription memorialising Leigh who was buried in Stoneleigh, England."

Gilbert's uncle, James Wentworth Leigh, who had been vicar at Stoneleigh 1867-1873, undertook "the painful duty of bringing the body back to England". His body was returned to Stoneleigh for burial on 23 October 1884, amidst much grieving.

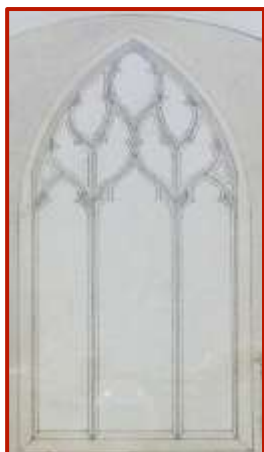


The magnificent stained glass east window was later erected in his memory.



# 1886 The East Window

As part of the extensive re-ordering of the church in the early nineteenth century, a new clear glass window was commissioned for the east of the chancel.



In 1819 the architect Charles Smith sent his sketch of the window including the size of the glass panes "*which I hope are nearly exact, but is almost impossible to get them quite correct from a ladder*".

1826 sketch of the clear glass east window

DR 18/25/60b

This remained until 1886. However, after the death of the Honourable Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh in September in 1884, a memorial to him had been erected in the church. This is now situated in the Leigh Chapel, and was moved there in August 1886, because a new window for the chancel was ready to be installed – a fine stained glass window in his memory.

The window's subject is an illustration of the text, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; "and the figures of the blind, the halt, and the infirm, the child and the woman in an attitude of supplication are very finely presented. In the upper tracery opening is introduced the coat of arms of the late Hon. Gilbert Leigh, and lower down the four Evangelists, while at the bottom of the window in the right and left divisions, are two angels, bearing in their hands a scroll containing the text given above, and in the central division the record, *To the memory of the Honourable Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh*." (reported in the *Coventry Herald* 1 January 1887). The centre is occupied by a figure of the Saviour seated on a throne, with right hand uplifted in the act of blessing. The work was carried out by Messrs. Clayton and Bell, the cost being defrayed by subscription among the personal friends of the family.

## Memorial Brass

In March 1887 the *Coventry Herald* again reported that "a memorial brass has just been placed on the chancel side of the Norman archway, and therefore not visible from the body of the church, to the following effect:-

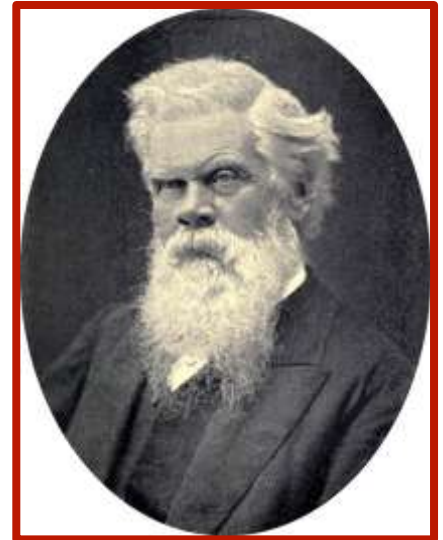
*The east window in St. Mary's Church, Stoneleigh, was erected to the memory of the Hon. Gilbert Henry Chandos Leigh by Vt. Anson, Hon. A. Bourke, Hon. C. Bourke, W.R. Bankes, E. Baldock, J. Brocklehurst, Lord Castletown. Sir B. Cunard, G. Cunard, Ld. W. Compton, Hon. J. Fitzwilliam, E. Frewen, Moreton Frewen, J.S. Follet, Horace Flower, H. Harter, F. James, A. James, C. Kesteven, Ld. Manners, H. Magniac, H. Neville, W.J. Paul, Hon. H. Plunket, Hon. J. B. Rouche, W.D. Russell, Sydney Stern, Vincent Stopford, A.J. Thornhill, F. Thornhill, Watson Taylor, Sir C. Wolseley. It may be remembered that one of the above number, E. Frewen, was with the late Hon. Gilbert Leigh in the Big Horn Mountains at the time, though not at the moment, of the lamentable accident. The memorial brass has been executed by Messrs. Richardson, Ellson, and Co., of Coventry."*



# 1896 Sir Henry Parkes

Henry Parkes was the son of Thomas Parkes, a tenant farmer in Stoneleigh who fell on hard times. Moat House Cottage, Canley, where Sir Henry Parkes was born on 27 May 1815, was then part of the Leigh Estate, as was Tocil House at Gibbet Hill, to which the family moved when Henry was a boy. From here Henry would walk to Stoneleigh School each day.

Following an accident, Henry's father Thomas unfortunately found himself unable to continue to farm profitably, and the family were forced to leave. Henry eventually decided to emigrate to Australia with his wife Clarinda.

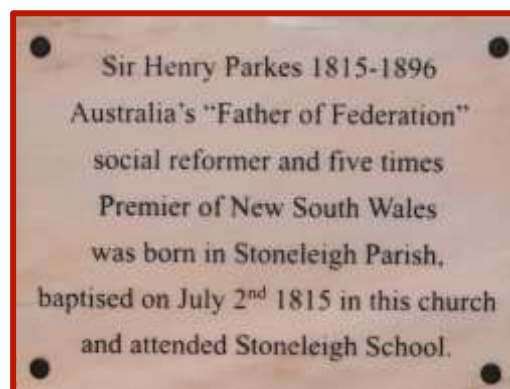


Although their life there was full of hardship at first, Henry eventually rose to become Premier of New South Wales no less than five times, introducing many significant social reforms. These included a revised Land Act, a new Electoral Act, copyright laws, the introduction of paid magistrates, the provision of medical schools, the improvement of water and sewage systems, and a new foster home system. Parkes felt that his crowning achievement during his third premiership was the Public Instruction Bill which made school attendance compulsory for all children from 6 to 14 and ended state aid to church schools.

Although Parkes' dream of a union of the colonies of Australia was not achieved during his lifetime he was rightly recognised as the "Father of Federation" for his leadership in advancing the cause for nationhood in the last ten years of his life.

He had returned to Stoneleigh in 1882 amid great festivities, and had stayed with Lord Leigh at Stoneleigh Abbey. He had enjoyed revisiting the scenes of his youth, including Stoneleigh School, the farmhouse in which he was born and the church in which he was christened. Having been created a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George in 1877 and Knight Grand Cross of the same order in 1888, he died on 27 April 1896. He had been married three times and produced 17 children!

Since his death he has been honoured by being featured on banknotes and coins, and the town of Parkes in New South Wales has been named after him. At a special service on 5 July 2015 his great-great-grandson Ian Thom travelled from Australia to unveil the plaque in Stoneleigh Church, to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of "The Australian Colossus".





# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1905 William Henry 2nd Baron Leigh and 1906 Caroline Amelia Leigh

William Henry, 2nd Baron Leigh, was born on 17 January 1824 at Adlestrop, Gloucestershire, and was baptised there but also, later, at Stoneleigh, on 10 September. He was the eldest son and first of the ten children of Chandos, 1st Baron Leigh and his wife Margarette nee Willes. After Harrow he went to Trinity Cambridge and succeeded his father Chandos as 2nd Baron on 27 September 1850. Among his many appointments he was Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Warwickshire, a Governor and Trustee of Rugby School, J.P. for Gloucestershire and High Steward of Sutton Coldfield, 1859-82, and again 1902-5. A great philanthropist, he was actively involved in many charitable organisations as well as in the management of his estate. He married, on 22 August 1848, Caroline Amelia, daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Westminster. They had eight children during their 57-year marriage. He died on 21 October, 1905.



Caroline Amelia, nee Grosvenor was born in 1828, the seventh of the fourteen children of Richard Grosvenor, 2nd Marquess of Westminster and his wife Elizabeth Mary nee Leveson Gower. She was baptised at Eccleston in Cheshire on 28 July 1828. She married on 22 August 1848 and the couple had eight children. She invested much interest in the operation of Stoneleigh School and was a talented watercolour artist. Inconsolable after the death of her husband, she died the following year, on 24 March 1906.



Theirs is a particularly fine early twentieth century memorial.

*In Loving Memory of William Henry, 2nd Baron Leigh, for Forty-Nine Years Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire born 17 January 1824, died 21 October 1905 and of Caroline Amelia his wife, daughter of 2nd Marquess of Westminster born 14 June 1828 and died 24 March 1906.*

The monument carries the heraldic arms of the family with their motto *Tout Vient de Dieu* (Everything Comes from God) and in an especially lovely design of white and gold lilies around the Cross, are the words:

LOVELY AND PLEASANT IN THEIR LIVES  
IN DEATH THEY WERE NOT DIVIDED

# 1906 John Thomas Thorn



The memorial to the Reverend Thorn is situated on the wall above the pulpit.

It is constructed of white marble and commemorates his 33 years as vicar of Stoneleigh.

The tablet was paid for by local parishoners

Canon John Thomas Thorn was born on 17 September 1830 and was vicar of Stoneleigh from 1873 until his death on 24 May 1906. He was Honorary Canon of Worcester from 1889.

He had been educated at Christ Church Oxford and was ordained in 1855. When he became vicar of Stoneleigh he followed the Hon. Rev. James Wentworth Leigh in that office. His wife Emily died aged just 45 in 1879 and they had no children.

A shy man essentially, he was nevertheless a great servant to the church at Stoneleigh and was particularly involved in the work of Stoneleigh School. Newspapers reporting his death remarked upon how well-loved he had been by his parishioners. He was president of the Village Club, secretary of the Friendly Society and a trustee of Sotherne's Charity. His principal work outside the village was connected with the Warneford Hospital in Leamington, resulting in that institution being better equipped than any other of its size.

The headmaster of Stoneleigh School, William Wells, wrote in the school logbook that:

*From the time that Canon Thorn first came to Stoneleigh in the autumn of 1873 until the present week he has taken an active interest in everything connected with the school and its work.*

*The earlier records show that he took no small part in the teaching, secular as well as religious. Since I have been Master, for a number of years he took a class regularly for several mornings a week in religious instruction, but in later years the Vicar took examinations only, at frequent intervals. For the school's success in the Prize Scheme Examinations teachers and scholars are much indebted to him for his valuable help. His kindness, sympathy and support will ever endear him to our memory; his whole character was a noble example to us all.*

# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1909 Frances Helene Forbes Beckwith Leigh

Frances Helene Forbes Beckwith was born on Staten Island New York circa 1847, one of the four children of Nelson M Beckwith, a New York banker, and his wife Frances Forbes.

A noted beauty, she accompanied her father to Paris for the Great Exhibition in 1867, when he was the US Commissioner General to France. Here she caught the eye of the Empress Eugenie and the Emperor Napoleon III; she later visited the couple during their English exile.

She married Francis Dudley Leigh on 28 November 1890 at St George's Hanover Square and they made Leek Wootton their Warwickshire home, with 27 Hertford Square their London address. Sadly she died unexpectedly young on 28 April 1909, following a bout of pneumonia. The couple had no children.



The typically Edwardian, large white memorial to Frances Helene, first wife of Francis Dudley, 3rd Baron Leigh, is signed by A. Apolloni and has figures in shallow relief holding the inscription:

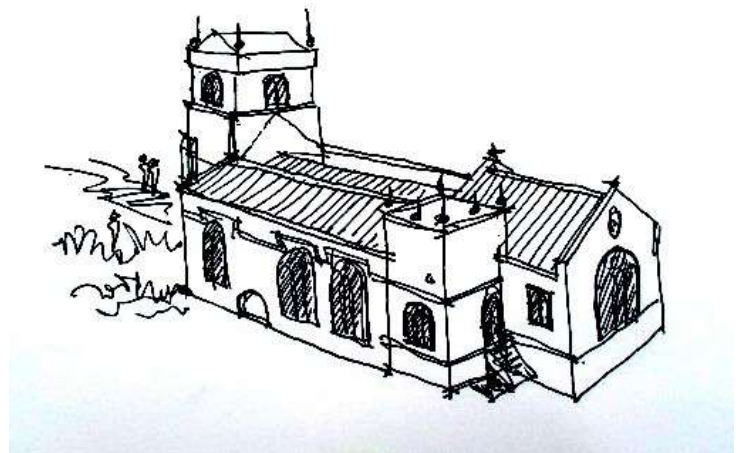
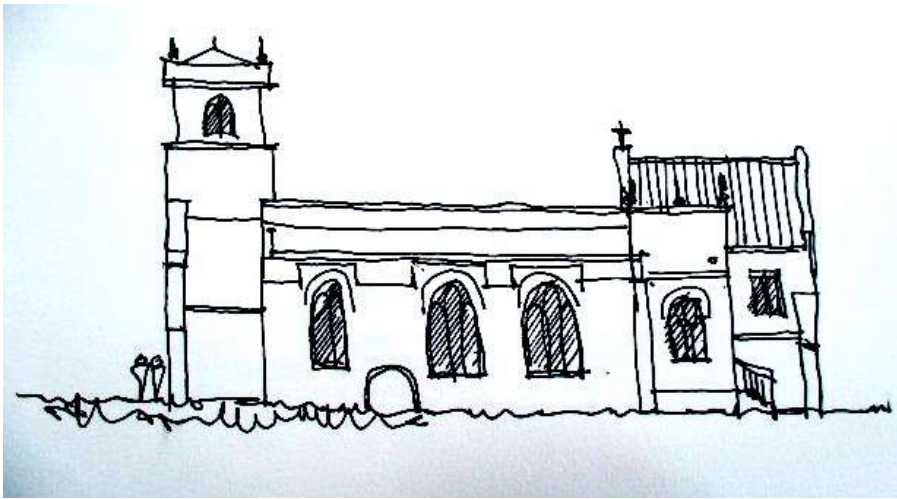
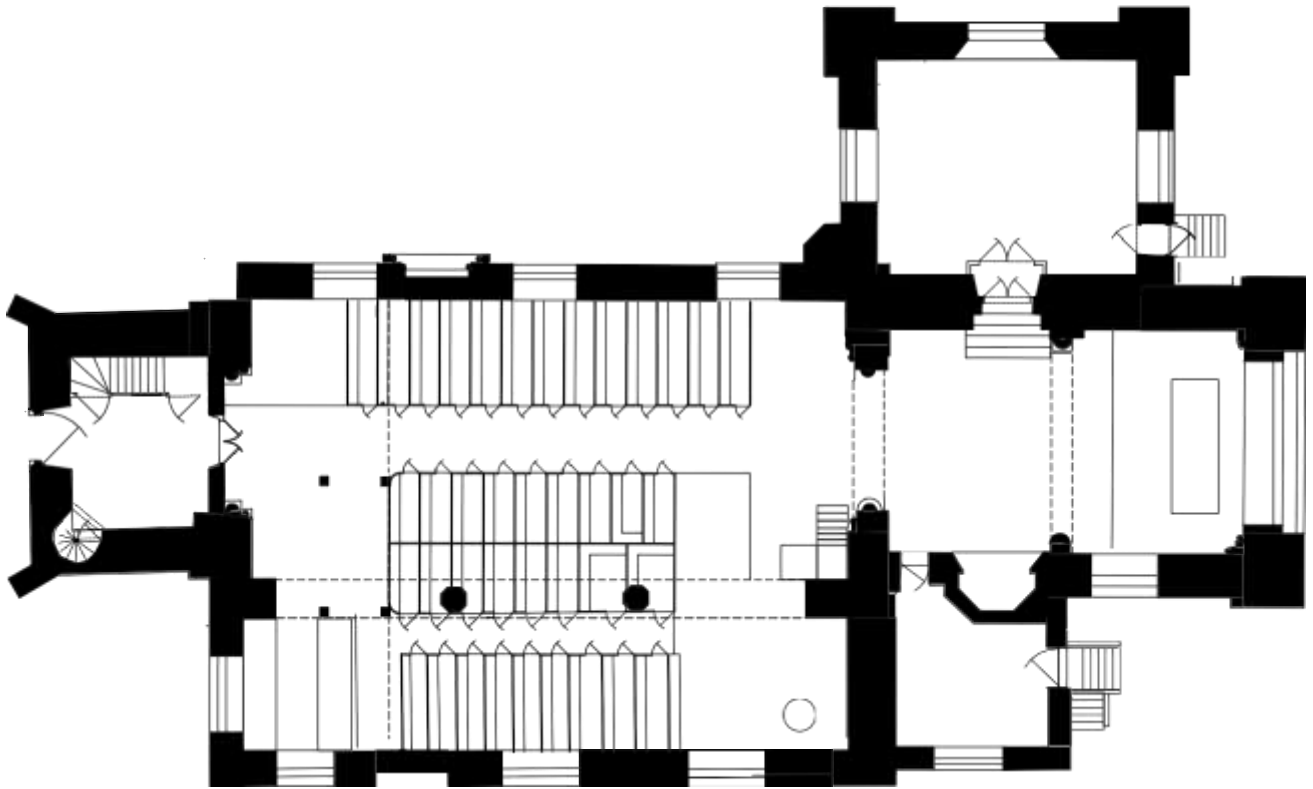
*To the Memory of Frances Helene Forbes, daughter of  
the Hon N M Beckwith of New York, Wife of Francis  
Dudley 3rd Baron Leigh, Married November 29th  
1890, Died at Stoneleigh Abbey April 28th 1909.*



Most gentle most unselfish  
Life's long shadows break in cloudless love



# Modern





# Modern

## 1910 to Present Date

The 20th Century saw modifications within the church, significant modernisation and on-going repairs to the fabric of the building culminating in the 2016-2017 major renovation.

In the 1920s, the organ was removed from the gallery to the east end of the south aisle and a faculty was obtained for converting certain pews to choir stalls. The font at this time was at the west end of the nave by the door. Electric light was installed!

1936 saw the removal of 3 pews at the rear of the church to form a vestry for the thriving choir, followed by a 1937 installation of choir stalls in the chancel.

The 1940s included the installation of 'electric blowing equipment' and heating, ventilating and equipping the Leigh chapel.

In 1955 a pair of wrought iron gates was erected at the entrance of the churchyard (given in memory of the late Canon H E Cooke). Then in 1956 the bells were rehung.

The 1960s were busy with modernising to oil central heating, reglazing six windows, adding a sixth bell to the belfry, altering the dimensions of the altar and lowering the altar rails. This was followed by moving the organ back up to the gallery and providing a Baptistry by moving the font to its current position at the east end of the south aisle, with the hanging of the tapestry depicting the Holy Spirit.

In the 1970s there was a complete re-wiring of the church and updating of the lighting throughout, including fluorescent tubes. This was repeated in 1998 with altering and updating the lighting and installing a new sound and loop system

Following the 1975 Quinquennial Inspection, the 1980s saw repairs to interior and exterior stonework, with the tower in scaffolding after a fundraising campaign for £30,000. Also redecoration and repairs to the vestry and repairs to the windows.

The 21st Century changed the choir vestry at the rear of the church to a kitchen and toilet facilities were provided. The church was closed for a while in 2005 with a £55,000 replacement of the floor after a deathwatch beetle attack. Then in 2008 fundraising started towards the costs of £126,000 to mend the leaky roof, which rose to £305,000 in 2012 and to the major repairs of 2016-17 estimated to be £330,326, with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund.



# 1914 & 1915 Leigh Brothers War Memorial

Two brothers from the Leigh family were killed in the Great War, one in August 1914 and the other in May 1915. They were the only sons of Sir Edward Chandos Leigh and the grandsons of William Henry 2nd Baron Leigh. Major Chandos Leigh's widow Winifred was granted a faculty in July 1916 to erect a memorial to them both.

The marble and stone memorial shows the arms of the Leigh family, the regimental badges of each brother, and after giving details of their military service (both were professional soldiers) concludes **Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori.**



## MAJOR CHANDOS LEIGH, D.S.O.

King's Own Scottish Borderers

killed on Aug. 23rd, 1914 aged 37

Elder son of the Hon. Sir Edward Chandos Leigh, K.C.B., K.C.,  
and Lady Leigh, of 45 Upper Grosvenor Street, W.

In 1912 he married Winifred, daughter of the late Right Hon.  
A. F. Jeffreys, of Burkhams, Hampshire.

After leaving Trinity Hall, Cambridge, Major Leigh entered the King's Own Scottish Borderers through the Warwickshire Militia, in 1895. As a subaltern he served with the Mounted Infantry in South Africa, being mentioned in Despatches and receiving the D.S.O., medal and six clasps. For his services in the Egyptian Army from 1902-1912 he received the Osmanieh and Med-jidieh Orders, as well as the medal and clasp for the Bahr-el-Ghazal Expedition of 1905-1906. He was a fine horseman and polo player, and was well known on the Cairo Turf, where he more than once headed the winning list of steeplechase riders, both amateur and professional.

At Mons, Major Leigh, though severely wounded, not in the trenches but in the open, ordered his men to retire across the canal and leave him where he was, so that there should be no delay in blowing up the bridge in face of the advancing Germans. News was received later that he had died and was buried at Boussu, shortly afterwards.

He was the first Old Harrovian to fall in the war.

# 1914 & 1915 Leigh Brothers

## LIEUTENANT EDWARD HENRY LEIGH

Died 9 May, 1915 – Aubers Ridge aged 26

Second son of the Hon. Sir Edward Chandos Leigh (O.H.),  
K.C.B., K.C of 45 Upper Grosvenor Street, W., and of Lady  
Leigh, and grandson of Lord Leigh,  
of Stoneleigh, Warwickshire.

He attended Pembroke College, Cambridge.



Lieutenant Leigh received his Commission in 1911, when he joined the 2nd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade in India, being promoted Lieutenant in 1913. He went to the Front with his Regiment in November 1914, and took part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, his Battalion gaining the distinction of being the first actually to enter and capture that village.

He was killed on May 9th, 1915, while leading his men into action in the attack on the Aubers Ridge.

He was much beloved by his Riflemen, who said that there was not one of them who would not have followed him into action anywhere, he was so fearless.



# The War Memorials

## World War One

When the war ended, and many families in the village had lost sons, husbands and brothers, the community began establishing ways of paying tribute to their memory. Initially a “prayer corner” was set up in the church until the red sandstone memorial tablet, designed by Mr Sydney Jones of Leek Wootton was unveiled and dedicated on the north wall on Sunday 20 June by the Bishop of Coventry. It reads **Sacred to the Memory of the Stoneleigh Men who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1919**, before listing the names, and at the foot is written **Death is Swallowed Up in Victory**



For a full account of the lives of those listed see:  
*Another Country, the Story of Stoneleigh Men in the Great War*

## World War Two

A silver on copper plaque commemorates the names of Humphrey Desmond Cooke and John Copeland Aris, both of whom died in 1942. Cooke served in the RAF and Aris in the Royal Navy, and the emblems of each service are included on the plaque. It was placed under the World War One memorial in 1946.





# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1919 Rupert Leigh



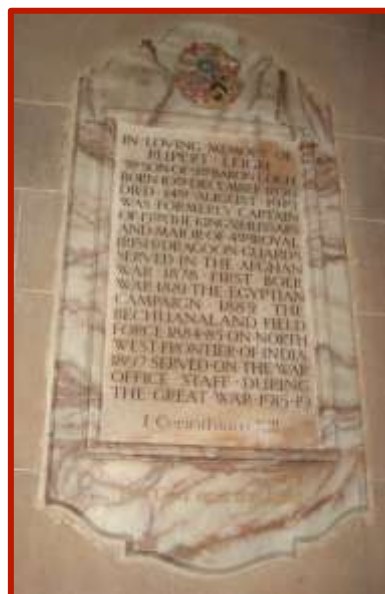
Rupert Leigh was the third son of William Henry and Caroline Amelia, and since his brother Francis Dudley died without an heir, it was Rupert's son who became heir to the Stoneleigh peerage and estate. Rupert was born on 10 December 1856 at Stoneleigh, and baptised here on 18 February 1857.

Having attended Sandhurst he became a professional soldier: he fought in the Afghan War between 1878 and 1879, and the Egyptian War in 1882. He was with the Bechuanaland Frontier Force between 1884 and 1885. He was Aide-de-Camp to the Governor of New South Wales, his sister Margaret's husband the Earl of Jersey between 1890 and 1894 and accompanied his sister on many travels throughout Australasia.

He was Military Secretary to the Governor of Bombay in 1900. He gained the rank of Major in the service of the 4th Dragoon Guards (formerly 15th Hussars).

He married Beatrice Dudley Smith on 14 July 1906 at St Paul's Knightsbridge, and their only child Rupert William Dudley was born on 14 March 1908. During WW1 he worked in the War Office. He died on 14 August 1919 at Stoneleigh, just a few days before the Peace Celebrations there, though his official residence was in Kensington.

The memorial to Rupert Leigh gives a comprehensive list of his dates and military service. It, too, carries the family crest and refers the reader to Corinthians XIII, with its key passages about Christian love, before ending "For God and the King".

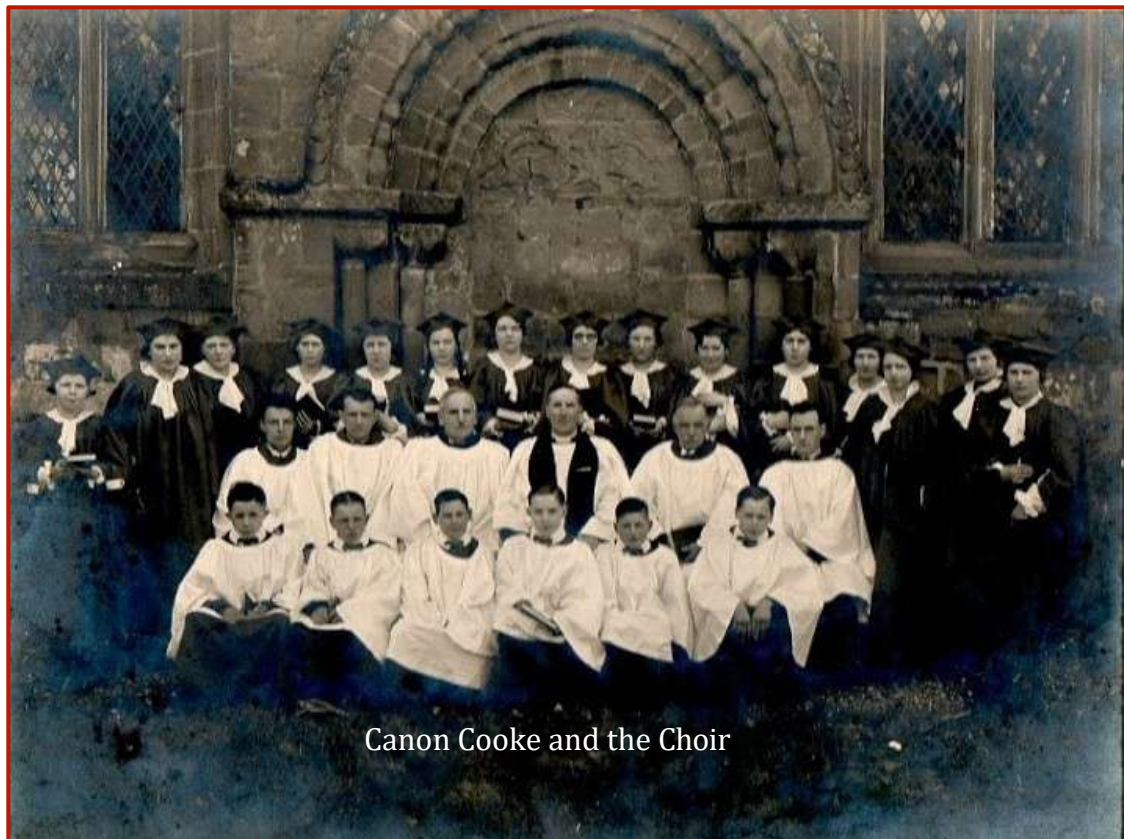


# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modifications

1928 Electric Lighting Installed



1936 Creation of a Vestry at the rear of the church for the thriving Choir





# 1937 Choir Stalls



Alice Rose Ward nee Webb married Frank Ward in April 1898. When Alice died in 1936 they were living in Northumberland Avenue in Leamington Spa. Frank gave the choir stalls in Alice's memory. Frank and Alice Rose together with Frank's second wife Nora are buried under a very striking cross in the churchyard.



1977 The Leamington Spa Opera fills the Choir Stalls.

# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1938 Francis Dudley 3rd Baron Leigh

Francis Dudley Leigh was the second son of William Henry, 2nd Baron Leigh, and his wife Caroline Amelia, daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Westminster.

He was born on 30 July 1855 at Stoneleigh Abbey and baptised in Stoneleigh on 25 September. After Harrow School he went to Trinity, Cambridge, and a few years later, in 1886, became assistant private secretary to Viscount Cross, the Secretary of State for India.

He was a member of the London County Council and Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, as well as being honorary Colonel of the 7th Battalion the Warwickshire Regiment and of the Warwickshire Yeomanry, among other military positions.

He investigated many modes of employment at home and abroad before he succeeded his father as Lord Leigh in 1905, following the death of his older brother Gilbert in 1884 in America.

After his first wife died he sold his London home and travelled widely. During WW1 he drove ambulances in Belgium and aided the war effort in a variety of ways.

In 1923 he married Marie Campbell. He died on 16 May 1938.

Francis married twice and both his wives, Frances Helene and Marie are commemorated in the Leigh Chapel and buried with Francis in the vault beneath. However, he had no children so the title then moved to his nephew Robin, the son of Francis's younger brother Rupert.



Placed over the east door of the Leigh Chapel, partly obscured by the new door frame.



# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1941 Cicely Laura Miller

Cicely Laura Miller is commemorated in the chapel although she is buried in the churchyard (see SHS Burial Database). She was the daughter of Dudley Robert Smith, and wife of Thomas Butt Miller of Cricklade, Wiltshire. She died at Stoneleigh Abbey on 14 August 1941.

Her inclusion here can be explained because her sister was Beatrice Dudley Smith who married Rupert Leigh (1856-1919). Probably the memorial was commissioned by their son Rupert William Dudley, 4th Lord Leigh.



# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1949 Marie Campbell Leigh



Frances Helene's widower Francis Dudley, 3rd Baron Leigh remarried in 1923. His second wife was Marie Campbell born circa 1886 in New York, the daughter of Alexander Campbell and his wife Angeline. Her father died when Marie was ten and her mother remarried, her second husband being William Richard Converse. During WW1 Marie volunteered to work with the American Red Cross and this may have been how she met her future husband, Francis Dudley Leigh. They were married on 2 October 1923 and lived for much of the year at 31, Grosvenor Square, London. Following her husband's death in 1938 Marie continued to live mostly in London, even during WW2, when she lived in the basement of her house despite its having received bomb damage. She died on 13 March 1949 and wished to be cremated; her ashes were interred in the family vault at Stoneleigh on 17 March.



# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modifications

1956 Gates at the entry to the Churchyard in memory of Canon Cooke



1968 Creation of a Baptistry, moving the Font and hanging the Tapestry





# The Hatchments

In the middle ages it was sometimes the practice to place the helm and sword of a dead man above his memorial in church. It had probably been carried on top of his coffin. In some churches and cathedrals fragments of such armour still survive. The helm was surmounted by a crest, which in battle or tournament would be one of the means of recognising the wearer, whose face was otherwise obscured by a visor.

Later, this practice died out but a modification of it survived in the 'hatchment' or 'funeral escutcheon'. On the death of a person entitled to bear arms, his or her armorial bearings, painted on a lozenge (diamond) shaped canvas or panel and enclosed in a black frame, were placed on the house front as a sign of mourning and as a kind of obituary notice. The panel would be put on the lead vehicle of the funeral procession, then returned to the house front. After the mourning period, the hatchment was taken to the church and hung on the walls.

Their heraldry is of interest and they are decorative and colourful. In Stoneleigh there is an excellent collection, all commemorating members of the Leigh family, and dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



If a hatchment has just one coat of arms on a solid black background, it means it was for a bachelor or spinster.



If a hatchment is split down the middle it shows the coat of arms for the husband on the left and the wife on the right, {left and right as you look at it}. If the background of one half is black it shows that person has died, if one half is white, that person survives. If the background of both halves are black, both have died.

Furthering quartering of the hatchment would accommodate second wives.

There were nine hatchments in Stoneleigh which were repaired and restored by Lord Leigh in the 1960s. The picture below shows two hatchments above the arches in the church and two in the gallery.



A Leigh Hatchment



# 1962 The Treble Bell

**The Treble cast in 1962 by John Taylor of Loughborough at 3½ cwt.**

The sixth bell, the treble, cast in 1962, was by John Taylor of Loughborough, now UK Bell Foundries Limited, who claim to be the largest bell foundry in the world. The largest bell in Britain, the “Great Paul” of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, was cast at the foundry in 1881.

The Stoneleigh Treble bell is inscribed in memory of local farmer and long-time churchwarden Frank Ernest Grimes who had died the previous year, and a subscription had been set up for its purchase.

As the Treble, this new bell became the 1st in the 6 bell peal. It is tuned to the note of “E”, the highest note in the peal.



The Treble Bell before installation



The Treble, on the left, in the Belfry

# 20th Century Organ repairs and 1968 New Organ

During 1904 there was a major overhaul of the organ and it was moved from the gallery to the east end of the south aisle (roughly where the font now stands). The work was carried out by William White, the estate master carpenter, whose premises were in Leamington, at a cost of £58 10s.

In June 1967 the vicar, Canon Geoffrey Parks, reported that a faculty was to be obtained for obtaining a new organ and placing it in the gallery once more! It was hoped that this would be effected in a year to eighteen months, and in fact the organ was installed in 1968. This formed part of a project to re-site the font to its present position in the south aisle. Nicolson's of Worcester provided the organ with a separate console for the organist, all at a cost of £4,250. The new organ now stands just where the original barrel organ once stood. Of the 21 stops on the enlarged organ, nine were brand new, nine were taken directly from the old organ, and a further three stops from the old organ had some pipework replaced. Nicolson's still carry out maintenance on the organ.

## Organists

Of some interest is the fact that for much of the twentieth century there were essentially only two organists! Mr William Wells was the first, in 1893, to take on the job as part of his role as schoolmaster until his retirement in 1932. After an interregnum, in 1947 Peter Antrobus took on the role which he, too, carried on for fifty-one years, until his death in 1998. The present organist is renowned local musician Ron Binnie.



William Wells



Peter Antrobus



Ron Binnie

# 1968 The Tapestry

The tapestry was designed by Mary Wills when she was a postgraduate student at Birmingham College of Art in 1966-67.

Mary was one of four students asked to submit an embroidery design for the Baptistry at Stoneleigh Church, which was commissioned to be made by the textile department.

Her design was chosen because it was representational; the dove descending, representing the coming of the Holy Spirit, with the Cross behind.



In Mary's words:

*I made a small scale embroidery to be enlarged to the present size. The Cross was longer at its base to balance the composition, but after approximately two years a sponsor for the funding wished the lettering at the base to be embroidered on the background in memory of Evelyn Hill.*

*The background fabric was carefully chosen to match the colour of the wall, but this unfortunately was painted white. The embroidery was made by completing pieces separately, as much as possible, and then applying them to the background. This involved a frame in three hinged pieces being constructed and the background fabric being stretched over this. Scaffolding was put up at the back and front of the frame and involved two people on either side passing a needle and thread back and forth to attach the pieces.*

Evelyn Hill nee Hillman was the daughter of William Hillman of bicycle and car fame. She married Percy Rowland Hill in 1911 who became chairman and director of the Hillman Motor Company after the death of his father-in-law. The tapestry was given in Evelyn's memory by her niece Rosemary Williams nee Hill whose father Eustace Carey Hill was Percy Rowland's younger brother.

The inscription embroidered along the base reads:

Evelyn Hill 1883-1966 Mors Janua Vitae (Death is the Gate of Heaven).



# The Leigh Chapel Memorials

## 1979 Rupert William Dudley 4th Baron Leigh and 1977 Anne



As Francis Dudley, the third Baron Leigh died childless, the title descended to his nephew, son of Rupert Leigh.

Rupert William Dudley, 4th Baron Leigh, was born on 14 March 1908 in Kensington. His parents, The Hon. Rupert Leigh and Beatrice, nee Dudley Smith, had married quite late in life and sadly, therefore, young Rupert – who was generally known as Robin – lost his father when he was just eleven years old, and his mother when he was sixteen. He was their only child. He was educated at Eton College, and Sandhurst. He was Lieutenant in the 11th Hussars, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars. He held the office of High Steward of Sutton Coldfield and of Deputy Lieutenant of Warwickshire in 1946. Widely liked and respected for his generosity and genial personality, he married Anne Hicks-Beach, daughter of Ellis Hicks-Beach and Nancy nee Whitehead, on 27 April 1931. Their happy marriage is reflected in the touching sentiment on their memorial stone. The couple had four sons. He died on 24 June 1979 and is buried in Stoneleigh churchyard. He was succeeded by his eldest son, John Piers.

Anne, Lady Leigh, nee Hicks-Beach, daughter of Ellis Hicks-Beach and Nancy nee Whitehead was born, the third of six children, on 30 March 1908 at Witcombe, Gloucestershire. She and Rupert William Dudley Leigh were married there on 27 April 1931. They lived for most of their lives at Stoneleigh Abbey, though they spent much time too at Adlestrop House, where their fourth son was born. Anne, like her husband, was an accomplished rider to hounds. She died at Adlestrop House and her funeral was held on 2 June 1977 at the church there, before cremation and burial of her ashes at Stoneleigh on 13 June.





# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fundraising

## 1980s The Fundraising Begins

22 Coventry Evening Telegraph, Friday, May 14, 1981

### £30,000 'Save it' campaign by church

A MAJOR appeal is to be launched to save Stoneleigh Church.

Fund-raisers want to collect £30,000 to carry out vital repairs to the stonework and roofs. Work is expected to start this year in an attempt to halt further damage by the weather.

The appeal is being spearheaded by churchwardens Syd Creed and Una Thorley. Fund-raising events will be held throughout the summer.

"We must raise £30,000 in hard cash and government grants this year if Stoneleigh Church is to survive as a useful building for our community," said Mr Creed, the Coventry head postmaster, who is chairman of the restoration appeal committee.

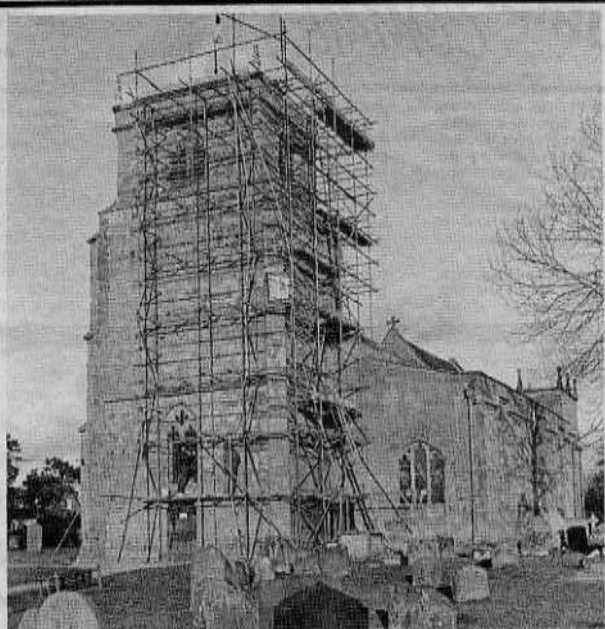


Mr Creed and Miss Thorley discuss stonework with the Rector, the Rev. Peter Good

## 1984 Tower Repairs

*Stratford-upon-Avon Courier Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> 1984*

### NEWS FROM THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES



EXTENSIVE restoration work is continuing at St Mary's Church, Stoneleigh. Stonemasons are strengthening and replacing the sandstone making up the clock-tower. A new clock face is also to be installed.

Work began in November and at this stage it is not clear when it will be completed, explained the Rev Peter Gooderick. Much of the 13th century church was made of Warwickshire sandstone and it has deteriorated over the years.



# 1990 The Stoneleigh Stitchers

In 1990 a small group of people from the village and surrounding areas, under the leadership of Eileen Burman, started making pew seat cushions and altar kneelers. The number grew until about fifty became involved. Designs were based on three main themes: firstly from features in the church e.g. the chancel arch; secondly themes from village activities e.g. the W.I. and the Cricket Club; thirdly the village itself – its flowers the meadows and local gardens.

The background to the cushions is in a striking blue, with each cushion having the symbol of the fleur-de-lys, associated with the Virgin Mary to whom the church is dedicated.

The frames were set up in the Leigh Chapel and many years of design and stitching ensued.





# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fundraising

2005 Deathwatch beetle attack causes Replacement of Floor £50,000

2008 Fundraising to mend Leaking Roof hopes to raise £76,000 towards estimated £126,000 cost.

ALL the www.kentish.com 055001. EMAIL: editor@kentish.com WRITE to The Editor, Weekly News, 31 Warwick Road, Keston, CV11 1HN

## Big fundraising task ahead to try to mend leaky church roof

BY LUCIA CLIFFORD

URGENT roof repairs at an historic Stoneleigh church have prompted residents to launch a major fundraising campaign to gather the money needed.

A total of £126,000 needs to be raised to repair the leaking roof of the Grade I listed St Mary the Virgin church.

Full cost of the repair will total £126,000 but English Heritage has granted a grant of £50,000 - so long as fundraising raises the rest.

Church treasurer Syd Creed said: "It means so the English Heritage money is secure it is essential we raise the other £76,000."

"We have sought help from national charities with some success."

"We have appealed to the members of the parish by direct letters and this appeal is to progress with the gift day we held in church as part of our harvest festival."

So far fundraising returns have helped raise a total of £25,000 and the appeal organisers are hopeful to achieve their target.

The church dates back to Norman times and has a Norman chancel arch. In the chancel there is a 17th century wooden reredos and to Adam Dudson Dudley, the daughter of Sir Thomas Lee of Stoneleigh who died in 1609 at the age of 80.

The Georgian baroque and gallery were installed in 1821. The large chapel was built above the nave and has a number of large family monuments.

In the last three years the church has had to shell out £30,000 due the church floor almost collapsing due to an attack of deathwatch beetle.

The money used for that came from funds put aside for the reconstruction of the church and the installation of a kitchen and disabled toilet.

Mr Creed added: "We replaced the money we used for those repairs and raised £67,000 for this project from various sources with much help from the parish and village and donations from national charities."

"The exchange has also been used as part of a reconstruction of our parish into a new parish ministry with Andrew and Leah Woodley."

Help with fundraising and donations are being sought and anyone who may be able to assist should contact Mr Creed on 554523.

Picture right: Syd Creed (treasurer of Stoneleigh Parish Church), church warden Tim Pritchard, the Rev Philip Crisp and church warden.

2012 Fundraising with hopes of Heritage Help towards £305,000 costs

Kentish

EMAIL: editor@kentish.com

## Church calls for Olympian effort to save roof

Churchworkers are hoping the Olympic spirit will help them raise more than £260,000 for urgent repairs to a historic building.

Former Commonwealth middle-distance champion and Coventry's lead ambassador for the 2012 Olympics David Moorcroft is launching an appeal to repair the nave roof and stonework at St Mary the Virgin church.

The former British record-holder, who has family connections to the village, will be giving a talk at Stoneleigh village hall on Friday March 30 to start fundraising.

Decay to the structure beneath the copper roof means it is not properly supported and may split - with serious consequences.

Parochial church council has already raised some £42,000 from the National Churches Trust and a private charity but needs to find a further £263,000 and is seeking help from English Heritage.

The Grade I listed church is Norman in origin with a Romanesque arch dating back to around 1100. Additions were made in the 17th and 19th centuries and the church's Georgian box pews are a special feature.

Churchwarden Ian Smith said the church was still a central part of village life for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and said it would be "disastrous" if the roof was damaged further.

He said: "There is no alternative. The roof is in such a state that water could get in at any moment."

The talk will be held at 7.30pm in Stoneleigh Village Hall. Tickets cost £15 and include refreshments. Call 853238.

ROBERT COLLINS  
robert.collins@leamingtoncourier.co.uk

## 'Water could get in at any moment'

lan Smith

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# Periods in English History

Prehistoric Britain	until c. 43
Roman Britain	c.43–410
Anglo-Saxon	c.400–1066
Norman	1066–1154
Plantagenet	1154–1485
Tudor	1485–1588
Elizabethan	1558–1603
Stuart	1603–1714
Jacobean	1603–1625
Carolean	1625–1649
(Interregnum)	1649–1660
Restoration	1660–1688
Georgian	1714–1837
Regency	1811–1837
Victorian	1837–1901
Edwardian	1901–1914
Windsor	1910–
First World War	1914–1918
Interwar Britain	1918–1939
Second World War	1939–1945
Post-war Britain	1945–