



Charnwood u3a, English Parish Churches Group invitation to other u3a members

Coach outing to Tewkesbury and Malvern,

Tuesday 12th May, 2026

Our coach outing this year is to two superb churches situated in a beautiful part of England; both have long histories and splendid fittings [see second sheet].

There are spare places on the coach if anyone in Cu3a (or other u3a) would like to join us. If you want to come on both guided tours, the cost pp is £34. If you would rather come to both places and have free time, the cost is £21pp.

8.15 [prompt please] depart Tesco's car park, Loughborough [see important note below]. Short comfort breaks on both morning and late afternoon journeys

10.30 guided tour of Tewkesbury Abbey followed by free time during which you might like to visit a complete contrast, one of the earliest Baptist Chapels in England, situated down one of the town's many medieval passageways.

1.30 coach departs from Tewkesbury and takes us to Malvern

2.15 guided tour of Malvern Priory followed by free time

4.30 coach departs Malvern

Arrival back at Loughborough approx. **6.15-6.30**

You can choose your own refreshments for the day as both towns offer a variety of eating establishments. If weather fine, why not take a picnic for lunchtime to eat in the abbey grounds or by the River Avon?

Please make cheque out to Lili Robinson who looks after our finances but give, send or deliver with the form below to me at 31, Mayfield Drive, Loughborough LE11 2EA. **Please book as soon as possible.**

Roger [phone number on the day for emergencies: 0750 843 1296]

I/we would like to book for this outing: _____

_____ ; email address: _____

Phone no: _____ mobile no. on the day: _____

Car registration if parking at Tesco's [needed because we are there for more than 3 hours: _____

Tewkesbury Abbey was a Benedictine abbey until the Dissolution in the 1530s when the town managed to buy and save the abbey church as their parish church for £453. Tewkesbury provides some of the very best architecture from the Norman tower [the biggest in Europe], the nave which is a forest of huge Norman drum piers through to the magnificent east end, a superb example of the Decorated Gothic style. This is architecture of extraordinary beauty, pride of the great families associated with the abbey, the de Clares, Despensers and Beauchamps and a casket for their family memorials and chantries. Round the choir and high altar are arrayed their splendid chapels and above is a spectacular gothic vault dominated by the sun of York, a reminder that in the Wars of the Roses battle of 1471, a Yorkist victory, fighting came right into the abbey precincts with several of the victims buried here including Henry, Prince of Wales, the son of Henry VI. High up in the ambulatory at the east end is a spectacular series of seven stained glass windows, among the outstanding examples of 14th century glass anywhere. In the centre the Last Judgement with prophets in the windows either side, and then knights from the great families associated with the abbey shown in their heraldic surcoats. Don't miss the most recent stained glass which consists of two spectacular windows in the chapel of St Catherine and St John the Baptist, created by Tom Denny to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the monks' arrival at the Abbey, the theme being the Benedictine motto 'to work is to pray'.

Malvern Priory is a similar story, a Benedictine priory which became the parish church at the Reformation. Tucked in at the base of the Malverns, the exterior offers a superb display of 15th century Perpendicular Gothic grandeur. By contrast we are confronted with Norman strength in the nave and a chancel which is a complete contrast: its walls are panelled Perpendicular. Beneath are medieval choir stalls with superb misericords [mercy seats] which include an almost complete set of the Labours of the Months, a parade of medieval secular life. Malvern's unique collection of medieval floor tiles adorns the rear of the screens around the sanctuary/high altar. But it is all eyes on the stained glass because the church contains some of the finest 15th century glass in England – a very different colour-palette from the windows of a century earlier at Tewkesbury: the great west window, two windows in the north aisle and transept, the clerestory windows, a huge if jumbled east window and, above all, the series of Old Testament panels in the south east chapel, windows which can be seen and appreciated at eye level. Together they take us right into the medieval world of faith, Biblical events and saints. Malvern also has two windows by Tom Denny: a millennium commission, carefully developed in close dialogue with medieval architecture, light, and devotional tradition. Their imagery is based on Psalm 36, a text that moves from an opening meditation on human transgression to an affirmation of divine mercy, righteousness, and sustaining light, much of it set here in the context of the Malvern Hills.