

OPEN TO THE FUTURE RE-ORDERING PROJECT

To mark the millennium of the martyrdom of St Alphege, a major project has been carried out to improve the church interior and install new facilities.



Open To The Future



The St Alphege chapel provides private prayer space and contains a new altar specially made by local craftsman Brian Lovejoy.

Removal of pews in the north east corner has created a flexible space with better access to a group of brasses.

One of the brasses in the north east corner marks the grave of Sir John Cassey, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who died in 1400. His wife, Dame Alice lies beside him; a dog, Terri, at her feet.

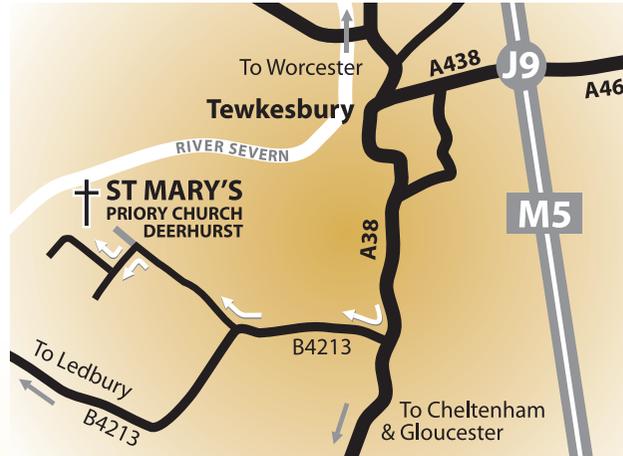


A generous bequest from a parishioner funded the installation of a more powerful organ, gifted to the church when a chapel in Painswick was closed.

The heating system will be upgraded and the former boiler house has been converted to a WC with disabled access.

HOW TO FIND US

Deerhurst village lies on the bank of the River Severn, 4 miles south of Tewkesbury by road. Exit the M5 at J9, drive towards Tewkesbury, following signs for Gloucester on the A38, after 3 miles turn right onto B4213. At the sharp left bend, turn right to Deerhurst. Post code: GL19 4BX.



VISITING AND TOURS

To arrange an accompanied group visit with guide please contact the Visitors Officer:

Mrs Sheila Ryan

Telephone: 01452 780107

Email: sheilaeryan@btinternet.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

Friends of Deerhurst Church:

Website: www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk

Local History and Heritage:

Website: www.apperleydeerhursthistory.co.uk

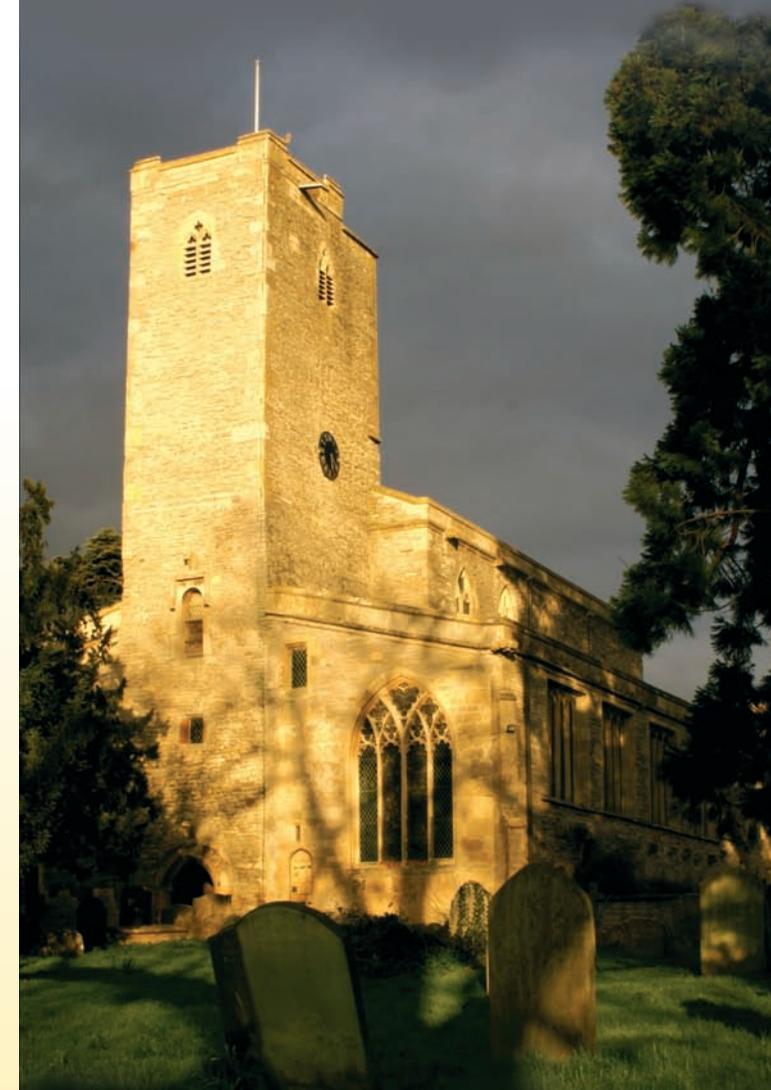
Apperley & Deerhurst Village website:

www.apperley-deerhurst.co.uk

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THE PRIORY CHURCH OF ST. MARY, DEERHURST



A Guide

to the distinctive history
of this remarkable church

THE STORY OF ST MARY'S CHURCH

St. Mary's church was established on the banks of the River Severn as a place of worship in the middle of the eighth century. The earliest evidence documents the existence of a religious community dating back to AD 804. Despite many changes of fortune, the building has retained its legacy as an outstanding example of Anglo-Saxon design and construction.



The original building followed the basic rectangle pattern common to the period. Modifications were made over time, with the addition of aisles around 1200 and the tower in the 14th century. The ruins of the seven-sided apse remain.

The Saxon font at the west end of the north aisle was thrown out of the church in 1653. Its top was rediscovered in a farmyard in 1845 and the stem found near a local pub in 1868, when the two parts were reunited. The spiral ornamentation suggests it was carved around 800.



ST. ALPHEGE MONK OF ST MARY'S PRIORY



Alphege was born in 953 and began his monastic life at Deerhurst, where he is reputed to have found the regime too lax. He moved away to live near Bristol, became Abbot of Bath and then Bishop of Winchester. Later, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was captured and ransomed by the Danes, but forbade the ransom and was killed in 1012.

The millennium of his martyrdom has been honoured by the creation of a chapel dedicated to the Saint at the West end of the South aisle, under the 15th century window containing his image.

THE ESTATE AND ITS OWNERSHIP

After Earl Odda died in 1056, the estate reverted to Edward the Confessor. The land was later given to Westminster Abbey and the church to the Benedictine monastery of St Denis near Paris, becoming a cell of Tewkesbury Abbey. During the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, it became a parish church.

A UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

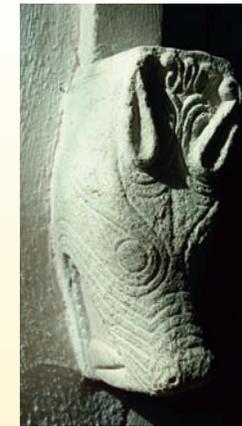
The church has many fine features that display its Anglo-Saxon heritage.

The double-headed opening, high on the west wall of the nave, suggests that there were extra floors leading to the interior room that is now the ringing chamber.



The church building is also distinctive for its original stone sculptures.

Eleven beasts heads remain; two on the chancel arch in their original positions. The beasts' heads on either side of the inner door are 'label stops' that



were previously on the outer door. Those on either side of the chancel arch provide evidence of the colours used to decorate the carvings.

The stone head of an angel on the side of the ruined apse and the carved image of the Madonna over the inner doorway are the original carvings.

