

# **Graffiti Project Toolkit**



**A guide to finding, recording,  
interpreting, and presenting  
historic graffiti in English churches**

**Produced by volunteers  
at Holy Trinity Goodramgate, York**

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**Churches  
Conservation  
Trust**

## Introduction

This booklet is the final product of the 'Graffiti Project', which a group of students and young volunteers undertook at the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) church of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, in York over several months in 2024. The booklet aims to provide a toolkit for other churches and volunteers to undertake their own Graffiti Projects. It includes all the most important information needed for undertaking research on graffiti, presenting it to the public, and putting on graffiti-related events at your own church. Before you proceed with your own graffiti project, please reach out to your CCT contact for more information and best practice!

Part 1 of this booklet, explores why you might want to look into graffiti in your church through reflecting on the reasons why we explored this area at Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, what worked well during the project and what lessons were learnt.

Part 2 sets out a working definition of graffiti, the main kinds of graffiti you might find, how to go about locating it, and how best to record and catalogue it. We then go on to look at how we might interpret the graffiti we have found.

Part 3 takes a look at what kind of graffiti-related events you might want to organise to present your findings to the public and provides some examples of resources that we produced for our events. A full list of resources is included at the very back of the booklet.

Every church is different; they will have different quantities of graffiti, different kinds of graffiti, and therefore different problems and opportunities for interpreting and presenting it. What is included in this booklet, therefore, is not a set of instructions, but guidelines based on our own experience of doing the Graffiti Project at Holy Trinity in York. We hope that you find it useful as a starting point for thinking about, researching, and interpreting your church's graffiti.



## **PART 1: Why might you choose to explore your graffiti?**

York Holy Trinity (also known as Holy Trinity Goodramgate) is located in the heart of York. It is kept open to the public on a regular basis (currently Wednesday to Sunday, 11am to 3pm in the winter and 11am to 4pm in the summer) by about 30 volunteers. They welcome 100s of visitors each week and steward events. YHT volunteers are dedicated and reliable, but as at many churches across the Churches Conservation Trust, they are mostly older members of the community.

When Marianne Blaauboer (Volunteer Manager for the CCT) and myself (Gemma Murray, Site Manager for Holy Trinity Goodramgate) started to think about the Graffiti Project, we had a couple of things in mind that we wanted to achieve.

We wanted to connect with the local student population: York is a city with a thriving student population. YHT has hosted talks and events which have encouraged some students to join as volunteers. We know that a direct approach to young people can work and hoped that adding to the opportunities we offer these young people would strengthen our links with York's universities.

We wanted to energise and inspire our existing volunteer base: Current volunteers at YHT have diverse backgrounds and interests (including experience of working with young people). We wanted to offer them new ways to share their skills, to experience training in new areas and new ways to think and talk about the site.

We wanted to encourage younger people to enjoy the site: We hoped that young people (both those devising the activities and those attending them) would be introduced to the Churches Conservation Trust as an organisation and inspired to care for our buildings in the future.

Finally, it was always part of our hope that the graffiti project would inspire other churches across the Churches Conservation Trust to think about their own graffiti and how that could be used to connect with their local audiences and create their own events.

## What did we do?

Between July and November 2024, we ran a series of training sessions and events looking at all the ways in which people have left their mark on our building over the years.

We considered various ways of sharing heritage with the public (through art & craft, photography and storytelling for example) and then worked with young people to create activities to be delivered at events at YHT. Details of the activities are set out in the Toolkit.

The timetable that we followed for training and events was as follows:

July 2024: to begin, we took a closer look at the graffiti which was already familiar to our volunteers. We then invited members of the public to come in during the Festival of Archaeology (a national annual festival with a new theme each year and free resources) to help us to find more by undertaking a graffiti hunt and cataloguing their findings.

August 2024: Miriam, a member of CCT staff, delivered a social media and photography workshop in August. This made it easier to take clear photographs to catalogue the graffiti, having learnt editing techniques that really brought out the markings.

September 2024: As part of Heritage Open Days (another national annual festival with free resources and support on how to run events), volunteers distributed a 'spot it sheet' to visitors, with clear photos and some introductory explanations of eight particularly interesting examples of graffiti.



October 2024: As the new university term began, we hosted a drinks evening at YHT. The event was publicised at both of our local universities and on our own social media channels. At that event, we explained the timetable for the rest of the project and invited students to sign up as micro volunteers. About twenty people attended. Nine students signed up for the project.

Dr Crystal Hollis, an expert on graffiti, gave a public lecture, advertised as part of a local festival (York Unlocked, where people are invited to explore the secrets of buildings in York) and then Sarah Cowling, one of our volunteers and a professional tour guide, ran an afternoon workshop on how to write and present a tour.

November 2024: Young people supported the delivery of tours around the site as part of an evening event as part of York Ghost Week (a local festival). There were two further workshops: Steve Tarling, a member of the CCT's education team, ran a storytelling workshop and Gemma Murray, site manager at YHT, ran a workshop on event management. Graffiti tours and the spot it sheet were used again at a Remembrance Day themed event.

The final Takeover Event took place on Friday 22 November, 1000 to 1700.



## What did focusing on graffiti do for us?

As well as helping with all the points we had hoped to improve on, we were surprised to discover the following:

We learnt so much more about our building - There was much more graffiti than we had thought. The more we looked for it; the more we found.

Very young children and teenagers were able to contribute to the information held about our site and connect with the place. They were by far the best at spotting graffiti due to their superior eye sight and being literally able to consider things from a new angle (due to their flexibility or height). Hopefully, this will give them a sense of connection to our building which will mean that they want to continue to look after it in the future.

Looking for graffiti also made us aware of the ways the building has changed and developed over time with graffiti at unusual heights, on reused materials etc.

We connected with other local buildings and organisations - once you start looking; you cannot stop! Graffiti shows up in most old buildings. We were able to have conversations with other places in York about their graffiti and encourage people connected with those buildings to visit Holy Trinity, Goodramgate. York Unlocked (a local festival which is all about discovering in secrets of buildings in York) helped to publicise our talks and encouraged people to look for graffiti in other places. They have suggested that they would like to return to this subject for their next event. Historic England has also let us know that that are interested in exploring graffiti in their buildings.

Our existing young volunteers were given an opportunity to take on a leadership role - they rose to the challenge of leading the project and took ownership of it.



## What would we do differently next time?

When we started the project, we were initially hopeful that we might be able to secure New Wave funding as part of the Heritage Open Days scheme. Although we made an application, we did not manage to secure any funding.

We tried to tie the final Takeover event in with the Kids in Museums Takeover Day and Discover Creative Careers week. This did not work as well as we intended, since we were not able to identify schools who would like to work with us. We could have done more work to find school partners at an earlier stage.

The drop out rate from the new students was high. Of the nine students who signed up for the project, four later dropped out. The remaining five attended some combination of the training and events. None of them attended everything. Two joined current young volunteers in delivering the final events. One has joined as a volunteer on a longer term basis. We could maybe have addressed this by linking the training to one particular course or scheduling the training so that it occurred on a regular basis and over a shorter period.

There is no need to run a full project like we did – the Toolkit can easily be dipped into for a one off event, used to support recruitment of new volunteers, or just to provide new areas of conversation with visitors.



## **PART 2: Working with graffiti in a Church context**

### **Defining Graffiti**

Before you even start looking for church graffiti, you need to decide precisely what it is you are looking for. We therefore need a good working definition of 'graffiti'. At Holy Trinity we adopted a fairly broad definition of 'graffiti'; if we choose too narrow a definition we risk missing some really interesting things.

We chose to define 'graffiti' as:

**'Any intentional mark, inscription, or cutting found inside the church which was not originally designed to be on display'**

This definition gives ample scope for research and inquiry while still being clear that accidental marks or intentional text, e.g. grave stone inscriptions, are not considered to be graffiti. We also included masons marks and window etchings from the crafts people who worked on them within our definition on the basis that they were not part of the initial design for the parts of the church on which they now appear, but had been revealed through the removal of facings or added during later repairs. As this definition suggests, at Holy Trinity we stuck to graffiti inside the walls of the church, but that is not to say that outside walls and churchyards do not have graffiti. In your own project, you could include the outside as well as the inside of the church.



## But isn't graffiti vandalism?

Many people today view 'graffiti' as vandalism and might, at first, be anxious at the thought of graffiti in a historic building such as a medieval church. However, this was not always the case in the medieval and early modern periods; graffiti could be a form of religious, social, or cultural expression - one which was not necessarily discouraged - even in a church. That the graffiti you find may well not have been frowned upon is an important thing to bear in mind when researching and interpreting graffiti. That being said, it is important that we today, visitors and volunteers, do not damage or add new graffiti to historic buildings.



## Types of Historic Church Graffiti

Now it's time to explore what kinds of graffiti you might find in your own CCT site. This is not an exhaustive list of types of historic graffiti, but a selection of what we consider to be the most common types found in churches. If you find something that doesn't quite fit these, Dr Crystal Hollis' research is a great place to learn more about rarer categories.

### *Initials*

These are some of the most common forms of graffiti, both medieval and modern. You will almost certainly find some of these at your site, and unfortunately they are very difficult to interpret with any certainty.



Carving into wood  
used as an altar cover.  
Transcription: JM 167?  
RJ 1667

### *Memorials*

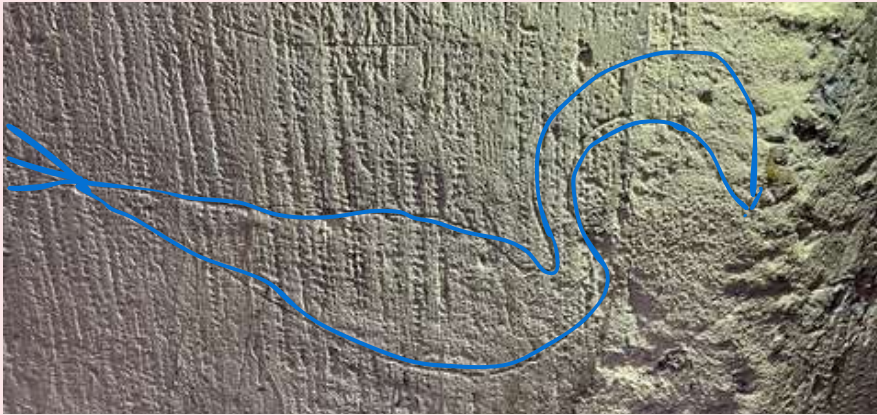
Memorials appear similar to initials, but are accompanied by dates. They mark a specific point in time, not necessarily the date of a person's death. Where these initials and dates are enclosed by a design, such as the simple square in the image below, or a more elaborate structure, they are more likely to indicate a death.

Dr Hollis suggests in her SCA lecture that during periods of mass death, where individual burials were less common, these marks consciously imitated gravestones or mausoleums.



## *Figural Marks*

Figural marks involve images - of people, animals, or plants, for example - instead of just text. Some figural graffiti can be devotional, such as graffitied images of the Madonna and Child, or they can simply represent objects of interest for the parish community or visitors to the church.



Figural carving of a bird on a pier in All Saints North Street, York



## *Mason Marks*

These are clear, neat marks made by masons' tools. Because of this, they are generally a simple arrangement of straight lines, as in the example here, from one of Holy Trinity's piers.



## *Circle Designs*

Perfect circle designs indicate skill with masonry tools and experience carving in stone; they're the marks of professionals. They also require time and patience to finish, so we can assume they haven't been made in a rush. Daisy-wheels are common, apotropaic or protective marks, composed of overlapping circles.

This is a design composed of overlapping circles, found on a pier at St Mary the Virgin, Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire (vested with the CCT)



## *Assembly Marks*

These marks resemble roman numerals, and appear in clusters, close together. They are commonly found in roofing structures, and serve to remind the mason how the stone blocks should be assembled onsite.

## *Text/writing*

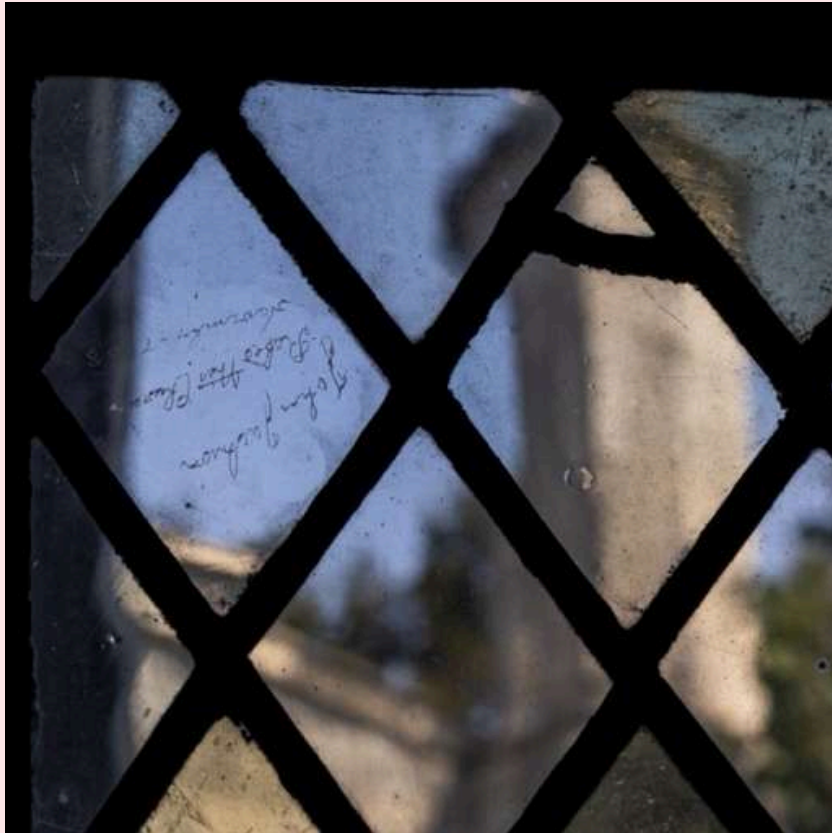
Common types of graffiti text are prayers and names (see our 'initials' section.) Sometimes, we even find local events recorded on the fabric of parish churches, like storms, failed harvests, or outbreaks of disease.

During the course of the graffiti project, we solved an important historic mystery at Holy Trinity, concerning a piece of textual graffiti on one of the windows.



## A Two Hundred-Year-Old Graffiti Mystery: John Jackson “robed this church”

At Holy Trinity many of our 19th century windows have writing on them, often by the people who made or fitted the windows. One particular example (see image below - top left corner) had puzzled us for several years: what did it say?

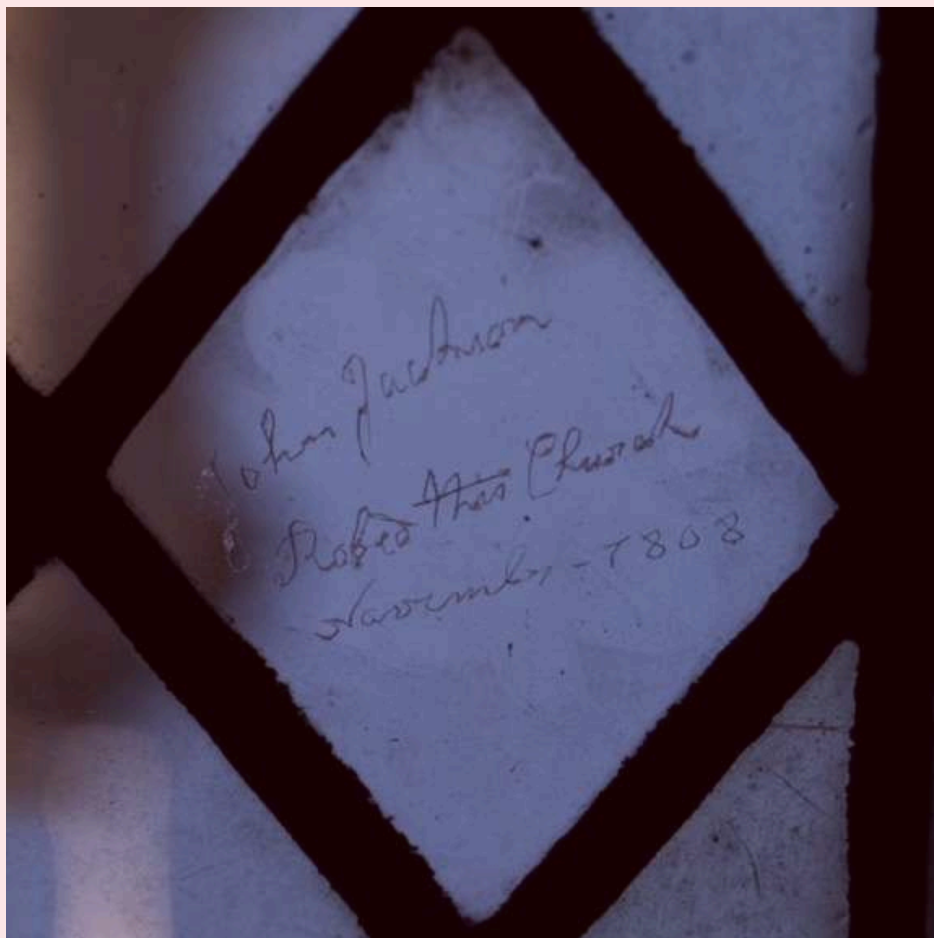


Amongst our volunteers several hypotheses were developed, the most popular of these were that it is John Jackson “robed this church” - as in provided altar cloths etc. - or even “robbed this church”. Neither of these options, however, seemed likely.





Dr Crystal Hollis, however, was able to read the 19th century handwriting more clearly. It says “John Jackson roofed this church”, proving exactly why the skill of palaeography can be so helpful when interpreting graffiti!



The study of historic graffiti helped us to clear up this historic mystery, and we now understand our church better as a result.



## Locating the Graffiti

### *Systematic Searching*

Knowing where your graffiti is and how to find it again is an essential part of any project on historical graffiti. You are therefore going to need a clear system so that someone else can easily find exactly what you have found.

At Holy Trinity we did this by labelling different parts of the church and numbering the piers and pews, but this is not the only way to do it. Different churches will require different approaches, but try to not make yours too complicated: keep it simple and easy to use.

### *Where To Look*

Graffiti could be anywhere in a church, but some places are more likely to have it than others. Almost all graffiti will be relatively close to the ground - within reach of whoever made it. At Holy Trinity we did not climb up high to look for graffiti, both because it is unlikely to be up high and because this is not always safe to do. Things made of stone - such as walls, arches, and piers - are good places to look for graffiti; carving was often a method of creating graffiti in the medieval and early modern periods. Similarly, historic wood - such as pews - offered a relatively easy place to create inscriptions.



The graffiti in your church may well be difficult to spot at first glance, so use a torch, ideally a powerful one, to help you find it. 'Raking the light' (ie: passing it back and forth across a surface) will help make it even easier to spot any marks or inscriptions.



### *Examples on Stone and Wood*

Below are two examples from Holy Trinity, one on stone and one on wood.



Scratches on stone



A cross marking





## Recording and Cataloguing Graffiti

Once you start finding what might be graffiti, you will need to start recording and cataloguing it. To do so, we recommend you have a **torch, camera, magnifying glass, pen or pencil, paper, and a ruler**. These will help you spot, record, and examine what you find.

When you find an inscription which you think might be graffiti, we recommend taking a clear photo of it. To give a sense of scale, place your ruler alongside the marking, then 'rake' your torch light (as explained on page 16) to make the marking as clear as possible. Once you are happy that the graffiti is as clear as can be, take a photo (a good phone camera will do).

Once you have your photo, note down where you found it using the system you have developed for labelling parts of the church. **Be as clear and as detailed as possible**. Your record needs to be transparent so that you, or someone else, can easily find the same piece of graffiti again. To help you, record the 'photo ID' so you can match your photo to your written record. To find the 'photo ID' on an iPhone, go to your photo of the graffiti and gently swipe up and find the unique photo ID number (circled in red in image below). We also recommend noting the time and date you took the photo, information which can be found above the 'photo ID'.



## Interpreting Graffiti - What Does it Mean?

Once you have identified a piece of interesting graffiti, it's easy to jump to conclusions about who made it and what it might signify.

Even when we believe we are simply recording the marks we have discovered, the language we use to describe them can muddy the waters, and lead us to false conclusions. Dr Crystal Hollis warns against this. When recording your finds, she argues, it is best to stick to simple, descriptive language, without trying to label or categorise markings prematurely.

For example: During our graffiti hunt at Holy Trinity, we discovered a mark in the shape of a six-pointed star. Since the star seemed to be composed of two, overlapping triangles, we began to refer to it as a Star of David.

Soon, however, Dr Hollis pointed out that this terminology was potentially misleading; it brought with it a host of images and associations, and above all suggested that the mark might have something to do with Judaism, a claim for which we had no evidence. Although we found it helpful to consider the mark in the context of the Star of David and its religious and historical significance, we made the decision to refer to it simply as a six-pointed star in order to avoid limiting its possible meanings.



In cataloguing the graffiti in your own local church, you might run into the same dilemma. For example, say you discover a piece of graffiti in the shape of a four-legged animal. It might be tempting to ascribe religious significance to the mark by describing it as an 'Agnus Dei,' an image of the 'Lamb of God,' the title often used to describe Jesus Christ in Christian liturgy. Although the Agnus Dei appears in many Christian contexts, does this piece of graffiti definitely reference this symbol? In cataloguing this marking, we would encourage you to take a more descriptive approach. If the mark resembles a four-legged animal, it is best to record it as such, without burdening the graffiti with premature interpretation.

Once you have recorded your graffiti using simple, descriptive language, you might think about its positioning in the building. Ask - was this furnishing/architectural element here at the time of the church's construction? Or, does this piece of graffiti appear on an object that might have been recycled from another context, such as reused wood or stone? These questions may help you get a better idea of the date and origins of your markings.

Another tip is to look at your historic parish records for context. If you have found a piece of graffiti displaying a name, initial, or date, does it appear again in the parish records? Remember that, during and prior to the Middle Ages, surnames were not ubiquitous and single initials were common. Think about significant historic events, and the ways they might have impacted your church and its historic communities. We found markings in Holy Trinity displaying dates from the mid seventeenth-century, around the time of the Siege of York, which would doubtless have changed the lives of the people who worshipped in Holy Trinity at the time.

If possible, visit other churches to get a sense of what else is going on. It may surprise you to learn that the marking you found in your church appears again and again across the historic churches in your area, or in churches with similar dates of construction. It always helps to widen your sample size, and to place your church and its graffiti into a wider context.



## What Does Historic Graffiti Look Like?

Dating graffiti is not always straightforward, but there are a few things you can look at to determine whether it is historical.

The simplest way is to see if there is a date carved by it. However, make sure that the date belongs to your original piece of graffiti. One way of doing this is by looking at the handwriting or carving style: are the marks of a similar thickness, suggesting that the same tool was used? Does the shape of the numbers or letters look similar - like they might have been carved by the same person?

Palaeography - the study of handwriting - is a great place to start if you find graffiti without a date. Does the handwriting look modern or does it look older? To get a precise date for handwriting you will likely need to talk to an expert, but we have put some links to helpful websites in the “Resources” section of this booklet to get you started.

Handwriting is absolutely not something to overlook - even when you have the date inscribed next to your graffiti.

For example, in the image below we have what appears to be IL or FL next to the date 1740. However, at that time, the letter that looks like an ‘l’ with a cross through it actually represented a modern capital ‘J.’



## Graffiti Myth-busting

We did some research into common myths and false conceptions about historic graffiti. Once you have spotted some graffiti, keep these tips in mind when you embark upon interpretation.

1. “Ritual” or religion is an easy explanation, but not always the best one. Just because the marks are found in a church, they don’t have to have religious or ritual significance.
2. VV marks don’t necessarily have anything to do with the Virgin Mary, although they have historically been associated with the cult of the Virgin.
3. A five-pointed star doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the five wounds of Christ, and might not have any religious significance whatsoever.
4. Don’t assume that all graffiti is illicit activity – historically, graffiti wasn’t necessarily as transgressive as it is now.
5. It is common to misidentify masons’ marks or other graffiti markings as witches’ marks, or marks meant to ward off bad luck or evil spirits. In fact, many of these supposed ‘witches’ marks served a practical purpose, so we advise caution when assigning apotropaic meaning to graffiti marks.



## Conservation Guidelines

The following subscribes to current conservation guidelines at the time of writing, but these may be subject to change.

It is always best to err on the side of caution when it comes to conservation and cleaning. Before beginning any cleaning, photograph the area and catalogue any graffiti found, making sure you have a detailed record of what the area looked like before conservation began. In almost all cases, intervention will do more damage than good, particularly in the case of graffiti marks.

### *Wood*

- Dry cleaning is best. Never use water on pews or any other historic wood in the church.
- To revive wooden surfaces, buff gently with a chamois leather cloth, avoiding graffiti marks.
- Microfibre cloths can be used to wipe dust off of wooden surfaces. The key is to collect and remove dust, not just to move it around.
- We have found most of our pen and pencil graffiti marks on wooden pews, while it may be tempting to try and clean these off, it will likely do damage to the historic wood underneath, and destroy historically valuable graffiti.

### *Stone*

- Stone is very fragile, so try not to touch any carved marks as it will wear them away.
- If possible, consult with a local stonemason to determine what stone is used in the church. This will give you an idea of what natural wear and tear might look like, and what might be deliberate marks.
- You may find graffiti marks that have been drawn over with pen or pencil. This is incredibly damaging to the original piece. Do not be tempted to do it!





## *Glass*

- Cleaning or conserving window glass will almost always involve working at height, with very fragile materials. Do not attempt this!

## *Metal*

- Dry dust with soft brushes or microfibre cloths.
- Remember that the oils on your hands can permanently etch your fingerprints into unpainted metal objects.

## *How to Deal with Damage*

While exploring your site and cataloguing graffiti, you may find yourself confronted with signs of damage around the building. Below is a quick guide to what you might find, and how to respond if you do find it. Once again, the first principle is not to intervene. All issues should be raised with your CCT contact.

- If you discover any mould in the church, isolate the affected object if possible. If this is not possible, take care to close off the space to the public. If you have to touch mould, more protection is better: wear goggles, an apron, and an FFP3 mask.
- If you encounter signs of a pest infestation, isolate the object or close off the space. Signs of pest infestations in wooden objects (woodworm) include: fresh holes in wooden surfaces, with a lighter coloured wood visible inside, or surrounded by piles of sawdust. Keep an eye out for signs of moths in and around church textiles.
- If an object is broken, collect all loose pieces in a bag and label with as much information as possible.

## **PART 3: Events**

We are very lucky at Holy Trinity Goodramgate to have access to some incredible experts on topics like guided tours, storytelling, and social media marketing. We have condensed our learning from practical workshops with these experts, as we found them incredibly helpful when designing and delivering our graffiti events. Get in touch with the CCT volunteering team to find out what resources they can help you access!





## Photography and Social Media - Miriam

We heard from Miriam Flüchter of the CCT, who provided us with some top tips for the promotion of graffiti-related events on social media. Here is what we learned:

- If you are promoting an upcoming event, start with a clear posting schedule. Facebook especially rewards regular posting.
- Instagram rewards collaborative use of the app, so tag and interact with similar accounts, or “collaborate” with local charities and institutions (or the CCT) in order to boost engagement.
- It also helps to put links (for example, to online resources) in your Instagram and Facebook bios, and in your stories.
- Across social media platforms, images with people in them reach the biggest audiences.
- Similarly reels and other short form videos can be very popular, especially if they feature people; just make sure they’re no longer than 30 seconds.
- Try to add interactive elements to your content. You could ask your audience to guess the age of a particular marking, or try to interpret a faint inscription, for example.
- It best to post on weekday mornings, from 9 to 10am; try to avoid weekends.
- Finally, look for similar accounts for inspiration!

Miriam also provided some helpful tips on photo editing, to make your graffiti appear as clear as possible. Once you’ve taken your images (using the lighting techniques we have already mentioned) turn your exposure up, your contrast up, and your shadows down. That way, you can maximize clarity on the images you have already taken.



## Storytelling and Guided Tours - Steve

Steve Tarling, the CCT's Heritage Learning Officer for the North, ran an amazing session for us all about the power of storytelling and tips on public speaking. He has kindly allowed us to share his presentation, which appears in the Resources section.

To condense his very detailed session, we have pulled some key points out. Conveying information through stories is a really good way to engage people with the historic graffiti marks. Once you have spent time researching the stories behind the marks on your church, you want people to be able to engage with and remember them.

- When building your story, focus on what's important. Pick out the key points you want to get across. How do you want people to feel when they hear it?
- Use sensory imagery to connect with your audience.
- Face your audience, make eye contact, and speak loudly and clearly. It's important that your audience can hear you!



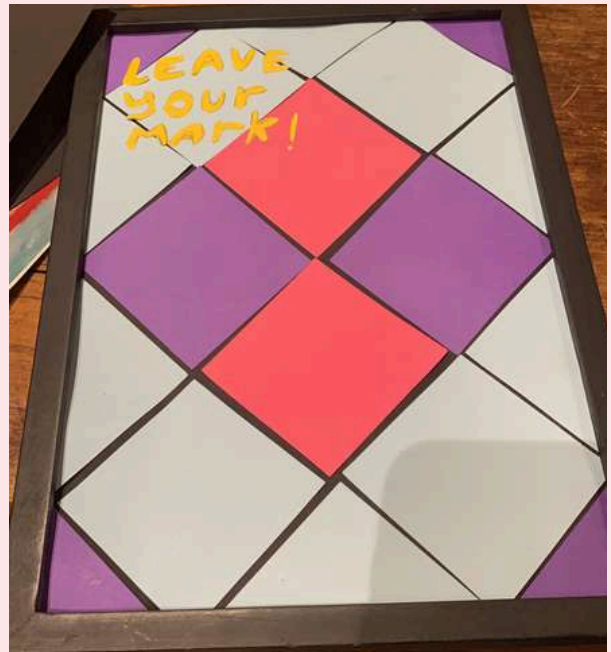
## Event Planning

We followed the basic steps below when planning and delivering the four events we held as part of this project.

### *Consider the Audience*

Who is your target audience? This should be the starting point for planning any event.

If you want to get children involved in this project, consider what age range each activity is targeted at. A simple craft which is fun for a 3 to 5 year old, like our colourful paper windows (see image, right), would probably be really boring for a 12 year old.



Also consider the timing of the event. Weekday mornings are good for children not yet in school, but school aged children will only be able to attend after school, on weekends, or school holidays. Are there any other events going on in your area? We ran an event during York Archaeology week, capturing the audience that was already out and about in York with an interest in historic buildings. Similarly, we ran graffiti themed craft events during a Remembrance Day event, running with the theme of memorialisation.



## *Interpretation and Learning*

What do you want the audience to learn during the event? What might be an engaging way to teach it?

For example, when we had an audience of university students, we wanted them to learn about the basics of spotting and interpreting historic church graffiti. We organised a short talk by Dr Crystal Hollis, and then an interactive torchlit exploration of the church, where the students could spot their own graffiti marks.

## *Health and Safety*

What could go wrong? Complete a risk assessment and make sure all volunteers are aware of it. Do what you can to minimise risk, for example bringing extra lighting to poorly lit or uneven walkways.

## **Resources created for our Events**

Here is a list of the printable resources that we used, feel free to adapt these. They can be accessed by following the links below. The Graffiti Sheet is also reproduced in full on the next page and can simply be photocopied as needed.

*Find your own Graffiti Sheet -*

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iRAdt5E36giWlhcJKsjQW5PWF6xdX8EbgqceOVVJ6vHw/edit?usp=sharing\\_](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1iRAdt5E36giWlhcJKsjQW5PWF6xdX8EbgqceOVVJ6vHw/edit?usp=sharing_)

*Spot it Sheet -*

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qHr5neHun5WT9NFf5FWYalJoHie moC2x8tvcrx4UUqQ/edit?usp=sharing\\_](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1qHr5neHun5WT9NFf5FWYalJoHie moC2x8tvcrx4UUqQ/edit?usp=sharing_)

*Risk Assessment for Takeover Day -*

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s1m6slrDeGmlBf1etzW1oE5nDjsbkezv/edit?usp=sharing&oid=105156771501885066435&rtpof=true&sd=true>



## Background Resources

- *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches*, Matthew Champion
- CCT Lecture: Brian Hoggard - Protection Marks In Churches and Other Buildings ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AE06CuZk\\_g4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AE06CuZk_g4))
- Magical House Protection: The Archaeology of Counter-Witchcraft by Brian Hoggard
- Palaeography: reading old handwriting, 1500 - 1800 - A practical online tutorial (<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230801144244/https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/palaeography/>)
  - If you find graffitied initials or longer text, this free tutorial offered by the National Archive could be helpful in deciphering and dating the marks.
- CCT Lecture: Crystal Hollis - 'Reading the Room: Looking at Historic Graffiti in Churches' (<https://www.cctdigital.com/videos/crystal-hollis-graffiti-lecture>)
  - Dr Crystal Hollis very kindly visited York to deliver a practical workshop and lecture for our volunteers and the public. Her insight has been invaluable to our project, and her research on historic graffiti has really shaped our understanding.
- SCA Lecture: James Wright - An Introduction to Historic Graffiti (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ntuu0Vv7zDk>)
- Dr James Wright - Mediaeval Mythbusting Blog #12: Stonemason's Marks (<https://triskeleheritage.triskelepublishing.com/mediaeval-mythbusting-blog-12-stonemasons-marks/>)



## **Background Resources** ctd.

- Dr James Wright - Mediaeval Mythbusting Blog #11: The Pentagram  
(<https://triskeleheritage.triskelepublishing.com/mediaeval-mythbusting-blog-11-pentagram/>).
- Dr James Wright - Mediaeval Mythbusting Blog #8: Burn Marks  
(<https://triskeleheritage.triskelepublishing.com/mediaeval-mythbusting-blog-8-burn-marks/>).
- Dr James Wright - Mediaeval Mythbusting Blog #2: The Problem of “Witchmarks” (<https://triskeleheritage.triskelepublishing.com/mediaeval-mythbusting-blog-2-the-problem-of-witchmarks/>).
- Historic England - Graffiti on Historic Buildings  
(<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/graffiti-on-historic-buildings/heag288-graffiti-historic-buildings/>).
- Dr Jenny Alexander - Medieval Mason’s Marks  
(<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/scapvc/arthistory/people/ja/research/masonsmarks/>).



# Steve Tarling - Storytelling Workshop Slides

## The Art of Storytelling

**LEARNING AIMS:** To learn how to tell a story.

To learn how storytelling can be used to engage visitors in a heritage/ cultural setting.

**What is  
storytelling?**



Consider: Who, what, where, when, how, why?

**ALL:** To understand the key components of oral storytelling.  
To have improved confidence in public speaking/ delivering stories

**MOST:** To understand the key components of oral storytelling.  
To have improved confidence in public speaking/ delivering stories.  
To be able to deliver a short story to a member of the public.

**SOME:** To understand the key components of oral storytelling.  
To have improved confidence in public speaking/ delivering stories.  
To be able to confidently deliver a longer story to the public/ an audience.

## How confident do you feel on telling a story in public?

0   1   2   3   4   5

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What are your biggest fears/ concerns/ worries about telling a story?

# Narrative Structure – 6 parts

Part of story	Purpose	Example
<b>Opening</b>	Est setting/ introduce characters/ mood.	
<b>Problem</b>	What is the core source of conflict in the story?	
<b>Complication</b>	How does the conflict progress/ change?	
<b>Crisis/ Climax</b>	How do the problems reach a head/ high point?	
<b>Solution</b>	How is the problem/ conflict solved? If at all? Who are the winners and losers?	
<b>Closing</b>	How does it end? How are things different from the start of the tale? Does the ending refer back to the start?	

# Narrative Structure – 6 parts

- Sum up a story into six parts/ sentences.
- Storyboard into six images like a comic strip.
- Sum up into six words.

## Voice Work – Different parts of your voice.

[Understanding volume - Using your voice - GCSE Drama Revision - WJEC - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Welcome to Vocabilities - AKA Improve your voice](#) Youtube

How to warm up your voice.

What are the different parts/ registers of your voice (Chest voice, mid voice, head voice and falsetto).

Tone, pitch, volume, projection, cadence, intonation, accent,



# Intonation Exercise

I never said he stole the money.

(say that phrase 5 times but each time put the emphasis on a different word).

I never said he stole the money.  
I never said he stole the money.  
I never said he stole the money.  
I never said he stole the money.  
I never said he stole the money.  
I never said he stole the money.



Example – Beddgelert

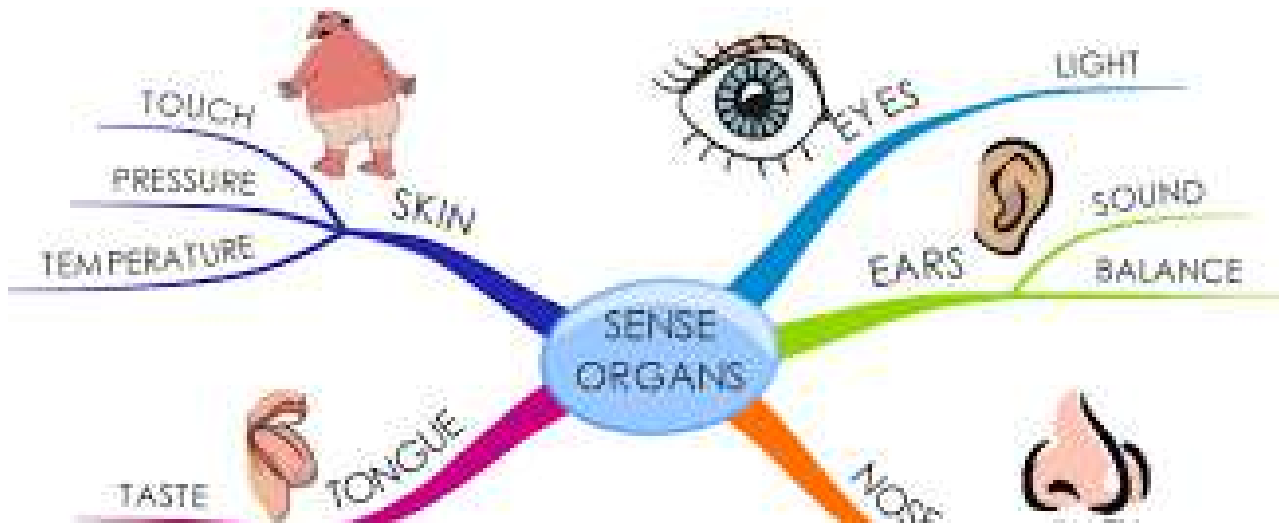
## ***Storyteller's Tools – Show Don't Tell.***

***Show don't tell.***

***A picture tells a thousand words.***

**“If I have to describe how a character is feeling, then I have failed in my duty as a storyteller” - Stephen King.**

# Storyteller's Tools – use your senses.



## Storyteller's Tools – Pathetic Fallacy

**Pathetic Fallacy** – when the scenery or weather contribute to the mood/ emotions of the story.

## Storyteller's Tools: Foreshadowing

**Foreshadowing** – hinting/ suggesting that something is going to happen later in the story.

## **How confident do you feel on telling a story in public?**

0    1    2    3    4    5

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**What are your biggest fears/ concerns/ worries about telling a story?**

## **Now it is your turn.**

- Spend a few minutes reading, summarising and studying the story that you have.
- Feel free to cut out unnecessary parts, edit or cut it down.
- Tell it in your words, not someone else's.
- Then, with a partner, spend a few minutes watching each other tell the story.

## **How To Tell A Story**

- **Tell it in your words.**
- **Focus on the most important parts.**
- **Use your senses.**
- **Consider: How do you want your audience to feel having heard it?**
- **Try and connect with as many people in the audience as possible.**
- **Use dialogue and voices to bring it to life.**
- **Provide a “hook.” What is the reason to hook the listener/ audience and how will this make them want to carry on listening?**

# Why should we use stories/ storytelling as part of our sessions? What benefits are there?

*"Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection,"* **Freeman Tilden, Interpreting Our Heritage.**



How can churches (and your church)  
tell a story? How might you use  
storytelling?



How confident do you feel on telling a story in  
public?

0 1 2 3 4 5

---

What are your biggest fears/ concerns/ worries about telling a story?

## Further Reading and Resources

- “Frankly, there isn’t anyone you couldn’t learn to love, once you’ve heard their story,” Andrew Stanton writer of Toy Story, Up, Inside Out, WallE and Monsters Inc, director of episodes of Stranger Things, Better Call Saul and Obi Wan.
- [Andrew Stanton: The clues to a great story – YouTube](#) Trigger warning – it starts with a rude joke.
- [Fact Sheets | The Society for Storytelling \(sfs.org.uk\)](#) Lots of free resources on using storytelling in schools/ learning etc.
- Therapeutic Storytelling: 101 Healing Stories for Children Paperback – 3 April 2012 by [Susan Perrow](#)
- [Series of regional/ county folk tales published by The History Press The History Press | The destination for history](#). Also if you type in a county/ region and folk tales into Amazon the list comes up. Most counties are included.
- Website containing numerous stories for children (fairy tales, parables, modern re-interpretations of classics etc) [Myths | Bedtime Stories \(storyberries.com\)](#)
- Some Christian themed, but not overtly religious stories can be found here. [Erica Baron | UU World Magazine Story of the Three Trees | Bible.org](#) by Angela Elwell Hunt [The Other Wise Man – Wikipedia](#)
- Folklore map of the British Isles [STG’s Craftily Conjured Great British Folklore and Superstition Map — Marvellous Maps](#)

Feedback: For more help contact [starling@thecct.org.uk](mailto:starling@thecct.org.uk)

<p>Something I enjoyed....</p>	<p>Something I learned....</p>
<p>Something that could be improved...</p>	<p>Something I would like help/ support with....</p>



# DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL GUIDED TOUR

Sarah Cowling  
Holy Trinity Goodramgate, York



Finding the Opportunity

Finding the Story

Creating the Story/Tour

Placing the Tour

The Tour - Practicalities  
Check!

On the Day



## FINDING THE OPPORTUNITY



**YORK  
UNLOCKED**

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th  
October 2023

[www.york-unlocked.org.uk](http://www.york-unlocked.org.uk)



YORK GEORGIAN FESTIVAL

1 - 4 AUG. 2024

## FINDING THE OPPORTUNITY



## FINDING THE STORY

Memorials Ledger  
Stones

Parish Registers

People connected  
with specific  
industries or  
products



## CREATING THE STORY/TOUR

Definition of a story....

*'an account of  
imaginary or real  
people and events  
told for  
entertainment'*





## PLACING THE TOUR

### Think about the End Product

Length of the tour  
What is the Route  
Start and End points  
Maximum People  
Time of Day



## THE TOUR - PRACTICALITIES

### Where will your group stand?

How big is the space?  
What can they see?  
Are they blocking a path?  
Are they in any danger?  
Are they comfortable?

### How will the group move around safely?

Does the route involve crossing roads?  
Uneven Surfaces/Kerbs  
Can you avoid stairs/steps?  
**ACCESSIBILITY!**

## THE TOUR - PRACTICALITIES

Never put anyone in danger – Sacrifice the story if necessary

**Practise Practise Practise**



## CHECK!

Is the Route Accessible?



## ON THE TOUR

One Job – Be heard

Be confident

Pace

End on Time

Enjoy



## GOOD LUCK!

Sarah Cowling  
Holy Trinity Goodramgate, York



## **Final thoughts from the participants**

Matthew, visitor to Takeover Event on 22 November, aged 12, said that looking for graffiti by torchlight with our current volunteers and hearing about how it could be interpreted was “actually fun” and he “didn’t even have to lie about it!”

Jonathan, visitor to Takeover Event on 22 November, aged 12, said “I loved finding all the extra graffiti – things that had not been recorded before.”

Ellen, a pre-existing young volunteer, said “Most excitingly, we found a carved pentangle” and solved the mystery around “a window inscription claiming that a John Jackson ‘robed’ the church in 1808 (was he dressing it somehow or stealing from it?)”. In fact, with advice on 18th century spelling and handwriting, we worked out that he had “rofed” (“roofed”) the church which fitted with the other evidence of plumbers and glaziers in the window.

## **Enjoy exploring!**

**Churches Conservation Trust**  
**Registered Charity Number 258612**

