

# More than a piece of Elizabethan heritage

I HAD better start by explaining where Felkirk is, because you will find it on only fairly large-scale maps. This is because the parish is still named after the first church on the site – which existed long before the surrounding former pit villages developed.

The church lies on a triangle encompassing South Hiendley and Shafton, two villages standing roughly between Wakefield and Barnsley. The immediate surroundings of the church, however, remain delightfully rural and help to give Felkirk its undoubted charm.

There are three things to see here – the church itself, the Elizabethan schoolroom and the very pleasant churchyard.

The church itself is a medieval structure, encompassing Norman, early English and Perpendicular work. Some of the windows were altered after the Reformation, and the Victorians carried out their usual restoration work.

Some of the exterior stone carvings suggest that there was a church here before the Conquest.

Inside there is a medieval font and an ancient West Door. The church also contains some interesting glass – the most distinguished piece being a representation of the Patron Saint, holding a silver and a golden key.

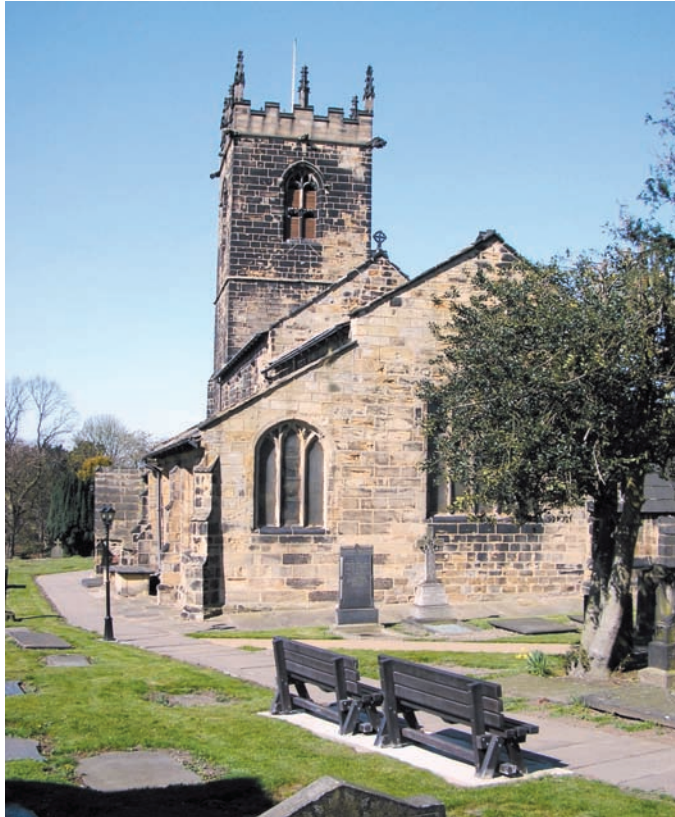
This is the work of Frederick Preedy (1820-98) who also was responsible for the East Window at Holy Trinity, Ossett, and is nationally regarded, both as an architect and a stained-glass artist.

The other glass is also of interest. One of the two sets of three lights on the north side has the unusual combination of St George, St Michael and St Alban, while the other set has a pre-Raphaelite feel to it.

The churchyard has an open aspect and a lovely feel to it. When I went there on Maundy Thursday the swathes of wild flowers mingled perfectly with those that relatives had placed around the more recent grave-stones.

Spring was definitely in the air. Churchyards are now generally recognised as making an important contribution to our ecology – and we are very lucky in this diocese to have

## Sights of the Diocese



Perfect compliment: the church, the very pleasant churchyard and the little Elizabethan schoolroom, below, which the PCC is determined should be used for community faith-based activities.



some delightful ones.

The schoolroom is Felkirk's unique feature. It was in a poor state of repair for many years, but has recently been very well restored, and all those responsible deserve a big vote of thanks.

It is both a pleasing and a very useful addition to the churchyard, and the church and schoolroom compliment each other perfectly.

The PCC is keen for this little building to be used for faith-based activities in the community – and is not just seen as a piece of our heritage.

I must draw readers' attention to the comprehensive literature the church has produced, all adding to the visitor's enjoyment. In addition to a revised history there is a well presented walk-round guide, a quiz, a discovery trail and five excellent illustrated heritage walks, all starting from the churchyard.

I urge readers to pay a visit here, and make use of all that is on offer. The church and schoolroom are open on Sundays and Bank Holidays between 2pm and 5 pm, and on Thursdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

The church and schoolroom will also be open for groups and individuals who wish to take advantage of the rural surroundings for Quiet Days.

**NEXT ISSUE:** Kirkburton.