

Among the memorials in church is an unusual one entirely in Latin to an Italian landscape gardener *Romolo Piazzani*. In 1905 he built Ryton Hall opposite the church which became the rectory for his friend Revd Fraser with whom he shared the hall.

His Italian influence may explain the style of the reredos behind the altar, and the Virgin and Child opposite the font. He died in 1932 and is buried in the churchyard opposite the hall with an obelisk marking the grave. The fact that his good friend Revd Fraser, rector for 37 years, is buried next to him in the south west corner at the end of the avenue of yew trees suggests that Piazzani designed the lay out of the church yard and the avenue.

The hall was for a time a boarding school, and is now apartments, with more houses built in the school grounds.

One noted vicar without a memorial was Revd Robert William Eyton rector here 1841-1863 who wrote a scholarly *Antiquities of Shropshire* covering the county history 1066 - 1307AD

We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

*Details of current events
and services are in the newsletter and on the notice board
and on the church website
<http://www.wwwbeeson.co.uk/beckbury/group.htm>*

*May God bless you on your journey home
and in your journey of faith with him.*

St Andrew's Church



RYTON

A Brief Guide

THE VILLAGE

Set high above the valley of the River Worfe in the quiet side road, Ryton has a peaceful charm and beauty. It dates back to Norman times and is referred to as *Ruitone* in the Domesday Book of 1086. Ryton is a common village name where there is light sandy soil and means 'rye farm'.

Ryton was part of the Saxon parish of Shifnal, but became separate at some point during the 12th century because there is mention of a priest at Ryton named Bernard in 1186. There is the worn down *motte* (mound) of a old castle not far from the church dating from the 13th Century.

To the north east of the village is Hatton Grange (originally a granary) which in the 13th Century was owned and farmed by the monks of Buildwas Abbey eight miles away.

Across the river valley to the west lies the small hamlet of Grindle now linked to Ryton in one civil parish. Its name means *green hill* and although not in the Domesday Book, it became equal to Ryton in the 12th century and its Lord of the Manor gave grants and rights to the monks of Wombridge Priory.

The river below the church had various mills on its banks. In 1654 there is record of a paper mill and corn mill both under one roof. Because it was located at the confluence of the River Worfe and the Wesley Brook it is probable that there were two separate water wheels on either side of the one building. In the early 18th century there was also a 'slitting mill' on the river which cut sheets of iron into rods for making nails. While the scene now looks very rural, it is only eight miles from Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale where Abraham Darby first used coke to produce iron in 1709 and made the area the heart of industry in the West Midlands.

On the west side of the river valley was the village school, now a private house. It was built in 1845 in a similar style to the school house at Beckbury (1852) with the classroom above the teacher's accommodation on the ground floor. In 1891 there was an average attendance of 55 pupils from a village population of 171. The wooden building behind is the scout hut.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

The church seems to have some medieval stonework but there are no records or evidence about the church till 1710 when a tablet in the tower wall commemorates the church wardens who were probably responsible for the building of the tower. There are six bells. Originally there were just three: two were added in 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's 50th Jubilee. A sixth bell was added in 1993.

The entrance doorway was changed from the original squarer style. On the tower wall just above the Hardy memorial are two corbels (stone supports) on which rested a large gallery at the back of the church.

The font is unusually recessed into the tower arch and the style of its carved decorations indicates it is 14th century

In 1720 there is a record of the building of the chancel, though the present chancel arch, windows and roof are late 19thC

The church building was 'restored' ('gothicized' says Pevsner's Guide to Shropshire) in 1874 by the Victorians whose influence can be seen in many churches in England. Here, however, they did not significantly raise the floor height of the chancel as was done at neighbouring Beckbury and other churches. But the London architects did remove the gallery, open up the tower arch and add two memorial windows.

In 1886 the north aisle was built in memory of William Kenyon Slaney and Mary Slaney. The 1874 windows were relocated into the wall of new aisle. The Slaneys moved to the original Hatton Grange (now Plowden House) in 1650s and built the new house in 1764. Later descendants served as M.P.s or in the army. One of those M.P.s was Colonel William Slaney Kenyon-Slaney, who has the unique fame of scoring the first international football goals when England beat Scotland 2-0 in 1873 (the first ever international match in 1872 ended Scotland 0 England 0) He died in 1908 and is buried in the churchyard with other family members on the north boundary of the church yard.

The nave and aisle roofs and the tower were repaired in 2014, and the chancel and vestry roofs in 2018.