

# Village Churches and their Communities: 'lifecycles' in village churches and village society in medieval England



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## **Village Churches and their Communities: 'lifecycles' in village churches and village society in medieval England**

**Tutor:** Dr John Hunt, BA, PhD, FSA, FRHistS, PGCE.

Informed by examples and case studies drawn mainly from the western midlands, this course is structured around the notion of a 'lifecycle' that may be typically applied to most of the region's rural parish churches, in whole or in part, over the centuries between the Norman Conquest and the Reformation.

Commencing with the foundation, patronage and endowment of churches, we will look at how parish churches had to manage their relationships with other churches and interested parties, and at their construction and dedication, patronal saints, and their achievement, or otherwise, of parish status. A core theme in this course will also be a discussion of the 'clerical establishment' in parish churches. What clergy typically served a medieval parish, and what was their background and relationship with their parishioners? These and associated issues, including the relationship between the parish and the manor court, will be considered.

The ways by which churches might be transferred from one patron to another, and the potential implications, will be discussed, as will be the impact on parish churches of new theological thinking about the sacraments between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, reflected in fonts and altars. We will also explore the extent to which parish church building may be taken as a reliable barometer of prosperity with medieval communities, and the impact that the Reformation had on parishes.

In addition to the buildings themselves, the course will draw upon a range of documentary sources, among them the records left by episcopal visitations of the parishes in the dioceses of Hereford, Lichfield and Coventry, and Worcester. This course picks up and develops themes and material introduced in a previous Portcullis History Study Day, *Village Churches and Village Society in Medieval England* (November 2017), but attendance on this previous course is not essential.

**10am till 4pm**  
**FEES: £60.00 (Payable in advance)**