



The Chancel Seats



The special seats in this church, St. Laurence's Ludlow, are some of the best in Britain.

They are called misericords, which means mercy-seats.

Why?

Well, hundreds of years ago, the services in this part of the church often lasted a long time. People taking part had to stand up a lot. **Some of them were quite old, and got tired standing up.** So seats were made which had a small ledge underneath them. When the seat was tipped up, people could just rest a little on the ledge.

John the Baptist



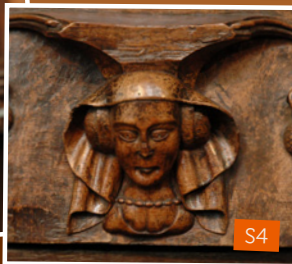
But they still looked as though they were standing up. So these ledges were called "kindness" or mercy-seats. (In Latin, the language used in churches then, miseri means mercy, cord means seat). The ledges underneath were not normally seen. **So the men who carved them sometimes put funny designs there, or scenes from everyday life.**



These questions are all about the misericords and the carvings on them. On the Plan you will see how we have numbered them. **Use these numbers in your answers** (N=North and S=South)



The Boy Bishop



S4



S6



N9

BIG EAST WINDOW

ALTAR (TABLE)

NORTH

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- X

X 16

SOUTH

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- X

16 X

1

North Side



1. In N1 perhaps the carver was making fun of something. What do you think?
.....
2. N2 is half-woman, half-bat (called a harpy). Which other one on the North side is also half-woman, half-animal? Give its number here N Which animal is the other half of this one?
.....
3. N3 is a famous carving. It shows a woman, probably a pub-owner, with a jug in her hand, over the shoulder of a Devil. (With other devils standing by). What is happening to her on the right?
.....



4. One of the devils in N3 is playing a musical instrument. What is it?
5. There are two other musical instruments on the North side. Can you name either of them?
.....
6. N6 shows a Deer and two "Green Men". These are very ancient symbols (before Christian times). They seem to be the Spirits of what? (Look carefully at the carving round their heads)
.....
7. You have already seen a Deer (in N6). On the North Side find two other animals. (There are at least 5). Name two of them here.
.....



2

South Side



8. In S1 the man has a number of Tools round him and nearby. Name as many as you can.

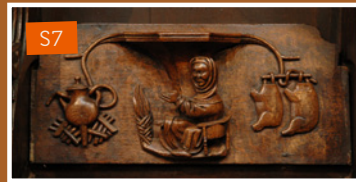
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9. The man in S3 has a pack on his back. Perhaps he is a Pedlar (a man who sells things from his pack, going from door to door). What is he doing here?

.....

10. In S7 the person is sitting by the fire. Perhaps it is Winter. What is hanging up on the right?

.....



11. S10 shows a Griffin (not a real animal). This is supposed to be a cross between a bird and a mammal. Which ones do you think they were?

.....
and

12. What do you think is going on in S11?

.....

13. Which is your favourite misericord, and why?

.....
.....

14. Back at home or at school, design your own misericord. You might like to draw something from life today, in the way carvers did then.



The Answers

1. Headdress/Ugly woman
2. N4, Fish
3. Being thrown into Hell (probably for serving bad beer, or not serving full pints)
4. Bagpipe
5. Shawm (a bit like an Oboe or Clarinet)
6. [N12] Drum [N1]
7. Forest or Woodland
8. Bats [N2], Fish [N4], Deer and Dogs [N10], Falcon or Hawk [N12], also in [N9] where the carving is quite worn, there is a Donkey with a Bishop's hat on talking to Birds (probably Geese) and also a Rabbit on the left side.
9. Bellows, Hammer, pair of Pattens (overshoes), Barrel, Spades. (There are also some bones and skulls on the right)
10. Perhaps the carver is telling the man that Death always comes to everybody)
11. Pulling on or Taking off his Boots
12. Bacon/Pork/Pigs
13. Eagle (the head) and Lion (the body)
14. Taking Wine or Beer from a Barrel

