

Cherishing Our Churchyard

RECORD BREAKING LEVELS OF RAIN... AND FUN! READ ALL ABOUT IT...



PORCH SQUATTERS REVEALED TO BE MOTH CATCHERS

73 Species of Moth Discovered

Charles Fletcher, Simon & Jill Warwick and Joe Priestley
WEDNESDAY NIGHT/ THURSDAY MORNING

Thanks to the labours of Jill Warwick and Charles Fletcher, schoolchildren were able to see, handle and release over 250 moths of 73 different species.

Charles and Jill set 4 large moth traps in the conservation area and burial ground at 9.30pm, just as the sun was setting. Even at this stage, it was clear that we might be in for a treat as several moths took the bait even as we were setting the traps. Illuminated by the giant lightblubs of the moth traps, the churchyard took on a whole new light. We were even serranaded by the sound of a nesting Tawny Owl!

The traps were set on Wednesday night, a rare dry night in an otherwise wet and windy week. The best weather for catching moths are warm, humid nights, preferably just before a storm. However, this week, we really couldn't be too picky!

Thursday morning dawned wet and windy, not too promising conditions for Jill as she set out at 6am to turn off the lights. Joe and Charles arrived on the scene at 7.45am. Charles' initial estimate stood at 45 species, which was soon surpassed as the new species of moth came thick and fast.



Child from Sharow school holding a moth before releasing it back into the wild.



This field was cut by trainee scythewomen and men! You can head to the north of the Churchyard to admire their handiwork.

Birthday Boy Celebrates with Scything Workshop

PETER TRIFFITT,
SCYTHING NATURAL

What better way to celebrate your birthday than learning how to scythe grass on a rainy Tuesday?

Local volunteers and conservators, including Peter Triffitt who was also celebrating his birthday, enjoyed a day learning how to use the scythe with Steve Tomlin. A fruitcake was hand-delivered at lunchtime, alongside the traditional block of Wensleydale cheese.

Cake aside, the workshop was a captivating insight into the scythe, taking volunteers from the setup through to cutting our first patch in the churchyard. The church has now purchased three scything kits to help with the upkeep of the conservation area and grassland.

The scythe has several benefits over the use of petrol-powered cutting methods such as

the strimmer or lawn mover. The scythe is a silent cutting method, using a swift, efficient cut. It is also environmentally friendly as it doesn't use fossil fuels for power.

Many people who use the scythe claim it helps them relax as well as helping build core strength. Emma Gillon, a local estate manager who participated in the course, said: 'I really enjoyed the course, and liked the smaller class size as we had Steve's attention and tutoring on a more personal level. He was very knowledgeable and easy to chat with. The course was very relaxed which was good.'



Churchyard Week 3rd to 11th June



DISCOVERY

Bug Hunting and Churchyard Exploring

A new generation in touch with nature

BUG CATCHING AND CHURCH EXPLORING
TUESDAY

On Tuesday, the children learnt about the life of Henry Horrox Slater, chaplain at St John's Sharow from 1879 to 1882.

Besides his role at Sharow, Henry accompanied botanists to the isle of Rodrigues, where he excavated the bones of several extinct species of bird. In 1885, he travelled to Iceland, working on his book, the Manual of the Birds of Iceland, which was published in 1901.

The children set out into the churchyard in this same spirit of adventure. Given the weather, they were equipped with wellington boots, raincoats and hoods. The children were shown the type of clothing Henry would have worn in these conditions, including the heavy woolen cloaks still in use today. A bit of dress up never goes amiss but the big woolen cloaks, so heavy in the rain, really helped the children to understand how fortunate they were to be sheltering under their lightweight raincoats!

Provided with bug pots, tweezers and a map, as well as instructions not to squish the bugs, we braved the rain to capture snails, slugs, spiders, woodlice, grasshoppers and ants.

Thanks to modern technology, we were able to take macro (closeup) photographs of the insects and see them upclose and personal on laptop screens. You can see a few of the shots of our creepy crawlies below. The children enjoyed seeing them on the big screen and there were a certain number of screams (mainly from teaching staff) when a spider appeared!

All insects were returned safely to their homes in the conservation area, though we suspect a few snails were discovered more than once...

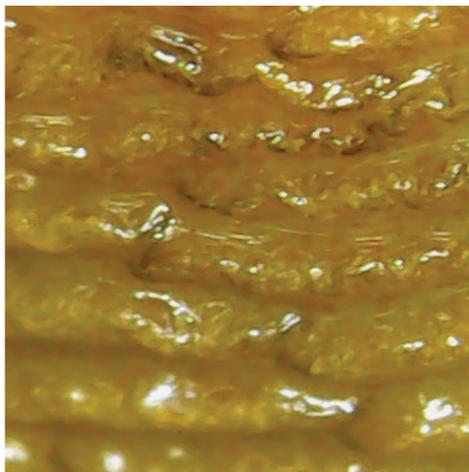


BUG HUNTING: Children exploring flowers, bugs and birdlife in the churchyard



Up Close and Personal

Can you name the insects from these shots?



VOLUNTEER

Helping Keep our Churchyard Tidy

CHURCHYARD
ST JOHN'S SHAROW

Excited by all the changes taking place in our beautiful churchyard? Interested in conservation, ecology or cake? Well our churchyard conservation days may be for you!

Every year, we organise several sessions to keep our churchyard a wonderful place to walk, sit and contemplate creation.

If you would like to join our merry band, we can guarantee plenty of cake, tea and food in return for your hard work! It is also a fantastic way to meet local people. Sometimes, the sun even comes out!

Interview with Beth Lonsdale, Heritage Learning Assistant

Beth Lonsdale
Sharow, North Yorkshire



"I really enjoyed Wednesday, when the sun came out and we welcomed members from Ripon Community Link. Weeding the conservation area was hard work but really rewarding, we managed to get rid of so much of the pesky fire weed. It was great to see the members so involved and they really helped us out."

Seeing the results of the moth capture was really exciting - I never knew there were so many species and some of them were so big and colourful! Even though it was raining, we managed to huddle in the porch and show the children what we had found."

Scything was fabulous! It was something I never thought I'd learn but it is a skill I can really put to use in our conservation area. I'd really encourage others to come and find out more about how you could get involved with the craft."

The weather could really have made life difficult this week, but the school-children are made of hardy stock and we all had fun anyway! We weren't really bothered at all about the rain."

Thanks Joe for all your hard work, the week was a great success! Same time next year."

CELEBRATE

St John's gains Eco Church Award

The next steps on our eco journey

PARISHIONERS

ST JOHN'S SHAROW

St John's has gained a bronze Eco Church Award thanks to the hard work of parishioners.

We are now working towards attaining a silver award, which should be achieved with a few alterations to the ways in which we work.

Our submission for a Church Times Biodiversity Award has also been submitted so watch this space!

1. Appoint a green champion
2. Have a notice board dedicated to Eco-Church
3. Revisit the idea of selling Fairtrade
4. Encourage walking and cycling to Church
5. Engage with local MP on green issues
6. Engage with council on green issues
7. Commit to pray for overseas environmental project

8. Twin our toilets
9. Grow fruit and vegetables in Churchyard or have allotments
10. Use Recycled paper
11. Use environmental friendly cleaning products
12. Check the water supply is metered
13. Have cycle racks in the Car Park
14. Encourage the congregation to undertake a personal lifestyle audit.
15. Have a section on website about Eco-Church entitled How to be Green.



PRESS COVERAGE: The Northern Echo, Yorkshire Post, Ripon Gazette, Harrogate Advertiser and the Diocese of Leeds all helped to advertise our events

ACCESS

Ripon Community Link visits St John's

Sunshine (and plenty of tea and cake) ensured a good day for all

WEDNESDAY

RIPON COMMUNITY LINK

Wednesday brought a rare glimpse of sun, even warranting hats and sunscreen! We were joined by older pupils from Sharow C of E Primary School in the morning for an archaeological exploration of the churchyard.

One of the activities involved putting a fake plastic skeleton back together but unfortunately we misplaced a foot. Hopefully the children don't think skeletons only have the one foot!

In the afternoon, members from Ripon Community Link helped with a spot of weeding, removing overgrown patches of rosebay willowherb.

After lunch, Beth Lonsdale demonstrated the use of the scythe and members of RCL helped us to turn over the cut grass as part of the haymaking process. It then promptly rained, thwarting our efforts for making hay whilst the sun shone! Instead, our new handmade hand-haybaler was used

to compress the cut weeds ready for transport to the tip.

Into the afternoon, the group explored the archaeology of churchyards and the symbolism of the carvings on some of the gravestones. Joe produced a trail around the churchyard using images of landmarks to navigate around the conservation area.

Philip Vaughan, photographer and support worker with Ripon Community Link said: 'Brilliant day, pitched spot on! Interesting, varied and fun, thank you. Big thanks too to Beth!'

The group wish to come back next year, when we hope to welcome other disability charities from the local area. The quiet and peaceful churchyard provides the perfect stress-free environment for unwinding, which really facilitates the



FIRE WEED PICKING: Volunteers from Ripon Community Link assist with upkeep of the churchyard. The group learnt about different species of grassland and why it is important to manage different types of grass.

DISCOVERY

Discovering Lichens during Graveyard Recording

Not as dull as it sounds, honest...

Friday saw a historical theme as children explored the different memorials in the churchyard. Using brass rubbing techniques practiced on the brass plaques of the Piazzi Smyth grave, the children used larger pieces of paper and tough wax crayons to trace the gravestones. The names, dates and places of occupation were then recorded.

Different colours were used to represent lichens and the children explored why lichens were so important to maintaining the food chain. The weather was fortunately very kind, which allowed the children to complete the 'survey' of the south east portion of the graveyard before end of play.

It seemed a shame to reach the end of the week but, before leaving on Friday, the children were shown the plaque memorialising the gift of money for the foundation of Sharow Church of England Primary School. This generous act of George Knowles, recorded for posterity in our church, illustrates how inseparable the church, school and village communities, even now. I

It was wonderful to welcome the children and we hope to welcome them back soon!



DISCOVER MORE AT STJOHNSSHAROW.ORG.UK OR IN
NEXT MONTH'S ROUNDABOUT MAGAZINE

OSTEOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM



Monday saw younger children grappling with the question, ‘why do we have a churchyard?’ The answer was near immediate: ‘because it is full of skeletons!’

Teaching osteology (the study of human bones) to children is actually really easy. It is perhaps the best way to access those difficult topics; life and death; heaven and hell; hand or foot.

The children learnt about Christian burials, why all the gravestones face the same way and what Christians think will happen on Judgement Day. Having discussed this, the skeleton reassembly began.



Our Illustrators

Simon and Juliet Balme are helping us with our illustrations for guidebooks. Do say hi if you see them with a pencil and pad in hand!

That’s all Folks

I hope you have enjoyed finding out about Cherishing Churchyard Week at St John’s Sharow.
 Joe Priestley
 Heritage Learning Officer

