

The Preedy Trail (9 Herefordshire Churches)

Written by John Grove

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The Preedy Trail covers 9 Herefordshire churches – at Little Dewchurch, How Caple, Hollybush, Canon Frome, Stretton Grandison, Mathon, Storridge, Cotheridge, and Whitbourne. Highlighted is the contribution of Frederick Preedy, either to the building or to the furniture and stained glass. He was a Victorian church architect 1820-1898, born at Offenham, moved to Fladbury, and practiced in Worcester and London.

His works are all over the country but mainly in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Norfolk. He completed 20 new churches, 30 major restorations, and the amazing total of some 400 windows in over 100 churches. He was very unusual in that he combined church restoration with some very fine stained glass of his own design and manufacture.



Critics give him a high rating - 'Some of Preedy's windows from this time are of outstanding quality (1855 and 1865), and certainly among the finest of the High Victorian period. Many were made for his own churches or restorations, but they include also commissions from leading figures of the Gothic Revival like Samuel Sanders Teulon, William White and most notably, William Butterfield.'

'As an architect, Preedy was not in the first rank of 19th century designers, but on the other hand he was not so run of the mill as many of his contemporaries – his new churches show many original touches. Preedy ... was the only architect of the Gothic revival - at least in the nineteenth century – to combine the profession of architecture with the manufacture of stained glass, an art for which he possessed a genuine gift.'

'The best of his windows, as at Storridge 1856, Claverley 1858, Banford 1860, St. Stephen's Worcester 1862, or Hunstanton 1867, are indisputably among the finest productions of the Gothic Revival during its most original and self assured phase.'

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Frederick Preedy is a worthy local Victorian, whose work deserves far more recognition. The Pevsner guides are full of references to him.

Sources

Frederick Preedy by Gordon Barnes

The Stained Glass of Frederick Preedy by Michael Kerney