

## HADS Field Trip to Herefordshire

July 2013

Following Clive's presentation on Kilpeck Church which was so well received in November 2012, Don planned a long weekend in Herefordshire for July 2013.

We set off on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July in the minibus and made our first stop at the Priory Church of St Mary the Virgin at Deerhurst. (Sally had requested a stop there because she knew it and thought it would interest us.)



We had a fascinating guided tour, which really helped us to understand some of the history of this ancient building. Besides the church itself we were also able to see Odda's chapel in its peaceful setting. Dating from Saxon times, the church is now a parish church and Odda's Chapel is maintained by English Heritage.

Making our way to Hereford, we checked in at our hotel – The Green Dragon – and some of us went out to explore the city. We had a quick look at the Cathedral and decided we would like to return on the Saturday when we would have more time to look around properly and see the *Mappa Mundi* which is held there.

The following day was designated Kilpeck day! We already knew a bit about the site from Clive's talk, so we were all looking forward to seeing it and dowsing the three sites that are there: the church, the castle and the site of the village.

Again, we were fortunate to have a guided tour and the opportunity to ask lots of questions. Kilpeck Parish Church is world famous as the most celebrated example of the Herefordshire School of Sculpture. Here the messages about death and judgement were conveyed as visual images since very few people could read at the time they were made. The area is particularly interesting for dowsers as the lines of energy there are very strong. It is also the home of the Sheela-na-gig described either as a Celtic fertility symbol or a warning against the sins of the flesh!

I think we were all amazed at the sheer beauty of the sculptures and the numbers of them that decorate the church. The huge font is situated towards the back of the church and is interesting because it is early Norman and not in the style of the Herefordshire school. Huge it certainly is, as Carol demonstrated by climbing in and sitting in it!

After lunch at the Kilpeck Inn we returned for further dowsing on the site around the church and up into the area of the castle. The information boards around showed that dowsing has been practiced at this site for a long time because of the energies that abound here.



We learnt a lot, experienced the joy of dowsing the energy and were able to sit and enjoy the peace and tranquility of this remarkable place.

Then it was back to Hereford and its Cathedral. Treasures held there include the *Mappa Mundi*, the Chained Library and the Magna Carta. Only 4 charters of 1217 survive and Hereford has one of them. The *Mappa Mundi* is a late 13<sup>th</sup> century map of the world and is one of the most remarkable and important medieval works of art in existence. On permanent public display, the lighting, humidity and temperature are all carefully controlled.

The Chained Library preserves the history of the Cathedral from its earliest days because there has been a working theological library at Hereford for at least 900 years. The oldest book – the Hereford Gospels dates from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. After all this culture and information a cup of tea was deemed necessary!

The following morning was sunny following the torrential rain of the previous evening. As a change to the itinerary we decided to go to the Wye Valley as some people had never been to Symonds Yat. This proved to be an inspired move! Ye Old Ferrie Inne which has stood on the banks of the Wye since the 15<sup>th</sup> century provided a wonderful 21<sup>st</sup> century lunch and the whole area looked wonderful in the sun.

There were plenty of people on the river and we enjoyed a trip on the Old Ferrie itself before making our way back to Hampshire.

It was a fabulous weekend, full of interest and fascination, and thanks as always go to Don for planning such wonderful trips for us to enjoy.



Ed Cole