



SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL

A PLACE FOR ALL PEOPLE

A 'Little Mester's' Story

Nah then, my name's Jack and I'm a Little Mester – aye, that's right, a Little Mester. That's what they call us Sheffield craftsmen, and every one of us is a master of his trade. We were the backbone of Sheffield's cutlery industry back in my day. My workshop were in the shadow of this great building and it's where I used to grind blades made from the finest Sheffield steel.

There's nothing I admire more than good craftsmanship. On days when I come in this church, I like to have a look round and see the fine workmanship that's gone into this building over the centuries – look closely as you walk around and you'll see what I mean.

Did you look up when you walked in? That Lantern window with its coloured glass, letting the light flow into the building – wonderful piece of work that is, some real skill went into installing that. There's some great craftsmanship gone into all the stained glass windows, you know. Make sure you don't miss the ones in St George's Chapel – I reckon we must be the only church in the country with a stained glass window of a polar bear! The chap who designed them, Keith New – great craftsman he was.

There's a lot more to look at, believe me, old and new. Have you seen the pulpit? Lovely piece of work, carved out of English oak. Have a look at the figures on it and see if you can spot Saints Peter and Paul – they're who this church is named after. 'Course, time's moved on and the church is a cathedral now and has been for a hundred years. Take a look at the bishop's throne further up the building, that's carved from oak too, lovely workmanship.

Up at the east end there's some fine masonry dating right back to Norman times, if you know where to look. Have a close look at the wall up at the far end and you'll notice some patterned stones in a zig-zag or dog-tooth pattern – a thousand years old, they are – imagine what work went in to carving them, they must have only had some pretty basic tools back then. I wonder if those Norman stonemasons ever thought that people would be admiring their workmanship a thousand years on?

But before you go, you must take a look at the Sheffield Nativity – as a steelman myself it's one of my favourites – made from sheet steel it is, and all the detail is summat to see. Good to see that Sheffield craftsmanship still lives on!

Anyhow, you make sure you spend a bit of time having a good look round, there's a lot more than I've had time to tell you about. A thousand years of fine craftsmanship's gone into this building and it makes me proud to be from Sheffield when I see it.