

Malcolm Warburton, Diocesan Tourism Officer, journeys into the unknown

Help me to dig out your treasures

I WOULD like first to thank readers for the positive comments I have received about the articles on churches in our diocese.

For this first edition of 2006 I thought that I would offer a few thoughts about church tourism — and draw attention to one or two things that will be happening during the year.

I have written about 23 of the 240 or so churches in Wakefield Diocese — a mere fraction of the many interesting places of worship we possess — and I hope I have managed to show that we have a huge variety of architectural and artistic treasures in what nationally may not be considered a rich area.

Simon Jenkins mentions three in his book of 1,000 churches, and John Betjeman's book contains references to just under 30 in this diocese. I am still making discoveries — and if you think I owe your church a visit, please get in touch with me.

North Yorkshire has been very fortunate recently in having the services of Zoe Kemp, who worked with Yorkshire Tourist Board and was responsible for organising a large number of enthusiastic folk to help her to produce regionally organised booklets encouraging people to visit North Yorkshire's many interesting churches.

That project completed, Zoe is working with the Churches Regional Commission, based in Leeds, where she is encouraging similar work in other parts of Yorkshire.

Zoe lives in our diocese, and I am very pleased that she has agreed that as one of her first undertakings in her new role she will help us produce a similar booklet to cover churches in the Wakefield District.

It is hoped to launch this very soon, and churches in the area were sent a questionnaire before Christmas. Many churches have been very quick to respond — for which we say a big thank you.

If the questionnaire is still on your desk, it is not too late to

Sights of the Diocese



Echoes of Napoleon: Neo-Classical St James's, Thornes, dating from 1829. A very late example — and therefore better than usual — of a Commissioners' or Waterloo church.



Splash of gold: St Peter and St Leonard, Horbury, started in 1791.

send in a reply — I shall be chasing you! We hope to extend this to other parts of the diocese in the not too distant future, so if you are in Kirkstall or Calderdale, do not despair.

I also want to encourage interested parties to attend a

day conference in St Catherine's Church, Wakefield, on Saturday, March 25, between 9.30am and 2pm.

This is entitled *Creative Spaces, Vibrant Places* — the role of church-led cultural activities in creating dynamic

communities. Cost is £6, including lunch, and it will be an opportunity for us to publicise the new Wakefield leaflet — which we hope will be well on the way to completion by that time.

Speakers will include Susan Wrathmell, who has had a splendid book on the architecture of Leeds published recently.

For those who do not know St Catherine's it will be an opportunity to see one of the diocese's newest churches.

Further information can be obtained from Zoe Kemp at the CRC. Tel. 0113-2443413.

I include here my email address and telephone numbers (please amend P18 of the Diocesan Directory) and remind you that I am available to give talks to all types of church group. Please contact me for further details.

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