

Visit to St Laurence's Church, Slough
(Sunday 8th September 2024)

As part of Heritage Open Days, I recently visited St Laurence's Church, along with my young daughter and son. . .

St Laurence served as Deacon of Rome during the reign of Emperor Valerian (253-260 CE) where he oversaw material goods of the Church and distributed alms to the poor. After the then Pope's arrest and execution in 258 CE, Laurence probably knew his time was nigh. And, according to tradition, he was martyred by being 'roasted alive on a gridiron'. He is said to have shown remarkable calm and humour during his execution, reportedly mocking his slayers, 'Turn me over; I'm done on this side.' . .

. . . Built in the 12th century, St Laurence's is not only the oldest church, but also the oldest building in Slough. An honour, indeed. As we walked through the lychgate (from the Old English meaning corpse- used in medieval times to shelter a coffin while the priest conducted part of the service), we met Allan, the jovial churchwarden. He greeted us with a smile and a question and invited us to sit inside while the others arrived. . . Crikey, these open days must be quite popular, I thought.

Inside, a group of ladies, quite advanced in years, momentarily stopped their chatter and looked up in bemusement at the three of us. . . Shortly after 15:00, Allan popped his head around the door and invited the group outside. Like a master weaver at work, Allan began with a potted history of the church and its surrounds. He mentioned the discovery of Saxon remains during a recent excavation indicating an even more intriguing, hidden history of the church. We then toured the graveyard as he pointed towards a host of notable burials present. . .

. . . Unfortunately, we didn't have time for tea and cupcakes with the others, so continued the tour with Allan inside the church. . . . At this point, Allan pointed towards Hershel's grave next to the pulpit. A bizarre, theological oddity for someone outside the faith.

I looked at the kids and could see endorphins waning, so took them around the back of the church to see Hershel's telescope exhibition.

Alas, we couldn't browse for long. My daughter felt tired and suggested we go home. Though we couldn't leave without thanking with Allan.

'Allan, thanks for the tour!' I beamed.

'And, you do realise the jam is gelatine free?' Allan continued in the next breath.

'Ah, that's great, maybe we can buy a few jars when we next visit?'

We shook hands, and I signed the visitor's book before heading outside.

I squinted at the kids, 'Did you enjoy that?'

'Er...yes, though we could have at least eaten some of those biscuits and cupcakes!' my daughter wailed. 'Yes, maybe next time.'

'Right I want you both to write an essay on this visit.' Stony silence. I'm still waiting.

In summary, a fascinating trip with generous hosts. Well worth a visit.

Asif Rana, Upton Park <https://nextdoor.co.uk>

An invitation to . . .

SANTA'S SPECIAL



SATURDAY 16TH NOVEMBER
ST LAURENCE'S
(Upton Court Road, Slough SL3 7LS)
11.00AM - 2.30PM

Food, Cakes, Craft,
Decorations, Gifts,
Raffle and
all the trimmings!



(Parking in Upton Court Road Car Park)
www.saint-laurence.com

Don't forget our service on **10th November, Remembrance Sunday** will start at **10.50am**.

St Laurence's Dedication and Gift Day will be on **Sunday 1st December**, followed by **Christmas Lunch** (bk in church/call Sl.532425)