

# heritage INSPIRED!

## churchyards...

South Yorkshire's faith tourism initiative

According to archaeologists, there can be little doubt that long before Christianity reached our country, ancient places of burial (eg: long barrows) and the land adjacent to them had been used for both spiritual and communal activities.

Following advice from Pope Gregory the Great in around 600 AD, St Augustine and his missionary colleagues adopted many of these sites for Christian worship and burials. Following ancient custom they also continued to be centres of the community.

Preaching crosses were erected, and here the missionaries carried out their work of conversion. Once converted, villagers who died were buried at the side of the cross and thus the first Christian burial grounds were established. Eventually the crosses were superseded by the erection of a church, usually a crude building of timber and thatch. This means that many churchyards are older than the churches they contain!

The antiquity of some churchyards may be seen where the level of the burial ground is higher than the level of the footpaths serving it, as centuries of burials have substantially raised the level of earth above adjacent ground.

As in the pagan past, village festivities and social gatherings such as dances and games took place in the churchyard. Indeed, in many parishes the unconsecrated north side of the churchyard was effectively the village recreation ground where fives, quoits, ninepins, marbles, wrestling and football took place.

Some of these activities also encouraged gambling, and in 1764 Parson Woodforde writes that "my guests played Fives in the churchyard this evening and I lost there at betting the sum of 1/6p". Believe it or not, another popular churchyard 'sport' was cockfighting (there are recorded instances of cockfights being held in the church nave).

Football, with no restriction on the number of players in each team, was also popular, and there is at least one instance recorded of the church porch being used as one of the goals.

As time went by, these activities slowly but surely ceased. As one commentator remarked of their passing "whilst standards of conduct and morality improved as a result, the poor were also deprived of many simple and harmless pleasures which served to relieve the harshness of everyday life".

Ancient churchyards are important places for archaeology and history, revealing evidence of the past and documenting the lives of people who have lived and worked in a parish. Many are now managed carefully with regard to our environment. They are 'living sanctuaries' providing a refuge for a rich diversity of plants and animals. To find out more please visit: [www.caringforgodsacre.com](http://www.caringforgodsacre.com)



Firbeck St Martin

HERITAGE INSPIRED is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. We work with partner sites to promote their social, architectural and cultural heritage. We produce interpretation leaflets and publicity, organise events and activities and support volunteers. If you would like to be involved we would love to hear from you.

Would you like **heritage inspired!** FREE to your door or could you receive it by email (saving us money for other projects and activities)?

If so (or if you want to be removed from our list), please contact us.

# making sense of the stones

Want to know more about your local heritage?

Why not join local expert Pat McLaughlin for our highly acclaimed course exploring the history and heritage of this area, within the context of a national picture.

The course will explore how ancient beliefs contributed to the development of the major faiths. It will examine: standing stones, earthworks, burial mounds, Roman beliefs, the introduction of Christianity, the Saxon occupation of eastern England, return to paganism, the Viking effect, the Norman invasion, church and cathedral building, the renaissance, the Victorian gothic revival and modern architecture. To finish we will arrange a site visit to see the 'theory in practice'.

The courses are open to all, but places are limited so must be booked. Each course will be nine 2-hour sessions, one per week:

"Sacred Savages?" - Prehistoric England

"The Invaders" - Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Normans

"From Terror to Tranquillity" - Castles, Manor Houses, Stately Homes

"I Want to be Alone" - Hermits, Monasteries, Abbeys

"Church Architecture" - from Conqueror to Emperor

"Poetry in Stone" - Cathedrals

"A Treasure House of History" - Parish Churches

"The Way to Heaven" - Church and Churchyard Monuments

"Exploring an Ancient Church" - (site visit)

*"Excellent - I wish it could have lasted longer"*  
Attendee Comment



## doncaster (thorne) course

**START DATE:** Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010 1pm - 3pm

**Venue:** Thorne Church Hall, Stonegate, THORNE, DN8 5NP

**Cost:** £1.50 per session or £10 for the whole course

**To Book:** Please ring 0845 6529634 to book. Please send a cheque (made payable to HERITAGE INSPIRED) for the amount due, with your name(s), address & phone number to HERITAGE INSPIRED, Mexborough Resource Centre, Dolcliffe Road, Mexborough, S64 9AZ

## sheffield (greenhill) course

**START DATE:** Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 1:30pm - 3:30pm

**Venue:** Greenhill St Peter, Reney Avenue, GREENHILL, S8 7FN

**Cost:** £1.50 per session or £10 for the whole course

**To Book:** Please ring 0845 6529634 to book (please send a cheque as above).

For more information please ring **0845 6529634**.

*"I have gained knowledge, and the confidence to get out and about on my own and explore and appreciate our heritage"*

Attendee Comment

# heritage talks

FREE & EVERYONE WELCOME!

Why are there carvings of faces covered in leaves and flowers in our churches? How is faith built into architecture, and why? Where are the oldest sites in SY and why and how were they built?

We would love to introduce you to some of South Yorkshire's hidden gems of architecture, carving and much more. There are little known details in each of our heritage faith sites - we will show you where to find them and what they mean! Join celebrated local heritage speaker Pat McLaughlin at one of our heritage talks:



Date	Venue	Time	Talk
20 January	WATH St James Rooms	1:30pm	Saxon & Norman Architecture in SY
23 March	SILKSTONE All Saints Church	10:30am	Saxon & Norman Architecture in SY
23 April	LOW BRADFIELD Village Hall	1:30pm	Green Men & Gargoyles
26 May	BLYTH Priory	1:30pm	Green Men & Gargoyles

Each talk will last about 2 hours, with refreshments provided.

There is no need to book a place, but if you would like more information about our heritage talks please give us a ring on 0845 6529634. We will be booking more FREE talks across South Yorkshire through the rest of the year.

## candlelit tours epworth old rectory

**EPWORTH OLD RECTORY**  
home of the remarkable Wesley family

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at 7.30pm**

Epworth Old Rectory's popular Candlelit Tours are coming again! They provide a rare opportunity for small groups to have a unique experience touring the Wesley family home by candlelight with a costumed guides.

Tours are available every Friday and Saturday at 7pm during the months of February 2010 and March 2010. Tickets are £5 and places can be booked by calling 01427 872268.

## SIX churches walk

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 10am**

Meet at Wentworth Holy Trinity. The six churches walk is a fascinating 10 mile circular route. Most of the route is along ancient footpaths and bridleways, which have been used for hundreds of years by local people and visitors alike. Light refreshments will be available at Wath All Saints for lunch. This event is part of Rotherham Walking Festival.



## VOICES OF RAWMARSH & PARKGATE

We are thrilled to announce the publication of a new book by Tony Dodsworth, one of the members of our Steering Group.

Based on the research by the Rawmarsh and Parkgate Local History Group, this title includes stories that remind us of the different aspects of life in Parkgate. It also includes short sections on older aspects of the history of the area, with historic sources including maps, private letters and parish records.

The book is available from all good bookshops.

## WATH FESTIVAL

Details are being finalised for Wath Festival 2010: 28th April - 3rd May. Some activities will be taking place in the magnificent church of All Saints.

The festival is South Yorkshire's biggest festival of music and dance, established in 1972. Community events take place throughout the festival week from local school's concerts, the festival procession, singarounds, music workshops and concerts.

Comedian and actor Ade Edmondson and his band The Bad Shepherds will be headlining the 2010 festival. For more information about the festival visit [www.wathfestival.org.uk](http://www.wathfestival.org.uk).



## can you help?

Would you like to be involved in fun activities, helping HERITAGE INSPIRED to promote your local site? From managing the project, to helping prepare for events, to making to tea for volunteers - there is a role for everyone who would like to be involved. We also offer work placements to students and anyone wanting to get back into work or just looking for an excellent addition to your CV.

## DAISY ISOBEL HOLDEN

Many of you will want to join us in welcoming Daisy Isobel Holden to the world on 25th November 2009.

Gemma will be on maternity leave until the end of May 2010. We miss her already but know she will be having a fabulous time with Chris and Daisy!

## ART & CRAFT FAYRE

Come and discover our Art & Craft Fayre at Bradfield St Nicholas over the weekend of 5-6<sup>th</sup> April 2010. There will be lots of stalls full of interesting goodies!

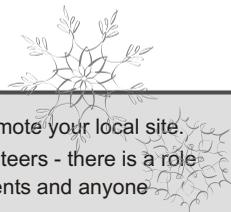
## SNOWDROP FESTIVALS

There are several snowdrop festivals in our area!

The ancient priory church of Blyth St Mary & St Martin will open daily from 30<sup>th</sup> Jan to 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010, 12noon and 4pm to coincide with the snowdrop season at Hodsock Priory. The snowdrops at Kirk Bramwith St Mary are always an amazing sight and well worth a visit.

## EPIC FUNDING

HERITAGE INSPIRED has been granted some funding by the East Peak Innovation partnership to do some work in the Pennine Barnsley and Sheffield area. Although we already work with some faith sites in this area this grant will allow us to spread into West Yorkshire a little - so look out for lots of new places to visit soon!



## HERITAGE INSPIRED

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