Breedon priory church of Saint Mary

and Saint Hardulph stands on the site of an

iron age

fort evidence of the ditch and bank

system

can still be seen pottery fines

excavated here

show that the hill was occupied since at

least the first century

bc in fact a polished stone axe head

of the new stone age or early bronze

period

some 3000 years old was found during

the building

of the Saint Hardulph school and community

centre

this priory church is thought to be the

oldest religious site in Leicestershire

it was founded as a monastery in the 7th

century

and contains the largest collection and

some of the finest examples

of Anglo-Saxon sculpture the most famous

of which

is the Breedon angel which can be found

just through these doors

a copy of the breed and angel sculpture

can be seen inside the church

the original is in safe keeping

the monastery fell into disrepair after

Viking raids

and was rebuilt in the 12th and 13th

century

when the priory was finally closed down

during the dissolution of the

monasteries in the 16th century

a local wealthy landowner Francis

Shirley

bought the priory as a burial place for

his own family

his effigy is seen here lying beside

that of his wife

the Shirley family are still prominent

in the village of Breedon

this macabre alabaster tomb is the final

resting place of George Shirley

he had it carved 20 years before his

death in 1622.

it consists of two tiers with effigies

of babies

praying above the skeleton which

presumably

represents George himself parts of the

old priory can still be seen

in this church today

the surround of this door has both Saxon

and Norman elements

you'll also see that it has a brand new

door and already

that is part of this building's history

like many old churches Breedon has its

own interesting sundial

this grave belongs to John Johnson who

is the esteemed and faithful servant

of the honourable Lawrence Shirley the

fourth Earl

Ferrous what the stone doesn't say

is that Earl Ferrous actually shot john

Johnson

and john died soon after from his

injuries

and for this act earl Ferris became

the last English peer to be hanged

the church is still a working place of

worship in the village of Breedon on

the hill

for those of you who are interested in

the origin of place names

bree is a Celtic word for hill don

is an old English name for hill and it's

on a hill

so we really are on the hill on

the hill

on the hill