



St Helen's Churchyard Ashby de la Zouch



Our Digital
Ancestors

Churchyard Spotting

Welcome to St Helen's churchyard! As you walk around the churchyard, see if you can spot these things that tell us about the building and its past. To find the clues, start at the entrance to the heritage centre and walk clockwise around the church. Tick them off when you've found them!

Note to adults: Please be careful when walking around the churchyard as the ground is uneven. Do not approach any memorials that look unsafe and try and respect those buried in this holy place.



Consecration Cross. This mark shows where the bishop blessed the new parts of the church in 1878.

Spotted ☐



Blocked Doorway. The vicar used to live in the house behind this wall, so this was a short cut for them to get to church!

Spotted ☐



Railings. These were used to mark the memorials of important people. Many railings were removed during World War 2.

Spotted ☐



Buried memorials. Once headstones are laid flat, grass quickly grows over them so they can't be seen any more.

Spotted ☐



"Arrow marks". Scratch marks were said to be made by archers practising. This isn't true, but we don't know what they really are. Were they made to protect people? Or were they made by bored school children?!

Spotted ☐



A stone with circles. We don't know why this stone is decorated, is it to bless this part of the church? Is it to just make it look pretty? What do you think?

Spotted ☐



Wilkes' Gobs. In the late 1700s, the government put a tax on bricks. Joseph Wilkes had a solution: halve the tax paid by making bricks twice as big!

Spotted ☐



Sundial. This large sundial has probably been here for hundreds of years. We think it was built so the owners of Ashby Castle could read the time.

Spotted ☐



Daisy Wheel. This is another St Helen's mystery. Is it a "witch mark" to protect the building from evil spirits, or a decorated stone that once stood somewhere else?

Spotted ☐



Ordnance Survey benchmark. This mark was made by the people who made the first accurate maps in England. They recorded exactly how high this mark is above sea level; just over 132m.

Spotted ☐



Decorated memorial. People liked to decorate memorials. Most of the things they drew had a special meaning, e.g. a rose meant love

Spotted ☐



War memorial. These were often put in churchyards and other places to remember those killed in World War 1 (and later World War 2)

Spotted ☐



Initials. We are not sure why there are initials on this wall. Are they people who got married in the church? What do you think?

Spotted ☐

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