

## The C21<sup>st</sup> Challenge

During Miss Braund and Miss Bird's lifetimes there were many debates about how to make the Shallowford Trust sustainable. Architects were appointed, trustees debated. How to increase accommodation and barn space in various directions, support more children and maintain staff in what is perceived as an isolated location? As the farm remained Elizabeth's and Rosemay's home, change proved difficult. However, in 2014 the firm Roderick James Architects, headed by Pete Brodbelt was finally engaged. Sustainability of income balanced against engaging young people in the most effective ways to ensure lasting impacts, remained a strategic question until detailed questionnaires enabled a strategy to be developed between 2019 and 2020.

This primarily involved the conversion of the Main East Barn into accommodation and building an Outdoor Education Barn, more lovingly referred to as The Ark as a multi-purpose space in front of a wonderful lawn. The critical target, was how to achieve expansion whilst retaining a sense of home and developing activities that nurtured and encouraged young people to be challenged and thrive in an increasingly urban and screen based society.

Few pictures have survived over the years. However, one from 1964 shows a practical mud yard and a stone wall where now there is a picket fence. The drain is protected as a Grade II listed feature.



1964



May 2022



May 2022: maintenance is needed once again on the house, following the last major works in 2009-2010





Down the drive 2018



Down the drive 2023



Towards the yard 2018



Towards the yard 2024



May 2019: pig shed and stables hiding the office



March 2021: the Outdoor Education Barn or Ark and the revealed office

The stable and pig sheds were originally roofed with tin by John Howe in the 1970s. Malcolm Hunter and his team worked from 1982 to develop the front two pig pens, building the Bull Pen and repairing the office in 1987. The stable for Barney and Bridie was built in front of the office in the 1980s. These barns served their purpose of housing uncountable numbers of animals and enabling many a painting session or a barbecue on a wet day for around forty years. These barns



were taken down in 2019 and the Ark was built under the supervision and with much work from Malcolm Hunter and many volunteers in 2020.



January 2020



March 2020



July 2019: the old caravan, which had served as accommodation, library and store was finally dismantled by a Providence House Work Party. The trees in the garden on the left were taken down



May 2024





January 2020: The old granite shed which was a muddle of timber and granite was carefully deconstructed leaving the external wall for the Ark to be constructed.



May 2024: The completed Ark and car park photographed from the bank surrounding the Klargestor or sewerage treatment plant.



Car Park & curtilage wall January 2020



May 2024

### **Work on the East Barn:**

The ambition was to enable the Shallowford Trust to accommodate an average class of thirty children plus two leaders. The Barn was converted into accommodation for 21 people, with five en-suite bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, the cobbled room and a downstairs accessible toilet in 2021.



The East Barn in January 2020, before conversion to human use.



May 2024 following three years of public use

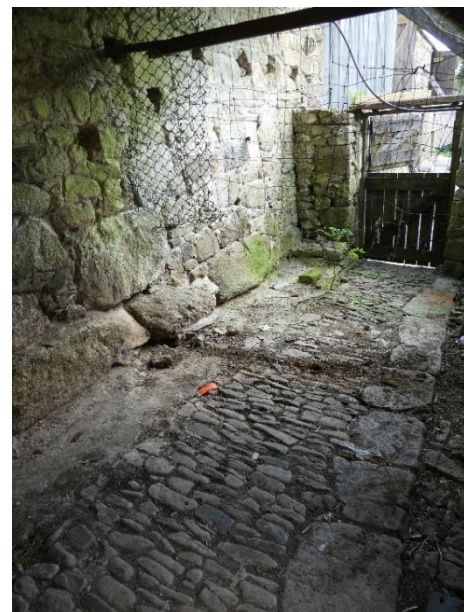




The Barn door in January 2020



The Barn door in May 2024



The leaking roof lean-to became the underfloor heated bootroom in 2020!





May 2024, the instillation of the 'Plant Room' for equipment to filter the acidic water, to house the underfloor heating system, the washing machines and drying equipment were all necessary to ensure support for the on-going programme and increased number of visitors.



In the previous 30 years no major flooding had been recorded, but persistent rain in February and June 2020 caused spring ingress within the farm house. New drainage was additional to the planned budget, but considered to be essential.

17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: the rough washed cement was laid to enable water to flow safely downhill away from doors.

The old Log Shed was fully converted to a very useful outside store with movement censored and emergency lighting.





January 2020: the external stair case that was built during Miss Braund and Miss Bird's day to access the upstairs floor was removed and used for firewood.



May 2024: A new cement path was laid with gravel to help the flow of rainwater and access through the yard. New glass doors replaced the old stable wooden ones to allow light into the building.



Robert Musgrave clearing up behind the East Barn before work begins, September 2019



The Converted East Barn with its 'pig run' and the back of the Plant Room, May 2024



May 2020: many volunteers had removed all the internal wood, preparing the space ready for future work, a new roof, new floors, insulation, new drains and heating.





June 2020, all the old beams and wooden structures were removed, the floor levelled and drainage channels dug.



July 2020, the first floor is drilled into the sturdy ancient walls before the multiple layers of insulation were applied.



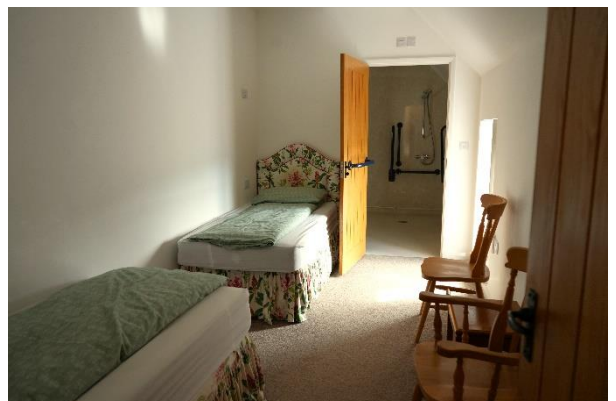
10th October 2020: Room Five, placing and spacing! Finalising plans for bathroom fittings and doorways on the first floor.



8<sup>th</sup> January 2021: Room Four, fully boarded, plastered, first fixings of electricity and one coat of paint. Note the painting was undertaken by many volunteers. THANK YOU!!!



May 2024: Room Four, a sense of home but fun in a room for six people.



May 2024: Room Five: easy access room, with a bathroom for wheelchair users.





20<sup>th</sup> August 2020: the Barn floor is cemented, the first floor in place and the walls for the kitchen and window have been constructed. This internal kitchen replaced the 'concept' of an external kitchen in the shippen, thus retaining a more accessible 'homely' feel.



17<sup>th</sup> May 2024: The completed corridor; with the kitchen on the right, a door to the lift and dining room ahead.

On the left, maps of the world and of Britain were secured by Phil Dorman to enable young people to gauge their location.

### **The Cobbled Room:**

Following the granting of Planning Permission on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the builders carefully created two doorways through the walls allowing internal access to two rooms that in the original plans were only accessible through external stable doors from the yard.

New doorways leading into and from the cobbled area. Once a dairy, to become a sitting room or 'snug'.







January 2023: some group leaders call the room the 'Snug', then we tell them it used to be a dairy and show them the drain for urine and faeces!

### **The New Farm Yard:**

Following the increase of youth growing up in urban areas with unchallenged immune systems, scares around bacteria, viruses and general higher levels of allergies to a wide range of triggers, the need to demarcate clear zones of 'green' and 'red' areas was considered a necessary demand in our modern world. The transition from the animal 'red' areas to human 'green' areas were to be facilitated by the provision of hot hand washing facilities both outside and inside buildings.

Most of the work was completed by Matt Symes, a family building company, with additional support from plumbers and electricians.



January 2020:  
compared to  
May 2022: the  
Shippen



August 2021  
and May  
2022:

No Corner  
Barn (left)  
and one  
constructed  
(right).







August 2021 and May 2022: the Animal Barn transformed with a lean-to and cemented yard. Note, the Animal Barn was constructed in 2018.



August 2021 open stone yard turned into a covered open and cemented yard May 2022. Corner Barn extension /animal shed.



August 2021 to May 2022 Shippen Lean-to (disabled toilets and store).



Scrappy and Girlie enjoying the freedom of the yard.





The Corner Barn is often referred to as the Cathedral!



The Barns were superficially completed for the deadline of 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 when the Earl and Countess of Wessex officially opened the new facilities.



Final completion of the 'child and cow safe' gates in the Farm Yard by December 2023, fabricated and installed by Matt Irish Engineering.





Car park & Farm Yard January 2020



May 2024



Animal Barn towards the House & Yard January 2020



Animal Barn & Lean-to towards the new Corner Barn & House May 2024



Harry Symes pointing at the end of the Shippen:  
November 2023 funded by the Clothworkers Foundation.





One Acre Field is levelled ready for the poly-tunnel February 2022. Funded mostly by Rural Development Programme (RDPE).



Poly-tunnel, raised beds and fruit cage all in place by May 2022. This photo May 2024.



One Acre Field is levelled ready for the poly-tunnel February 2022



View over the highly productive vegetable plot, May 2024



July 2019



May 2024





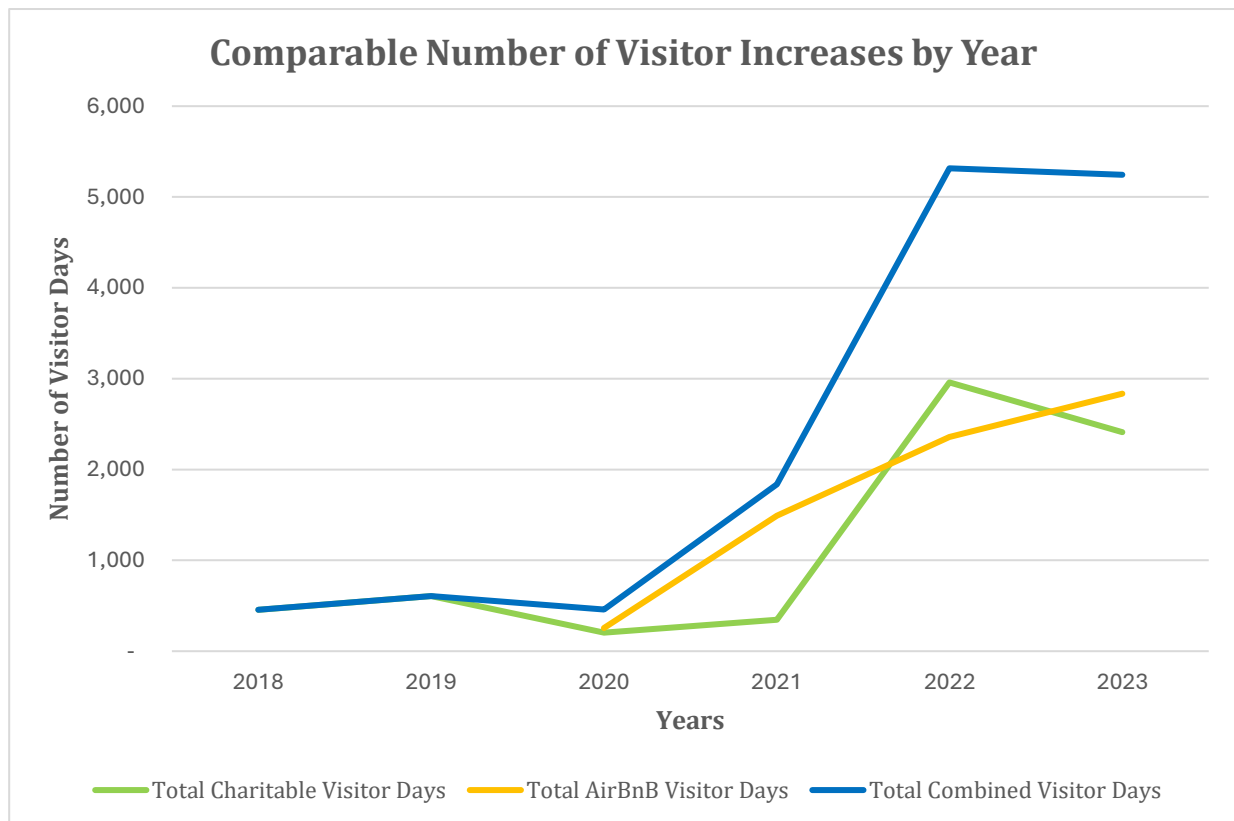
July 2019



May 2024

### Yet the main achievement?

Must be increasing the number of young people who immerse themselves in nature, discover that hills can be climbed, that the view is exhilarating, that lying on soft moss makes a perfect bed, that trees when hugged relax your soul, that eating fruit and vegetables is delicious and that there is a whole world, a whole way of life they had never dreamed of, yet is theirs if they dare to explore.



Note: high visitor rates in 2022 were possible through a fantastic Heritage Lottery Green Recovery grant, through which our Conservation Officer was able to fund a large number of day visitors. Similar grants will be sought in the future.

Outreach work to increase overall visitor numbers continues.





April 2024

**PDF Documents to Download:**

2020 Construction of Shallowford Ark

2021 Conversion of Shallowford's East Barn

2022 Completion of the Shippen and Farm Yard