

CHURCHES IN THE DUDLEY AREA

This route starts just south east of Stourbridge and wends in a roughly circular direction through largely urban and suburban areas up to Dudley and back south via Rowley Regis, ending at Halesowen. It could as easily be done in reverse order. All churches are in the Anglican diocese of Worcester and on O.S. Map 139.

You could stop at any point or miss a church. Some may not be open for Ride and Stride and more churches in urban than rural areas tend to be closed unless for services.

As most people now have either a sat nav or google maps on their phone, I have added the post code of each church and omitted instructions for moving between them.

PEDMORE. ST PETER

DY9 0SW



This interesting church has examples of church architecture from many periods. Its tall solid C15 bell tower is now attached to a largely Victorian nave and chancel rebuilt by the well-known Worcester architect Frederick Preedy. Its great treasure in the south porch is the re-set Norman doorway with a tympanum above of Christ in Majesty surrounded by the symbols of the 4 evangelists. It was sculpted in the C12 in the style

of the Hereford school, whose most famous example is Kilpeck church in rural Herefordshire.

OLD SWINFORD. ST MARY

DY8 2HA

The church was largely rebuilt in Church Commissioners style in the 1840s replacing the medieval building, though the multi staged battlemented C14 tower remains.

It is wide, light and airy with notable cast iron columns supporting the west end gallery and providing the trusses of the nave roof, reflecting local industry in the area at the time. The church still retains its box pews. The east window commemorates Mary Webb, wife of one of the early owners of Webbs of Wychbold, the famous local nursery firm.

Some other windows are in the Arts and Crafts style. At the west end there is a large white painted board listing the rectors and patrons of the church as far back as 1285.

It has modern facilities.



STOURBRIDGE ST THOMAS

DY8 1AG

An exceptionally fine Georgian red brick church built between 1728-35 by subscription by a group of leading industrialists for the poor of the town since the parish church did not provide seating for them. The tower was added later in 1759..



The impressive interior, very much in the style of James Gibbs and St Martin in the Fields in London, has large north and south side seating galleries and large east and west end windows. The galleries and current pews date from 1836. The gilded plaque of the Holy Ghost on the ceiling is striking

Four north and south aisle windows of the Life of Christ are by members of the nearby Bromsgrove Guild (see picture).

N.B St Johns' in central Stourbridge is now inaccessible since it is used by a theatre company working with those with special needs.

WORDSLEY HOLY TRINITY

DY8 5RD

Funded by the Church Commissioners, the church was completed in 1831 in the expanding industrial area of Kingswinford. A large church in Perpendicular style with fine galleries to north and south . attractively painted wooden ceilings to the nave and



chancel

There

are some good Arts and crafts style windows also. It is open on Saturday mornings.



KINGSWINFORD ST MARY

DY6 8AY

An interesting Anglo catholic church, but not likely to be open for Ride and Stride. If you do get in, look for the Norman tympanum of St Michael re-set over the south porch vestry door inside the building and the attractive mid C20th font cover by Ninian Compton. The base of the tower looks Norman.

PENSNETT ST MARK

DY5 4JH

Tucked down Vicarage Lane off , but barely visible from, the nearby busy A4101, St Mark's size has led to its being called "The Cathedral of the Black country" . Completed in 1849 on land given only 3 years earlier by the Earl of Dudley, it is built of local yellow sandstone with a wide nave and side chancel all in an Early English style favoured by the Oxford Movement.

This spacious church 2006 and now has small kitchenette fittings are Victorian mainly C20. The around the font are made Dreadnought Look for the sword William Ewart Victorian prime brother -in -law ran a Gornal. There is a kitchen.



wide nave and side chancel all in an favoured by the

was reordered in meeting rooms, a and toilets. The ,but the windows attractive tiles probably the locally tiles. once owned by Gladston the 4 times minister whose nearby ironworks in smart new toilet and

DUDLEY ST THOMAS AND ST LUKE "TOP CHURCH"

DY2 7JT

The current church, on the site of a medieval church destroyed (as was St Edmund's) in the civil war, was finished at the considerable (then) cost of £24,000 in 1818. It sits on the high point of the town and, with a large spire, is visible for many miles. Its shape is almost octagonal as the side aisles widen out making it easier to reorder the church around a more central altar as they did a few years ago. Outside the Perpendicular style breaks out in froth of battlements and pinnacles.

The box pews have now gone , but the galleries remain on the north, south and west



sides .The C20th ceiling to the nave is a plastered tierceron vault .The three decker pulpit includes pieces of the earlier C17 one.

The striking painted glass east window in the style of Raphael from 1821 survived the Second world war damage that destroyed most of the other windows .

it is an active community facing church, open on Saturdays 1.30-3.30 .

DUDLEY ST EDMUND “BOTTOM CHURCH”

DY1 4PS

The original, probably Anglo-Saxon church (given the dedication) was first mentioned in a charter of 1180 but was demolished in the English Civil war as the nearby castle was under siege.



The present classical style building dates from 1724 and was due to the patronage of two Bradley brothers. The fine west front with a central tower and door, along with the other two west doors, are all pedimented with niches. It dominates one end of the town's marketplace.

Inside the galleries were added in the C19, but the furnishings retain some C18 work. There is much C19 and early C20 stained glass.

Look for the Minton tiles dating from 1864 when the chancel was reordered.

For the fittest cyclists only as it sits atop a steep hill!



The site of much rebuilding too. By the early C19th medieval church was in such a bad state of repair that the church authorities agreed to knocking it down .The church was rebuilt just after 1838, but due to bad subsidence this was a knocked down and replaced between 1904-07 by an Arts and Crafts style building. Alas this only lasted 7 years before much of it was destroyed in a fire. There is much debate over who the arsonist (s) were.

The current building utilises the outer walls of the 1904 building for the transepts, but replaced the tower in the 1920s rebuild. The interior is largely white with well-done 1930s woodwork.

A fascinating church to conclude the tour with both interesting architecture and a real community hub feel about it.

The earliest remains are mid 12C of what was a large Norman church with several bays still remaining at the west end and fine south and west doorways with zig zag decorations. The chancel arch too is Norman as is the magnificently decorated font. There are several traces of other Norman work around the building also.

The arches from the chancel to the south chapel are C14 (Decorated), but the massive crossing arches , supporting a large 3 stage tower, unusually placed in the middle of the nave, are C15 (Perpendicular)



Look for the medieval wall tiles in the south aisle and traces of medieval wall painting in the splays of the single Norman chancel window. Restoration in 1883 added an outer



south aisle , a south chapel and amended the east end, as well as replacing the box pews. The mainly C19 stained glass commemorates various local worthies.

Take time to wander through the church and spot its many different features and find the door to the bell tower - unusually it is internal .The church is usually open and they serve tea and coffee at some times, Toilets available.

ENJOY THE TOUR