



# PILGRIM TRAILS

October 2019

*Welcome to our newsletter - Pilgrim Trails.*

*This is our sixth publication charting the progress towards the completion of the 'Pilgrim Roots' Project.*

## PILGRIMS GALLERY at BASSETLAW MUSEUM is NOW OPEN!

An **exciting** and **innovative** new gallery has opened at Bassetlaw Museum in Retford, celebrating the life of William Brewster, one of the District's most famous sons.

The **Pilgrims Gallery** is part of a £750,000 **National Lottery**-funded project which commemorates the **400th anniversary of the Mayflower's voyage** to America in 1620. The Gallery was opened by **Dr Jeremy Bangs**, Director of The Leiden American Pilgrim Museum in the Netherlands, **John Everitt**, Committee member for the Midlands & East, representing The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, **Sir John Peace** and Chairman of Bassetlaw District Council, Cllr **Debbie Merryweather**.

The **Gallery** has **two sections**: one part is a reproduction of an early **17th century study** and the other is a **contemporary exhibition space**.

The study is not dissimilar to one which would have existed at **Scrooby Manor** where Brewster lived. In here, through a mirror, visitors see William recounting four stories: his early life in **North Nottinghamshire**; the reasons why the Separatists wished to break away from the Church of England; the life the Pilgrims experienced in **Leiden**, Holland and finally, the journey aboard the **Mayflower** and their later life in **America**. There is also a '**story chair**' where visitors can sit and listen to **King James** becoming angry with the Separatists; the child's voice of **Jonathan Brewster** talking about being forced to leave his home and everything he is familiar with; **Mary Brewster**, William's wife explaining her fears and also her faith, which enabled her to follow her husband to a new and unknown life ahead; and a further story from **a traveller** along the **Great North Road** who recounts the secretive and dangerous times that existed in 1608.



*Dr Jeremy Bangs officially opens the Pilgrims Gallery - left to right : John Everitt, representing National Lottery Heritage Fund, Sir John Peace, Lord-Lieutenant, Nottinghamshire, Dr Jeremy Bangs, Councillor Deborah Merryweather, Chairman of Bassetlaw District Council.*

The **exhibition space** includes interpretation highlighting the themes of **Religious Tolerance, Freedom and Migration**; challenges which are as relevant in today's world as they were when the Separatists fought for the right to practice their beliefs. There are panels that give more information on the **women** and **children** involved in the Pilgrim story, and others that tell of the **Wampanoag**, the **Native Americans** who lived in Massachusetts when the Mayflower landed in 1620. There are **dressing up costumes** for visitors of all ages, and old fashioned **games** such as Pilgrim dominoes contrast with quizzes on **modern tablets**. Bassetlaw District Council worked closely with Mike Oakenfull, the gallery designer, to ensure that visitors of whatever age would find the experience fun, **entertaining** and **thought-provoking**. Assigning children the character of one of the Mayflower's passengers for example, brings home to them the reality that half of the people who travelled on the ship died during that first winter in America.

**Bassetlaw District Council's** Deputy Leader Councillor **Jo White** said; "One of the features within the gallery that I am most proud of is how we have tackled telling the controversial aspects of the subject of colonisation. We have done this by **working closely** with the **Wampanoag nation** with whom we have built a **strong relationship** and they have written their own story and provided the images that accompany those panels".



**John Everitt**, Committee member for England: Midlands & East at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "It's **fantastic to see the gallery** opening in time for the landmark **Mayflower 400 anniversary** next year. With many of the **ship's passengers**, the Separatists, being from the **East Midlands**, the story of the Mayflower is intrinsic to the heritage of the area, and thanks to **National Lottery players** the inspiring stories of their journeys and pursuit of tolerance and freedom, will live on through the gallery."

The '**Pilgrim Roots**' made possible thanks to The National Lottery players, also includes the **upgrading of** an existing **Mayflower Trail** with new interpretation at **Babworth, Scrooby** and **Sturton-le-Steeple** in Nottinghamshire and **Austerfield** and **Gainsborough** in neighbouring counties; a **new website pilgrimroots.org** which is **now live**; an **exciting events calendar** associated with the **Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020** and the appointment of two additional members of staff, dedicated to improving the visitor experience and helping to tell the **story of North Nottinghamshire's Mayflower pilgrims** to the rest of the world.



*The NEW Pilgrims Gallery*

## NATIONAL LOTTERY PLAYERS – Visit Pilgrims Gallery and Pick Up Your Free Bookmark!

**Bassetlaw District Council** and our partners in the Pilgrim Roots project are extremely grateful to **National Lottery players**. They enable projects like ours to happen. As a way of thanking them, any visitors to the gallery that show they are National Lottery players will be given a free Pilgrims Gallery bookmark. **Visit Bassetlaw Museum shop** (where incidentally there are some very nice pilgrim related souvenirs on sale) or ask a member of the Gallery staff for your bookmark.





## New Pilgrims Trails Interpretation Panels Introduced

Visitors to **St Swithun's** in **Retford**, **All Saint's Church**, **Babworth**, **Sturton le Steeple** and **Austerfield** will see that new information boards have been installed in the nearby church yards. In **Scrooby** the boards can be found outside the **village hall** and in the grounds of **St Wilfrid's Church** and in **Gainsborough**, in the gardens of **Gainsborough Old Hall** and outside **United Reform Church**. Each panel gives details of specific parts of the wider Pilgrim story, so for example **Austerfield** very much focuses on **William Bradford's** life, both as a child in the village of Austerfield and his later life in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The **Pilgrim Trail** is part of the **Pilgrim Roots**, National Lottery Heritage Funded project.



One of the panels - St Helena's Church, Austerfield



### The Pilgrim 400 Apple Project

The **Pilgrim 400 Apple**, an unmatched variety, cultivated especially to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower journey in 2020. Grown by horticulturist **John Stirland**, the first apple was planted in the village of Scrooby, home of **Elder William Brewster** on 7th September 2019 by John himself and Nottinghamshire's Lord-Lieutenant, **Sir John Peace**.

Hereafter, Pilgrim 400 apple trees are to be planted in **18 different locations** during 2020. Each of these places are members of the **modern Mayflower Compact** and have their own unique story to tell.

The site of the second Pilgrim 400 Apple planting will be in **Leiden, Holland**, giving this project a truly international appeal.



## Greetings from the WAMPAHOAG NATION on the Opening of Pilgrims Gallery



**Bassetlaw District Council** has worked closely with representatives of the **Wampanoag nation** on the interpretation in **Pilgrims Gallery**. We are delighted with the result: beautifully illustrated stories told by **Native American people**, we are hopeful that we will have a visit in 2020 of some Wampanoag, watch this space. Meanwhile, **Simon Greaves**, Leader of Bassetlaw District Council read out a **message from the Wampanoag at Pilgrims Gallery opening**.

*"On behalf of the many citizens in the Wampanoag Nation that have participated in this project, I want to send our warmest congratulations to Bassetlaw District Council on the opening of the Pilgrims Gallery today. It has been a pleasure working with your team to ensure the exhibition tells our story accurately and is fully representative of the Wampanoag perspective. It was a true collaboration of efforts on both sides of the water and the result is a fascinating account of the historic events that have shaped the world we live in today. We are sorry that we could not physically be with you today, but wish you every success and hope our plans to personally tell our story in 2020 come to fruition."*



Plymouth Plantation



A Wampanoag Wetu

## Trails of Discovery at St Wilfrid's Church Scrooby



Ranskill Brownies at St Wilfrid's Church

In **July** the **Trails of Discovery** team for the **Arts Society Dukeries** launched a Children's Trail for **St Wilfrid's Trail, Scrooby**. **Ranskill Brownies** 'road tested' the trail which involves 13 questions that encourage children to **search for clues** around the church. There is also a word search to complete. **Rev'd Jackie McKenna** deemed the trail a great success and the Arts Society are now producing similar trails for the churches in Austerfield and Babworth. **Bassetlaw District Council** sponsored the printing of the trails.



## Pilgrim Roots Project welcomes new member of staff in time to welcome our first Gallery visitors.



**Isabelle Richards** has been appointed to the role of **Project Support Officer**; she is based in the Pilgrims Gallery and helps to **co-ordinate tours** of other local sites associated with the pilgrims, such as the **churches** where they preached and worshipped. Isabelle said "I am very pleased to be joining the museum team at this exciting time. I look forward to continuing to host visitors in the **fantastic new gallery** and encouraging them to follow the threads of the story out into the wider area."

On the 19th of September the **hard work** of people across the Pilgrim Roots team came to fruition in the official opening of the Pilgrims Gallery. Dignitaries, artists and campaigners gathered from across the region in order to celebrate the **gallery's completion** as a tangible step towards the commemorations in 2020. **Dr Jeremy Bangs** of the **Leiden American Pilgrim Museum**, who gave a talk to the assembled guests and ceremoniously **opened the gallery**, said that it is **as good as any Mayflower Pilgrim exhibit** he has seen in his 40 year career and the **best new one for 2020**.

There was the air of a festival at the gallery opening: the sun was kind to us, other **related projects** and their leaders showcased their work and plans in the **Bassetlaw Museum gardens**, and pilgrims in costume and character circulated with canapés. There were **queues to enter** the Pilgrims Gallery that day, and most guests only got a cursory tour of the exhibition which offers a great deal of detail. Since then, visitors have been able to **look around at a more leisurely pace**, appreciating the depth of the story as well as the design of this **engaging space**.

## New Chair of Pilgrim Fathers Origins Association



At its recent AGM, **Sue Allan** stepped down as Chairman of the **Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association** at Scrooby. Sue explained that the Association was formed by **Barry Bowles**, and while he served as a councillor for Bassetlaw he had excused himself from serving as Chair in order to preserve the Association's non-political affiliation stance. As Barry is no longer a serving councillor for the district, Sue felt it was fitting that, as **Mayflower 400th commemorations** approach, she would step down in favour of Barry to take his place at the helm.

Sue wished him all the best and added that she would now hold the position of **Vice Chair** and remain in the non-executive position as **Association Historian**. New Chairman **Barry Bowles** said 'I am absolutely delighted to take up this role, although Sue is a very hard act to follow. It is an **exciting time** for the Association and I thank members for trusting me to take us into 2020 and beyond'.

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