

Refurbished base for The Pilton Story - in a very old Pilton building



The Pilton Story has moved into its newly refurbished base in the Grade II listed Pilton Church Hall, one of the oldest buildings in Pilton. For a little under £3,500 a disused room in the Hall has been cleared of long-term stored stuff and has been refurbished and re-decorated to create a pleasant and light space for volunteers to meet, interview people and generate the database inputs to make the story of the village of Pilton more available widely. How was it done?

It is clear that the roof trusses of the 16th century merchant's house which is now the

front part of Pilton Church Hall had moved significantly at some point in the distant past possibly pushing out the southern end wall of the building. Although now stable, this movement had resulted in damage to both plasterwork and the possibly frieze hidden under centuries of paint. New storage facilities were provided for the Pilton Scouts on the Hall premises and Pilton Festival banners and other stuff were moved to storage offsite. The first work was to remove and replace large areas of loose lime plaster - a job carried out by local contractors Rob Milligan and Paul Grand-Scrutton.



Next to enter the fray room was Pilton electrician Barry Lane who fitted new lighting and a dado trunking to carry power and telephone cables. For the first time ever, a telephone line was brought into the Church Hall to give the essential broadband access for running a server-based database and website. Heating went in to ensure that the room is a comfortable place for both people and equipment and is maintained well above freezing even in the depths of winter.

In between all these professionals, members of The Pilton Story volunteer team were busy re-decorating the walls, window and ceiling in the Church Hall colours - terracotta red woodwork and calico coloured walls. The Hall's maintenance man, Dave Cole, tidied up the approach staircase and doorway ready for decoration.

The specialist conservator of the frieze, Richard Jaeschke, then spent the best part of two weeks cleaning and restoring the much painted over,

possibly Tudor frieze on two of the walls, assisted by Pilton joiner, Andy Kilby, who replaced the supporting timbers behind the damaged frieze to stabilise it supporting the frieze in place during the work as shown in the photo above.

The major dirty work having been completed, a vinyl floor covering was put in by Steve 'Lobby' Laramy. Rather than timber, this is a simulated pine board floor covering, which looks similar to the wooden floor exposed in the adjacent Tudor Room. Suddenly we had a room ready for use. Come along and have a look - and bring your story of Pilton with you.

Martin Haddrill