



Tudor Corvedale and the Reformation

Tudor England was much affected by religious issues. King Henry VIII broke with Catholicism when the Pope refused him a divorce. The result, from 1534, was the Reformation when all things Catholic were banned, both clergy and people were required to become Protestant and monasteries were closed and dismantled and their properties and lands confiscated. In the South Shropshire Corvedale area, lands owned by Wenlock Priory were bought by local gentry who soon made substantial profits and built large houses. Churches that had been outposts of the Priory, became parish concerns, under the jurisdiction of the Hereford diocese. Some monks who had been displaced from the Priory found new roles as parish priests.

More details can be found in: "Glimmers of Dissent"
 (Reactions to the Reformation in the parishes of Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long)
 by Wendy Brogden, on sale in Shipton Hall and available from www.ludlowhistory.co.uk



St James' Church, Shipton, TF13 6JZ (allow about ¾ hour)
 Open to visitors. Refreshments available in nearby Stanway Fabrics shop.

Look for:

- blocked up doorway in the chancel, best seen from outside. Before the Reformation, clergy would enter this way to maintain their separation from the congregation;
- evidence of a rood screen (to carry a large cross) above the chancel archway: plinths to support the screen; blocked-up opening above the right-hand archway. Rood screens were banned at the Reformation;
- stained glass in the windows: coats of arms of Queen Elizabeth I and other Tudor royalty to demonstrate loyalty;
- John Lutwych's plaque which dates the rebuilding of the chancel to 1589;
- not a Reformation matter but there is an interesting plaque commemorating the four More children of Shipton who were deported to America on the Mayflower in 1620. Booklets telling this awful story are on sale in the church.

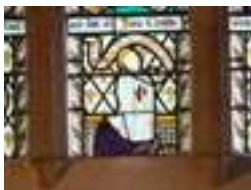


Shipton Hall, TF13 6JZ (allow about 1½ hours)
 Open to visitors on Thursdays from Easter to September; 2.30 to 5.30 plus Bank Holiday Sundays and Mondays; 2.30 – 5.30; entry charge. Light refreshments available in nearby Stanway Fabrics shop.

- built by local landowner, John Lutwych, in the 1590s who also rebuilt the chancel in Shipton Church; an earlier property stood on this site.

Look for:




- Elizabethan panelling in the room over the hall;
- plaintive poem in an upstairs window, etched by a love-lorn daughter of the household;
- view across the lumpy field at the front where once stood village houses, allowed to fall into disrepair and be cleared to improve the vista; a distant thatched cottage remains;



St Michael's Church, Munslow, SY7 9ER (allow about ½ hour)
 Open to visitors. Lunch available at the nearby Crown Inn.

Look for:

- a stained glass window in the north aisle which celebrates pre-Reformation Catholicism with images of the Five Precious Wounds of Christ. The rector, John Lloyd, left money in his 1528 will to pay for this window;
- reset fragments of 14th – 16th century glass showing a kneeling family beneath two Madonnas.

	<p>St Michael's Church, Stanton Long, TF13 6LQ (allow about ½ hour) Open to visitors.</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blocked up doorway in the chancel, best seen from outside. Before the Reformation, clergy would enter this way to maintain their separation from the congregation; • a tomb recess dating from about 1300: this was probably the Easter sepulchre, used on Good Friday in Catholic services; • a piscina in the wall of the nave which may mark the location of an altar to St Blaise whose statue was taken from the church and burned in Much Wenlock in 1547 as part of Reformation policy to rid churches of idols.
	<p>Wilderhope Manor, near Longville, TF13 6EG (allow about ½ hour) Open to visitors all the year round: Sundays 2.00 – 4.00 plus Weds 2.00 – 4.00 from 3 April – 25 Sept; refreshments available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • built by Francis Smallman in the 1580s; now used as a Youth Hostel. <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plaster mouldings in the ceilings with typical Elizabethan ribbing and decorations depicting the Tudor rose, fleur de lys and Beaufort portcullis; • motifs in the ceilings that may indicate Catholic sympathies: the single word IESU (O Jesus) and the motto, Droi Dev Est Mal Mev (Lawful right is ill moved).
	<p>Wenlock Priory, Much Wenlock, TF13 6HS (allow 1½ hours) Open to the public on most days; audio guides available; entry charge; now in the care of English Heritage. Several cafes in the town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ruins of a large and wealthy priory which had been part of a network run from Cluny in France since 1079 and with a foundation going back to the 680s; • commandeered, closed and dismantled by order of Henry VIII in 1540; • closure released lands which were purchased by several Corvedale worthies who made fortunes and built large houses; • closure also released monks, some of whom became ministers in local churches. <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monks' washbasins; • finely decorated chapter house; • the ruins of the very large priory church.

Contributed by Mike & Wendy Brogden, The Ferndale Flat, Shipton, Much Wenlock TF13 6LB
www.ferndaleflat.co.uk
01584 841649