



Welcome to St Mary's Church, Fownhope, known as The Little Cathedral because its length and height make it one of the largest parish churches in Herefordshire. Parts of the church date from 1150, as shown by the Norman arches, but the church has been added to in different styles over the centuries. It was mentioned in the Domesday Book and was considered important in those days as it was called a Minster Church, having two priests. It is now an important part of the local community. We hope you enjoy your visit to our church.

1. TYMPANUM

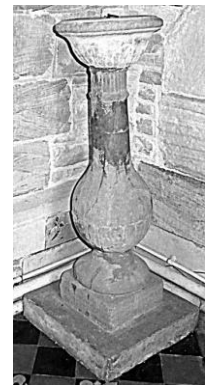
Most people think it is **Mary** holding the baby Jesus, although some others think it is God. Mary's large hands are an indication that it was carved by travelling sculptors. The tympanum is a fine example of the Hereford School of Romanesque Sculpture. The sculptors produced their work between 1134 – 1155, having been trained at Hereford Cathedral. Other examples of the Hereford School of Sculpture can be seen at Kilpeck Church as well as Hereford Cathedral.

2. CHEST

The chest is made from **wood** and **metal**. It was carved out of one solid oak tree in 1325. Churches were ordered to provide chests for storing books and religious clothing. This chest was stowed away in the tower for well over a hundred years and when discovered, in January 1975, was found to contain a pair of silver candlesticks and other church items.

3. FONT

Water is put into the **octagon** shaped font. At Baptism, water from the font is sprinkled on the forehead to signify the washing away of sins. This font dates from the 1600's, Tudor times. There is also a smaller font in this church (**see 3a**) which was found in the old vicarage garden and originally stood in the porch. Once baptised in the entrance, the child entered the church as a member of the congregation.



4. BANNER

The tree is an **oak** tree. At the time of the Civil War, in 1651, when King Charles 1 was running away from the Roundhead soldiers he hid in a hollow oak tree. He is said to have announced that the date would be called Heart of the Oak day (29th May). It is also known as Oak Apple Day or Royal Oak Day to celebrate his escape. The banner in the church shows that many years ago a group was formed to help the poor people of Fownhope when they needed to pay their bills. Each year near to 29th May the group still marches to the church.

5. STONE COFFIN LID



The carved chalice (drinking vessel) shows that it is the grave of a former **vicar**.

6. LECTERN

The bird is an **eagle**. An eagle traditionally carries the word of God, as eagles are birds that seem to fly the highest in the sky, and so nearest to the heavens.

7. PULPIT

It is high up so the vicar can be heard and seen by all the people and he or she can see everyone in the church.

8. GODWIN TILES

Godwin and Hewitt were inspired by medieval tile designs and these became very popular in Victorian times. In the 1840's William Godwin started a tile making factory in Lugwardine, which is 2 miles from Hereford. A second factory was opened in the 1850's at Withington. William and his brother, Henry, began making the encaustic tiles you see here in Fownhope Church. They can also be seen at All Saints Church in Hereford, Hereford Cathedral, and Tewkesbury Abbey. Local red clay was used to make the main part of the tile while finer, light coloured clay was inlaid to form the pattern. A set of tiles could take three weeks to complete.



9. BURMA STAR



When you go **home** tell them of **us** and say for your **tomorrow** we gave our **today**.

In the second World War many of our soldiers were sent to fight in distant parts of the world. This part of the church is remembering soldiers who fought in South East Asia because often we forget the hard battles they fought outside Europe. There are other memorials to WW1 and WW2 at **9a**.

10. PISCINA

The vicar would have washed up the **communion vessels** which he had used during the service in the piscina. It has a decorative pattern round the drainage hole.

11. CHAIR

The chair was carved in **1634** and is sometimes used by the vicar.



12. SEATING

The newest seats are lighter in colour, a modern design and can be moved and stacked easily to use the space in different ways.

13. USE OF WOOD

When many of the older objects were made, Fownhope was surrounded by forests. The River Wye, being close by, was used to transport wood on barges when water levels were high enough. Sometimes tree trunks were tied together to form rafts on which the crew travelled, trying to steer their unwieldy craft downstream. Bark from the trees was also exported in this way for use in tanning leather.



22,000 oak shingles were used to make the church turret.

The village stocks were last used over 200 years ago. Offenders were shut in the stocks whilst local people threw rubbish at them as a punishment for doing wrong!



