

Later the window would be broken up and the fragment of which she was a part came to Sellack in 1630. She already had the book and the men who jigsawed our window together would have no trouble fixing her up with a halo, a sword and a wheel, the trappings associated with St. Catherine.

The other windows with coloured glass are 19th century, but there are two ancient fragments. There is a 14th century head of Christ in the window between the north chapel and the vestry and in the window near the pulpit is part of a 15th century panel showing the crucified Christ in the lap of God. It was once part of a Trinity.

Our east window so impressed a gentleman living in Foy, a neighbouring parish, that he had it copied for Foy Church's east window in 1675.

There are a dozen monuments on the church walls and some of the lengthy—and very complimentary—inscriptions are interesting. The oldest monument is Helip Fox's (1678) and the newest remembers men who died in the world wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945

The north chapel with its 14th century stone vaulting was once the private pew of the family who lived at Caradoc Court. It contained six 17th century oak chairs which were stolen in the night of May 3rd/4th 1985.

The chancel panelling, the communion rail, the pulpit and the gallery at the west end are 17th century woodwork.

The gallery was once the private pew of the family living at Pengethley, Sellack's other big house. In 1844 they gave up the 'said gallery to the Parishioners for the use of the Parish Singers' but now it houses the organ.



## *St. Tysilio's Church*

### *Sellack, Herefordshire*



*A Visitor's Guide*



## *St. Tysilio's Church*

Our village was once called Llan Sulluc which means Sulluc's Church.

Sulluc is one form of the name Tysilio and ours is the only English church dedicated to this Celtic saint. The other churches he gave his name to are in Wales and Brittany. The best known one is on the Menai Straits at LlanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllanTYSILIOgogogoch (This means "The church of St. Mary in the hollow of white hazel trees near the rapid whirlpool by St. Tysilio's of the red cave".)

Tysilio lived in the 7th century, was born in Pengwern (Shrewsbury) and became a monk. His royal relatives—his father was King of Powys—were furious because they had other plans for him. From then on they caused trouble for him. Eventually when he was abbot of his monastery, he and his monks fled to Brittany to escape the persecution of his family. Tysilio established a monastery in Brittany at a place now called St. Suliac.

Tysilio died at St. Suliac about the year 650. His feast day is October 1st

Like any other old building our church has been altered over the years. Tysilio's church would have been made of wood but by the 12th century it was built of the local sandstone. In those days it had a nave (the main body of the church where the congregation stand or sit), a chancel (the east end of the building where the priest officiates) and a north aisle (this accommodated larger congregations and provided a path for processions). One of the original 12th century arches leading from the nave to the north aisle remains.

Early in the 13th century a north chapel was added, but a hundred years later both aisle and chapel were rebuilt and the west tower and south porch were added.

Apart from the minor alterations in the 17th century no more rebuilding was done until 1840. That year over zealous parishioners with more money than sensibility demolished the greater part of the north aisle and replaced it with a huge and badly built north transept. It is a good place to sit if you are listening to a sermon because the pews face the pulpit—it was designed as a 'preaching' transept—but not a good place for Communion or wedding services because it is difficult to see the chancel and the altar

The tracery (stone framework) of the east window is 14th century. The glass was once in other windows in other churches and has been pieced together to make a unified design. It is a mixture of 15th, 16th and 17th century stained and painted glass and was assembled in 1630 at the behest of Richard Scudamore, a local gentleman who lived at Caradoc Court.

In the upper part is the crucifixion with Mary and St. John at the foot of the cross.

In the lower part of the window are Mary with baby Jesus, Joseph, the three kings and a stable with an ox and an ass. Above Mary and Jesus is a comet-like Star of Bethlehem.

To the left of the kneeling king is St. Mary Magdalene with her box of ointment and to the right of the stable is a seated woman reading a book. She is meant to be St. Catherine, but it is doubtful if she really is.

The other figures in the window are wearing the sort of timeless (no time at all) fancy dress in which artists used to garb Biblical characters, but the woman with the book is wearing clothes of a definite date (the 1530s) and was probably the donor of a window in another church in another part of England.