



**The Friends of All Saints Church,
Hemblington**

**The History of the church, local area,
and precis of results of two recent
archaeological excavations**

**An illustrated talk offered to
The Bure Valley Conservation Group
and Friends of All Saints Church**

Wednesday, 26th April 2017



The Bure Valley Conservation Group has worked with the Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church, Hemblington, the congregation and members of The Friends, to manage a conservation area in the northern churchyard. This is under the auspices of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Scheme. The area is mown twice a year, once after seed has set, and again towards the end of the summer. After mowing, the area is then raked to remove all the dead vegetation, to ensure that seedlings can develop and smaller plants are not stifled.

As part of their regular weekly programme, the Group asked to hear the results of the two archaeological excavations which had taken place firstly in the nave of the church, and later in the churchyard area immediately to the north of the church, when footings had been dug for an extension, to offer level access into the church and provide W.C. facilities.

34 members of the group plus Friends of the church were offered a short film, illustrating some talks given at a study day in September 2015, when the early records of the church and the architecture were discussed, and the building of the rubble walls outlined from a geological aspect. Finally there was a discussion about the church's unique artistic gem – a huge Medieval wall painting of St Christopher, illustrating his life before his conversion to Christianity and his subsequent trial, tribulations and death.

After the short film there was a presentation about evidence of human habitation found in the area, from the Mesolithic, through the Bronze age, to Roman, Saxon, and Medieval times. The architecture of the church confirms a very early building, with the round tower likely to have been built in the 11th century, and several changes having taken place inside the nave during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. Evidence of pre-Reformation practice and destruction of statues either during the Reformation or the Civil War years was illustrated, and the timeline was brought up to date showing work undertaken during the Victorian era as well as in the 20th century with the timely addition of electricity, water and now a kitchen area and W.C.

The two archaeological reports were outlined briefly, with some discussion about the number of burials within the church and on the north side. After refreshments, the group braved the cold winds to undertake the first wild plant survey of the year, noting some 46 plants and seeing or hearing 13 different species of birds.

The Friends of All Saints Church is very proud to be associated with the Bure Valley Conservation Group, and the Blofield and District Conservation Group which has managed the southern churchyard for many years. If any local groups would be interested to hear about the churchyard conservation schemes or the history of the church, please get in touch.

Everyone is also very welcome to become a Friend of the Church, to help fund any repairs to the fabric that may be required. Enquiries to: Hemblington@gmail.com or via the website: www.hemblingtonchurch.org.uk

