

North of Telford – Bolas Magna, Shawbury, Moreton Corbet and Hodnet.



A rural view of the churchyard and countryside, from the church of St John the Baptist, Bolas Magna.

The area between **Telford and Market Drayton**, in the north of Shropshire, is a part of the county I haven't explored. I say that with some regret, because despite working in Telford for three years, I never ventured outside Wellington and Telford, merely sticking to the 'rat run' between Dudley and Telford!

BOLAS MAGNA

The area I visited this time lies between two main roads - the A49 and A442. Our first port of call was the quaintly named '**Bolas Magna**', to the church of **St John the Baptist**. The church is the second to be built on the existing site, with stonework from the late 13th century. The current church was built in the 18th century - even though at first glance it looks like the chancel was built much earlier.



The redbrick 18th century brickwork tower and nave (1728) at Bolas Magna, with the stone chancel built in 1690.

As I approached the church from the lych gate, I was greeted by an enthusiastic greyhound whose owner suggested I go to a nearby cottage to collect a key. The lady wasn't in (although she appeared later!) but one of the church helpers who was doing some gardening in the churchyard kindly fetched his key, and I let myself in.

The church still retains its 18th century box pews.



18th century box pews at Bolas Magna.

The chancel was built by **John Tourneur**, the **Rector of Bolas Magna** for 33 years, at his own expense. He died three years after it was completed, and is buried under the Communion Table it is said!



The altar at St John the Baptist, Bolas Magna.

PARISH OF BOLAS MAGNA.

The undermentioned Fees, only, are allowed by the "TERRIER," to be charged the Inhabitants of the above Parish, by the Rector and Parish Clerk, for the performance of the following Duties, Viz :-

RECTOR'S FEE.-

For Marriage with License, . . . FIVE SHILLINGS
When Banns are Published, . EIGHT-PENCE
For Burying, FOUR-PENCE.

PARISH CLERK'S FEE.-

For Marriage with license, . . TWO SHILLINGS & SIX-PENCE
When Banns are Published, . ONE SHILLING,
For Burying, TEN-PENCE.

NO FEE FOR BAPTISM OR CHRISTENING

By a resolution of the Ratepayers of the said Parish in Vestry Assembled, held on the 25th day of March, 1861, it was resolved unanimously, "That the above Extracts from the TERRIER, be printed and circulated amongst the Inhabitants, and a copy framed and fixed at the entrance of the Parish Church."

THOMAS BILLINGHAM, Churchwarden, and Chairman of the Meeting.

S. BENNION, PRINTER, MARKET DRAYTON.

A scale of fees for marriages and funerals at Bolas Magna, dated 1861.



The vestry at St John the Evangelist – preparing for Palm Sunday!



Nave and chancel at Bolas Magna.

After a good look round St John the Evangelist, I set the satnav for my next destination, **Shawbury**. However I was quite hungry at this point and on the way encountered the charmingly named '**Tiddly**' pub (also referred to as The Royal Oak). I can assure you that I didn't get 'tiddly', but I did have a superb lunch of ham, egg and chips followed by apple pie and ice cream.



'The Tiddly' pub, Ellerdine.

Shawbury



The noticeboard and pathway to St Mary the Virgin, Shawbury.

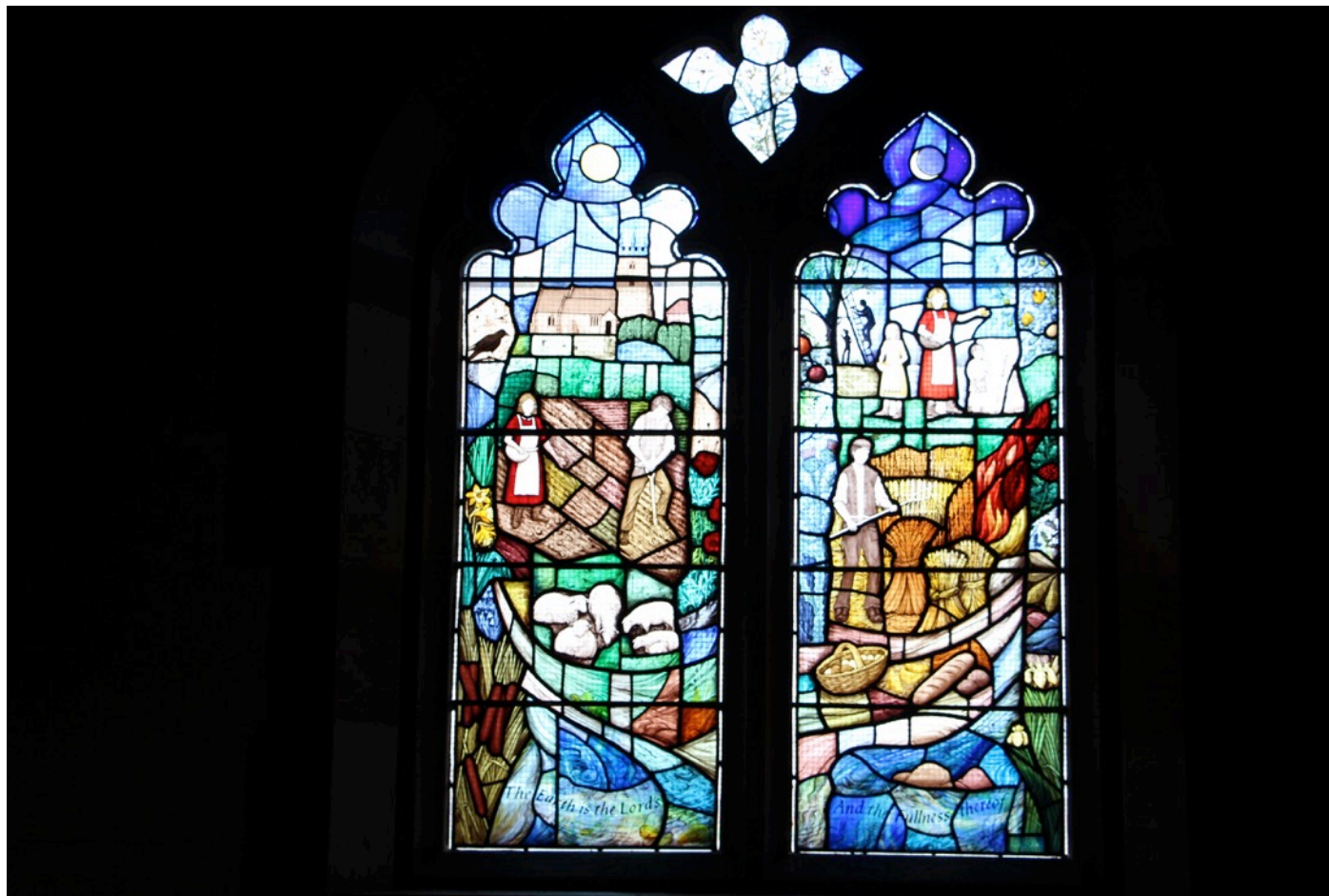
St Mary the Virgin at Shawbury dates back to 1182 and still has some original features. A carved reredos behind the altar (1881) along with other carvings are of special interest. In the last 10 years a stained glass window, bellringing platform, kitchen and toilet have been added. The church was open when I arrived.



The outer doors to the porch at Shawbury – with cut steel figures.



Carved and painted reredos of The Last Supper at Shawbury.



'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness therein' – a stained glass window depicts the abundance of the local agrarian economy.

MORETON CORBET



Moreton Corbet Castle – next to the church. The ruins contain both Norman and Elizabethan remains.

Moreton Corbet is easy to miss - I set off from Shawbury and although I knew it was nearby, there was no sign to mark the start of the village. It was certainly the most spectacular of all the settings I visited that day - quite apart from the church, there is an adjacent **Moreton Corbet Castle** to wander round too!



Effigies of Sir Richard Corbet (d. 1513) and his wife inside St Bartholomew's, Moreton Corbet.

Inside there is a carnival of colourful monuments and windows, quite spectacular. Something told me that the Corbets didn't want to be forgotten in a hurry!



The tomb of another Sir Richard Corbet (d.1562), and his wife Margaret Corbet.

Two generations of the Corbets are arrayed in all their splendour as life size effigies. In one, of Sir Richard who died in 1513, heraldic shields are displayed. In another, the children appear as smaller reliefs on the side of the tomb.



The monumental tomb of Sir Richard Corbet (died 1513) and his wife with magnificent stained glass window.



Sir Richard Corbet, d. 1691

Representing a later generation, Sir Richard Corbet, who died in 1691, merits his own chapel with a bust in a wall niche.

HODNET

The final leg of my journey to the area north of Telford took me to **Hodnet, near Market Drayton**. The best known attractions in the area are Hodnet Gardens and Hawkstone Follies. However the village of **Hodnet** is one of the best kept and most attractive rural settings I have visited and well worth wandering round in its own right. Ultimately, it was to prove another frustrating visit though, as first I had to take pot luck on who held a key (it was the local shop) and then the key I was given didn't fit any of the doors to the church, so I couldn't go inside.



The beautiful centre of the village of Hodnet. The house on the right is 'The Hundred House'. The lych gate to the church is in the centre of the picture.

The church of **St Luke at Hodnet** is well known for its octagonal tower and its **Bishop Heber** and **Hill family** connections. Reginald Heber was a rector at St Lukes from 1807 until he was appointed Bishop of Calcutta in 1823. The **Hill family** were local gentry and some held government office.



Hodnet – the octagonal tower.



A view of the east of the church, with the village war memorial.

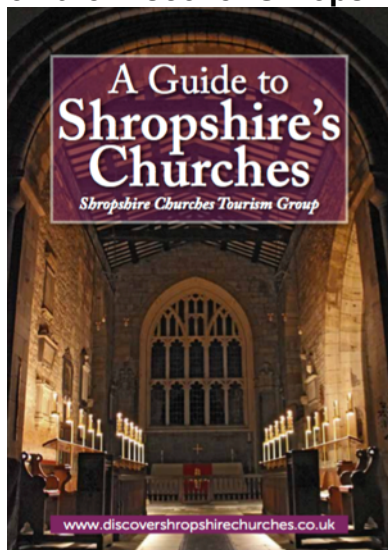
Alas due to the key problem, I was unable to go inside - but there is an article about **St Luke's interior** (which is spectacular) in the Shropshire Star:

[St Luke's](#)

Source material for articles:

[Bolas Magna – A Church Near You](#)

Other basic information about the churches, including postcodes, is contained in the Shropshire Churches brochure and on the Discover Shropshire website:



<http://www.discovershropshirechurches.co.uk>

