

## **St Denis' church and churchyard / nature reserve**

Update for 20 July 2021 meeting of  
Hatley Parish Council

### **St Denis' church**

#### **Heritage Open Days 2021**

The church will be open on 10, 11 and 12 September from 11.00 until 1.00 and from 2.00 until 4.00 pm for the Heritage Open Days event with the theme of 'Edible England'. Peter Mann has kindly submitted details which are on the [HOD's website](#). Offers of help with visitors or preparation of any displays are welcome!

#### **Report of renovations in Friends of Friendless Churches (FoFC) newsletter**

St Denis' is mentioned in the summer 2021 issue of the FoFC newsletter with a half-page report on the new glazing in the south and north sides of the chancel – which include salvaged fragments from the old east window, now detailed, with photographs, on the St Denis' page of the Hatley website, <https://www.hatley.info/hatleys-churches/st-denis-east-hatley/> and <https://www.hatley.info/hatleys-churches/st-denis-east-hatley/st-denis-church-photo-gallery/>.

#### **Bat emergence survey**

Rachel Bates of the [Cambridgeshire Bat Group](#) organised a survey of bats emerging on the evening of 17 July, a beautiful balmy evening with the church lit by a half moon. She invited local residents to take part in the survey. Sarah Brennan, John O'Sullivan, Ruth Chan, Alastair Smith, Linda Hudson, Sofie, Jeremy, Ali and Thomas Hooper and Nicola Jenkins joined in.

Rachel collected samples of bat droppings from the church floor for analysis and set up a camera and bat detector inside the church for the duration of the survey. She gave a brief talk to the group and distributed tally counters and bat detectors, describing how to distinguish bat species and movements.

Participants sat in pairs round the church and, with Rachel, counted any bats emerging from the church between 9.00 pm and about 10.15 pm. Activity outside the church was dominated by common pipistrelle and a few soprano pipistrelles and inside by multiple brown long-eared and a few passes of a barbastelle bat. At least 16 brown long-eared bats emerged from between the tiles and the guttering of the vestry and just three bats came out around guttering in the nave on the north side of the church.

No bats were observed to emerge from the south side. Everyone enjoyed seeing plenty of bats foraging around the churchyard all evening, mostly common pipistrelles, some coming from surrounding trees. Ali and Thomas were particularly good at spotting them.

A short report is on [Cambridgeshire Bat Group's](#) Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1733641183520612/?multi\\_permalink=2917126248505427&notif\\_id=1626601808755501&notif\\_t=feedback\\_reaction\\_generic&ref=notif](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1733641183520612/?multi_permalink=2917126248505427&notif_id=1626601808755501&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic&ref=notif).

Results of the laboratory analysis of the bat droppings from the church floor will take some time to obtain.

### **St Denis' churchyard / local nature reserve**

Peter Mann has put together a risk assessment of activities carried out in maintaining the churchyard required by Gamlingay and Hatley Parochial Church Council for insurance purposes.

Peter single-handedly mowed the south side of the churchyard on 30 and 31 of May and (again single-handedly) mowed three quarters of the churchyard and strimmed round the church and the graves on 16, 17 and 18 July. He's also cut off the low boughs of the horse chestnut and a dead branch of a yew tree.

Thanks to Peter for all his time and effort. We hope to finish the tidying and trim the west hedgerow sometime before the open days. We await permission from the PCC for felling (maybe partially) of the dead elm and the lowering of the elm hedgerow on the southern boundary. Hopefully this can be obtained and the work organised sometime during the autumn or winter.

A fourth spreadsheet of species of plants, bushes and trees in the churchyard recorded between 1992 to 2021 was been compiled by Dr Jonathan Shanklin, the county's botanical recorder, following the survey carried out by Cambridgeshire Flora Group on 30 March. This is [on the Hatley website](#). Only 18 records were made this year with 10 species being recorded for the first time but locals are invited to submit records (preferably with photos) from time to time (Nicola Jenkins is happy to collate these) and they will be added to the official species list.

Via an email request to the Friends of Friendless Churches, a visitor was shown around the church on 10 June.

Nicola Jenkins / 20 July 2021