

## Polesworth Abbey

Polesworth Abbey is a Scheduled Ancient Monument site dating from the 600s. It came to be the centre of literary creativity in Elizabethan times, and possibly Shakespeare's home during the 'lost years'. John Donne, Michael Drayton and others lived and stayed here.

The Anglo Norman Abbey remains as the parish church and parts of the medieval cloister now form part of the Abbey grounds with the Refectory open daily.

Talks can be given on the Viking raids, Saint Editha, the literary history of the Abbey and discoveries made during three years of Community Archaeology.

**Cost:** Free (donations welcomed)

**Group size:** Up to 60

**Location:** High St, Polesworth, B78 1DU.

Number 8 on map

T: 01827 892340 E: polesworthabbey@aol.com

**Website:** www.polesworthabbey.co.uk

## Origins of Handel's Messiah

Charles Jennens was a librettist for several of the works of composer, George Frideric Handel. He is most famously acclaimed for his selection of the texts for the oratorio, "Messiah". Jennens' wealthy family made their home at Nether Whitacre and he was interred in the family vault under the church.

Our talk reveals the Jennens connections with the area. Viewing of the memorial available by request. A visit may be combined with food and drink at Whitacre Hall Tea Room & Walks, Jennens' former home.

**Cost:** Donations to the church (£5pp suggested)

**Group size:** Up to 20

**Location:** St Giles Church, Nether Whitacre B46 2DY

Number 3 on map

T: 01675 481232 E: ritapoulson@btinternet.com

## George Eliot's Astley

George Eliot, born Mary Ann Evans, spent her formative years in and around Astley. Her surroundings inspired much of her work; St Mary the Virgin Church inspired Knebley in *Scenes of Clerical Life*.

The George Eliot Fellowship hosts group visits to Astley offering talks about the life and work of this extraordinary woman. Visit the church, Astley Castle and other relevant locations by arrangement.

**Cost:** Free (donations welcomed)

**Group size:** Up to 30

**Location:** St Mary the Virgin Church, Astley, CV10 7QS.

Number 4 on map

T: 02476 619126 E: johnkburton43@gmail.com

**Website:** www.georgeeliot.org

## How to find us

See 'Location' for numbers



**Nearest airport:** Birmingham (BHX)

**Nearest train stations:** Atherstone, Coleshill Parkway, Water Orton, Birmingham International, Tamworth, Nuneaton.

**Key routes:** M6, M6 Toll, M42, A5



North Warwickshire's heritage attractions work with **Northern Warwickshire Tourism**. Find out more about group visits plus places to eat and stay on their website. [www.visitnorthernwarwickshire.com/groupvisits](http://www.visitnorthernwarwickshire.com/groupvisits)



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North Warwickshire  
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# North Warwickshire's HERITAGE SITES & STORIES



## Guided visits, walks and talks for groups



George Eliot

George Frideric Handel  
©National Portrait Gallery, London

## Middleton Hall & Gardens

Middleton Hall & Gardens is a Grade II\* listed historic house and gardens, nestled away in the tranquil North Warwickshire countryside. The fascinating history of the estate spans over 900 years with the oldest remaining building on site dating back to 1285. The Georgian Walled Garden is a serene environment, full of colour, bees and butterflies.

Today, the site is cared for by a charitable trust and includes over eighty volunteers. Pre-booked group tours are available throughout the year and can be tailor-made to include an exclusive lunch or afternoon tea in the Georgian West Wing. Groups wishing to visit the Hall without a tour are also welcome and are encouraged to pre-book.

**Cost:** £11.50 (inclusive of welcome drinks, introductory talk, admission and a tour)

**Group size:** Minimum 15 people

**Location:** Middleton, B78 2AE. Number 1 on map

**T:** 01827 283095 **E:** enquiries@middleton-hall.co.uk

**Website:** www.middleton-hall.co.uk

## Roman Mancetter & Boudica Heritage Centre

Sitting on the Watling Street, Mancetter was of front-line strategic importance during the Roman invasion.

Discover the fascinating stories of Celtic Queen Boudica's last battle against the invading Romans, which prominent historians believe took place here. The heritage centre is situated within St Peter's Church on the site of the Roman fort with local archaeological finds on display in this exciting new exhibition.

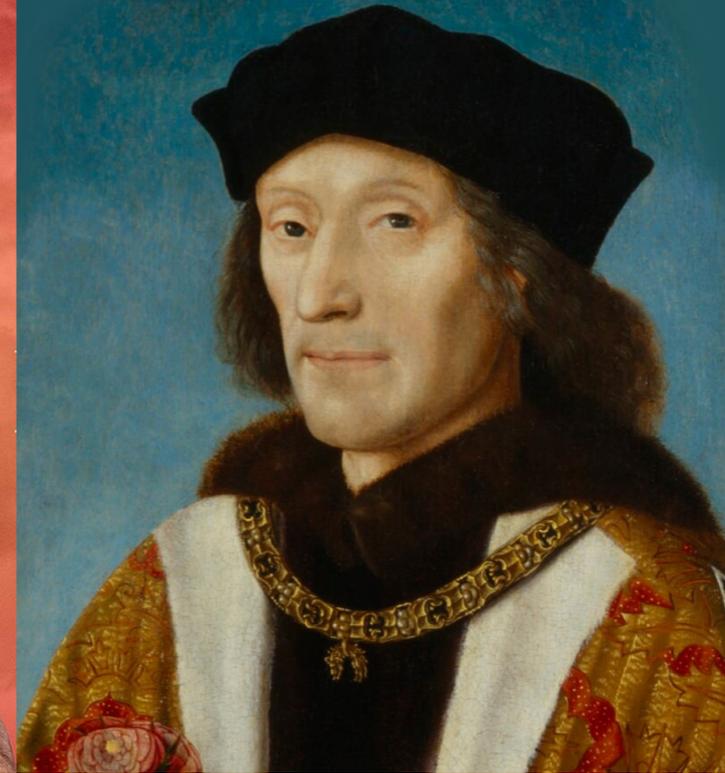
**Cost:** Exhibition only - free. Guided talks, walks and refreshment packages from £5.50pp

**Group size:** Up to 40

**Location:** St Peter's Church, Mancetter, CV9 1NJ  
Number 5 on map

**E:** events.romanmancetter@gmail.com

**Website:** www.romanmancetter.org.uk



## Birth of the Tudor Dynasty

On the eve of the Battle of Bosworth, Henry Tudor stayed at Merevale Abbey. His pivotal meeting near here with Lord Stanley led to the death of King Richard III and the birth of the Tudor Dynasty.

Step in these powerful footsteps at The Church of Our Lady Merevale, Abbey Farm B&B and St Mary's Atherstone to uncover Henry's Road to Bosworth. All three sites may be visited via Eddie Smallwood of Legions to Legends.

**Cost:** £12.50pp including refreshments

**Group size:** Up to 30

**Location:** Merevale, CV9 2LA. Number 7 on map.

**E:** eddie.smallwood@btinternet.com

**T:** 01455 212631

For visits only to The Church of Our Lady, Merevale please call 01827 874252 or email admin@kingbaxgroup.org.uk

## Atherstone Heritage Centre

Located in the vibrant historic hatting town of Atherstone, this volunteer-run local museum tells the story of the town and surrounding area from Roman times to the present day. The centre offers a rolling programme of special exhibitions exploring Atherstone's hat manufacturing industry, mining, pop manufacture and the overcrowded yards in which the workers lived.

Come and visit the centre or book a guided tour of the historic market town.

**Cost:** Donations appreciated. **Group size:** 10-20

**Location:** 51 Long Street, Atherstone, CV9 1AZ.

Number 6 on map

**Find out more:** www.facebook.com/AtherstonesHeritage

## St Mary's Church

Dating from 1086, St Mary's church has been at the centre of Atherstone life for nearly 1000 years. The church tells the history of the market town of Atherstone and the part the church played in its growth.

Groups of all ages are welcome to visit. Guided visits and talks can cover the town's social history as well as St Mary's life as a school; Henry VII and Florence Nightingale's visits; the magnificent 19th-century Kempe stained glass windows; HMS Atherstone and World War tributes.

**Cost:** From £1pp. Lunches available. **Group size:** <50

**Location:** The Market Place, Atherstone CV9 1EX.

Number 6 on map.

**T:** 07380966803 **E:** stone534@btinternet.com

**Website:** www.stmarysatherstone.co.uk

## Coleshill Heritage Walks

Uncover Coleshill's stories of stage coaching, the circus elephant, Typhoo tea and pillories in this two-mile guided stroll around the town. The walk takes in 12 talking points of heritage and historic interest, lasting between 90 and 120 minutes.

**Cost:** Free

**Group size:** Up to 20 per guide

**Location:** Coleshill Town Hall, High Street, Coleshill, B46 3BG. Number 2 on map

**T:** 01675 463326

**E:** info@coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk

**Website:** www.coleshilltowncouncil.gov.uk