

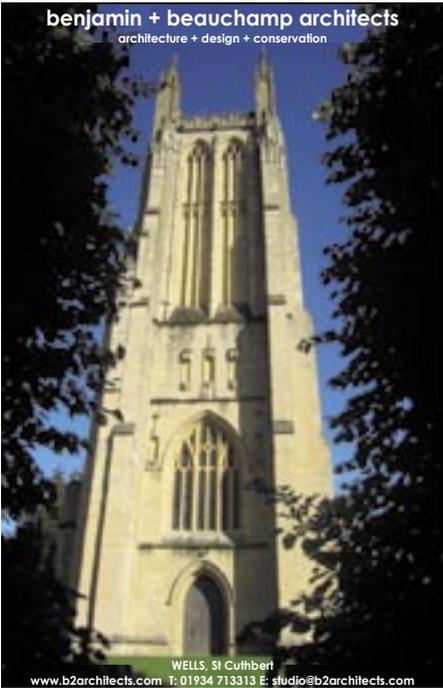


# FRIENDS OF SOMERSET CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 2011



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## Chairman's Report 2011

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Warm greetings to all Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels Trust. Early in the new year our Trust hopes to make a grant offer which will take our total of offers over the **£500,000** mark. That is a milestone of which we can all be proud. This record has been possible because of the generosity of our many supporters and the hard work of those who serve as Trustees and Office holders. Thank you.

So what have we done in 2011? Our main purpose is to give grants. Angela Dudley has set out this year's schedule of offers made on page 5. Over the past year the Trustees have as a matter of policy offered substantially higher levels of grants to reduce the sums of money held in the bank because giving out money to worthwhile projects and making a real difference in communities is what we aim to do. We have however still held back sufficient funds to tide us over any tough times; the detail is in Paul Heal's report on page 6. In encouraging an understanding of Somerset's rich heritage of churches and chapels we have enjoyed an excellent **programme of visits**, and thanks are due to Simon Colledge who has arranged these for the last four years and has planned those for 2012. However, he is retiring this year, and we need a replacement. **Is this something you could do?**

Once again our main fund-raising event has been the Ride and Stride. Do pick up the detail on page 7 in Chris Hawkings' report. We are very dependent on this event and Chris's work is invaluable. Next year in addition to the routes organised locally all over the county we are having one high profile route in the Cheddar valley and aim to get a good number of riders and striders to swell our funds.

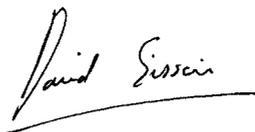
We are awaiting a response from the National Churches Trust (NCT) to whom we have applied for funds under their County Trusts Grant Scheme. Their decision will influence our scale and pattern of giving in 2012. Our Trust gave significant help to the NCT who worked in partnership with the Automobile Association to produce *Exploring Britain's Churches & Chapels*, a beautiful book available from all good bookshops. Somerset comes out well.

At the Annual Meeting at St Swithin's Bath we brought our grant giving Policy criteria in line with current thinking. We will now also offer grants for works which enhance community use of churches. You can see this revised policy on our web site.

To consolidate our ability to give grants we need to ensure a predictable flow of funds. In the coming year we plan a membership drive and perhaps a single 'Big Event'. We will look at possible membership options including Gift Membership and Life Membership. Trustees have also given sensitive consideration to current **membership subscription** levels which have remained unchanged since the Trust's inception. We concluded that these need to be revised upwards. New Standing Order forms are included with this Report. The revised annual rates will be £20 for individuals, £30 for families, £30 for small churches, £60 for large churches and £100 for corporate membership.

I do hope to meet members in our 2012 programme of church visits and also at our **Annual Meeting** which will be held on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April** at the church of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury, with a visit to the adjacent medieval Chapel of St Margaret (recipient of an FSCC grant in January) with its Almshouses.

With best wishes,



DAVID SISSON,  
CHAIRMAN

## From our Publicity Officer

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The rise in 'church crawling' is staggering. Wells Cathedral and Bath Abbey attract thousands of visitors and though our lesser churches are not in the same tourist league there is discernible 'market growth' amongst those who, for whatever reason, delight in voyages of localised discovery. Somerset's churches, chapels, graveyards and parsonages are steeped in history and history is fashionable, judging by the number of TV programmes, internet sites, and the accompanying popularity of archaeology, architecture, genealogy, and spirituality. Major new publications, including the AA's *Exploring Britain's Churches & Chapels* and Pevsner's updated *The Buildings of England – Somerset : North and Bristol*, attest to this re-awakened interest. Bookshops stock an ever-increasing number of local topic titles and with new technology it's now both easy and cost-effective to create web sites and produce small-run publications. It's an ideal time for our churches to capture a ready market, but locked doors, peeling notices of long-discarded events and amateurish leaflets from the ark of rotary duplication offer nothing to the enquiring mind. Decay can be romantic but aren't some places overdoing it?

Hugh Playfair's superb book *Keeping Somerset Churches Alive* should be on every priest's and minister's to-read list for it shows just how many Somerset churches have adapted to the realities of modern user-demand and non-worshipping community appeal without loss of *raison d'être*.

Times are hard – and yet in the midst of economic doom and gloom our church buildings are in a remarkably good state of repair, thanks to huge efforts by dedicated (and often small) congregations, itinerant or non-worshipping supporters, income from wider community uses, English Heritage, and charitable trusts such as the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels.

Church building projects need effective publicity in order to tap widest possible support. FSCC, along with other county trusts and national organisations have become adroit messengers on behalf of the restoration cause, but more needs to be done to win friends in local media offices.

Whether you have an interest confined to a specific church or chapel, or are fascinated by the whole panoply of places of worship set within this county it is inconceivable that you would fail to be a member of the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels, but on the off-chance that you are not a member do please join our endeavour to keep Somerset's churches and chapels well and truly alive and encourage others to join too!



JOHN CROCKFORD-HAWLEY  
PUBLICITY OFFICER

*Window repairs at Bishops Lydeard, grant-aided by FSCC in 2010.  
Grants can be made for both large and small projects.*

## Grants 2010–11

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24 churches came forward with requests for grant during our last financial year and the trustees were able to offer grants totalling £72,750 to all but two of them. Since the first grant made in June 1997, the Trustees have now offered grants to a total of £475,350 to date. Perhaps in January next year we will have topped the £1/2 million!

Sadly, many of the more recent applications have been for works following theft of lead from accessible roof slopes, with some churches having had two or more thefts in the last year or two. Some attempts have been foiled – though we've heard little news of convictions – but the adjacent damage to stonework, gutters, etc. add greatly to the cost of re-leading. Many are now looking to alternative materials – stainless steel, zinc or fibreglass – and the Friends have made grant offers to all.

Churches often write to thank us for the FSCC's help and give a progress report on how the church is doing. All Saints, Merriot, recently wrote saying "... although we can just about find the necessary funds to cover the cost, we can now, with your (FSCC) help, turn the lights and heating on as well !" Glad we could help!

### SUMMARY OF GRANTS JULY 2010–JUNE 2011

Place	Dedication	Offer amount (£)	Date of Trustees' grant decision
Combwich	St Peter	4,000	6-Jul-10
Durleigh	St Hugh	1,500	6-Jul-10
Fivehead	St Martin	500	6-Jul-10
Nettlecombe	Blessed Virgin Mary	1,500	6-Jul-10
Barrington	St Mary	500	12-Oct-10
Corfe	St Nicholas	500	12-Oct-10
Croscombe	St Mary	750	12-Oct-10
Cutcombe	St John the Evangelist	5,000	12-Oct-10
North Stoke	St Martin	5,000	12-Oct-10
Sutton Bingham	All Saints	10,000	12-Oct-10
Brent Knoll	St Michael	5,000	15-Jan-11
Cheddon Fitzpaine	Blessed Virgin Mary	2,000	15-Jan-11
Dunster	St George	3,000	15-Jan-11
Glastonbury	St Margaret's Chapel	1,000	15-Jan-11
Westonzoyland	St Mary	5,000	15-Jan-11
East Pennard	All Saints	5,000	16-Apr-11
Easton-in-Gordano	St George	5,000	16-Apr-11
Hinton St George	St George	3,000	16-Apr-11
Milverton	St Michael	1,500	16-Apr-11
Monksilver	All Saints	7,500	16-Apr-11
Timberscombe	St Petrock	4,000	16-Apr-11
Wootton Courtenay	All Saints	1,500	16-Apr-11
<b>Total</b>		<b>£72,750</b>	

ANGELA DUDLEY  
GRANTS SECRETARY

## Treasurer's Report

This Treasurer's Report covers the 12 months ended 30 June 2011. During this period our total income amounted to £33,324 (2010, £41,106) and expenditure £1,815 (2010, £4,003), before grant payments which amounted to £35,750 (2010 £24,250). Grants approved but not paid at 30 June 2011 amounted to £43,000 (2010 £7,500) and net assets after deducting grants approved but not yet paid amounted to £95,641 (2010, £133,877).

### INCOME

	2011	2010
Deposit interest and investment income	1,130	1,121
Donations	2,034	12,140
Subscriptions	13,887	12,365
Ride & Stride	9,073	8,465
Publications and events	2,443	2,490
Tax reclaim	4,757	4,525
<b>Total</b>	<b>£33,324</b>	<b>£41,106</b>

Total income fell by £7,782 due mainly to the reduction in individual 'one off' donations which were particularly good in 2010. This reduction was partially offset by the improved contribution from annual subscriptions and the Ride & Stride.

Income from members' activities including publications, church visits and members' evenings contributed £2,443 (2010, £2,490).

### EXPENDITURE

The major expense items are the cost of printing £627, postage £343, and general expenses of £612. An advertising banner was also purchased at a cost of £233. 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 £31,509 compared with £37,103 last year.

### GRANTS PAID TO CHURCHES

There has been a substantial increase in both grants paid during the year and grants approved but not paid at the year end. Grants paid to Churches during the year were £35,750, an increase of £11,500 over last year and grants outstanding at the year end amounted to £43,000 an increase of £35,500.

### BALANCE SHEET

Due largely to the increased level of grants paid and grants approved but not paid, and the reduction in income, net assets have decreased from £133,877 to £95,641. This effectively is the level of uncommitted funds we have available to carry forward into the next year. Total bank balances decreased from £129,568 to £118,131.

### 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

## Ride and Stride 2011

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Looking back on my report for last year I'm afraid I sounded rather pessimistic. This year, however, I am pleased to say I am feeling much more optimistic. There are two reasons for this: one financial and one a really heartening story from the 2011 Ride and Stride event.

For the event held on 11th September 2010 the final total raised amounted to £19,120. This compared with £18,517 for 2009 which represented an increase of 3.25%. Nationally income from Ride and Stride for all County Trusts was down by 9% which reflected the downward trend in charitable giving generally. For us to increase our income, contrary to the national picture, was a fantastic result and a great credit to all those involved.

Excluding Gift Aid, over £14,000 was raised using traditional sponsorship forms while the JustGiving website raised almost £2,000. The total recovered from Gift Aid was just under £3,000. 148 people raised money using the traditional sponsorship forms while 13 people raised money online. Over 900 individuals gave sponsorship. The average raised per person on line was £147 compared to £96 using sponsorship forms. Whilst £96 is still a very commendable amount, the message to participants is please use JustGiving if you can. Not only is the amount of sponsorship greater, a higher proportion of Gift Aid is recovered and it also considerably reduces the amount of time spent on administration.

After returning the 50% refunds to churches the net amount to FSCC funds including Gift Aid amounted to £11,655. It is a little early to comment on the amount raised from the event on 10th September 2011 but a steady stream of cheques is coming in.

However, the story from this year's event which really raised my spirits and should be an inspiration to us all came in a letter to me from Dawn Valouks of Wilton Orchard.



"I live in sheltered accommodation at Wilton Orchard and attend St George's C of E Church nearby. I took part in the Ride and Stride event on my Mobility Scooter. I imagined the event would be rather like a cross between a pilgrimage and a picnic but I met no one else taking part. Only one of the churches I visited was expecting anyone. St John the Evangelist in Taunton had prepared fresh coffee, home made cakes and an organ recital. At first I refused their hospitality thinking it was arranged for someone important. A lovely welcome.

When I arrived back at Wilton people were gathering for a grand wedding so I didn't look for a signature to my form. I went to a public seat in a memorial garden and ate my picnic lunch before returning home. This is only a tiny contribution but here is my cheque. I do wish it was more. Every little etc."

I can't really add to that.

CHRIS HAWKINGS. RIDE AND STRIDE COORDINATOR AND TREASURER

## *The Butcombe & Blagdon Youthwork Trust stride their way to Uphill*

For the second year running the Butcombe and Blagdon Youthwork Trust (BBYT) has supported the Ride and Stride event, this year with a walk along sixteen miles of the West Mendip Way from their base in Blagdon to Uphill.



*The Butcombe & Blagdon Youthwork Trust at the trig point on Wavering Down, en route to Uphill. From left to right: Elliot, Kerri, Hannah, Susannah, Chloe, Pete, Josh, Sam, Tim, Richard, Guy, Max and Gaynor.  
Photo: Clare Walker*

Anyone who knows this section of the West Mendip Way will be aware that the walk takes in some of the best scenery that Somerset has to offer. Nestled in amongst the villages of Shipham, Compton Bishop, Loxton and Bleadon are the ancient churches with bell towers standing as they have done for hundreds of years. The Norman church of St. Nicholas Church dating back to as early as 1080 and positioned above the old quarry at Uphill holds a poignancy all of its own. This semi-derelict church is well worth a visit to seek out its rich history and to admire its position as it looks onto Brean Down headland and casts its eye over Weston-Super-Mare. It is difficult to pass these lovely old buildings without feeling a little small in more ways than one.

Fourteen supporters of BBYT took part in this year's event, with the youngest members completing the section of the walk on Wavering Down. Richard Saunders (previously based in Poole) is the Trust's first full-time youth and children's worker and it was the countryside around Mendip that first drew him to take up the position. Richard states "whilst undoubtedly the young people in our villages have an appreciation of the place where they live, rarely do they make the most of it. This walk gave us the opportunity to take in the best that Mendip has to offer and with views such as these, sixteen miles and sore feet would seem a very small price to pay. We have already decided to take part in next year's Ride and Stride event and the youth group have requested we walk the other half of the West Mendip Way into Wells".

## *Area Representatives – a tribute*

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Our Trust is fast approaching the day when the grants we have offered since 1996 will top the £500,000 mark. This total has been spread among some 215 churches and chapels in Somerset. Each grant has been helped to its successful conclusion by the dedicated work of our Area Representatives whose job it is to make contact with the grant applicant, visit the church or chapel concerned and then to give crucial 'on the ground' support to our Grants Secretary and the Trustees by checking the details and discussing with the applicants the need and scope of the work for which the grant is being sought. It is a rôle that is vital in ensuring that our grants are offered and given in the most fair and effective manner.

Although I have tackled a number of jobs for the Trust, I have never been an Area Representative; I am now, however, the Trustee charged with coordinating their work and since taking this responsibility on I have been so impressed with their dedication, their concern and the care they give to their task.

Margaret Jordan has been Representative for the Axbridge area since the Trust's very beginning. I asked her what she found so rewarding about the job. "Many things," she said, "but three stand out. I see the beautiful interiors and treasures of some church buildings that otherwise I might never have entered. I meet the most delightful people, many of whom are elderly and struggling to keep their church in good repair – they're real troopers and an inspiration. And, perhaps most of all I love being able to ring up and tell them that we are able to help them with a grant. Sometimes it is the seed corn for greater fundraising or, perhaps, the final brick in the wall – always the happy result of dedication and effort."

John Bishton in East Somerset endorses Margaret's view. As a building historian he says it is always fascinating and such a privilege to see the unexpected corners, beauties and curiosities of our great heritage of churches. Although some congregations find fundraising very hard work, others become very enterprising. John is always impressed by their dedication and, like Margaret, he enjoys meeting people and finds it so rewarding to be able to help.

We now have almost a full team of Area Representatives covering the county – we have a Representative elect for the Crewkerne and Ilminster area and it is just the Quantocks still without cover. If you or anyone you know might like to take it on, please get in touch with me. On average each representative has about three applications for grants a year to deal with under the guidance of Angela Dudley, our Grants Secretary.

Our Representatives also act as the ears and eyes of the Trust, alerting us to local issues and concerns and, whenever they can, encouraging membership. Contact details for Area Representatives are listed on the back of this Annual Report. Together they have put in years of dedicated work for which we and all the recipients of grants are so extremely grateful – we couldn't do what we do without them!

If you would like to know more about the work of Area Representatives, please do not hesitate to contact me.

JANE VENNER-PACK

TELEPHONE: 01761 463699

EMAIL: JANEVP@GLOBALNET.CO.UK

## Royal Arms in Churches

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It is generally assumed that the display of the Royal Arms in churches was a replacement for the roods taken down at the Reformation but though a number date from the 16th and first part of the 17th century, it was not until the reign of Charles II that it was enacted that they should be so displayed. The majority of those in Somerset date from the 18th and early 19th century. There are a few Victorian examples while Crewkerne has a set proudly bearing the cipher EIIR.

Royal Arms are to be found carved in stone or wood or exceptionally plaster or cast iron, but most are painted on rectangular boards or canvas and framed. They can be large – over 6ft long and 4 or 5 ft high. Their usual site is over the chancel arch or a doorway but they may be on any suitable wall space. They should not be confused with hatchments depicting on a diamond shaped frame the arms of a local family displayed above the porch of the deceased's house and later laid up in the church.

The Arms take the form of an 'achievement' with supporters, lion and unicorn, on either side of the shield which may be encircled with the garter. Above is the crown surmounted by a lion and below the motto. That of the Tudors is *semper eadem* which was also used by Stuart monarchs or the Stuart motto that continues to today *Dieu et mon droit*. Occasionally in 17th century examples an admonitory text may be substituted for or added below this motto.

Sometimes the arms bear the royal cipher, a date or the names or initials of the church wardens. Occasionally an older painting has been updated to the current monarch but in the absence of other evidence the best way to identify the date in general terms is by the alterations in the blazon over the centuries.

The blazon of the Tudor Monarchs was England (3 lions) and France (3 fleur de lys) quarterly. The Stuarts used the Tudor arms in quarters 1 and 4 and the framed lion of Scotland and harp of Ireland in quarters 2 and 3 respectively. William III added an escutcheon of the House of Nassau in the centre of the Stuart arms – a gold lion on an azure shield. After the Act of Union in 1707 the arms of Scotland were impaled (i.e. half of the same quarter) with England and France and Ireland continued in the 2nd and 3rd quarters. The arms of the Hanoverian monarchs were similar except the 4th quarter contained the arms of Hanover and Brunswick in various configurations and sometimes the cap of an Elector (of the Holy Roman Empire) in the centre. After 1801 the fleur de lys was replaced by the framed lion of Scotland in the 2nd quarter and no longer impaled in the 1st quarter with England. When the German principalities followed the male line on the accession of Queen Victoria the Royal Arms took the form that continues to this day.

Examples of the above in Somerset are:

Carved stone: Wells Cathedral, Beckington; Carved wood: Keynsham, Taunton (St Mary); Plaster: Upton Noble; Cast iron: Burnham on Sea; Tudor arms: Banwell; Stuart arms: Taunton (St Mary), Bruton, Low Ham; Hanoverian arms: 1714–1801: Butcombe, Keinton Mandeville; 1801–1817: Hinton St George, Penselwood; 1818–1837: Timsbury, Chilthorne Domer; Victoria: Shepton Mallet, Hardington Mandeville (bench end); Elizabeth II: Crewkerne; Mottos: *semper eadem*: Nether Stowey, Bridgwater (1712); *Dieu et mon droit*: Most churches; Admonitory text: *Feare God, Honour the King*: Nailsea, (Stuart, repainted), Winsford.

Some 20% of the Somerset churches have Royal Arms. The late Professor Edward Fawcett prepared a detailed catalogue which was published as a supplement to Vol. 95 of the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.

GERARD LEIGHTON

## Review of our activities in 2011

### FEBRUARY

### TALK

The talk on The Painted Monasteries of Moldavia was given by Rear Admiral Roger Morris who explained the position of Moldavia, pointing out that it is part of Romania, and proceeded to outline the history of the region from 1352 to the present day. We were treated to a fascinating tour of eight monasteries, all in the north east of the region. The paintings of the monasteries had survived the centuries and were so very clear—how did the artists of the 1500s produce paint that has lasted so long? A feature of the monastic churches was the very large overhang of their roofs, protecting the paintings. From the start of communist rule in 1947, when the rule of King Mihai was overthrown, the monasteries fell into decline, although some of the monks did their best to maintain them. With the overthrow of Ceausescu the monasteries revived; one is now a thriving pilgrimage centre, five now thrive as nunneries, one is a vibrant community of monks and the other a monastic community with priests' training college.

### MARCH

### CHURCH VISITS, YEovil AREA



We were blessed with a dry and sunny day for our visit to three churches, starting with the parish church of St John Baptist in Yeovil. Here the rector, James Dudley-Smith, gave us a talk on the history of the church, pointing out many interesting features, especially the stained glass window depicting The Last Supper with Judas having a black halo. Also the massive brass lectern which probably came from the abbey and convent of Syon at Isleworth to the west of London. The present church dates from about 1380.

A short walk eastwards through the Quedam shopping centre brought us to the Methodist church where Thelma Stevens gave us a short talk on the history of the church which survived a fire in 1932, bomb damage during the war, and a near annihilation during the development of the Quedam shopping centre. The expanded church rooms now have under cover connection to the church and supply plenty of room for all the church activities.



A short drive out of Yeovil along the A37 brought us to the ancient church of St Mary Magdalene at Barwick with Stoford. The church warden, Chris Story, told us about the four stages of construction and the many smaller alterations and additions that took place over the centuries. One striking feature is the roof of the north aisle, a marvellous piece of well preserved carpentry looking as if it had been made within the last 100 years, not 500 years ago, as is the case.



We finished the day with a splendid tea provided by Coral Story. Altogether a very enjoyable afternoon.



#### APRIL AGM AT ST. SWITHIN, WALCOT, BATH

David Sisson welcomed our Patron, Lady Gass, and about 33 members to this well-restored Regency church, featured in the centre-spread of Hugh Playfair's *Keeping Somerset Churches Alive*.

The programme included a choral interlude sung by *Two Blondes & a Brunette*; songs included *Paris Angelicus* and Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*.

A very detailed history of the restoration of the church followed, presented by Alastair Gibson and Henry Brown, and John Crockford-Hawley gave an amusing account of *Potty Parsons* through the centuries.

The formal business began with David Sisson's Chairman's Report; Ride & Stride 2011 by Chris Hawkings, and an update on Events for 2012 by Simon Colledge.

After some questions and discussion, we all enjoyed an excellent tea in the Crypt Café. The marvellous church has adjoining gardens which are being restored, and is very welcoming to young families.

#### MAY CHURCH VISITS, BATH & N.E. SOMERSET

Through the beautiful rolling countryside south west of Bath, Charles Kerr led 44 members to three very different churches.

We entered St. Julian's, Wellow, through a fine porch and heavy, traceried door. The church was rebuilt in 1372, the village having been depopulated by the Black Death for 20 years. We saw the magnificent waggon roof, rood screen, pews and chapel, all dating from the fifteenth century.



At Foxcote we were welcomed to 'the Palladian church' by Bob Goode, churchwarden and organist for over 30 years. Little is known of the building before the 1700s, but the tower and churchyard are much older; it still has no electric lighting.



At Combe Hay Parish Church, the church warden, Peter Dippa-Miller, gave the history of the church from Saxon times, its additions and re-building to its re-ordering in 2009 (which revealed a Roman hypocaust and mediaeval bones) and resulted in a building suitable for many uses by the community. Margaret Dippa-Miller and Libby Kerr kindly provided an excellent tea from the new servery.



#### JUNE CHURCH VISITS, N.E. OF TAUNTON

Having heard the weather forecast, it seemed that we would definitely learn the difference between gargoyles and hunky punks. But after an early shower the day remained more or less dry.

Mrs. Pat Mennim, Churchwarden, welcomed us warmly to St. Bartholomew's, East Lyng, and Dr. Robert Dunning spoke of East Lyng's (lyng = anglo-saxon hill) strategic position at the time of King Alfred, being one of the 'burghs' or defences against the Danes. The church has a replica of the 'Alfred Jewel', discovered near North Petherton in 1694 and now in the Ashmolean Museum. Things to look out for were the 12thC font, 14thC windows, altered in the 15thC, early 16thC bench ends, though one with 1614 on it. The pulpit was a 3 decker of the early 18thC. Outside among the graves is a tomb of George Edward Marston who was a member of Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions.



At St. John the Baptist's at Durston we were welcomed by Rev. Philip Denison, the Associate Vicar. The original date of the church is not certain, perhaps a 12thC chapel, and the tower is 15thC. A 1694 chest cost the wonderful sum of £1.2s.0d.

Rev. Philip was also at St. Giles, Thurloxtton to welcome us with Church Warden Mr David Winspear.



The two churches form part of the Alfred Jewel Benefice. St. Giles was a Buckland Abbey foundation of the 12thC, the tower being added in 1500. The screen and pulpit, all one piece, dates from 1634, and there is a series of windows relating to landmarks of Queen Victoria's reign. Outside, the village stocks stand under the great yew tree. A delicious tea was very kindly provided in the Village Hall at the end of a most interesting afternoon.

## JULY

Following the successful House and Garden visit to Faulkland and Hemington in June 2009, 35 members gathered in Wells on a beautiful sunny afternoon.

## WELLS GARDEN VISITS

At the 'secret' garden of the Old Deanery, we were given a fascinating history (ancient and recent) by Diana Wheeler and Sylvia Hanks. There has been a garden there for 800 years, but it is particularly associated with Dr William Turner who was Dean in the 1550s and 60s. He was a medical Doctor and Botanist, as well as a cleric. He wrote *A New Herball* 1551-68, and in Wells he collected and grew his 'Herbs' (which in those days included any plants, from seaweed to trees, which could be useful to man) in his garden at the Deanery.



In 2004, the garden was overgrown and untidy, and a group of volunteers has worked hard to recreate a Tudor Herb Garden in commemoration of William Turner. The garden is laid out with cruciform paths between lawns and box balls, and beds containing medicinal plants, textile and dye plants, an orchard area with fruit trees, all plants mentioned by Turner in his writings.

We moved along to 'The Rib', just at the entrance to the Cathedral Green, where we were welcomed by owner Hilly Cansdale, who told us about the history of her home. Originally it was a Hall house of early 15thC, extended 1520, 1575, 1610, with a floor inserted into the Hall



*Garden at The Rib*

at some time, and further alterations and 'updating' about 1810. There is a beautiful garden at the east end of the cathedral, extending down to the lake of the Bishop's Palace garden.

We were generously allowed to wander through the house and admire the Tudor interior, including the magnificent Hall roof, previously hidden by a ceiling and hence unspoilt by Victorian 'restoration'.

We then repaired to St Thomas' Church, where after an excellent tea, we had a superb exposition of the history of the church from Alan Thomas, who has been architect to the church for 33 years. The church was built by S S Teulon in 1856-7 to serve the 'East End' of Wells, with high quality stone carving and decoration, financed by Dean Jenkyns and his widow. It proved very popular, and within ten years was overflowing, so Teulon added a North aisle, though finance was tight then, so it is much plainer. It was almost condemned to demolition in the late 1970s, but the then Rector changed his architect, and Alan Thomas has saved it and overseen an extensive, but very sensitive conservation.



**AUGUST CHURCH VISITS, MILVERTON AREA**

After a wet morning the sun shone as we saw the warm red sandstone of St John the Baptist, Heathfield, first of a group of three small village Churches between Taunton and Milverton. The two-stage West Tower with its twin bell openings appeared early perpendicular, the Church as a whole taking its present appearance from a restoration in 1869. Two incised Lombardy Crosses on the outside south wall suggest a date before the 1160s, when a church is known to have been on the site.



At Oake, St Bartholomew, the two stage tower stood on the south with the south aisle abutting. Inside, a large 15th century north window from Taunton Priory with six lights and



smaller upper lights, some containing silver-stain glass, sheds light on the nave. The 13th century chancel, short as in the other churches, contains two fine engraved coffin stools of some antiquity. In the 1950s a congregation of three or four met here, but during the ministry of Revd John Butler FBOA numbers began to increase in all the benefice churches and have continued to do so, so that 20 to 25 now attend each service. Imagine a four-fold increase in numbers throughout Somerset!

Approaching Holy Cross, Hillfarrance, from the south west, the substantial three-stage tower, with its Somerset tracery and central stair turret in the middle of the north wall (as often seen in West Somerset and Devon), seems

almost to dwarf the church, yet the inside is far from insignificant. The nave has many fine carved bench ends, the short chancel a curved plaster ceiling painted bright blue with golden stars to represent the vault of heaven. A Mortuary Chapel of 1333 has been transformed with determination and enthusiasm to provide an open area where meals can be served to the community, with a new kitchen and WC tucked inconspicuously into the SE corner of the building, all achieved on a limited budget. Here an attractive tea was provided, bringing an enjoyable afternoon to a close.



One of the purposes of the FSCC is to provide aid and encouragement to small village churches such as these.

**SEPTEMBER: RIDE AND STRIDE: SEE REPORTS ON PAGES 7 AND 8.**

**OCTOBER**

**CHURCH VISITS, N.E. OF FROME**

On a bright autumn day, 45 members were welcomed by Glynn Bridges, Church Warden, to Orchardleigh, the 'church-on-an-island' featured on the front cover. He told us that the church is No. 1 wedding venue in the country, with 115 weddings in 2011 – a great help to the 23 residents. The nave and chancel date from 1300, with stone monk and nun corbel (supports for a Lenten veil), and pewter chalice from that date; some restoration was done by Gilbert Scott,



but no electricity. We were entertained by a poem of Henry Newbolt, who had lived nearby.

At nearby Lullington a wedding party and vintage bus were leaving, so members first looked at the outside of the remarkable Norman north doorway of All Saints, richly decorated with zig-zag and beak carvings, the Tree of Life and Christ in Majesty; inside, the crossing arch and font are as beautifully decorated. The church was restored in 1862 (and central heating installed by Haydons of Trowbridge, well-known for having heated Windsor Castle). Detailed Deeds and Church Wardens' accounts were on view, showing how the church had cared for the needy of the parish in the past.

Moving on to Norton St. Philip, we were greeted by Muriel Duckett, Church Warden, and her helpers. Alexander Forsyth gave a short history of the church and the recent building of The Hub, which provides modern facilities beneath a glass-walled sitting area. Some members climbed the tower to see the bells and bell chamber, the faceless 1840s clock, and a wonderful view from the top of the 70 foot tower. The usual good tea followed!



## Membership Secretary's Report

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As at the end of October 2011 the total membership of FSCC stood at 783. There are 231 church memberships, 10 corporate and 542 individual and family members.

It is now a condition of grant offers that recipients become members of FSCC – a condition which did not apply in the past. In 2010 grant aided churches which were not members were invited to join, resulting in a large increase in church memberships during the year. However we still only count about 35% of churches as members out of the 650 or so eligible churches and chapels in the County. **Is your local church a member? Could you recruit new members?** You are our life-blood!

The Trustees are always thinking of ways to increase membership, and we are planning to offer gifts of membership, so that members could buy say a 2 year membership for their children or even grandchildren. This would encourage interest in Somerset churches and chapels among a wider audience and create a younger membership, enabling FSCC to continue its works far into the future. It is hoped to launch this plan at the Annual Meeting in 2012.

In the meantime please invite friends and family to become members. They can either download an application form from the website [www.fscandc.org.uk](http://www.fscandc.org.uk) or contact me: my details are on the back of this report.

GILL HAWKINGS

## The Paulet Monuments at Hinton St. George

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Hinton St George church contains probably the finest series of monuments of the 16th and 17th Century in the country; they commemorate members of the Paulet family of Hinton House. The Paulet Chapel was altered in 1814 but like many buildings of that time looks grand though the underlying construction was skimped. FSCC has contributed to its repair, principally gutters and parapets as an essential first step to the conservation of the Monuments. It cannot of course help with the conservation of these which are not part of a main structure.

Out of the six major monuments two are of national significance, that to Sir Amyas Paulet (d. 1588) of highest sculptural quality was brought to Hinton from old St Martins in the Fields when it was demolished in the 18th century. The other to the 1st Lord Paulet (d. 1649) dating from 1668 is a baroque *tour de force* and as Sacheverall Sitwell commented would be more at home in Palermo or Naples than in a Somerset village church.

The folk at Hinton St George are to be congratulated on the way that they are setting about the work and it is good that FSCC has been able to help with the primary need of a weather tight building. The total project shows how local people appreciate their church buildings and contents and the enormous efforts made to keep them in good order. Accepting responsibility for this fine series of monuments is a daunting task.

GERARD LEIGHTON

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Photographs:* Roger and Dorothy Bark, who supplied all those illustrating the Church Visits including Orchardleigh on the cover, John Crockford-Hawley (p4), Dawn Valouks (p7) and Clare Walker (p8). *Reports on Church Visits:* Simon Colledge for all Reports apart from March (Dennis Bishop) and August (John Morrell). Very many thanks to you all!

## Can you be our new Programme Secretary?

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2012 is Simon Colledge's last year as Programme Secretary. Over the past five years he has produced wonderful church visits, spreading over the whole of the historical county of Somerset. Thank you so much Simon.

**If you would like to see a Programme of Visits in 2013, please consider whether you could fill this rôle, perhaps with a friend, as Visits need to be organised during this current year.**

### HOW TO FIND PLACES TO VISIT

- \* via members' suggestions
- \* using lists of previously visited places
- \* where a grant has been given
- \* spread locations around the county.

Simon is available to give every help and support, and has some suggestions for 2013. If you would like to contribute to FSCC in this way, please contact him at 13 Middle Path, Crewkerne TA18 8BG. Tel: 01460 75815; e-mail: [simoncolledge@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simoncolledge@hotmail.co.uk)

## Programme for the year 2012

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We hope you will be able to join us on some or all of our visits this year – but please book in well beforehand, or there may not be any delicious tea for you!

### FEBRUARY FRIDAY 24TH, 7PM

### TALK AT WELLS & MENDIP MUSEUM, WELLS

An illustrated talk on Coptic Churches in Egypt by Margaret Davies, followed by light refreshments. **Booking essential.**

**Write with s.a.e.** and cheque for £10 (payable to F.S.C.C.) to Simon Colledge, 13 Middle Path, Crewkerne TA18 8BG. Tel: 01460 75815; e-mail: [simoncolledge@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simoncolledge@hotmail.co.uk)

### CHURCH VISITS

#### MARCH SATURDAY 24TH, 2PM

#### CREWKERNE AREA

Start at St. Leonard's, Misterton (£500 grant 2009), then on to St. Michael's, Haselbury Plucknett (Hermit Wulfvic 12thC; modern windows), St. Martin's, North Perrott (*reredos*, *Hoskyns windows and tablets*). Tea - donations.

**Contact** Simon Colledge, as above.

#### APRIL SATURDAY 21ST, 2PM

#### GLASTONBURY

### ANNUAL MEETING and CHURCH VISIT

at Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury R.C. Church  
Magdalene Street Glastonbury BA6 9EJ

With opportunity to visit the nearby 13thC St. Mary & St. Margaret's Chapel, originally the chancel of a medieval hall hospital and recipient of an FSCC grant this year. Also Glastonbury Abbey, opposite.

Tea - donations. **Contact** Simon Colledge, as above.

Cut here to save and pin on your notice board!

### MAY SATURDAY 19TH, 2PM

### WESTON SUPER MARE AREA

Start at St. Lawrence, Wick St. Lawrence (*carved stone pulpit*), Holy Saviour, Puxton (*leaning tower*), St. Mary the Virgin, Yatton (*new chapter house*). Guide: John Crockford-Hawley. Tea - £3. Donations to F.S.C.C.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

### JUNE SATURDAY 23RD, 2PM

### MELLS/FROME AREA

Start at St. Andrew, Mells (*famous burials*), St. Michael, Buckland Dinham (£2,000 grant 2009), SS. Peter & Paul, Kilmersdon (*grotesques & gargoyles*). Tea - donations. Further recommended viewing: St. Mary Magdalene, Great Elm, between Mells and Buckland Dinham.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

### JULY SATURDAY 14TH, 2PM

### ILMINSTER AREA

Start at St. Mary the Virgin, Isle Abbotts (£3,000 grant 2005), St Andrew, Puckington, United Reformed Church, Mid Lambrook (*unspoiled interior*), St. James, East Lambrook (*exterior steps to gallery*). Tea - Margery Fish Garden (regular prices, garden closes at 5.30 pm). Donations for F.S.C.C.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

### AUGUST SATURDAY 18TH, 2PM

### TAUNTON AREA

Start at Holy Cross, Thornfalcon (*fine bench ends*), St. George, Ruishton (c1389 font), St. Michael, Creech St. Michael (*fine heraldic tomb*). Guide: Dr. Robert Dunning. Tea - donations.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

### SEPTEMBER SATURDAY 8TH, 10AM – 6PM

### RIDE & STRIDE

Raise money for FSCC by getting sponsored for visiting churches and chapels either on the main event day of Saturday 8th September or on any day from Saturday 1st to Sunday 16th September. Look out for details of 'The Ten Towers' cycle ride through the Cheddar Valley. Participants are welcome from throughout the county and beyond. If you wish, half the money you raise can be returned to your own church or nominated charity, or you can give it all 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](http://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**

### OCTOBER SATURDAY 20TH, 2PM

### MENDIPS AREA

Start at St. Lawrence, Priddy (*pre-Ref. altar frontal*), St. Peter's, Draycott (*font by William Burgess*), St. Leonard's, Rodney Stoke (*a thankful village; Rodney family memorials*), Holy Trinity, Blackford (*octagonal*). Tea - donations.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

### NOVEMBER SATURDAY 17TH, 2PM

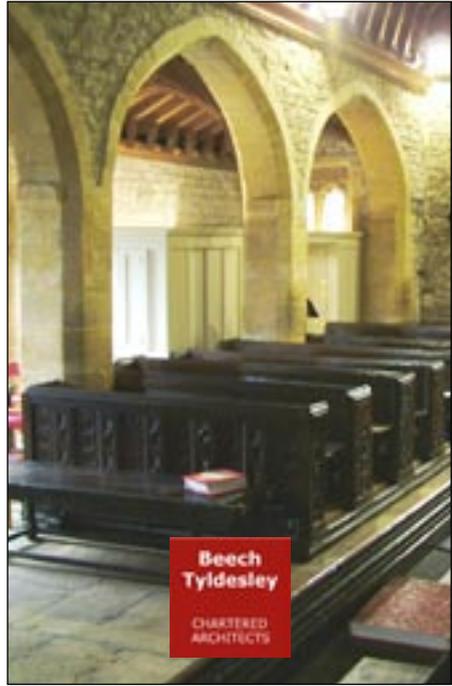
### SHERBORNE/MILBORNE PORT AREA

Start at St. John the Baptist, Milborne Port, followed by a visit to English Organ School & Museum: a chance to see 14 instruments and enjoy an organ recital, followed by tea. Cost: £10 p.h. based on 25 members attending.

**Contact** Simon Colledge as above.

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