

The roof repairs to the church of All Saints Wytham.

South side of the nave.

During what were thought to be minor repairs to the nave roof in January 2011, it was found to be in danger of total collapse. It was therefore re-tiled in March/April that year. Unfortunately, the original tiles (Stonesfield Slate) were no longer available. Replacements were agreed with English Heritage. These look fine, but are much heavier than the originals, which set up an undesirable asymmetric loading on the nave roof. Because of this, and signs that other elements of the nave and chancel roofs were also deteriorating, the decision was taken to re-tile the remainder of the roof as soon as the money could be raised.

The church was inspected by English Heritage in February 2014, and placed on their 'At Risk' register because of the condition of the roof.



The south side of the nave roof under repair



and completed.

North side of the nave, and both slopes of the chancel.

In June 2013, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) offered a grant of 42% of the agreed costs of the repairs, provided their terms and conditions could be met. Any grant over 50% attracts considerably more paperwork, justification and hence administration, so the grant request was kept below this level. The agreed costs were eventually set at £123,469, including VAT, of which the HLF would contribute £51,700. About £5,000 of this was attributable to a programme of social and environmental improvements around the village, which the HLF required us to provide as one of the conditions of their grant. In addition, the HLF was mainly responsible for funding the *planning* of the repairs including the production of the specification for the work.

The remainder of the money was to be found by the PCC of All Saints, assisted by the Friends of All Saints (FAS). The PCC approached 23 Trusts and Charities, as a result of which grants and donations were obtained from:

The Gladiator Trust

Bartlett Taylor Charitable Trust

Mr & Mrs J.A.Pye's Charitable Settlement

Garfield Weston Foundation

Oxford Historic Churches Trust

A total of £17,250 was received from these charities.

VAT on the re-tiling element of the bill is reclaimable under the Listed Places of Worship Scheme, and was then estimated to be £16,796. The VAT on the social element of the project is not reclaimable, and must be paid by the PCC. Thus, the PCC had to raise approximately £38,000, with the help of the FAS. The results of our efforts were as follows (figures are the best available, but include some approximations):

- Donations - £10,500
- Profit on sale of tiles - £3,860
- FAS fundraising - £18,900
- The remaining £4,463 was found from Gift Aid repayments and the general funds of the PCC arising from the excess of regular income over expenditure.

The target was reached by the end of June 2015, and permission to start work obtained from the HLF.

Administration.

The HLF were first approached in mid-April 2013. After confirmation that the work was eligible for consideration for a grant in the then new 'Grants for Places of Worship' category, a preliminary application was submitted in May 2013. The grant then offered was subject to a two-phase procedure. The first, or 'Development' phase of the project, for which the HLF allotted £11400, was to develop a specification for the works and to obtain all the authorities and permissions required. There was no guarantee that we would get a grant for the second phase of the process at this point.

It was at this stage that the first difficulties arose. We required a faculty, in lieu of planning consent, from the Diocese. This required us to name a contractor, confirm their tender price, and show that we had the money available or promised. The HLF wanted the appointment of a contractor to be supervised by them as a part of the second, or 'Activity' phase. Fortunately, there was good will all round, the HLF allowed us to appoint our contractor early, and the Diocese agreed to grant the faculty without any certainty that money for the work would become available!

We applied for permission to start the second or 'Activity' phase in March 2014. For this phase, we had to produce:

- detailed costing and cash flow estimates,
- demonstrate that we could provide our share of the money needed,
- specify the benefits the project would provide to the community,
- detail the possible difficulties that might arise and the mitigation measures required to overcome them.
- Produce detailed progress reports on the work in hand.

At this time we were still short of the money we needed. However, fund raising was in full swing, and we were hopeful that it could be found by the end of the year, so that we could carry out the work in the spring of 2015. An additional problem then arose - the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), delegated by Natural England to supervise our handling of the bat roost in the church roof, wished to monitor the bat population for 12 months. They also wished the work to be done in either September/November (before the bats came home to roost for the winter), or March/April (before the breeding season) – preferably the former. Fortunately, good will prevailed once more and the monitoring programme was finally completed in August 2015 - just in time for us to get the essential work done before the bats came home to roost in November. It was because of this tight schedule that it was necessary to erect a scaffolding roof over the church while the work was in progress – we could not afford to be delayed by weather. This added considerably to the cost of the project – possibly by as much as £7000. In the event, the decision was justified, as there were three days of continuous rain, which would have otherwise delayed the project considerably. As it happened, the transfer of manpower from other delayed projects put us ahead of our timetable. This period of bad weather was also responsible for much vehicle damage to the verges of the access road and the ground at the rear of the church.

We finally completed all the preliminary actions required of us by the HLF and the Diocese in time for the HLF deadline of March 2015. We still lacked authority from the BCT to disturb the bats, but goodwill prevailed once more, and the HLF granted us permission to start work on condition that we obtained this authority before actually starting. This enabled us to agree a timetable and work programme with our contractor. Work finally started with the erection of the scaffolding at the end of August 2015.

A progress report was sent to the HLF on 20th October 2015, detailing the state of play as at that time. 50% of the HLF grant was claimed at this stage, and a further 40% in December, but it was not permissible to claim the final 10% of the grant before completion of the project, including the social and environmental improvements the HLF required. We also claimed the first part of the VAT refund.



*The scaffolding goes up
and up!*

The repairs to the roof.

The south side of the chancel roof was in very poor condition. The battens to which the tiles were fixed were thin and of poor quality, and were rotten across almost the whole of the roof space - we were fortunate that a gale had not already removed the tiles. The north side was in better condition, the battens being of much higher quality. However, a coping stone on the eastern gable end of the chancel had split, and that next to it had been replaced at some time with an ordinary garden paving stone, which did not overlap its neighbour as designed. This had allowed water to run down the inside of the wall, rotting the feet of the first four rafters where they sat on the wall plate. This could have produced a partial collapse of the north east corner of the chancel roof at some time in the future, which would have produced a considerable leak. We were again fortunate to find this before such a collapse occurred.

The north side of the nave was fairly sound. The battens were in good shape, but another three rafters - by their appearance, reused from the old church - had significant areas of rot, both high up and at their lower end where they rested on the wall plate. Presumably, this had been caused by a leak under the tiles, which had allowed water to run down the sarking beneath them and collect at their base where the most serious rotting had occurred. They were reinforced by bolting additional beams alongside them. Replacing them was not an option as they also supported and were fastened to the nave ceiling.

The cement flashing against the tower wall had perished. The ingress of water here seems to have been prevented only by a bee's nest under the tiles at the corner! Many of the tiles were in poor condition, with evidence of de-lamination. They were very roughly cut – probably the 1812 originals. They were purchased by the roofing company, but will need a lot of trimming before they can be reused.

As well as the coping stone problem, about half of the ridge tiles needed to be replaced because of their condition – some had been crudely patched with cement at some time in the past. Efforts to find replacements in salvage yards were unsuccessful, and about 11m. of ridge tiles had to be cut from new stone. This caused significant extra cost.

At the top of the chancel arch at the end of the nave, there was originally a window. This was covered with slate, presumably when the hot water heating system was installed in 1893, as the boiler flue would have

exited at this point. The slate had broken, and the window had become an access point for jackdaws. The window was blocked off with slate once more, and the frame restored. The chancel cross, which had disappeared at some point in the past, was also replaced.



The roof beams on the north side of the chancel.



The bees nest being removed from the roof.



Chancel arch window, blocked by the heater flue



Jackdaws nest in the roof over the nave!

The roof was lined with sheep's wool insulation as work progressed, and a walkway laid along the length of the nave and chancel lofts. As the remaining ridge tiles were re-fixed, holes were left for the bats to go in and out of the roof space both in the nave and the chancel. The window in the chancel loft at the east end of the church has been covered on the inside with wire mesh to prevent the future ingress of birds, while allowing the bats continued access.

The social and environmental improvements.

The following improvements, agreed with the HLF were completed:

- Research the history of Wytham (particularly that since 1914), the church and its predecessors. Much work has been done on the history of the village, including that during the First World War and the stories of those who fell in France. A history of the church since 1135 has been written, and copies are for sale in the church.
- Produce descriptive leaflets covering the main artefacts inside the church. These have been produced and are available inside.
- The installation of an interpretation board. This has been completed, and erected outside the gate of All Saints.

- Update and improve the church web site. See 'www.wytham-church.org.uk'.
- Publicise the activities of the church as widely as possible. This has been done and is continuing. Press and radio have been involved frequently, and the local parish magazines feature the church in nearly every issue. Talks on the history and activities of the church are given at every available opportunity.

The cost of the new roof.

1. Development phase.

a. Structural Engineer	£423 + £85 VAT	= £508
b. Bat Conservation Trust	£314	= £314
c. Architect	£7190	= £7190
d. CDMC (Health & Safety advice)	£395 + £79 VAT	= £474
Total:	£8322 + £164 VAT	= £8486

2. Construction phase.

a. Woodstock Roofing	£86134 + £17226 VAT	= £103360
b. Information Board	£981	= £981
c. Booklet printing	£379	= £379
d. Architect	£10717	= £10717
e. Bat Conservation Trust	£2453	= £2453
f. Art work for Information Board	£375	= £375
Total:	£101039 + £17226	= £118265

3. Retention payments (now disbursed).

a. Architect.	£1250	= £1250
b. Woodstock Roofing.	£2153 + £431 VAT	= £2584
Total:	£3403 + £431 VAT	= £3834

4. Still to be determined (winter 2016 & 2017 roof inspections).

a. Bat Conservation Trust	£700?	= £700?
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Total construction costs: £104442 + £17657 VAT = £122099

Grand Total, both phases plus HLF extras: £112764 + £17821 VAT = £130585

Plus possible bills from the Bat Conservation Trust estimated to be of the order of £700.00.