

# Project Gargoyle



**Wardens' guide to the  
recording of medieval carvings  
in the churches of  
Leicestershire and Rutland**



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Front cover: Gargyle on Tilton on the Hill church; photograph by Bob Trubshaw.

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### **Objectives of Project Gargoyle**

Leicestershire and Rutland churches are home to a wealth of surviving medieval sculpture, predominately of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. However this has hitherto not been systematically recorded or studied. Project Gargoyle was set up in Spring 2009 to photograph, document and study such carvings in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Photographs and associated descriptions will be stored electronically in the Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Leicestershire County Council, the successor to the former Sites and Monument Records (SMR). In the future some or all of this information will be accessible online through English Heritage's 'Heritage Gateway' and other web sites.

### **Who is running Project Gargoyle?**

Project Gargoyle was instigated by Bob Trubshaw, who is acting as Volunteer Co-ordinator. Liz Blood of Leicestershire County Council's Heritage Warden Scheme is Project Co-ordinator.

Other key members of the committee are:

Graham Walley	(Leicestershire County Council)
Peter Liddle	(Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group)
Kathy Harman	(Leicestershire County Council and Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group)
Richard Clark	(Leicestershire County Council)
Helen Wells	(Leicestershire County Council)
Mike Hawkes	(Diocese of Leicester Archaeological Advisor)
<i>to be appointed</i>	(Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society)

Additional Leicestershire County Council staff are assisting with specific roles. Kay Snowdon, who has since left Leicestershire County Council, played a key part in the initial phases. Dr Alan McWhirr represented Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society until his death Spring 2010.



## The scope of Project Gargoyle

**Project Gargoyle** is an attempt to make a photographic record of the important church carvings in Leicestershire and Rutland. This will help in monitoring the wear and tear on them, and will help to record the changing styles over the centuries and may even allow individual masons to be recognized. The information you record will be entered on the county's Historic Environment Record (HER) which is the main historic archive for present and future generations.

Strictly speaking gargoyles are a special type of carving designed to throw water from a roof, but '**Project Gargoyle**' aims to record *all* the *figurative* carvings inside and outside churches in Leicestershire and Rutland. 'Figurative' carvings are those which feature the faces and/or bodies of humans or animals. This project won't be recording the other types of decorative church carvings such as geometrical designs, or monuments or gravestones. Most of the carvings you record will be stone but interior ones may also be in wood.

The carvings of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries have not been adequately recorded before so **Project Gargoyle** will be especially useful here. But to avoid missing any we are interested in all figurative carvings, from Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque to Gothic and Gothic revivals – including those in restorations of medieval churches or from the nineteenth century. For practical reasons the project will initially concentrate on churches in Leicestershire (i.e. within the diocese of Leicester) although Rutland's churches (in the diocese of Peterborough) will be covered in due course.

Once there is a more-or-less complete photographic record for Leicestershire and Rutland it is hoped to commence an analysis of motifs and styles. As far as we know Project Gargoyle is a first in the counties where good quality medieval carvings are well preserved. In practice this is the zone following the 'Jurassic spine' of England where oolitic limestones are readily available; i.e. Somerset through to Lincolnshire.

Although not within the scope of Project Gargoyle, the archaeological adviser for Leicester diocese is keen to see a complete photographic and documentary inventory of all churches in the diocese, including stained glass windows, sepulchral wall monuments, communion vessels, ecclesiastical embroidery, and such like. In due course Leicestershire County Council's may consider promoting such comprehensive church recording if the Heritage Wardens want it and this project goes well.

## **Photographing and recording carvings for Project Gargoyle**

### ***Who can help?***

The aim is to involve people willing to record their local area and who have the access to the necessary photographic equipment and expertise and there are various ways to do it. One person by themselves could do it or the work could be divided amongst a group, with some writing or recording and some photographing. Possibly one photographer could work with several parish-based Heritage Wardens, enabling several churches in an area to be successfully recorded. Simply put, there are no rules about who does what, and who works with whom, other making sure you liaise with Bob Trubshaw to avoid duplication of effort.

- 1 Firstly look at the latest version of the 'Leicestershire and Rutland village-by-village' PDF file (online at [www.leics.gov.uk/gargoyle](http://www.leics.gov.uk/gargoyle)) to see if your church has been covered. Please note that this document is frequently updated to always check the current online version.
- 2 If your church has not been covered then email Bob Trubshaw promptly to avoid duplication of effort.
- 3 Visit the church to see if there are any carvings inside or out and complete the recording form on page 6. The carvings that we want to record are those known as 'figurative carvings' which have human or animal faces or bodies. Medieval foliate carvings, such as roof bosses – decorative carvings along the centre of a roof, and those found on the ends of pews should also be recorded.
- 4 Find out if you can whether the church has been heavily restored or rebuilt in the nineteenth century. You will not need to record foliate decoration or simple heads around doors and windows if these are known to be all nineteenth century or more recent.
- 5 If you live in the parish then you may know who the key holder for the church is. If not, and you need phone numbers for church key holders or clergy than contact Bob Trubshaw who has the current diocesan directories which give these details.
- 6 Return the recording form to Bob Trubshaw. It is just as important to report an absence of carvings as it is to say there are some or lots!
- 7 If there are medieval carvings then discuss the intentions to photograph them with the relevant clergy. Explain that the Project Gargoyle committee includes Mike Hawkes, the diocesan archaeology advisor and the photographs will form part of Leicestershire County Council's Historic Environment Record.
- 8 If you know of any local photographers please let Bob know. However, they are required to have a level of technical expertise and the right equipment. This is so that the images that are produced are of a high enough standard to be put on a website and in a possible future publication.

**Project Gargoyle Recording Sheet**

**Name:**

**Telephone number:**

**Email:**

**Address:**

Parish: .....

Name of church: .....

(please use a separate form for each church)

Does the church have carvings?

1. How many carvings inside the church?  
Please give a brief description of the carvings

2. How many carvings are outside the church?  
Please give a brief description of the carvings

**Under no circumstances should photographs be emailed to Bob Trubshaw.**

**Church Access**

Please give details of the Church Warden/person responsible who a project photographer can contact to arrange access to photograph the gargoyles.

**Name:**

**Telephone number:**



## **Contact details**

**Bob Trubshaw** (Volunteer Co-ordinator) is now at:

113 High Street, Avebury, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1RF

Tel: 01672 539007

Email: bobtrubs@indigogroup.co.uk

**Under no circumstances should photographs be emailed to Bob Trubshaw.**

**Liz Blood** (Project Co-ordinator) can be contacted at:

Room 400

Penn Lloyd Building

County Hall

Glenfield

Leicestershire

LE3 8RA

Tel: 0116 3056187 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Email: liz.blood@leics.gov.uk

In the event of any changes then current contact details for Bob and Liz will be online at [www.leics.gov.uk/gargoyle/](http://www.leics.gov.uk/gargoyle/)