



FRIENDS OF SOMERSET CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 2010





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Mission Statement

Our slogan is simple – 'Keep Somerset Churches Alive!'

Over 700 churches and chapels, representative of most Christian denominations, are still in regular use in Somerset. From the soaring height of a Somerset tower to the lowly rudeness of a village gargoyle; from the magnificence of civic endowment to the humility of meeting house simplicity; from Victorian over-supply to current uncertainty, one thousand years of history is carved in the stone and wood of our churches.

Multitudes flock to the stately homes of England and they pay handsomely to gain access. History is big business and plays a major role in this nation's tourism appeal. The church stands possessed of more Listed Buildings than all other institutions put together. Somerset alone has over 230 in the Grade I and Grade 2* categories. Congregations cry for cash to maintain historic fabric, and ponder how best to keep doors open and accommodate visitors and non-worship community uses without unduly compromising the *raison d'être* of existence.

During the past decade the non-denominational Friends of Somerset Churches & Chapels (FSCandC) charity has given over £399,350 to over 200 restoration projects. Some grants have been substantial, whereas others have been 'top-ups' without which many restoration projects wouldn't have left their drawing boards.

Arguably our churches are nowadays better cared for than at any time in recent history but the era of national economic belt-tightening, smaller congregations and changed conceptions of church will present challenges for the future. With over 700 members the Friends of Somerset Churches & Chapels is rising to these challenges. Will YOU help us reach our new objective—to raise and donate £50,000 per annum for the maintenance of Somerset's historic churches and chapels?

JOHN CROCKFORD-HAWLEY



New FSCC banners in use at Dillington House



*A previous year's FSCC grant helped restore All Saints, Weston-super-Mare.
Left, restoration in progress, and right, the restored nave*

'Keeping Somerset churches alive' is a pretty good definition of the work of our Trust. *Keeping Somerset Churches Alive* is also the title of a book written this year by former Chairman Hugh Playfair. Hugh's beautifully presented book captures the need for adaption and change in the management of church buildings as well as their preservation. It is full of great examples and fine colour photographs. If you have not already done so I do recommend that you **buy a copy** – better still, get the special offer pack for your church. Contact Hugh at Blackford House, Blackford, Yeovil—profits come to the Trust!

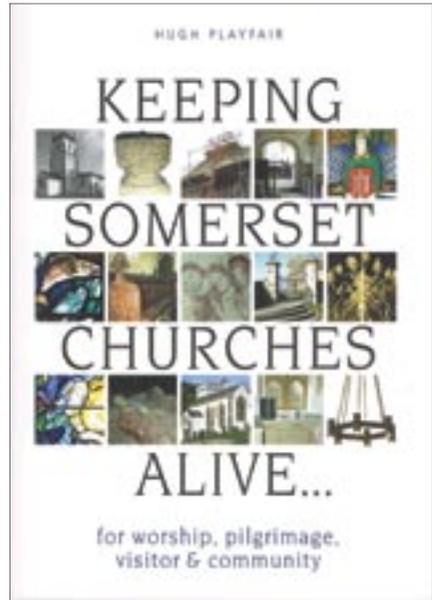
Adaptation and change is also a feature of the new style of this Annual Newsletter. We felt that we needed to produce a version which better reflects the forward looking attitude of our Trust and gives a fuller flavour of our activities. So we have printed photographs in colour, allowing the diversity and complexity of our Somerset Churches to be displayed in vibrant form. Our front cover is an excellent example of a recently installed west window at Pitminster, visited in 2010. We have used a shorter and hopefully more easily understood set of accounts. There is a brief resume of a typical grant-aided project at Holy Trinity, Blackford, Wedmore. Overall the intention of the new style is to bring the work of the Friends of Somerset Churches to a wider audience.

On Trust administrative matters we have streamlined our management structure with an executive committee now dealing with day to day issues. Trustees retain control, giving strategic guidance and making grant recommendations. Led by Jane Venner-Pack, we are trying to strengthen our Area Representative structure, but we **need some new blood. Could you help?** If so contact Jane at 'janevp@globalnet.co.uk'

As the financial report shows, our financial position in terms of money in the bank is strong, but we intend to reduce the amount held in reserve to the equivalent of three years' grant-giving. To achieve this we will be making one or two more substantial grants to particularly deserving projects and will consider re-orientating our grants to be tied to community aspects as well as to structural repairs. Chris Hawkings has written elsewhere in this newsletter about the Ride and Stride. With his and Jane Venner-Pack's efforts we should strengthen our finances.

However, we are slowly losing members and the proportion of corporate members, typically churches, seems lower than we would like. In fact fewer than one third of the active places of worship in Somerset subscribe to the Trust. Perhaps members could **check that their local churches have joined** and if not nudge them along: that really would help.

I would like to say a word or two about our web site. We intend to up-grade several aspects,



e.g. by adding more photographs and giving examples of grant aided cases. We would like to be able to communicate by using e-mail in addition to traditional means. The Trust now has an e-mail address 'fscandcinfo@gmail.com'. I would be most grateful if **members would send in their own e-mail address** to that address.

Our Annual Meeting on 16th April is at Walcot St Swithin, Bath, and promises to be a lively event with choral works and a talk, as well as the usual Trust business. Do **pop the date in your diary** and come along.

In summary we have had a very successful year; we have made changes, we have had a wonderful programme of visits and the same to look forward to next year. We are financially strong and the Ride and Stride is being regenerated. Fulsome thanks are due to the dedication and support of Trustees and Committee members. But my letter above does invite members to take actions. I do encourage you to help by reacting where you feel you can.

I invite as many as possible to come to our stimulating programme of events, particularly the Annual Meeting in April 2011 at which you will have the opportunity of saying how you feel about your Trust.

DAVID SISSON
CHAIRMAN

Grants 2009–10

JULY '09	£
Barton St David	750
Pylle	1000
OCTOBER '09	
Charlcombe	2000
Claverham	3000
Withiel Florey	1000
JANUARY '10	
Bishops Lydeard	5000
Compton Pauncefoot	500
Weston-s-Mare (Emmanuel)	500

Only nine churches came forward with applications during the year – no applications at all for the April meeting – and the above grants were offered. Regrettably one application had to be refused as the PCC had enough money to cover the works.

The Trustees never like to say 'No' to an application and try to be fair to all. When an application comes in from a church that 'has' sufficient funds or 'have' a large legacy attached to it, the Trustees feel obliged to offer grants to churches who 'have not'. There are also, incidentally, some applications that are not eligible and again the trustees have to stick to the rules. If an exception is made for one, then it would have to be made for all.

Nevertheless, a total of £399,350 has been offered in grant aid to over 200 of our Somerset churches over the years, and all the money has come by the generosity of you all – so 'Thank You'.

ANGELA DUDLEY
GRANTS SECRETARY

Jim Burrell 1931–2010

Jim and I first met some thirty years ago on the Yarlington Shoot. A firm friendship developed for we shared a number of interests - shooting, Scotland, military matters, heritage, and so on. Jim enjoyed his shooting and he played a full part in the out of season activities - cutting paths through the woods for the beaters, repairing pens for the young pheasants, delivering them to the pens and feeding them. Eventually Jim and I both left the Shoot; but an enduring friendship between ourselves and our families had been forged.

As I've said we had many interests in common apart from shooting. We both lived in self-imposed exile after serving in Lowland Scottish regiments, Jim in the Cameronians, but he was a professional soldier, and myself in the King's Own Scottish Borderers, but I was a mere National Serviceman.

We also shared an interest in the restoration of antique furniture but again Jim was a professional - he converted a hobby into a business and was an esteemed member of the British Antique Furniture Restorers Association - and I was mere amateur. He was always ready to give advice - where to find baize for the repair of a card table, where to find a glass bowl for a tea caddy, and so on. His particular forte was the restoration of boxes and tea caddies. He would scour the local auction houses, and amassed a considerable collection from which he would generously donate two or three items to help raise money for a deserving charity- the Star and Garter Homes or the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels.

Our most productive and enduring shared interest was in churches, for Jim was a committed churchman. When the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels Trust was founded some fifteen years ago Jim immediately joined and volunteered to help. When Jim did something he did it properly and with total commitment. He became an outstanding area representative - finding new members, encouraging churches to apply for grants and join the Trust, organizing church visits, and finding sponsorship for the tenth anniversary book which celebrated the considerable achievements of the Trust. It was typical of him that in spite of illness last month he insisted on participating in the Annual Sponsored Ride and Stride event, always held on the second Saturday of September, by walking round a number of churches in Taunton raising a handsome sum of money.

He was devoted to the well-being of his own church in Seavington St Michael. I well remember him ridiculing the Diocesan Advisory Committee's insistence that some badly eroded stone round a window should be repaired rather than replaced. Jim had his own opinions and he was not afraid to voice them and stick to them in his inimitable firm but humble way. He was also very concerned that the furnishing of the interior of the reordered church should be appropriate and to the liking of the parishioners.

When Jim smiled it was as though the sun shone and the world seemed an even better place. We shall miss Jim, but not as Norma and their families will miss him. He was a devoted husband and an adoring father and step-father. We shall miss him for he was a real gentleman - loyal, courteous, trustworthy, straightforward and honest. He was an entirely delightful and dependable friend. It was so good to be with him earlier in the year for his Seventy-ninth Birthday Party. Sadly I had not seen him since that lovely occasion. Well does he deserve the divine accolade, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant'.

HUGH PLAYFAIR

Holy Trinity, Blackford: A Restoration Project

The church of Holy Trinity, Blackford on the Isle of Wedmore is a special building, one of a very few Georgian chapels in our rural Somerset villages. The building is Grade II listed. The design is the work of Richard Carver (c1792-1862) who was County Surveyor to the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The church is an elegant representation of the early Gothic Revival style, built in 1820-1823. Unusually for churches in Somerset, the main part of the church is octagonal.

In 1999 the PCC was faced with a difficult decision. Years of modest maintenance and previous building errors had seriously affected the fabric. The repair bill was dauntingly high, and additionally the Church lacked basic facilities such as access for disabled people and even running water. There was little by way of funds in the bank. But the village community decided that Blackford must have a church and set about the challenge.

By 2006 Phase I had been finished. By hook and crook over £130,000, had been raised with fantastic support from the whole village, the Diocese, FSCC and anonymous donations. A new Vestry had been built with a lavatory, access for disabled provided, a tea bar installed, hard cement render hacked off and replaced with breathable mortar.

Phase 2 was immediately started. Holy Trinity was immensely fortunate in being offered a very substantial grant by English Heritage towards the essential high level works. Yet again FSCC added significantly to the pot. As a result the roof and cupola have been completely refurbished and the walls re-rendered with lime mortar. The project cost over £240,000 an immense sum for a small village. But now there is a watertight church which serves both the secular and non-secular village community needs.

This project was immeasurably helped by the FSCC providing encouragement and financial support. Credit is also due to the Architects Benjamin and Beauchamp and the skills of the building team Carrek Ltd.

DAVID SISSON



Topping Out at Holy Trinity, Blackford, Wedmore

Ride and Stride 2010

The final total raised from the Ride and Stride event on 12th September 2009 was £18,517, compared with £22,419 for 2008. After retaining all of the Gift Aid claimed and returning 50% of sponsorship to individual churches the net addition to FSCC funds for the 2009 event was £10,718. This is a very disappointing result and is the smallest amount raised since 1997. In a league table of those counties taking part Somerset is 27th out of 35.

Following the 2009 event a small working party was formed to look at ways in which we could encourage people to take part and increase the amount raised. A number of initiatives were introduced for the Ride and Stride event on 11th September 2010.

Anyone who couldn't make Saturday 11th September was able to undertake their walk or ride on any day from Saturday 4th September to Sunday 19th September.

As well as churches and chapels taking part any charitable organisation could enter a team and nominate their own organisation for the 50% return of sponsorship money collected. The intention was to encourage youth groups and other younger people to take part. As more and more older members say they are no longer able to take part the participation of younger people is essential if the event is to survive into the future.

Individual participants were also very welcome with 100% of sponsorship raised being for the benefit of the FSCC. More entrants raising funds solely for the benefit of FSCC is to be encouraged. The aim is to involve more people with a general interest in historic buildings, architecture and the local community.

Probably the major initiative for 2010 was the facility for participants to raise sponsorship on an FSCC JustGiving website. This enables riders and walkers to create their own web page with details of their individual activity. The ability to attach a link to emails makes reaching large numbers of friends, relatives and colleagues very easy. Although for technical reasons the website was not up and running until August almost 14% of our income for 2010 has resulted from the website with some significant individual contributions. There is also a higher proportion of sponsorship gift aided on the web.

The total raised so far including website donations and gift aid is just over £17,000 and is up on the same time last year.

However, there is only so much we can do by changing the rules and making it easier to get sponsorship. If this event is to be a success and for us to move up the county league table it is up to every Trustee, Area Representative, Local Coordinator, Church Representative and FSCC Member to take part, encourage the involvement of others and actively seek sponsorship.

CHRIS HAWKINGS

RIDE AND STRIDE COUNTY COORDINATOR AND TREASURER

Cyclists Help Preserve Somerset's Heritage

On Saturday 11th September supporters of The Friends of Somerset Churches & Chapels took part in a sponsored cycle ride around the churches in Wells and the surrounding countryside. A number of cyclists started at St Cuthbert's Church in Wells and after visiting Christ Church, Coxley, the redundant church at Godney and Christ Church, Henton, met up at St Matthew's

Church, Wookey with others who had set off from the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Croscombe.

The group then cycled to the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Wookey Hole, St Thomas' Church, Wells and after checking in at Wells Cathedral finished off the ride with a visit to the Bath and Wells Diocesan Offices in the Old Deanery on the north side of the Cathedral Green. The group climbed the tower of the Old Deanery where everyone enjoyed fantastic views of Wells.

Those who took part on the Wells ride have already raised nearly £500 which will be used towards the repair and maintenance of churches in Somerset. This is just part of a county wide event known as the Ride and Stride. The total raised by all of the walkers and cyclists taking part throughout Somerset should reach £20,000 which is a vital source of income to help preserve our heritage.

FSCC is an independent, non-denominational trust, established since June 1996 to help any church or chapel which is open for worship in the historic County of Somerset with the cost of repairs and maintenance.

If you would like to join in next year please contact Chris Hawkings on 01749 672327 for more information.

REPORT AND PHOTO BELOW COURTESY OF THE WELLS JOURNAL



The photograph, taken outside St Matthew's Church, Wookey shows, left to right: Chris Hawkings, John King, Paul Hodge, Phil Lindner, Ann Edmonds, Rob Hawkings and Peter Graham.

English Churches abroad: they are well worth visiting

In Italy and elsewhere one usually visits stunning churches architecturally interesting and with frescoes that are real works of art, but rarely the English Churches in places which had an English population of sufficient size, mostly dating from the 19th century. They are a treat in store, as the following three examples will show.

ST. MARK'S VIA MAGGIO, FLORENCE

This served an English population of an amazing 80,000 in the late 19th century. Completed in 1881, it was designed by G.F. Bodley and the interior decorated by J.R. Spencer and an involvement by Holman Hunt. Catering for an Anglo-Catholic congregation, it is in the latest neogothic style of the time, and the decoration a great example of pre-Raphaelite painting and fresco.

CHRIST CHURCH IN PERA, ISTANBUL

Its gothic façade faces up a steep hill beyond and below the Galata tower. The architect was G.E. Street and it has an impressive and monumental interior. Stratford de Redcliffe, the powerful British ambassador in Constantinople at the time of the Crimean War, was behind its construction, there being quite a population of English in Constantinople at that time in the 19th century and beyond.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH AT VEVEY, SWITZERLAND

This is a more modest church with a local vernacular touch, but unmistakably English, set in its churchyard in the higher part of the town with views over Lake Geneva. Here again there was a nucleus of English residents and indeed there in another Anglican church on the hillside between Ouchy and Lausanne, a short distance lower down the lake. Its main claim to fame is the large contemporary memorial tablet in the nave to Richard Bradshawe and other members of the court which condemned Charles I to death. At the end of the Protectorate in 1660 they deemed it politic to exile themselves to Vevey and in due course died there.

GERARD LEIGHTON

Thank you from Winsham

18th May 2010

GRANT AWARD FOR ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, WINSHAM

On behalf of the PCC and congregation of St. Stephen's Church in Winsham this is to express our thanks for the generous cheque just received towards our repair costs. Our nave is now looking resplendent, both outside and inside, and a few weeks ago we were delighted to welcome Bishop Peter Price to lead our rededication service.

None of what we have achieved would have been possible without the help we have received from a number of big-hearted organisations, and the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels have been in the forefront with their generosity. Would you please pass on our most sincere thanks to the Chairman and Trustees, and rest assured of a warm welcome whenever you venture to Winsham.

Yours sincerely

E.P. Saunders, Churchwarden

Programme for the year 2011

FRIDAY 25TH FEBRUARY, 7PM

THE OLD DEANERY, WELLS

A talk on *The Painted Monasteries of Moldavia* by Admiral Sir Roger Morris, with slides, followed by light refreshments.

Write with s.a.e. and cheque to FSCC for £10 to Simon Colledge, 13 Middle Path, Crewkerne TA18 8BG (01460 75815). **Booking essential.**

SATURDAY 19TH MARCH, 2PM

YEOVIL AREA

Church Visits to St. John, Yeovil, the Methodist Church, Vicarage Street, Yeovil and St. Mary Magdalene, Barwick. Tea (donations). *St. John ('The Lantern of the West') and the Methodist church both now serve the community and are walkable from Tesco's car park. A short drive takes us to Barwick, with its fine carving and 7 consecration crosses.*

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

SATURDAY 16TH APRIL, 2PM

ST. SWITHIN, WALCOT, BATH

ANNUAL MEETING followed by a short talk on the history and re-ordering of the church, one on 'Potty Parsons' by John Crockford-Hawley, and a recital from a soprano trio from Wells. *The Georgian church of St. Swithin was rescued from closure and is now converted for multi-purpose use. Tea is available from the café at £2.50 per head.*

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above. Use the Podium Car Park (£3.40 for 2–3 hours), or the Park and Ride at Lansdown.

SATURDAY 21ST MAY, 2PM

WELLOW AREA OF BATH AND N.E. SOMERSET

Church Visits organised by members Charles and Libby Kerr, to St. Julian, Wellow (*a gem with its ancient pews*); St. James, Foxcote (1725, *no electric lighting*); and Combe Hay Parish Church (*dating from Saxon times with additions and rebuilding, and was re-ordered in 2009*). Tea (donations).

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

SATURDAY 18TH JUNE, 2PM

N.E. OF TAUNTON, OFF A361

Church Visits with local experts to St. Bartholomew, East Lyng (*ancient clock, fine bench ends and associations with King Alfred*); St. John the Baptist, Durston (*received an FSCC grant of £5,000 in 2009, rebuilt 1850s*); and St. Giles, Thurloxtton (*mainly 15thC with rich carvings. Parson Woodforde was curate in 1763*). Tea (donations).

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

THURSDAY 14TH JULY, 2PM

WELLS GARDEN VISITS

The Old Deanery, with Mrs. Frances Neale; The Rib and historic house (by kind invi-

tation of the owners); St. Thomas Church, St. Thomas Street (1856–7, *architect S.S. Teulon*). Parking and tea (donations) at St. Thomas Church Hall.

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

SATURDAY 20TH AUGUST, 2PM

MILVERTON AREA

Church Visits suggested by members Eric and Dinah Butler, with local experts to St. John the Baptist, Heathfield (13thC tower, the rest re-modelled in 1860s, interesting monuments); St. Bartholomew, Oake (*perpendicular, with impressive window containing fragments of 15thC glass*); Holy Cross, Hillfarrance (*some fine carving, and modern painted sanctuary ceiling. Church has been revived as a village centre*). Tea (donations).

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

SATURDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER, 10AM–6PM

SPONSORED RIDE AND STRIDE

This is your chance to help ensure that Somerset's magnificent heritage of religious buildings continues for the future benefit of local communities. Get sponsored for visiting churches and chapels either on the main event day of Saturday 10th September or on any day from Saturday 3rd September to Sunday 18th September. If you wish half of the money you raise can be returned to your own church or nominated charity. If your church or chapel isn't organising something do your own walk or ride and give all your sponsorship to FSCC. Creating a JustGiving webpage is great fun and makes obtaining sponsorship much easier. Use the link on the FSCC webpage www.fscandc.org.uk or go to <http://www.justgiving.com/somersetchurches>.



For more help with joining or organising a walk or ride contact the Ride and Stride Coordinator and Treasurer, Chris Hawkings, 3, Glastonbury Road, Wells BA5 1TW. Tel: 01749 672327. Email: fscandcinfo@gmail.com

SATURDAY 15TH OCTOBER, 2PM

N.E. OF FROME

Church Visits to All Saints, Lullington (*according to Pevsner 'Perhaps the most enjoyable Norman village church in Somerset'*); St. Mary, Orchardleigh (*a medieval church on an island*); St. James and St. Philip, Norton St. Philip (*award-winning re-ordering known as 'The Hub'*). Tea (donations).

Write with s.a.e. for directions or phone Simon Colledge, as above.

SATURDAY 19TH NOVEMBER, 11AM

PRIORY BARN, TAUNTON

Arrive at Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton for coffee, followed by a talk by Stephen Membery on the Priory (now long gone) and lunch at the Cricket Club at 12.30pm. A visit to the medieval Priory Barn, arranged by Trustee Sir Peter Wallis, will follow lunch.

Write with s.a.e. and cheque for £10 to FSCC, to Sir Peter Wallis, Parsonage Farm, Curry Rivel, Langport, Somerset TA10 0HG.

Review of the year's activities in 2010

FEBRUARY

Great Churches of the South West. A very informative talk by Patrick Brown, humourously delivered and with excellent slides. 28 members attended and enjoyed a buffet supper afterwards.

MARCH

38 members gathered at St. Mary the Virgin, Nettlecombe, and were fortunate to have Marilyn Crothers point out the more interesting features including the splendid font depicting the seven Sacraments. The Chalice and Paten are from 1479, the earliest pieces of dated Church Silver.



Font, Nettlecombe



Bench end, Monksilver

At All Saints, Monksilver, Gordon Yeo, a faithful attender for 40 years, spoke with great affection of this little church, which mainly dates from the 14th century and has links to Sir Francis Drake and Elizabeth Sydenham. Wonderful carving and a splendid oak lectern in the form of an eagle.

John Lees gave us a humorous and informative talk at St. George's, Bicknoller. We saw a delicate chancel screen, magnificent bench ends c.1530, and stocks near to a fine old yew tree. Simon Warman, the well-known carver, lived and was buried at Bicknoller.



St. George's, Bicknoller

Tea followed—a magnificent spread: Mike and Jean Pennington-Ridge, and Chris and Anne Leigh all helped to make this Church Visit such a success.

APRIL

The 14th Annual Meeting was held at St George's Roman Catholic Church Centre in Taunton. The new Chairman, David Sisson, started proceedings by introducing himself. He paid tribute to Hugh Playfair for the success of FSCC in its 13-year history and to Gerard Leighton the Honorary Treasurer for that time. He thanked Gerard for finding such a well-qualified successor as Treasurer in Paul Heal, Angela Dudley for all she does as Grants Secretary, Simon Colledge for his well-planned and interesting programme of visits and Rowena Wallace for her production of the Annual Report and Accounts.

He explained some of his plans for the future including raising FSCC giving from £30,000 pa to £50,000 pa, and outlined plans for making greater use of a management committee with Trustees taking strategic decisions, as well as agreeing the grants to be made.



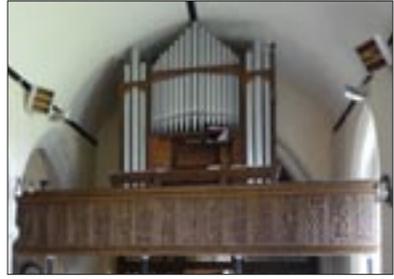
Station of the Cross

Other speakers were John Crockford-Hawley, the new Publicity Manager, on his plans and the importance of publicity, and Hugh Playfair who introduced his new book *Keeping Somerset Churches Alive*, saying that churches must become well used buildings in the community, not museum pieces.

Members were then invited to St. George's Church where a young Nigerian ordinand gave a brief history, pointing out the two special features of the church—the beautifully carved 2 to 3 ft high Stations of the Cross by Tom Praetor and the newly installed window designed by Patrick Reyntiens and constructed by his son (illustrated on last year's Programme cover). Tea and a wonderful array of cakes from a team of ladies ended an interesting afternoon.

MAY

We first visited Churchstanton, as well as Staple Fitzpaine and Buckland St. Mary, in 2000. The Blackdown benefice covers one of the most attractive parts of the county and the Rector, Sue Green, had arranged perfect weather for our visit. The church of St. Peter and St. Paul, at Churchstanton, is a gem, with an undistinguished exterior but a joyful interior, not done justice by Pevsner. After an introduction to the benefice by Stephen Higgs, a parishioner and member of FSCC, Chris Poole, a fellow parishioner, talked to us about the history and architecture of this special building and, with the help of Geoffrey Berry, another local expert, displayed the interesting church plate.



Gallery screen at Churchstanton, made from benchends



Interior at Corfe

At St. Nicholas, Corfe, a Victorian, neo-Norman building, our guide was John Finchett, another local enthusiast. Here, the Kempe windows and an unusual, tapestry war memorial attracted particular attention.

At historic St. Andrew and St. Mary, Pitminster, about which our own Robert Dunning has written at length, Chris Robinson shared with us

his infectious interest in the parish and the building. The modern east window, featured on this year's cover, was particularly admired. Tea at the village hall brought a happy afternoon to a fitting conclusion.



Pitminster

JUNE

A very well organised Church Visit, thanks to meticulous planning by Ian and Sheila Ashby. We were lucky to have good speakers – David Chappell at Tickenham, Ian Ashby at Nailsea and John Stevens at Wraxall. George Chedburn was with us and gave his insight into recent work at Nailsea and Wraxall, helping to make the churches more welcoming to the community.

At Tickenham we learned about St. Quiricus, boy martyr around A.D. 300, with his mother, St. Julietta.

Ian Ashby told us that Nailsea, Holy Trinity, was originally Nailsea Island, and he pointed out early glass and intriguing carving on the capitals. A very versatile layout of seating, dating from 2004, gives the church a welcome feel.

Wraxall, All Saints, has a simple Norman entrance, superb carving by Blomfield and glass by Kempe. John Stevens told us of the association with the Gibbs family, owners of Tyntesfield.

An excellent tea was enjoyed by 27 members at the Cross Trees Hall; and the sun shone throughout. (Sadly, Roger Bark was not on these Visits, so no photographs!)

JULY

Dr. Robert Dunning led 40 members (including Fr. John Hodder, the incumbent, and Dennis Burry, churchwarden of 65 years' standing) to three churches in beautiful countryside near Frome, all 'Normanised' in the 19th century but with tell-tale signs of original early buildings.



Marston Bigot

In Marston Bigot, some 16th century glass in what had been a private chapel, moved out of the view from the big house in the 18th century following a petition to Parliament, 'an oddity'.



Altar and reredos, Cloford

In Cloford, 17th century monuments to the Horners, a 15th century tower, 'resplendent chancel' and immaculate church-yard.

In Wanstrow, 16th century flat-topped windows, possibly moved from a previous manor house.

The Congregational Chapel in Trudoxhill was bought in the early 18th century as 2 cottages and premises for a meeting house



Trudoxhill Chapel

for dissenters, following Parliamentary Amnesty. The bare white interior, hat hooks, 19th century pews and adjoining school-room were charming.

An excellent tea in Wanstrow church, provided by Bob and Janet Bramley and friends, was much appreciated.



North Barrow

AUGUST

Members David and Felicity Reid led 50 people to complete the visit to all churches of the Six Pilgrims benefice in their beautiful setting near Castle Cary.

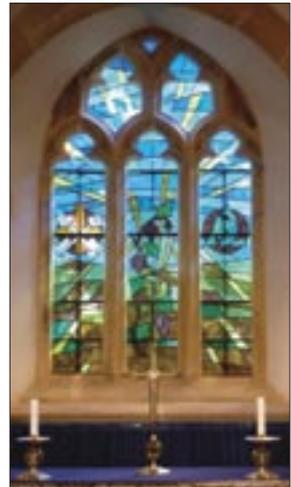
At North Barrow ('on rising land'), Churchwarden Sharon Wesselby pointed out the Grade 2, simple lay-out of St. Nicholas, with its Perpendicular tower and rebuilt nave and chancel, necessary following a fire in 1860 and instability of blue lias beneath in 1949, when the neighbouring farmers were asked to contribute £25 towards the rebuilding. The eight trimmed yew trees, and one-to-spare, are said to be 'the emblem of immortality'.

At South Barrow, the Chairman of the P.C.C. spoke about St. Peter's with its chunky 15th century tower, ancient font and stained-glass East window, commissioned from Laura Gilroy AMGP to commemorate the Millennium. With a population of 175, including children, South Barrow is considering re-ordering of the church to render it more useful to the community.

Finally, in Babcary, Churchwarden Simon Hoare showed the group round the inside and outside of the Perpendicular church of the Holy Cross, with its pulpit of 1632, interesting monuments, and connection with Parson Woodforde, who was curate here in 1764.

A delicious tea was served in the 19th century north aisle, and the opportunity to climb the tower was enjoyed by the energetic.

An excellent Church Visit in a Benefice which really 'pulls together'.



Millennium window, South Barrow



Interior, Babcary

SEPTEMBER: RIDE AND STRIDE (SEE REPORT ON PAGE 8).

OCTOBER

On a warm and sunny October day twenty-eight people were introduced to four churches three of which nestled in the depths of the countryside. This was unexpected as we were within only 20 minutes' drive from Bath. We were led, by Jennifer Beazley, on a delightful journey travelling through a maze of narrow, winding lanes. St Mary Magdalene, Langridge stands in a remote hamlet attended by a farmhouse and barn. This delicate but robust church has a short Norman tower and a magnificent Norman doorway with triple arch. There is a small modern apse to be seen through the partially restored Norman chancel arch. An 11th C effigy of the Virgin and Child, situated above, has traces of original paint and was found embedded in a wall in 1888. Many important families attended and funded this church namely Ascelin, Blathwayt, Fitzjohn, Walsh and Wolrond.

By contrast All Saints, Woolley is small, simple and unpretentious with a square tower and round arched bell-turret, a simple apse and a simple font with oak leaves. A scrap of paper found in 1873 informs us that *This ancient chapel being ready to fall down, Elizabeth Parker of Ravenfold, York, Lady of the manor of Woolley did order to be builded at her own charge this most glorious church 1761*. It stands in a Thankful Village with appropriate brass plaque dedicated to the thirteen men who returned.

Blessed Virgin Mary, Swainswick is approached down a very narrow lane. Our arrival coincided with school out which led to some creative parking. A splendid Norman arched door leads into a much larger interior than anticipated. A saddleback roof with clear glass beneath was much appreciated. There is a chapel off the chancel through a panelled arch and a canopied recess. There are many finely carved pews and a tablet commemorating John Wood the Elder. The Rectors offered lengthy service – one of them for 67 years and two others for 46 each. The unusual topography of the churchyard is a steep and undulating terrain, more like a garden, giving an atmosphere of contented tranquility. A huge barn is positioned nearby. A perilous journey over the toll bridge led us to St. Nicholas, Bathampton. There is a legion of people linked with this church. One from the East India Company, another the surveyor of the Russian Empire and discoverer of gold in Australia and Ralph Allen of postal services fame. Admiral Arthur Phillip's renown brings many visitors to see the 'Aussie' chapel with wood furniture and fittings grown in Australia and shipped over. Devlin, the silversmith, made the altar silver and Sickert's tomb lies in the graveyard. The tea was idiosyncratic in as much the tea was free but the delicious fudge brownies were not, and was taken in the pub opposite. It turned out that a couple from Canterbury took the trouble to make a four hour journey here and back to join us. They said it was one of their very best days out.

On our pilgrimage we glimpsed beautiful houses, both large and small, farmhouses and barns. In Poultry Street house a secreted glove was found accompanied by two letters. Frequently Cowper, the stained glass glazier, took the trouble to indicate his name and address at the foot of his windows. Who said that advertising is a new concept?



Church Visiting – a pleasant way to find out more about Somerset's churches – this one to St. Michael's, Somerton.

Treasurer's Report

This Treasurer's Report covers the 12 months ended 30 June 2010. During this period our total income amounted to £41,106 (2009, £36,614) and expenditure £4,003 (2009, £1,715) before grant payments which amounted to £24,250 (2009, £27,000). Assets at 30 June 2010 amounted to £133,877 (2009, £108,387).

INCOME

	2010	2009
Deposit interest and investment income	£1,121	£4,026
Donations	£12,140	£2,000
Subscriptions	£12,365	£13,296
Ride & Stride	£8,465	£9,519
Publications, cards, events	£2,490	£2,772
Tax reclaim	£4,525	£5,001
Total	£41,106	£36,614

Subscription income, ride and stride income and bank interest all fell during the period. However, this disappointing decline was more than offset by an increase in individual donations which amounted to £12,140, £3,900 as a contribution to the publishing costs of our new publication *Keeping Somerset Churches Alive* and £8,240 in general donations.

We now have two active publications which, including the donations referred to earlier, have contributed some £4,581 in revenues in the year.

Income from members' activities such as Church Visits and members' evenings contributed £1,297 (2009, £1,974).

EXPENDITURE

The major expenses are the cost of our 2 publications, £2,415 and general expenses of £955. No trustee received any remuneration or other benefits during the current or previous year.

Surplus of income over expenditure for the year, before grants paid amounted to £37,103 compared with £34,899 last year.

GRANTS PAID TO CHURCHES

Grants paid to Churches during the year were £24,250, a reduction of £2,750 from last year. Grants outstanding at the year end amounted to £7,500. The Trustees are seeking to increase the general level of grant giving and would welcome new applications.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT THE YEAR END

Net assets have increased from £108,387 to £133,877 with bank balances increasing from £116,715 to £129,568. The market value of investments in the Charities Official Investment Fund has increased from £10,672 to £11,809 and grants approved by the Trustees but unpaid at 30 June 2010 were £7,500.

COPIES OF TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

A copy of the full Trustees' Report and Accounts can be found on the website or can be requested from the Treasurer on payment of £3 to cover the costs of printing and postage.

PAUL HEAL
TREASURER

The Trust and how you can join it

Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels was formed in 1996 to provide financial help with repairs to churches of all denominations in Somerset, encouraging wider interest in them and raising funds for these purposes. Since it was formed FSCC has given grants totalling £399,350 to help over 200 churches with essential repairs.

Members are entitled to attend meetings, lectures and church tours and to receive a copy of the annual report. The minimum annual subscription for individuals is £10, family £15, churches £25, corporate £50.

To join, please contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs. Gill Hawkings, 3 Glastonbury Road, Wells BA5 1TW, telephone 01749 672327, or visit the website at www.fscandc.org.uk.

The website contains sections on Who we are, What we do, Membership, List of churches and chapels which have received grants, Bike Ride, Sales (FSCC tea towels and a list of church cards available), Events (annual programme), Contacts, and Latest News.

Date for your Diary!

Saturday 16th April at 2pm

15th ANNUAL MEETING

at St. Swithin's, Walcot, Bath

followed by a short talk on the history and re-ordering of the church, another on 'Potty Parsons' by John Crockford-Hawley, and music from a soprano trio from Wells. Tea is available in the cafe at £2.50 per head.

Write with s.a.e. for directions to Simon Colledge
13 Middle Path, Crewkerne TA18 8BG (tel: 01460 75815)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor is very grateful for the photographs on pages 3 and 16, from John Crockford-Hawley; on page 5 from David Sisson; on page 9 from Chris Hawkings; and the cover and those from the Church Visits by Dr. Roger Bark; also for the reviews of the year's activities from Simon Colledge, and the October review from Caroline Gentinetta. We are especially grateful to our advertisers for helping to sponsor this full colour Annual Report.

The cover picture is of the stained glass window at Pitminster, St. Mary and St. Andrew, 1989. It was designed and made by Jane Gray in Shropshire and shows Christ summoning Andrew on the shore of Lake Galilee. It includes the thistle of St. Andrew and the lilies of St. Mary., and was dedicated by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Right Reverend George Carey, later becoming Archbishop of Canterbury.

Contributions to next year's Report will be very welcome; please contact the editor (details on back cover).



Old Deanery Court, Cathedral Green, Wells BA5 2UQ

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Chairman: David Sisson

Providence House, Sexeys Road, Blackford, Wedmore. T:01934 713617. E: david.sisson@tiscali.co.uk

Trust Treasurer: Paul Heal

Culberry Farm, East Pennard, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6TT. T: 01749 860452

Trust Secretary: Mrs Penelope Ritchie

Orchard Cottage, Mill Street, Baltonsborough, Glastonbury, BA6 8RJ. T: 01458 850540

Membership Secretary: Mrs Gill Hawkings

3 Glastonbury Road, Wells, BA5 1TW. T: 01749 672327. E: gillandchris@hawkings.freeserve.co.uk

Membership Treasurer: John Wood

Rose Corner, Blackford, Yeovil, BA22 7EE. T: 01963 440276

Grants Secretary: Angela Dudley

Whynot Cottage, Wellow, Bath, BA2 8QA. T: 01225 837134. E: fscandinfo@gmail.com

Assistant Grants Secretary: John Beauchamp. E: john@b2architects.com

Ride and Stride Coordinator and Treasurer: Chris Hawkings

3 Glastonbury Road, Wells, BA5 1TW. T: 01749 672327. E: chrishawkings@hotmail.co.uk

Programme Secretary: Simon Colledge

13 Middle Path, Crewkerne, TA18 8BG. T: 01460 75815. E: simoncolledge@hotmail.co.uk

Publicity:

John Crockford-Hawley, 14 Gerard Road, Weston-s-Mare, BS23 2RF. T: 01934 629166.

E: bartjrch@aol.com

Annual Report Editor:

Mrs. Rowena Wallace, St. Cleers Cottage, Sutton Road, Somerton, TA11 6QP

T: 01458 272844. E: rowena@directoffset.co.uk

Area Representatives:

BATH AREA: Mrs Jennifer Beazley, E: Beazley.uk@aol.com

BRUTON & FROME: John Bishton, Suthfield House, Quaperlake Street, Bruton, BA10 0HF

BRIDGWATER & AXBRIDGE: Mrs Margaret Jordan, Riverton House, Old Coach Road, Cross, Axbridge, BS26 2EJ

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Email us at: fscandinfo@gmail.com