

Welcome to St Mary's Church Astley



**"We pray that this house of God
may be a gate of glory for you"**

We know that a church existed at Astley as early as 1285 because a priest was appointed in that year. However what remains today contains part of the church that was built in 1343 together with some additions that were built in 1607/8.

The 1343 church was built in the form of a cross, with a central tower which had a lead covered spire. After dark a light was always shown from the spire which was known as "The lantern of Arden"

The light was to guide travellers through the thick forest which surrounded the area in those days.

The church's purpose was a chantry for Thomas Astley. Here priests sang mass daily for both him and his family to aid their souls through purgatory. Over the years the church has passed ownership through Sir Richard Chamberlayne to the Newdegate family.

The main body of the old church was about 30 metres long but by 1600 the tower had fallen down and the church was in a state of disrepair.

In 1607/8 the present tower and chancel were built, using some of the materials from the old church, at each end of the chancel of the earlier building.

Nave

Ceiling

This is made of oak and has twenty one shields which record families connected with the church. It was extensively re-stored in 1876.

Wall paintings

(17th Century)

There are six on the south wall and three on the north wall showing seven Bible passages, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.

Choir Stalls

(14th Century)

There are two sets of nine and behind each stall is a painted panel.

There are nine apostles on the north side and nine prophets on the south side.

Chancel

Stained glass windows

The east and north windows contain some 14th century stained glass whereas the south window is modern.

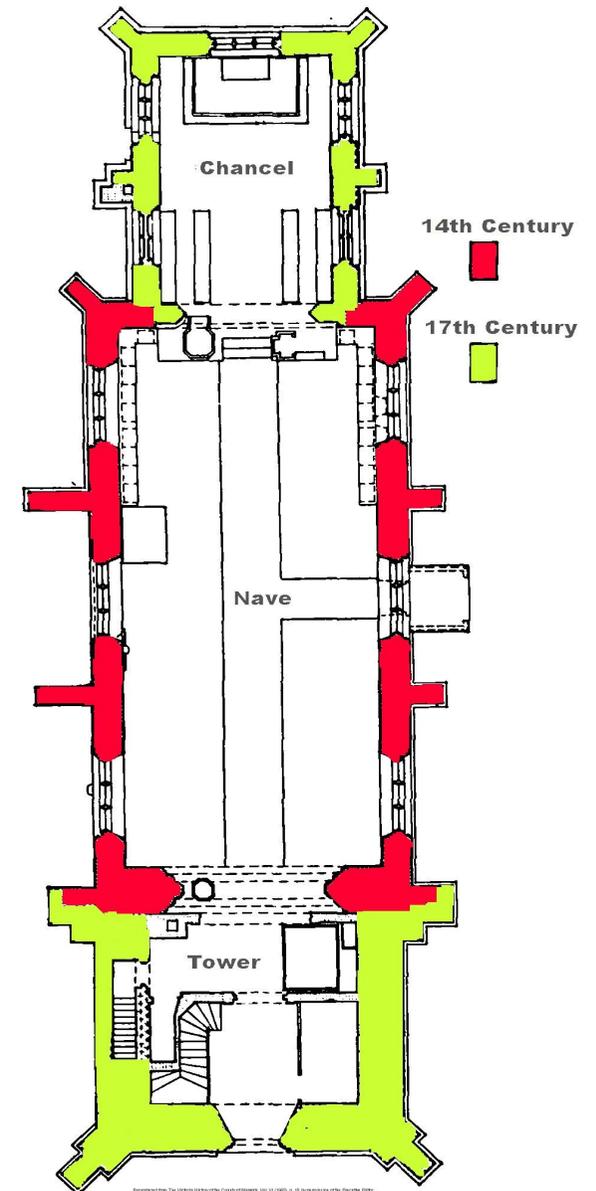
Altar Picture

This dates from the 17th Century and depicts the taking down of our Lord from the cross. It was given to the church in 1905 by Sir Francis Newdegate

Tower

A stone circular staircase leads to up the bells of which there are five. Four of these have an inscription showing that they were made in Leicester in 1607

PLAN



Vicar: Reverend P Brown BA Dunelm

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