

CHURCHYARD SURVEY FORM

Church name: St Helen and All Saints, West Beckham

Parish: East Beckham with West Beckham

Address: Church Road, West Beckham, Holt, Norfolk, NR25 6NY

Grid reference: TG143396

Weather conditions: Grey and windy

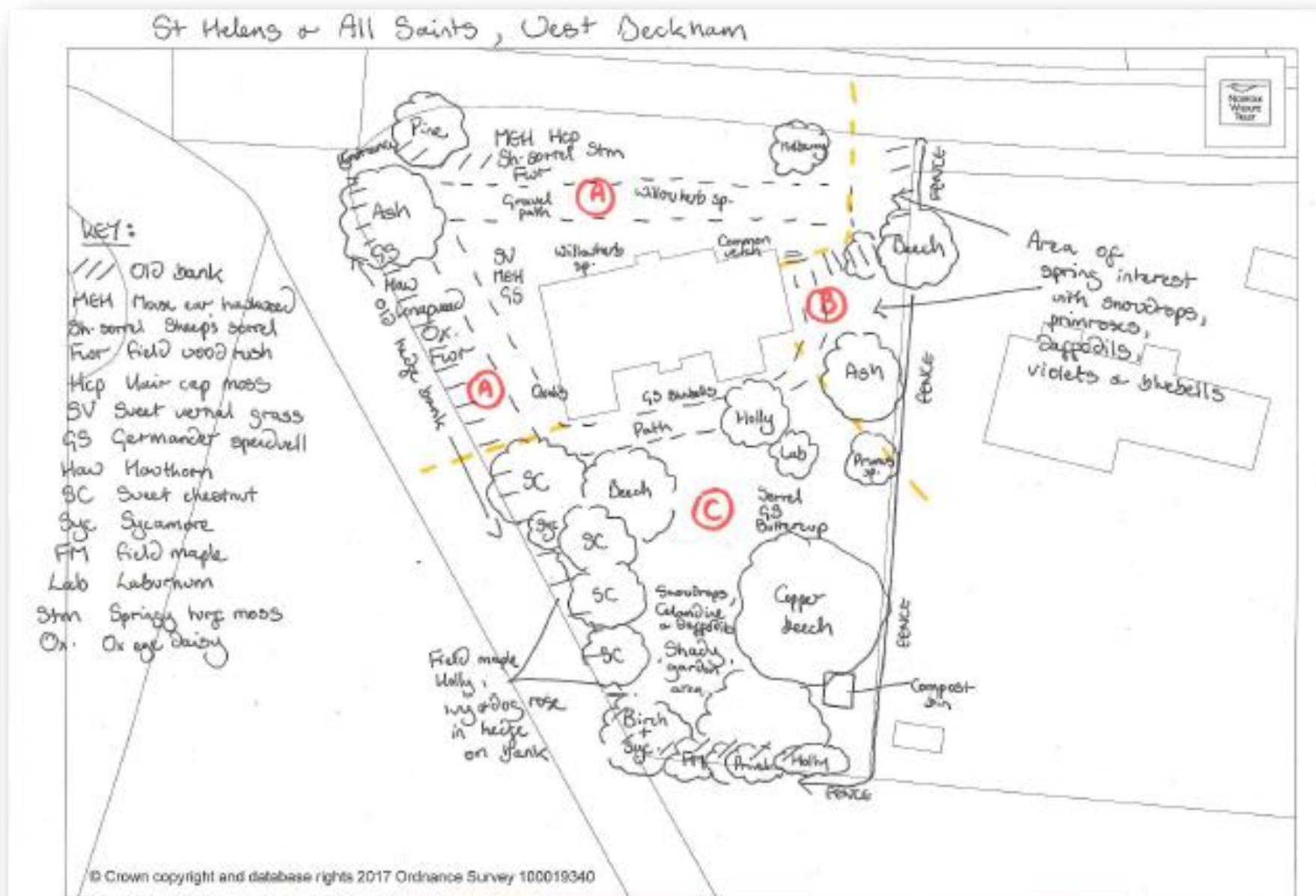
Date of survey: 30th March 2017; 8th May 2017; 8th June 2017

Name of surveyors: AG, LM, LS(NWT)



Harebells at West Beckham Church by Lorraine Marks

Annotated map of the churchyard



1. Does the churchyard have a defined conservation area(s)?

No – according to Norfolk Wildlife Trust's records the churchyard had previously been surveyed in 1982, where plants of note included English bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*) and lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*). However, there are no records of the church being adopted into the Churchyard Conservation Scheme.

2. Is the sward even and fine-textured? Or coarse and tussocky? Or closely mown?

The sward is kept closely mown throughout this small churchyard. Due to the shade cast by tall surrounding trees over much of the site, there is also moss growth throughout the sward.

3. Are the grass cuttings raked off?

No, the cuttings were being left on at the time of both our spring and summer visit.

4. Are there significant unmanaged or neglected areas?

There are no neglected areas, as the whole site is carefully mown short, giving a neat appearance. The eastern spring bank was, by our June visit, getting quite long, with the appearance of rougher species such as dock (*Rumex sp.*) and hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and some tougher grasses.

The south side of the churchyard is heavily shaded by mature trees on an old hedge bank, and consequently this whole area is maintained as a shady woodland garden, with an open area of mossy grass, planted spring bulbs such as daffodils (*Narcissus sp.*) and snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), as well as lesser celandine and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) throughout.

5. What sort of hedge do they have? Does it appear to be managed?

- The northern boundary of the churchyard is a low grassy slope falling away to the north, and open to the road. It is also an occasional access point to the churchyard for vehicles.
- A garden fence runs along the whole of the eastern boundary, with an unusually-shaped, raised bank full of spring flowers at the north-east corner – this bank is topped by two beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) trees.
- The southern boundary has a small continuation of garden fencing at the south-east corner, as well as mature trees and some shrubs, including privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), on another raised bank. Some of these trees may be part of an old outgrown hedge.
- The west of the churchyard has another possible remnant hedge bank, this time along its whole length. The bank has a flat top, and some tiny, stunted remains of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) growing out of its west facing side; the bank here is more obviously maintained than the others, being regularly closely cut, as faces directly onto the road.

6. Are ant hills present in the churchyard?

No

7. Description of the churchyard

St Helen's in West Beckham has a small, closely mown and in parts heavily shaded churchyard, with a lovely display of spring flowers, such as snowdrops, primroses (*Primula vulgaris*), daffodils and bluebells, particularly to the east end of the church.

There are some nice wildflower species in the sunnier spots of the churchyard, including germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), celandine, common dog violet (*Viola riviniana*), field wood rush (*Luzula campestris*), campion (*Silene sp.*), St John's wort sp., herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), mouse ear hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) and hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*).

There are many mature trees, most noticeably to the south and west boundaries of the churchyard, which cast considerable shade into the grassy areas. There is some evidence on the boundaries of an old hedge bank (perhaps with some remnant hedgerow species such as field maple - *Acer campestre* - and holly) that must have once surrounded the site. The church was built in 1890, on the site of an old tithe barn. There are no headstones.

A companion village graveyard, West Beckham cemetery (site of the old All Saints church), lies to the south.

Compartment A:

This compartment is to the north and west of the church, including part of the old hedge bank to the west of the churchyard.

The area to the immediate north of the building is quite shaded, and has short cut grass, willowherb sp. (*Epilobium sp.*) and mosses. Also against the north wall of the church is one small patch of common vetch (*Vicia sativa*).

The low slope that forms the churchyard boundary is to the north of the path, and has the following species, all occasional: field woodrush (*Luzula campestris*), ribwort and greater plantain (*Plantago lanceolata* and *P. major*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), willowherb sp., common mouse ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), mouse ear hawkweed (*Pilosella officinarum*), bittercress sp. (*Cardamine sp.*). There is also frequent springy turf moss (*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*) and a haircap moss sp. (*Polytrichum sp.*).

There is a mature pine tree towards the north-west corner and a mulberry tree (*Morus nigra*) towards the north-east corner, with creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) growing around the base.

To the west of the church, in a sunnier area, Compartment A also has the following species: rare sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), frequent yarrow, germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), and a patch of garden oxalis (*Oxalis sp.*) near the porch. There is also occasional ox eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and cat's eat (*Hypochaeris radicata*) to the immediate west of the building in the short mossy turf.

The western roadside hedge bank has a small patch of harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*).

This remnant hedge bank has a few tiny (stunted by mowing?) hawthorns (*Crataegus monogyna*), growing out of the side of the bank; also occasional chickweed (*Stellaria*

media), ox eye daisy, daisy, and primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), and common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*). This bank continues along the west boundary, into compartment C. This bank has a tall ash tree to its immediate north, by the old gate.

Compartment B:

This is a small compartment to the east of the church including a lower flatter area of grass, a raised bank with two old beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) on top, leading up to the slightly higher level of the southern part of the churchyard, accessible by steps. It has garden fencing on the eastern boundary.

This compartment has the best display of spring flowers with primroses, daffodils, and garden bluebells, as well as lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), common dog violet (*Viola riviniana*), celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), germander speedwell, cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*). In summer there was a lovely patch of harebell on the bank.

By our summer visits, we noted more species growing in this small compartment, with abundant rough meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*), frequent dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), barren brome (*Anisantha sterilis*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondyleum*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*); occasional common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), red campion (*Silene dioica*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). There was also rare dissected cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*), wall speedwell (*Veronica arvensis*), and prickly sowthistle (*Sonchus asper*). Also occasional were self-heal, sticky mouse ear (*Cerastium glomeratum*), creeping buttercup, cat's ear, herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), and yarrow.

Compartment C:

Compartment C is the area of the churchyard which is most shaded by tall, mature trees on the boundary. It also has a few trees within the sward, some ornamental. It has garden fencing to the east and southern corner, and the old hedge bank with remnant hedge to the west and south.

Trees here include mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), cherry (*Prunus* sp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), beech, sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), birch (*Betula pendula*), sycamore (*Acer pseudplatanus*), laburnum (*Laburnum* sp.) and copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* f. *purpurea*). The old, grown out hedge to the south also has privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), holly, and dog rose (*Rosa canina*).

The sward has occasional common sorrel, germander speedwell, tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), hogweed, garden bluebells (*Hyacinthoides* sp.), greater plantain, primroses, daffodils, broad-leaved dock, and foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*); frequent creeping buttercup and daisy. Rare here is a sedge species (*Carex* sp.).

Photographs:



West end of St Helen's and All Saints, view from entrance towards south porch. Showing neat and tidy sward, gravel path, and mature trees on southern boundary.



St Helens and All Saints, showing low, flat-topped western boundary hedge bank



Showing southern side and east end of church, taken from SE corner. Showing short mown grass; central ornamental trees; and taller sward of compartment B. June 2017.



Harebells, knapweed and ribwort plantain on the western bank



Harebells, in front of the trunk of a beech tree, on the eastern bank of West Beckham churchyard

Churchyard Plant List

Name of Site: St Helens & All Saints, West Beckham

Date/s of Survey: 30th March, 8th May and 8th June 2017

Name of Surveyor/s: AG, LM, LS(NWT)

ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	Comp. A	Comp. B	Comp. C	Comment	DAFOR
Common cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	*	*			O
Common knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>			*	On west hedgebank	R
Lords and ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	*	*	*		O
Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	*	*	*		O
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>		*	*		O
Ox eye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	*	*			O
Sweet vernal grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	*				R
Lesser celandine	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>		*			O
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>		*	*		O
Common dog violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i>		*			O
Field woodrush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	*		*		O
Harebell	<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	*			On western roadside bank of comp A	R
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	*				O
Greater plantain	<i>Plantago majus</i>	*		*		O
Red campion	<i>Silene dioica</i>		*			O
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	*	*	*		O

ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	Comp. A	Comp. B	Comp. C	Comment	DAFOR
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	*				O
Common mouse ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	*				O
Sticky mouse ear	<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>		*			O
Sheep's sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	*		*		O
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	*				O
Mouse ear hawkweed	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	*				O
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	*	*			F
Bittercress sp.	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	*			On path to north of church	O
Pearlwort	<i>Sagina sp.</i>	*				O
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondyleum</i>		*			F
Willowherb sp.	<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	*			On path to north of church	F
Prickly sowthistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>		*			R
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>		*	*		O
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>		*	*		O
Bluebell sp.	<i>Hyacinthoides sp.</i>		*			O
Ground elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>	*				O
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	*	*	*		O-F
Daffodil (garden)	<i>Narcissus sp.</i>		*	*		O
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>		*	*		O
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>			*		O
Crocus sp.	<i>Crocus sp.</i>		*			O
Dog rose	<i>Rosa canina agg.</i>			*	In hedgerow to south	R
St John's Wort sp.	<i>Hypericum sp.</i>		*			O
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis pupurea</i>			*		O
Petty spurge	<i>Euphorbia peplus</i>	*				O
Broad leafed dock	<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>		*			O
Ivy-leafed speedwell	<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	*	*			O

ENGLISH NAME	LATIN NAME	Comp. A	Comp. B	Comp. C	Comment	DAFOR
Wall speedwell	<i>Veronica arvensis</i>		*			R
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>			*		O
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>		*	*		O
Cut-leaved geranium	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>		*			R
Stinking iris	<i>Iris foetidissima</i>			*		R
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>		*			O
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>		*			O
Barren brome	<i>Anisanthus sterilis</i>		*			F
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	*	*	*		O
Hedge woundwort	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>			*		O
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>		*	*		O
Garden oxalis	<i>Oxalis sp.</i>	*				R
Privet	<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>			*		R
Sweet chestnut	<i>Castanea sativa</i>			*		O
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>			*		O
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>			*		R
Copper beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica f. purpurea</i>			*		R
Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>			*		R
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	*		*		R
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>			*		R
Mulberry	<i>Morus nigra</i>	*				R
Pine	<i>Pinus sp.</i>	*				R

Please note: DAFOR is a way of showing the amount of plants present in the churchyard, where D=dominant, A=abundant, F=frequent, O=occasional and R=rare

The plants highlighted in this colour are of note

The plants highlighted in this colour may spread and can become invasive