

Lenten Journey 2017

Visiting parishes and people around the Diocese of Worcester, Lent 2017.

4: St Peter's Besford



Martin with Revd Canon Susan Renshaw at St Peter's, Besford.

Magda and my **Lenten Journey 2017** continued with a visit to **St Peter's Besford**. **Revd Canon Susan Renshaw** took us to visit, having already been to **Eckington** and **Defford** with her earlier in the afternoon.

The mainly 14th century church of St Peter in Besford is a wonderful example of English church architecture and one of only a few timber frame churches in England. The church is included in Simon Jenkins' England's *1000 Best Churches*.

Inside there are important monuments to the Harewell and Sebright families, as well as pre-Reformation rood screen and Jacobean altar rail.



St Peter's Defford is one of only a few timber frame churches in England.



A triptych to John Harewell, dated 1594.

There is a **triptych** just inside the front door. On the outside are the remains of painted shields. Opening the doors, at the top in the middle is a kneeling figure. On the left door is the grim reaper with a scythe, on the right door a skeleton. Below are panels with inscriptions which are too worn to read. At the centre bottom is a corpse in a shroud with putti (cherubs) on the inside of the bottom doors.



Rood Screen dated around 1500 at St Peter's Besford.



The alabaster tomb of Richard Harwell, died 1576, in the sanctuary.

In the north east corner of the chancel is a tomb base with the effigy of **Richard (son of Edmund Harewell, High Sheriff of Worcester)**, who died in 1576. He is holding a book and round the base of the tomb are shields and weepers (figures mourning the deceased). On the wall above is wood panelling with the remains of painted shields.



A knight's helmet, sword, gauntlets and crest in the chancel at St Peter's Besford.

We parted company with Susan at this point – she went off to visit a sick parishioner and from Besford we made our way back towards Eckington.

We passed **Eckington Bridge and Wharf**, a picnic site, and stopped to see the view.



Eckington Bridge.

To finish our trip I wanted to visit a vantage point over the **Diocese of Worcester**. Following Susan's directions we made our way from Eckington to **Bredon Hill**, which inspired the famous poem '**On Bredon Hill**' by **AE Housman**. From there one can see for miles over the diocese, towards the **Malvern Hills**.



At Woollas Hill near Deer Park Hall. The hill leads up to Bredon Hill. The Malvern Hills are in the distance, to the west.

Martin and Magda Jones

First written March 2017.

Sources:

Review on **The Silver Traveller Advisor** website:

<http://www.silvertraveladvisor.com/review/attraction/153203-st-peter-s-church-a-hidden-gem-with-a-timber-frame-nave-and-beautiful-carving-inside>