

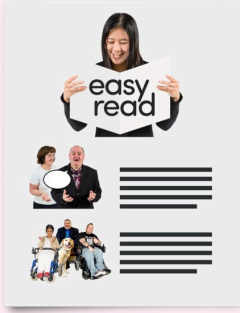


National
Trust

About Staunton Harold Church



Easy read booklet



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It has words and pictures.



You might want help to read this booklet. You can ask someone to help you.

words

Some words are **black and bold**. This means we think they are difficult words.



Black and bold words are thicker and darker. We explain what they mean in a box like this.



Some words are **bright blue**. These are links to websites or email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

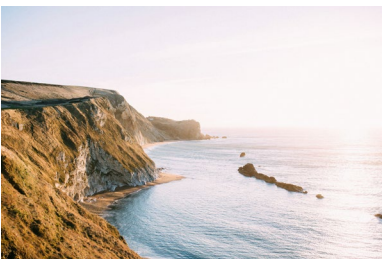
Who we are and what we do



We are the **National Trust**.



We look after lots of old buildings and gardens in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



We also look after some old woodlands and coastline.



In this booklet we tell you about a church we look after called **Staunton Harold Church**.

What happened in the past



Staunton Harold Church is very old. A man called Sir Robert Shirley started to build it in 1653.



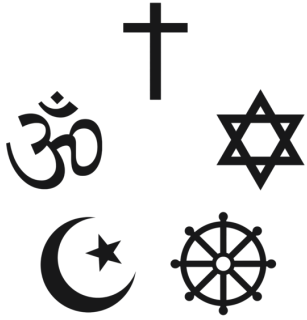
It is special because not many churches were built then.



Most churches built then were very plain, but Staunton Harold Church is not.



Sir Robert Shirley built the church to show his **faith** and **political beliefs**.



Your **faith** is your religion or what you believe in.



Your **political beliefs** are how you think a country should be run.



He got in trouble with the police lots of times and was sent to prison.



He died when he was young, before he finished building Staunton Harold Church. His wife finished building it after he died.



Staunton Harold Church has not changed much since it was built.

About the inside of the church

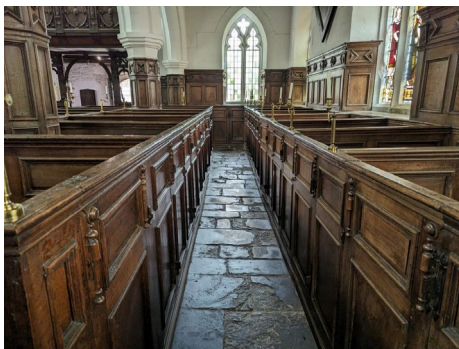


Pews

The wooden **box pews** were made by local people. There are not many pews like this left in the UK.



A **box pew** is a type of bench with sides all around it. The sides go up to your shoulder. There is a door to get into the pew.



Important people sat in pews near the front of the church. Poor people sat at the back. Women sat on the left and men on the right.



You can see where some people scratched words and symbols into the wood.



Stained-Glass Windows

The windows were plain at first. Then **stained-glass windows** were added.



Stained-glass windows have small pieces of coloured glass arranged to make a pattern or picture.

Sewallis Shirley was the 10th **Earl** of the area.



Earls were important men, chosen by the King or Queen to be in charge of their local area. When an earl died his son became the next earl.



One stained-glass window shows Sewallis Shirleys wife in a red dress. It was made to remember her after she died.

Chancel Screen

The **chancel screen** was wooden at first. Metal gates were added in 1711.



A **chancel screen** is a tall screen that separates the area where the **altar** and choir is from the main part of the church where the pews are.

The **altar** is a special table at the front of the church which is used in church services.



You can see the original screen by the front door.



Ceiling

The ceiling was painted with clouds in 1655.



We think the clouds were meant to give people hope in difficult times.

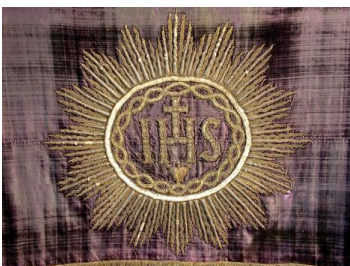


Pulpit

The **pulpit** was made by the same local person who made the pews. He was called William Smith.



A **pulpit** is where the leader of a church stands to speak to the people in the pews. They sometimes climb steps to get to it.



The cloth hanging from the front of the pulpit matches the cloth on the altar.



Hatchments

Wives' **hatchments** are on the walls on the right, and husbands' hatchments are on the walls on the left.



Hatchments are painted diamond shapes. They were used in funerals.



Organ

The **organ** is the oldest organ in the area that works.

An **organ** is a big musical instrument. It usually has 2 or 3 keyboards and lots of tall pipes.



The organ was made around 1630 and was brought to the church in 1686.



Bells

The Church has 8 bells. They were made between 1669 and 1831.



We do not ring the bells very often.



The last time we rang them was in May 2023 when there was a church service in London to make King Charles the King.

About the outside of the church



Design

The Church has a **Gothic Survival design**. Not many churches were built like this at the time.

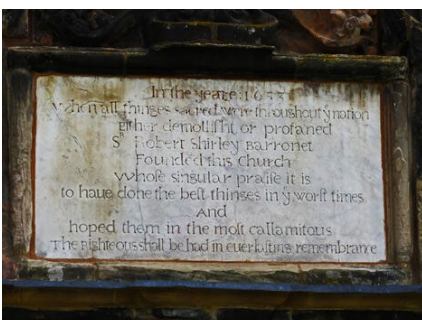


Gothic Survival design means a building has things like pointed arches, and big tall pointed windows.



Inscription

There is an **inscription** over the front door. It was added in 1662. It says thank you to Sir Robert Shirley for building the Church.



An **inscription** is writing carved into stone.

Graves

There are 3 **graves** in the **churchyard**. 2 graves are for the Earl and his wife.

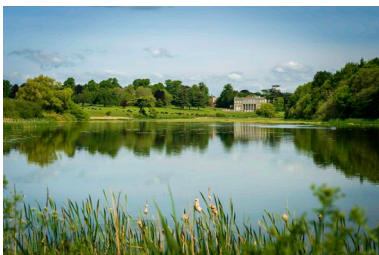


A **grave** is a place in the ground where a dead person's body is buried.

A **churchyard** is the grass area around a church.



The other grave is for Catherine Shirley. She was the daughter of the 1st Earl.



Other people from their family were buried in the family **vault** under the church but that **flooded** when the lake got bigger.



A **family vault** is a room under a church. Dead people from the same family are buried there.

Flooded means lots of water got in.

Mausoleum



The dead bodies of Sewallis Shirley and his wife are in the **mausoleum**.

A **mausoleum** is a small stone building in a churchyard where dead people are buried.



Arch

There is a stone arch on the right-hand side of the church. It used to be in the gardens of the house that is next to the church.



Vault

The door to the family vault is opposite the mausoleum.

**Death
is my
reward**

There is an inscription on the door. It says **Death is my reward**.



Bridge

There are 2 pillars by the bridge that goes over the lake. They were part of the golden gates.



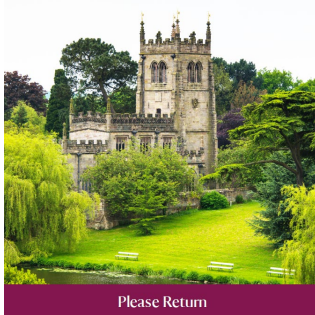
In the past, people used the gates to go into the house gardens. The gates are not there anymore.

The pillars have a dog and a **stag** on them a **family crest**.



A **stag** is a male deer.

A **family crest** is a pattern of symbols used by one family. It shows their family history.



Thank you to A2i for the words
www.a2i.co.uk (reference 45128)

The full version of this document is
called
**“Staunton Harold Church
Easy Read Guide: 2026”**