

Corpusty Church - Art & Memory

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There is much despondency about the future of rural churches. St Peter's Corpusty tells a story of decline, abandonment and near-collapse. Then, since 1975, there has been a step-by-step recovery. It now stands like a beacon on its hill overlooking north Norfolk, proclaiming just how much such a building can be loved, revived and cherished.

A long programme of conservation has now secured the structure, with tracery repaired and glass put back in the windows. In the last year the guardian of the building, the Norfolk Churches Trust, has supervised and paid for strengthening the piers of the tower, stabilising the plaster on the walls, putting in a wooden floor and providing disabled access through the north door.



Now it is safe to introduce the exhibition of inscriptions. The Lettering Arts Trust is loaning a collection of inscriptions in stone and wood, which demonstrate the outstanding skills of contemporary carvers. Others are being donated by a private benefactor. Some will be exhibited in the church, some in the churchyard. Inside the building there will be an exhibition explaining how such work can be commissioned and executed. The moving and installation costs are being paid for by the Behrens Foundation. Work on the transfer is due to start in March.

The repairs carried out over the last forty-five years have attracted grants and gifts for which St Peter's is specially eligible. It has not deflected donations from other churches in the benefice.

St Peter's will now serve three principal purposes. First of all it will continue to be a testament to at least six centuries of worship, prayer and meditation, with occasional services conducted by the Rector of the benefice and others. It is also particularly

valued as a place of quiet contemplation. Second, it will show that the craft of fine lettering is still practised to the very highest standards, in an art form of exceptional beauty and permanence. Finally, it will be available to the village and particularly the school, so that these skills, particularly the art of lettering, can be appreciated. The creativity it represents needs to be widely shared. The church will also be a space for other exhibitions and arts activities, including small concerts.

If you are interested in helping and supporting this project, do please get in touch either with me, or the Norfolk Churches Trust.

