

Lenten Journey 2017

Visiting our fellow Christians in parishes around Worcester Diocese, over Lent 2017.

1: St Giles, Bredon



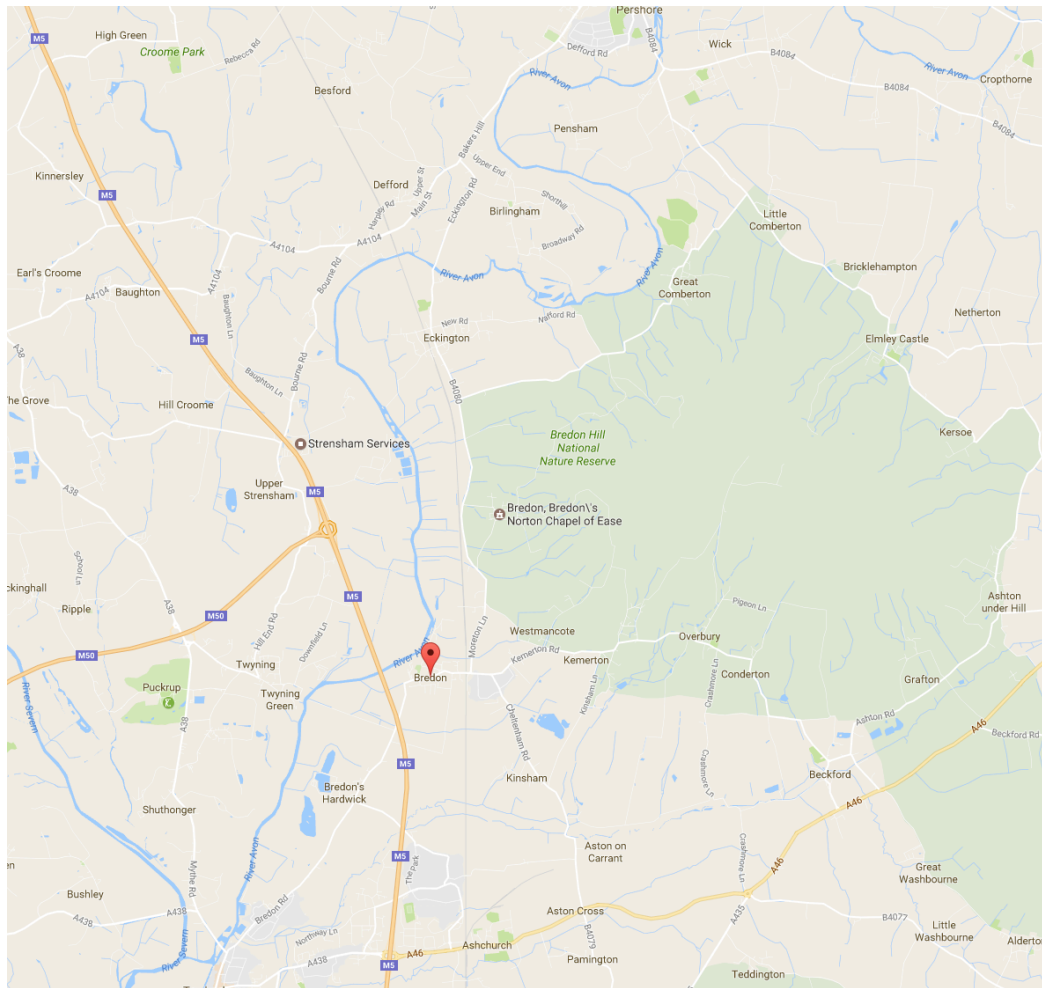
Martin begins his Lenten Journey on Bredon Hill. Nearby is Deer Park Hall on Woollas Hill - the Hall is a centre for conferences and weddings.



Martin was wished 'Bon Voyage' on his Lenten journey around the Diocese of Worcester by the Rural Dean of Kingswinford, Revd David Hoskin, who led the Ash Wednesday Holy Communion service 2017 at St Peter's Church Hall in Upper Gornal.

The idea for a Lenten trip first came to me around 18 months ago when I attended a **Diocesan Day** at Worcester Cathedral. There were over 400 people there from all over the Diocese, but I quickly realised that although we all belonged to one Diocese, I hardly knew anyone there, still less about the parishes they came from. So I thought Lent could be an opportunity to get out and about to meet as many fellow Christians in the Diocese of Worcester as I could, visit as many parishes as I could - and photograph the churches I saw so I could pass on the experience and information to others.

I'm intending to stage another exhibition in December 2017, similar to my ['Sacred Shropshire'](#) exhibition held in December 2016 at All Saints' Sedgley, where groups of churches that can easily be visited in a day are recommended. The exhibition will be called '**Diocese**'.



We stopped off for lunch at Strensham services on the M5, on the way down to Junction 9. We then took the A46 east before turning north on the B4079 and B4080 to Bredon. The churches we visited (Bredon, Ecton, Defford, Besford) run in a line northward, parallel to the M5.

Our first church could well have been one of those whose bells **AE Housman** wrote about in his poem 'On Bredon Hill'. Bredon church is dedicated to St Giles, who was probably a Greek who became a hermit and lived near Arles in Southern France sometime before the 9th century. He was a popular saint in the Middle Ages - patron saint of lepers, cripples and beggars.



St Giles Church, Bredon. The church is entered by the Norman porch on the north side.



The Old Rectory House at Bredon. A fine manor house dating from the 15th century, it stands to the north-east of the church.



The nave and chancel at St Giles, Bredon.

Bredon's history can be traced back to the Hill Fort of the 2nd century BC and there is evidence of occupation from then onwards, through Roman and beyond times. In Anglo-Saxon times there was a Christian community with a church and monastery but both were destroyed by the Danes in 850AD.

The original Norman church started in 1180-90 consisted on Chancel, Nave, Tower and Porch. During the 13th century the Early English South Aisle was built. The slender graceful spire was added in the first half of the 14th century.

By 1350 the building was largely complete and there have been only minor modifications in the past 600 years.



The beautifully carved and painted pulpit at St Giles, Bredon on a wineglass-shaped pedestal.



This mid-14th century tomb at St Giles, Bredon, with its lovely carvings commemorates Sir Giles Reed, who died in 1611. His descendants built the almshouses that are still lived in by elderly residents of Bredon.



The East Window and Altar at St Giles, Bredon. The window shows the adoration of the Magi.



Tiles with heraldic shields face the sanctuary steps at St Giles, Bredon. Worcestershire churches are known for their tiles.



A magnificent priest's chair in the sanctuary at St Giles Bredon.



An early 14th century coffin lid, featuring a cross of thorn thought to suggest an association with the sacred Glastonbury tree. The heads may represent early members of the Reed family.



This mid-14th century tomb with its roof carving commemorates William and Katherine Reed of Mitton, and their child.



The organ at St Giles, Bredon.



Tiles create an interesting 3D effect on the floor of the nave at St Giles, Bredon.



The Easter sepulchre at St Giles, Bredon. This is an early wall tomb set under a pinnacled ogee arch. The simple hog back tomb slab is covered with ball decorations. The cross from the high altar and the Blessed Sacrament were placed here from Good Friday until the morning of Easter Sunday, as a representation of the Resurrection of Christ.

Martin and Magda Jones

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