Introduction
There are hundreds of churches in the East Riding of Yorkshire. This exhibition aims to highlight just a few and look at some interesting characters or amusing stories that are connected with them. We will examine unique features and peculiarities which might be of interest and will hopefully prompt you to visit some of local architectural gems. It does not aim to describe any church in exhaustive architectural or historical detail. This exhibition was researched and written by Volunteers at Skidby Windmill and Museum of East Riding Rural

Early Churches
East Yorkshire has been inhabited for thousands of years and many of these early settlements would have had shrines or temples to pagan gods. As Christianity spread across Europe Pope Gregory declared in 601AD that the new Christian churches should be built on the sites of these former pagan shrines “so that the people of the land….may the more familiarly resort to a place to which they have been accustomed”. Many of these early churches were dedicated to All Saints to help people change from worshipping many gods to a single god - for example the churches at Bishop Burton, Kлинwick, Pocklington and Preston. Most of the early churches were built of wood, especially in East Yorkshire where stone for building is scarce. Gradually from the 11th century these were replaced by more permanent structures.

All Saints Church Goodmanham
This church is one of the oldest in East Yorkshire and indeed in the north of England. The area where the church now stands was previously occupied by an important pagan temple to the god Woden and the chief priest was a man named Coifi. In 627AD this region was part of the kingdom of Northumbria and was ruled by the pagan King Edwin. However Edwin’s queen was Ethelburga, a princess from Kent who had already been converted to Christianity by the Pope’s missionary, Paulinus. Ethelburga invited Paulinus to the king’s summer encampment at Lendlesden and it was here that the king and Coifi listened to his explanations of Christianity. As a result the king publically stated that he accepted the new faith and asked who should destroy the old pagan temple at Goodmanham. Coifi announced that he would do this himself and according to Bede: “as soon as he reached the shrine, he cast into it the spear he carried and thus profaned it. Then he told his companions to set fire to the shrine and its enclosures and destroy them.”

A wooden church was then built to be followed around 1130 by a stone building. Fifty years later a square tower was added and further extensions were completed in the 14th and 15th centuries. Bells were then installed in the tower around 1500.

All Saints, Aughton and Robert Aske
The village of Aughton lies 9 miles south-west of Pocklington. The church of All Saints overlooks the flood plain of the River Derwent.

Robert Aske (1500-1537) was the younger son of Sir Robert Aske of Aughton. His was a well-connected family: one cousin was Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland and another was Jane Seymour, wife of King Henry VIII.

Aske was a devout Catholic but he objected to Henry VIII’s religious reforms, particularly the dissolution of the monasteries. He became leader of the Yorkshire rebellion called the Pilgrimage of Grace. Initially, as a lawyer, he took up the grievances of local people. They were not only supporting the old religion but were also concerned about unfair taxes, local and regional governance, poor harvests and the attack on the monasteries. Aske was granted an audience with King Henry where he discussed the people’s concerns and the idea of holding a northern parliament.

The King made promises of redress and a safe passage home but fighting broke out again and Henry changed his mind. He had Aske arrested, put in the Tower of London and convicted of high treason. Taken to York, on July 12th 1537, he was hanged, drawn and quartered outside Clifford’s Tower. This was done so that local people could see what happened to people found to be traitors

Robert Aske is remembered in All Saint’s church in his home village. Notably, on the tower is a shield with 6 quarters with an Old French inscription translating as: “Christopher, the second son of Robert Ask, Chevalier, ought not to forget the year of Our Lord 1538”. Also on the tower is a benchmark of the time and, carved in sunk relief, a newt or salamander which is otherwise known in Old English as an Ask.

St James’ Church, Nunburnholme
There has been a church on this site since Anglo-Saxon times though nothing now remains of this earlier building. The main body of the church was built in the Norman period and a tower was added in the 18th century. It was formally dedicated to All Hallows. The font (which has carvings of figures from the Bible and Norse characters) is a survivor from this early church.

By the end of the 19th century the building was in such a poor state of repair that it was considered unsafe to use, and between 1872-3 it was fully restored. A new tower was built in 1902 on the foundations of the Norman tower which incorporates a Norman arch. Standing underneath this arch is an Anglo-Saxon/Norse cross shaft which was made before 900AD. This was found embedded in a wall.

The Reverend Francis Orpen Morris
The tower of St. James’ was built in memory of the church’s most famous rector, the Reverend Francis Orpen Morris, a renowned 19th century naturalist and writer. He was born in Ireland in 1802, though his father was a Rear Admiral from East Yorkshire. He studied classics at Oxford, but his interest in the natural world was already evident as he chose the Roman writer Pliny’s “Natural History” for his thesis. Ordained as a priest in York in 1833, after several curacies he was appointed as the rector of Nafferton eleven years later. In 1854 he moved to Nunburnholme and remained there for the rest of his life.

His most famous work was “A History of British Birds” published in six volumes between 1851 and 1857. He had a close relationship with a local printer, Benjamin Fawcett, who was born in Bridlington and had his business in Driffield. Fawcett was considered an expert in producing woodcuts. The success of Morris’s book on birds led to the expansion of the printing business and the relationship lasted 50 years.

Morris wrote many more books on natural history, was opposed to vivisection and hated fox hunting. He was also a fierce critic of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution. He also wrote books and pamphlets on religious subjects, country houses, adult education, the postal service and even an account of the system of hiring servants in East Yorkshire.

He died in February 1893.
THE SYKES FAMILY
Sir Tatton Sykes 4th baronet (1772-1863) and his son, Sir Tatton Sykes, 5th baronet (1826-1913) of Sledmere House were responsible for the building, rebuilding or restoration of some of the most fascinating churches in East Yorkshire. Tatton Sykes senior employed J. L. Pearson, an enthusiast of the Gothic Revival, to restore the medieval churches of Garton-on-the-Wolds, Kirkburn and Bishop Wilton and rebuild St Margaret’s, Hillston in Holderness. The 5th Baronet worked with architects, G.E. Street and Temple Moore, leading stained glass artists and other craftsmen to create a group of magnificent village churches. In all he financed work on 17 rural churches between 1866 and 1913.

St Mary’s Sledmere - the grandest of the Sykes churches, built for Tatton Sykes II in 1893-8 at a cost of at least £60,000. Designed by Temple Moore, it stands on the site of a 14th century church, rebuilt, except for the tower in 1758. There are monuments to the Sykes family from the former church and an illuminated book commemorating the Wagoners Reserve of the First World War.

St Mary, Cowlam is a small medieval church, restored and partly rebuilt in 1852 to designs by Mary Sykes, daughter of Tatton Sykes I. The village was depopulated in the late 17th century and the church is reached through a farmyard. Inside is a tub-shaped Norman font, richly carved with figures including the three Magi, Adam and Eve and two wrestlers.

St Michael, Garton-on-the-Wolds is an imposing Norman church dating from around 1120. It was restored by J L Pearson for Tatton Sykes I in 1856-7, when he reconstructed the Norman south doorway and the chancel. In 1872 Tatton Sykes II employed G.E Street to furnish the church and was responsible for the extraordinary paintings which cover the walls of the nave and chancel and the jewel-like stained glass. The paintings and glass are by Clayton and Bell and show Old and New Testament scenes.

St Nicholas, Wetwang developed between the 11th and 20th century and its history can be traced in the stonework and fittings. From the Norman period are the north arcade, two windows in the nave, the font and reused carvings in the vestry and under the tower. The tower and north chapel are 13th century, the north doorway 14th century. There are remnants of 17th century texts on the nave wall. Restoration in 1845-6 was paid for by Tatton Sykes I but his son financed further works by Temple Moore in 1895-6 on the tower and north wall. C. Hodgson Fowler rebuilt the chancel and re-roofed the nave in 1901-2, when stained glass by Burlison and Grylis was inserted.

St Elgin, North Frodingham This large church, half a mile west of the village, has an impressive Perpendicular west tower, the top part being designed by Temple Moore 1891-2 and paid for by Tatton Sykes II. The nave and chancel are of cobblestone and were restored in 1877-8. Inside is an Anglo Saxon shaft and cross, the most decorative in the East Riding.

St Mary, Fridaythorpe is another church restored for Tatton Sykes II by C. Hodgson Fowler in 1902-3. A new north aisle was added, replacing a long-demolished 13th century aisle and also the south porch to what is largely an early 12th century building. The square tower has an elaborate Edwardian clock face and there is a curious inscription: “this 713 found hear” carved on the capital of the first column from the east in the north arcade. The ornate carved reredos came from Sledmere Church.
Although today Holderness is a quiet area with a small and scattered population this was not always the case. In the medieval period the area was wealthy due to the fertile soil and important trading links with Europe from the Humber. This is one of the reasons for the number and quality of the churches in the area.

St Augustine’s church in Hedon and St Patrick’s church in Patrington are known as the “King” and “Queen” of Holderness and St Patrick’s is one of the finest parish churches in England.

One unusual feature of many Holderness churches situated along the coast is that they are built of cobbles as this was the only available building material. Examples of these are at Tunstall and Withernwick.

Some of the churches along the banks of the Humber were built with tall spires to act as navigation aids to shipping on the river. A good example of this is St Wilfred’s church at Ottringham.

### Saint Augustine’s Church, Hedon
Saint Augustine’s church in Hedon, also known as the ‘King of Holderness’, dominates the small market town; the top of the church looks like the crown of a King. Dating back to the twelfth century it was built when Hedon was the leading port on the north bank of the Humber. By the fifteenth century Hedon was in decline as Hull became the leading port. In the seventeenth century George Edward Street carried out a restoration and rebuilt the South Transept.

### Henry Waterland
Henry Waterland a lawyer, property owner, civic leader and parliamentary agent. Henry was a member of the established church and regularly attended St. Augustine’s church with his family. Although not born in Hedon, Henry arrived there around 1696 and in 1700 married Martha Baines, daughter of Alderman William Baines of Hedon. Henry rebuilt Old Hall in Fletchergate where the couple lived and Henry carried out his lawyer’s practice from there. In the 18th century the work of a provincial attorney was varied, property conveyancing being a large part of Henry’s practice. Because of the limited use of banks and no building societies, attorneys would lend money to clients or act as a broker in procuring loans and bonds. It can be deduced from this that Henry was a wealthy man.

Henry notably represented the Burtons of Burton Constable who owned several manors in Holderness the most important being the copyhold manor of Burstwick.

Henry was a Freeman of the town and was elected mayor eight times between 1707 and 1759. He was paid £10 per annum to act as Parliamentary Agent for Henry Guy, one of Hedon’s two MPs. Previously Guy had been found guilty of accepting a bribe of £200 and spent two years in the Tower of London.

Waterland and his wife, Martha, had ten children. Martha died in 1742. Henry lived to the age of 93 outliving all but one of his children. He asked that he be buried next to his wife in St. Augustine’s church and there are wall memorials to both Martha and Henry in the church.

### St Helen’s church Skeffling
This church was built in 1466 of cobbles, typical of churches on the Holderness coast. Half a mile away was the Benedictine priory of Burstall, built in the 13th century to house 20 monks from the abbey of St Martins in Normandy and there was a close association between the church and the priory.

The church remains largely unaltered except for the addition of 18th century box pews and a 19th century porch. As there was no electricity services were held by candlelight and these still remain popular. Sadly it is now in need of repair and restoration, especially as it suffered a minor earthquake in 2007 and the local population are trying to raise funds for this.

An unusual feature of the church is the home-made organ. In the first half of the 20th century three brothers, John, William and Wilfred Ward lived in the village. They were a very musical family who owned many instruments and had a family orchestra. They loved the church and when they realised that there was no money to buy an organ they decided to build their own.

They spent £4 10s - (£4.50) purchasing second hand organ pipes and other bits and pieces from an organ which was being scrapped in Kings Lynn and enlisted the help of Tut Lawson from Eastling, a joiner who had some experience of organs and a reputation for producing beautiful craftsmanship. It took them some time to build the instrument but they completed it and John would often play it. John died in 1962 at the age of 87, followed by his brothers in 1965 and 1970. All three are buried in the churchyard.

### Burstwick All Saint’s Church
Burstwick village, once called Skeckling-cum-Burstwick, is in South Holderness near Hedon. All Saints church in Burstwick is a grade one listed building and it was built circa the 14th century of the Gothic style of architecture. The church of All Saints is built mainly of boulders and ashlar and consists of chancel with north chapel, nave with north aisle, south porch and chapel, and west tower. A bequest of £15 was left in a will in 1456 for the tower. It was further restored in 1893 and further restored in 1902.

It was reported that in 1853 a new gilded weathercock (now no longer there) was added to the church. John Jackson a resident of the village aged 92 climbed up the narrow spiral staircase to witness its adjustment to the sun.

There is a stone monument in the church in memory of John Maynard who was the vicar for two years, he was a missionary in South Africa for 31 years and it was while he was the vicar that the church was restored in the 1850s, so it is safe to say that he witnessed the above daring exploit of John Jackson.

The east window is dedicated to the memory of the late Reverend William Clarke, who being a vicar would have very high moral principles, as a letter from a resident in the village had written to the vicar to ask him to provide a recommendation for a drinks licence from the magistrates. Clarke wrote back to him: “It is needless to say that I decline ... there is already one public house in the village and the multiplication of public houses would have a pernicious influence on the morality of the lower classes of society”. However he did leave in his will £500 for the ‘education of the children in the parish’.
radical journalist, philosopher and novelist. They had a daughter, also called Mary Godwin; Mary Wollstonecraft, became Mary Godwin after her marriage, in 1797, to William Godwin, a mother were abandoned by Imlay in Paris and he took no further interest in them.

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Mary came to Walkington as a 9 year old and the family later moved to a house in Highgate, Beverley. The culture of young ladies at the time was privileged but their future was restricted. Education was merely to make such girls marriageable and lady-like. They were expected to find a husband, rear children and run a household - not to have paid employment and a career. She had a friend of the same age, Jane Arden, and both attended the Minster regularly until her family moved back to London in 1775.

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Mary Wollstonecraft, became Mary Godwin after her marriage, in 1797, to William Godwin, a radical journalist, philosopher and novelist. They had a daughter, also called Mary Godwin; Mary Godwin became Mary Shelley, later an author, most famous for her novel "Frankenstein".

William Godwin married again but Mary Godwin did not get on with her step-mother and eventually, in 1814 ran off to Paris with poet Percy Bysshe Shelley where they married. So Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter, Mary Godwin became Mary Shelley, later an author, most famous for her novel "Frankenstein".

The de Mauleys and Bainton
The fortunes of the de Mauley family were made with Piers (Peter) de Mauley I. He was born in Poitou in France. He gained lands and a barony as a result of his marriage to the wealthy heiress Isabel de Turnham. The marriage is thought to have been a reward from King John for some skulduggery Piers had carried out on the king's behalf. Piers died on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1241.

The grandsons of Piers I are significant to our area although there are contradictory stories. The baron Mulgrave was named Peter for generations and so Peter III inherited the barony. His brother Stephen de Mauley was a cleric: he was King's Clerk and Archdeacon of Cleveland and Rector of St. Andrews, Bainton in East Yorkshire. His younger brother, John, was a knight and also Rector at Bainton. Edmund de Mauley (1250-1314) fought with Edward II against Robert the Bruce and was killed at Bannockburn near Stirling.

On the south wall of the nave is the 14th century de Mauley tomb. The church’s literature tells us that this is a memorial to Sir John de Mauley, Rector of Bainton who “fought at the battle of Bannockburn”. Other sources state that Sir Edmund de Mauley, who died at Bannockburn, is buried at Bainton. Perhaps they are both remembered here; there are two similar but different shields above the memorial.
St. Martin Church at Burton Agnes

St. Martin's church is a Norman building over 800 years old and is situated next to Burton Agnes Hall. Access to the church is under an avenue of beautiful yew trees, one of which is 300 years old. The church was rebuilt in the second quarter of the 12th century with a nave without aisles, a chancel and possibly a western tower. Parts of the original walls remain at the four corners of the nave and the chancel arch. The church has been altered greatly over the years especially in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. There are many features within and a number of tombs and memorials. Stained glass windows include the east window in the North aisle of 1772 by William Peckitt of York, the chancel windows by William Wailes in 1844, and the south aisle windows by Herbert Bryans in 1924.

Sir Roger de Somerville

The chantry of the Blessed Virgin Mary in St. Martin’s Church was founded by Sir Roger de Somerville, the owner of Burton Agnes in 1314. In 1317 Roger obtained licence to transfer the body of his first wife Maud to the chantry. There is a licence in Mortmain to Roger de Somerville for a fine of 40 shillings to grant two dwellings, two bovates, sixteen acres of land and a rent of twenty loads of turf in Burton and Thymom to a chaplain, who shall celebrate service daily at the altar of the Blessed Mary in Burton Agnes church for the soul of Sir Roger, for the soul of Maude his late wife, his father and mother, and brothers and sisters and all relatives. The tomb of Sir Roger is placed in the arched recess in the wall of the north aisle at St. Martin’s church.

Robert Isaac Wilberforce

Robert Isaac Wilberforce was the Rector of the parish of Burton Agnes and Archdeacon of the East Riding from 1840-1854. He was the second son of William Wilberforce who campaigned to abolish slavery. During his time at Burton Agnes, Robert restored St. Martin’s church, and the chancel was completely rebuilt. He also presented the east window in memory of his illustrious father. The window became damaged in the Second World War but has since been restored. Robert also restored the lead-lined font to its proper place and usage after he discovered it in the Rectory garden. In June 1832 he married Agnes Everilda, the daughter of the Peckitt of York, the chancel windows by William Wailes in 1844, and the south aisle windows by Herbert Bryans in 1924.

Sir Walter Griffith of Burton Agnes Hall

There is a fine alabaster monument in St. Martin’s Church to Sir Walter Griffith and Jane Neville his first wife. Often referred to as the ‘Dark Knight’, Walter is in armour, and resting by his side are two small figures, presumably of their two children, both who died in young adulthood. Walter’s father leased Burton Agnes to him in 1457 and Walter is remembered as the man who modernised the Manor House at Burton Agnes, the oldest part that had been standing for 300 years.

Sir Griffith Boynton

At the age of twenty-seven, Sir Griffith Boynton inherited Burton Agnes Hall and the Boynton estates. Sir Griffith beautified the church of St. Martin around 1730, which included the present pews of the nave and aisles, and the arch opening from the nave into the pew that is used by the family at Burton Agnes.

Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte’s lifelong friend Ellen Nussey had a brother Henry who was acting as curate to the Reverend Charles Henry Lutwidge at St. Martin’s church at Burton Agnes. Mr. Lutwidge was in charge of the parish of Burton Agnes from 1833 to 1840, and was the uncle of Charles Lutwidge Dodgeson, better known as Lewis Carroll the author of ‘Alice in Wonderland’. Charlotte Bronte had been acquainted with Henry Nussey for some years having visited his family frequently. In February 1839 Charlotte received a proposal of marriage from him, her first offer of marriage. Writing to Henry in March, she gracefully declines the marriage proposal, “I have no personal repugnance to the idea of a union with you, but I feel convinced that mine is not the sort of disposition calculated to form the happiness of a man like you, and I will never, for the sake of attaining the distinction of maternity and escaping the stigma of an old maid, take a worthy man whom I am conscious I cannot render happy.” Charlotte did remain however on amicable terms with Henry Nussey for many years.

Woodwork

There is a carving of a Green Man in the choir stalls at St. Martins that has leaves and stems coming out of his tongue. The meaning of the Green Man was originally a pagan symbol associated with nature and fertility. Popular in the Middle Ages they came to be associated with church liturgy, the tongue with speaking falsely and the leaves with sin. The lectern was made by Robert Thompson of Kilburn. He was known as the ‘Mouseman’ as all his works have his trademark church mouse carved on them.
**American connections and other stories**

**St Mary’s church, Etton**

St Mary’s church in Etton was originally built in the medieval period but all that remains of this early church is the 12th-century tower and the 13th-century south aisle, the remainder of the church was rebuilt between 1844 and 1846. However, on the north wall of the nave are three sculptures depicting Christ, St Peter and St Paul which were made around 1190 and moved here from the ruined church of St Peter at Holme-on-the-Wolds.

**John Lothropp**

In 1584 John Lothropp was baptised in the church of St Mary and was to become famous for founding the first Congregational Church in America. He was ordained in the Church of England in 1623 but soon joined the Independents a group of non-conformists who were forced to meet in private because of their views. Many were imprisoned but all were later released except Lothropp who was considered to be too dangerous. Eventually he too was freed on condition that he emigrated to America. He settled in Scituate in Plymouth colony and in 1644 he built a meeting house, the first Congregational Church in America. This building still exists and is now the oldest public library in the country.

A framed certificate hangs in St Mary’s church sent by the people of Etton in Massachusetts to commemorate their links with the village. According to genealogists Lothropp’s descendants include George Bush, Sarah Palin and Dr Spock.

**St Mary’s, South Dalton and the Hothams**

Work on building the beautiful church of St Mary’s in South Dalton began in 1858 and took three years to build. The old 13th-century church, also St Mary’s, was about 50 m south of the present site. The present church serves the former parishes of South Dalton and Holme; the old church of St Peter’s in Holme on the Wolds became redundant and was demolished in 1868.

The church was built by Beaumont, 3rd Baron Hotham and designed by John Loughborough Pearson R.A., who went on to design Truro Library in Etton, Massachusetts which incorporates John Lothropp’s house.

**A Carling connection**

The parish records for St Mary’s also record the birth of another famous person with links to the North American continent. In 1797 Thomas Carling was baptised here, the youngest of five children of William Carling and his wife Margaret, a local farmer who later turned to brewing to supplement his income.

In 1818, at the age of 20, Thomas left the village and travelled to Ontario in Canada where he used the knowledge of brewing he had gained helping his father to establish his own brewery. The business prospered and became the world-famous Carling brewery which is still in existence today.

William continued to farm in Etton until his death at the age of 83 and both he and his wife were buried in St Mary’s churchyard.

**St Peter’s Church Rowley**

This church is unusual as it is a church without a village. It was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 but seems to have been built halfway between Riplington and Little Weighton in order to serve both communities.

The 13th-century font is not original but belonged to St Nicholas’s church in Beverley. In 1800 the Reverend Robert Croft found it in a stonemason’s yard in Beverley and bought it for the church.

In 1730 a chapel was built for the Ellerker family of Risby which houses a wonderful set of family monuments dating from 1401 to 1804.

**Reverend Ezekiel Rogers**

The most famous minister of Rowley church was the Reverend Ezekiel Rogers. He was born in Essex in 1590 and became assistant minister in 1619. Like many people at that time he became disillusioned with the Church of England and became a Puritan, resulting in his suspension in 1638. Many of his parishioners shared his beliefs so he gathered together 20 local families and sailed from Hull to London. There they were joined by others with similar beliefs and sailed to Massachusetts on the ship John of London where they founded a new settlement which they named Rowley.

Rogers died in Massachusetts in 1669 and is commemorated with a memorial. On his death he left a large collection of books which he bequeathed to Harvard University. In 1994 the American settlement donated a stained glass window to Rowley church in his honour.

**The second baronet Scborrough**

John Hotham, second baronet Hotham, was the grandson of the first baronet, also John, who famously barred the gates of Hull to Charles I denying access to the city’s arsenal. When John senior and his son, Captain John, were executed by Parliamentary forces Captain John’s son, also John, was 13 years of age. He inherited the baronetcy with his uncle, Durand, acting as guardian. In 1650 John was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Sapcote, 2nd Viscount Beaumont of Swords in Ireland. They had 5 children but only two survived.

After the Glorious Revolution Hotham was returned as MP for Beverley in the general election of 1669. He came back to East Yorkshire after the coronation of William III as Governor of Hull. He died at the age of 57 as the result of a chill and was buried in South Dalton on 29 March 1689. The manor of South Dalton had come into the Hotham family in 1680.

In St Mary’s, to the south of the chanter, is the Hotham Chapel which displays the memorial to Sir John Hotham, second baronet. The work, in marble, was done in Italy. The monument was moved from the old church when this new one was built. The chapel is surrounded by a wrought iron screen by Francis Skidmore of Coventry. The monument (right) shows a knight, in armour, reclining as in life, on a slab supported by the four Virtues: Truth, Fortitude, Justice and Temperance. Below is a skeleton to remind us of the transience of life.

![Steeple People](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**East Riding Churches and Associated Stories**

**Below:** Memorial in Rowley, Massachusetts with details of the inscription. (From www.findagrave.com)