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

NEWSLETTER No 17: January 2013

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## Entering the FINAL YEAR of the Church History Project!



Hello everyone

Welcome to the CHP newsletter for January 2013.

Did you know there are only about 12 months left until this project finishes?  
It's amazing how time flies!

The Heritage Lottery Fund grant that was awarded to us in 2008 has been a tremendous help and has enabled the project to expand in ways it could not otherwise have done.

We now have one more year to get as much research as possible complete and up on the website. If you are currently researching a church for the project it's time to really get stuck in!

...read more on page 2

### **Histories added to the website and entries received since October 2012**

Since the last newsletter, which came out in October 2012, we have published the histories of the following churches on the website: Cromwell St Giles, Hawton All Saints, South Leverton All Saints, Hoveringham St Michael [pictured above], West Markham All Saints, Bilsthorpe St Margaret.

This brings the total of full entries on-site up to 122.

Entries that the Editors and Webmaster are currently finalising are:  
Nottingham St John the Baptist, Sutton in Ashfield St Modwen, Nottingham All Saints, Westwood St Mary, North Wheatley St Peter & St Paul, East Stoke St Oswald, Clumber Park St Mary the Virgin, Maplebeck St Radegund, Laneham St Peter, Nottingham St Bartholomew, Halloughton St James, Coddington All Saints, Willoughby on the Wolds St Mary and All Saints, Strelley All Saints, Rolleston All Saints and Sutton Bonington St Ann.

Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who have contributed to this!

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

CHP Newsletter 17

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## The final year of the (funded) Church History Project

The following article is mainly aimed at the 75-or-so volunteers who have taken on an entry between 2000 and 2012 and are yet to submit it...

So, here are some F.A.Q.s

### *What will happen to the website?*

<http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk> will continue to be on-line for the foreseeable future. The tremendous collection of information it contains will have on-going value and will continue to be available free-to-view by anyone after this phase of the Project concludes.

Prof. John Beckett, Dr. Chris Brooke, and Revd. Dr. David Harper will still be around to add entries to the website after 2013 but there will be very little other support available (not having funding means we will not be able to produce printed material, pay travelling expenses, put on training days, produce newsletters, etc. Other sources of funding are being looked into, but unlikely).

### *What about the churches that haven't been researched at all yet?*

Our main aim, and our agreement with the HLF, is that there will be something for every church in the Diocese on-site by the close of the project. For up to half the churches this may not be a full entry, rather, it may simply be a 2-300 word summary history, plus photos, listing description (if applicable), location and contacts. You may have heard us refer to these as either "intro entries" or "front ends". We are very grateful to Terry Fry who has written well over 100 of these for us already, and to the others (you know who you are!) who have also contributed.

Having said that, we are reluctant to accept bits of entries (as it gets really hard to keep track) so if

you are currently working on an entry do please try to complete it and submit it to us as soon as possible, and ideally by September of this year.

As it says in the guidelines booklet, you can submit material to Heather Sirrel via email, or to Prof. John Beckett at Nottingham University (see page 16 of *how to write the history of your church* for more details).

### *I don't think I'll manage to complete my entry, what should I do?*

Above all else, please talk to us – let us know! We might be able to help, or know someone who can help you to finish, or take it off your hands if you wish. This is really important with any aspect that you might be stuck with – please don't keep quiet!

You can speak to Janice Avery, the research manager, on 0115 943 0346 (after 6pm) or Heather Sirrel, the project co-ordinator, on 07736 286 056.

### *Where do I stand if I only joined the project last year?*

Obviously if you are brand-new to the project we don't want to put pressure on you, all that we can ask is that you do your best in the time available. Please read the guide on *how to write the history of your church* as it sets out what is needed and provides lots of helpful suggestions along the way.



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*I'm not currently working on an entry but could maybe do one in time.*

If this applies to you – brilliant! Please have a look at the list at <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk/main/hinprogress.php> to see if any of the churches on there appeal to you as possibilities.

At some point in the summer we may stop active “recruiting”, so please think about this earlier rather than later.

Also – please don't aim for December 2013 – aim for earlier than that – because if the editors receive 100 entries in December 2013 to process and get on site they might combust due to overload!!

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### Next Researchers' Training Day: Saturday 23rd March, Holy Trinity Church, Southwell

This training day will be aimed primarily at the 75-or-so current research volunteers who have taken on an entry between 2000 and 2012 and are yet to submit it.

The main part of the training day will be spent looking at how to write up and complete your entry in time.

At this stage in the project we would strongly encourage you to attend.

Please complete and return the reply slip at the end of this newsletter – or email Heather – by **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> of March** to let us know you will be coming.

Timings: refreshments will be available from 9:30 for a 10am start. The session will run until about 12:30 and will close with a buffet lunch as usual.

Venue: Holy Trinity Church, Westgate, Southwell, Notts, NG25 0LD

Suggested parking: along Westgate and on Hillside Drive (opposite the church). There are usually also a few spaces round the side of the church (Coghill Court).

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### A note of thanks

We would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work of Geoff Buxton, a volunteer photographer who joined the project in summer 2011. Geoff has photographed 174 churches in extensive detail – plus many more besides – and has been a great asset to the project.

Many thanks are also due to our other volunteer photographers: Judith Asquith and Bill & Jane Paulson, whose work is fully appreciated!

Do of course please keep sending your timesheets in to Heather at Dunham House, 8 Westgate, Southwell, NG25 0JL



## Reports from the last researchers' Training Day at the Great Hall in Southwell

### Saturday 17 November

The latest researchers' training day took place in the Great Hall, Southwell, when over forty people attended. Project Manager Nick Harding opened the event by welcoming research volunteers and members of the Research Team, and explaining how the original remit of the project, i.e. cataloguing the history and archaeology of all the churches and church sites in the diocese, had led to its expansion into other areas, particularly education and tourism.

John Beckett opened the first session, on **identifying and looking at internet source materials**. He said that when the project was in its early stages there was little information available via the internet, but over the last ten years available resources have increased to such an extent that now it is possible to do a major part of research simply by consulting the internet. He gave two examples which he and Chris Brooke had researched via the internet – Treswell and Kneeton – but he stressed that the first thing volunteers should do is visit the church they are researching, in order to get a feel for the building and its surroundings.

He reminded volunteers to check the Resources section on the project's website, which is updated as and when new resources are discovered. Further information is outlined in the guide booklet *'how to write a history of your church'*. It is hoped to digitize more sources in the near future. If researchers know of any other useful resources which are not listed, they are asked to let the Team know.

Chris Brooke said resources will lead to either an original or transcribed document or a database, and then went on to mention various useful



websites, using Treswell [pictured above] as an example. He noted the differences in spelling over the years – it appears variously as Tyreswell, Tyreswelle, and Tireswelle. Domesday entries can be accessed via the **National Archives** website – though at a cost (the Local Studies Library also has a copy). If there is no mention of a church or priest, it does not mean that there wasn't one, since many are not listed in Domesday.

If a church is known to have been apportioned to a monastic establishment, the **Monastic Database** should be searched, which can lead to other resources. A check should be made of the foundation charter via the **British Archaeological Association's** website. Another useful site is **British History Online**. The **1291 Taxation Returns** should be consulted – every church above a particular value was taxed in an attempt to raise revenue for the Crusades. Chris demonstrated that Treswell church's income was split between two people at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which showed the value of the church. Fifty years later many churches appear in the **Nonarium Inquisitiones** (although the entries are in Latin, the wording tends to be in a standard format and can be fairly easily interpreted).



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From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards the **Calendar of Patent Rolls** was compiled which can be searched online, and in 1294 Edmund had the moiety of Tyreswell church. In 1304 a licence to buy in a priest is recorded, and in 1318 John de Malton had a moiety of the church. The **Registers of the Archbishops of York** are very useful; mostly confirming whether someone had a right/apportion to a living. **Dugdale's Monasticon Anglicanum** is a site which is currently not operating, but should be restored soon. There is much useful information, such as what was happening to a church's building, in the **Churchwardens' Returns and Visitations**.

**Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collections** have a search catalogue. The **National Archives** provide information as to what is held and where the information can be found. Chris said a good starting point is the listing description, which could be used to draw up a sketch plan – but the listing should not be taken as read, and should be used in conjunction with **Pevsner** and other reliable sources. **Google Earth** can indicate the shape and boundaries of churchyards. **Old.maps.co.uk** is a useful resource, as is **Edina**, which has the earliest Ordnance Survey maps. (Researchers should ask Chris or John Beckett to access Edina if they wish, since it is not open to the general public.) Other sites mentioned included **Crockford's Directories** (there are on-site costs for accessing). Records between 1830-1880 are available at **Lincolnshire Archives Office**, St Rumbold Street, Lincoln. Some websites are poorly maintained, such as trade directories, and John Beckett recommended using **Google Books Search Engine**.

There followed a Question-and-Answer session, then a short break, and afterwards Chris Brooke spoke about **understanding church bells and bellframes**. By the ninth century bells were in common use in churches, but they tended to be small – originally hand bells were used at various points in the medieval liturgy. They played a significant ceremonial role and were used to ring

the canonical hours, to announce the time and a call to worship. They were also used to announce commencement of the Mass and tolling for the dead. Bells also had a secular use, being rung as warning signals for invasion. They were also traditionally used to ward off evil spirits.



The earliest known bell in Nottinghamshire is at Littleborough, the bell [pictured above] dating from c.1180 is dedicated to a saint, as medieval bells often were. The next earliest is at Moorhouse (c.1240) which is uninscribed. Both are long thin bells. The third earliest is at Halam (c.1250) which is also uninscribed. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century bells took on a more traditional shape, ie smaller and fatter, as a result of being easier to manufacture and less likely to crack.

Originally bells were almost always cast in situ, either in the church in a casting pit or just outside. They generally gave the founder's marks and date, but as they were not always named, the style of lettering can help with identification. Bellframes were poorly understood and poorly researched nationally, mainly as access in the past was limited. Their evolution has in recent years been better understood, although there are only a few firm dates available. Originally bells were hung on a beam, then on a series of short headed frames; Chris showed examples from Lambley, dated to 1475, and Carlton-on-Trent, dated to 1547. Long headed frames followed, these allowed for more

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stability. Eventually metal frames were used, which were much more stable, and they are still used today.

George Elphick produced a classification of bellframes in 1945, which was used for many years until in 1993 Chris Pickford reclassified them, his volume showing various topologies and more variants. As examples of early bellframes Chris mentioned Bleasby, with two oak timbers suspended on window sills tree-ring dated to 1476, and Halam, where two original beams survive. A very rare and probably early medieval frame is the Elphick H frame, consisting of a beam suspended right across the belfry supported on a gantry, and Chris showed an example from Heapham, Lincolnshire, as we have none identified in Nottinghamshire.

After the Reformation ‘change-ringing’ was introduced – that is, full circle ringing – which originated in the Oxford and Cambridge colleges. This type of ringing gave more control over the bell, but created more strain on the bellframe, so that a more substantial design was needed.

Improved casting techniques and more foundries meant the quality of casting was enhanced. The only two foundries still in existence are Taylors of Loughborough and Whitechapel, London.

George Dawson is the local bell expert, and has constructed a profile of differing shapes through various eras. He has some references recording the movement of bells – this could happen if they became cracked, and therefore non-ringable, and they had to be replaced. Sometimes the number of bells was added to. After a long period in use, bells are quarter-turned to even out the stresses. Chris advised researchers to look at all the equipment surrounding the bells, such as hoist pulleys used to lower or raise them for tuning or maintenance. He stressed, though, that if researchers are going to

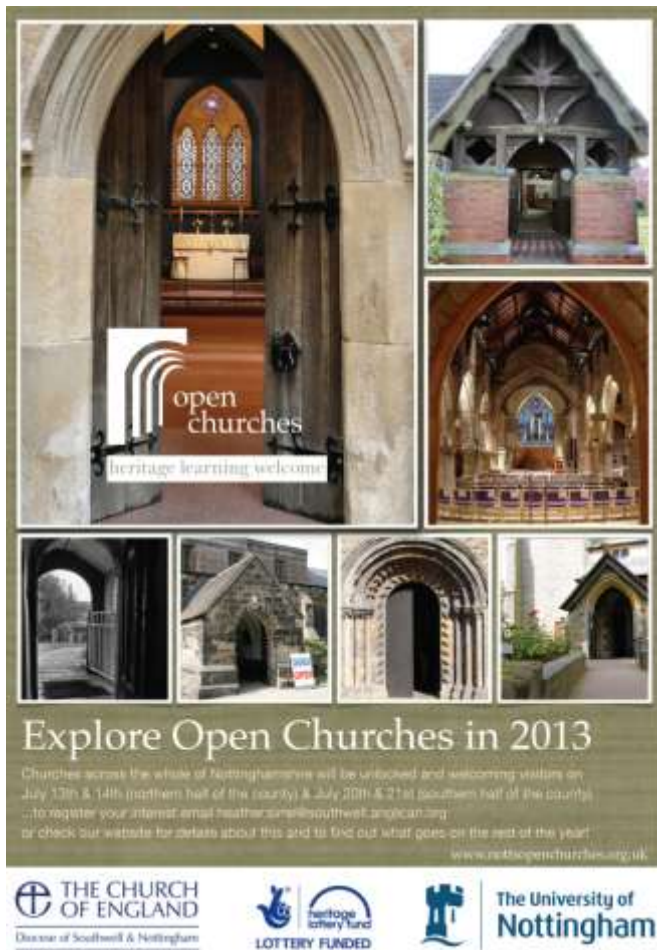
get a closer look at the bells, they must ensure it is safe to do so.

David Harper then spoke about the website; there were 117 full entries on the site, plus more to be added. There are a large number of introductory pages on the site, which consist of a short summary of the church and a photograph. Researchers were asked to look at the ‘work in progress’ section to check on the churches and sites not currently under research, and to urge anyone they know interested in the project to contact Heather Sirrel. He said the Research Team has just organized some additional help in getting entries onto the site. John Beckett added that David was doing an excellent job of putting entries and introductory pages onto the site. Many introductions have been submitted by Terry Fry, who was given particular thanks.

During an excellent lunch provided by Southwell Minster Refectory, attenders were able to pose any further questions to the various Team members.

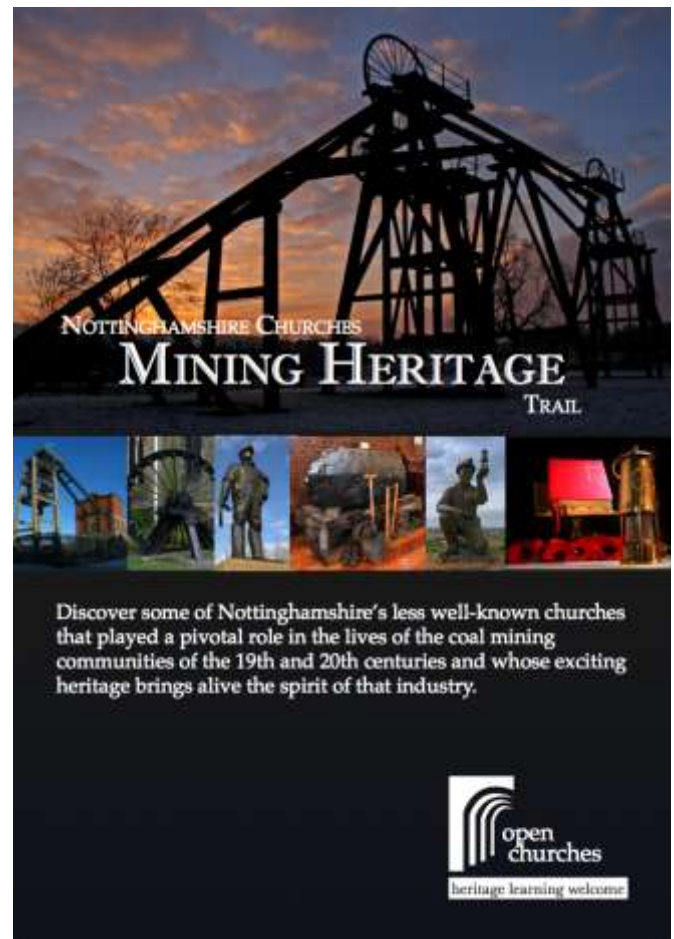
Janice Avery  
November 2012

For a copy of the PowerPoints used to illustrate the talks please see <http://www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/volunteers/page.html> or contact [Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)



Open Churches Weekends:  
13th & 14th of July 2013 = Bassetlaw and Newark  
& Sherwood District churches  
20th & 21st of July = City, Rushcliffe, Broxtowe,  
Ashfield, Mansfield and Gedling district churches

For more information please see  
[www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-OCWE13.php](http://www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-OCWE13.php)



The Mining Heritage Trail leaflet is now complete to order a copy please email  
[heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)

There will be a special event to launch the leaflet and we will let you know full details once they are firmed up.

The Education aims for this year are:

- produce a subtitled version of the DVD
- complete and launch the material for secondary schools
- create a website specifically for children to use to learn about churches
- launch a pack of materials for use with groups of children (such as scouts, guides, boys' brigade etc.)

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



Reply slip



**RESEARCHERS' TRAINING DAY  
SATURDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2013  
Holy Trinity Church, Southwell**

Full details are on page 3 of this newsletter.

Please complete and return this slip by Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> of March to Heather Sirrel, Dunham House, 8 Westgate, Southwell, Notts, NG25 0JL, or email [Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)

**I will/will not [please delete as appropriate] be attending** the researchers' training day on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

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

Church/church site you are currently researching:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

If not attending, work done so far:

