

FRIENDS OF WILTSHIRE CHURCHES CHURCH TOURS 2017

THE FIRST TOUR OF 2017 was to CHURCHES IN THE BECKINGTON BENEFICE, FROME and was led by Glyn Bridges on Saturday 8th April 2017

The itinerary included:

All Saints, Lullington (Grade 1) – built about 1150, with a particularly fine Norman font with its Latin inscription “Hoc Fontis sacro pereunt delicta lavacro” (In this holy font sins perish and are washed away). The most outstanding piece of Norman work is the North door which is very elaborate and bears marks of Continental workmanship. About the year 1280 a large chantry chapel was built on the South side of the nave. The church plate, a chalice & paten 1562, a chalice & paten 1627 and a pewter chalice c1300 were available to view. The church was restored in 1862 by T.H.Wyatt.

St Mary's, Orchardleigh (Grade 1) – the church dates from about the middle of the 13th Century. It consists of a nave and chancel with a rebuilt South porch. Most of the glass is 15th Century. The aumbry still has its original 13th Century oak door and iron work. On either side of the chancel are brackets for the support of the Lenten veil, not unique but exceedingly rare. The Jacobean period pulpit was the upper portion of a high 3-decker. The church was restored in 1878-81 by Sir Gilbert Scott and his son Oldrid.

All Saints, Rodden There has been a church at Rodden since the early 13th Century. The present church was rebuilt in 1640 and was then known as the Chapel of St Blaize. It was a chapel of ease to Boyton in Wiltshire for 500 years until 1808 when the Rev. J.M.Rogers purchased the advowson of Rodden thus becoming its patron. It was re-dedicated as All Saints Church in 1974. One of the charms of the church is its situation between farm buildings to the north and the Rodden Brook to the south with its duck pond.

St Mary's, Berkley – the glory of this church is its octagonal domical vault dating from 1751. Each panel is decorated with rococo stuccowork in white on blue rising to an octagonal lantern. Pevsner describes the stuccowork as ‘sumptuous and curiously worldly’. The east window replaced an oval window and the present glass was installed in 1870. The ornate door case is thought to have been a part of the 18th Century reredos removed from the sanctuary.

St George's, Beckington (Grade 1) – mainly 15th Century with a fine Norman tower. The nave roof c1425, tombs, brasses, royal arms 1574 and a Jacobean screen. There is an interesting classical hanging monument to Samuel Danyel 1619. Today the interior has a sombre appearance due to the stripping of the plaster in 1873.

THE SECOND TOUR OF 2017 was to view Graffiti in Churches. It was led by Tony Hack who runs the Wiltshire Medieval Graffiti Survey and Judy Thomson on Saturday 6th May 2017

This tour was dedicated to observing and understanding the large amount of graffiti that is to be found in many of our churches.

The Friends Group met at St Mary the Virgin, Bishops Cannings and enjoyed a fascinating presentation by Tony and Judy on multi-period historical graffiti and a demonstration of the specialist torches and techniques for discovering graffiti. They then tried this for themselves.

Lunch was served in The White Horse in Compton Bassett.

After lunch, St Mary the Virgin, Calstone Wellington was a marvellous and very interesting church with a large amount of 17thC graffiti inside the porch and on the external walls. The Friends also discovered previously unrecorded graffiti pictures on the outer walls.

The tour ended at St Nicholas, Bromham where we were made most welcome by the Churchwarden, Ron Drew, and his team. The alabaster tomb of Sir Roger Tocotes was the main attraction, with its soft surface covered in many inscriptions from over the centuries. Martin Knight thanked Tony and Judy for sharing their knowledge and expertise and for leading a fascinating and highly enjoyable tour.

THE THIRD TOUR OF 2017 was to Salisbury Cathedral on Saturday 8th July 2017

On Saturday 8 July, John Osborne organised a wonderful visit to Salisbury Cathedral. We enjoyed a special visit to the library where the librarian, Emily Naish, showed us some of the rare and fascinating publications held there. We were then treated to a comprehensive tour of the Cathedral by our guides, John Osborne and Christopher Rogers. The day was rounded off by a visit to St Thomas' Church enthusiastically led by another of our Friends, Sally Vaughan.

THE FOURTH TOUR OF 2017 was to CHURCHES IN NORTH-WEST WILTSHIRE on Saturday 2nd September 2017 and it was led by Edward Buchan

The itinerary included:

Coffee at St John the Baptist, Colerne

St John the Baptist, Colerne

Hill village, church tower rises high above the By Brook valley. Nave and vaulted tower about 1450, "superb piece of ashlar work in Perpendicular style" (Woodruffe). Arcades earlier, c1200. Medieval corbel heads. 2 large fragments of "one of the best C9th crosses in the West Country" (Pevsner). Grade 1.

St Christopher, Ditteridge

Norman church in secluded spot, close to the Fosse Way. Nave, chancel arch and lovely south doorway 1097, chancel renewed in C13th. Some sympathetic restoration by E W Godwin in 1860. "Once visited, Ditteridge is rarely forgotten; few churches can match its timeless atmosphere or its situation in this delightful hamlet above the By Brook valley. One of the best small churches in Wiltshire." (Woodruffe). Grade 1

St Thomas à Becket, Box

Originally Norman, C12th. Dedication to Becket (d.1170). Hazlebury Chapel with tomb recess is C12th and was originally built on to an earlier church as a "Thomas" Chapel. Core of the church is C14th, some rebuilding in 1713, south aisle added 1834. Beautifully proportioned Early English tower arches. Striking stained glass of Becket and Henry II by Potter of Bath (1991). Fine collection of table tombs in churchyard. Grade 1

Lunch at the Methuen Arms, Corsham and/or a chance to wander round the town. "Corsham has no match in Wiltshire for wealth of good houses..." (Pevsner)

St Bartholomew, Corsham

"An outstanding Grade 1 church with much of historical and architectural interest" (Woodruffe). Saxon foundation, Norman arcades but otherwise mainly C15th, east end of nave and tower rebuilt 1874 by Street. Adjacent to Corsham Court; Methuen family chapel in N Aisle with alabaster tomb to painter Lady Eleanor Methuen and stained glass. Lady Chapel rebuilt by Thomas Tropenell of Great Chalfield 1465, with his great tomb. Superb east window by Kempe.

St James, North Wraxall

Very fine simple Norman south doorway, scallop capitals, chevron band and pellets to hoodmould, and later pilgrim figure of St James; otherwise mainly C13th. North aisle has Methuen Chapel c1793 with painted ceiling and marble tomb of Paul Methuen (d.1837) by Westmacott. Grade 1

Tea at St James, hosted by our Vice President Lord and Lady King.