

Churchyard Enhancement Project Completion Report

All Saints Church Shipdham Churchyard Enhancement Project (CEP) End of Project Report

Introduction

All Saints Church Shipdham is a Church of England 13th Century Grade I listed medieval Church sited in the middle of Shipdham village, adjacent to the A1075 Dereham – Watton road. The Church provides a focal point for the village and, in addition to traditional pastoral functions, hosts a range of social and artistic activities for the benefit of the village community. The Church maintains close links with the village school, a Church School; Thomas Bullock Voluntary Aided Primary School Shipdham.

Although the Churchyard, and the Churchyard wall are owned by the Church, following closure of the Churchyard in 1877 by Order in Council, the legal responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of both Churchyard and wall passed to the Shipdham Parish Council (PC). In 2000, or thereabouts, the PC recognised that the condition of the wall was deteriorating to a position where restoration action was necessary. A study carried out by Norfolk Property Services confirmed the need for early action to halt the continuing decay of the wall; eventually it was jointly agreed between the PC and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) that the best way forward was to retain the services of the All Saints Church architect, Mr David Aldridge RIBA, to prepare the drawings and specifications required to obtain the requisite Faculty through the Diocesan Advisory Committee to authorise the restoration work for the wall and to obtain quotations from suitably qualified contractors..

At around the same time, the PC offered to fund the floodlighting of the Churchyard with the twin aims of enhancing the beauty of the Church at night, and improving the security of the Churchyard and the Church at night.

Taken together, the above undertakings required a coordinated approach, both to identify and seek the necessary funding, and to put in place an organisation which, under the joint authority of the PC and the PCC, could manage and control the implementation of what would evidently be a major project.

Formation and organisation of the CEP

Following initial informal discussions with the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI), it was apparent that some form of project organisation would need to be set up to enable a valid application to be made to the LHI for a grant. The LHI (Mr Wall) made it clear that, to qualify for a grant, the village community would need to be involved so far as possible to enhance both community spirit and to promote an awareness of the village heritage. Consequently, in May-June 2004, the Churchyard Enhancement Project was set up with the initial objective of preparing and submitting a comprehensive application to the LHI for a grant. A CEP Group was formed to take the project and the grant application forward..

This Group consisted of:

A Chairman.	Cllr Paul Hewett
A PC/PCC Coordinator	Mrs Joanne Kidd
A Treasurer	Mr Peter Dodd
A Project Administrator	Mr Brian Kidd

Additional members to be co-opted as necessary

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(At the time of writing, the CEP Group is still in existence with its original members)

Following wide-ranging discussions with a number of village organisations and groups, a comprehensive application was assembled for submission not only to the LHI, but also to other grant organisations, including Breckland District Council, Dereham Community Chest and WREN. These applications were submitted in July 2004, but only the application to the LHI was successful. In their letter of 15 October 2004, the LHI advised that the CEP application had been successful, with the award of a grant of £24,974, just a few pounds short of the maximum of £25000.

Funding sources – LHI/HLF, Parish Council, PCC, etc.

The LHI grant of very nearly £25000, together with the promise of additional funding from the PC and the PCC to a total of £40,000 allowed the project to proceed. However, the project suffered an initial set-back when it became apparent (from experience elsewhere) that the contractor selected for the wall would not be satisfactory for the restoration work to ensure the quality required for a listed ancient flint wall. Consequently, it became necessary to obtain a further three contractor quotations, which resulted in the selection of Simon Williams, Anglia Flint, as the contractor for the restoration of the wall. This selection was endorsed by the Breckland Council Conservation Officer. However, all three quotations were considerably more costly than the quotation from the previous unsatisfactory contractor. This required the promise of additional funding from both the PC and the PCC. These promises were forthcoming and, following an on-site meeting 11 May 2005 with Mr Wall of the LHI, he agreed that the project was viable for the restoration work on the wall to go ahead, together with the other elements of the whole CEP.

Consents, Timescales

Faculties were required for both the Churchyard floodlighting and the restoration of the wall from the Chancellor via the Diocesan Advisory Committee. In addition, Breckland Council, rather late in the day, advised that Planning Permission would be required for the siting of the Churchyard floodlighting. All these consents were obtained before the CEP application to the LHI was submitted in July 2004.

The LHI set a project duration of three years i.e. a completion date of 31 October 2007. However, unforeseen problems with the wall restoration made it necessary to request an extension of the project duration (letter to Heritage Lottery Fund – HLF (3 Oct 07) and this was agreed as a project completion date of 31 October 2008. For the same reason, an extension of the wall restoration Faculty was agreed to mid November 2008.

Community/ Group Involvement.

An essential part of the whole CEP was, and is, the involvement of members of the village community, both as groups and individuals. Annexes A to H (illustrated with photographs) cover the activities of the CEP groups relating to these activities – some are complete, some will, by their nature, be ongoing beyond the ‘official’ project completion date. In this context, the help of Mrs Anne Mason of the LHI must be recognised – both prior to the submission of the LHI application and with subsequent assistance to some of the activities listed below:

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- Shipdham Thomas Bullock Primary School Annex A
(David Saunders)
- Wives Group – Research into Village and Church History Annex B
(Wendy Dole)
- Twinning Association Annex C
(John Doel)
- Horticultural Society Annex D
(Keith Wood)
- British Legion Annex E
(Bill Fawcett)
- Art/Illustrations Annex F
(Bill Fawcett)
- USAAF 44th Bomb Group Annex G
(Brian Kidd)

Professional Involvement

The nature of the CEP was such that professional and contractor help was essential
This help is covered in the following Annexes:

- Churchyard wall Annex H
(Brian Kidd)
- Flood lighting Annex J
(Brian Kidd)
- Contractors Annex K
(Brian Kidd)
- Architect Annex L
(David Aldridge)

Project Funding.

As mentioned above unforeseen, and unforeseeable, problems with the restoration of the wall – ingress of moisture – ivy attacking the internal structure – led to both an increase in project duration and, inevitably, project costs. This required an increase in the funding necessary to underwrite the project.

In broad terms, the agreed funding was;

LHI/HLF	£25000
Parish Council	£39000 (including £4000 previous insurance payment)
Parochial Church Council	£24000
Sales, donations, etc.	£5000
Total	£93000

Project Costs

At the time of writing, it is difficult to be precise about final overall project costs. The bulk of invoices have been paid, (about £4000 outstanding), but there are significant sums to be recovered, from a combination of an outstanding insurance claim (submitted in June 2007 in respect of impact damage to the wall) and recovery of VAT. Depending on the satisfaction of the insurance claim, the sum to be recovered could be as much as £17000.

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Summary of Progress – October 2004 to October 2008

The status and progress of the CEP has been reported quarterly to the LHI/HLF on the LHI Progress Reports (LHI 3PR). In addition, the minutes of the (approximately) quarterly meetings of the CEP participants have been forwarded to the LHI/HLF. Monthly reports are submitted to the PC and, where appropriate, to the PCC.

The status of the various CEP activities are set out in the Annexes above, but in summary:

Churchyard floodlighting	Complete
Planting up of Churchyard with bulbs, trees,	Complete
Restoration of Churchyard wall	Estimate complete by end Oct 08
Research into history of village/church/buildings	Virtually complete. Draft illustrated booklet in hand
Shipdham Primary School	Visits to Churchyard completed and ongoing
Shipdham Heritage Centre	Permanent CEP displays will be set up Winter 2008/9
Art/Illustrations	Mr Dickerson's Shipdham paintings used for production of postcards and calendars
Twinning Association	Links involving CEP established with Noyant la Gravoyere
USAAF 44 th Bomb Group	Links established with Veterans Association
PR	CEP activities publicised with media, etc.

Conclusion

The CEP has been a long, challenging, but rewarding project. It is believed that the CEP will have met the objectives agreed with the LHI/HLF in bringing together members of the village community to make a major and lasting contribution to the heritage of Shipdham village.

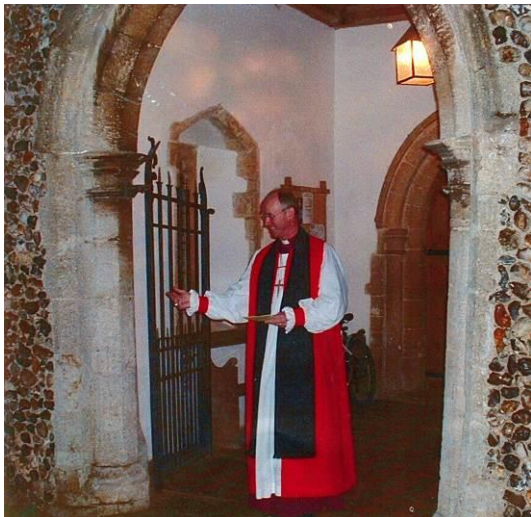
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Floodlighting

Annexe J

In 1999, the Shipdham Parish Council proposed to provide and install two floodlights in the Shipdham All Saints Churchyard as a Millennium gift. The aims of the floodlighting were twofold; first to enhance the beauty of the medieval church and the churchyard at night and, secondly, to improve the security of the churchyard, particularly for pedestrians in the hours of darkness. Although welcomed, the proposal immediately ran into trouble at the application for a Faculty stage because of concerns over design, installation and electrical integrity

However, once the Norwich electrical contractors, AA Electrics were retained and with design support from Mr. Norman Christmas, good progress was made with the design and installation of five floodlights



carefully sited to give the most effective illumination of the Church and Churchyard. It was soon found that some of the wiring and components of the Church's electrical system would have to be upgraded to cater for the additional electrical loads. This was efficiently accomplished by AA Electrics and, with help from local contractors Larwood Digger Hire to dig trenches for external cables, the floodlighting system was trialled and commissioned by Christmas 2004. The new floodlights were officially 'switched on' at a special service conducted by the Bishop of Lynn.

Since then, the floodlights have proved a great success and undoubtedly meet the original aims envisaged by the Parish Council. Every month, one or more members of the local community contribute a total of £30 to sponsor the operation of the floodlights.



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Shipdham Horticultural Society

Annexe D

It was suggested during the early planning stages of the project that some landscaping should be included to form an attractive setting for the newly-restored Church wall, the floodlighting and the other improvements included within the programme and the Shipdham Horticultural Society was asked if it would be prepared to oversee and organise the work. The offer was gladly accepted and their Chairman was co-opted onto the Management Committee. After discussion, it was decided that the appropriate planting would be to flank the pathway through the churchyard with daffodils; replace some ailing trees, add more; under plant with snowdrops; and, subsequently, to intersperse the repositioned gravestones with drifts of crocus. To help finance the project and to provide an opportunity to involve the community, individual plots each one yard square on both sides adjacent to the pathway were offered for sponsorship. Each sponsor was given the opportunity to dedicate the plot to a much-loved friend or relative or commemorate a notable-occasion, with details of each sponsor and the dedication to be recorded permanently in a Book of Remembrance to be on show in the Church itself and in the Heritage Centre maintained by the Royal British Legion.



A sponsor for each plot was readily found, the bulbs were purchased in bulk, divided up to provide the correct number for each plot and planted at community sessions. Each sponsor was given the opportunity, if he or she so wished, to make the sponsorship even more individual by planting the appropriate plot personally. These sessions, manned by both members of the Society and many other volunteers, turned hard work into very enjoyable occasions and emphasised the involvement of local people and organisations. In the event, nearly 200 plots of daffodils have been planted, together with 10 much larger drifts of crocus and a dozen or more beds of snowdrops - something over 12,000 bulbs in all. It is hoped to extend the crocus planting in the near future.

The planting has not only greatly improved the attractiveness of the Church and its surroundings, it has in addition contributed some £2000 towards the cost of the Project as a whole. It would be invidious to name individual sponsors, who included school children and other residents within the village; voluntary and commercial organisations; and former villagers but perhaps one notable name may be mentioned, the United States 50 Bomb Group who were stationed at Shipdham aerodrome during the Second World War and who made a generous contribution to make the support international. The generosity is typified by the anonymous donations which were made towards the cost of the bulbs themselves.



There is no question that the project has been an enormous success in many directions. Local residents now value even more than they did "their" Churchyard, whether or not they worship there- the centre of the village has been greatly improved in appearance as the photographs demonstrate – and the footpath through the Churchyard, much used as the link between the two halves of Shipdham, is now much more inviting during the day and much less daunting after dark. The Shipdham Horticultural Society is proud to have been given the opportunity to be involved in such a worthwhile project..

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Churchyard Wall

Annexe H

Probably built around 1800, this ancient wall surrounds the Churchyard, and is a magnificent rubble flint wall of traditional construction. By the mid 1990s, the wall was showing marked signs of deterioration and evidence of a number of sub standard ad hoc repairs. This state of affairs was recognised by the



Parish Council of the time, though initial attempts to initiate a repair programme stalled through lack of funds, and the need to obtain a Faculty from the Diocesan authorities. It was then agreed that the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council would work together to initiate a restoration programme. Accordingly, the All Saints Church Architect, Mr. David Aldridge, prepared the necessary specifications and drawings and obtained contractor quotations to obtain a Faculty for the restoration of the wall. Once this was granted, and the necessary funding was put in place, Simon Williams, Anglia Flint was selected as the wall restoration contractor, with David Aldridge acting as supervising architect. Target date for completion of the restoration work was October 2007. Simon Williams was selected because his quotation was acceptable, and he had an excellent reputation as a first rate craftsman highly experienced in the specialised task of flintwork; this was endorsed by the Breckland Council Conservation Officer.

Work started on the wall in Spring 2005; initially, progress was quite good, Simon Williams taking care to maintain traditional methods of repair, coupled with extremely high quality standards. However, it soon became apparent that the internal, and hidden, condition of some parts of the wall was much worse than originally envisaged, with ivy and ingress of moisture taking their toll on the internal rubble core. For some wall panels, this deterioration was so bad that the complete wall panel had to be taken down and rebuilt from scratch with a new brick core. In addition there were some incidents of vehicle impact damage, including one serious incident where a complete panel was virtually demolished by impact damage by an unidentified agricultural vehicle. The Police were unable to identify a culprit, and insurance claim action is ongoing. All this, coupled with some unseasonable weather, made it apparent that the target date of October 2007 could not be achieved and, with HLF agreement, the date was extended to October 2008.



Further complications arose in the Autumn of 2007. Norfolk County Council decided that the A1075 main road running adjacent to the south churchyard wall should be resurfaced. This entailed closing the road for some weeks - although this allowed Simon Williams and his team to work free from the normal flow of traffic of a very busy main road, this had to be done close to some very large and noisy road surfacing equipment. And this exercise had to be repeated in early summer of 2008, when it was necessary to institute single lane closure for four weeks to allow repair work to be completed on the south face of the wall adjacent to the A1075



However, after four building seasons, 2005 to 2008 inclusive, the wall restoration is complete. It can now be said that the wall has been restored to its former magnificence, with restoration work of a uniformly high quality. So long as the wall is now looked after, it will last for generations to be a lasting part of the Shipdham village heritage.



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USAAF

Annexe G

Some sixty-four years after he was flying in Liberators from Shipdham Airfield during the War, Lee Aston returned from his home in the USA to pay homage at the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) 44th Bomb Group Memorial in All Saints' Churchyard. After being entertained at the airfield, Lee and his wife Mary were escorted to the memorial by Paul Hewett and Brian Kidd, who are chairman and co-ordinator respectively of the Churchyard Enhancement Project (CEP), and by



parish council chairman David Hill. Captain Aston, as he then was, flew on thirty-five missions with No. 67 Squadron out of Shipdham as a navigator (he later became a pilot) and emerged unscathed unlike many of his colleagues who were lost over Germany. On returning to America after the War, Mr. Aston took a law degree and achieved doctorates in mining engineering and geology - one of which was from Aston University in England - and subsequently practised as an environmental and mining attorney in his home town of Elberton, Georgia, before retiring some

years ago. This is not the first visit he and his wife have made to Shipdham but he feels that he probably won't want to make the long journey again. Later, Mr. Aston, a director of the 14th Bomb Group Veterans' Association, was shown the churchyard wall which is being refurbished under the CEP and he was thanked for the generous contribution the Association had made to it.

During World War II, the USAAF 44th Bomb Group was stationed at Shipdham Airfield flying Liberator bombers. Many sorties were flown from Shipdham, and many American aircrew lost their lives as a



result of bombing operations against Germany. Following the end of the war, the USAAF 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association was formed. The Association maintained close links with Shipdham, with regular visits to the village and the Airfield; in 19.. the Association presented a fine marble memorial tablet to All Saints Church to commemorate those American aircrew who lost their lives during the war. The Association took a keen interest in the activities of the CEP and, in 2006, made a gift of \$1000 to project funds. In 2007, some 64 years after flying in Liberators from Shipdham, Capt Lee Aston and his wife Mary returned to Shipdham and the Churchyard to revisit old haunts, and to learn about the activities of the CEP. The photo shows Lee and his wife beside the 44th Bomb Group memorial. On his return to the USA, Lee made a personal financial contribution to the project.

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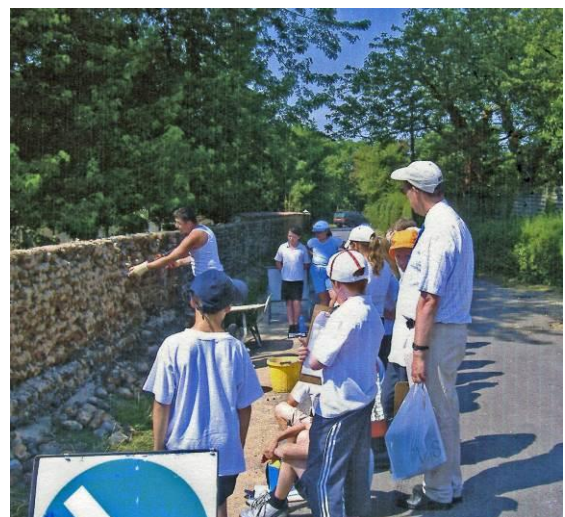
Thomas Bullock Primary School Shipdham

Annexe A

The school has used the opportunities which have arisen as a result of the project to enhance the curriculum which we offer to the children at the school.

Key features of this curriculum enhancement include

- Visits to the site to watch the wall builder at work
- Discussions with the wall builder about the use of suitable materials. The children asked the builder many questions about his work and construction methods
- Follow up work in science about the use of materials
- Watching the builder at work and gaining an appreciation of traditional building skills. A number of children were inspired to think about taking this up as a career!
- Lichen survey in the churchyard. Looking at the difference in lichen cover on old parts of the wall and newly restored areas
- Mini-beast hunt - finding out which creatures use the wall and other areas of the churchyard as their habitat.
- Further research at school on habitats
- Art work inspired by the churchyard including patterns in the wall



Although restoration of the wall is nearing completion we hope to continue using this valuable educational resource in the future to enhance the learning opportunities for the children at the school. We hope that this will give the children some sense of ownership of the village churchyard so that they help to care for the wall and churchyard in future years

David Saunders

Headteacher

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Shipdham Twinning Association

Annexe C

Shipdham Twinning Association was first approached by the Churchyard Enhancement Committee (CEP) with a view to producing a record of the twinning for a time capsule. We contacted our twinned village in France, Noyant la Gravoyère, about providing material for this venture for which they showed great enthusiasm. Subsequently, in 2005, they presented a plaque celebrating the 20 years of twinning to be mounted on the church wall during a friendship ceremony at the church when people from Noyant la Gravoyère were visiting Shipdham. This is illustrated below. The craftsmanship of repairing the flint stone wall surrounding the church was demonstrated and a model of our village sign, which sits on a mound made of flint stones, was presented to them. This is now displayed in their town hall. Currently, a book is being produced of the water paintings, gifted by Ken Dickinson to the CEP, depicting different locations in Shipdham as a friendship gift to Noyant la Gravoyère for the interest shown in the Enhancement Project.



John Doel

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Wives group-Village and Church History

Annexe B

As part of the Churchyard Enhancement Project and to meet the requirements of the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) now the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), a small team from Shipdham Wives Group has endeavoured to compile a history of Shipdham incorporating research carried out by others and themselves. We have tried to acknowledge the research of others and without their help this project may not have been possible. This project has been compiled purely for the pleasure and enjoyment of the people of Shipdham, and we hope it will be an important and invaluable contribution to the heritage of the village community both now and in the future.

The following are extracts from a diary kept to chart our progress in the challenge of compiling a history of Shipdham as part of the Churchyard Enhancement Project.

The group comprising of Angela Bishop, Mindy Chilvers, Janet Coe, Sue Dewing, Wendy Doel and Pat Lyster made their first visit to the Norfolk Record Office, in Norwich in early January 2005.



Visit to the Norfolk Records Office

- Nine visits to research documents, books and maps at the Norfolk Records Office: January 2005, March 2005, June 2005, October 2005, November 2005, October 2006, January 2007, August 2008.
- Eleven meetings called to discuss findings and ideas: January 2005, April 2005, November 2005, January 2006, February 2006, June 2006, July 2006, February 2007, June 2008, July 2008, and September 2008.
- Anne Mason (HLI) was requested to visit the group for advice: November 2005.
- Fairfield Studios near Diss were visited to purchase an old map of Shipdham: November 2005.
- Visit to Gressenhall Museum: August 2006.
- Visit to Shipdham Heritage Centre: June 2008.
- Numerous visits to All Saints Church, Shipdham for the purpose of taking photographs and seeking information.
- Numerous visits to Dereham Library over the three year period.
- Visit to Mattishall to seek an estimate from a company to print book: July 2008.
- Various visits to historic buildings in Shipdham to take photographs.
- Interviews with residents.
- Objective: To produce a book that was interesting and informative; encompasses village life and the extraordinary history attached to it and to document our heritage of which we are enormously proud. The book is titled '**Shipdham – A Journey Through Time, 1066-2008**'.



This project's target was to involve as many inhabitants of Shipdham as achievable, we have endeavoured to include as many aspects of village life as possible and we have tried to acknowledge the research of others.

Wendy Doel Chairman Shipdham Wives Group

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Royal British Legion Shipdham Branch

Annexe E

The Shipdham branch of the Royal British Legion has not had a lot to do throughout the Project to date as their involvement was to provide the repository and display of information and pictures of the progress of the project. As of now no information or pictures have been made available but this will be changing in the not too distant future.

Shipdham RBL has assisted with the daffodil planting that took place and funded a tree to be planted. They have also provided the funding for the calendar, postcard and card production.

The village heritage centre will be the place that houses and displays the project media that is being produced and currently is being made ready to receive the various items so that they can be ready for display by Easter 2009. Display boards are being erected to display the many photographs and glass display cases for the books etc. that are being produced by the Wives Club.

Art Illustrations

Annexe F

The watercolour art illustrations that the late Mr Ken Dickerson produced were kindly donated to the Project by his widow Mrs Dickerson. The CEP now own the property rights to these pictures. Much discussion after receiving these watercolours ensued and eventually it was decided to use these pictures of significant houses in the village to raise funds for the Project.

Mr Bill Fawcett volunteered to attempt producing calendars, postcards, cards etc. from the artwork so they could be sold to raise funds. Two calendars-2007 and 2008- have already been produced and a 2009 one is in production at this time. Many postcards have been produced and currently cards are in production.

While not a significant amount of funds have been raised, some money has been raised to contribute to the Project costs.

The original illustrations will be framed and will be on display in the Heritage Centre next year. The final resting place for these fine watercolours has yet to be decided by the committee.

Bill Fawcett