



St Helen's Church
Ashby-de-la-Zouch

Heritage Project eNews

No. 10 June 2019



Stories of St Helen's - a Community Play

Friday 12th and Saturday 13th July at 7.30 pm, in St Helen's Church

To celebrate the end of our amazing Heritage Lottery Funded Project, we are performing Stories of St Helen's, a Community Play: five one act plays based on different people and stories of the church throughout its history.

Robert Nundi and his two wives will rise from the alabaster to tell their tale. Lt Col Philip Bent will meet past Comrades in Arms and our lost Pilgrim will battle it out with a tour guide to make himself heard. St Helen will be making a one-off appearance to save the day ... there will be bells and things might get a little heated when two parish secretaries battle over the church rotas.

All the plays are by local writers and bring together people from our parish and community, including actors from the Venture Theatre, St Helen's Choir, local school children and members of several local church congregations.

Rehearsals are well underway. Costumes are being constructed, props primed and lines being feverishly learnt. Come along to help us celebrate our fantastic project and join in the fun.

Ticket just £5 each (primary age children free), available via our website - www.sthelensheritage.co.uk, Ashby Tourist Information Centre or on the door.


St Helen's Heritage Project

Stories of St Helen's

A Community Play

A series of five playlets performed by members of the community to celebrate the wonderful history and heritage of St Helen's Church

12th & 13th July, 2019
Performance start: 7.30pm
@ St Helen's Church
Cost: £5 per person
(Primary school age free)

Tickets available on the door, via our website at sthelensheritage.co.uk and from the Tourist Information Centre ashby.tic@nwleicestershire.gov.uk/Tel: 01530 411767

4 Church Yard, Ashby De La Zouch, LE65 1AA Tel: 07435 564236
Facebook.com/sthelensheritage
www.sthelensheritage.co.uk Email: sthelensheritage@gmail.com

Contacts:

Sharn Stinson (Project Operations Manager) - 07435 564236 - sthelensheritage@gmail.com

Julie Starkey (Research) - 07906 288841 - julie.starkey0@gmail.com

Since our last newsletter ...

Easter Holiday fun - Easter Bonnets and Crowns



Ashby Arts Festival - 4th May



Before and after - Jill Chapman (pictured right) with her wonderful 'paint by numbers' of '**Somewhere Over the Rainbow**' on the Arts Festival musical theme, which encouraged lots of churchyard passers by to pick up a paintbrush during the Arts Festival.

Pictured right are some younger Arts Festival visitors, displaying their '**Rock Band.**'



Nature Day - 29th May

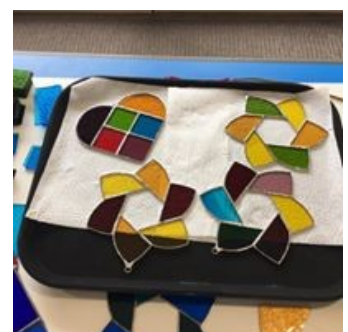
Our half term workshop offered hands-on nature crafts for children. Steve Saunders from Forest Schools led the children in making their own custom bug hotels, together with teaching some older children how to whittle wood and start a fire in a can! The children also made seed bombs of wildflower seed and bird feeders.

Stained Glass Experience - 15th June



A brand new workshop for adults, led by talented stained glass artist Jo Cuffley. Participants created their own beautiful stained glass light catchers from cut glass and copper foil.

We hope to offer this course again soon.



Heritage Talks

Our final Heritage talk of the 2018-19 winter season, back in March, was a series of short talks delivered by our own research volunteers. Anne shared her findings on the many royal



connections at St Helen's, Simon delivered an archaeology update, Ken shared a fascinating series of photos, detailing the transformation of Parish Rooms to Venture Theatre and Julie talked about Robert Nundi and the Victorian Church Extension.

The talks were well received by a large audience and the good news is, Anne has been planning a whole new series of talks for next winter. These are listed below so that you can put the dates in your diaries.

If you're interested in learning more about the Victorian Church extension, Julie has written a detailed article for the Ashby Museum Journal, part one of which will be available from the Museum this month.

Heritage Talk Series 2019-2020

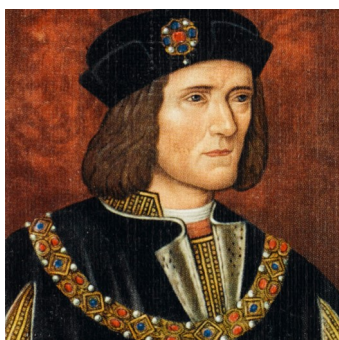
Mondays at 7.30pm, Hastings Hall, St Helen's Community Heritage Centre

£3 including refreshments

October 7th	Dr Rebecca Gregory	Viking Leicestershire
November 4th	Roger Willson	Viewing the stained glass at St Helen's in the context of an appreciation of Victorian glass
December 2nd	David Budge	Medieval pottery, found on our site. Who made it and what was it used for?
January 6th	Peter Liddle OBE	Medieval Pilgrimage to and from Leicestershire
February 3rd	Steve Woodward	Wildlife in Churchyards
March 2 nd	Research Group	Hot Off The Press 2! New finds by our very own research team

In the meantime, just to whet your appetite ...

Monday 15th July 2019 in St Helen's Church



Greyfriars Leicester and the Search for Richard III

A talk by Dr Richard Buckley from the University of Leicester Archaeological Service.

Join Dr Richard Buckley, the lead archaeologist on the University of Leicester project which found Richard III in 2012 and confirmed his identity beyond reasonable doubt after an extensive programme of scientific analysis.

£3 per person, including light refreshments

Education News

Rachel Grevatte and her team of volunteers have been working hard on local school visits. Rachel writes ...



This month, we had a visit from sixteen 3 and 4 year olds from **Ashby Day Nursery**, who came along to try out our new Early Years Explorer Trail. They thoroughly enjoyed finding the 7 trail bags located around the Heritage Centre and Church. Each bag contains objects, activities and songs related to some of our Heritage features. The children finished with rubbings and their favourite part of all was the biscuits! One of the nursery nurses commented that it was the best day of her life!

Year 3 and 4 pupils from **Griffydam Primary School** also came along this month to write 'found poems' and take rubbings. A book of pupils' 'found poems' is now located in the Heritage Centre. Do take a look at their evocative and emotive poems when you next visit.

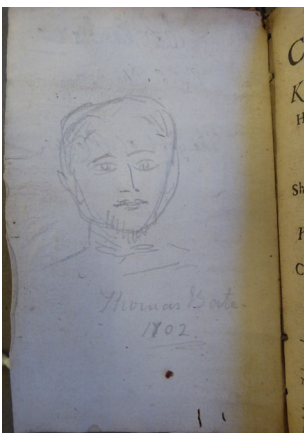
A visit to the Ashby Parish Library

On Thursday 20th June, a group of us travelled to Nottingham University Special Collections, which cares for the Ashby Parish Library, or 'Bate Library' as it is known at St Helen's. We were met by Ursula Ackrill, who specialises in the Parish Library Collections at the University and has a particular fondness for our 'Bate Library.'



The term 'Parish Library' was used from the 17th century to refer to libraries built up by royal injunction after the Reformation to ensure certain books were made available in churches. These included an English Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Ashby Parish library was established between 1707 and 1712. Thomas Bate senior bequeathed books to his son, Rev Thomas Bate, who gave 445 books to the church for the use of parishioners and clergy, many of which he signed. Between 1731-1783 Rev Peter Cowper gave 120 books, which are also signed. In 1730 Cowper built a library building in the nearby vicarage garden, with a slate plaque in Latin containing the name Thomas Bate over the entrance

Ursula had brought out various books of particular interest or significance for us to look at, including the oldest book in the collection, a breviary dated 1493, Venice, and an annotated copy of Arthur Hildersham's lectures at St Helen's.



Drawing of Thomas Bate (1702) in one of the books.

We were also shown the photographic studio where books are digitised and taken into the climate controlled area where all of the University collections are stored under optimum conditions for their preservation.

Ursula has written two articles in 'Discover,' the quarterly magazine published by the University of Nottingham Special Collections. The first was featured in the March issue of this newsletter and both can be read by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/newsletter.aspx>.



**“CAPABLE OF EXCELLING IN EVERY FORM OF PUBLIC LIFE,
HE CHOSE TO APPEAR IN NONE”**

One of the reasons given for St Helen’s designation as a Grade 1 Listed Building is that: “the church retains an outstanding collection of funeral monuments from the C15-C18”. The monument to Theophilus Hastings, the 9th Earl of Huntingdon, in the Hastings Chapel is one of those specifically mentioned.

Theophilus married Selina Shirley, daughter of Earl Ferrers of Staunton Harold. He died in 1746 at their London home in Downing Street, which was still a street of private houses at that time. The monument to the Earl has a bust of Selina, his widow, set on it.

The monument was designed by William Kent, the leading architect of the day. It was made by



Joseph Pickford, the uncle of the Derby architect (also called Joseph Pickford. His house in Derby is now a museum). The bust of Selina was sculpted by Michael Rysbrack, the leading sculptor of the time. The monument contains the Latin inscription “Guil. Kent invenit” (ie: William Kent designed it) and on the edge of the bust is inscribed “M. Rysbrack fecit” (ie: made it). The Earl and Countess were for a time tenants of William Kent at his house in Savile Row. (The Earl of Burlington gave Kent the use of the house).

Between them Kent and Rysbrack were responsible for the monuments to William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey and to the Duke of Marlborough in the chapel at Blenheim Palace.

The epitaph on the monument was composed by Lord Bolingbroke. He says of Theophilus: “Capable of excelling in every form of Publick Life, He chose to appear in none.” Lord Bolingbroke clearly came from the other end of the spectrum. He was Queen Anne’s Secretary at War between 1704 and 1708 and then a Secretary of State from 1710 to 1714. After the death of Queen Anne and the accession of the Elector of Hanover as George 1, Bolingbroke fled to France and became a leading member of the Stuart government in exile. He eventually returned to England and was a leader of the Tory opposition to the Whig Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole.

Above: Monument to the 9th Earl of Huntingdon.

Ian Scruton

Right: Detail showing the name of William Kent, designer of the monument.

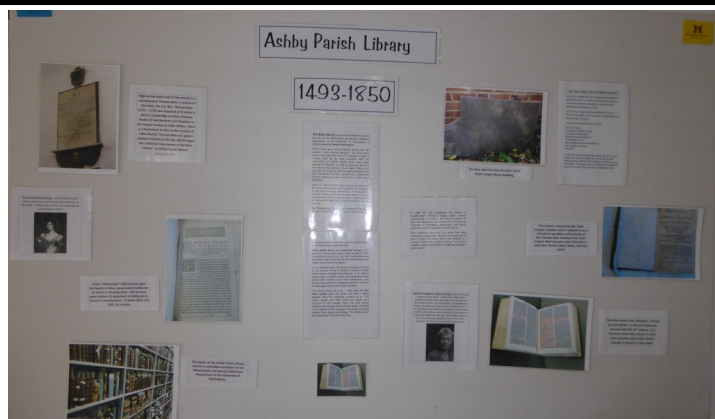
Ian is a member of our Research Group. If you are interested in the history of St Helen’s Church and would like to join us please contact Julie (details on front page).



Exhibitions

Our current exhibition in the Heritage Centre is on the Ashby Parish Library. If the article on page 3 of this newsletter has whetted your appetite, please pop in and have a look.

Our next exhibition, starting in September, will be on charities past and present at St Helen's.

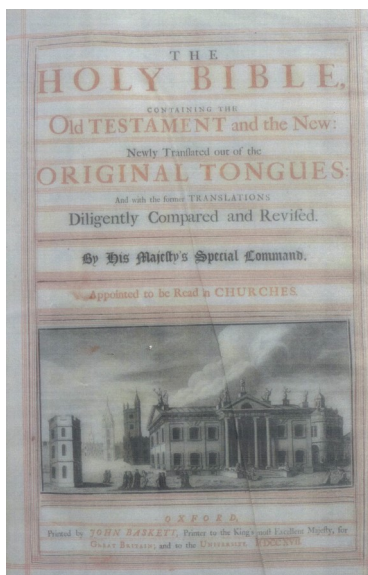


How to find out about our Project

Our website: www.sthelensheritage.co.uk Our Facebook page: [St Helen's Heritage Ashby de la Zouch](#)

Old Bibles

In 1996, Barbara Countess of Loudoun placed into the care of St Helen's two Bibles which had come down through her family. The Bibles entered the Hastings family through Barbara Baroness Grey de Ruthyn, Marchioness of Hastings, who died in 1858. Barbara, Countess of Loudoun, was her great, great, great, granddaughter.



One of the Bibles was printed in 1685 and dedicated to King James II. It was the gift of the Bishop of Oxford to Baron Grey de Ruthyn. The Bishop's inscription was that he 'heartily desired that his lordship may conduct himself according to the words of that sacred book.'

The other was printed in 1717 and labelled simply 'A King James Bible.'

We are delighted to say that, as part of the Heritage Project, the Bibles are currently in the hands of conservators in Nottingham and will be returned to us, complete with bespoke storage boxes, in a few weeks time.

The Peal Book

Our handsome 19th Century Peal Book, which records peals and quarter peals rung on our bells since 1886 has now been fully digitised. The digitised version is on permanent display at the back of the Church, next to the door into the Bell Tower. Feel free to switch it on!

In addition, all the more recent peals and quarter peals which were not originally inscribed into the book have been drawn up by calligrapher Sheila Smith and are part of the digital display.

