

## Building Committee News

### *We're off...*

After so many years of frustration, at long last scaffolding will once more cover the east end of the building. English Heritage, which had for so three years kept Shobdon's Phase II restoration on hold due to what they perceived as "lack of urgency," now recognises that the completion of the structural repairs to the transepts and chancel are urgent and need immediate attention.



We were able to prove this urgency by having a specialist structural engineer report on the stability/safety of the parapets, which were found to be resting on either rotten or completely missing inside wall-plates; there was a real risk of an inwards collapse. Having proved (at SCPT expense) that there was a problem, the task now is to establish the extent of the degradation which will allow our architect to draw up the repair work specifications for the actual restoration works. This additional investigatory work is regarded as essential – especially so in the light of the surprises encountered during the earlier, Phase I project, where unforeseen problems effectively doubled the costs and left everyone involved feeling shocked and surprised.

Scaffolding is due to go up in August. This will be a heavy-duty scaffold, capable of supporting the stone-work that has to be removed temporarily to enable the inner parts to be examined and repaired. The removed stones will then go back into their original positions. Initially, only the worst-affected south transept and south side of the chancel will be covered and weather-proofed. What is uncovered in those areas should enable the architect to judge what will be needed

for the remaining parts as well. As soon as the architect is able to obtain prices for the complete restoration, the rest of the east end will be covered and we hope to see all the works completed by mid summer 2009.

Completion of the structural repairs to the building will enable us to consider the various non-structural restorations that our very special building warrants. It is the unique interior that makes Shobdon's church so special. The decorative plaster-work, wonderful furniture and windows all need attention. The paintwork in particular is beginning to look shabby. None of this is grant-aidable under the English Heritage Repairs to Places of Worship Scheme. Other grant sources will be approached once we are able to show that the building is structurally sound and weather-proofed. We already have a substantial donated sum available, specifically for re-decoration.

The Building Committee has both SCPT and PCC members. The PCC is greatly relieved to now have the financial support of the SCPT enabling it to proceed with this major restoration project with few of the worries that it faced last time.

### Shobdon Church Preservation Trust

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Friends of SCPT newsletter 2008

### *Something to celebrate*

We can't find the words to thank you all for your fantastic support for our appeal, and the Antiques Roadshow Evening. Letters and cheques, and offers of items for the Antiques Auction simply poured through the letter-box. There were one or two large donations, but most were for amounts of up to a hundred pounds, but they quickly began to add up to a very significant sum, and in the end we banked over £8,000 in donations alone. To this was added £3,000 for the auction, some £2,000 from the event and bar sales and raffle accounted for a further £600, so the grand total was around the £14k mark – not bad for a little parish like ours. Fundamentally though, our wonderful church rightly has many admirers, both locally and all over the country, and when the call went out, you did not let us down. We are so very grateful for your generosity; as I think may have been said in the thank-you letters, we hope that God too will find some mysterious way of showing his gratitude.

So, we are closing in on our total. The funds are there for the preliminary work, which means putting up a pretty substantial scaffolding, so that the builder can peel back lead and fish around inside the bowels of the building. We will then have a clearer idea of the extent of the decay, and what it might cost to put it right; we have so far depended on a bit of guesswork from the architect and English Heritage – let's hope they were not too wide of the mark.

Meanwhile, we must address the problem of finding the remaining £25,000, and the last bit is always the most difficult. There are still some major charities which were very helpful in the past, and hopefully might come to our rescue again. Please, though, bear us in mind if you have any ideas about suitable charities we might approach, or if indeed you happen to be making your will!



Roadshow evening - arriving.



Shobdon  
Church  
Preservation  
Trust

*Protecting the fabric  
of this building of  
national importance  
for future generations*

#### Patrons

Lawrence Banks Esq. CBE  
Mrs Sophie Blain  
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The Rt. Rev. John Oliver  
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### FOR THE DIARY *Art Exhibition in London.*

Well-known local artists Susie Arbuthnott and Alison Cooper are having an exhibition of their work in London, at the Shepherd Gallery (just off Piccadilly) from 8-13 September.

It follows a phenomenally successful first showing of their work there three years ago, and is on for a full week. Details are enclosed with this newsletter. They are donating a generous proportion of the take equally to St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem and SCPT.

### *Christmas Cards*

Andrew Gilliat holds stocks of existing cards, and will be very glad to hear from anyone who would like any. As they are old (but in no way time-expired), he is willing to cut a deal, and bargains are to be had.

Early action is advised, to avoid disappointment. Tel: 01568 708364

## Antiques Roadshow Evening

This all came about from a call from Sotheby's. We had been rather scratching around for the annual event, and this came as the answer to our prayers. Apparently a (she – we know that much – requested anonymity) mystery benefactor asked them to do a day or evening for the benefit of Shobdon Church. So, big thanks to her too. We agreed the first day of the Shobdon Food and Garden Festival, as we would be able to use their large marquee, and the planning process began. Over a thousand letters went out, and the result was a great number of donations, and a sell-out of tickets for the evening. It also brought in over thirty items for the auction, from some interesting art deco pieces, pictures, some fine chairs, an Afghan camel bag, silver, a top hat and a working spinning wheel. Lord Lloyd-Webber had generously sent a couple of tickets for the Sound of Music, and Sotheby's donated a day with them in London.

The evening was a huge success; our team of auctioneers (John Harvey, Robert Miller and Andrew Parker) was kept very busy as our visitors arrived valuing an interesting array of items – not entirely good news for some, alas. Oh, well. The weather, initially threatening, kept dry, and we served Champagne to over a hundred and twenty guests, in the grounds of (and even in) the church.



*John Harvey gives his verdict.*

Dinner followed, produced on the premises by our splendid team of helpers, led by Marcia Lynch-Staunton, and our

chairman made a short welcoming address. Then it was over to Sotheby's again, and they regaled us with stories of great and unexpected finds, and amusing anecdotes, while knocking down the auction items.

The evening had a great buzz, and we are so grateful to all who came and made it such a successful and, apparently, enjoyable social occasion.



*Roadshow evening - dining*



*Winter warmth*

## Sale of Winter Woollies

The Belgate Barn was the venue for a highly successful sale of Cashmere and Lambswool cardies and tops, all beautifully produced in the Scottish lowlands, in December 2007. Quality was high and prices keen, and there was a steady stream of happy shoppers. Our thanks to organisers Susie Tweedie and Susie Arbuthnott. The 'take' was divided equally between SCPT and the MacMillan Renton Appeal, and both benefited to the tune of £500.

## Thank you Sybil Colefax and John Fowler.

We are so indebted to C and F for a number of reasons. The Shobdon Chairs (see previous editions) sell slowly but steadily, and we get a nice surprise cheque every year (they generously give us a good percentage of every one sold.) We must also thank director Roger Jones for the gift of two fine Regency bedroom chairs for our antique auction – they had been, he said, knocking about in the showroom for rather too long. They were the stars of the show, and made a big price.

## Shobdon Food and Garden Festival

This followed the format of previous years, with tents and stalls set round the church – itself beautifully decked with flowers, and a huge throng of visitors from all over (over three thousand in the two days). There was music from rock and jazz, to the Kington Brass Band who entertained us on the lawn, a great range of comestibles on sale, for both gourmand and gourmet, and demonstrations from local chefs and restaurateurs. The event rang too with the sound of the blacksmith's hammer on the anvil, and there were displays of tractors and vehicles from yesteryear. It raised a substantial sum to be divided between local schools, but with a large portion going to the church. Another great team effort from the Teale family, and an enthusiastic band of helpers from our village.



*Haute cuisine - Chefs' Theatre*