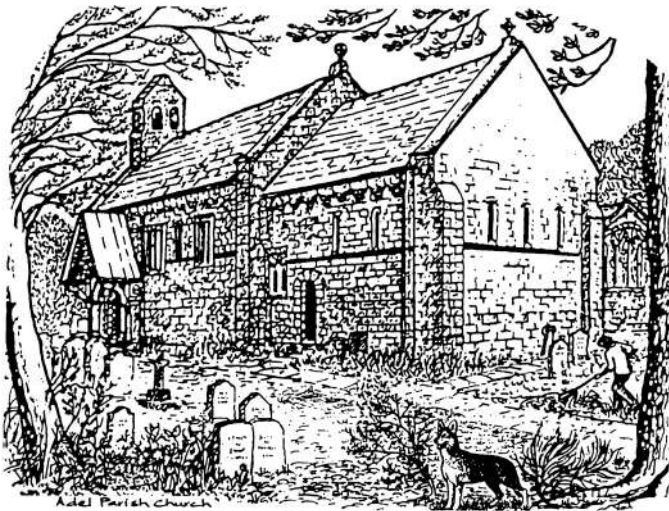


Help us keep our churchyard beautiful



A deadly disease is affecting our ash trees

Our churchyard ash trees are dying. They are increasingly being affected by Ash Dieback disease, which you may have heard about on the news. Sadly, they will have to be felled as they will become a safety risk. So far 6 trees have been affected, but all are likely to die. They will leave gaps that will take some time to fill.

Tree work also needs to be carried out on some of our other trees to keep them healthy and happy. And our elderly ride-on mower is pleading to be retired. So we are asking our community to join with us in raising money to help pay for this.

Why our churchyard is important

It is one of the few areas of countryside freely accessible to the people of Adel within the parish boundary. As more houses are built in the area it will become even more important as a tranquil and timeless haven, a peaceful spot for prayer or just to stroll in.



Tree creeper

We now recognise our churchyard is also important as a wildlife habitat. It has mature trees which support many varieties of insects, birds and small mammals including bats. It has some stands of plants that are the food plant of insects, butterflies and beetles. And it has a rare area of unimproved meadow with beautiful wildflowers and grasses.



Many of us found particular solace walking in the churchyard during the Covid isolations, and you may have visited either then or since, for outdoor services or community activities, to walk the dog, remember a loved one, or just to sit on a bench and absorb the peaceful atmosphere. Whatever the reason, you are most welcome.



What you can do

- Donate using the QR code on the back of this leaflet
- Get involved in further fundraising events
- look out for information on FB Adel Parish Church
- become a volunteer helping to keep our churchyard beautiful

Our churchyard habitat

There has been a church and churchyard here at Adel since Saxon times. The wooden church was in the care of the monks at the Priory of the Holy Trinity, York, who rebuilt Adel Church in local stone in c. 1150.

St John's churchyard has existed for over 1200 years. The oldest grave stones and a Cross Head (the shaft is missing) that were found here, are from the year 800 - & are now on display in Leeds City Museum (see p25 '*History of Adel*'). The Mounting Block, by the main gate, and 3 monuments in Adel Churchyard are Grade 2 listed.

The churchyard would presumably have been very similar to the general surrounding countryside, and many plants present in the churchyard might perhaps be survivors from those that were common at that time. One thing we can be sure of: unlike much agricultural land today, the churchyard has never been subjected to artificial fertilisers and pesticides which means that several species of fungi that require natural soil grow here.

Wildflowers

The plants around Adel are now so much reduced in numbers and variety it is probably impossible to discover what was there originally, but we can still see plants such as Cow Parsley, Hogweed, and the rather less common Pignut, here in the churchyard. The Bluebell and Wild Garlic which flower so profusely in the churchyard in May are also seen in places such as Adel Woods, but the patches of pretty April-flowering Wood Anemone that occur in several parts of the churchyard are not common elsewhere.



Other notable wildflowers we have include Foxglove and Garlic Mustard (aka Jack-by- the Hedge); this is

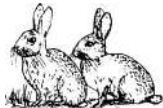
the larval foodplant of the Orange-tip Butterfly. And the native grasses in our unimproved churchyard meadow areas support the caterpillars of several other butterflies.

Why is planting yellow rattle so important?



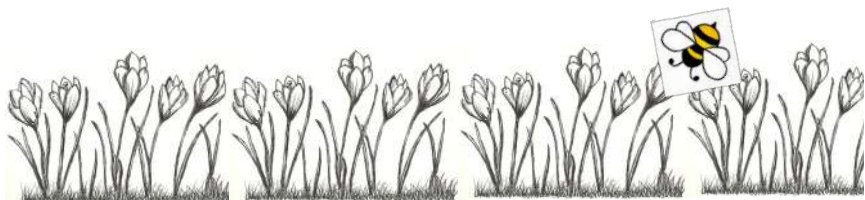
Over the last five years we have been deliberately introducing other wildflowers, especially the Yellow Rattle which has an important role in reducing the vigour of the meadow grasses. Our meadow areas are now mowed only in September to let wildflowers bloom and set seed. This enables yet more wildflowers to get established, so that the churchyard is able to support more species of butterflies and other insects.

In turn this means that more birds, bats and small mammals will make the churchyard their home.



Springtime bulbs

Everyone notices the swathes of Daffodils that appear each year in March and April, and these are known to have been planted by a former rector over several years. Earlier in the year we enjoy the nodding Snowdrops, and then the Crocuses which are such a useful food source for bees flying out on warm days. These too have been planted over the years by our volunteers.



Trees

We have over 130 trees in the churchyard. Most are native and all support a range of insects and also provide nesting opportunities for birds. Shrubby trees such as the Hawthorns in the hedges have been splendidly blossoming this year; a lovely sight and also providing food for insects in May. Some dead wood is left deliberately both as habitat for beetles and nests for solitary bees.



Two large trees near the church are of particular interest: just opposite the church door is a very tall Sycamore with two trunks (or is it two trees?) and down the footpath on the left is an Oak with a divided trunk, and a very wide spread of branches. This spread can be estimated by counting the flagstones, which are 2 feet wide, in the footpath alongside.

Oak trees are probably the most valuable trees in the churchyard because of the many insects that they support. Small birds feed their nestlings on the caterpillars of these insects which, if all goes well, emerge at about the same time as the young birds.

Later in the year we have fruiting plants including hawthorn, holly and bramble thickets around the churchyard that provide food for birds and small mammals, and of course acorns and conkers from our

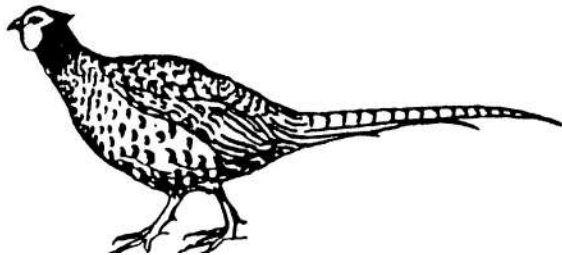
trees are buried as a winter food store by jays and squirrels.



Thank you

Thanks to kind donations we have been able to increase the appeal of our churchyard to wildlife by doing things like; putting up bird boxes, keeping our churchyard bird seed feeder regularly topped up, and planting wildflower seeds.

We also have a small group of volunteers who give up their time to help maintain the churchyard for us all. We are very grateful to everyone who contributes.



Please turn the page to find out how you can make a donation.

To donate to our church grounds fundraiser you can:-

Use this QR code in order to make an online payment



Or use this link:-

tinyurl.com/adelchurchyard

Or make a cash donation

Or send a cheque, made payable to Adel PCC to our church treasurer (address in Adel Bells)

**Adel Parish Church: part of Christ's family,
welcoming everyone, sharing God's love
and being a voice of hope**