

Extract from [The Search for Old Wirral](#) by Alan Brack, published by Countywise.

... he next took me to Stoak where the feel of history enters your bones as soon as you set foot in the place. Sadly, St. Lawrence's no longer justifies its own vicar. It is now part of a Team Parish under the Rector of Ellesmere Port so unless you go to a Sunday service you need to make prior arrangements to get in. David's prior arrangement brought Jean Kipps, the Rector's secretary, with the key. Her own feeling and affection for the church was plainly evident. On the wall was a framed, beautifully-lettered list on goatskin parchment of all the ministers of Stoak from the 13th century down to the Rev. Stanley Winton (the present Ellesmere Port rector). Coyly she confessed that it was her own handiwork and laughed aloud at the suggestion that she was an accomplished calligrapher. 'I just got a book from the library to see how it was done,' she said modestly.

There has been a church here since Saxon times but the present building was extensively restored in 1827 and at the time they paid scant regard to history. They retained only what was sound and, happily, that included the Tudor nave roof of arch-brace and hammer beam design. 'Nothing like it anywhere else in Wirral: David exclaimed, and the feeling of wonderment which it aroused in him shone through. 'And the parish registers dating back to 1543 are the oldest in Wirral and so are the bells.' Sadly, the bells are not rung any more and the oldest of them, bearing the date 1598, was on the floor, covered in dust and pushed out of the way under one of the pews.

But the features for which the church is best known are the memorial boards and hatchments that hang on the walls. When he was here last, there were fourteen of them and he was dismayed to find that there are now only nine. What has happened to the other five?

[Alan's book](#) contains a splendid picture of one of the panels and of the interior of the church; just two of the 121 black and white and seven colour photographs and seventeen drawings, with which it is illustrated.