

Three churches in south-east Shropshire

All Saints', Claverley, is an early church on the site of pre-Christian worship, retaining its Saxon font as well as a fine Norman example. On entering one is immediately struck by the extensive twelfth-century wall painting, a 15 m long frieze along the north wall over the arcade, somewhat reminiscent of the Bayeux Tapestry. The Gatacre chapel was of particular interest as the tombs and memorials related to Jeremy Bate's family history, the subject of his talk on Sunday. A curious item of



The south door of St Gregory's, Morville, c. 1150–1200, with some later replacements to the ironwork. *Photo Keith Pinn*



Twelfth-century wall paintings at All Saints', Claverley. The frieze is thought to represent a battle between Virtues and Vices.
Photo Keith Pinn



Memorial to Sir Whitmore Acton and his wife by T. F. Pritchard, 1763, in St Mary's, Acton Round. *Photo Keith Pinn*

furniture was an oak chest with unusual horizontal mouldings to the front and a large carved roundel to the side. Unfortunately the piece had evidently endured a hard life and suffered extensive repairs.

The next stop was **St Gregory's, Morville** where one is confronted by a twelfth-century south door with fine scrolling ironwork. The oak dugout chest in the nave has similar 'split-curl' decoration to the iron hinges which may have been made by the same smith, although the chest itself is claimed to be much earlier. Other items of interest were a finely carved Norman font and a set of four seventeenth-century oak carvings depicting the evangelists.

Finally, many of us braved the narrow lanes to find **St Mary's, Acton Round**. This tiny church was built originally as a chapel for Wenlock Priory. Immediately opposite the south door is a small side chapel filled, floor to ceiling, with a memorial to Sir Whitmore Acton and his wife dating from 1763. It is somewhat incongruous in such a small simple church being a high fashion mixture of Gothick and Rococo by T. F. Pritchard (died 1775), a Shrewsbury architect we would meet again at Bitterley Court and Benthall Hall.

Gill and Keith Pinn