

St Denis' church and churchyard / nature reserve

Update for 18th July 2023 meeting of
Hatley Parish Council

St Denis' church

Stephanie Norris, the architect and Michael Hayhow of Lodge & Sons (Builders) Ltd. who carried out the restoration work to repair and replaster the nave walls and do other repairs between January and May 2022, visited the church on 2 June to inspect the work carried out at the 'end of rectification period for Phase 3'. A few minor areas of plaster were identified as needing attention and have since been put right. The building has rising damp but this requires a major donation to rectify.

The certificate for the Greater Cambridge Design and Construction Award 2023 is on display in the church.

We haven't been approached by anyone wanting to organise a simple event, display or exhibition in the church during the summer months. Suggestions welcome – please spread the word.

Forthcoming visit by Wrestlingworth History Society

Members of Wrestlingworth History Society are visiting the church on the evening on 20 July.

Survey of bats emerging from the church

Rachel Bates organised five members of [Cambridgeshire Bat Group](#) to count the bats emerging from St Denis' church on the evening of 8 June. They counted out 14 brown long-eared bats; another few were flying around the inside of the church at the end of the survey. A static detector inside the church also picked up a few calls from barbastelle bats. Common pipistrelles were recorded foraging outside. It was a lovely evening. Rachel recorded some video footage of the bats inside with an infra-red camera.

Thanks, as always, to Peter for keeping an eye on the church and for opening and closing it daily, and to Peter and Joyce Denby for showing round occasional visitors.

St Denis' Churchyard / Local Nature Reserve

Interment of ashes of Ishbel Beatty

The ashes of Ishbel Beatty were interred on 24 June in a ceremony conducted round the grave of Simon Keith's wife, Gill by Revd Hilary Young. 32 people attended. Ishbel lived with Simon at 'The Palace' in East Hatley for over 40 years before they moved to Retford in Nottinghamshire in late 2018. She died on 5 May. Ishbel will be remembered by many for her poetry and her research into local history. More on the Hatley website (use the search box for 'Ishbel Beatty').

New management plan for the churchyard/nature reserve

Lucy Wilson, the local Wildlife Trust's Conservation Officer, is preparing a new management plan for the churchyard / nature reserve, following her visit on 28 March and discussions with the WLT team. Nicola Jenkins distributed notes on her advice and suggestions to Revd Hilary Young, Peter Mann, Sebastian Kindersley, Joyce Denby and later to Alastair Smith. Two Volunteer Officers, Louisa and Tate, surveyed the plants and trees first on 30 May, when Sebastian Kindersley met them and Peter Mann explained

things, and again on 14 July when Nicola met them. The results will be compared with earlier surveys. The Wildlife Trust will issue the new management plan soon.

Scything course

Rev Hilary Young organised a scything course on 11 July during which significant patches of the long grass in St Mary's, Gamlingay and St Denis' churchyards were cut. The five participants are now scythe users - novices as yet but keen to practice. A good deal of the course was about the management of grass and wild flowers. Revd Hilary Young plans to work that into practice in Everton, Gamlingay and Hatley churchyards. Nicola has bought a scythe for use by anyone mowing the churchyards.

Cutting the remainder of the grass

A session will be arranged soon to mow the remaining areas.

Wild flowers

Among the plants flowering recently were some bee orchids, common spotted and pyramidal orchids in the long grass on the south side of the churchyard/nature reserve (plus one pyramidal seen on the north side); yellow rattle was abundant on the north side.

We are grateful to Peter Mann for mowing the footpaths during the year and for mowing areas for people to gather round the graveside on 24 June.

Nicola Jenkins and Peter Mann / 18 July 2023