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The major task in recent months has been stabilisation of the north aisle walls, where specialist contractors used anchors and concrete beams to secure the structure. Heavy machinery had to be coaxed up the steep church path, with water hauled from the village hall to cool drills. During the work some slow worms, a toad and a newt were carefully rescued and released from the damp ground around the foundations. Inside the tower, rotten timbers and a collapsed threshold had left the top steps to the roof unsafe. These have now been rebuilt in concrete, ensuring safe access once again.

Alongside the structural works, the PCC secured two grants from the Pilgrim Trust to fund surveys of the church's historic monuments and its medieval stained glass. The glass includes a panel believed to be linked to Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife and Queen of England for just eighteen months. Surviving examples of Tudor-period stained glass are rare in Dorset, and the Ibberton window provides a tangible connection to one of the most dramatic episodes in English history.

Renovation echoes

This isn't the first time the village has rallied to safeguard its church. As the late Roger Guttridge wrote in his BV column back in January 2021 (see link in first comment below to the article), a local diarist wrote the 'roof had fallen in and the knave was expected to follow' in 1892. Between 1902 and 1909 St Eustace underwent a major restoration under Rev. L.S. Plowman, with worship held in a temporary building – now the village hall – until the Bishop of Salisbury reopened the church in July 1909.

Modern attention now turns to the roof, where slipped tiles, leaks, rot and corroded nails mean a complete re-lay is once again urgently needed. Planned future works include trimming back the yews to protect the fabric of the building, repairing the bell tower louvers and eventually replacing the tower roof. The church community remains grateful for local support, both in donations and volunteer help, as it works to secure the future of this much-loved landmark.

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