

1 Balderton, St Giles

The oldest parts of the present church are the Norman north and south doorways, the north entrance to the porch being particularly superb with a carved 12th century figure of the Virgin Mary in a niche above; inside is a 15th century oak door.



In the south aisle window is glass depicting the Adoration of the Lamb by artist W Wailes. There are also many fragments of medieval glass.

Other notable features include the early 14th century font, the outstanding octagonal spire, the brass lectern, which came from the church at Cotham when it fell into disuse, and the remarkable set of medieval pew ends, with carvings of rabbits, hounds and grotesques.

2 Newark, St Mary Magdalene



In medieval times Newark was one of the largest towns in Nottinghamshire. Although there was probably a church on the site in Saxon times, the earliest parts of the present church, in the crypt, date from c1180.

There are two chantry chapels dating from about 1500, one with fine wall paintings depicting the 'Dance of Death'.

Visible from many miles away, St Mary's 14th century spire is reputed to be the fifth tallest parish church spire in the country.

It is said that during the 17th century, the church tower served as a look-out point for the Newark garrison during the Civil War sieges – a cannonball hole in the spire is possible evidence. Most of the stained glass windows, which had survived the Reformation, were destroyed at this time, though fragments were gathered together and can now be seen in the east window of the Holy Spirit Chapel.



After the capitulation of the town, Parliamentary soldiers are said to have stabled their horses in the church.

Also in Newark are St Leonard's, St Augustine's and Christ Church; information about these can be found on our website.

3 South Muskham, St Wilfrid

St Wilfrid's today is a stone-built, Grade I listed building. The north aisle is narrow, approximately 4ft wide and almost certainly dates from the 14th century; the north door is 13th century and was most likely moved when the north aisle was added. The tower has stonework from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.



A south aisle window contains glass showing the arms of William Smith, bishop of Lincoln 1496-1513.



4 North Muskham, St Wilfrid

Originally consisting of simply a chancel and nave, the church dates back to the end of the 12th century.



Notable features include the stone seats around the 13th century pillars of the north aisle, which were used by the sick and infirm in the days before pews. This arcade is the oldest visible part of the church, and remarkably one of the capitals has traces of original painting.



The chancel contains some interesting memorials and the 15th century north aisle

was financed by a local wool merchant, John Barton of Holme, and his initials and symbols can be seen in the glass in the north windows.

The rood screen, originally 15th century, contains the original door and some late medieval carving.

It is thought that at some point in history the lead was stripped off the roof leaving the church open to the wind and rain for a long period, hence the bleached colour of the oak inside the church. This may have happened during the Civil War as many local churches suffered when Newark was under siege, the lead being melted down for ammunition.



5 Cromwell, St Giles



The Domesday Book mentions a church in Crunwelle in 1086 but it was largely rebuilt in the 13th century with a new tower of the 1420s.

To the south the small aisle and chancel aisle have been much changed over the years. Two medieval windows in the north chancel wall include remains of armorial glass. There is also a fine example of a "flamboyant" 14th century window to the south of the altar.



Cromwell is one of 41 'Thankful Villages' in England, where all the soldiers returned from the First World War hence there is no war memorial.

6 Carlton-on-Trent

St Mary the Virgin

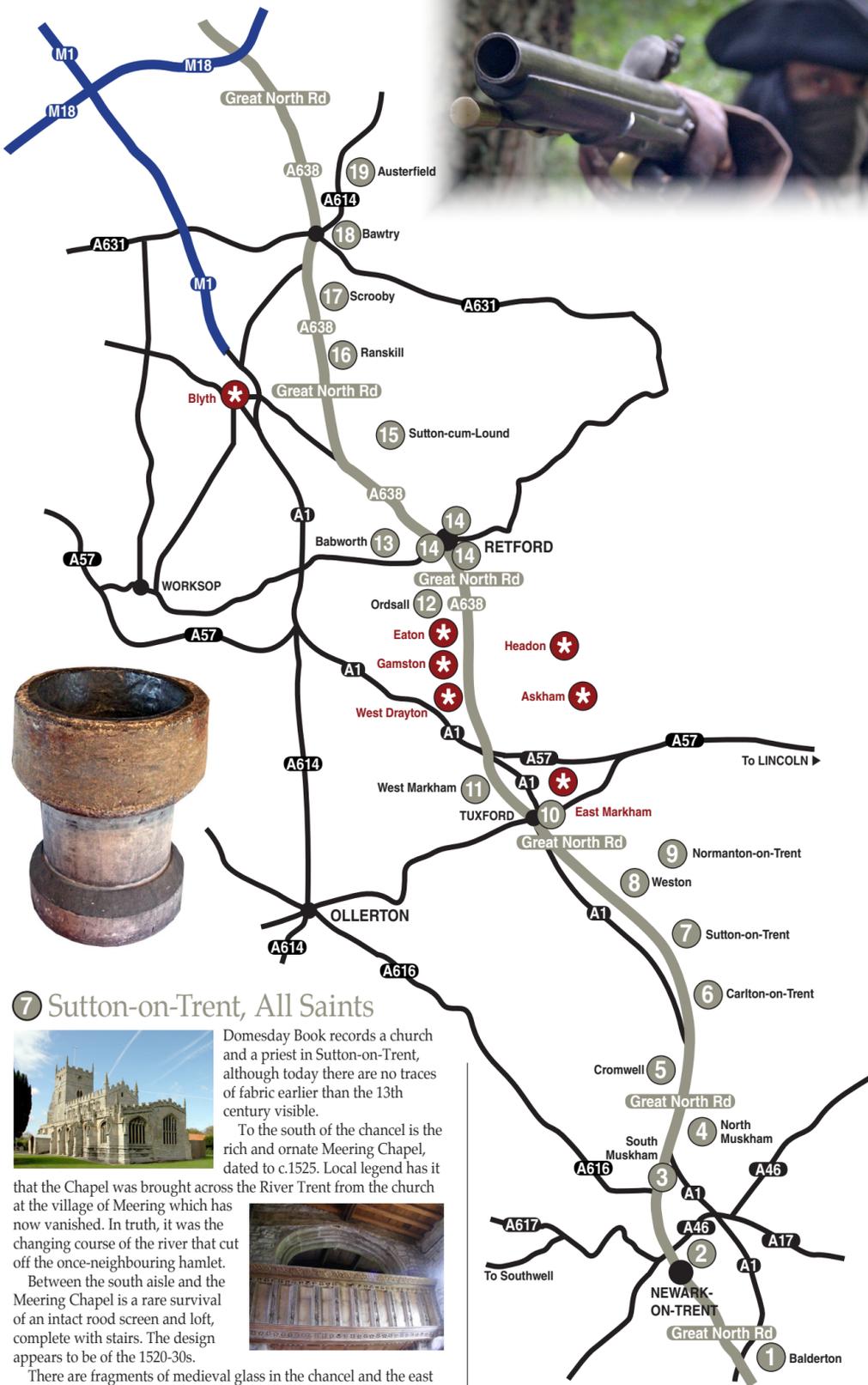


A medieval church existed on the site of the present building which was linked to the parish of Norwell. This building contained Norman stonework was demolished in 1849.

The present building was constructed in 1849-1851. The patron was John Vere, and the architect was G G Place of Nottingham whose grave can be found in the churchyard.

Of the earlier church, a few remnants remain: the south doorway of the nave, which probably dates to c.1200; a 14th century window in the north wall of the chancel; and the unusual bellframe, which has been tree-ring dated to c.1530.

The interior contains seven stained glass windows, three dating from the period of building and four from 1860.



7 Sutton-on-Trent, All Saints



Domesday Book records a church and a priest in Sutton-on-Trent, although today there are no traces of fabric earlier than the 13th century visible.

To the south of the chancel is the rich and ornate Meering Chapel, dated to c.1525. Local legend has it that the Chapel was brought across the River Trent from the church at the village of Meering which has now vanished. In truth, it was the changing course of the river that cut off the once-neighbouring hamlet.

Between the south aisle and the Meering Chapel is a rare survival of an intact rood screen and loft, complete with stairs. The design appears to be of the 1520-30s.



There are fragments of medieval glass in the chancel and the east window is by Wailes. In the chancel are a few "poppyheaded" pew ends, probably dating from the 15th century.

8 Weston, All Saints



A church is mentioned in Weston in Domesday Book.

The church today is embellished with battlements and pinnacles and dates mainly from the 13th and 14th centuries, although extensive restoration took place in 1880 under architect E Browning of Stamford.

The chancel retains sedilia (stone seats) and two piscinae (ceremonial wash basins). There is a Norman tub font of the 12th century. Tiny fragments of medieval glass remain. The three bells are old, one by R Mellors of Nottingham dates from around 1550.

9 Normanton-on-Trent, St Matthew

St Matthew's is mainly 14th century, but parts of the north aisle are probably 13th century. The rood screen no longer exists but the steps and doorway can still be seen.



Between the 15th century clerestory windows, there is some Georgian lettering from the scriptures, the one nearest the tower being from the psalms.

There are several stained glass windows, one of which, showing St Philip & St George, is a memorial to Philip George Turner (son of the then Vicar) who died at El Alamein in World War II.

While out slightly to the east of the Old Great North Road, you may wish to visit Low Marnham, St Wilfrid (NG23 6SL). This church is now owned by the Churches Conservation Trust. It is generally open but if locked there is a list of local keyholders at the entrance.

10 Tuxford, St Nicholas



This large church, situated in the historic market town of Tuxford, has 12th century origins. The fine tower is of the early 14th century and the spire dates from the 1350s. Unusually, the chancel is dated to 1495, being a gift of Thomas Gunthorpe. It has a unique and rare canopy above the baptismal font.

The White Chapel includes some interesting plaques and carvings, particularly one depicting the Last Supper. A figure of St Lawrence in stained glass dates to c.1500, and the rood screen is also of this period. There are several fine monuments.

11 West Markham (Markham Clinton), All Saints and the Milton Mausoleum

All Saints' church, of possible Saxon origins, is a very simple, rectangular structure. The walls are built mainly of rough stone with an abundance of "herringbone" work. It has a very early south door, doorway, font and carvings. Part of the original earth floor remains.

In the late 1820s the 4th Duke of Newcastle had a new church built as a resting place for his wife, Georgiana Elizabeth, who died giving birth to twins. "The Mausoleum" was designed by Sir Robert Smirke and consecrated in 1833. It functioned as the parish church until 1949 when parishioners chose to revert to using the ancient church. The Mausoleum ultimately passed into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

At this point the Old Great North Road changes from the B1164 to the A638. If you stay on the trail, crossing the A1 at the two Markham Moor roundabouts, the next three churches are West Drayton St Paul, Gamston St Peter and Eaton All Saints, however these



do tend to be locked. As an alternative, with a slight diversion you can take in East Markham St John the Baptist, Askham St Nicholas and Headon-cum-Upton St Peter, all of which tend to be open every day (at least during the summer). For more information on these 6 churches visit our website www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk. Picking up the Old Great North Road (A638) again at Eaton...

12 Ordsall, All Hallows



Ordsall village is mentioned in the Domesday Book and its present church was probably built around the middle of the 13th century; it has an interesting late medieval rood screen.

It is situated in a beautiful spot on a hill above the river Idle. The first known Rector was William de Billurg, who came in 1277.

The author, John S. Piercy, who wrote 'A History of Retford' in 1828, is buried in the churchyard.

Up until the mid-18th century the Great North Road from Markham Moor to Barnby Moor was a sandy track running fairly directly through Babworth (traces can still be seen on OS maps marked as Old London Road). In 1765 this was abandoned and replaced with a new stretch of road running through Retford.

13 Babworth, All Saints



The first building of a church here is recorded in 1290, but the present church dates largely from the 15th and 16th centuries.



Notable features include the embattled south porch with its carved human face and grotesque creature, a decorated urn to the Rev John Simpson (d.1784) and the rare late Georgian, and Victorian stained glass.

The chancel and sanctuary contain furniture by Robert Thompson who was part of the 1920s Arts and Crafts movement. Look out for his famous carved mouse trademark.

Richard Clyfton was curate of All Saints from 1586 until 1604. His preaching in the new manner had a strong influence on the foundation of the Pilgrim movement. William Brewster from Scrooby and William Bradford from Austerfield, both friends of Clyfton and regular attendees of his services, were passengers on the Mayflower. The footpath to the church from their homes in Scrooby and Austerfield is known as the Pilgrims' Way. From Babworth you can either go east into Retford on the A620 or north along Sutton Lane to rejoin the Great North Road A638.

14 Retford churches

Retford, Grove Street Anglo-Methodist Church



This joint Anglican and Methodist church dominates the skyline as you travel along the Retford ring road. The church was dedicated in 1880 and is a Grade II listed

building. Designed by Bellamy and Hardy (as was the Town Hall), the church is a remarkable example of Victorian architecture, and includes a magnificent organ.



At the time of the Norman Conquest there were two main routes to the North through the East Midlands, joining up around Bawtry. Ancient bridges, at Newark and South Muskham, show that the Great North Road was the main route to and from York and Durham.

In 1544 a traveller could take a day to ride from Doncaster to Newark and it was these lengthy trips that established many a Coaching Inn along the route.

The journey times were shortened over the following decades. In 1603 one particularly swift messenger took news of Queen Elizabeth I's death to her successor James VI of Scotland in Edinburgh in only 60 hours. A feat that may have fuelled the story of Highwayman Dick Turpin in the following century making the ride from London to York in less than 15 hours.

By 1832 the journey between the two capitals had been reduced to 42½ hours thanks to the improvements to the roads, funded by tolls.

Today, this trail can be followed as a day trip or can be dipped in and out of to view a few churches at a time.

For more information and other possible trails see our website:
www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk

For more information on the following churches:
www.southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk

Balderton, St Giles

With 12th century stone carving, medieval glass and bench ends.

Open: This church is generally open to visitors all year round on Mondays and Thursdays.
NG24 3NP

Accessibility:  

Newark, St Mary Magdalene

A grade I listed building dating mainly from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. With one of the tallest spires in the country, this church also has medieval choir stalls, important fragments of medieval stained glass and 'Dance of Death' wallpainting.

Open: This church, including its coffee shop and bookshop, is open from 8.30am - 12.30pm and 1.30pm - 4.00pm Monday to Saturday, plus Sunday afternoons.
NG24 1JS

South Muskham, St Wilfrid

A grade I listed building dating mainly from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

Open: This church is open to visitors all year round.
NG23 6EQ

North Muskham, St Wilfrid

With gothic rood screen and acclaimed bells.

Open: This church is open to visitors all year round.
NG23 6GD

Cromwell, St Giles

One of only 41 villages in England where all of the soldiers returned safely from the First World War.

Open: This church is open to visitors all year round. Nearby attractions: Next door is the Vina Cooke Museum of Dolls and Bygone Childhood.
NG23 6JD

Carlton-on-Trent

St Mary the Virgin

Built in the mid-19th century by Nottingham architect G G Place, who is buried in the churchyard. Features of the earlier medieval church remain.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; keyholders are listed at the entrance.
NG23 6LP

Sutton-on-Trent, All Saints

With rare intact rood screen and loft, complete with stairs.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; keyholders are listed at the entrance.
NG23 6PD

Weston, All Saints

Includes a Norman tub font, sedilia and piscinae, and 16th century bells.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; keyholders are listed at the entrance.
NG23 6SW

Normanton-on-Trent St Matthew

Including Georgian wall painting.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; keyholders are listed at the entrance.
NG23 6RQ

Tuxford, St Nicholas

With a rare canopy above the baptismal font.

Open: This church is open to visitors on Wednesday mornings.
NG22 0HT

West Markham (Markham Clinton), All Saints and the Milton Mausoleum

Two fascinating churches, one medieval and one Victorian, whose histories are intricately woven together.

Open: West Markham church welcomes visitors all year round; keyholders are listed at the entrance. The Mausoleum is open every 2nd and 4th Sunday afternoon during summer months; at other times there is a list of keyholders at the entrance.
NG22 0PJ

Ordsall, All Hallows

Including an interesting late medieval rood screen.

Open: This church is open to visitors on Wednesday mornings
DN22 7TU

Babworth, All Saints

With rare late-Georgian stained glass and work by arts & crafts artist Robert Thompson.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN22 8ES

Retford, Grove Street Anglo-Methodist Church

A remarkable example of Victorian architecture.

Open: This church is open to visitors all year round.
Parking: Parking is restricted around the church, but there is plenty of local parking.

Wheelchair access: Disabled access is via the ramp from the car park at the rear of the church.
DN22 6LB

(West) Retford

St Michael the Archangel

A medieval church with a William Butterfield Victorian extension, rare organ and unusual spire.

Open: Every Thursday lunchtime in April and October the church is open for organ recitals. Also open on May Day and for Heritage Open Day every September.
DN22 7AY

(East) Retford, St Swithun

A grade II* listed, town-centre, cruciform church.

Open: St Swithun's is open to visitors from April - October, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays; and the rest of the year Thursdays only. Usually 11am - 2pm.
DN22 6PL

Sutton-Cum-Lound, St Bartholomew

Grade I listed building with remarkably fine chancel windows.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN22 8PW

Ranskill, St Barnabas

Built by the famous Victorian architect Ewan Christian in 1878.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN22 8NJ

Scrooby, St Wilfrid

Famous for its connection to William Brewster and the Pilgrim Fathers.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN10 6AJ

Bawtry, St Nicholas

Including some unique east window stonework.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN10 6HX

Austerfield, St Helena

With Norman stone dragon carving and Sheela Na Gig.

Open: This church welcomes visitors all year round; there is a notice up in the porch of where to obtain the key.
DN10 6QY



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CHURCHES OLD GREAT NORTH ROAD TRAIL



Discover the fascinating history that lies along this ancient stretch of road and connect with the heritage which these churches have to offer.

The Great North Road was once a main route from London to Edinburgh, until the 1920s when it was re-designated the A1 and subsequent decades of modernisation changed the route to bypass towns. It is a road with a past to reveal: coaching inns, highwaymen, royal pageants and raiding cavalry all played their part in its rich history.



Churches are a valuable part of our heritage, being both significant guides to British architecture and important focal points within our communities.

The Church History Project was set up in 1998 by the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham in conjunction with the University of Nottingham to provide an accurate historical and archaeological record for each church and church site within the Diocese. The recent award of a Heritage Lottery Grant has enabled this work to expand into both education and tourism.

The Church History Project is looking for volunteers to help research the 307 churches in the Diocese as part of the project.

To get involved, or for more information about this exciting and innovative project please contact:

Heather Sirrel, Church History Project
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Full training and support will be given.
www.nottsopenchurches.org.uk



(West) Retford, St Michael the Archangel

St Michael's is a largely medieval church with a William Butterfield Victorian extension and an exquisite and rare Father Henry Willis organ. It has an unusual 14th century spire that the architect Pugin called "a poem in stone". The church has connections to both Queen Anne & Queen Mary II, and to the Bonsor family (including Nelson). Beautiful Victorian and Edwardian stained glass adorns the windows.



(East) Retford, St Swithun

St Swithun's is a large, 13th century town centre church and a major landmark within the town of Retford. It is built on a cruciform plan with a central tower which collapsed in 1651 and had to be rebuilt. The first written record of a church on the site is in 1258. The building is Grade II* listed and historically it was the corporation church of the old borough of East Retford.

The church contains outstanding examples of stained glass by Victorian artists Clayton & Bell, O'Connor, Wailes, and Kempe, including one designed as a Boer War memorial.

15 Sutton-Cum-Lound St Bartholomew



This fine church, a 14th century Grade I listed building contains many notable features, the first of which being the ancient door - likely made of Sherwood Forest oak. The chancel windows are outstanding examples of decorated curvilinear tracery of the 14th century. Several of the bench ends are also very old; one is carved as a human head, thought to represent the Queen of Sheba.

The list of incumbents at the back of the church shows changes in quick succession in the late 1300s. This was at a time when the Black Death was raging in England and one can only surmise that many of these men fell victim to this terrible disease.



James Brewster, brother of William Brewster, one of the Pilgrim Fathers, became Vicar in 1594 but far from emulating his kinsman's piety, James was a decided rogue, being known for drunkenness and misappropriation of the furnishings and fittings of Bawtry Hospital of which he was Master.

You may wish to carry on to Ranskill, or go slightly off track to the west now and visit the church of Blyth, St Mary & St Martin, which stands on the site of an 11th century priory. The position of the priory near the Great North Road meant that it received a large number of travellers seeking hospitality and it was granted funds by the archbishop of York to help towards the costs of this in the 13th century. The priory buildings, including the east end of the church, have been lost, and the course of the road changed to bypass the village, but the late Gothic west tower is still visible from the Great North Road. The church boasts the largest medieval 'Doom' wall painting in the north of England.

16 Ranskill, St Barnabas



A simple church comprising nave and chancel with a western bellcote in the gothic 'lancet' style of the 13th century, built by the famous Victorian architect Ewan Christian in 1878. The church serves as a 'chapel-of-ease' to the parish of Blyth.

17 Scrooby, St Wilfrid

St Wilfrid's church is Perpendicular-Gothic, a style that was popular in the 15th century. However, it is not the significance of the architecture that makes it important, but its connection to William Brewster and the Pilgrim Fathers (early UK settlers in the United States). St Wilfrid's was Brewster's local church but he absented himself from the services as he increasingly disagreed with them. Expelled from church, Brewster and fellow "Separatists" met at Scrooby Manor before leaving for Holland, and then America in 1620.

The church forms part of the Mayflower Trail around the area; a trail focusing on the churches and places that were associated with the Pilgrim Fathers.



18 Bawtry, St Nicholas



St Nicholas's church was built in the 12th century as a chapel of Blyth. The tower was largely rebuilt in the 18th century but its belfry windows are medieval. There is a blocked Norman doorway and 13th century east window with unique carved moulding on the outside - said to be one of only two of its kind in the country. There is a 15th century chapel with war memorial altar, and a superb 18th century wrought iron screen.

19 Austerfield, St Helena

The present church was founded in 1080 by John de Busli as a 'Chapel for the people of Austerfield'. As with Bawtry, they previously travelled to Blyth Priory. The church's most striking feature is the carved Norman 'tympanum' above the south door, showing a dragon.



Inside, the pillars are Norman and one features a 'Sheela Na Gig'. This is an exaggerated and lewd carving of a female figure sometimes found in medieval churches with no definitive meaning.

Austerfield is also associated with the Pilgrim Fathers as William Bradford, later Governor of Plymouth, Massachusetts was baptised in this church.



Our thanks to Geoff Buxton and Chris Brooke for the photographs used in this leaflet. Main front cover photo: © Mike Holmes