

Attingham Park and Atcham Church



A distant view of Attingham Hall on the 'shortcut walk', February 2016

On one of the most pleasant days of **half term week** in February 2016, Magda and I made a break for Shrewsbury.

We've visited **Attingham Park**, the regional HQ of the **National Trust**, many times, and it has the advantage of being one of the few local Trust properties that remain open over the winter.



Signpost indicating paths through the woods.

Our main reason for visiting was to have a walk in beautiful surroundings - there are several trails around Attingham. We chose the 'shortcut' path across moorland, on our return crossing the **River Tern** by the picturesque weir and up the path to the front of the Hall.

The paths closer to the house and to the walled garden were busy with families on half term break, but the longer routes around the estate were practically deserted.



The 'shortcut' moorland walk at Attingham.



Snowdrops on the banks of the River Tern, by the weir at Attingham Park.

The shortcut walk returns to the Hall by passing over a bridge on the River Tern, by the Weir.



The path leads back to the impressive frontage of the Hall. Attingham Hall was designed by **George Steuart** and was built in 1785 for Noel Hill, the first **Baron Berwick**.

The park was landscaped by **Humphry Repton** and includes woodlands and a deer park, with between 200 and 300 head of Fallow deer.



There are several life size sculptures of horses in the courtyard and in the stables at Attingham.



The bridge across the River Severn at Atcham.

Having concluded our walk we went off in search of a Shrewsbury church. We had originally planned to visit **Cardeston**, but on our approach to Attingham Park we'd spotted Atcham church in the distance and opted instead to stay close by. Next time, perhaps, we'll take in a group of four nearby churches: **Cardeston, Ford, Alderbury and Meverley**.

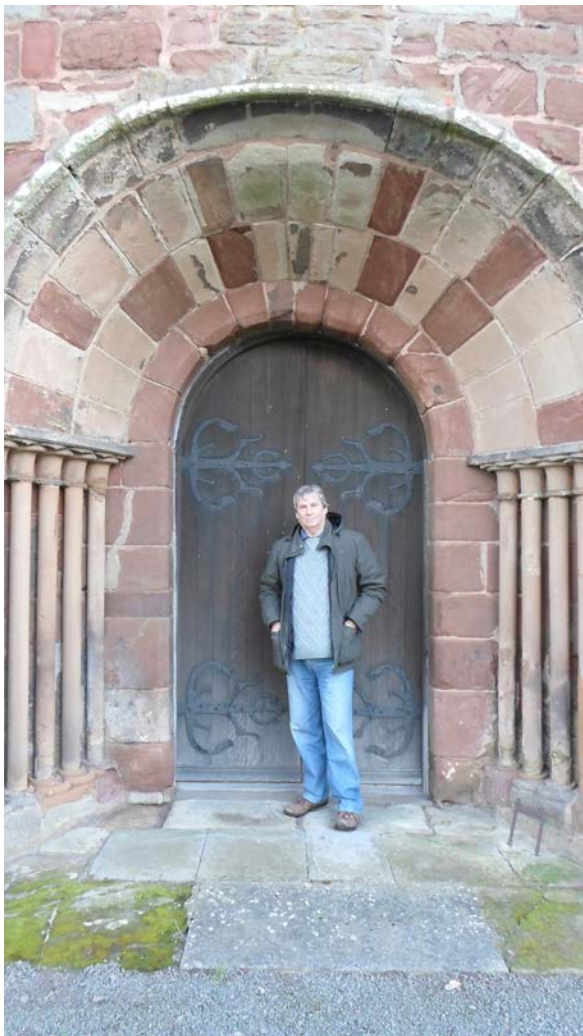
Access to **St Eata's** is in fact directly opposite the entrance to Attingham Park, across the B 4380. The access road is shared with the **Mytton and Mermaid** pub.



The side elevation of St Eata's, Shrewsbury.

St Eata's benefice is united with that of St Giles-with-Sutton, Shrewsbury. The church is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated **Grade I listed building**. Its dedication to **Eata of Hexham** is unique.

The oldest part of the present church is the nave and dates from the late Saxon or the early Norman era. The tower is probably from the 12th century, and the chancel from the late 13th century. The south porch is dated 1665. The church was restored in the late 19th century.



The east doorway wasn't used for access on our visit – it has an impressive oak door and Norman arch above.



Entry to the church was through the south doorway.



The inscription above the south door gives the date of construction as 1685.



The organ was restored by Nicholsons of Worcester in 1897.

The two-manual pipe organ was built in 1858 by G. M. Holdich, restored in 1896 by Nicholson and Company, and overhauled in 1961 by Hawkins and Company. More pipes were added in 1976.



The octagonal font is dated 1675. It bears the initials of two churchwardens – John Chapman and William Patteshall.



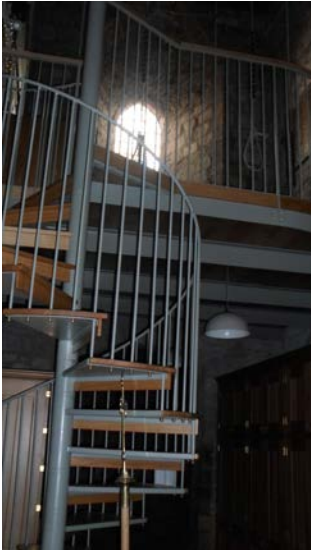
The choir stalls incorporate late medieval poppyheads and 17th-century reliefs.



The stained glass in the east window dates from the 15th century - there is also a 16th-century glass in a north nave window depicting Blanche Parry, a personal attendant of Queen Elizabeth I.

In the north wall of the chancel is a window dated 1859 by William Wailes, and there are windows in the south walls of the chancel and the nave by Lavers and Westlake.

There is a ring of six bells, four of which were cast in 1709 by Abraham Rudhall I at Gloucester, and two in 1829 by Thomas Mears II at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.



Bellringing gallery, accessed by a new spiral staircase.

A bellringing gallery, with mezzanine floor accessed by spiral stairway, was installed in 2014; it replaces the previous gallery that was badly damaged in a fire caused by a lightning strike in 1879 (which injured several children) and taken down in 1896.

Martin and Magda Jones
February 2016

Information sourced from:

St Eata's Church leaflet 2016

Wikipedia – St Eata's Church, Atcham; Attingham Park.

