

THE FRIENDS OF WILTSHIRE CHURCHES



Cecil Beaton at Broad Chalke Church

Annual Report 2019

www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk

The Friends Of Wiltshire Churches

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The Ven Alan Jeans
Mrs Caroline Keevil
Mrs Clare Miles
Mr John Osborne
Mr Mark Robinson
Mr Christopher Rogers
Mr Neil Skelton
Mr Geoffrey Till

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined during 2019:

Mrs Elizabeth Blackwell (Eastbury)
Mr & Mrs Robin Boyd (Poulshot)
Mrs Pam King (Calne)
Mr Alexander Kirk-Wilson
(Marlborough)
Mr Anthony Lovell-Wood (Tisbury)
Mrs Diana Lumb (Corsham)
Mrs Virginia McGillycuddy (Ramsbury)
Mr & Mrs Timothy O'Brien
(West Lavington)
The Very Rev Nicholas Papadopoulos
(Salisbury)
Mr & Mrs Nigel Ross-Smith (Biddestone)
The Rt Rev Dr Andrew Rumsey
(Marlborough)
The Rev Graham Warmington
(Westbury)
Mrs Suzanne Wise (Bradford-on-Avon)
Colonel & Mrs David Wynne-Davies
(Sutton Benger)

Future Events

Saturday 15 February 2020

Winter Lecture Series: The Knights Hospitaller in England in the Later Middle Ages by Michael Hodges. Market Lavington Community Hall 3pm.

Saturday 21 March 2020

Annual General Meeting followed by the Annual Guest Lecture on The Evolution of Salisbury Cathedral by Izaak Hudson, Chief Architect of Salisbury Cathedral. Salisbury Museum 3:30pm.

Saturday 18 April 2020

Proposed tour to Bath to be led by Christopher Rogers.

Saturday 16 May 2020

Proposed tour of churches in Warminster area to be led by Brian Woodruffe.

Sunday 14 June 2020

Summer party at Chisenbury Priory, preceded by choral evensong.

Saturday 4 July 2020

Proposed tour of churches in north Wiltshire to be led by John Osborne.

Saturday 19 September 2020

Proposed tour of churches in north Dorset to be led by Michael Hodges.

Further details of all these events will be announced in due course.

Website News

Over the past year we have continued to update the website, www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk, with new pictures and other content that instantly shares the contribution of the Trust and Friends. You can easily browse the website menus and pages to find out about the Trust, its Grants to Wiltshire churches, the annual Ride & Stride event and all about the Friends and their activities. The Church Trails map remains a firm favourite for visitors to Wiltshire and this now has a link to the Wiltshire churches pages in the National Churches Trust Explore Churches website. We hope that this broad coverage of our churches and linkage to the NCT will stimulate wider interest in our beautiful churches and their history.

We always appreciate feedback on the website and constructive comments on how it could be improved. Please 'Contact Us' through the website.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Grants

The following grants were awarded by the Trustees in June 2019:

Church	Project	£ Grant
All Saints, Lydiard Millicent	Chancel roof	£3000
Foxley Church, Foxley	Tower and rainwater goods	£3000
St Mary, Kilmington	Tower lead	£3000
St James, Bratton	Roof lead and alarm	£2000
All Saints, Fonthill Bishop	Belfry, drainage, rainwater goods	£3000
St Nicholas, Biddestone	Masonry and rainwater goods	£3000
Easton Grey Church, Easton Grey	Vestry roof	£2000
St Giles, Alderton	Window stonework	£2000
St Mary, Bradenstoke	Chancel and Vestry roof and Bellcote	£1500
Holy Trinity, Calne	Walls	£1500
St John, Bishopstone	Tower floor	£2000
St Michael and All Angels, Winterbourne Earls and Dauntsey	Tower clock	£1500
St John, Boreham, Warminster	Heating system	£3000
St Giles, Stanton St Quintin	Heating system	£1500
St Michael and All Angels, Kington St Michael	Community facilities	£3000
St Peter, Kington Langley	Community facilities	£3000

TOTAL: £39,000

The following grants were awarded by the Trustees in November 2019

Church	Project	£ Grant
St Michael and All Angels, Lyneham	Roof	£2000
St Mary, Alvediston	Tower	£5500

Church	Project	£ Grant
St Martin, Bremhill	Roof, gutter and drainage	£3000
Holy Cross, Sherston	Roof	£3000
St Andrew, Wootton Rivers	Roof and Tower	£1000
All Saints, Marden	Roof and wall	£2000
All Saints and St Mary, Chitterne	Tower, roof and rainwater goods	£2000
Christ Church, Shaw and Whitley	Roof	£1000
Holy Rood, Rodbourne	Chancel Roof	£1150
St Mary, Codford St Mary	Gutters	£1000
St Michael and All Angels, Figcheldean	Guttering and downpipes	£400
St Laurence, Downton	Walls	£600
All Saints, Sutton Mandeville	Wall drainage and damproofing	£3000
St Michael and All Angels, Hilperton	Aisle safety, worship and community space	£1000
St Michael the Archangel, Mere	North Porch access	£500
St James, Avebury	Stained glass windows	£500 + £2000 HCCT*
Freshbrook Church, Swindon	Ceiling, lighting and heating	£1000
St Thomas a Becket, Tilshead	Electrical safety	£1500 + £1500 HCCT*
St Bartholomew, Corsham	Heating	£2500
St Mary and St Ethelred, Luckington	Toilet, Kitchenette, Water supply	£3000
Atworth Independent, Atworth	Kitchenette and serving area	£2000
St James, Ludgershall	Historic clock	£1500
St Barnabus, Beanacre	Historic organ	£1000

* see page 6

TOTAL: £38,550.00

2019 TOTAL: £77,550.00 plus £3,500

News Round

by Martin Knight

Writing this in the depths of a soggy winter, it is hard to imagine the heady summer days when the Friends spent many happy hours exploring churches and enjoying hospitality in one form or other.

I am very happy to report that all our events during the year were extremely well subscribed, indeed over-subscribed on many occasions, thus enabling us to raise even more funds for our churches.

We were able to welcome 14 new members, enjoy 2 excellent lectures, visit 16 beautiful churches, marvel at Salisbury Cathedral's monuments, and enjoy a special evensong and party at Fonthill. The net effect was that, thanks also to Ride & Stride, the Trust was able to distribute around £80,000 to our churches, the details of which are shown in the Report.

The winter lecture series continues to be well subscribed and is a good fund-raising activity for an otherwise dull Saturday afternoon. We are very fortunate to have such a professional lecturer in Christopher Rogers as a supporter and, in February, he certainly enthused us about Horace Walpole and the Gothick Revival. It fitted very well with the exhibition that had been running at Strawberry Hill at the time. At the AGM in Salisbury, Julian Orbach gave us a most interesting talk on the progress of the Victoria County History revision that he is conducting for Wiltshire. The

afternoon was completed by the usual beautiful choral evensong in the cathedral.

Our church tours covered the diverse geography of our large county. In April, Brian Woodruffe took us along the Chalke Valley. May saw Edward Buchan lead a tour in the north of the county, ending up at Malmesbury Abbey. In July, John Osborne based his tour around Edington Priory. The finale was left to Michael Hodges who shepherded us around Salisbury Cathedral to examine its many monuments. We are very fortunate to have a group of such enthusiastic and knowledgeable tour leaders who give us so much pleasure. My very grateful thanks to them for all the time they spend supporting our cause. Details of the lectures and the tours can be found in the body of the Report.

Our annual summer party was held at the fabulous garden of Fonthill House, preceded by evensong at Fonthill Bishop where we were entranced by the lovely soprano voice of Milly Forrest, a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music. The sun broke through in time for us to enjoy this special occasion and my grateful thanks go to Lord Margadale for his generosity in allowing us to invade his garden. The Vice-Chairman of the Friends, Diana Matthews-Duncan, has organised the summer party for the past ten years and she has, understandably,

decided it is time to retire from this task and the role of vice-chairman. During that time, she has been responsible for raising very large sums of money for the Trust and we owe her a huge debt of gratitude for all her hard work.

On the subject of retirement, there are two other supporters that need mention. The first is Charles Graham who has now conducted his final management of the county's Ride and Stride. This annual event is the major contributor to the funds of the Trust and Charles has devoted a huge amount of time and energy over the years for which we are extremely grateful. The second is Peter Smith who has been the Treasurer of the Trust for many years. Peter will be retiring during 2020 and leaves with our grateful thanks for all he has done.

We have an exciting programme of events planned for 2020 and I hope

those who have not experienced any in the past may find time to dip their toe in the water. They may be surprised to realise what they have been missing. We are planning to venture outside the county again: to both Dorset and to have a special tour of Bath Abbey and its current refurbishment. I am also delighted that we will have the opportunity to hold our summer party in the fabulous gardens at Chisenbury Priory courtesy of John and Tessa Manser. As usual, you will receive good notice of these activities and an outline schedule can be found in this Report.

Finally, once again, I am greatly indebted to Caroline Keevil and Kt Keevil Whitehead who have given so much of their time to design this Annual Report and, I believe, make it easier to read and more informative each year. Very many thanks to them both.

Hartham Church Charitable Trust Fund

The grants made by the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust are not large but have provided important encouragement to local congregations working hard to maintain and enhance their churches and chapels. Any applicant churches or chapels that stand out for their contribution to advancing the Christian religion may also be considered by Trustees for an additional grant from the Hartham Church Charitable Trust Fund (HCCT Fund). Trustee decisions on WHCT and HCCT grants in 2019 have made a substantive contribution to the Church in Wiltshire.

Legacies

Please remember the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust in your Will.
The Registered Charity number of the WHCT is 1075598.

Report on the Annual General Meeting

and Annual Lecture held in

The Salisbury Museum

Saturday, 30th March, 2019

by David Evans

Annual General Meeting

The Meeting was attended by about 55 Friends and their guests, who were welcomed by Martin Knight, the Chairman. He began by conveying the apologies of Sarah Troughton, the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire and President of the Friends, and thanking her for her sterling support of the Friends' activities.

After gaining approval for the minutes of the 2018 AGM, Martin briefly reviewed the activities of the Friends in 2018. He was able to be brief, since everyone had received the Annual Report, which had been excellently produced by Caroline Keevil and her daughter. Martin expressed his gratitude to Caroline, who had been hampered by difficult domestic circumstances.

Martin believed that the Friends had achieved considerable success in meeting all of their main aims. First, they had raised a substantial amount of money to help churches struggling to meet repair bills, and Martin urged Friends to bring to the attention of PCC's the existence of this source of help. Second, they had raised awareness of and interest in the county's churches. In this connection, he referred to Michael Hodges' excellent lecture on church

monuments, Tim Connor's lecture on war memorials and four successful church tours, led so ably by Messrs. Woodruffe, Skelton, Osborne and Rogers. Third, they had provided enjoyable activities for the Friends: not only the church tours, but also the Summer Event at Lydiard Tregoze, for which he thanked Diana Matthews-Duncan, without whose hard work it could not have happened.

Martin then asked Luke March of the National Churches Trust to speak about the work of his organisation. Luke defined their aims as providing grants to assist with the repair, maintenance and touristic possibilities of churches nationwide. Whereas the WHCT hands out many small grants, the NCT can make large grants from its income of £1.2m.

Finally, Martin explained the Friends' policy of keeping the annual fee low, but raising fees for special events to make up for the effects of inflation. Hence the new fee of £20 for the Annual lecture and other events

Peter Smith, the Treasurer, then outlined the financial record of the Friends. In 2018 income had been about £34,000 and expenses about £6,000, enabling the Friends to give

the WHCT about £28,000 towards the £80,000 disbursed in grants. The rise in income of about £6,000 was due to a generous legacy and two gifts. Peter pointed out the splendid contribution over many years of Brian Woodruffe's book, which had now raised about £12,500 to the Trust and he also mentioned the financial success of the Summer Party.

Martin continued by thanking Charles Graham for his invaluable work over many years as county co-ordinator of Ride & Stride, which contributes so much to the WHCT's finances. At last, a successor to Charles has been found. She is Fiona Draper of Chippenham. Friends were urged to support Ride & Stride and to chivvy their PCCs into doing so: this year the day for riding and striding will be Saturday, September 14th.

Martin then introduced our speaker, Julian Orbach, who is in the process of revising the volume on Wiltshire in Pevsner's Buildings of England series.

Julian Orbach's Lecture on Revising Pevsner's account of Wiltshire Churches

Mr Orbach began by pointing out that a revision of the Pevsner guide had last been undertaken in 1975 and is overdue. Even the building in which he was speaking requires a fuller entry, which should mention the barrel roof of 1898 and explain the changing uses of the space.

One of his main tasks is to correct what in the light of more recent

research have been shown to be errors in the Pevsner guide. For example, the south aisle at Cricklade was too readily dismissed by Pevsner as Victorian, whereas pre-Victorian illustrations reveal that the Victorian restorers closely followed the medieval design. Similarly, the church at Allington should not be described as simply a rebuild of 1851, since it can be shown that the rebuilders copied and reused many elements of the pre-1851 building. At Corsham, on the other hand, the 'Norman' arcades now seem to be entirely a Victorian invention.

Another objective of the revision is to do justice to post-war work on churches which Pevsner had not fully described and to record additions to churches affected since 1975. There are very few new churches in Wiltshire, though the speaker did refer to Catholic churches at Amesbury and Swindon. Pevsner did not, however, discuss the interesting hexagonal church of 1968 at Frogwell, Chippenham, or the brick-and-glass garrison church of St Giles, Warminster, also of 1968. Additions to existing churches have rarely taken the form of monuments, which tend to be opposed by the DAC, but the speaker thought that the DAC had done a good job in encouraging the insertion of good stained glass windows, often by local artists. In particular, he mentioned the windows by Thomas Denny at Woodford, inserted in 2013, and the Prisoners of Conscience window in the Cathedral, designed in Chartres by Gabriel Loire and inserted in the Trinity Chapel in 1981.

Mr Orbach had found a few significant omissions from the Pevsner guide. The memorial in the Cathedral to the dead of the South African War, created by Alexander Fisher in 1904, seemed to him a very significant example of Arts and Crafts work. The murals of 1947 in St Barnabas, Swindon had also been missed by Pevsner, as had the striking window at Winterslow.

The speaker suggested that a number of the churches in the county need to be reinterpreted. Their role as minster churches needed to be taken more into account when we reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon history of such churches as Calne, Amesbury and Warminster. The dating of the Norman work at Malmesbury, signalled as questionable in Pevsner, continues to puzzle. It is connected with the important issue of the precise extent of Bishop Roger's role in church-building in the county in the 12th century. Great Durnford, another church of Norman date, also raises difficult questions for the reviewer, who needs to explain why the church was so large. The Cathedral's building history is not straightforward either. The cloisters and entry to the chapter house were started in an early 13th century style, but the building of Westminster Abbey brought about a rethinking and the adoption of its style at Salisbury. The received history of the building of the spire postulates a long campaign, whereas Mr Orbach believes that the nature of the structure would have

necessitated its rapid erection.

The talk included a few remarks about buildings belonging to the free churches. On the whole, recent trends seem unfortunate, with period features being stripped out to leave nondescript modern-looking spaces.

The speaker made a few remarks about building stone and expressed his astonishment at the distances over which stone was often carted in the middle ages. As an example, he cited Marden, which is far removed from the sources of its stone and is nowhere near a navigable waterway.

Finally, he mentioned some of the problems that he faces in describing Wiltshire churches. It seems impossible to find a county style. There are, for example, many good church towers, but they do not have definable local features. Important church furnishings, such as fonts, get moved around: a font formerly in the Cathedral is now to be found in South Australia. The task of revision has proved very lengthy and Mr Orbach cannot yet say when he will be in a position to publish it.

The audience's questions and their response to Martin Knight's vote of thanks made it plain that everyone had found the talk informative and interesting.

Editors' note: the images supplied to go with this were of such low resolution that any prints were not of good enough quality for this report.

Thank you to all those who supplied images for this report - Geoffrey Till, Clare Miles, John Price, Michael Hodges, Christopher Rogers and Caroline Keevil.

Winter Lecture Series

Horace Walpole and the “Gothick” Revival

Given by Christopher Rogers

Saturday 9th February 2019

by Clare Knight

It was with great anticipation that we met in the Community Hall in Market Lavington to hear Christopher Rogers, who never fails to deliver lectures of enormous interest, talk on the Gothick revival with a ‘k’.



Gothick Folly

The definition that Christopher gave of Gothic is ‘the pointed arch style prevalent in Western Europe in the 12th to the late 16th centuries,’ the style of the middle ages with superb examples in Merton College chapel, dating from the latter half of the 13th century, and Salisbury Cathedral, built between 1240 and 1280. It became the style of the Englishness of three centuries, eventually displaced by the classical influence of the Renaissance. Gothic became Gothick in the

architectural movement that started in the late 1740s in England and grew in momentum in the early 19th century as neo-Gothic and Victorian Gothic. However, there are good reasons to suggest that interest in the Gothic never really went away.

Wren used the Gothic, though Christopher suggests that he was never very comfortable with it, for example his Great Gate at Christchurch, and to him Gothic was ‘work of the greatest industry and expressive carving, full of fret and considerable imagery sparing neither pains or cost.’ Nicholas Hawksmoor also used the pointed arch in his rebuilding of All Souls in Oxford with its two Gothic towers.

Horace Walpole summed up his attempts with ‘Hawksmoor had blundered into picturesque scenery not devoid of grandeur’.

Walpole is well known for his much admired, past and present, Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham but he was not the first to re-adopt the gothic. There were many sham castles and follies which typified the fashionable melancholia, as purely decorative, fanciful and romantic. Batty Langley was the first serious exponent of the Gothic Rococo and published his book ‘Gothic Architecture improved by Rules and



Strawberry Hill House

Proportions in many Grand Designs' in 1742. He believed, through misunderstanding the provenance of Gothic, that his umbrellas and temples and pavilions came nearest to ancient Saxon architecture which was the craze as illustrated by the umbrella and sham ruins at Painshill. More significant is the Gothic Temple at Stowe as it represents another facet of the Gothic which was synonymous with Germanic, suggesting vigour, hardihood and the love of liberty, the Goths had rescued humanity from the spineless passivity of Rome.

Horace Walpole, the youngest son of the Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, inherited his father's Earldom to become the 4th and last Earl of Orford. He lived splendidly on the income from various government sinecures and indulged his passion for



Mildenhall carving

architecture and collecting objets d'art. He bought his cottage, called Chopped Straw Hall, in 1747. His first gothicization of it was not finished until 1753 and he described it as 'a little plaything of a house'. He did not do it alone but had a committee of Richard Bentley, Thomas Chute of The Vyne and Thomas Grey the poet. Bentley was replaced after a falling out by Thomas Pitt of the political family and an architect. It was a trend setter of the Gothic style and much visited, maybe as many as 10,000 persons during Walpole's lifetime. It was also much criticized, as one critic put it 'just what one might expect from a man who possessed a vague admiration for the Gothic without the knowledge necessary for a proper adaptation of its features'. Later Kenneth Clark quotes Walpole himself saying 'every true Goth must perceive that my rooms are more the works of fancy than imitation', but the house inspired this taste and gave it 'social standing', its play for effect worked.

Few churches were built in the Gothic style as there were plenty of moldering medieval structures in the country already, but one that was is the church of St John the Evangelist, Shobdon, near Hereford. An entirely new church was added to an ancient tower and is described as 'ebullient rococo' and could have been designed by William Kent. Another is at Tetbury in Gloucestershire and another at Croome d'Abitot in Worcestershire. Designed with the house by Robert Adam it is described as a 'perfect fantasy of the period with elegant Gothick windows



Arbury Hall

and plasterwork, pulpit, communion rails, commandment and creed boards'.

In 1794 Walpole wrote 'you will see a child of Strawberry prettier than the parent, and so executed and so finished.' The house to which he was referring was Lee Priory in Kent, now destroyed. Perhaps the finest of the Strawberry Hill clones is Arbury Hall near Nuneaton. The Elizabethan house was Gothicized by Sanderson Mill and Henry Keene in the mid 18th century. Also at Wardour Castle near Tisbury, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown gave design advice on the garden, incorporating the old romantic ruin of the 14th century castle as a folly.



Lacock



Fonthill

The influence of Strawberry Hill and Georgian Gothick lasted well into the 19th century. Fonthill, built for William Beckford by James Wyatt, was a deeply romantic house and was a brilliant advertisement, as long as it lasted, for the Gothick that had risen into predominance with Strawberry Hill. By 1830 it had become unfashionable with the upcoming Oxford movement. Edward Pugin summed it up. 'All that is cunning and rascally is included in the term Wyatt.'

Our thanks to Christopher for his most instructive and illuminating talk which I have tried to outline here.



Tetbury

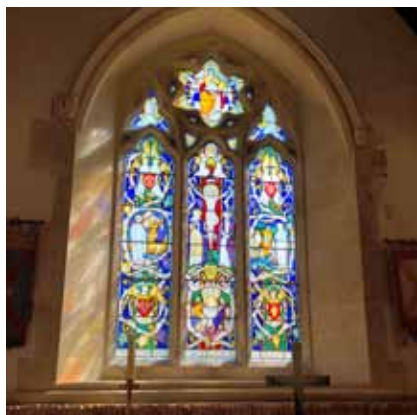
Tour of churches - The Chalke Valley

Led by Brian Woodruffe

Saturday 13th April 2019

by Mark Robinson

The Friends met at **St. Andrews, Nunton** on a perfect spring day and were greeted with a thank you for funding raised for restoration work. It is always a bit special when Friends can actually see that money is being well spent. Some of the masonry dates back to the 12th century and the first reference to an appointed parson was in 1147. In 1382 the church was appropriated by Bishop Wykeham to endow Winchester College. Further restorations have taken place over the centuries with major reconstruction in 1854/55.



Nunton East window

The treble bell is original but uninscribed, the tenor was replaced by one founded by William Purdue in 1641 and the third was replaced by one founded by Clement Tosier in 1701. These three bells all hang in the church today. As we came away, we could not help but be impressed by

the Christopher Webb east window of 1937, and a feeling of gratitude to those who, over the centuries, had clearly cared for this beautiful homely church which in 1934 had been transferred to the parish of Odstock.



Christopher Webb signature

Our second stop was at **St. John the Baptist at Bishopstone**. Existing since 1225 it was extensively rebuilt in Chilmark stone in the 14th Century. It is the epitome of a cruciform church and in it are preserved two stone coffins, once containing the relics of two bishops. The richly carved oak reredos pulpit is thought to have



Gatehouse at Bishopstone



Bishopstone stone carving

come from Spain, as is the carved wood and leather pulpit, both of which were brought to the church by the Revd. George Montgomery. It clearly was part of a once valuable living. The chancel is grand, measuring 53 feet long, which is unusual for a country church. The south transept houses a stone altar by A.W. Pugin in memory of the Revd. George Montgomery, who made extensive renovations and gifts to the church, but who sadly died after 21 years of service, when a wall in the church of East Grafton collapsed on top of him. There was much to see, including stained glass by J.T. Lyon and a beautiful font.



Lead Letters at Bishopstone

After tearing ourselves away for a very convivial lunch at the Queen's Head in **Broad Chalke**, we could walk to **All Saints**, a church steeped in history.

In the Charter of the year 955, King Eadwig granted 100 hides of land at Chalke (Cheolcum) to the nuns of Wilton, although the early evidence of Christianity is a Saxon preaching cross from the 9th century. The church we see today was built c. 1280, although work may have started in 1258, when the keeper of Savernake Forest was ordered to provide the vicar of Chalke with timber for the fabric of the church.



North windows, Broad Chalke

There are several corbel carvings round the roof dating from the 13th to 15th centuries. In the mid-17th century extensive repairs were undertaken due to the efforts of Sir John Aubrey, who in his 'Natural History of Wiltshire' writes "in 1659 Sir George Penruddock and I made ourselves Church Wardens, or else the fair church had fallen". In the mid-19th century, the church was restored this time by Wyatt and Brandon and the work included a new roof.

Major restoration of the full set of 8 bells, the oldest of which was cast by Peter de Weston in 1347, took place in 1996-1998 to mark the millennium. There is also a clock made in 1740 by William Monk, a blacksmith of Berwick

St. John. In 1903 a new organ made by Peter Conacher & Co of Huddersfield was purchased for £260 and the old one was sold to Bowerchalke for £30. The new one was renovated in 1950 and 1973 when a 15th "stop" was added. Over the years much has been done which is what makes this church so special today. The beautiful churchyard has unusual pollarded lime trees laid out and planted by Maurice Hewlett. The war memorial stands opposite the Lych Gate. Distinguished people buried there include Christopher Wood (artist 1901-1930), Revd. Rowland Williams (1817-1870) and Sir Cecil Beaton (1904-1980).



Memorial at Broad Chalke

Finally, we came upon **St Michael and All Angels in Coombe Bissett** where a church has stood for over 900 years. This is a big church in a tiny village and work on it in the 14thC was almost halted because of the Black Death. Until 1847, Coombe Bissett and West Harnham were under the "Peculiar Jurisdiction" of the Dean of Salisbury, so not subject to the Bishop or Archdeacon.

Over the south aisle and arcade are two Norman Arches (1150-1180) and

the arch by the Font, which is carved from a single block of stone, has a perfect Norman Column. The present roof is early 19th century, re-leaded in 2006. During alterations in 1961 a Medieval Altar Slab, with consecration crosses still visible, was found under the chancel floor, believed to be buried at the reformation when wooden tables replaced stone altars. Six bells date from 1589, at least two of which are made by John Wallis of Salisbury. These were re-tuned and re-hung in 1979-80. By the organ is a Record of Benefactors and income from these charities is used to relieve hardship within the parish. On a final and lighter note the Donkey Field, north of the churchyard is named after Jack and Jane, owned by the Widow Rideout, the mid-19th century village carrier who operated the Coombe Bissett Express to Salisbury. She is buried in the churchyard but no headstone remains.



St Michael and All Angels, Coombe Bissett

Our thanks go to Brian for leading such an enjoyable day which revealed much, but at a relaxed and leisurely pace.

Tour of churches around Malmesbury

led by Edward Buchan

Saturday 18th May 2019

by Caroline Keevil

On Saturday 18th May 42 of us met at Hullavington to start our second tour of the season, to be led by Edward Buchan.

I remember being quite taken aback when I walked into **St Mary Magdalene, Hullavington**. This church was re-ordered in 2017, quite a make over; some of us really liked it and some found it just too much. Whatever your feelings it is an example of a Church being used for the 21st Century. The Church Warden told us the financing of the work had come from a very generous benefactor and the WHCT.



St Mary Magdalene, Hullavington

The Aisles, Nave and Chancel are C12th Transition Norman to Early English, the North Aisle West window is late C13th, the South Porch and

a very fine North Chapel are early C13th, the North Aisle West Window is late C13th, the screen (moved from the centre aisle to the North Aisle in 2017) and rood loft are C14th & C15th. Bench ends & North Aisle roof are Perpendicular (Perp) late C15th. The windows were renewed in C15th. Blomfield restored church and rebuilt C14th Tower in 1872. There is a fragment of a C15th Chasuble and a C17th Flemish panel of The Sacrifice of Isaac. C17th and C18th monuments. The organ is 1907.



Sherston stone carving

Holy Cross, Sherston There was a Saxon Church of which nothing is left. This splendid Grade 1 Church, all local stone, is late Norman + Early English (EE) + Perp Fine Gothic survival, upper tower 1730 on EE base (original C14th sound panels) by Thomas Sumpson of Colerne. Norman Owl added in C18th. 7 famous bells. The V was cut into the Water Stoop by Cromwell's soldiers. The late Norman 1170 Nave with 4 magnificent arches with



Carved Crowned Head, Sherston

trumpet scallops and square abaci and a fine arch to the South Aisle Chapel. The Crossing and North transept, with 3 beautifully closely stepped Lancet windows are Early English C13th. Tower arches rest on 8 carved crowned heads, 5 original. The C13th Chancel was drastically restored by Wyatt and Ewan Christian. The South Transept was rebuilt in late C15th Perp, chancel south wall cut away and filled with fine wide 4 centre moulded arch, 3 bays. South Porch with a room above is C15th Perp. A Jacobean Pulpit and C13th – C19th monuments. The East Window was restored by Wyatt in 1877 as part of the C19th renovations and then some C20th. But it kept its pews. However their new C21st cupboards are to be recommended to other Churches looking to create a kitchen and/or storage. There is a very simple C13th font.



Sherston Tower Arch with carved crowned head



Foxley Church

Foxley Church with no dedication is another Grade 1 Church. Foxley was always a small village – 10 households in 1428, 50 in 1801. There are 35 today. There has been an Early English Church here since C12th, the Rectory was there in 1341. The Nave is C12th or earlier, the extended North Transept Aisle and chancel are early C13th, a C14th North Chapel, C17th Jacobean Pews, the West Tower is C17th, the Reredos is C18th and the South porch early C18th. There are C18th monuments to the Aycliffe family and a fine 1901 window to Walter Cecil Luce. The Chancel Screen is sparse.



Luce window, Foxley Church

There is a nearby mortuary chapel at Cowage Farm, this is the former Church of Bremilham - in 1811 there were 14 inhabitants and it is the same number today. There has been a church here since late C12th, largely demolished and rebuilt 1874 as a small chapel with a western bellcot. It is the smallest church in England still in use (one service a year at Rogationtide) at just 12foot square with only one pew. Perp. Font and 1677 bell from Foxley in a bell swap.

We lunched, quite formally, at The Bell Hotel in Malmesbury. an ancient Saxon town, Charter 880 from Alfred. St Aldhelm was the Abbot 675 – 709. It was an important town since C11th. It is almost encircled by the river Avon with a Castle and Abbey and involved in the wars between Stephen and Matilda and Henry. The Castle was removed by King John 1215.



South Porch Malmesbury Abbey. Interior, The Apostles & Angels

Malmesbury Abbey is dedicated to St Peter & St Paul and is another Grade 1. Brian Woodruffe has it as 'one of Wiltshire's glorious Churches' a C7th abbatial foundation of St Aldhelm, a Saxon parish Church of which nothing was left except the tower. The Abbey, built 1140-1175,

became the parish church after the dissolution. The Nave survived the Reformation and half the Norman West Front survives. The East end Tower and spire (taller than Salisbury's) collapsed in 1500, the West end Tower collapsed in 1662. There was much destruction during the Civil War and it changed hands 5 times.

We started, obviously, at the Great South Porch 'the chef d'oeuvre of Malmesbury', among the best pieces of Norman Sculpture in England' (Pevsner) and Edward described how it faced the town and entering was like a bible reading; the 8 continuous geometric orders, of which 3 are Bible scenes carved there. Inner - the Creation Story. Middle – Journey of Patriachs and Kings - Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Samson. Outer – Death and Resurrection - The Annunciation, Nativity, Crucifixion, Pentecost. In the Inner Porch there is a Tympanum of Christ + 2 Angels in Glory. The Great South Door has gunpowder damage which leaked from the room above.



South Porch Malmesbury Abbey. Sculpture on Outer Archway. The Entombment - Joseph & Nicodemus lower Christ's body into the tomb

Only the Nave and parts of the transepts survive, east of the crossing was ruined after the tower fell and dissolution. Romanesque arcaded

and tribune, pointed arches hinting at Gothic. Wonderful scalloped capitals, roll mouldings and billets on the stops in the shape of animal heads, zigzag and triangles. Gallery on south side has a projecting oratory for the Abbot to watch, or for visiting nobility? Clerestory with decorated windows raised in C14th to add a terrific vaulted roof with painted bosses and heads. Where the crossing was is Pulpitum, an awesome solid wall of stone which has never been decorated (though much debated). There is a C14th Perpendicular tomb chest of King Athelstan, died 940, first king of all English, in the North Aisle and a Burne Jones window on the South side with glass from the William Morris works.



Malmesbury Abbey Nave. Animal head completes the hoodmould above an arch in the arcade

Church Of The Holy Rood, Rodbourne

This is a very agricultural village, part of Malmesbury Abbey estate until the Dissolution when the Abbey was bought by Stumpe, a clothier. The C12th church is mainly intact. The South Porch has a carved Tree of Life Tympanum. There is a C13th East



Windows at Rodbourne

window, a C13th carved seat in the Sanctuary, a C14th Chancel and a pretty C15th West window, a C15th Rood Screen but the loft has gone, a C17th Pulpit, an C18th window in West wall and South Porch. The Tower, 1862, has a saddleback roof. The East window is 1863 made by William Morris, who also made the curtains round the Altar, and there is work by Philip Webb, Ford Maddox Brown and Rosetti.



Rodbourne church

This had been a long day, we had visited 6 churches. I am sorry there are not more photos and it has been a bit of a crush to report here on all that we learnt. We started out as a large party, those stalwarts repaired to Southsea Farm at Kington Langley for tea with Edward and Fiona Buchan. Many thanks Edward for a Grand Day Out!

Tour of churches around Edington

led by John Osborne
Saturday 6th July 2019

by Martin Knight

Meandering down pretty narrow lanes in rural Wiltshire on a sunny Saturday morning raised the expectation of a fascinating day to come. We gathered to find a sizeable group of church crawlers waiting expectantly outside the now defunct church of **St Mary Old Dilton**.



St Mary Old Dilton

The immediate impression was one of a beautifully kept church, spotlessly clean with pale wooden box pews. Up to the 18thC the area had been one supporting the cloth working industry. As a result of the increased population by the 19thC, a new church was built nearby. This was good news for St Mary's as it was spared being given Victorian 'improvements'. We are lucky to now witness a rare survival with its typical 18thC box pews. The church became redundant in 1970 because the pews were unsafe and it is now administered by the Churches

Conservation Trust. We noted the unusual gallery and the three-decker pulpit showing the emphasis of worship on the 'word' in that era.



Interior, Old Dilton

On arriving at **Steeple Ashton**, we could not help but notice the vast contrast of the imposing church of **St Mary the Virgin**. The present building dates from around 1500 and is the high point of perpendicular style. The aisles were built by local merchants Messrs Leucas and Long and we were able to look at the magnificent ceiling



Steeple Ashton



Gargole at Steeple Ashton

with the help of a mirror. A lightning strike in 1670 destroyed the spire. It was followed by a second strike which killed 2 of the workmen repairing the damage. The style is very much over the top: a statement of glorification by patrons. John pointed out that there was a rare Vicars Library in the room above the porch. Created by the Rev Samuel Hay, one of several high achieving brothers, it has housed around 1000 books. Hay was a 'father' to his parish and was known as the hermit because of his eccentric dress.



Priory Church, Edington

After an excellent lunch at the Three Daggers in **Edington** who did well in managing to cater for the 35 of us, we moved on to the **Priory church**. Founded by William of Edington 1350s, it was occupied by Augustinian monks. The Manor is on the site of the



Edington

old monastic building. In 1450 the Bishop of Salsbury was murdered here when he took sanctuary from local rebels. Restored by Ponting at the end of 19thC, many furnishings are from that period. In WW2, some items from Imber (requisitioned by the MoD) were brought here. John spoke of how this church is of extreme interest architecturally: at the point of the changeover from Decorated to Perpendicular. Hence there are many examples of both styles. For instance, the west window is Perpendicular while the others are Decorated. Outside, it is much more decorated at the east end than at the west end and we were alerted to the 3 seats carved into the north wall. This is an amazing place to visit with many remains of old structures visible. John explained one of the theories surrounding the carving of a monk above a barrel and how it could be related to the Winchester diocese (WinTun). The chancel holds a beautiful renaissance monument to one of the owning families which has been moved, causing damage. We saw many other outstanding sculptures.

Our next port of call was **All Saints, West Lavington**, strangely close to and visible from the main road which many of us have travelled on without noticing its presence. Again we witnessed an interesting mix of architectural style. Norman pillars on the north side of the aisle and early English (pointed) arches on the south side. John advised us never to debate the invention of the pointed arch with a Frenchman. There are many theories: even that they originated in Syria and the idea was brought back by crusaders. But all agree that the pointed arch is better at keeping a building standing. Here we had a 14thC tower which had been buttressed by extending the aisles on both sides. In the private chapel we found a good monument to Henry Danvers who died in 1654. In the other chapel, there is a lancet window to Matthew Wilkinson, Master of Marlborough College, who was booted out of the school and fled to West Lavington after the rebellion of 1851. We also admired the Millennium east window by Simon Whistler (of the family) depicting local scenes: Avebury stones, this church and Salisbury.



Norman Arches, West Lavington



Potterne

We then made our way to **Potterne** and the church of **St Mary the Virgin** which many of us must have frequently passed without stopping to visit. Here was our opportunity. When we finally reached the church itself (parking is not easy), we were greeted with a magnificent view. John referred us to the east window which is composed of lancets grouped together, framed with purbeck marble shafts, demonstrating good quality. The pulpit is rare being of wood and pre-reformation. The present font is 15thC. There is also an old Saxon font with a fine Latin inscription. Rumour has it that it was found in a local farmyard. John wondered how many other fonts had been found in farmyards. They are popular places for such things! We ended with an unresolved discussion on the church's connection to Magdalene College Oxford, and feeling very fulfilled by such a fascinating day. Grateful thanks were conveyed to John for making it so special.

Tour of Great Durnford and Stapleford Churches and the Monuments in Salisbury Cathedral

Led by Michael Hodges

Saturday 21st September 2019

by Clare Miles

The morning's visits took us to villages in valleys on the southern edge of Salisbury Plain. The first was at **Great Durnford** to visit **St. Andrew's Church**, by the River Avon. The small building of flint and white limestone with greensand dressings has a 13th century western tower and is set in a spacious churchyard. Both north and south round-headed doorways with scalloped capitals, zig-zag carved decoration and patterned tympana immediately indicated that we were entering a fine Norman church; sight of an impressive 12th century chancel arch confirmed this. Michael Hodges explained that the earliest church here was of 11th century date; the living was managed by Old Sarum Cathedral by 1150.



Doorway at St Andrew's Church, Great Durnford

The aisleless, timber roofed interior is spacious and although 13th and 15th century alterations were made and 20th century restoration work undertaken, the character of an

ancient church was preserved. A Norman font carved with intricate interlaced arches and the small primitive sculptures of a Green Man and of two birds perching against the capitals of the chancel arch attracted attention. Fine quality furnishings in late medieval bench ends and Jacobean pulpit, lectern and communion rail are amongst many interesting features of this church which John Betjeman once declared to be, 'one of Wiltshire's most delightful'.



Font at St Andrew's Church, Great Durnford

A short distance west was the Parish Church of **St. Mary, Stapleford**, close to the River Till where it enters the Wylle Valley. Like St. Andrew's it was constructed of local stones and flint. It too was of Norman date and originally the endowment of Old Sarum; this passed finally and currently to St. George's, Windsor. Surviving Norman work exists in the south doorway and further in the magnificent 4-bay, late 12th century

arcade between the south aisle and the nave. Massive round arches with dog-tooth carving are supported on wide scalloped capitals with, in some cases, heads at the corners. These rest on 3 foot diameter circular columns composed of alternating bands of white stone and green limestone.



Columns at St Mary, Stapleford

The building style of the larger part of the church is of Decorated Gothic. An attractive feature in the wide chancel is an elegant, 3-seat sedilia and piscina, defined by cusped ogee arches with Victorian restored heads at the bases of each. An extensive restoration of 1861 saw the installation of a stone pulpit and renewal of the east window. Fine quality Victorian stained glass was noticeable.



St Mary, Stapleford

Following lunch in the village of Barford St. Martin we arrived at

Salisbury Cathedral. Michael chose a chronological sequence for his tour of some 30 monuments. The story of the abandonment of the Norman Cathedral of Old Sarum and construction of a new building in the more desirable lower ground in Salisbury, is well known; the transition was overseen by Bishop Poore. In 1220 foundation stones were laid and six years later the bodies of Bishop Osmund (who died in 1099) and two succeeding bishops were translated from Old Sarum to Salisbury. Most unusual of their tombs is what remains of a 'fiorminda' tomb-shrine for St. Osmund, built in the 13th century to serve the cult that had developed around this holy bishop. Six oval apertures allowed pilgrims to touch the shrine and pray in supplication for healing. Osmund was canonised in 1456.



Salisbury Cathedral interior

Contemplation of a number of military effigies in their changing styles evoke the times of the Crusades, the 100 Years War and the Wars of the Roses. Fine attention to detail in the carving of the armour, accoutrements and portraiture even, is compelling but most important and striking is the earliest, a stone effigy of William Longespée the Elder, illegitimate son of Henry II and a founder of the

Cathedral. He died in 1226 and his monument was the first to be installed. Resting on a wooden tomb-chest, his figure, head tilted, is encased in chain mail and holds a long shield with heraldic decoration.



Tomb of Sir Richard Mompesson and Lady Mompesson

Of the further 10 monuments of Pre-Reformation bishops, the most refined is that of Giles de Bridport who died in 1262 shortly after the consecration of the Cathedral. His finely carved marble effigy is placed within an arcaded structure decorated with carved naturalistic detail. Noteworthy are a large 14th century brass memorial and an exquisite 16th century fan-vaulted chantry chapel created for bishops. Two Baroque monuments in the retrochoir make an impact. The first, a tall wall monument of architectural scale and design, with coffered arch, columns, pediments and statuary, contains the recumbent effigies of the Earl of Hertford who died in 1621 and his wife. Equally sophisticated is the Bath stone monument of 1635 for Sir Thomas and Lady Gorges. Their effigies lie beneath a canopy supported by four twisted columns and surmounted by obelisks, allegorical figures, and astrological

and geometrical shapes. Sir Thomas was an Elizabethan courtier and builder of Longford Castle in Wiltshire.

Later monuments for persons of high rank reveal further stylistic changes. A restrained black and white marble wall tablet containing the bust of the Royalist, Sir Robert Hyde could be contrasted with Michael Rysbrack's imposing Georgian monument to Thomas, Lord Wyndham, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland. On a large pedestal is a sculptural arrangement of a weeping woman resting her arm on an urn and holding a spear and a lyre. Dignified monuments for Victorian bishops present effigies on tomb chests and are placed in the retrochoir. Notable 19th and 20th century Wiltshire personages are memorialised in the north transept, unfortunately inaccessible to us because of building works.

Repeat visits would be rewarded by the sheer multiplicity and wealth of sculpture here and rich seams of ecclesiastical, national and local history spanning nine centuries. These can be excavated, in the first instance, with the help of Michael Hodge's excellent book, *The Urns and Sepulchres of Mortality – The Church Monuments of Wiltshire* (Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, 2018). The Chairman, Martin Knight, thanked Michael and expressed our appreciation for the day's memorable visits and tour, especially made in the Cathedral under busy, noisy conditions, albeit with the beautiful overtones of the choir's rehearsal for Evensong.

Ride+Stride

Saturday 14th September 2019

by Charles Graham



Ride+Stride start in Corsham

"We cycled 26 miles to 8 different churches. It took us 6 hours – it felt like a million! The reason we carried on was mostly the jellybeans." (8-year-old twins Robert and William, who raised over £1000 for St Thomas's, Salisbury).

Congratulations to all the 370 or so people (aged 1 – 98) who took part this year and raised over £57,000 for their own churches and the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust. We were blessed with a glorious sunny day, our handsome churches and beautiful countryside looking at their best. There was an excellent turn-out for the launch in Corsham by the Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Mrs. Sarah Troughton, who spoke eloquently of the importance of the Trust's work in maintaining our churches.

The majority still favour the two-wheel ride, but striders make up a significant proportion of the participants, and

a well-publicised 98-year-old rode in splendour to St. Mary's, Codford on his mobility scooter, raising over £1000.



Col. Michael Elcomb welcomed by the appropriately named Rev. Clifford Stride

There were a couple of horse-riders in Corsham, a training bike rider in Melksham, and a first this year: "Glide and Stride" in Heytesbury. I'm not sure how much striding took place, but the Gliding (throwing paper aeroplanes down from the pulpit) was clearly a success.



Glide+Stride at St Peter and St Paul Heytesbury

Once again I am pleased to record the achievement of the

stalwarts from St. James, Bratton, who won the Brooke Cup for the ninth year in succession. Why can no other churches mobilise 40+ participants?

Congratulations too to the youngsters from St. Mary's, Grittleton who retained the Junior Group Cup.

A full list of Prize-winners can be found on the Trust web-site, but I would single out David Fishlock whose solo effort raised over £2000 for St. John the Baptist, Mildenhall and Christ Church, Marlborough.

This brings to an end my time as Ride+Stride Administrator, so may I thank all those who have loyally supported the event over many years. It remains a very important fund-raiser for the Trust as well as for our own churches, and I hope my successor, Fiona Draper, will find the job as rewarding as I have.



The Wootton Rivers Team at St Nicholas, Huish

Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Treasurer's report

For the year ended 31st March 2019

by Peter Smith, Hon. Treasurer

The net assets of the Trust increased to £441k as at 31st March 2019 (£388k, 2018). This figure includes the Hartham Church Charitable Trust restricted fund investment of £105k.

The gross income of the Trust for the year was just over £118k (£99k, 2018).

The Friends made a profit of £31,800 for the year (£24k, 2018). This comprised £13,900 from Membership Fees and Gift Aid; over £5700 (after expenses) from fund raising activities; over £6000 from donations; a legacy of £5000 from the estate of Mrs Brenda Mackechnie-Jarvis, a former Friend of Wiltshire Churches; £280 from the ongoing sales of Brian Woodruffe's book "The Parish Churches of

Wiltshire"; and £787 from the sale of Christmas Cards.

The Trust's other significant income was raised by the annual Ride & Stride sponsored event - £60,000; Investments - £13,600; and Parish Donations - £4,100.

The WHCT awarded 41 grants totalling £64,150 for the year to 31st March 2019.

Full details of the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 are available for viewing online at the Charity Commission website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk) by entering the WHCT's Registered Charity Number 1075598.

St. Mary's Church, Lydiard Tregoze

In 2017 WHCT awarded this C11th Grade 1 listed building £3000 towards work revealing medieval wall paintings which had been whitewashed during the Reformation. In 2018 we held our summer Evensong service there. Conservation students have now discovered, in an ornate niche behind a wall plaque, a statue of St Christopher thought to have been concealed by a stone mason in the 16th century. How rewarding that the stone mason's action has been vindicated five centuries later. Keep funding these projects please!



Images from bbc.co.uk



Steeple Ashton