

This God's Acre Activity Pack Belongs To:



**Discover the secrets of your local churchyard**

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# Introduction

The term 'God's Acre' probably dates from 1841 when Henry Wordsworth Longfellow published a poem entitled 'God's Acre', which includes the following lines -

*"I like that ancient Saxon phrase which calls the  
burial ground God's Acre."*

## **When you think of a churchyard – what comes to mind ?**

It sometimes surprises people that places associated with death are so full of life.

This is the case when it comes to our churchyards. For over 1,000 years the land around churches has been used for burials, and so it has come to be known as God's Acre.

Because it has never been used for building or cultivation, and it has not been treated with chemicals or pesticides, this land teems with plants, bugs and all kinds of wildlife which might not be found anywhere else.

So wherever there is a God's Acre in our area, this Activity Rucksack will help us to explore its secrets, discover things we never knew before and learn more about God's wonderful world.

+ John

Bishop of Lincoln

**We hope you enjoy using this pack to discover  
the secrets of your local churchyard.**

Please remember that the churchyard is primarily a place for burials, remembrance and quiet contemplation.

It is important that due care and respect is given to the grave sites and to people visiting graves.

## **Health & Safety Information**

- Whenever you are outside in a new environment it is always important to take care of your own safety and the safety of others.
- It is always best to let someone know where you are and what time you expect to return.
- During hot weather, drink plenty of water and protect yourself from the sun. During cold weather, wrap up warm and keep moving about.
- In order to minimise the risks associated with the physical environment, please do not climb gravestones, trees, fencing or hedging and watch your footing around steps, paths and hidden stonework.
- In order to minimise the risks associated with fieldwork activity, please do not use any of the equipment in the pack if it is broken and only use the equipment for what it is intended.
- In order to minimise the risks associated with biological hazards such as bites, stings and waterborne diseases, do not disturb bees or wasps, wash your hands to remove any plant sap and ensure all cuts are covered with a waterproof plaster.
- In the event of a serious accident please telephone 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- Following any outdoor activity, please wash your hands afterwards.
- The Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service cannot accept any responsibility for accident or loss that occurs whilst using the Activity Pack.

# Bark & Leaf Rubbings

Did you know that different trees have different bark patterns on their trunk. By taking bark rubbings you can see these different patterns.

Of course different trees also have different leaf shapes and you can also take leaf rubbings.

Place this section of sheet over a tree trunk and rub the wax crayon across to take a bark rubbing.

Place this section of the sheet over a tree leaf and rub the wax crayon across to take a leaf rubbing.

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# Take a closer look at Churchyard Trees

Did you know churchyards are very good place to find large, old trees. Some trees can live to be over 500 years old! These trees are very important because they have provided food and shelter for birds, animals and insects for a very long time.

## Find the largest tree in the churchyard

### Identify your tree

Use the **Tree Key Sheets** to identify your tree and write its name here:

### How old is your tree?

Use the following method to find the approximate age of your tree.

1. Measure the circumference of the tree's trunk at 1.5m above the ground. (This is known as the girth.)
2. Calculate the approximate age of the tree, using this formula.
3. 
$$\frac{\text{Girth of trunk (cm)} \times 4}{10} = \text{Age of tree (years.)}$$

**The approximate age of your tree is.....years old.**

### How tall is your tree?

Use the **How tall is your tree?** activity sheet and write the height of your tree here.....

# Minibeast Search

Did you know that minibeasts is the word we like to use to describe invertebrates, which are animals without a backbone. This includes all the insects and other animals such as worms and slugs - you may be able to think of others!

## Where do minibeasts live?

When looking for minibeasts it is important to think about what they eat, because they like to live near their favourite food. Herbivores eat plants so will be on trees and in grass, whilst detritivores, who eat rotten plants and dead things, will be under fallen leaves, logs and near the compost bin. As carnivores eat other minibeasts, you should be able to find them almost anywhere!

See the 'Bugs on Bushes' sheet and the 'Churchyard butterflies Guide'

Using the spoons and magnifying pots to carefully capture a minibeast and examine it closely. Once you have finished with it, please return it to where you captured it and release it gently back.

**Draw your minibeast here:**

**Name of minibeast :**  
(Real or made up name)

**Where was it found**

log grass tree leaf litter

**Number of legs:**  
**Other features:**

# Looking at Lichens

Did you know an individual lichen is really 2 organisms living together for the benefit of both. It is partly a fungus and partly an algae but they need each other to survive.

## Why are lichens important?

Lichens are often used to indicate how healthy the environment is. If the air is very badly polluted with sulphur dioxide there may be no lichens present. Shrubby and leafy lichens are the most sensitive to harmful pollution while crusty lichens are the most tolerant.

## Pollution indicators

No lichens or some green algae only.	Grey-green or orange crusty lichen seen on walls and gravestones.	Grey leafy lichen growing on walls or trees.	Shrubby lichens growing on trees.
<b>Polluted</b>		<b>Clean</b>	



## How fast do lichens grow?

Use the 'Lichen photo sheet' and the 'Guide to Common Churchyard Lichens' as well as the hand lens and ruler to help you identify the lichens and work out how fast they grow.

Type or name of lichen	Date on gravestone	Age of gravestone = maximum age of lichen	Width of lichen (mm)	Width ÷ age = growth rate ( mm per year )

# Gravestones

Did you know that different types of rocks have distinct features that make them look very different from each other.

This means you can identify the various types of stone used for building the church as well as gravestones and memorials.

## Using the **Gravestones** photo sheet

Try and find gravestones made out of these 4 rock types and for each gravestone record whether it has lichens growing on it or has been badly worn away by the weather (Weathering).

Rock type	Date of grave	Notes
Sandstone		
Marble		
Granite		
Limestone		

What is the most common rock type used as gravestones in the churchyard?	
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## Using the compass

### Notes

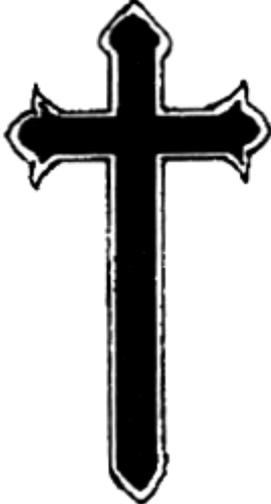
See if all gravestones lie facing east to west.	
Is the east facing side of gravestones more worn away than the west facing sides? What has worn down the gravestones?	

# How many different images of crosses can you find?

Record how many of each cross type you can find



**Latin**



**St. James'**



**Passion**



**Celtic**



**Crucifix**

**Other**

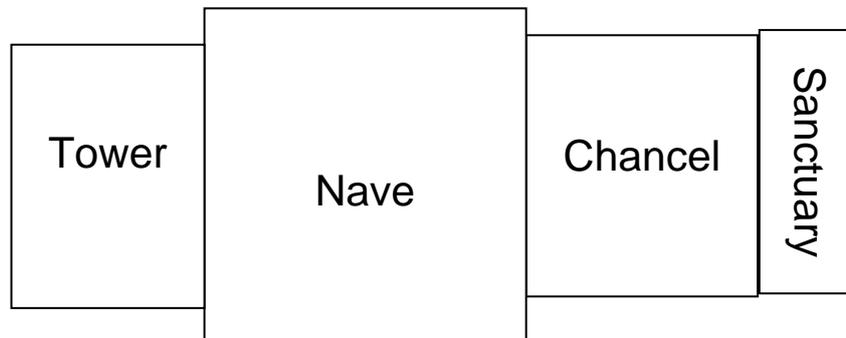
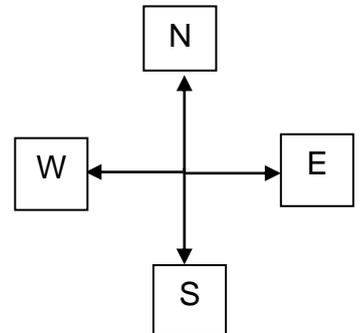
Draw another cross you can see!

# Looking at Churches

Did you know that most churches tend to be built in a similar way, in an east to west direction (east is the direction that the sun rises).

## Parts of the Church :

- Nave** Where the people sit.
- Chancel** Where the priest traditionally speaks from.
- Sanctuary** At the eastern end, where the altar is
- Tower** Sometimes with bells or a spire.



**Look at your church building – Can you see any of these parts of the church?**

**Use the compass to see if your church lies east to west.**

**Find a quiet place to sit and draw a picture of the church.**

# Dating Churches

Churches were not all built at the same time, with many having alterations and extensions over several hundred years.

By looking carefully at the church you may be able to see clues to how old the church is.



Different shapes of windows and doors can help tell us how old different parts of the church are.

## Count the windows and doors

<b>Number of windows</b>		<b>Number of doors</b>	
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Using the **Window Style Interpretation Sheet**

**Draw the shape of 4 different windows below and estimate their age :**

<p><b>Window style</b> ..... <b>Approximate date</b> .....</p>	<p><b>Window style</b> ..... <b>Approximate date</b> .....</p>
<p><b>Window style</b> ..... <b>Approximate date</b> .....</p>	<p><b>Window style</b> ..... <b>Approximate date</b> .....</p>

**Looking at the windows - can you work out which is the oldest part of the church?**

## Further Information

### **For Wildlife & Geology:**

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust  
Tel: 01507 526667  
[www.lincstrust.org.uk](http://www.lincstrust.org.uk)

### **For Archaeology & History:**

Historic Environment Records  
Tel: 01522 782070  
[www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Lincolnshire Archives

Tel: 01522 782040  
[www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)

### **For any other issues:**

Lincolnshire Wolds  
Countryside Service  
Tel: 01522 555780  
[www.lincswolds.org.uk](http://www.lincswolds.org.uk)

### **Diocese of Lincoln**

Open Churches Officer  
Tel: 01522 504025  
[www.lincoln.anglican.org](http://www.lincoln.anglican.org)

Churches Together in  
All Lincolnshire  
Tel: 01522 504071

## Other God's Acre Project Sites

Bag Enderby, St Margaret  
Belchford, St Peter & St. Paul  
Brinkhill, St Phillip  
Burwell, St Michael  
Claxby, St Mary  
Farforth, St Peter  
Fotherby, St Mary  
Harrington, St Mary  
Haugh, St. Leonard  
Haugham, All Saints  
Langton by Spilsby, St Peter & St. Paul  
Ludborough, St Mary  
Nettleton, St John the Baptist

Mareham on the Hill, All Saints  
Oxcombe, All Saints  
Ruckland, St Olave  
Scamblesby, St Martin  
Somersby, St Margaret  
South Ormsby, St Leonard  
Stewton, St Andrew  
Tathwell, St Vedast  
Thoresway, St Mary  
Walesby, All Saints  
Tetford, St Mary  
South Elkington, All Saints  
Welton le Wold, St Martin

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East Lindsey District Council  
West Lindsey District Council  
Freiston Centre for Environmental Education  
Community Librarians  
Local Historians and most importantly the church community groups in the Lincolnshire Wolds God's Acre Project.