

The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham  
**CHURCH HISTORY  
& OPEN CHURCHES  
PROJECT**

NEWSLETTER No 18: October 2013



heritage learning welcome

**Histories added to the website and entries received since Jan. 2013**

Since the last newsletter, which came out in January 2013, we have published the histories of the following churches on the website: *Saxondale St Martin, Sutton-in-Ashfield St Modwen, Nottingham St John the Baptist, Westwood St Mary, Nottingham St Bartholomen, Nottingham All Saints, Adbolton All Hallows, North Wheatley St Peter & St Paul, East Stoke St Oswald, Coddington All Saints, Maplebeck St Radegund.*

This means we currently have 133 full entries on the site. Another 186 churches have introductory entries.

Entries that the Editors and Webmaster are currently finalising include: *Clifton St Mary, Rolleston Holy Trinity, Collingham All Saints, Widmerpool St Peter, Sutton Bonington St Anne, Habbleshorpe St Peter, North Leverton St Martin, Nottingham Emmanuel, Willoughby St Mary & All Saints, Kneesall St Bartholomen, Moorhouse Chapel, Ollerton St Paulinus, Nottingham Holy Trinity, Edingley St Giles, Farnsfield St Michael, Wollaton Park St Mary, Selston St Helen, Clumber Chapel, Danethorpe, East Stoke Medieval Hospital, Halloughton St James, Laneham St Peter, Gamston & Bridgford St Luke, Strelley All Saints and Nottingham St Paul.* A huge thank you to all the volunteers who have submitted entries since the plea in our last newsletter!

<http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk>

CHP Newsletter 18

in this issue:

new entries ...	1
reports on last researchers' day ...	2-4
details of next researchers' day ...	5
Open Churches Weekends ...	6
new trail leaflet ...	7
education update ...	7
reply slip ...	8

Hello and welcome to the Church History Project newsletter for Autumn 2013!

There are only a few months left now of the Project “as we know it”; the Heritage Lottery Funding comes to an end early next year.

As we explained in the last newsletter, there will be some continuation - the three Editors will continue to add to the website and of course the tremendous amount of research and resources that are already online will remain online.

But if you are currently researching a church we really need to push you now to finish your work and submit it as soon as possible to stand any chance of getting it up on the website before the formal end of the Project.

If you have any questions there is a selection of helpful FAQs in the last newsletter, which you can find electronically here [www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/volunteers) page or you can of course contact us at any time. Heather’s always on email at [heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org).

On Saturday the 25th of January we’ll be celebrating all the Project has achieved in the 15 years since its conception. Please join us at Southwell Minster that afternoon (timings TBC) where, among other highlights, our guest speakers will be Bishop Paul Butler and Loyd Grossman, Chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust. We’ll be saying a huge thank you to all the volunteers who have contributed to the project through the years, plus we have a couple of surprises in store too...!

Thank you for your continued support of the project.  
Hope you enjoy this newsletter.  
Heather

## Reports From the Last Researchers’ Training Day at Holy Trinity church, Southwell

The last training day ran twice due to the difficult weather conditions first time around. xx of xx and again on the 4th of May 2013.

The meeting, which was attended by around twenty researchers and several members of the Research Team, was introduced by Professor John Beckett. He said an important source had recently become available in an accessible format: Archbishop Drummond’s parish visitation returns for 1764, which Howard Fisher has transcribed, and which the Thoroton Society has published. This will be available shortly in the Local Studies Library.

The main aim of the meeting was to **identify and address problems encountered in writing up the research**. Reference was made to the briefing handbook, which is the guide to follow, and examples of churches which are already on the website were shown. John said writing up the history and archaeology sections appears to be more problematic than the other sections. He advised researchers to work out a timeline, collect the material and set it out in chronological order of the history of the church through time, beginning with the earliest periods (for which there may be an entry in Domesday), then to ‘read’ the church through architectural styles until surviving records are available.

The key sources to consult in compiling the history (pages 5 and 6 of the briefing handbook) are:  
Domesday Book – Morris description  
Robert Thoroton, Antiquities of Nottinghamshire (1677), using Throsby’s revisions  
Nicholas Pevsner, Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire (2nd edn., 1979)  
Nottinghamshire Local Studies Library: (holds a file on each village and church)  
Trade directories (also in Nottinghamshire Local Studies Library)

For archaeology (page 7 of the briefing handbook): Describe the nave, chancel and tower. The official archaeological description will be added by the Research Team. Add the listed building description if there is one, information is available at <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>



Dr Chris Brooke said Pevsner should be consulted and information added on the architectural history if possible; but if researchers are unable to provide this, he will do so. He also stressed that the listing description is a very useful source for sorting out the chronology of the archaeology.

Chris described two methods of setting out the work:

It can either be produced as a series of bullet points, starting at the earliest point visible, and then worked through chronologically. Significant features such as blocked windows, which are part of the fabric but distinct from the fittings and fixtures, should be included, since these can be dated archaeologically. Alternatively a narrative can be produced, starting with the chancel, and giving a short description with dates. Then add the tower, nave, etc, in any order, giving each item a narrative rather than bullet points.

Either method is acceptable, and the information does not have to be extensive; but it should be accurate. The aim is to be able to physically date the building.

Chris said researchers should look at the different entries already on the website, which are a guide as to what is required.

Researchers do not have to produce a technical summary at the end of the archaeological section, Chris will do this. The purpose of this summary is to give professionals such as architects fuller information, for example if a medieval church has had central heating installed. Researchers should, however, mention the roof style, wall paintings, etc in the archaeology section, and Chris will put this information into the standard format.

There then followed a question and answer session on writing up entries, and a particular question on galleries. Chris said if a church had a medieval western gallery very high up, the only evidence available now will be a blocked doorway above the tower arch, which would be almost in what is now roof space. There is virtually no documentary evidence as to the use of these galleries, and the best guess is that they formed part of a pre-conquest liturgy. But they have no connection with the later singers’ galleries which are at much lower level.

Heather Sirrel said she could provide print-outs of the slides shown at the first session, if required, but full details are in the briefing handbook.

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Chris Brooke led the second session on **wall paintings and mural decoration**. He said wall paintings were universal in medieval churches, before people could read or understand Latin, and those currently with bare stone walls indicate a 19th or early 20th century restoration, when it was decided that plaster should be removed and pure stonework revealed. Much evidence may have been lost, but there are still clues to the presence of paintings.

Nottinghamshire is not over-blessed with major schemes, and the county’s best example is Blyth. It contains a rare 12th-century outline painting [detail pictured above], which is scarce in England, consisting of a very stylised geometric form on one capital running onto the wall. In 1985 the architect wished to replaster the east wall, but there was a medieval painted scheme underneath, which had not been touched during a 19th century restoration. A major conservation programme carried out between 1988-90 revealed the largest Last Judgement scene known in the north of England, dating mainly from the 15th century. It also revealed a 14th-century passion cycle depicting Easter, although an 18th-century monument has wrecked the majority of the scene. Blyth’s ceiling vault contains an unrestored 13th-century painting which was not conserved due to lack of funding.

Medieval wall paintings do not generally fade as the pigments used were almost universally carbon black, white limewash, and red and yellow iron oxide. Some organic pigments which were sometimes used have altered over time. The colour blue was very expensive

and not generally used; it was almost exclusively reserved for the Virgin's cloak. Blyth was partly limewashed over during the Reformation, and has also been subject to moisture in the air and a penchant for coal and wood heaters in the 19th century, which generated soot and smoke and produced a thick layer of carbon. This can, however, be removed with modern technology.

Chris then noted several other churches in the area and elsewhere which have wall paintings:

**Halam** contains a fragment of a yellow ochre painted decoration, possibly 12th century.

**Thurgarton** has traces of paint on the canopy of the east window.

**Sibthorpe's** 18th-century ceiling cuts the head of the chancel arch. The Victorians didn't remove the flat plaster ceiling, and the top of the chancel arch and surviving original plaster has paint traces probably of 13th or 14th century origins.

**Laxton** has overpainted texts which have been enhanced using CEI imagery.

**Corby Glen** has 14th- and 15th-century paintings in the spandrels of the arcades between the aisles in the church at Corby Glen.

**Pickworth** in Lincolnshire has a late 14th-century painting of the Weighing of the Souls.

**Newark St Mary** contains paintings of the Dance of Death, a 16th century theme.

**South Scarle** has a late medieval carved roof with fragmentary traces of paint.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, in place of figurative medieval paintings, black letter texts of biblical verses and geometric stylized outlines can be found, such as at **Willoughby**. Sometimes rebuses or cartouches are present.

By the beginning of the 19th century, but pre-restoration, unusual and rare depictions can be found; for example at **Upton** there is a painting of an angel in the north chapel, probably from around 1800. This has been enhanced using CEI imagery [pictured right enhanced using UV fluorescence].

**Caunton** has 19th-century texts and a stencil decoration on the chancel arch.

**Coddington** has an early Arts and Crafts type scheme, with an 1860s painted chancel ceiling.

Wall paintings are not always medieval. Langford

contains traces of a 19th century painting. The Victorians used pigment dyes mixed in with limewash, such as bluebag. Even so, researchers should include the information in their entry. Places to look include the stonework of columns, and in niches, which tend to have survived restoration. If overpaint is flaking off, possibly emulsion, there might be a wall painting underneath. Look at the roof (with binoculars!) as well as the walls. East Stoke has a 19th century stencil decoration on the nave roof and clerestory window soffits.

Analysis can be done of paintings to identify the different pigments, which helps to date them. We now have access to a FTIRS analysis which will be available to the project later in the year for glass and paintings.

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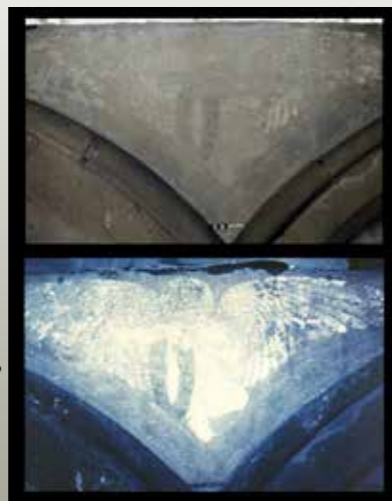
Rev Dr David Harper then gave an **update on the website**. There are currently 130 full entries on the site, one due to be added imminently, and several more in preparation. For churches with no full entry, we currently have 169 introductory pages on the website. More volunteers are needed to provide fuller information on those churches which have only introductory entries. A number of full entries are currently under research, and we look forward to receiving them. Although David expects to be involved with the website for some time, Heritage Lottery funding will end this time next year.

Terry Fry, who was present at the meeting, was thanked for all the work he has done towards the project, both in researching full entries and introductory ones.

A splendid lunch was provided by the Refectory staff, after which the meeting closed.

Janice Avery  
May 2013

For a copy of the PowerPoint presentations used to illustrate these talks please see [www.nottsopechurches.org.uk/volunteers'page](http://www.nottsopechurches.org.uk/volunteers'page) or email [heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)



## Next Researchers' Training Day: Saturday 30th of November 2013, at Jubilee House, Southwell

This is our last training day as the funding for the Project ends in just a few months.

As always, the session is aimed at all researchers – whether new or seasoned, there will be something for everyone.

The main part of this training day will comprise of a talk by Dr Jennifer Alexander (Senior Teaching Fellow, History of Art, University of Warwick) on graffiti and masons' marks in churches.

Please complete and return the reply slip at the end of this newsletter (or email us) by Monday, 25th of November at the latest, whether or not you intend to join this session.

### Draft Programme (timings approximate)

(refreshments available from 9.30am)

10.00am: Welcome and CHP Project Update – Project Manager Nick Harding

10.10am: 'The Writing on the Wall' – Dr Jennifer Alexander

11.00am: Break

11.15am: Project loose ends - how you can help – Prof. John Beckett

12.00pm: Report on recent progress with the website – Rev. Dr David Harper

12.15pm: Questions & answers

12.30pm: Buffet lunch and an opportunity to discuss specific points with the Team

Directions to venue (use postcode NG25 0JL): Jubilee House is the new office for the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham. It is located right next door to the old office (Dunham House), opposite the west side of Southwell Minster.

There is a carpark for 20 cars.

## Do we have any church recorders out there?

During the summer we have been able to recruit some very able students who have been researching and writing the histories of churches for which we have been unable to recruit a volunteer.

They have done some excellent work, but in most cases without visiting the church.

We still have some travel expense funding available, and we are wondering if anyone who has volunteered on the project would like to tour the county (well, bit by bit...) recording the information on monuments and war memorials, and providing information on fixtures and fittings, glass, organs and all the other things that can only be done on the spot.

We can provide guidance, and a list of churches. Contact Heather if you'd like to help! [heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)





Tourism

## Open Churches Weekends



165 churches opened for this summer's Open Churches Weekends welcoming more visitors than ever before, some from as far afield as Kent, Norfolk, Cumbria and even overseas.

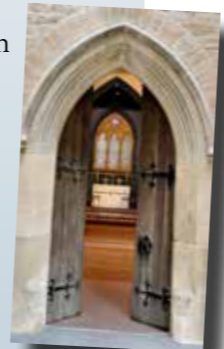
All over the county churches were bustling with people enjoying the stalls, live music, costumes, historical displays, children's activities, bell ringing and refreshments.

Particular highlights included Holme Pierrepont St Edmund's hugely popular flower festival, Hickling St Luke's fete and Bunny St Mary the Virgin's "Midsummer Festival" (which featured on Radio Nottingham on Sunday 21/07/13).



North of the county on the 13th and 14th there was a real buzz at St Anne's Worksop as the open church joined up with the local school summer fair and displays of art and crafts attracted lots of visitors. Churches such as St Laurence's Norwell, St Nicholas' Askham and St Swithun's Retford, showed off their clock and bells, with St Laurence's display of artistic photographs of the clock mechanism in particular drawing much admiration. Renowned organist Stephen Carey did a mini tour with recitals at Scofton St John and Babworth All Saints.

Overall it was another highly successful couple of weekends. Huge thanks to all those who gave their time and effort to make it happen!



The Church History Project is not just about research!

The research feeds our work in two other areas - tourism and education - in an offshoot known as the Open Churches Project...

Tourism

### New Trail Leaflet:

## Nottinghamshire Churches' Mining Heritage

*Anglican places of worship built for the expanding mining communities*

Our latest Trail leaflet was launched at a special event on Wednesday 24th of July. The leaflet celebrates the Nottinghamshire churches that played a pivotal role in the lives of 19th & 20th century coal mining communities.

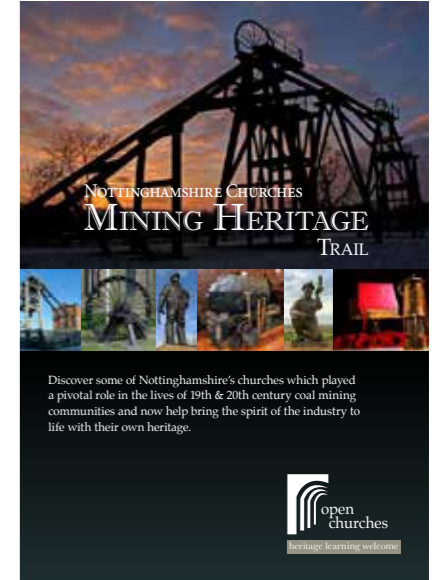
The county has seventeen remaining churches which were originally founded specifically to cater for the expanding mining communities, and the launch event focused on two key locations in Bestwood: St Mark's church and the Winding Engine House, with talks about the history and how faith and the church helped life for a miner.

West Nottinghamshire once boasted a long line of coal mines which, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, transformed the villages and countryside of north-west Nottingham, Sherwood Forest, and the Dukeries, into one of the greatest coalfields in Britain.

Amidst this major expansion of industry new settlements arose and once-tiny villages grew to support the miners and their families. This development brought the need for new churches to cater for their spiritual needs and witnessed the foundation of a large number of such buildings.

The trail leaflet allows people to discover some of these less well-known churches, ones that perhaps don't immediately spring to mind when you think of 'history' or 'heritage' but ones that have an important story to tell as they retain the spirit of the industry.

See [www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-miningheritage](http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-miningheritage)



## Education Update

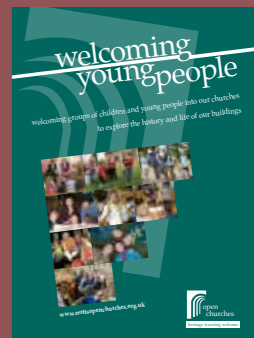
This year we have produced quite a few new resources to help aid learning. Firstly, there is now a subtitled version of the DVD "the history and life of churches" available.

We've produced a pack of material for use when welcoming groups of children and young people (such as scouts, guides, boys' brigade etc) into church (pictured right).

We've launched the Key Stage 3 material, which is all online at [www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/education-secondary](http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/education-secondary) (home page pictured right).

And we're well on the way with making a whole new section of the website specifically for children to use to learn about churches.

You can find out more about all of these at [www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk](http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk)





RESEARCHERS' TRAINING DAY  
**Saturday 30th of November 2013, at Jubilee House in Southwell**

Please complete and return this slip by Monday, 25th of November at the latest, to Heather Sirrel, Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project, Jubilee House\*, Westgate, Southwell, Notts., NG25 0JH (\*please note the new address!), or email [heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org), or telephone 07736 286 056.

I will/will not [please delete as appropriate] be attending the researchers' training day on 30th of November in Southwell (full address and directions are on page 6 of the newsletter).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ tel no: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Church/church site you are currently researching (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

If you are part of a research group, number attending (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. date you expect to submit your research (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to research a further entry (once your current research is complete)? Yes/no

Do you wish to continue to receive newsletters? Yes/no

\*\*\*please continue sending timesheets in to Heather either via email or post (details above)\*\*\*

