

If These Walls Could Talk

Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Image Gallery – Updated August 2025

1 - Repair, conservation and reopening works to the C14th tower



The Priest's Room (Level 1) glazing installed, electric lighting, cills repaired with new stonework as required, timbers cleaned.



New internal door to the Priest's Room. There had previously been no sign of the old door but the fittings were still evident.



Level 2 – remains of the old windlass. Floor timbers and windows restored, repointing as necessary, cill repaired, new door fitted.



A view of the south tower wall and porch showing the new lime mortar pointing and new window stonework at Level 2. (Image by Droitwich u3a Photography Group).



The newly installed tower lights brighten the scene walking up to the church for Evensong.



Example of damaging cement-based mortar raked out ready for repointing.



Repointing underway!

New external lime mortar repointing
with example of new stone
replacement.



Pre-project: badly eroded cill and stonework



Pre-project: external turret access door
cement-based mortar in poor condition,
causing damp and damage to stonework.



New door now in situ and lime mortar
repointing.



Vertical turret window being fitted with new cill and framing already in place.



Window and glazing being fitted to first level Priest's Room.



Pre-project: internal tower doorway as blocked circa 1859.



Doorway reopened affording direct access to the stairway from the nave.



New door soon to be fitted...and then in place.





Pre-project: poor condition of internal turret stair treads and pointing.



New stair treads and door frame in place.



New stair treads fitted



New rope handrail fitted



Nave west gable end – stonework pre-project showing cement-base mortar and damp areas.



Tower, turret and nave west gable end post-works with lime mortar applied and stonework drying out.

2 - Events

Lime Mortar Skills Workshop and Scaffolding Tours



Having A Go!



A good head for heights needed!



heritage open days




Creativity Unwrapped
Hampton Lovett Church
Saturday 9th September 2023
10.00am – 4.00pm

The theme of the 2023 national Heritage Open Days programme is 'Creativity Unwrapped'. Please come along and help us in celebrating examples of the creative spirit of Hampton Lovett through the ages. Exhibits, displays and demonstrations will include:

- Renowned sculptors and their works
- A demonstration of stonemasonry
- The works of a local artist – blacksmith
- The secret works of a C17th century writing group
- Local craft pottery
- The artist's view of the church

Have a wander around and learn about our wider heritage and discover what is currently going on in the tower!

Coffee, tea and cakes as well
 WC Parking Nearby

Heritage Open
Day 2023



Having a go after the stonemasonry demonstration.

2023 Heritage Open Day programme



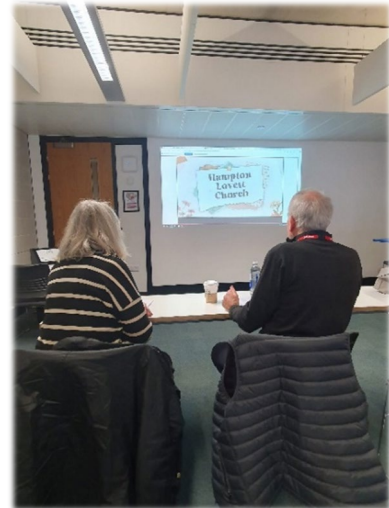
Chris: our Stonemason at the Heritage Open Day with a demonstration carving completed on the day. The carving has been dated 09.09.23 and will remain in the church for posterity.



Ready for Heritage Open Day.



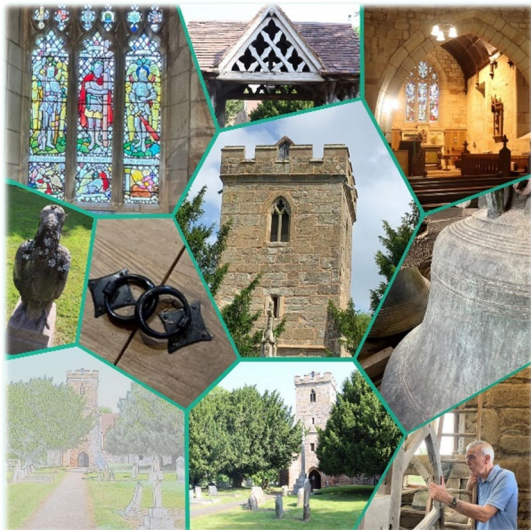
National Treasures Day 2023



University College Birmingham: ready for student presentations 12.04.24
(UCB Image: Peter Lopeman/Alamy Stock Photo)

Historical Society Visits and Tours

- 18/06/24 Droitwich Civic Society
- 25/06/24 Droitwich u3A Digital Photography Group
- 17/08/24 Kidderminster Historical Society
- 25/06/25 Dorridge u3a Digital Photography Group



Dorridge u3a Digital Photography Group

Images from the visit by Droitwich u3a Photography Group

Collage image: Janet Skan

Church image: Alan Meyrick

Droitwich u3A Digital Photography Group



Celebrating Heritage and 'Surprising Connections'

Hampton Lovett Church and Parish Rooms

Saturday 7th September 2024 10.00am - 4.00pm

Sunday 8th September 2024 10.00am - 2.00pm

The theme of the 2024 national Heritage Open Days programme is Routes, Networks and Connections. Please come and discover Hampton Lovett's role as an historic connections hub! Help us, as well, in celebrating the reopening of the C14th tower after repair and conservation works and maybe take a tower tour!

Railways are featured this year. See a working model of the local railway, the church and the old Cutnall Green Halt. Hear about Operation Starfish in World War II. Why not bring your own 'OO' gauge engine and see it running!



Discover the Monarch's Way footpath passing through the churchyard, the escape route of the future King Charles II after the battle of Worcester in 1651. Learn about Hampton Lovett's connection with the Royalist cause.

A Secret Writers' Network

Review the evidence of Hampton Lovett's connection with a 1600's writer's network - working secretly towards the restoration of the Anglican Church in the time of Cromwell's 'republic'.



'If These Walls Could Talk... Revealing a Community That Helped Shape Our Nation'... Free copy to all visitors.

Additional small souvenir for all National Lottery players.

Light refreshments, parking and WC facility available at the Parish Rooms

Take a Guided Access* or Virtual Tower Tour!

Thanks to National Lottery Players, works to the C14th tower have been completed. The secrets of the tower can now be revealed. See the 'Priest's Room' and the bells (two cast in the 1600s, one in the 1700s). If preferred, watch our virtual video tour from the comfort of the nave.



*Please note for the guided tours: the stairway is narrow so clothes may gather some dust from the walls. Being comfortable with stairs and 'sensible' shoes with some tread required as well as a good level of general health. Maximum of three persons plus guide at a time and no children under 10 years of age.

Where are we?

Hampton Lovett Church and the Parish Rooms can be found off the A422 Droitwich to Kidderminster Road in The Forest, Hampton Lovett, WR9 0LU. Contact details: 01905 779091 / 07531 911959

The Hampton Lovett Heritage Railway.





Getting ready for Heritage
Open Day





National Lottery Open Week 2025

Hampton Lovett Church

Saturday 22nd March 2025 10.00am - 4.00pm

Tours, Teas & Tales!

We are delighted to offer this new Open Day as way of saying 'thank you' to National Lottery Players and our local community for making possible our heritage project:

'If These Walls Could Talk...' 'Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church'.

Wander around this historic church. Take a guided (or virtual) tour of the reopened C14th tower. Discover the secrets of the priest's room, the windlass room and the bell chamber.



We've been delving into our Church records. Come and see some of the surprising things we've found and the tales our findings have to tell. Our exhibits tell tales of Hampton Lovett's role in the courts of kings and queens, in great affairs of state, in the development of the Anglican faith and in industrial innovation and enterprise.

Tracing Your Family History?

We'll be happy to help you look through our records of Births, Marriages and Burials.

Newly Discovered!

Marian marks, spirit traps, Chi-Ro, bell ringing notations, a heater shield, mason marks, initials, a scratch dial and holy dust scrapings.

These mysterious markings on our church have their own tale to tell. Come and have a look!

Guided Tower Tours: The spiral stairway is rather steep & narrow so clothes may gather dust. 'Sensible' shoes with some tread required as well as a good level of general health. Maximum of three persons per tour and no children under 10 years of age.

Where are we?

Hampton Lovett Church and the Parish Rooms can be found off the A422 Drotwiche to Kidderminster Road in The Forest, Hampton Lovett, WR9 0LU. Contact details: 01905 779091 / 07531 911959

Heritage Open Day 22.03.25



Bat Walk at Bodenheim Arboretum



Ready To Go : bat detector to hand!

3 – Interpretation Assets

Suite of Logos

Two examples of the range of church logos – other ‘large-scale’ versions can be used for banners



St Mary and All Saints
Hampton Lovett Church




If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church


Two examples of the church logos suite – other ‘large-scale’ versions can be used for banners

Suite of pull-up panels

The ‘welcome’ and the ‘thank-you’ panels (below) will be left on display in the church so casual visitors see them on entry.



If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Made possible with
Heritage Fund
thanks to National Lottery players

If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church

Repairs, Conservation and Reopening Works to the 14th Century Tower

Thanks to National Lottery Players and our local community, major works to the tower and nave west gable end were completed in 2023.

The removal of damaging cement based pointing mortar, applied in past times, was a major task. This was stripped back to the original medieval mortar. New lime mortar pointing now allows the sandstone to breathe and dry out.

The reopening of the original internal doorway was central to the project, giving easier access to the tower.

Other works included conserving or replacing sills, mullions and stair treads, fitting a rope handrail to the stairway, installing lighting and reglazing the first level Priest's Room.

Through our guided access and virtual video tours we hope many more people will now discover the 'secrets' of this historic tower and also enjoy the view.



14th Century Tower, Hampton Lovett Church



Reopened tower doorway




View from Hampton Lovett Church



If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church


Inside the Tower

Level 1: The Priest's Room
Now restored, this room was for the use of the priest and also local people. Who knows how many have met here throughout the centuries.




The Priest's Room

Level 2: The Windlass
Here stands the remains of the old wooden windlass, used to wind a rope to raise heavy loads, possibly including the bells. Some parts have been removed over the years.




The old wooden windlass

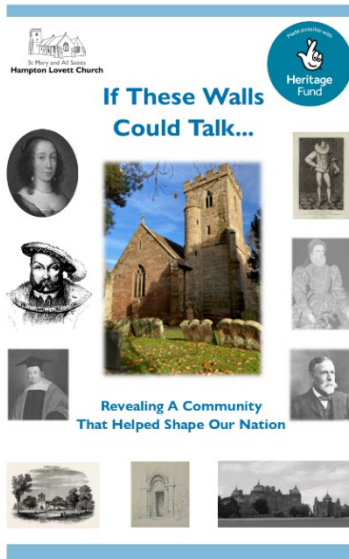
Level 3: The Bell Chamber
A ring of three bells. They are by Thomas Hancox of Walsall (1622), John Martin of Worcester (1664) and Richard Sanders of Droitwich (1711). The bell frame is later and by Kendrick of Droitwich (1868). The bells may be silent now but options are being explored to bring them back to life.



The bell chamber



Two ‘project banners’ : one in the porch entrance for events and the other within church. Two of each ‘tower banner’ one of each on display in church and one within the tower.



Souvenir coasters given to National Lottery players at events

The new edition of our heritage booklet, *"If These Walls Could Talk"*. The booklet includes a completely rewritten section on the project including the Heritage Fund stamp and a 'thank you' to National Lottery players.

B2 Interpretation Panels





The Monarch's Way

3rd September 1651: the future Charles II, together with his remaining Royalist troops is fleeing the Battle of Worcester after suffering heavy casualties at the hands of Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentary forces. Charles was to spend 42 perilous days on a tortuous journey that would eventually lead to Shornham and a boat to exile in France.

Today the 610-mile Monarch's Way, which passes through Hampton Lovett churchyard, can be followed as a leisure activity. For Charles and those with him, it was about life or death.



Charles is depicted as being aided by some of his supporters.

It must have seemed a desperate journey with little hope for the future.


Yet by 1658 Cromwell was dead, government nigh impossible and the country in danger of sliding into anarchy. In the irony of all ironies, Parliament invited Charles to return as a unifying figure and in 1660 the monarchy was restored.

Nine years earlier such an outcome would have seemed scarcely imaginable to Charles as he passed by Hampton Lovett Church on that darkest of days.




Monarch's Way - Hampton Lovett Church





Joshua Marshall 1628 —1678

A memorial to Dr Henry Hammond (d.1660) can be found on the nave south wall. The sculptor was Joshua Marshall and the monument is dated 1665. Joshua was one of the most successful masons of his time. Prior to the Great Fire of London (1666) he was employed in sculpting monuments, making tombs, elaborate chimney pieces and supplying stone. As a tomb maker, he made the white marble sarcophagus in Westminster Abbey, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, which houses the bones of Princes Edward and Richard (often known as 'the princes in the tower').




As Master Mason to Charles II, he worked with Sir Christopher Wren on the rebuilding including several "Wren Churches". He was principal builder of The Monument to the Great Fire.




The Monument
Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Dr Robert Hooke. It is a tall column of Portland stone, 202 feet high, the exact distance from the point at which the Great Fire of London started.

In the 10 years prior to his death he took contracts worth £46,000 (approximately £6.5m in 2021 terms). This amount included £10,500 for works to Windsor Castle.


John Motson's 'The Monument'.






HMS WARRIOR
The World's First Iron Hulled-Warship

By 1858 the expansionist Napoleon III posed a severe threat to Britain through the construction of a new powerful class of ironclad warships, the first being *La Gloire* (right). Britain faced a potential invasion threat and the country was in uproar. Queen Victoria herself asked 'if the navy would be adequate in wartime'.



HMS Warrior, raised up in the dry dock at Portsmouth, 1880.

Appointed as First Lord of the Admiralty, it fell upon Sir John Somerset Pakenham of Hampton Lovett and Weswood to decide what to do. There was much controversy. It is said many in the Admiralty regarded ironclad warships as a passing fad. Despite this, Sir John pursued a still more radical design. *La Gloire* was iron clad over a wooden framed hull and therefore still vulnerable at her heart. *Warrior* was the first iron-hulled warship. Fast, heavily armed and virtually indestructible, she and her sister ship *Black Prince* could not be challenged. Any threat of invasion was gone.



La Gloire
Ships: LA May 1859, 1860

Three of eleven B2 moveable framed poster-style interpretation panels telling the stories of people and events linked to Hampton Lovett Church. These will be displayed for Heritage Open Days and other events.

These latest panels are designed to be left on display in the church to be seen by casual visitors. The first is a visitor 'welcome' message. The second panel outlines the project recently completed and is a thank-you to everyone involved with the project.

If These Walls Could Talk

Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Welcome

A very warm welcome to St Mary and All Saints, Hampton Lovett Church.

For centuries this church has been a place of sanctuary, spiritual contemplation, worship and thanksgiving.

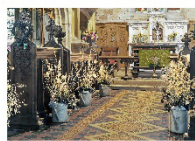
For a small parish, Hampton Lovett also has a surprising heritage of involvement with major historical events.

Our booklet, *"If These Walls Could Talk..."*, tells these stories. Please do take a copy together with the other leaflets and the church plan.

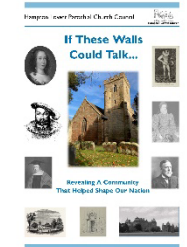
Much more information about the church can be found on our website by entering *"Hampton Lovett Church Worcestershire"* into your web browser.

We would be delighted if you would take the time to sign the Visitors' Book!

Thank you for visiting.



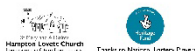
Church set for Harvest Service. Image P Jones URPS



If These Walls Could Talk booklet of stories available to visitors.



This church has interesting external features too. Above is the door that leads to nowhere! Now closed, this is a very early stone door, some 600 to the original chantry chapel (1400s) but may well be earlier.



Thanks to Historic Lottery Players

If These Walls Could Talk

Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Thank you to National Lottery Players, our community, volunteer team and contractors

2025 saw the completion of a two year project which included major external and internal conservation repairs to the 14th century tower and the nave's west gable end.

Reopening the nave internal doorway, installing lighting and providing a rope handrail mean that we are able to offer tower tours which have proved very popular.

A series of community activities, including heritage open days, a lime mortar workshop, a scaffolding tour, student projects, school and society tours and talks and even a bat walk mean that many more people have engaged with and visited the church.

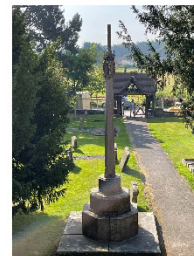
Project images, a tower tour video, news stories, information about church services and social and heritage events can be found on our website. Please enter *"Hampton Lovett Church Worcestershire"* into your web browser to find us.



St Mary and All Saints, Hampton Lovett Church



Information ready for Heritage Open Day



View from the tower, Hampton Lovett Church

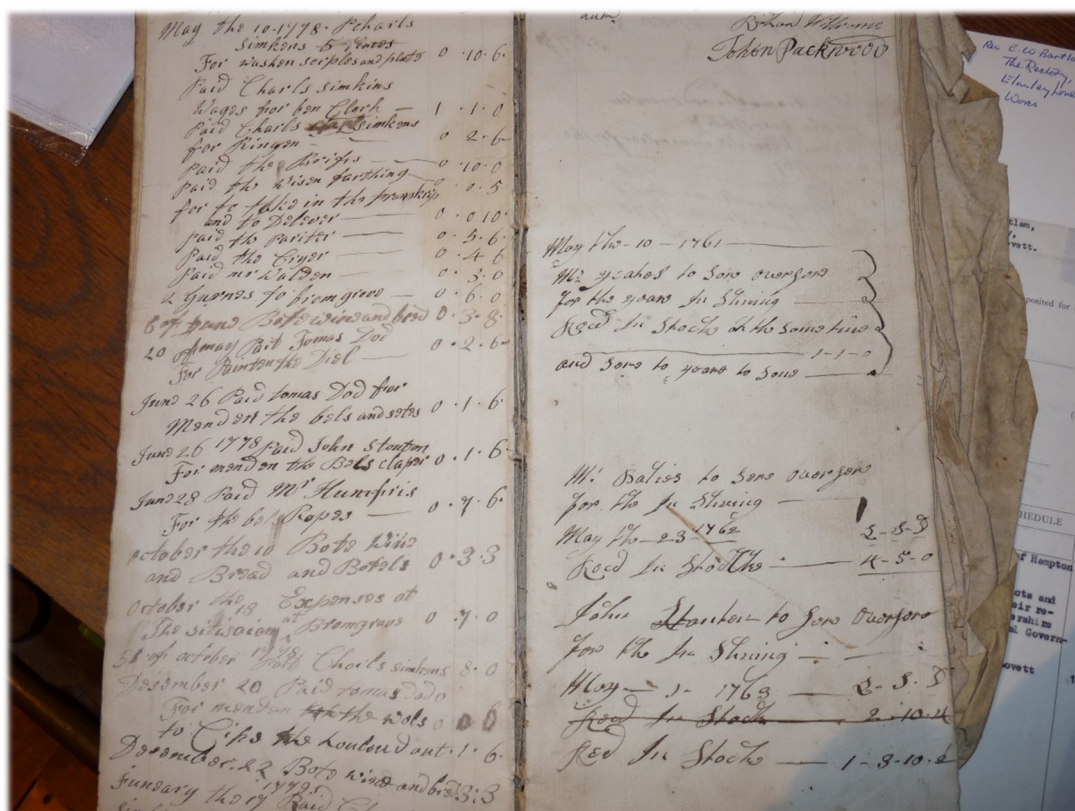


Thanks to Historic Lottery Players

Books, diaries and accounts



17

The Churchwardens' Accounts from the 1700's: catalogued and archived during our historic documents audit. A facsimile will be produced for display at future Heritage Open Days and events.




The 'Whole Duty of Man' on display during Heritage Open Day 2024

In March 2025 three new B2 panels were added to our range of interpretation assets


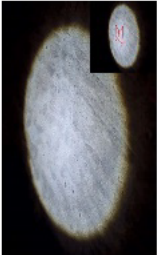



MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES

From spirit traps to masons' marks



It started with a discovery in the tower. Marks that look like an 'EVV' in the priest's room may be *apotropaic*; ritual, protective or symbolic markings found at thresholds such as doors and windows. They are likely Pre-Reformation.

The E may be a trident-like form symbolising defence against evil. It's next to a VV, a *Marian mark* to invoke the Virgin Mary. On the right hand side of the same window, we find a conjoined VV. Above it, is what looks like an attempted IXI in a mesh design, a type of spirit trap. Another IXI mesh is found on the East window.

Mesh or Spirit trap




MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES

From spirit traps to masons' marks

As you head up the tower, there's a small VV over the entrance to the bell stage and what may be a Pax or Chi-Rho by the window opening.




Across to the Bell stage south, we see numerous incised markings. They are a complete mystery.




Possible Pax or Chi-Rho


And a beautiful find on the north opening appear remarkably similar to place notation on four bells (we now have three).

Bell ringers' marks




MYSTERIOUS DISCOVERIES


From spirit traps to masons' marks




Outside, above the tower door, there is what may be a 'heater' shield with a cross, another apotropaic mark providing protection at a threshold. The T-like mark to the left may be a mason's mark in a repurposed stone. There's another close by that looks like a 'k' too. The J.H. is almost certainly Post-Reformation I was 'ere! graffiti.



Collecting 'villy dust'



Mass, scratch or tide sundial



Heater shield over tower door and mason's mark


The holes you see further along the walls were probably made by visitors to collect stone dust deemed holy, for apotropaic protection, healing, fertility, plaster for icons, and burial practices.

Isoborn's eagle and initials: E. 1610

On the south side of the chancel, you see a mass, scratch or tide sundial and a hole where the gnomon was. Some believe this marked time for religious services. Others think this impractical for worshippers, who would listen for the bells. Another mystery!

If These Walls Could Talk

Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Mysterious Discoveries at St Mary and All Saints, Hampton Lovett Church

Following the renovation of the church tower in 2024, many intriguing incised marks were found, both inside and outside the church.


Some marks were thought to bring good fortune or to ward off bad luck. Others may have had more complex meanings or offered protection for particular objects or individuals.

Ritual marks may have served as spiritual barriers to guard thresholds such as doors and windows. Marks of probable religious significance can also be seen.


Incised marks were often made by stonemasons as they were building the church. There are possible examples of these.

Incised into an outside wall there is a 'mass', 'scratch' or 'tide' dial which could be a medieval sundial.


The people who worked at or attended Hampton Lovett Church certainly left their mark!




Marked incised markings in the bull cage



Probably not a cross or a sundial: mason's mark







Probable mason's mark resembling a 'K'




The 'mass' 'scratch' or 'tide' dial

To find out more, please pick up our booklet.


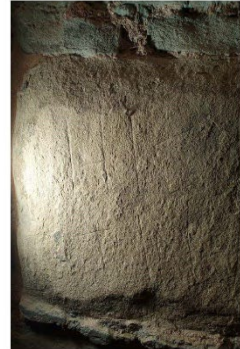









If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Mysterious Discoveries

The Markings, Signs and Messages at Hampton Lovett Church

August 2025 - a new 'Mysterious Discoveries' booklet and pull-up panel were added to our interpretation portfolio.

This new leaflet (August 2025) reveals the secrets of the tower and the story of the bells in a conveniently sized trifold format.

Level 3: the story of the bells...

Emerging from the turret stairway we find the bell chamber and another story to tell. Here can be seen a ring of three bells.

They were cast by Thomas Hancox of Walsall (1622), John Martin of Worcester (1664) and Richard Sanders of Droitwich (1711).

It is a mystery why three bells were cast by three different foundries over a period spanning almost ninety years. However there are clues.

The internal bell chamber stonework shows evidence that the bells were previously hung in a different formation and the remains of an earlier bell frame can still be seen.

The current frame is by Kendrick of Droitwich and dates from 1868. Perhaps the older bells were simply replaced, one by one as need arose.



The bells have been silent for some time now, originally due to a shortage of bell ringers.

Much work will be needed to restore them to full working order.

However, there is hope!

Alternative methods now exist by which bells can be sounded. Options are being explored.

Perhaps we will hear their sound once again in the not too distant future?

Tower tours...

If you would like to see more of the tower and the historic bells you may be interested in taking a tower tour.

On occasions we offer these as part of our heritage open days details of which will be promoted on our website under the Services and Events tab.

Enter Hampton Lovett Church, Worcestershire into your browser and you will find our 'A Church Near You' site.

On occasions we may be able to offer tours to groups or individuals by arrangement. Please contact us via the website.

A virtual (video) tour can also be found on the website—click 'tower tour' on the home page or access direct via YouTube by entering Hampton Lovett Church in the search box.



You may also find of interest...

'If These Walls Could Talk' tells some of the stories of the church's rather surprising heritage.

Tales of a local community that helped shape a nation!

© Hampton Lovett Parochial Church Council

If These Walls Could Talk
Revealing Secrets at Hampton Lovett Church



Hampton Lovett Church



Revealing the secrets of the tower

Thanks to National Lottery Players and our local community, 2023 saw the completion of a major project to repair, conserve and reopen the C14th historic tower for guided visitor access



St Mary and All Saints
Hampton Lovett Church

A major project!

The repair and conservation works were extensive and included:

- Repairs to the roof
- The removal of old and damaging cement-based mortar across the tower
- Replacement with traditional lime based mortar—allowing the stones to breathe and dry out
- Installation of new stonework to window mullions and cills
- Repair of stair treads or replacement with new treads as required
- The reopening of the blocked internal door from the nave to the turret stairway
- Installation of electric lighting and a rope handrail to facilitate guided visitor access



Before and after...



Pre-project cement-based mortar causing dampness



Lime mortar pointing & new stone insert



Pre-project turret stairs



Restored stairs with rope banner



Restoration of glazed windows to the 'Priest's Room'

New internal lighting gives a warm welcome when walking up the path on a winter night!



Level 1: the priest's room...

Now restored, this room was for the use of the parish priest and also for the local community. We know from old drawings of the church that the room was previously glazed so this was reinstated in the 2023 works to the tower. Who knows how many people have met in this room over the centuries.

The small alcove at floor level between the two windows is a mystery. Not a fireplace and not a lockable cupboard. It may have been left open during the tower construction as a convenient way of raising items to the first level.

During a tower tour a visitor spotted intriguing incised markings adjacent to the south window, highlighted in red on the image.

A pattern emerged with the discovery of other markings which suggests 'protective' marks incised long ago. Those by the windows may be spiritual barriers to guard thresholds.



Level 2: the windlass room

On the second level we find the remains of the old rope windlass. This would have been used to raise heavy loads to the upper reaches of the tower—the technology of its day.

Parts have been removed but the structure must have been left in place in case it was needed again.

