

Name of project/group

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) Annual Working Party

Type of project

Social action\Community empowerment

Location

Holy Trinity Church, Ratcliffe on Soar, Nottingham, East Midlands

What was involved

The SPAB's 10-day Working Party has, for the past few summers, been held at the grade I-listed Holy Trinity Church at Ratcliffe-on-Soar (Notts), bringing together 20-30 volunteers from a range of backgrounds with the support of the local community who provide lodgings, food and hospitality in return for much needed conservation work (lime plaster repairs, repointing of walls, limewashing etc). Funding is from the SPAB's charitable resources.

**Achievements**

Without the project a Grade I listed church would be in a much poorer condition. The working party projects have always chosen buildings with repair and maintenance needs, though the tasks required mostly have to be within the capabilities of volunteers managed by professionals. After this season it is expected that Ratcliffe church will return to full management of the community aided by the additional skills that the project has brought to local people. Others, from elsewhere, will have attended the working party and will take the skills acquired back to their own localities.



Future plans

The Ratcliffe Working Party is the latest in a succession run by the Society over several decades. Previous sites have included Compton Abbas church tower in Dorset (now SPAB owned, but managed with local voluntary help) and Greatham Old Church, Hampshire (which has been returned to local management). A new site for the Working Party is being identified, so that the project can continue.

Lessons learnt

As well as providing a historic building with care and attention, the Working Party offers an opportunity to teach volunteers and members of the local community traditional building skills and to raise the profile of building conservation more generally by engaging directly with local people.

Project contact

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