



Issue 4, September 2019

# The Buildwas Church 300 Restoration Project Newsletter

[www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org](http://www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org)

*Welcome to our new look newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading our latest articles and updates on our exciting renovation project.*

*Plus, if you wish to be informed of our upcoming fundraising events as well as general and special church services, you've come to the right place.*

*Please read on for details of the results of the inspection of the bells in our bell tower; our plans for the restoration of our churchyard; and our plans for a new aisle carpet.*

## Buildwas Holy Trinity Church Timetable

General services are held every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 3.00pm for 1 hour.  
We also hold special services at Easter and Christmas,  
as well as baptisms, marriages and funerals.

For more details visit our church website at [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4667/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4667/)  
and our Facebook page [@buildwaschurch](https://www.facebook.com/buildwaschurch)

*See overleaf for more information about our upcoming events,  
and sign up to our email alerts on our website [www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org](http://www.buildwaschurchrestoration.org)  
to be kept up to date when new events are announced!*

## The Buildwas Church 300 Restoration Project

The current building for Holy Trinity Buildwas dates from 1720 and replaced a medieval church. We are celebrating our church's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. **We wish to keep our church open for the use of the local community for future generations.**

We have therefore set up a **Buildwas Community "Save our Church" Group** to organise activities to raise money for Buildwas Church as part of the Buildwas Church 300 Restoration Project, for two reasons:

- **Fundraising** is required to pay for the Parish Share just to keep the church open and running. The Parish Share pays for the mission and ministry in churches in the Lichfield Diocese including Buildwas i.e. the costs to employ members of the clergy to run regular services and give spiritual leadership to the local community.
- **Grants** are required for the renovation of the church tower, gravestones and other items in the graveyard, repairs to the roof, renovation inside etc. This will cost ~£100k. We need to raise money towards these in order to secure the grants. **We have decided to concentrate on raising money for the church tower in the first instance, as it is leaking – this will prevent further damage to the fabric of the building. The estimated cost of tower repairs is £40,000.**

### Upcoming fundraising events

We are currently planning our events for Autumn 2019. These will include:

*A Jumble Sale*

*A Christmas Music Evening*

Keep an eye on our Facebook page @buildwaschurch for more details!

*If you are interested in helping out with any fundraising events, or have a fundraising idea, please contact the Church Wardens:*

*Stuart Ratcliffe 07968 598474 or Juliet Bowen 01952 432497*

### How to donate to our restoration fund

We have now set up a Just Giving page at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/buildwaschurch300](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/buildwaschurch300)

Any donations can be given with Gift Aid, which is an Income Tax Relief for UK tax payers. It enables our charity to claim back 25p for every £1 you donate. There is no extra cost to you. Complete a Gift Aid declaration (available in the church pews for cash donations) or say YES to the Gift Aid question when donation online. That's all there is to it!



## Inspection of Church Bells and Belfry helps determine our structural renovation plans

An inspection of the belfry tower and bells at Buildwas Church has been carried out by members of the Shropshire Association of Church Bell Ringers, to determine their state and the necessary repairs and renovations which need to take place, as part of the Buildwas Church 300 Renovation Project.

Former Bell Advisor, Peter Wollam, and his successor, Geoffrey Harding, met in the presence of Church Warden Juliet Bowen and the Rev. Peter Shaw, and climbed into the belfry area to conduct the examination. Their many years of expertise enabled them to furnish the church with detailed information about the nature, condition and history of the bells and their mechanisms, as well as conduct a survey of the belfry's walls and timbers.

The church bells were cast in 1846-47 by C and G Mears foundry in Whitechapel, London, and bear the inscription '*The gift of Walter Moseley Esq. and Reverend John Bartlett*'. The Whitechapel foundry is also where Big Ben (the Great Bell of the clock in Elizabeth Tower at the Houses of Parliament) was cast in 1858, just 11 years after the bells had been cast for Buildwas.

The bells at Buildwas comprise a treble, second and tenor and are so arranged as to be swung at a 180° angle (the act of swinging the bells at 360° would create too great a force for the timbers to withstand, according to Mr. Wollam and Mr. Harding).

The copper-tin alloy bells are mounted on timber frames, which, although have been determined require treatment for woodworm, are thought to be in sufficient working order, along with the various components for operating and housing the bells (subject to their lubrication and sensible maintenance), to enable bellringing to take place.



*The treble bell*



*The repairs in the lower half of the bell tower wall*



Fig. 3. Hole in masonry, belfry floor level, north side.



Fig. 4. Hole in the loft floor, largely concealed by detritus

It has been decided at this time that a once-considered new system of bells is not required, though the ceiling holes through which the flax bell ropes pass will be widened as part of the renovations, to reduce friction and subsequent wear on the ropes. Further conclusions were reached about the belfry and bell tower itself, and upon inspection, the urgency of renovations to its structure became more apparent. Rotten floorboards were discovered in both the belfry and in the loft below, and it was recommended that crawling boards be laid in order to safeguard against floor weakness, in the interim time before the floors can be replaced. The timber framing of the belfry tower walls have shown deterioration to the point at which on the west gable, daylight is visible. The structural importance of these timbers makes their repair imperative. A further, decorative, horizontal timber has also fallen away, to expose a hole in the masonry, which in itself has deteriorated throughout the entire belfry. Being of cement base with mesh reinforcement, it has broken down and thinned in several areas. Exposed holes have allowed birds to colonise the tower, littering the floor with nesting materials, which require removal.

The results of the inspection have clarified the exact nature of repairs that are required and it is hoped that revealing the results of the inspection will highlight the urgency of such repairs and inspire continued and further support in our fundraising efforts.

There are plans to ring the bells in 2020 to commemorate the Victory in Europe (VE) Day in May, and Victory in Japan (VJ) Day in August.

## **Charitable Trust to advise Buildwas Church on restoration of our Churchyard**



CARINGFORGODSACRE.ORG.UK

**The Beautiful Burial Ground Project — Caring For God's Acre**

The charitable Trust, **Caring for God's Acre**, are advising Buildwas Church on highly prioritised renovations and improvements to its churchyard, via a specially run National Lottery funded project.

The Shropshire-based organisation provides advice and assistance to churches and other organisations in the preservation of burial sites, in the interests of wildlife, communities and historical heritage. As part of an initiative called the **Beautiful Burial Ground Project**, the organisation has offered to visit our churchyard in September to provide suggestions, following an approach from Church 300 Project Secretary, Nigel Bowen.

Buildwas Church has long-since been working towards improvements in the outdoor area surrounding the church, with the organisation of a voluntary work party, who maintain the area periodically; liaising with the local council to arrange grass cutting; and facilitating a clean-up visit from cadets from RAF Shawbury.

The Beautiful Burial Ground Project Advisors will provide further ideas on how to preserve wildlife such as slowworms in the area, whilst still clearing and tidying foliage in the yard as a whole, as well as how to make the area appealing to tourists and improve disability access. There are also plans for events in 2020

aimed at families, to help them count the flora and fauna present as part of the National Biodiversity Project, and to learn more about the wildlife present, such as rare butterflies and slowworms.

Existing plans are to tidy overgrown areas of foliage and to repair and clean damaged gravestones of untended graves of those who have no surviving relatives who visit them. Attempts to contact all surviving relatives of untended graves must be made before some repairs can take place, and Shropshire Council will also be asked to maintain particular areas of the churchyard for which they are responsible.

It is hoped that the community will pull together to make it all possible.

**More information about The Beautiful Burial Ground Project is on the Caring for God's Acre website**

[www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/](http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/our-beautiful-burial-grounds-project/)

## Plans for Buildwas Church to be placed on the 'Heritage At Risk' register



We have arranged to meet with a representative from Historic England in September so they can assess the state of the church building for inclusion on the **Heritage at Risk Register**. This will enable us to make stronger applications for grants because it means our church will have been independently assessed as being at risk of further damage.

For more information, see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/buildings/>

## Plans for new aisle carpet

A big thanks to one of our church members, Karen Watton, for putting us in touch with **Carol's Carpets in Broseley**, because we need to replace the aisle carpet in Buildwas Church as it's now around 80 years old and is threadbare. Carol and her husband, Paul, have given a very competitive quote for a high quality, plain red, hard wearing carpet (including binding and fitting) which would go across the width of the aisle for the full length of the aisle. The fundraising committee have agreed to spend some of the £5757.00 we have raised for our renovation project, so we can have the carpet fitted asap.



*The current aisle carpet when it was in better condition. Photo courtesy of James Hedley photography:  
[www.jameshedley.com/park-house-hotel](http://www.jameshedley.com/park-house-hotel)*

## **Help needed with the Under The Wrekin magazine**

**We are looking to re-start the bi-monthly Under The Wrekin (UTW) magazine, as the current editor recently moved away from the area.....and we need YOUR help!**

This magazine is highly valued by the local community as a way of keeping up to date with events in the area. The magazine is delivered to around 600 households in local villages. Writing articles about our project in the magazine is one of the key ways that we raise the profile of our restoration project locally.

Roles we need to fill or help with include **Editor; Treasurer; Advertising;** and **Distribution** - as well as people to write articles and provide content, and advertise their business. The income from advertising pays for the magazine printing costs.

**We have a meeting organised for 7.30pm on Monday 16th September in Eaton Constantine Village Hall - everyone welcome! If you are interested in helping out, or know anyone who might be interested, please let Nigel know (Tel: 01952 432497).**

We plan to publish the December / January edition of the magazine.



**Under the  
Wrekin**