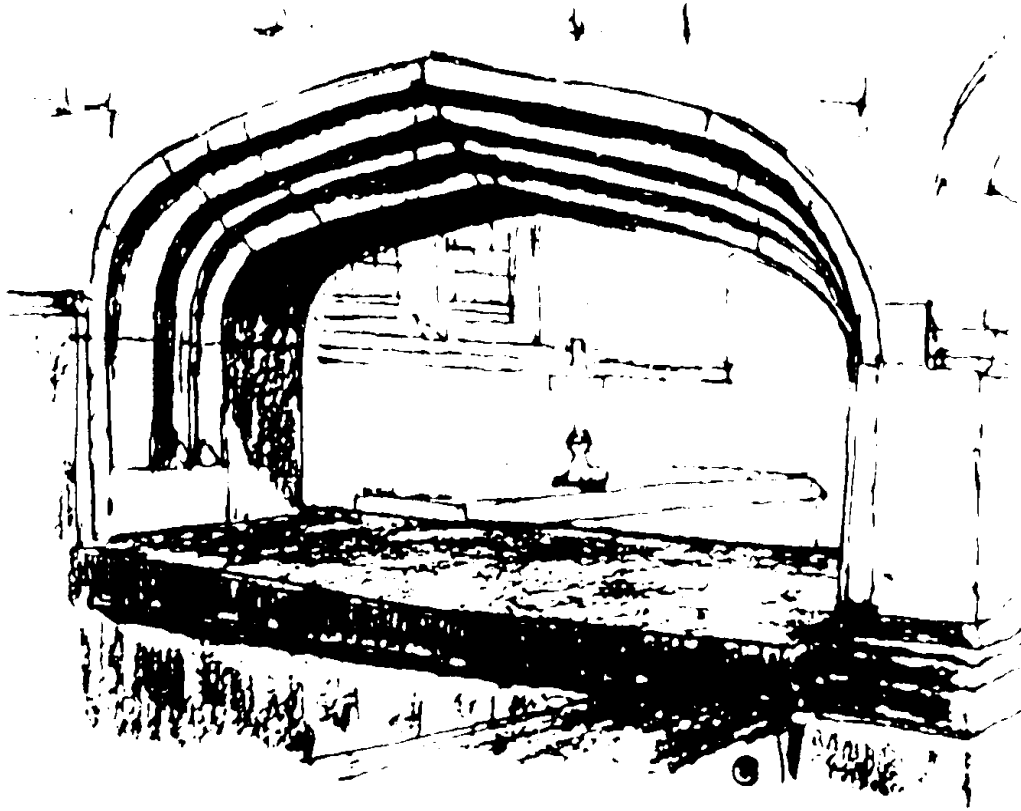


St John the Baptist parish Church Little Marlow Berkshire

This church has a Ledewich Chapel

The tomb of Nicholas Ledewich and his wife Alice lies under the low arch between the south chapel and the Chancel.

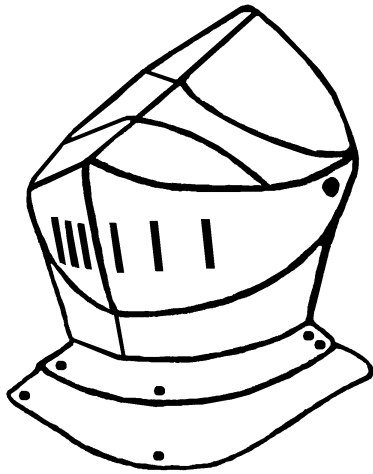


Originally brasses of both figures were inset but only that of Alice remains, as well as two of the three shields. The brass latin inscription reads:

Armīs ornatus Nicol Ledewich hic tumulus a quo fundatus locus iste Deo decoratur Prima digna poli prestat sibi gratia Christi Consortque suae Deus Aliciae miserere Bis septem geni triceni deno Novembris Virginis a partu lux terris abstulit illa.

A distinguished soldier (literally ‘honoured in arms’) Nicol Ledewich is buried here by whom this place is founded and decorated for God May the grace of Christ supply him with the best gifts of heaven and may God have mercy on his consort Alice the 10th of November 1430 A.D.

The date 1430 is quaintly expressed as ‘twice seven hundred plus thirty from the virgin birth’



When a warrior was buried in mediaeval times it was customary for his arms, armour and spurs to be placed around or on top of his tomb. Above the Ledewich tomb is a bracket upon which the helmet once hung. It was stolen in 1961 and shortly afterwards the present drawing of it was hung on the hook. The other pieces of armour presumably once on his tomb have long since gone.

Nothing more is known of Nicholas Ledewich. Doubtless he owned either the Manor of Danvers or Losemore. The Victoria County History states that a gift of 4/- each year was left for the orbit in the church (i.e. a requiem mass said for the repose of a benefactors soul). Possibly this orbit was for Nicholas Ledewich and his wife.

The south Chapel is often called the Ledewich chantry, a chantry being a chapel set aside for commemorations of this kind. many were built in the 15th and early 16th centuries.

In mediaval days there would have been no memorials on the walls of churches but instead brightly coloured paintings depicting stories from the Bible and the lives of saints. These disappeared under whitewash at the reformation. Statues of saints and stained glass windows suffered also then, and during the civil war in the 1640s churches up and down the land rang to the sound of puritan hammer and countless works of art were damaged beyond repair or lost for ever. It was during the civil war that the stained glass in the east window of this chapel was smashed. Fortunately however fragments of the original 15th century glass, including the clearly legible name of Nicholas Ledewich, and a dove representing the holy spirit survived. They have been reset in clear glass in the east window.

On the floor near the Ledewich tomb a tablet commemorates James Warren Esq. who died in 1774 and was descended on his mothers side from the Borlase family.