



Byron Vault - The entrance to the vault itself is under the floor near the pulpit and a floral tribute has been placed over a section of the exposed roof of the vault, under the wooden casing.



Floral tribute.

3.56pm - The Interment

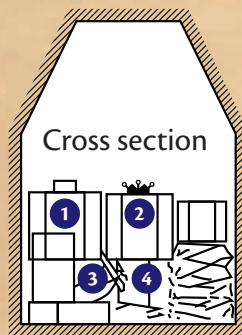
The coffin with his body, and urns containing Byron's heart and other organs, were carried down the steps into the vault. The committal prayer was read and the service ended at 4.10pm.

"The mourners stood for a few moments in silence gazing into the vault. Fletcher broke down completely. Tita staggered in his agony and had to clutch the back of a pew. Hobhouse tells that he was stunned. As they moved away, the stone slabs were replaced and the vault was sealed." *

*This excerpt is taken from *Byron and Where he is Buried*, by Thomas Gerrard Barber, vicar of St Mary Magdalene 1907-1946.

Inside the Byron Vault

It was begun by Sir John Byron (1599-1652) after he was created the First Lord Byron by Charles I. Sir John had been a successful Royalist general during the English Civil War. He died in France in exile after the king's execution so he was never buried here, but his second wife and all successive barons up until the poet are interred, along with family members. Three of them have a particularly close relationship to him.



- 1 The poet's coffin
- 2 Ada Lovelace's coffin
- 3 The Wicked Lord's coffin
- 4 Catherine, the poet's mother's coffin

William Byron, the 'Wicked' 5th Baron Byron (1722-1798) - The Poet's Great Uncle and Predecessor (coffin 3)

His reputation for wickedness began in 1765 when he killed his cousin William Chaworth in a duel. He lavished a fortune on Newstead Abbey. He created the lake and two small forts equipped with real cannon, where he held mock naval battles involving his own twenty-gun schooner. Later in life he was in serious financial trouble, and suffered mental instability. Reclusive, he entertained himself by training 'racing' crickets while Newstead crumbled about him.

Catherine Byron, (1764-1811) - The Poet's Mother (coffin 4)

Born Catherine Gordon, she was a Scottish heiress who married John 'Mad Jack' Byron, debt-ridden nephew of the 'Wicked' Lord Byron. He promptly spent her inheritance and left for France where he died. Catherine found life difficult after that, with little income and a young, disabled son. Her financial situation was not improved much by her son inheriting the ruined Newstead Estate. It led to a precarious existence for the young Byron in various rented houses.

Ada Lovelace, (Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace) (1815-1852) - The Poet's Daughter (coffin 2)

She was Byron's only legitimate child, the product of his ill-fated marriage to Annabella Millbanke. She was the last Byron to be laid to rest in the vault. You can find out more about Ada and the circumstances leading to her burial here in the souvenir leaflet dedicated to her.



South Transept - Here you will find a panel highlighting more of the life, character and legacy of Lord Byron and the Romantic Age.

Now your pilgrimage has ended, you can find out more about Byron, St Mary Magdalene church and its people, by accessing the QR codes on the tables in the refreshments area.

Scan this QR code to view a souvenir of your visit to St Mary Magdalene Church.



There is more to discover about St Mary Magdalene Church and its people.

There are two other pilgrimage trail leaflets to follow around the church.

There are two souvenir leaflets for the two other most famous burials here.

 St Mary Magdalene Church, Hucknall	 St Mary Magdalene Charles Eamer Kempe	 St Mary Magdalene Ada Lovelace	 St Mary Magdalene Ben Caunt
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Plus a host of other Hucknall characters and significant aspects of Hucknall's story.

 ERIC COATES	 OPUS SECTILES	 MINING	 ROBIN BAILEY	 SAM WELLER WIDDOWSON	 FRAME KNITTING
 DR. OTTO WALLEN	 ROLLS-ROYCE	 THOMAS CECIL HOWITT	 ZACHARIAH GREEN	 FRANZ VON WERRA	 NATIONAL SCHOOL

Special thanks for help in the preparation of this material to: Geoffrey Bond OBE, DL, and Ken Purslow.



For up to date information on our church's activities, please visit www.hucknallparishchurch.org.uk
Ask a steward for a large print version of this guide.

Courtesy of Nottingham City Council and www.picturethepast.org.uk



St Mary Magdalene
LORD BYRON

Byron Pilgrimage

An interactive tour of St Mary Magdalene Church, the burial place of the poet Lord Byron.



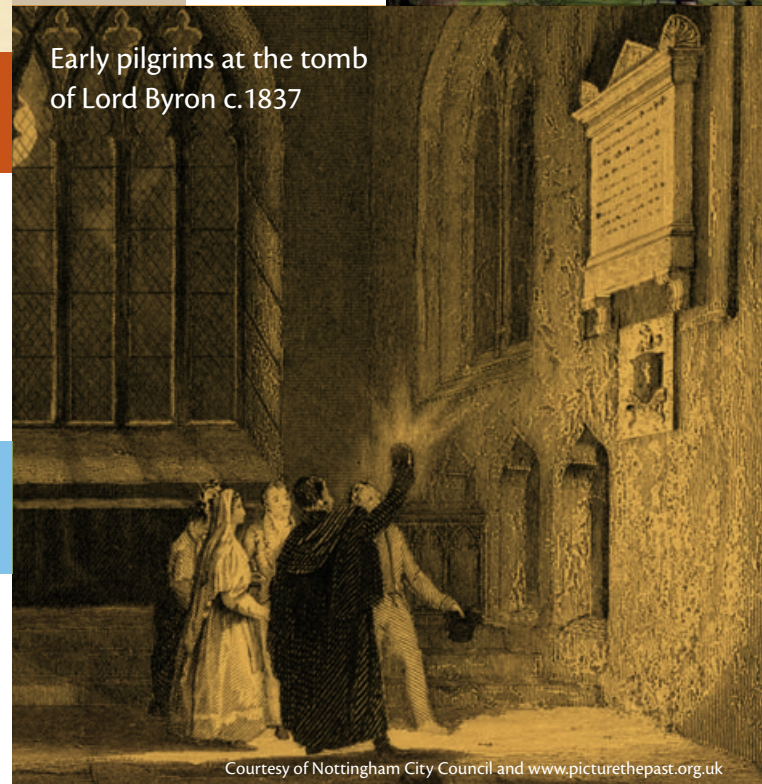
St Mary Magdalene Church, Hucknall



LOTTERY FUNDED



Early pilgrims at the tomb of Lord Byron c.1837



Courtesy of Nottingham City Council and www.picturethepast.org.uk

The pilgrimage leads you around the church to Byron's last resting place. Follow the route, find the numbered locations, scan the QR codes. www.hucknallparishchurch.org.uk





St Mary Magdalene
LORD BYRON



Lord Byron (1788-1824) – poet and icon of the Romantic Age found rest here at St Mary Magdalene Church. It had been a short life but a long pilgrimage of self-discovery. He had wandered across Europe in self-imposed exile and explored the boundaries of socially acceptable behaviour on a spiritual quest, searching for meaning to his life. He finally found it in the struggle to liberate his beloved Greece, sacrificing his life to that cause before his body returned here to the Byron family vault.

Your Byron pilgrimage

At each location on the pilgrimage, there is a sign like this with its number and a QR code. Scan the codes to find out more.

You can download a free QR Code reader from the App Store or Google Play.



Baptistry - Here you will find gifts given to the church in Byron's memory and other objects related to the poet, including the Byron hatchment; a wooden panel given by the poet's mother bearing the Byron coat of arms.



Site of the old Porch - The porch where Byron's coffin was carried into the church for his funeral used to be just here. The church was much smaller then. The south aisle was added in 1871, and the porch was moved stone by stone to where it is now.

*"So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright."*

Byron's Funeral - Friday 16th July, 1824

3.30pm - The Arrival

Byron's funeral cortège was met in the churchyard by the Rev. Charles Nixon. The coffin was led into the tiny church just here which was already packed with people.



Tower - Here you will find the story of how Byron's difficult childhood affected his development.

*"In Nottingham county there lives at Swine Green,
As curst an old lady as ever was seen;
And when she does die, which I hope will be soon,
She firmly believes she will go the moon."*



Byron, aged 19.
© Private collection.



The Nave - This is where Byron's coffin rested during the funeral service. The length of the church was greatly increased in 1881, and like the porch before it, the chancel was moved stone by stone much further east. So the coffin would have been placed at the edge of the old chancel not far from the entrance to the Byron vault.

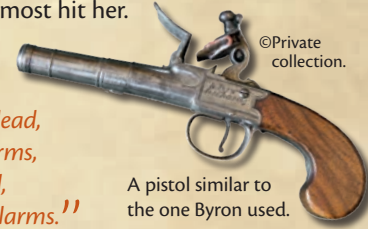
3.35pm - The Service

The chief mourners on the day had to push their way through the crowded church to the front. Attending were Colonel Thomas Wildman (the new owner of Newstead Abbey), Colonel George Leigh (Byron's brother-in-law), John Cam Hobhouse (a constant friend he had known since his student days in Cambridge) and John Hanson. Hanson was officially the family lawyer but he had known Byron his entire life; Hanson's wife had recommended the midwife who delivered the poet. Always in the background taking care of things, Hanson was the nearest thing Byron ever had to a father figure.

Also present were an exotic group of personal servants, who had accompanied him back from Greece. They had been more like friends and were deeply affected. A 'poor black servant', probably Benjamin Lewis, never took his eyes off the coffin. 'Tita' Falcieri who came from a family of Venetian gondoliers, 'seemed as if he were a stranger and friendless'. William Fletcher had been a farmer on the Newstead estate until 1808 when he became Byron's valet and constant companion; he had to withdraw from the front and support himself on a pillar, being so grief-stricken.



Memorial to Ann Jackson - The highest stone memorial on the wall here in the North Transept remembers Ann Jackson, a girlfriend of Byron when he lived at Burgage Manor in Southwell. She lived to be only 30 years old but almost didn't make it even to that age. In a shooting accident, Byron almost hit her. He immortalised the near miss in a poem.



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*"Doubtless, sweet girl! the hissing lead,
Wafting destruction o'er thy charms,
And hurtling o'er thy lovely head,
Has fill'd that breast with fond alarms."*

A pistol similar to the one Byron used.



Dedications - This marble panel in this corner of the Lady Chapel has a list of quotations by many famous people who either knew Byron or were influenced by his life and work.



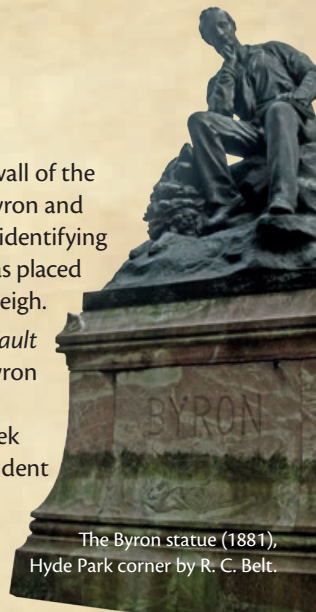
Greek Marble - A dedication slab in the floor of the chancel is made from the same stone that forms the base of the statue of Byron at Hyde Park Corner, London. It is Greek marble donated by the king and people of Greece in 1881, in grateful memory of Byron's iconic role in the cause of their independence. It is sited over Byron's coffin in the vault beneath.

*"Awake! (not Greece - she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake
And then strike home!"*



The Byron Tablet - On the wall of the chancel, below a profile of Byron and above the vault, is the tablet identifying Byron's last resting place. It was placed there by his half sister, Augusta Mary Leigh.

Below in the case is a facsimile of the *Vault Visitors' Book*, recording the earliest Byron pilgrims. These included Count Pietra Gamba, comrade of Byron on the Greek campaign; Martin Van Buren, 8th President of the United States; and Washington Irving, author of *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.



The Byron statue (1881),
Hyde Park corner by R. C. Bell.