



Sutton Veny St. Leonard's Church History

The cruciform church on this site was started in the 12th century, revisited in the 13th and 16th centuries, and underwent a major restoration in 1831. The first formal record of a church in Sutton Veny¹ occurs in 1240. Dedicated to St. Leonard, this church served the parish until the end of the 19th century.

Two of the memorials within the chancel relate to Richard Bayly, who was the rector in 1700. Sadly he lost his wife and also his 3 children in unconnected events before he died in 1716,

On census day in 1851 there were 130 people in the church for the morning service and 240 for the evening service. In 1863 the average congregation was said to be 250.

Despite a major restoration in 1831, the low lying damp ground caused the foundations to be extremely unstable, and it was decided in 1866 that St. Leonard's Church should be abandoned for a new church to be built on higher ground, 700 yards further to the north west (the present day St. John the Evangelist's Church).

As you can see, the nave, transepts and crossings are ruined. Only the chancel remains in usable condition. For a period it was used as a mortuary chapel and the bier was used to transport bodies to St. John's. In addition to the bier, the benefaction boards, the font, the bell and memorials on the walls are of particular note.

With effect fro May 1970 St. Leonard's Church became a redundant church and was vested into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust in October 1971.

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¹ Made up from the originally separate townships Great Sutton and Little Sutton in the vicinity of this church and Newnham at the crossroads at the top of the High Street.

Source: The Churches Conservation Trust