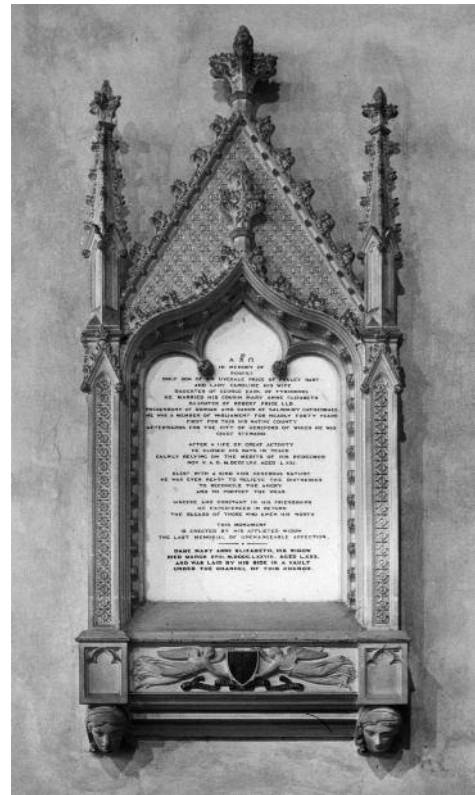


## Monuments

Above the Gurney's Patent stove is the monument to Uvedale Price of Mongewell, Oxfordshire (d.1844) who 'began to build this church'. It depicts Price's original designs of the church, which differed in certain details from the finished building and was made by Hardman to designs by Pugin. Above the door to the north vestry is the monument to Sir Robert Price (d.1857, aged 71) and his wife, Lady Caroline Price. To the left of it is a small lozenge-shaped brass to R L Freer, rector 1839-63 'who beautified this church and built the spire'. Other monuments,



Monument to Sir Robert and Lady Caroline Price

including some to members of the Price family, were brought here from the old church and adorn the west walls of the nave. Among these is a monument to George and Bennett Allen (sons of a former rector of Yazor, whose monument is underneath): Bennett had gone to Maryland, North America, where he became rector of a prosperous parish, returning to England as an American loyalist in 1776 and dying at Somers Town, London, in 1819 aged 83.

**The churchyard** was planted in typical Victorian style with evergreen shrubs, two Wellingtonia trees, lilacs, laurels and rhododendrons.

**The registers** date from 1621 and are deposited with the diocesan records in Herefordshire Records Office, Hereford.

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## Church of St Mary the Virgin

Yazor,  
Herefordshire



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Photographs by Christopher Dalton

# Church of St Mary the Virgin

by Andrew Pike (Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Regional Manager with The Churches Conservation Trust 1994–2006. Previously an archaeologist with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service)

## Introduction

Yazor is first mentioned in Domesday Book (1086), in which it is called *laverovre*, meaning lagoon's ridge or hill-slope. At that time it had six villagers and a smith with three ploughs.

The manor of Yazor was given to Llanthony Priory, Breconshire, during the reign of Richard I (1189–99). After the priory's dissolution in 1538 the manor passed through various owners, coming to Robert Price in 1691. The Prices originally came from Denbighshire; the last Price – another Robert (born 1786) – was the Whig MP for Herefordshire from 1818-41, dying childless in 1857. A series of unfortunate investments led to his having to sell the Foxley estate, which comprised much of the parish of Yazor, in 1855. Foxley was purchased by John Davenport; his descendants still own it though the house itself, which stood about 800 yd (0.75 km) north-east of the church, was demolished after the Second World War.

Yazor's original church stood south of the main road, adjacent to Yazor Court Farm. The surviving remains, consisting of the south transept, part of the nave arcade and the lower stages of the west tower, appear to date from the late 13th century. The church was partly dismantled in 1855 when the present church, dedicated to St Mary, was

built. Subsequently, in 1858–60, the south transept of the old church was restored as the Davenport mortuary chapel by William Butterfield. The graveyard of the old church remained the graveyard for the parish since the new church was not licensed for burials.

## History

The graceful spire of St Mary's church, together with two tall Wellingtonia trees, is clearly visible from the Hereford to Kington road (A480) at the junction of the main road and the lane leading to the Foxley estate – the lodge to the vanished house is opposite. The church was planned by Sir Uvedale Price, Robert's father, though no progress had been made by the time of his death in 1829. Uvedale Price was described as an apostle of the 'Picturesque School' – a movement which very much opposed the contrived garden landscapes of 'Capability' Brown and which included another Herefordshire squire, Sir Richard Payne Knight. Uvedale Price is credited with the re-introduction of flowers – especially roses – as a major component of the 19th-century garden.

Work on the new church finally started in 1843. The architect chosen was George Moore of London, a pupil of Edward Blore. Progress was slow, not helped by Moore becoming an imbecile in 1846. Construction was continued by John Taylor, clerk of works at Foxley, under the supervision of the Revd Richard Lane Freer, vicar, and the church was eventually consecrated by the Bishop of Hereford in December 1851. Following the service many local clergy and dignitaries partook of a splendid banquet at Foxley. Even then the church was not quite finished, since the spire and some of the internal fittings had to wait until 1855 to be completed.

The upkeep of the building eventually proved too much for the small and scattered community of Yazor, especially after the demolition of Foxley: St Mary's is not an easy church to maintain. Eventually it was declared redundant and vested in The Churches Conservation Trust in April 1987, since when the Trust has carried out repairs to the roof, stonework and some of the internal fittings.

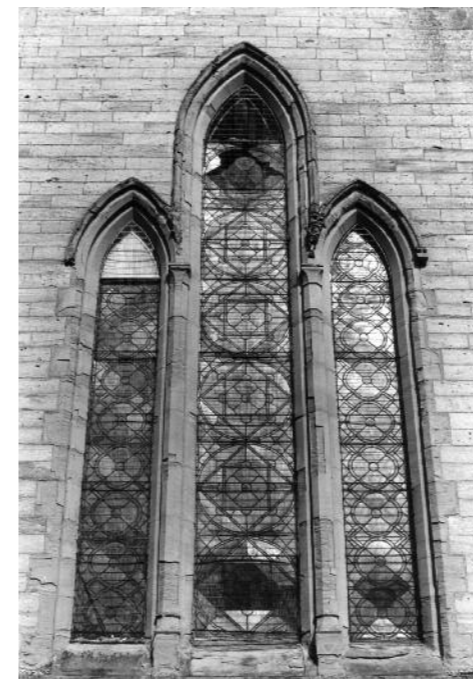
## Exterior

The church consists of a tower and spire, an aisled nave, shallow north and south transepts, and an apsidal chancel with small north and south vestries. The building is orientated north-north-west/south-south-east, unlike the east-west orientation of most churches (though in this guidebook the description assumes a normal east-west orientation).

The walls are of sandstone, from local quarries; the roofs are slated. Much of the

wood used in the construction was supplied from the Foxley estate.

The main entrance to the church is at the base of the tower through a doorway comprising a two-centred arch. The thin broach spire has two tiers of lucarnes (small gabled openings). The nave has thin buttresses dividing the bays with a tall lancet window in each bay. The transepts are buttressed and have lancet windows in the side walls and triple lancets in the gables. The chancel is polygonal, with single lancet windows in each bay. There are low vestries with doorways in their north and south walls. An iron cross is prominent on the apex of the chancel roof.



Triple lancet window in the transept gable

## Interior

Inside, the base of the tower has stone benches and a stone floor. The corbels of the inner doorway into the church bear likenesses of Queen Victoria on the left and a bishop on the right. Above the west door is an arch, at first-floor level, opening into the tower and spanned by a screen. The nave and chancel (cover) are all in one, without a chancel arch. The walls are plastered as are the nave ceilings; the chancel ceiling is plastered and painted blue with gold stars. The transepts are divided from the nave by oak screens – that on the north side was apparently formerly used as a schoolroom, hence the provision of 'pull-down' benches.

The floor is paved with plain red and black and patterned buff tiles in the nave, with oak boards under the pews. Between the transepts are groups of patterned tiles whilst the sanctuary floor (renewed in 2009) is boarded. The tiles are by Godwin (whose factory was at Withington near Hereford) and Minton.

Most of the furnishings – altar, reredos and pulpit with its tester (soundboard) are of oak, grown on the estate. These, together with the oak screens, were carved by David Lewis of Raglan. The oak lectern is dated 1851. The stone font has an octagonal bowl and came from the old church.

The five windows in the apse are filled with stained glass by William Warrington and depict various scenes of the life of Jesus: the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation, Crucifixion, Ascension, Resurrection and Manifestation. The glass in the central north nave window depicts The Marriage at Cana whilst the central south nave window depicts Ruth and Boaz; both are probably by Lavers

and Barraud, c.1866 and were installed to commemorate the marriage in 1866 of the Revd George Horatio Davenport to Miss Dashwood (south window) and, also in 1866, John Arkwright of Hampton Court near Leominster to Miss Davenport (north window). The west window contains a small oval depiction of the Virgin and Child, c.1850, probably by Powell and Sons of Whitefriars.

The chancel walls are painted bright red with stencilled grey lions 'rampant', and commemorate the Price arms which include a lion. A series of panels with decorated borders contain the texts of the Magnificat, the Creed, the Ten Commandments (above the altar), the Lord's Prayer and the Nunc Dimittis.

The royal arms of cast iron above the west door are of Queen Victoria (about 1850).

The tower contains two bells, both by John Finch of Hereford, of 1633 and 1639. These came from the old church where a third bell of the late 14th or early 15th century remains. Now cracked, its presence was forgotten till it fell from the ruined tower in 1912.

The organ is a two-manual instrument by F W Jardine of Manchester in 1879 and is located in the south transept.

Two brass chandeliers hang from the nave and chancel roofs; they are probably contemporary with the church.

Among the other fittings and furnishings, the splendid fluted 'Gurney's Patent' stove, made by the London Warming and Ventilating Company, should be noted.