

St. Mary Magdalene Church

I am hundreds of years old, a senior citizen,
Tall, sturdy and fully grown,
My doors are chunky, rough and wrinkled,
Don't be afraid! Come in! I welcome everyone!

I open to children who go to Sunday School,
I nurture everyone who comes inside,
I am a safe home, a sanctuary for swallows,
I provide comfort for those who pray,
I hear the most important words you say,
I honour people, so please stay...

I'm a secret-holder, I am full of mystery,
My memory is like an elephant,
I store mixed emotions like a bank stores money,
From misery to triumph, emotions echo in my ears,
I hear sounds bounce off my walls,
Voices from the dead when my doors are closed...

I smell the dust of old bricks,
I have a skeleton of protection,
These bricks are my bones, cement is my muscles,
The pews are my ribs, they creak and crumble,
I can speak many languages, I am very wise,
My gravestones and carvings tell stories
In English and Latin of the past and present...

I am built out of others – watch out!
You are standing on dead people, I knew them once,
My misericords stare from old generations to new,
Professions carved in wood, the butcher, the Sun Inn, the village green,
I am the only church in the country with this scene!

My stained glass windows are vibrant eyes,
They let sunlight dance through,
I look with joy at all the colours of the world,
Rich red, daffodil yellow, rare green by Mary Magdalene,
My fellow friends make gargoyle expressions,
Staring, some glaring, while angels guard me...

Can you spot the cat hiding inside?
Where's the skull encrusted in stone?
Who was the anchoress in her cell?
Perhaps she's telling us we are not alone...

Notice how my temperature varies,
It's warmer outside my bones,
I am a cold-blooded building,
But I am comfy, wise, protective, religious,
A holder of unsolved mysteries
And true, but forgotten memories...

*Written by Chloe, Ellie, Harry, Imogen, Ollie, Tilly and Wilson
Leintwardine Primary School
With Sara-Jane Arbury, Ledbury Poetry Festival 2019*