

HANKERTON HISTORY – DID YOU KNOW?

Hankerton History Group can't meet at present so we thought we should revisit some of our findings and share them via The Grapevine. Hopefully you will be able to spot these points of interest when walking round the village. First stop our wonderful village church.

I think we all know from the finger post that it dates from the 12th century but did you know that that the one of the few visible remains from this date are the two Norman beasts that carry the hood-mould of the south doorway inside the porch. According to Historic England they are in the Scandinavian "Ringerike" style. No-one is really sure why such fantastic beast were carved, one theory is to fend off evil spirits.



Walk round to the west wall of the church and you can still make out some medieval graffiti. This was very common and is found on most churches from this period and even in Malmesbury Abbey. In the right light you can make out lots of different initials and the initial "B" under the window is particularly clear. Some churches have "witches marks" graffiti again to ward against evil spirits but we just have villager's initials.

Just south of the porch is the socket of 15th century mediaeval Cross set on a late 17th century tomb slab, both are made of limestone and the cross socket is Grade II listed. Crosses like this were used for preaching, for tax collection and were generally a focal point for the village. Life in medieval Hankerton would have centred around the church with children playing in the churchyard and most likely there would have been a maypole for celebrations.



If they weren't sure what the time was they could use the sun dial in the south east corner of the church. You can try it out yourself with a small stick as we did. It was around 3 pm when we took the picture so I am not sure how accurate it is, may be it works better in the morning.