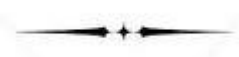


Imber



Ghost-town church is restored to glory

By Kirsty Barton

Tourists can now enjoy a cultural trip to St Giles Church in Imber, on Salisbury Plain, after a £200,000 restoration project restored the church to its former glory. This has also resulted in the church being removed from the English Heritage buildings at risk register for 2007.

The Grade One listed church is situated in the abandoned village of Imber, which was requisitioned by the Army for training in 1943. The church dates back to the 13th century and contains historically important wall paintings and 17th, 18th and 19th-century monuments.

The vital English Heritage grant-aided, temporary repairs, particularly to the leadwork of the church, were undertaken before the building was transferred to the Churches Conservation Trust.

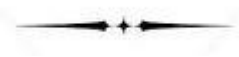
The £200,000 programme of badly needed repairs was started in 2005, supported by grants from the Ministry of Defence and West Wiltshire District Council.

Now the church is no longer on the buildings at risk register, tourists can visit it when the Army is least active - that is, at Easter time and in August.

England has 30,544 Grade One and Two-listed buildings or groups of buildings, with 1.7-2 per cent in the south-east, south-west and east of England being at risk through neglect and decay.

The total of Grade One and Two buildings and scheduled ancient monuments on the register currently stands at 1,235. In the south-west, progress is being made towards securing the future of 21 per cent of buildings on the list.

(Salisbury Journal – Sunday 26 August 2007)



Restoration Work on St. Giles' Church, Imber *(Photo by Brian Robert Marshall 2007)*