

St Mary the Virgin - Kilve Church

A pipe carrying the oil from the tank to the boiler fractured some time during the Christmas period of 2012 and some 500 litres of heating oil was lost. Our insurance company was notified who in turn contacted an organisation called RAW who deal with such contaminations. Initial investigations took place on 14th February 2013 which seem to suggest that the oil had seeped into a void underneath the chancel of the church (this is the part which houses the altar). After more tests, laboratory work and the resolving of a few contractual problems the work was resumed at the church on Tuesday 23rd April 2013, when the chancel floor was opened up again to allow a camera to be inserted so that the void could be investigated further. The results had the archaeologist dancing in the aisles as a whole crypt / vault appeared containing four lead coffins; as well as a considerable amount of heating oil on the crypt floor. This void has again been resealed and vented to the outside of the church so that none of the oil vapours can permeate into the church. Unfortunately there was insufficient detail to get any dates from the coffins with a camera, but the pictures do seem to reinforce the notion that there may have been a tunnel between the church and the chantry in days gone by and that there may even be more vaults under the nave; but at this stage no proof. We are now waiting RAW to say what the final part of the process might be. (Photographs enclosed)

