

## Green Men

The Green Man is often considered to be a pagan symbol with the earliest references dating back to the second century. Green men, in many guises, can be found in the stonework, metalwork and woodwork of many churches and cathedrals. In Wells Cathedral it is cited that there may be 40.

Green is associated with nature, spring and the colour of grass, plants and trees. It represents growth and renewal and is a symbol of prosperity, freshness, and progress. The Green Man is perhaps a symbol of rebirth, or “Renaissance”.

There are several carved wooden green men in St Michael’s Church, and they all have different features. Some are to be found on the famous bench ends. At the top of one, there appears to be a carved green man wearing a mitre.

To find the third green man, it is best to sit in the middle of the wooden bench behind the font and look up at the intersection between the centre of the wooden roof with the wall. Try using the mirror on the trolley. This chubby-faced green man with eyebrows, a rounded nose, wrinkled forehead and a bit of a grin, has two large oak leaves pouring from his mouth. His tongue is hanging out.



There is also a row of three green men in the roof bosses in the main aisle.



Most years this village holds a Wassail at the Cider Farm with the Green Man leading a procession to wake the apple trees and scare away evil spirits to ensure a good harvest. Traditionally wassails are held on or near twelfth night. The word 'wassail' is believed to be derived from the Old English 'was hál', meaning 'be hale' or 'good health. The Green Man is also known as the "Jack in the Green" and is connected with the "Green Knight" of Arthurian Fable and "Robin Hood". Unfortunately, much of the significance of the Green Man is no longer widely known, but he was important to our ancestors. Once you start looking for green men, you may be surprised at the number and variety you can spot!

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