

# THE TATTLER

Volume 12 Issue 4  
Spring 2005

## Topcliffe Church Tower Project Overview by John Graham

Believe it or not the Church Tower Restoration Project has actually taken about five years to complete. It was started in September 1999 when the Parochial Church Council (PCC) made an application to English Heritage for a grant to cover the repairs for the **whole** church. English Heritage got down to surveying the church in March 2000; they made an estimate of the cost of necessary repairs and established a priority for the proposed repair work which they detailed in a report issued in February 2001. This seems to be a long delay between the survey and the report but in order to be able to offer a grant the project application was carried over into a new financial year.

The priorities specified in the



report were:

**Priority A Work:**

Carry out urgent high level structural repairs to the tower which would involve scaffolding the full height.

Renew the window mullions and louvres and repair the clock surrounds.

Replace the tower roof and replace the lightning conductors.

Overhaul the bell frame & bells. (though this work was not eligible for grant)

Overhaul the clock mechanism. (not eligible for grant)

Remove debris from churchyard.

English Heritage estimated that the total cost of the Priority A Work would be £116,670 of which 2,813 was not eligible for grant, leaving £113,857 eligible for grant.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Topcliffe Web Site ([www.topcliffe.net](http://www.topcliffe.net))



Webmaster, Peter Perkins has somehow found time to update the Topcliffe Web Site and it is now working better than ever, with news and information about the village instantly available.

Last autumn we reported that there was a competition for children to design a logo for the website. The closing date for this has been extended until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005, so get your thinking caps on kids, (well anyone under 18!) and come up with some fresh ideas. A mystery prize will be awarded for the best design. Full details are available of the web site so why not log on right now at <http://www.topcliffe.net> and get details of the competition in the "Youth Stuff" section.

Peter is also looking for a young person to volunteer to run the youth section of the website. There must be plenty of you computer whiz kids out there, and here is a chance to learn a few more IT skills and get into website design perhaps? If you're interested, contact Peter now at [peter@solarvan.gotadsl.co.uk](mailto:peter@solarvan.gotadsl.co.uk)

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## Editorial

The first TATtler of a New Year seems an appropriate time to say thank-you to all those who make the magazine possible.

Thanks to Howard Wilson, who finds time in a busy schedule to assemble all the contributions into an attractive format ready for printing. Somehow, no matter how much or how little material we have, Howard manages to make it fit. Thanks also, to the TATtler distributors, who give up their time to make sure that every house in Topcliffe and Asenby, (and some further afield), gets a copy through the letter box shortly after printing. And to Peter Perkins, who makes sure it is available on the Topcliffe website, sometimes even before it comes back from the printers!

Thanks to the advertisers, and the two Parish Councils, without whose continuing financial support none of this would be possible.

A special thank-you this month to John Graham, for his informative article on the restoration of St. Columba's Church Tower. Yes - the stonework is finished, (for the time being) but there are still the clock and bells to complete. But read John's article for all the details.

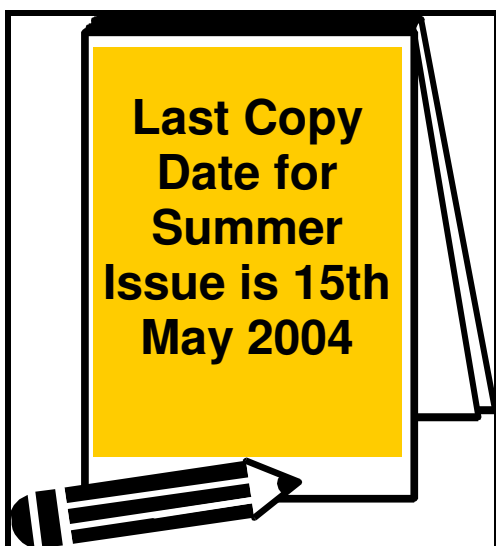
And finally, thanks to you all for supporting the many fundraising activities in aid of the Church Tower. The contributions may have been only a small percentage of the total cost, but without your generosity, the work may have never started.

# Help!

## Help wanted!

The TATtler is looking for someone who can spare half an hour of their time, four times a year to distribute the TATtler to homes in Manor Close and Winn Lane. A total of 27 magazines need delivering, 14 in Manor Close and 13 in Winn Lane.

If you feel you have the time to help, then please call the Editor, David Pilgrim, on 01845 578669. No remuneration I'm afraid, but you do get to meet some nice people!



## Asenby Recreation Ground

Christmas seems so far away now but it began with a swing at the annual mulled wine and mince pie evening at which we raised just over £250. This was thanks to all who supported the event but in particular to everyone who donated one of the many wonderful raffle prizes. What a choice for the lucky winners! And of course, thanks to John and Claire Phillips for the fantastic venue.

The money raised at this and previous events are to be used to improve the facilities in the recreation ground. Hopefully, you will soon see an addition to the playground in the shape of a baby and toddler swing, something requested by a number of families. There may be other ventures too, so watch this space!

## Help Us To Mow!

It is getting near the time when we need to begin to think about mowing the playing field again. Last year, Jackie Avison worked hard to set up a rota that worked really well. The grass was kept neat and manageable with the help of so many members of the village- THANK YOU! But we need your help again this year.

PLEASE- if you are willing to take an hour or so this spring or summer to mow the grass, whether you have done it before or are new to the village, phone Jackie on 578871. We really would appreciate your time.

**Emma McCormick**

## GRAND ATTIC AUCTION

To be held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2005, at 2pm in Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall  
**All proceeds to St. Columba's Restoration Appeal**  
**Auctioneer: Mr. John Phillips**

We are appealing for items for the above Auction, so please do not discard anything during your Spring Cleaning, which could be sold to assist the above! Books...Furniture...Bric-a-brac.....even Antiques!

### IN FACT ANYTHING SALEABLE!!!!

Items to be brought to the Village Hall on Saturday morning 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2005 between 8am and 11am

Viewing from 12 noon to 2.00pm on the day. Refreshments, Raffle

It may be possible to arrange transport for any bulky items.  
 Please contact John Phillips, Tel: 01845 577034

**BUYERS: Come and browse and see what you can discover...that hidden treasure, useful gadget or something you don't yet know you can't live without...!**

## Parish Council News

With the strong winds, power cuts, floods and snow that we have had over the winter the Parish Council are working on an Emergency Plan to help the people of Topcliffe e.g. to get sandbags for protection against flooding, providing hot food and drinks during prolonged power cuts etc. We hope to have this finalised over the coming months. Further details to follow.

## Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council Meetings are held at 8.00pm in the Village Hall on the 3rd Monday of every month. The next 3 are on Mon 21st Mar, Mon 18th Apr and Mon 16th May (a full list is available on the village web site [www.topcliffe.net](http://www.topcliffe.net)). All parishioners are welcome to attend.

In addition the Annual Parish Council meeting will be held in the Village Hall on Monday 9th May. This is **your chance** to find out what the Council are doing, and planning to do, with your money and to raise any issues you may have. Timings and further details will be displayed on Village Notice Boards.

## Clean It Up

Dog mess is not only unpleasant but it spreads diseases which can cause illness and even blindness. Under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 a person who is in charge of a dog must clean up after it when it fouls any footpath, highway, verge or other open space to which the public have access. It is vital that **dog** owners pick up after their pets & show consideration for other footpath users who would rather not step in dog faeces left by irresponsible dog owners."

An immediate £50 fixed penalty fine can be imposed by the Warden. Alternatively the case may be heard by Magistrates where the fine can go up to £1,000 and a criminal record received.

Owners who let their dogs out into the street unaccompanied can also have their pets seized as strays. That incurs a release fee of £50 plus the costs of kennels.

Anyone seeing an owner allowing their dog to foul and not cleaning it up should report the incident - in confidence - to the Council's Dog Warden Service on **01609 767104**. As much information as possible should be provided - including the name and address of the owner (if known), a description of the dog, the location and the date and time of the incident.



Alternatively you can write to us at:

**Hambleton DC  
 Civic Centre  
 Stone Cross  
 Northallerton  
 DL6 2UU**

(Continued from page 1)

### Priority B Work:

Repairs to the roofs, rainwater goods and drainage.

Repair East window

Repair Chancel and South Nave walls, also North Aisle, Chapel and Vestry walls.

Repair general inside stonework and re-paint.

Various works to the outside access arrangements

English Heritage estimated that the total cost of the Priority B Work would be £132,451 of which £63,961 was not eligible for grant, leaving £68,490 eligible for grant.

Against this report English Heritage were prepared to offer a grant of 90% or up to £100,000 of the eligible work for the Priority A work. A condition of this offer was that the parish would also do the ineligible work on the bells and the clock. Priority B work was to be left for a later date.

Topcliffe PCC debated the report in February 2001 and agreed to accept the grant and go ahead with the Priority A work. This work became known as Phase 1 – Tower Refurbishment Project. The PCC then authorised its architect, Sebastian Rowe of Hill Rowe Partnership in Ripon, to prepare a detailed specification for the work to go out for tenders for the grant eligible work. At the same time a fund raising committee was established to ensure that the PCC had sufficient funds to meet its share of the costs of the work.

The first draft of this specification was issued in August 2001 and was sent to English Heritage for them to comment. It took until January 2002 before it had been agreed by all parties concerned and was then sent out to obtain quotations from three potential contractors. The enquiry went to Burrows Davies of York, Crighton Restoration of Brompton and G Payne of Ripon. When the quotations were received in March 2002, it was agreed that Burrows Davies' offer was the best. However, these quotations delivered a major blow to the project. They were all well above the expected figure. The quotation delivered by Burrows Davies together with professional fees, VAT etc. took the estimated cost of the project to £231,000 compared with the English Heritage estimate of £113,857...i.e. more than twice as much.

Making allowances for other grants that the PCC had been successful in obtaining in the meantime, the apparent shortfall that the PCC would have to make up was about £83,000 which was clearly impossible. At

this stage therefore, a round of tedious detailed discussions were commenced between the PCC, the architect, the contractor and English Heritage. The target was to get the project to such a size that we could afford to proceed. It often felt at this time as though we were going round in never ending circles. The eventual outcome, however, was that the specified Phase 1 project would be split into two parts, Phase 1a and Phase 1b. The key to being able to proceed at this time was that English Heritage agreed that the offered grant could be put against Phase 1a alone and they even increased the amount they were prepared to make available by £23,400. This was later squeezed up to £25,000. English Heritage also accepted that we would be able to make a new application for more money after April 2003 to cover the costs of the work that had been taken out of the project and put into Phase 1b. This raised the possibility that if we got the timing correct we could in fact run Phases 1a and 1b

one after the other as a continuous project. In the event after many manoeuvrings that is what happened.

When the content of Phase 1a was finally agreed, a revised quotation based on the agreed reduced scope of work was obtained from the selected contractor, Burrows Davies, in November 2002. At this point Burrows Davies advised that because of the delays and their current commitments, they were

unable to start the project until the end of March 2003. In fact it did not start on site until the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2003.

A week later, on 30<sup>th</sup> June, an application was submitted to English Heritage for a grant for the Phase 1b work. At this point we discovered that English Heritage had changed the method of giving grants and we had to rework the application. In the meantime, once the scaffolding for the tower was up and it was possible to survey the stonework more closely it was clear that the Phase 1a work was rather more than we had allowed for and in addition the buttress weatherings needed a lot of work. The costs escalated again. It was also clear that the Phase 1a works scheduled for completion at the end of December 2003 were going to overshoot. It was also December before English Heritage made us an offer in principle of a grant for phase 1b. This amounted to another £139,000 plus £10,000 towards additional specification work. This offer was made against a new total estimated cost for both Phases 1a & 1b of £342,151.

In practice, on the site, the programming of work was re-jigged, with the agreement of English Heritage, to do



work for both phases in the most efficient manner.

By January 2004 the total cost of Phases 1a and 1b had gone up again to £352,640 and the PCC was seeking additional grants from other sources to fund the shortfall. The cash flow was constantly being juggled in order to ensure that the builder was not stopped from working due to lack of funds. Once the Phase 1b order was placed the overall project was given an overall completion date of July 2004. True to form for this project however, the work continued to have many problems during the year, a lot of it associated with the delivery and carving of stone so the completion date slipped further into the year. The Project was finally finished just before Christmas 2004.

The scaffolding then disappeared from the tower.....  
**and the final cost (including VAT) emerged from the books - £365,316**

Where did the Parish get all that money from?  
 It wasn't easy. It was built up as follows:

From English Heritage for Phase 1a	£125,000
From English Heritage for Phase 1b	£149,000
From Yorks. Historic Churches Trust	£ 19,669
From VAT Refunds	£ 41,076
From Hambleton District Council	£ 2,000
From York Diocese	£ 3,000
From the Parish	£ 25,571

**TOTAL £365,316**

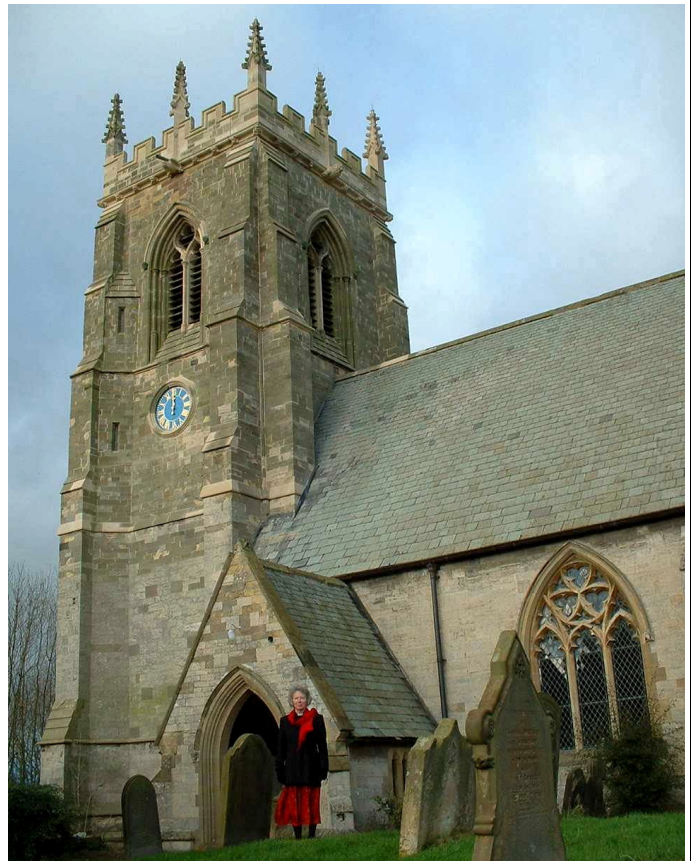
Up to April 2004 we could only claim back 12.5% of the VAT paid, however, in his budget Mr Brown appeared to give us a bonus by increasing this to the full 17.5%. But as he reduced the national grant to English Heritage accordingly, English Heritage then said that they would claw back most of that by reducing our last grant payment. In the event because of the rise in the project costs they didn't do that, so we benefited by around £5,500.

At the end of the day, even with all the changes in scope and increased costs, we managed to get enough money to complete this project without an outstanding deficit. Even those of us with a more secular outlook might consider that this was a "miracle".

The Parish did really well to raise over £25,000. This was done in all sorts of ways. There have been dinners, Attic Auctions, Barn Dances, several Gilbert & Sullivan presentations, Wine Tastings, a two year, £2 a week planned giving scheme, a donation from the Harvest Home event in the Swan and direct donations from many people both inside and outside the Parish. Included in these donations was one from Newby Hall and Lord Egremont, Lord of the Manor, gave a donation of £1,000. Some of the local companies also gave donations, such as Exhibition Solutions, Cleveland Steel & Tubes, Dorton Packaging and Plumbing Imports (UK) Ltd

Some people gave money specifically for the clock or the bells. This work is not included in any of the above costs and those donations have been protected for future use on these items. The Parish Council gave money specifically for the clock and this was spent on refurbishing the clock face so it could go back into the tower before the scaffolding came down. More information will be made available soon about the work to be done on the bells and the clock.

**Then of course there is phase 2 to look forward to!!!**



**Thank you!**

Reverend Christine Haddon-Reece, Vicar of Topcliffe, would like to say a big thank you to anyone who has helped in any way to bring about the restoration of St. Columba's church tower.

Your generosity in individual giving, in addition to fund raising events, has been amazing. Others have given their time and skills in so many varied ways to bring this project to completion.

Inhabitants of Church Street have been very patient with the disruption caused, and I hope that seeing the tower restored in all its glory makes the eyesore of 18 months of scaffolding nothing but a distant memory!

I am thrilled with the result as I trust you are too. Everyone is warmly invited to a church service to celebrate the completion of the tower restoration on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30 am, with the Rt. Revd. Robert Ladds, Bishop of Whitby. There will be light refreshments in the Village Hall after the service.

**Christine**

## St. Columba's Church Services

Vicar: the Revd Christine Haddon-Reece, Tel: 01845 577939

<b>Mar</b>	Sun 6th	<b>Mothering Sunday Family Service with Baptism</b>	10.30 am
	Wed 9th	Holy Communion in the Percy Chapel	9.30 am
	Wed 9th	Compline with Lenten Address	8.00 pm
	Sun 13th	Holy Communion	10.30 am
	Sun 20th	Palm Sunday Holy Communion & distribution of palms	10.30 am
	Fri 25th	<b>Good Friday Family Worship at Topcliffe</b>	10.30 am
	Fri 25th	Good Friday devotional hour	2 - 3 pm
	Sun 27th	<b>Easter Day Holy Communion</b>	10.30 am
<b>Apr</b>	Sun 3rd	Benefice Family Service	10.30 am
	Wed 6th	Holy Communion in the Percy Chapel	9.30 am
	Sun 10th	Holy Communion	10.30 am
	Sun 17th	Holy Communion	10.30 am
	Sun 24th	<b>Service of Celebration for Completion of the Tower Restoration, with Rt Revd Robert Ladds, Bishop of Whitby</b>	10.30 am
	Sun 24th	Choral Evensong	6.30 pm
<b>May</b>	Sun 1st	Benefice Family Service	10.30 am
	Wed 4th	Holy Communion in the Percy Chapel	9.30 am
	Thurs 5th	Ascension Day Holy Communion at Baldersby St James	7.30 pm
	Sun 8th	Holy Communion	10.30 am
	Sun 15th	Pentecost Holy Communion	10.30 am
	Sun 22nd	Matins	10.30 am
	Sun 22nd	Choral Evensong	6.30 pm
	Sun 29th	Prayer Book Holy Communion	10.30 am
<b>Jun</b>	Sun 5th	Benefice Family Service	10.30 am
	Wed 8th	Holy Communion in the Percy Chapel	9.30 am
	Sun 12th	Holy Communion	10.30 am

## Village Hall News (Lewis Rudge)

### "Dalesfolk" in concert

A concert in support of Christian Aid will be held at the Village Hall on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> may at 7.30 pm. The "Dalesfolk" from Richmond will provide the entertainment with a programme of folk songs and music. Tickets, which will include supper are £5 each and will be available from Yvonne Wainwright (Tel. 01765 640546), Rita Simmerson (Tel. 01845 578273) or Joan Fothergill (Tel. 01845 577404). Please come along for a lively evening and support this worthwhile cause.

### Committee news

There will be no Spring Concert in The Village Hall this year largely due to the disappointing turnout for The Newton Singers in the autumn, when an audience of only twenty attended. The choir came from Newton on Ouse to help us raise funds for the Village Hall and most people in the area couldn't be bothered to walk round the corner.

Many people in the two villages seem to believe that the Village Hall is an amenity provided by the local authority. This is emphatically not so and it is only kept

*(Continued on page 8)*

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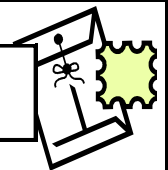
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(Continued from page 6)

open by the activities of a few volunteers and the concerts, which are fundraising events. So when events are so poorly supported it begs the question as to whether the majority of people in Topcliffe and Asenby actually want the hall to remain open.

The hall is an important asset to the community, and many organisations like the Church, Keep Fit, Playgroup and individuals, enjoy the facilities. Concerts and other events organised by the Village Hall Committee, help to raise funds to meet the considerable expense involved in running the hall and allow us to make it available to local groups at preferential rates.

Anybody who believes that the hall should be kept open and has some new ideas of how this should be done, please write to the Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall Committee, care of the Village Hall Topcliffe and let us know. We will be pleased to have ideas of what can be done, but we also need to know what your involvement will be.

Whether it be in fund raising events or just applying to join the committee and support others in their efforts to keep this important part of the villages' functioning let us know your views.

It's been said before, but the phrase use it or lose it is very appropriate.



## Topcliffe School

The children (and staff) of the school seem to have had a busy time of things since before Christmas. (TATtler receives the weekly school Newsletter by e-mail and have they been busy!) The list of activities they get up to are too numerous to mention here, but exercise, healthy eating and music all seem high on the agenda so hopefully the children will all grow up to be healthy citizens with a good appreciation of the arts!

As usual, the school has been playing an important part in the community, especially over the Christmas period. The Christmas Fayre managed to raise over £650 thanks to the support of parents and the hard work of the Friends of Topcliffe School.

Senior pupils attended the Crab & Lobster again before Christmas to sing carols whilst local Senior Citizens enjoyed a fine Christmas lunch. The carol singing was equally enjoyed. And on the 5<sup>th</sup> December, the school's choristers did a great job when they took part in the Christingle service at St. Columba's.

Should this edition of the TATtler reach you in time, you may like to know that the children will be in action again at St. Columba's, on Mothering Sunday, March 6th. They will be singing and taking part in the readings so please do try to attend and give them your support.

## Topcliffe Pre-School Group

This year Topcliffe playgroup is 25 years old and still going strong. Our recent Ofsted inspection resulted in an outstanding report and the committee would like to extend their sincere thanks to Jessica and her team for the excellent day to day care and support provided to the children as well as the extra work involved in preparing for the inspection.

Last half term we enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year by making a Chinese dragon, making Chinese fans and hats and trying Chinese food at snack time. This half term we look forward to celebrating Easter with an Easter egg hunt and an Easter raffle.

We always like to welcome new children from two years of age to our playgroup. Any enquiries should be made to Jessica Robinson on 578959, 9-11.30am Monday to Friday.

## Topcliffe Mother and Toddler Group

Topcliffe Mother and Toddler group meet every Friday morning during term time from 9.15 to 11.15am. We are a friendly group who always welcome new mums and children from newborns to pre-school.

We charge £1 for babies under one and £1.50 for children over one. We look forward to welcoming other mums for a cup of coffee and a chat.

## Useful Telephone Numbers

<b>Topcliffe Surgery</b>	577297	<b>Friarage Hosp.</b>	01609 779911	<b>Gas Emergencies</b>	0800 111 999
<b>Police</b>	0845 60 60 24 7	<b>Hambleton DC</b>	01609 779977	<b>Harrogate BC</b>	01423 568954
<b>Hambleton District Councillor (Topcliffe Ward) - Neville Huxtable</b> 01845 501068 (E-mail NWH@dwny.fsnet.co.uk)					

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Team**

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