

“Scanning All Saints Church”

At the Historians’ meeting on 30 January there was a large attendance for the talk by Mark Knight, entitled “Scanning All Saints Church”. Mark had previously arranged for a group to join him in the church tower and around the church to look at historical graffiti, so it was very interesting to listen to him and his colleague David talking about the medieval graffiti and signs scratched into the walls and also the digital scanning of the inside and outside of the village church.

Mark works for Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and is involved in the current 2-year funded project for Staffordshire Trent Valley, looking at the past and present heritage, communities, landscape and wildlife of the area. A team is scanning historic buildings and monuments, producing a digital representation of the outside (the 3D representation of All Saints Church is now available online) and the inside, including artefacts such as the font. Mark showed various examples of graffiti found in and outside the church before going on to explain the importance of the riverscape of the River Trent and the use of tithe maps. David talked in more detail about digital imaging and photogrammetry, which can be done using a simple mobile phone app. Maps can be created using terrestrial photographs and OS surveys; a wood henge at Catholme and a bronze age burial site at the National Memorial Arboretum have been located and recorded. In this way, the River Trent can be explored from source to sea, the natural landscape can be protected, and the future cultural heritage can be considered with reference to future developments and climate change.

It was a fascinating presentation and links very well with the next Historians’ meeting in February when Shane Kelleher will be talking about “The Work of the County Archaeologist”.

Allan then talked about the wooden rood screen in All Saints Church, which features long-nosed monks. There is a mystery about the origin of the screen, which may have come from Burton Abbey or another nearby monastery.