

**Holiday with a religious connection.**

**West Sussex Day 7 – Birdham, Itchenor, Chichester, Church Norton and Selsey.**



**Martin encounters the extraordinary 'Macrocarpa' tree in Birdham churchyard.**

## BIRDHAM

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016 was our last full day in **West Sussex** – it turned out to be very, very wet and not a day for long trips! However there were several locations of interest within 30 mins of Earnley, especially parish churches.

The first church we explored was **St James', Birdham**. The most striking feature outside the church was the **Macrocarpa** tree – it had the appearance of an ancient ash with a contorted knotted trunk. 'Hesperocyparis macrocarpa', commonly known as **Monterey cypress**, is a species of cypress native to the Central Coast of California - however the precise species is disputed and it may be an example of Italian Cypress (*C. sempervirens*). It was a nice surprise to find a variant on the ancient ash trees found in most old churchyards!



The **Macrocarpa** tree is located in a very pretty churchyard at Birdham, featuring a bench with trellis arch.

The parish church of St James, Birdham is situated on the Manhood Peninsula in Sussex. The area is a suburban extension of the city of Chichester, popular as a place to live and visit from its nearness to the city, Chichester Harbour and marina. The church was heavily restored in the nineteenth century, the then existing chancel being entirely replaced and the nave windows renewed. The sixteenth-century tower remains. The church has a Grade 1 listing.



The gated porch at Birdham.



East window, St James', Birdham. The scene depicted is Mark I: 19:20 - 'When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.'





**The beautiful chancel at Birdham.**



**A Millennium embroidery project depicting the village and its buildings at Birdham.**

## ITCHENOR

Our second church on Friday morning was the Parish Church of **St Nicolas, Itchenor**. It's a 13<sup>th</sup> century single-cell church, with later windows. The unusual belfry dates from the extensive restoration in 1869.



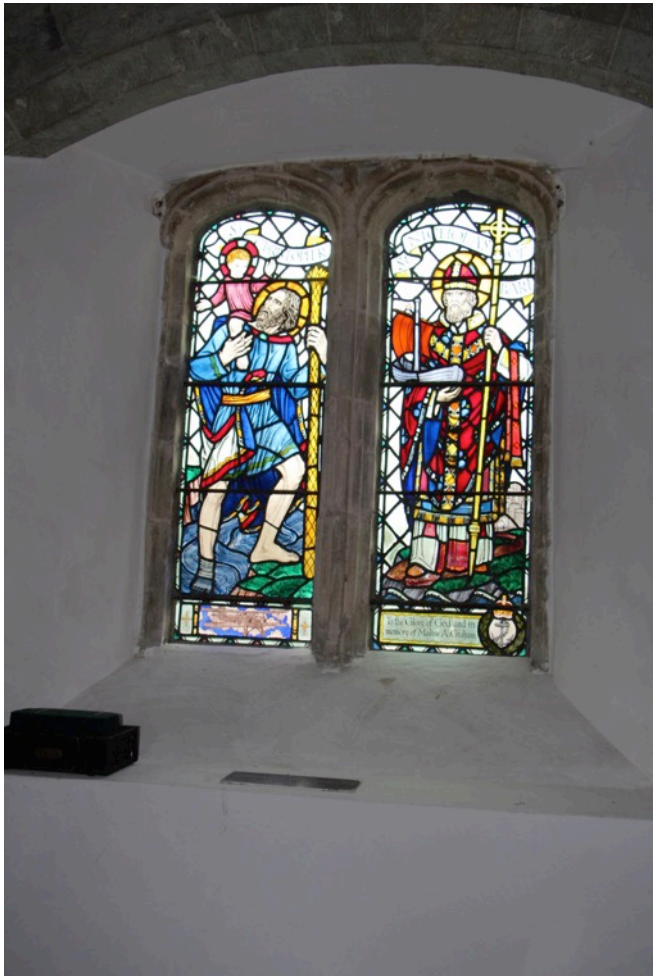
**St Nicolas, Itchenor.**





The altar at Itchenor.





**A window at St James Birdham, in memory of Lt Graham of the RNVR, killed in 1942.**



**Magda finds a booklet about St Nicholas, Itchenor.**

## CHICHESTER AGAIN!

Next, we decided to go back into the **centre of Chichester** so Magda could do another exploration of the shops - while I had another look round the Cathedral.



On our first visit I hadn't noticed the sculptures of the Queen and Prince Philip on the entrance arch at Chichester Cathedral.





I had also missed the icon of St Richard at his shrine on my first visit.



**Rainy day – the main entrance to the cathedral. A representation of a golden Christ in His Majesty with sword in his mouth occupies the tympanum above the doors. The reference is from Revelation 1:16 ('In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.') and 19:15 ('And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God').**

## CHURCH NORTON

After lunch at the **Cathedral Restaurant** we headed out in the direction of **Selsey**, stopping first at **St Wilfrid's Chapel at Church Norton**. Alas this was closed.

In its original, larger form, the church served as Selsey's parish church from the 13th century until the mid 1860s; when half of it was dismantled, moved to the centre of the village and rebuilt along with modern additions. Only the chancel of the old church survived in its harbourside location of "sequestered leafiness", resembling a cemetery chapel in the middle of its graveyard.

It was rededicated to St Wilfrid—7th-century founder of a now vanished cathedral at Selsey—and served as a chapel of ease until the Diocese of Chichester declared it redundant in 1990. Since then it has been in the care of the **Churches Conservation Trust** charity.

The tiny chapel, which may occupy the site of an ancient monastery built by **St Wilfrid**, is protected as a Grade I Listed building.





**The lych gate at Church Norton.**



**St Wilfrid's Chapel at Church Norton near Selsey. It is maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust.**

## **SELSEY**

Our final church in West Sussex, **St Peter's Church Selsey** dates from the 13th century. The Church building was originally situated at the location of St Wilfrid's first monastery and cathedral at Church Norton some 2 miles north of the present centre of population.



**St Peter's Selsey.**



The location of the old Selsey cathedral is not known for certain, and although some local legends suggest it is under the sea, and that the bell could be heard tolling during rough weather, it is thought unlikely. A more likely explanation is that the replacement church, founded in the 13th century, was built on the site of the old cathedral. There it remained until 1864-66, when all but the chancel was moved to the new centre of population in Selsey, where it was orientated North rather than East. The chancel that remains at Church Norton was dedicated to St Wilfrid in 1917 and is known as St Wilfrid's Chapel. The new parish church, complete with a new chancel, was consecrated on 12 April 1866.



**The nave and chancel at St Peter's, Selsey.**



East Window, St Peter's Selsey.

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016, the owner of the chalet came round to see how we had got on over the week, which was a nice touch. We left Earnley at 10.30am arriving back in Sedgley at 3.15pm.

***Martin and Magda Jones***

***April 2016***

St Wilfrid's Chapel Church Norton - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_Wilfrid%27s\\_Chapel,\\_Church\\_Norton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Wilfrid%27s_Chapel,_Church_Norton)

Itchenor: [http://www.sussexparishchurches.org/spc\\_V31/west-sussex/29-west-sussex-u-y/609-west-itchenor-st-nicholas](http://www.sussexparishchurches.org/spc_V31/west-sussex/29-west-sussex-u-y/609-west-itchenor-st-nicholas)

St Peter's Selsey: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_Peter%27s\\_Church,\\_Selsey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Peter%27s_Church,_Selsey)