

Tour for school children at St John's, Instow

Their exciting project will restore the interior of the Norman South Transept, one of the oldest parts of the church, the exterior of which was found to have split off from the main part of the church and was repaired in 2013. As part of the new project the internal walls and floor will be restored, and the pews re-ordered to form a learning and community space within the church. In addition, the stained glass window depicting ‘The Presentation in the Temple’ and the monument of local man John Downe who died in 1640, aged 21, will be conserved.

Sharing Heritage is a funding programme to help people across the UK explore, conserve and share all aspects of the history and character of their local area. The church will be working with Instow Community school to learn about local history and has already involved the community in meeting the conservators who will be working on the project. An exhibition is planned over the weekend of 13-14 September for Devon Historic Churches Day.

Volunteers will research the history of the Downes family, father and son, and an illustrated leaflet will be published thanks to the research carried out within the project. There will also be a First World War exhibition of all those who served in that war from Instow. The church’s website will be enhanced and work packs will be created for local schoolchildren to explain the people and artefacts they can find in our church. Talks and tours given by volunteers are planned for local organisations.

Pam Cantle, Grants Officer for St John’s PCC, said: “We are so delighted to have what was a shabby part of our church, transformed into a beautiful area for children and groups to use. We have had exciting moments when we found

a vault full of rubble underneath the floor, part of this was the 10 Commandments written on plaster in the 18th century. The window has turned out to be of exceptional quality, possibly by a craftsman trained by Charles Eamer Kempe. The icing on the cake was the discovery that John Downe senior had been such a well-loved and distinguished rector for 30 years and his eldest son Henry became a Barnstaple GP after reading Medicine in Caen, Normandy. Instow is twinned with Arromanches, how good is that!"

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West, said: “Sharing Heritage is a wonderful opportunity for communities to delve into their local heritage and we are delighted to be able to offer this grant so that St John’s Instow can embark on a real journey of discovery. Heritage means such different things to different people, and HLF’s funding offers a wealth of opportunities for groups to explore and celebrate what’s important to them in their area.”

Further information

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