

St James the Great Parish Church, Gawsworth, Cheshire



At one time a Norman chapel occupied the site where St James the Great parish church now is located. It has a 15th century, 103-foot high tower and window corbels with dripstones, shields of arms, and gargoyles. The stone cross in the churchyard in front of the south porch dates from the same time as the church and has carvings of animals representing the expulsion of evil spirits.

The walls of the nave were constructed of limestone in 1430 and the chancel and tower of pink sandstone in 1480. The roofs are 500 years old. The nave roof, barrel beam in design, has bits of its original brilliant colouring and gilt. The chancel roof, arch camber beam in construction, has rare panelled sections with tie beams. The 1893 choir screen sits where the original rood screen was.



The four generations of Fitton family monuments are in the sanctuary on each side of the altar. The oldest one is of Francis Fitton, a knight buried here in 1608. The tomb is made of alabaster and freestone. On the other side of the altar is the tomb of Dame Alice Fitton who died in 1626. The effigy of Mary, the supposed dark lady of Shakespeare's sonnets is here as is the tomb of the first baronet, Sir Edward Fitton, who died in 1619. There are numerous other family carvings and tombs among the monuments.

Fragments of ancient glass are in the chancel windows. The font is original 15th century work and has a carved font cover.

Visitor Information

St James the Great Parish Church
Gawsworth, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 9RJ
Three miles south of the town on the A536