



Toolkit 6:

Unlock the story of your church – on-line!

There are many ways to tell your church's story but you have to get your facts right. The following pages have some links to web-pages that may help you to share your stories more effectively. There are photographic resources, history pages and sites specific to churchyards all accessible from the internet in your home.

British History on-Line

This is your first port of call as a church detective. The history of your church, from its earliest origins, is likely to be featured here. Put your village or town name in the search box. Warwickshire is featured in the on-line Victoria County History.

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Images of England

Another EH supported site which has a free photo library. Just register as a user for no charge. All listed buildings throughout the country are on this and most featured churches have an historic summary attached. <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/>

Windows on Warwickshire – and Coventry

A Warwickshire specific library available at the county records office as well as on-line from your home. The Coventry Central Library hold a Coventry photo library that can be accessed from your PC.

<http://www.windowsonwarwickshire.org.uk/default.asp> - Warwickshire

<http://www.picturesofcoventry.co.uk/index.php> - Coventry

Church Plans on line

Some but not all. An archive of church architectural plans which may help with accessing a footprint of your church. Footprints are sometimes a feature of the Victoria County History files also – see above. <http://www.churchplansonline.org/>

Local Warwickshire records – via WCC

This link helps you to locate Diocesan and church archives

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/380FA0BC9ED2E20080256BC6003DFDF1>

Prayer Resources

Many people who visit your place will be curious about the way we worship and may know nothing about Christianity or how it has grown. This story can be told using resources you may put together yourself or you might like to look at the Lifewords series. An excellent booklet called 'Look Around You' explains the basics that can be found in any church and the prayer postcards, designed for heritage buildings, help those looking for direction.

http://www.sgmlifewords.com/uk/orders/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=4

War Memorials

These are full of human interest stories that can be researched and shared with those who visit your places. A simple list can unlock all kinds of community history stories. How the World Wars impacted on any community is a good project especially for younger churches. It can also link in with the Curriculum at Key stages 2 and 3. The following website is a database managed by volunteers and may not have your memorial. You can add the details of the memorial yourself to the database if it isn't there and this will be a start. www.ukniwm.org.uk

Churchyard Specific

If you have a churchyard it will afford you plenty of opportunity to find and tell stories. Births, marriages and deaths will always be fascinating and the lives of ordinary people are just as interesting as notables! It is a place where the sacred and secular meet.

- **The Good Gravestone Recording Pack** by Helen Swift has been prepared to help you understand graveyards and their monuments. The pack contains everything you need to record your graveyards, the stones and the people they commemorate and links to the growing interest in genealogy. The pack contains information about the various symbolism found on gravestones and what they mean and it will help you to record the condition of the monuments and draw plans of the churchyard.

The Good Gravestone Recording Pack is not downloadable but available at a cost of £5-00. Send to Helen Swift, 9 Upper Valley Road, Sheffield S8 9HA. It is well worth it!

- **'Caring for God's Acre'** The wildlife, ecology and seasonal changes in your churchyard will be fascinating to visitors and communities. Many churches are using their outside spaces to tell stories and share knowledge. There is huge potential for working with your wider community or with local schools to explore and learn about the natural world.

'Caring for God's Acre' is an independent charity providing resources and support to help church groups to understand their space better. An example of what they produce is included in the pack but do explore their website. There are some excellent tips on how to share your churchyard with children and young people on the resources page.

<http://www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk/>

The 'Parish Pump' newsletter is published by the Conservation Foundation and includes, among other things, details of the Yew Registration Project. Many churches across our Diocese now use their spaces as centres for recycling and there are stories to be told about creation and stewardship that could link in with this activity.

http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk/?page_id=3

NOTE: If you have problems with accessing any of the above sites call 024 7652 1346 for help. A small library of resources in the office may be of use and we can undertake basic research on your behalf with notice.

If you would like help or support with any of the issues highlighted here please contact Divine Inspiration on 024 7652 1346 or by e-mail on helen.mcgowan@divine-inspiration.org.uk.

The full Toolkit can be downloaded from the Ambassador page of the website

Go to www.divine-inspiration.org.uk for more information and advice to help you improve your church's welcome to visitors.

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