

# Friends and volunteers fight to restore medieval site



**HELPING HAND:** Helen Walker in the rubble bucket chain. (03224333)

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**Volunteers are continuing their battle to keep a historic castle site looking its best.**

The Friends of St Mary's Community Heritage site joined forces with English Heritage to restore the medieval motte at Castle Hall Hill.

The motte is a raised mound at the back of St Mary's Church, where a wooden keep stood almost 1,000 years ago.

Twelve volunteers, including offenders on community payback, turned out at the weekend to remove logs, clear litter and repair an area of the mound which had collapsed.

The monument was first identified as being 'at risk' in 2004, as vegetation, trees, and bracken had grown all over the site, threatening the archaeology and making it unrecognisable.

Since then, with a grant



**HISTORIC SITE:** The motte where the timber keep originally stood. (03224333)

from English Heritage and local fundraising, the group raised enough money to clear the site and reveal the mound and ditch.

Helen Walker, of the Friends, said: "We recognise that our local history is so important to understanding our heritage. As a group of dedicated volunteers, the Friends believe that by restoring and

cutting and spraying saplings, bracken and brambles to replace them with flowers will gradually restore the monument for people to enjoy.

The Friends also hope to install a viewing platform and carry out repairs to the wall on Dunbottle Lane. They have already installed signage and information boards, with funds from Mirfield Town Council, to help explain the importance of the motte to Mirfield.

Town councillor David Pinder also contributed money from the Mayors' Fund to help the group with their ambitions. He said: "I'm delighted that such an enthusiastic group of people have come together and achieved so much in such a short space of time.

"Many people living in Mirfield have no idea of our history so it is particularly pleasing that this group are being so successful and industrious in bringing our history back to life."

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