

Worcestershire & Dudley Historic Churches Trust

Dear Friend

Our car tour for Friends and guests will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 5 August 2018 commencing at Martley Church at 2.30pm. We will then visit Cotheridge Church where Peter Walker, Churchwarden, will give a presentation on the interesting discoveries which came to light when a camera was sent under the floor of the Church. As usual our Chairman and author of "Churches of Worcestershire", Tim Bridges, will give a short talk on the history of each of the churches. Tea will be taken at Cotheridge.

The cost is £8 per attendee to include tea. Cheques payable to WDHCT.

Martley St Peter A large medieval sandstone church with wall paintings, also showing the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Cotheridge St Leonard An unusual and picturesque Norman Church with timber tower and Berkeley family chapel – for more information see overleaf.

Name:

No of Attendees:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Please return this form with payment to:

WDHCT

24 Charles Dickens Close

Droitwich WR9 7HW

If you require an acknowledgment, please supply an email address or a stamped addressed envelope.

St. Leonard's Church, Cotheridge

A pretty and most interesting building set in a well-tended and most attractive churchyard. It is a veritable box of delights brimming with the unusual.

The most obvious of these is the all-wooden entrance porch and tower. There is a delightfully delicate 17th century canopied pulpit. The most obvious and unusual feature of the rather square nave is the very solid stone screen, which despite a rather nice but narrow Romanesque central archway is more an iconostasis without the icons than a typical English Rood Screen. A small piercing on either side of the arch was altered and filled with glass in the 1950s.

This was necessary because in 1947 the nave roof caved in and the nave became unusable for about ten years until it was restored. The chancel alone was used instead and was fitted out with east-facing box and open pews which have been retained. Access through the nave was impossible and the arch was temporarily blocked up.

However there remained the last unusual feature of the church – a 17th century rectangular brick (beautiful small bricks) chapel and underlying vault was built on the north side of the chancel, accessed from it, to house the remains of the Anglican branch of the Berkeley family (now defunct). It has subsequently been used as a vestry and store. There is no access to the underlying vault and so recently one of the floor tiles was removed and the vault explored with a fibre-optic camera, revealing a remarkable sight. There are numerous lead coffins stacked randomly, many broken and strewn bones in all directions. None of this was disturbed and the hole in the floor was sealed up. However a most impressive series of photographs was taken.