

THE FRIENDS OF WILTSHIRE CHURCHES



Annual Report 2023

www.wiltshirehistoricchurchestrust.org.uk

The Friends Of Wiltshire Churches



President

Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton DStJ, HM
Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire

Vice-Presidents

Lieutenant-Colonel James Arkell DL
Madeleine, Countess of Bessborough
CBE

The Rt Rev Bishop of Bristol
Mr John Bush CVO, OBE, KStJ
The Rt Rev Bishop of Clifton
Mr Robert Floyd DL
Mr Henry Hoare

The Countess of Inchcape
The Rt Rev William Ind
Sir Maurice Johnston KCB, CVO, OBE
Lord King of Bridgwater CH, PC
Mr Danny Kruger MP
The Marquess of Lansdowne LVO, DL
Lord Margadale DL
Lord Marland of Odstock
Lady Nutting

Mrs Claire Perry O'Neill
The Earl of Radnor
Sir Henry Rumbold, Bt
The Rt Rev Bishop of Salisbury
The Dean of Salisbury
Viscount Sidmouth
The Duchess of Somerset
Lord Talbot of Malahide DL
The Rt Rev Bishop of Ramsbury

Chairman

Mr Patrick Wintour DL

Treasurer

Mrs Fiona Lawley (Treasurer of the WHCT)

Front cover - Salisbury Cathedral lit up by the
moon for our 70th celebration in November 2023.
© Juliet Holt

Membership Secretary

Mr Jeremy Groom

Secretary

Mr David Evans

Committee

The Hon Edward Buchan
His Honour Judge Mark Overall KC

(Chairman of the WHCT)

Mr Michael Hodges DL
Brigadier Nigel Jackson MBE (Secretary of the
WHCT)

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

New Friends

We are pleased to welcome the
following new members who joined
during 2023

Major & Mrs Grant Baker (Chittoe)
Mr & Mrs Anthony Barne (Pewsey)
Mr Christopher Bromfield (Lacock)
Mrs Nicola Buchanan-Dunlop (Ham)
Mrs Janet Budgen (Crockerton)
Mrs Sarah Cozens (Lacock)
Mr Stephen Dunn (Salisbury)
Mrs Lavinia Gerard Leigh (Kellaways)
Dr & Mrs Alex Goodwin (Keevil)
Mr & Mrs Roger Hollest (Shaw)
Mr Richard Joy (Kingston Deverill)
Dr Nick Maurice (Marlborough)
Mrs Mary Newman (Salisbury)
Major General & Mrs Andrew Ritchie
(Poulshot)
Ms Clare Russell (Manton)
Sherston Parochial Church Council
Mr Alfred Storey (Corsham)
Ingrid, Lady Turner (Alton Priors)
Mrs Susannah Weaver (Corsham)
Mrs Juliet Wilmot (Chittoe)
Mr Richard Wintour (London)

News Round

by Patrick Wintour

John of Salisbury (C12th bishop & theologian) may have coined the phrase 'standing on the shoulders of giants' but the words are more often attached to Sir Isaac Newton, who claimed he had been able to see further by adopting this effective strategy. During this past year I have benefitted greatly by the firm foundations that were laid by my predecessors & I hope that the Friends of Wiltshire Churches will continue to multiply & strengthen.

This report sets out the highlights of the lectures, visits, concerts & other events that formed the contours of part of the Trust's 70th anniversary year & I hope that you will enjoy reading about it all.

Lectures & AGM

In February David Evans filled the Community Hall in Market Lavington with a thought-provoking lecture on the impact of the Reformation on art in churches. 'Idols & Iconoclasts in the English Reformation' explored different examples of how paintings, carvings & other forms of decoration were destroyed by zealots who sought to purge parish churches of anything that smacked of idolatry or could be in any way connected to the pope.

Our AGM in April was held in St Thomas's, Salisbury where the famous Doom painting had been painted over by the very reformers that David Evans had been talking to us about. The Friends heard how the church had undertaken a major conservation project to restore the Doom which had serious cracks & was partly hidden by a long metal beam. The total cost of the work had exceeded £500,000 & the majority of the funding had come from church members, past & present. The enthusiasm of the team at St Thomas's reminded me of some advice that I was given by my first boss – that generally one learns more through studying success than by analysing failure.

Visits to churches

Many Friends enjoyed visiting churches in Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire & in Bath during the summer & early autumn. We are very lucky to have such capable guides among our committee including Michael Hodges, David Evans, Chris Rogers & John Osborne. Details of these visits are included in this report & I hope that not only do these reports convey information about the buildings themselves, but also the obvious enjoyment that people experienced by being part of a group sharing a common interest.

As ever, I am extremely grateful to our lecturers, tour leaders & the organisers of Ride+Stride for all the work they do to make the events so enjoyable. Full details of these can be found later in this Annual Report.

Summer Evensong & Reception

We continued with our tradition of picking a slightly damp day in the midst of a hot & generally dry summer for our annual evensong & reception! In July we filled St Nicholas, Bromham – a fine church that we had visited with Friends in May. The service was led by The Revd Dr Kenneth Padley, Canon Treasurer at

Salisbury Cathedral who preached a powerful sermon about church buildings. After the service we gathered for a reception in the Orangery at Bowood House at the generous invitation of Simon Kerry. Friends were able to glimpse a spectacular rainbow over the lake & to view the ornate chapel designed in the early C19th. Sadly, the chapel was not quite large enough to accommodate so many Friends for evensong.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust

The trustees met in June & November 2023 & made grants totalling almost £80,000 to 33 different churches in the county. In addition, further grants of £100,000 were made to mark the Trust's 70th anniversary: Malmesbury Abbey (£70,000), All Saints, Wardour (£20,000) & St Peter, Clyffe Pypard (£10,000). A list of the churches that have been awarded grants is included later in this report.

Once again Ride+Stride proved a popular & effective instrument for raising precious funds for the Trust & for the churches involved; 9th September 2023 turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year but more than 230 cyclists & walkers were not deterred as more than 160 churches & chapels opened their doors to welcome people. £50,500 was raised on the day & Friends will be inspired by the stories of individual & team achievements that are also listed later in our report.

One of the highlights of the 70th anniversary celebrations was a superb performance of the Bach Mass in B Minor sung by the Salisbury Musical Society accompanied by the Florilegium orchestra. This was held on 25th November 2023 in Salisbury Cathedral & WHCT was one of the sponsors of the event.

Next year

Anniversary celebrations will continue into 2024 & there will be a special service in Malmesbury Abbey on Sunday 16th June followed by a reception. I very much look forward to seeing you there.

We are also developing our programme of events for 2024 & further details will be posted on the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust website (in the Friends section). As the cost of postage continues to increase at such an alarming rate, we will inevitably become more dependent on electronic alternatives. If there is anyone out there who is familiar with the antics of Mail-Chimp, please do get in touch if only to console me with the news that I am not alone in my struggle with this digital primate!

But I hope that as I write this (just after Advent Sunday) you have not been deterred from buying the excellent Christmas cards that are available. Please do remember that the Friends of Wiltshire Churches has grown through proselytising & to that end we have recently printed some excellent new material that should make it easier to recruit new Friends.

I remain deeply grateful to all those who volunteer their time, skills & experience in many different ways including Caroline Keevil & her daughter Kt who have put this report together.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Treasurer's report

For the year ended 31st March 2023

by Nigel Jackson, Interim Honorary Treasurer

The net assets of the Trust stood at £667,927 at the year end. This amount consisted of unrestricted funds of £546,017 and the Hartham Church Charitable Trust (HCCT) restricted fund of £133,730.

The gross income of the Trust for the year was £98,577, a 6% increase compared to the previous year of £92,044. Friends membership, Gift Aid and income raised £22,302.

The Trust's other significant income was raised by the annual Ride+Stride sponsored event, which raised £53,124 including Gift Aid. The half-share of sponsorship, £23,370, was returned directly to fundraising churches and chapels.

Dividend and interest income was £15,991 for the year (2022: £14,994).

Parishes donated £2,760 in the year (2022: £2,966).

WHCT paid grants to 21 churches in the financial year (2022-23) totalling £56,319.

WHCT awarded 37 grants in the calendar year 2023 totalling £84,230 of which 4 were from the HCCT fund totalling £5,710. The full list of grants awarded in 2023, including the three special 70th Anniversary Grants totalling £100,000, comes to a grand total for 2023 of £184,230.

The full independently examined financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 are available to view on the Charity Commission website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> - search for Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Register No 1075598.

Grants

Last year we reported a reduction in the number of grant applications and larger awards to fewer churches and chapels owing to a general slowdown of inspections, project management and contractor support in the pandemic years.

2023 has seen a return to normal levels of applications, with 40 grants being awarded by Trustees in the June and November meetings. Grants have ranged from major restoration to smaller yet critical repairs. In every case, the endeavour of each church and chapel, of all denominations, has stood out and merited the Trust's support.

70th Anniversary Grants

In celebration of the Trust's 70th Anniversary, Trustees also decided to commit £100,000 to the award of unique 70th Anniversary Grants. These grants were assessed from all applications to the Trust in June and November 2023. Three grants were confirmed by Trustees in their meeting on 13th November 2023.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust Grants

The following grants were awarded by the Trustees in June 2023:

Church	Project	£ Grant
Malmesbury Abbey	Extensive fabric	£10000
St Lawrence, Stratton Sub Castle	Roof	£3000
Wardour Chapel	Dome	£6000
Holy Cross, Sherston	Ceiling	£3500
St Thomas, Coulston	Walls	£2500
St Peter and St Paul, Heytesbury	Drainage	£1000
St Michael, Wilsford	Stonework & guttering	£1300
St George, Harnham	Window & rainwater goods	£2500
Bromham Methodist	Wall & guttering	£200
St Leonard, Stanton Fitzwarren	Flooring	£250 + £250 HCCT
St Mary, Cricklade	Safety-Heating system	£2000 + £2000 HCCT
St John, Charlton	Access Ramp	£500
St Leonard, Bulford	Paintings & Memorial	£1500
St John, Devizes	Clock	£1300
United Church, Bradford on Avon	Cartouche	£800
Holy Rood, Rodbourne	Kitchenette	£1500
Holy Trinity, Shaw	Solar Panel	£1550 + £1550 HCCT

TOTAL: £39,400.00 plus £3,800 HCCT

The following grants were awarded by the Trustees in November 2023

Church	Project	£ Grant
St Peter, Clyffe Pypard	Roof	£5000
All Saints, Lydiard Millicent	Roof	£3000

St Mary, Calne	Tower Roof	£3000
St John, Swindon	Roof	£2500
St Michael & All Angels, Atworth	Tower Roof	£2000
St Nicholas, Fyfield	Roof	£1500
St Martin, Bremhill	Drainage	£3000
St Anthony of Padua, Melksham	Rainwater Goods	£2000
St Peter, Langley Burrell	Repointing	£3000
Amesbury Methodist, Amesbury	Windows	£1500
Zion Baptist Church, Bradford on Avon	Baptistry	£620
All Saints, Swindon	Heating	£500
St Andrews, Ogbourne St Andrew	Toilet & Kitchenette	£4000
St Mark, Salisbury	Kitchen	£3000
The Well, Swindon	Internal renovation	£2000 + £1910 HCCT
St Paul, Salisbury	Disabled access lift	£2500

TOTAL: £39,120.00 plus £1,910 HCCT

2023 TOTAL: £84,230.00

70th Anniversary Grants (Awarded in November 2023)

Church	Project	£ Grant
Malmesbury Abbey	Nave ceiling	£70000
All Saints Chapel, Wardour	Stonework	£20000
St Peter, Clyffe Pypard	Roof	£10000

TOTAL: £100,000

Legacies

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

Hartham Church Charitable Trust Fund

Once an application from a Wiltshire church or chapel has been accepted for consideration for a Trust grant for repairs or community enhancements, it will also be assessed, in competition with other eligible applications, for an additional grant from the Hartham Church Charitable Trust Fund. These rare grants are made in recognition that the applicant church or chapel stands out for its contribution to advancing the Christian religion.

Trustee awards of HCCT grants have made a real difference to the church in Wiltshire.

Hartham Church is in the Hartham Park Estate near Corsham. The church is closed, but can be viewed from the adjacent road and path.

The HCCT Fund has been held for 5 years. In 2023 the HCCT Representative said – "I am impressed by the work that the WHCT has been able to achieve. I also appreciate the way in which WHCT notes the existence and impact of the HCCT grant."

Ed. We thought you would like to see a photo of this beautiful church, see page 38

Digital News

by Nigel Jackson

The Trust website and communications this year have been dominated by the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the Trust in 1953. Visible changes have included the introduction of the new logo to replace the original logo that was introduced in 1985. The logo has been included on the website and in all communication.

The website has also been refreshed, with a new background image featuring the scaffolded St Andrew's Church in Wanborough, to emphasise the purpose and support of the Trust. Vibrant new images of Ride+Stride and from Friends Church Tours have also been added.

The History of the Trust, written by Michael Hodges as part of our 70th Anniversary record, was added to the website in April. You can find it in the 'About' pages of the website. The

history gives a highly informative overview and detail of the evolution of the Trust, its people, achievements and outcomes. Brian Woodruffe has worked hard to compile the 70th Anniversary Exhibition of Church Projects supported by the Trust. This photographic overview includes examples of churches and chapels of all ages across the county that have been helped by the Trust. This Exhibition is also available to view in the 'About' webpages.

Website Home page Posts give News and Events. Grants are published in the Grants section soon after they have been awarded.

Finally, interest in the Trust and Wiltshire have been widely recognised through website sales from as far as Australia this year. The Donation button linked to the Trust Paypal account has also worked well, thank you.

Report on the Annual General Meeting & Lecture

Saturday 15th April 2023

by David Evans

Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held at 3 pm on Saturday April 15th 2023 in St Thomas's Church, Salisbury. Martin Knight was in the chair and around 50 members were present.

Martin Knight began proceedings by thanking the Vicar and Churchwardens of St Thomas's for allowing the meeting to take place in the church, a building which provides a fine example of work with which the WHCT has been able to help.

Fiona Lawley provided a brief account of the WHCT's financial position, which appeared to be very healthy. Costs and grants of over £90,000 were nearly covered by income from donations, activities of the Friends and Ride+Stride so that, given investment gains, the Trust's funds had actually increased.

Martin Knight briefly reviewed the year 2022, when the Friends had been able to resume their activities. On the whole, the weather had smiled upon them during their very successful church tours, though they had not been so fortunate in the case of the Summer Event at Chisenbury Priory. He was sorry to announce the death of one of the vice-presidents, Major General Sebastian Roberts, but was pleased that Bishop Andrew Rumsey of Ramsbury had become

a vice-president, especially given his responsibility for church buildings at national level. He specially mentioned the superb work of Caroline Keevil in producing the Annual Report, which meant that he did not need to spend long reviewing the Friends' activities of 2022.

Martin looked ahead to the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the WHCT. He mentioned the forthcoming Bach B-minor Mass to be sung in the cathedral in November and an exhibition illustrating the work of the Trust in helping local churches which would make use of Brian Woodruffe's collection of photographs.

Martin pointed out that since Covid churches had made fewer requests for grants and pointed out that consequently well thought out requests were especially likely to meet a generous response. Nigel Jackson informed the meeting that there were only two days left for the submission of requests to be considered in the Trust's June meeting and that 15 churches had so far applied.

Martin reminded the meeting of his imminent resignation as Chairman of the Friends and introduced his successor, Patrick Wintour.

Mark Everall addressed the meeting in

order to thank Martin for his sterling years of service since he took over from Michael Hodges in 2014. He praised Martin's energetic leadership and reminded the meeting of successful new initiatives such as the February lecture. He thanked Clare Knight too for her support of her husband in his demanding role. Mark's thanks were echoed by Sarah Troughton, President of the Friends, who mentioned Martin's clear literary style and his excellent tenor voice, which she had enjoyed at evensongs. She thanked Patrick Wintour for agreeing to take over from Martin. Applause from the meeting showed that the sentiments of Sarah and Mark were widely shared.

The Annual Lecture on The Conservation Project at St Thomas's Church, Salisbury

The lecture took the form of a series of talks about various aspects of the project, with John Foster, chairman of the redevelopment committee, introducing and concluding the presentation. Not only is the conservation of so significant a church interesting in itself, but its genesis could well prove instructive to other churches which need to undertake major conservation projects.

Following John Foster's introductory remarks, Chris Daniel outlined the history of the church. It originated as a chapel looking to St Martin's as its mother church. Oddly, the building breaks the grid plan on which the town of Salisbury is laid out but geophysical analysis failed to

establish with certainty exactly how the church originally related to north-south and east-west roads. A major event in the history of the church was the collapse of the chancel in 1447. It appears that the Doom depicted over the chancel arch was painted when the chancel was rebuilt. At the Reformation the Doom was whitewashed over, because its theme of salvation or damnation according to merit was incompatible with Protestant theology. The painting was rediscovered in 1819, when Miss Wicken made a sketch based on what she saw. Only in 1888 was the doom made permanently visible, when Clayton & Bell restored it. Comparison of that work with the 1819 sketch assures us that Clayton & Bell were essentially faithful to the late medieval painting. In organisation and in detail the doom follows precedent, but it departs from the standard model by including two saints, one at lower left, who is clearly the classic pilgrim, St James of Compostella, and one at lower right, who has no identifying attributes, but could be St Thomas of Canterbury, to whom the church is dedicated, or St Osmund, Norman Bishop of Salisbury, or perhaps any episcopal saint to whom the visitor might wish to direct his prayer.

The process of conserving the doom was more fully explained by Anthony Feltham-King. He described the state of the painting in 2019, before conservation began. The work was grimy, disfigured by cracks and in part hidden behind a metal tie-beam. More seriously, the plaster

on which the Doom was painted was becoming detached from the wall, because earlier a cement render had been applied behind it, instead of more suitable lime render. A specialist, Peter Martindale, was brought in and he succeeded in reattaching the plaster to the wall, in cleaning the picture and in filling the cracks. It seemed desirable to get rid of the tie-beam which spoiled the unity of the painted surface, but there were fears that it might be essential to prevent the walls from spreading outwards. Fortunately, such fears proved unfounded when the tie-beam was removed. It was not possible to distinguish between the original medieval painting and the work of Clayton & Bell, but Miss Wicken's sketch of 1819 served to witness to their fidelity to the medieval work. The speaker finished by listing the other improvements that were part of the project: the cleaned memorials in the Lady Chapel, the new flexible seating in the nave and the glass lobby built at the west end to link the church with the town.

John Bruce Ball then explained how this great project had been financed. Total costs had been £550,000. Trust bodies had supplied only 10% of this huge sum. The Heritage Lottery Fund had not been of assistance, because its grants depend on the involvement of the local community in fund-raising. Local businesses had given no substantial help. Instead, the church had relied largely on church funds, the donations of the congregation and the proceeds of events organised by the church.

The conservation project started in 2007, when discussion of the uses of the parish buildings began in the light of the church's position in the city centre. It was clear that good communication with the congregation would be essential, that the needs of future generations must be catered for and that this would mean providing for flexible use of the spacious nave.

In October 2015 came the first visible sign of progress, when the old entrance was replaced by a welcoming window connecting the church with the town outside. In 2019 work began on reconstructing the children's area. Then in 2020 the church was closed for six weeks or so, after which the aspect of the church was transformed. The old furnishings were stripped out, which made it easier to appreciate the spaciousness of this light-filled space, with its beautiful columns and Luke Hughes' fine new pews. The pews are stackable, which enables flexible use of the nave. The large glass lobby provides connection between the church with the town outside.

Altogether, the project took about eleven years. Fears that the removal of the old pews might prove deeply controversial or that the congregation might desert the transformed church happily prove unfounded. It was clear that John Foster and his team are proud of what they have achieved. The applause of the Friends which followed their presentation showed appreciation both of the talks and of what has been achieved at St Thomas's.

Winter Lecture Series

Idols & Iconoclasts in the English Reformation

Given by David Evans
Friday 10th February 2023

reviewed by Geoffrey Till

About 40 members of the Trust were treated on February 10th to an enthralling talk by David Evans on the

nature and fate of English medieval Church art during and after the Reformation. He ranged over oil and wall paintings, stone carvings, rood screens, wooden roof decoration and triptychs. By no means were his illustrated examples limited to our own churches in Wiltshire. David made the point that unlike their appearance today, medieval churches would have been ablaze with colour, but this was usually not just decoration for decoration's sake. Instead, it was a means of communicating ideas and moral precepts to an unlettered audience. The result was often sign-posted by symbols in a code understood by its audience but which we need to decipher. Exactly what the apparent message was, and very often the means of communicating it, determined the fate of such art when the 'Commissioners' of Edward VI and Elizabeth I set out to

reform the Church of England by getting rid of everything in England's parish churches they considered



Christ casts a devil out of a dumb man. A wing of the Sherborne triptych (late C15th.)

idolatrous and 'poppe-ish.' Now we can only tell what was lost by looking at what survived.

David started his talk by showing us an assortment of beautiful triptych paintings, which portrayed saints to be revered, each carefully identified by symbols of their martyrdom, St Barbara and her tower, St Catherine and her wheel and so on. Since the veneration of individuals was frowned on, these were deemed no longer acceptable on altars, rood screens or wall paintings, being either sold, destroyed or painted over. In the eyes of some reformers this concern even led to the liturgical demotion of the Virgin Mary. Likewise the famous Doom painting in St Thomas's church in Salisbury was painted over; it was disliked by the reformers since it

seemed to suggest that one's fate in ascending to heaven or descending to hell depended not simply on one's faith alone but instead on one's deeds.

When the message was overtly opposed to the political as well as religious trends of the time, the case for destruction was even clearer. David illustrated this by showing us an alabaster carving of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket which was absolutely forbidden, lest observers got to ponder whether Henry VIII was now actually assaulting the Church as Henry II had done then. To avoid such uncomfortable reflections, the elaborate tomb of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral was completely demolished. Anything that hinted at the idea of transubstantiation (that in the



Elizabethan coat of arms replacing the Rood, Preston Church, Suffolk



Desecrated statue of St. Margaret (Fingringhoe, Essex)

communion the offering physically turned into the body and blood of Christ) had to be removed.

Nevertheless enough of the medieval art survived to give us some indication of what we have lost. Pictures and carvings could be sold or concealed in some way. Occasionally, their message was sufficiently ambiguous to be open to new and more acceptable interpretations. The dons of Cambridge University were especially good at thinking up new ways of keeping what they treasured, particularly the windows of King's College. Sometimes the Commissioners simply seemed

overwhelmed by the extent of their task, or by the degree of local opposition. Medieval art in private chapels or remote churches could also escape their attention. In any case, some Commissioners were much more rigorous than others.

Even so, the loss of such art left something of a gap in a church's furnishings. In due course it was replaced by the more secular offerings of a later age. These could be plain C18th boards showing the Commandments, Lord's Prayer or Creed or as David also showed us, elaborate Tudor family memorials all with their own foibles and half-hidden messages.

Ensuring that the male figure was not obscured by the female one, for example, led to the husband's effigy being placed on a higher plane, or sometimes turned sideways for all the world as though the couple were both watching television.

Overall, David's comprehensive survey inspired his grateful audience to pay much more attention to what's in a church rather than just to the building itself. The furnishings, medieval art or its replacements, also have a fascinating story to tell and deserve far more than a passing and casual glance.

Tour of churches in Bromham and Lacock area

led by David Evans

Friday 19 May 2023

reviewed by David Evans & James Hepburn Scott

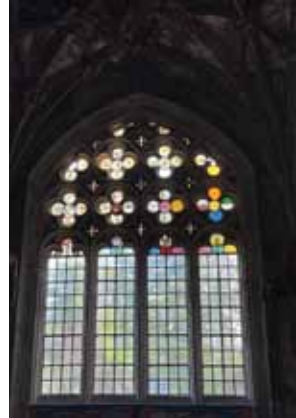


We started on a lovely spring morning outside **St Cyriac, Lacock**. The unusual dedication seems likely to have been originally bestowed by William of Eu, who became an important local landowner at the Conquest. This is a church whose history has been largely determined by prominent local landowners.



Gargoyles on NE corner

Our inspection of the exterior suggested that the present building derives mostly from the later middle ages, with inventive details especially of the gargoyles. The most highly decorated area is the north-eastern



Quatrefoils in NE chapel

chapel, built by Bishop Neville of Salisbury, and lit by a window with unusual tracery consisting of encircled quatrefoils. In the C16th Sir William Sharington, who had acquired Lacock Abbey, had his fascinating monument erected within this chapel. His heiress married a Talbot, the family which dominated the town till the mid-C20th. They had the chancel rebuilt in 1902-3, when it was dedicated to the memory of William Henry Fox Talbot, the pioneer photographer. The south transept, however, owes everything to ten generations of Baynards, some of whom are commemorated in a fine brass and elaborate wooden panel on the wall. In the south-western corner, yet another local dynasty is remembered, the Awdrys, who included the author of Thomas the Tank Engine.



Sharnington monument in NE chapel

Our second church, **St Nicholas Bromham**, looked lovely in the sunshine and is plainly loved by its congregation, whose embroidered kneelers make a colourful display.



Kneelers displayed, David talking

The church mostly dates from the perpendicular period, but a couple of Norman windows in the north wall prove that there was an earlier building here. Our attention turned at once to the SE chapel, dominated by a fine reclining alabaster figure in armour, which later generations chose to decorate with graffiti. Other tombs are adorned by interesting brasses.



Sir Roger Tocotes, Graffitied Alabaster

The fine panelled roof was recently restored at huge expense. The chancel was rebuilt in the C19th and is distinguished by its stained glass windows, created by William Morris following cartoons by his friend Burne-Jones.



Restored panelled roof

Our third church, **St Mary, Devizes**, has a neglected feel, as it is used only once a week for services. Nonetheless, the lofty perpendicular nave and the soaring arch, which leads into the western tower, are certainly imposing. They form a striking contrast to the low and dark Norman chancel, with an original quadripartite vault, but owing most of the detail



Looking west to a soaring arch

to Victorian restorers. Outside, there were interesting features to look at: the re-set Norman doorway to the south porch, the dole table near the south aisle and the late medieval statue of the Virgin and Child above the east gable of the nave, which miraculously escaped the iconoclasts during the Civil War.



Quadripartite vault at the East end

We resumed our tour after lunch in **St John's Church Devizes**. It was sited within the outer bailey of The Castle, a fortification of great importance in the C12th. Perhaps that is why there is so much opulent Norman decoration within. The chancel is approached through low but wide Norman arches, while the sanctuary is distinguished by its interlaced arches, green men, chevrons and fish-scale ornament.



Wide Norman arches leading to the chancel. At the crossing a C21st Altar, the workshop of Benchmark, donated by John & Rebecca Spicer.



A Green man carving on the East wall & interlaced arches, fish scale ornament.

Originally, the church was cruciform and aisle-less, but the NE and SE corners were later filled in with chapels, where the grotesque heads of the corbels, which were once on the exterior can still be seen. The SE chapel, built in the perpendicular style, is especially opulent in its decoration and has a handsome panelled roof which reminded us of the one at Bromham. The nave of St John's is in marked contrast to the crossing and chancel, having been rebuilt in the C15th and given aisles, presumably to accommodate the town's growing population. It had largely to be rebuilt again in the Victorian period, to which the stained glass also belongs, some of it by significant firms such as Willement and Kempe.



Bellringing chamber with guests

The tour finished with an optional climb to the bellringing chamber, where we saw the Norman interlaced arches, which could originally have been seen from the crossing below.

Our final visit was to the church of **St Michael and All Angels in Urchfont**, situated just beyond the fine duckpond in this beautiful village. We were greeted on either side of the door by King Alfred and his Queen Aelswith. She had founded the nunnery at Winchester to which Urchfont Manor was endowed in 900.



Queen Aelswith and King Alfred

There was probably a Saxon church on the site but the oldest remaining feature is the font, 1220. In the early C14th the Bishop of Salisbury visited and declared that the chancel was in a ruinous condition and ordered the "Rector and Rectory" to make it good. Hence we see the remarkable chancel rebuilt in about 1320. The



1320 chancel of liernes

vaulted roof has six sections with intersecting ridges which are known as liernes. These are supported by corbels decorated with carved heads and bosses at the intersections depicting, among others, Abraham and the ram, a pelican and a dragon. Here there is a fine marble tomb of Robert Tothill (d 1758) and his wife (d 1731). It depicts an hourglass and a quenched flame to remind us of our mortality. The newest feature was the millennium window in the west wall donated by the parishioners. In conclusion we were treated by three ladies of the PCC to a magnificent tea with superb cakes. This was the perfect end to a very interesting and enjoyable day.



Tothill marble tomb

70th Anniversary Launch & Events

by Nigel Jackson



Nigel Jackson (Trust Secretary), Sarah Troughton, Lord Lieutenant & Mark Everall (Trust Chairman)

The Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Sarah Troughton, launched the 70th Anniversary Year of the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust and unveiled its new 70th Anniversary logo at St Michael's Church, Tidcombe on Wednesday 14th June 2023. (The Trust helped St Michael's Church in Tidcombe when the lead on its roof was stolen in October 2018, with its own grant and by recommending a National Churches Trust grant. Since then, the Trust has supported electrical safety and lighting work inside the church).

The Historic Churches Preservation Trust (now the National Churches Trust) was set up under royal patronage in 1953 with a view to county organisations also being set up. The then Bishop of Salisbury asked the then Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire (the 16th Duke of Somerset) to set up a county meeting to discuss how to proceed in Wiltshire. This meeting was duly convened at the County Hall at Trowbridge on 17th February 1953. It was agreed at the meeting that the Wiltshire Historic

Churches Trust should be set up with the aim of raising £50,000 over ten years. An inaugural service was held in Salisbury Cathedral on 1st June 1954 and the Trust Deed was signed on 11th November 1954.

The purpose of the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust is to help Wiltshire and Swindon churches and chapels to pay for critical repairs after years of neglect following two World Wars.

Since the Trust was formed, it has made some 1200 grants totalling £1.6M, with £1M of this being granted since 2000. Progress was fairly slow over the first thirty years until 1985 when the first Great Bicycle Ride (subsequently "Ride+Stride") was held. This increased the amount of funds available for grants. Grants are also now made to support church community projects such as disabled access, kitchens and toilets. Between 1954 and 2008 the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust disbursed grants of £345,000.

In the autumn of 2008, the Friends of Wiltshire Churches was set up as a membership body of the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust. By the end of 2010 membership had reached a total of 420 individuals, a level at which it has broadly remained. A programme of excursions, social events and lectures was set up and continues to this day. Various relevant books were also published, such as Brian Woodruffe's "Parish Churches of Wiltshire". Grants to churches totalling £940,284 were made in the period between 2008 and 2022.

In the 70th Anniversary Year we celebrated in November in Salisbury Cathedral with a spectacular event of music and Brian Woodruffe's images of the Trust's 70 years work. And we have our summer event at Malmesbury Abbey to come.

70th Anniversary Grants

In Salisbury Cathedral on November 25th Brian Woodruffe made a screen presentation of 35 panels showing images of the work of the Trust over the last 70 years. You can see it in full on the website.

It is in five sections:

- Supporting major repair work
- Assisting with small works
- Aiding modernisation
- Donating to special projects
- 70th anniversary grants

Brian has redrawn these three for us to show in this report.

In 2023 the Trust awarded significant grants to 3 churches totalling **£100,000**.

Clyffe Pypard, St Peter.

Complete renewal of the nave and chancel roofs

Total cost: £414,750, Grant Awarded £5,000.

Plus 70th Anniversary Grant £10,000.



Wardour, All Saints (RC)

Remedial work on the Dome plasterwork
Total cost: £723,000, Grant Awarded £6,000.
Plus 70th Anniversary Grant £20,000.



Malmesbury Abbey, St Peter and St Paul

Major restoration and repair work
Total cost: £3,500,000, Grant Awarded £10,000.
Plus 70th Anniversary Grant £70,000.





Luke March, Sarah Troughton, Nigel Jackson



Vron Hodges, Michael Hodges



Choir, David Halls, Soloists



Bill Hiscocks, Luke March, Mark Everall, Sarah Troughton, Peter Troughton, Patrick Wintour, Michael Hodges

For The Friends of Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust the Close at the invitation of Mr Michael Wade who gave dating from 1720, frequented by Constable lovely to be able

In the interval of the concert of Bach's B Minor Mass Cathedral Choir and Florilegium conducted by David in the Refectory, we launched our new broch



Anne Everall, Gilly Cumming



Carola Mangnall, Anne Everall



Hoppy Goodson-Wickes, Caroline Keevil



Penny Broadhurst, Jenny Groom



Clare Miles, Martin Knight, Clare Knight, Nigel Jackson, Patrick Wintour



Timothy O'Brien, Annie Wintour, Christopher Hilary Leslie



Sarah Jackson, Sarah Troughton, Mike Jackson



Caroline Keevil, Amanda Rhind

Evening started with a reception at The Walton Canopy in The... us a warm welcome. This is an outstanding listed Grade 1 house... e in the 1820s and leased to Rex Whistler in the C20th, ... to visit, thank you Michael.

...ss given by Salisbury Musical Society with Salisbury... Halls the committee of The Friends held a reception... ure and Juliet Holt took these photographs.



Bill Hiscocks, Michael Wade, Sarah Troughton, Mark Everall, Luke March, Jeremy Groom



© Finnbar Webster, Pelham Groom



Peter Troughton, Charles Goodson-Wickes, Hopsy Goodson-Wickes



Leslie,



The William Pye Font



Mark Everall, Caroline Keevil, Bill Hiscocks, Marian Chapman

WHCT Evensong

Kenneth Padley Canon Treasurer Salisbury Cathedral

Sunday 16 July 2023 at St Nicholas Bromham

Why and how should we care for church buildings? These questions are implicit in our gathering tonight as Friends of Wiltshire Churches. And they are also questions probed by the nuanced approach towards places of worship taken in tonight's readings.

The first text was an extract from the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem by King Solomon nearly three thousand years ago. Solomon knew that, until his day, God had been consulted in a tent, a mobile sanctuary which moved with the people during their wandering in the wilderness. Solomon also knew that God is far greater than any space made by human hands. 'Will God indeed dwell on the earth?' he asked. 'Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!' And yet, build Solomon did, mindful that his Temple would be a focus for intercession and a bridge between earth and heaven. Thus he prayed, 'Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling-place; heed and forgive.'

Early Christians faced a variant of this tension. The polytheistic Roman Empire tolerated monotheistic Judaism as a slightly eccentric anomaly. However, once Christianity separated from its parent tradition, it was entitled to no equivalent protection. It became an illicit religion. Given this, the earliest 'churches' were not buildings but communities. Nonetheless, St Paul used the imagery of construction in his description of these congregations. We heard an example from his letter to Christians in Ephesus. 'You are no longer strangers and aliens but... members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.'

Christianity across the Empire would remain underground for the next 250 years. However, as soon as the Emperor Constantine revoked the prohibitions of his predecessors and gave the green light for Christians to meet in public, they started building. They knew from St Paul that they were a spiritual edifice and worshippers of an omnipresent God - but they also valued buildings in which they could gather to praise and proclaim the Almighty.

A remarkable example of this first generation of Christian architecture has recently been excavated 120 miles up the Meander River from Ephesus in the city of Laodicea. The fourth century church building of the Laodicean congregation exudes confidence: it was a robust, large, three-aisled basilica, with an apse at the east and a narthex at the west, redolent of so many subsequent eastern churches. Quite deliberately, it was provocatively sited, in the centre of the city, adjacent to

what had once been the city's greatest pagan temple.

And yet... there have been precisely zero Christians in Laodicea since the Middle Ages. For centuries their church was lost under Turkish sand and grass. Earthquakes and marauders did for the prosperity of Laodicea. In their hour of need, there were no Friends of Anatolian Churches to support the fabric of this once glorious edifice.

Unlike Laodicea, the churches of Wiltshire are not beset by tectonic tremors or Ottoman armies. But we do live in an age of rapidly changing expectations. Congregations and church buildings must adapt if they are to serve effectively the needs of their local communities. This is where WHCT comes in. Funding is vital and, having been a Vicar who until year ago oversaw two historic churches in Hertfordshire, I want to say a big thank you on behalf of my clergy colleagues in this county for the amazing support which you have provided over the last seventy years.

In addition, I'd like to commend the other ways in which organisations like WHCT can help churches to help themselves. You have been funding dozens of projects of excellence in building adaptation and heritage conservation. Can you share that expertise more widely with churches which are not so far advanced in the process?

Moreover, after conversation with your esteemed Chair, I'd also ask whether there are ways in which WHCT can foster a culture of greater openness among the churches of this county. I know from first-hand experience that, in many contexts, getting churches open can be a crucial step in transforming their fortunes and sense of purpose. Did you know that Ecclesiastical Insurance Group will not charge a penny more on the premiums of churches that are open and unstaffed during daylight hours, assuming the obligatory risk assessment has been completed?

When I arrived as Vicar of **St Michael St Albans and St Mary's Childwick Green** in 2012, both churches were locked outside the hours of public worship. However, opening the churches to visitors and locals became a paramount concern for my parish leadership team.

We used an acute pastoral need in 2015 as an excuse for a trial of unstaffed opening at the parish church, St Michael's. It was not without trepidation that we left the building unguarded for the first time. But within a month we knew from the comments in the visitor book – not to mention the dosh in the donations box - that we would never go back. Thus, when a year or two later that donation box was smashed by a burglar, the formerly-sceptical churchwarden did not insist on locking the doors again. Instead he advocated for CCTV so that we could keep the church open. He did this because he could see that the church was now engaging with many more people. We reckoned on a footfall of five to ten thousand visitors a year. That may seem a lot, but remember, when broken down, that's just 15-30 people a day.

Over the years which followed, a small team worked on simple ways to improve the engagement of our open church with weekday visitors * : removing clutter; introducing an area where prayers can be written and candles lit [yes, lit candles in an unstaffed church, with the right precautions and approval of the insurers]; producing a simple visitor guide which explains not the dry history of the building but the living role that the artefacts and architecture play in sharing the Christian story; translating that guide into a dozen languages by the congregation as a 'Pentecost challenge'; creating a carefully curated children's area that offers a friendly space for families during the week as well as on Sundays; installing a movement sensor on the lights so that they illuminate the interior when a visitor crosses the threshold; purchasing a card reader to sit alongside the cash donations box – a device which works even without wifi and which raised £2,000 in its first year, despite the disruptions of coronavirus restrictions.

When my more cautious daughter church got wind of these changes at St Michael's, eyebrows started to rise. St Mary's also voted to open their church and make adaptations to become more welcoming. However, because most of that congregation lived at a distance, they could only find volunteers for opening on Saturdays and Sundays. To circumvent this problem, we devised an electronic door opener. This pings the door open at 9am and locks it again at 5pm. A green door-release button ensures that nobody gets stuck overnight if they unwittingly enter at 4.59. The essential components to make this device are a self-closer on the door, an electromagnetic lock, a timer, and a decent locksmith. Installation cost a little more than £1000, a sum which was paid within a year by new donations from visitors who were delighted to find the village church open at last.

Electronic door openers like this strike me as a no-brainer for many smaller churches, and yet St Mary's Childwick Green is - to the best of my knowledge – still the only example in the Diocese of St Albans. Are there any similar devices in churches around here? Could WHCT develop a programme to fund such devices that might help churches to help themselves in the years ahead?

Two footnotes to the foregoing:

- Firstly, my examples from St Albans are illustrative, not prescriptive: each church will have its own unique needs, opportunities and challenges.
- But, secondly, I do not think it chance that the newfound openness of my former parish coincided with a reversal of declining attendance at worship. Services grew and levels of regular congregational giving went up too.

So as we give thanks tonight to the God whom even the highest heaven cannot contain, let us commit afresh to discerning, funding, and fostering ways in which our extraordinary ecclesiastical heritage can thrive in the years ahead.

* Cf. Paul Bond, *Open for You: The Church, The Visitor and the Gospel* (2006).

Tour of churches in the Lechlade & Fairford area

led by John Osborne

Friday 30 June & 7 July 2023

report written by John Osborne

Two dates with identical itineraries were offered for this excursion. This was to ensure smaller groups would be able to move around the churches more easily and especially to appreciate the astonishing late mediaeval glass of the windows at Fairford at close quarters. It would also help car parking, eg at Inglesham, where space by the remote church is limited.

The intended itinerary - with Lechlade at the hub of each visit- was difficult to accomplish, as the damaged bridge there over the Thames was closed to traffic, and so once having arrived by means of various diversions at the church at Lechlade (north of the river) it was understandable that the group did not feel like backtracking to Inglesham (which lies to its south). So, after Lechlade, we proceeded instead to the Eastleaches and, after a lunch break, to Fairford. Then, for those few remaining with enough energy, time, interest and petrol, we went the long way back to Inglesham.

St Lawrence, Lechlade, is one of the fine C15th. Cotswold 'wool' churches, with its Perpendicular architecture giving its interior a spacious appearance that the churches of the same century at Cirencester, Chipping Camden and Northleach also enjoy. Being at the highest



navigable point on the River Thames, the town flourished commercially and the rebuilding of the church was funded by the revenues diverted from a local priory which was suppressed in 1472. The tower and its spire are a notable landmark for several miles around.



Battered carving of earlier church

The clerestory was clearly not part of the original plan and dates from the early C16th. The chancel has a fine roof with painted bosses in the section over the sanctuary. We admired the (damaged) niche above the C15th font and noted the two battered carvings in the N aisle, which are the only remnants of the earlier church. There are some interesting 'Arts and Crafts' features: the communion rail by Norman Jewson and the reredos and screens. Currently, there is a plan to re-order the furnishings and fittings of the interior; the proposal to remove the chancel screen, in order to open up the view of the E end of the church, is – unsurprisingly – controversial.



To remove chancel screen or not, in order to give a long view to the east end

We moved on just a few miles into the rural depths of the Cotswolds, where the churches of **St Michael and St Martin at Eastleach Martin** and **St Andrew at Eastleach Turville** are almost a stone's throw from each other across the infant stream of the River Leach. It is a very pretty setting, with a path and an old, paved footbridge, called Keble's bridge, connecting the two tiny villages. The churches were separate parishes until 1935 and Eastleach Martin, where

John Keble was curate in the C19th, is now redundant. Neither church is at all showy in any way, but each has a humble charm and interesting architectural detail from the Norman, Early English and Decorated periods and Jacobean woodwork.



St Andrew at Eastleach Turville



St Michael and St Martin at Eastleach Martin

We especially noted the late C13th and C14th windows in the chancel and N transept respectively at Eastleach Martin, where there are also some uncomfortable mediaeval pews and a lectern that appears to have been knocked up on a bedpost from an Elizabethan four-poster. At Eastleach Turville, the tower has a Cotswold-style saddleback roof, a striking Norman S door with chevron carving and scallop moulding, and a fine C13th triple lancet window at the E end of the chancel.



Pews & lectern at St Michael and St Martin



Triple lancet C13th east window at St Andrew

After a break for lunch, taken variously in village pubs or cafes in Lechlade, we gathered again at **St Mary, Fairford**, where there appears for once to be enough space for the massed membership of the Friends to park their cars. This is another 'wool' church, rebuilt magnificently in Perpendicular style at the end of the C15th around a central tower constructed in the same style at the beginning of the same century. The unique glory of the church is the almost complete set of figured stained glass, which dates from the period of the rebuilding C15th by John Tame. He was a wealthy wool merchant, to whom the manor of Fairford was



leased from the Crown, who had confiscated it from the family of the Earls of Warwick at the end of the Wars of the Roses. Even if there were no stained glass this would be an outstanding late mediaeval building in its own right; but, while noting such features as the tombs and brasses of three generations of the founder's family in the Lady Chapel, and the highly individual good-humoured vernacular scenes carved on the misericords in the choir, this visit concentrated on the glass.

There are several astonishing points about the glass. One, of course, is



Great West window

how it has survived at all, as so much was destroyed nationwide by the iconoclastic puritans of the Cromwellian period. The sequence of the windows is logical and balanced. The colour is terrific. The great W window, partially restored in the C19th after the destruction wreaked by a great storm at the beginning of the C18th, is a stunningly colourful vision of the last judgement with its visions of heaven and hell, overseen by Christ in Majesty and the heavenly host. The windows on one side of the nave illustrate the prophets of the Old Testament; opposite are the apostles of the New Testament, who fulfilled their prophesies. In the clerestory, on one side are the martyrs of the early church; on the other, their persecutors. Starting from the N aisle, there are Old Testament scenes, then in the Lady Chapel the nativity and events concerning the life of Mary; the crucifixion is highlighted in the E window and the resurrection towards the S aisle. The architectural scenes of palaces and the countryside are more C15th continental than English.



East window



Clerestory Windows, Martyrs & Confessors of the faith

The design and execution seem to be the work of the royal glaziers, led by Barnard Flower, a Fleming, whose work is paralleled at King's College, Cambridge. One fascinating aspect is the inclusion here and there of the so-called 'hidden portraits', figures who from their facial features and dress seem to be members of the royal family, Henry VII and his sons and daughters, including the future Henry VIII.

A few hardy members of the group then found their way to **St John the Baptist, Inglesham**, an almost completely isolated church and now redundant, long forsaken by its village, which has migrated to the main A361. Tiny and unpretentious, it escaped Victorian improvement, thanks to William Morris, who lived at nearby Kelmscott Manor. The unspoilt interior reveals features from all mediaeval periods, but especially the C13th. We noted the Saxon stone carving of the Virgin and Child, the late Perpendicular parclose screens, the Jacobean pulpit and box pews, and the layer upon layer of frescoes, damaged but conserved. You feel the passing and presence of the Christian centuries here; no wonder that for two Friends it is their favourite Wiltshire church.

Tour of churches in the Avon & Bourne Valleys

led by Michael Hodges

Friday 1 September 2023

reviewed by Clare Miles

Our first visit was to **St. Andrew's Church in Great Durnford**, a secluded village by the east bank of the River Avon and within the Parish of the Woodford Valley. About 25 members were to enjoy the charm of this place and its ancient church. Julia Gallop, the Church Warden, welcomed us. Michael Hodges, our leader, described the Norman origins of the church. It was endowed by Isabel de Tosney and granted by her to Old Sarum Cathedral before 1158 when it was confirmed by Henry II. The small church of flint and white limestone was built in the C12th on the site of an C11th building. A low western tower was added a century later. Perpendicular windows were inserted into the nave. Particularly attractive are the north and south Norman doorways. They have zig-zag decoration and delicate, semi-circular bands of 'shuttlecock' or seed pod motifs and chequer patterned tympana.



Norman doorways with zig-zag decoration



One of two birds perching

The aisleless, timber-roofed interior is spacious, its impressive feature is the Norman chancel arch with primitive sculptures of two birds perching against the capitals on either side.

Equally eye-catching is the fine Norman font carved with interlaced round-headed arches. A wide view from the C18th western gallery shows a little changed medieval interior without any Victorian intervention. Fragile traces of both a Doom painting above the chancel arch and St. Christopher on the south wall remain, as does the stone flooring. Two medieval tomb recesses and a few wall monuments are discrete. There are fine quality furnishings to be admired: some rare C14th pews and seating with late medieval carved bench ends and the fine wooden Jacobean pulpit, lectern and handsome communion rail. St. Andrew's was fortunately saved from a perilous

condition when major repairs were undertaken in 1903.

Following the river upstream we came to the hamlet of **Wilsford** to visit **St. Michael's Church**. We saw in its leafy setting a flint and limestone church with a simple Norman tower. Michael explained that the body of the church was built in 1851-52 for Sir Giles Loder of Wilsford House. It was the work of Thomas Henry Wyatt whom he described as 'a prolific builder of slightly dull churches'. He was especially active in Wiltshire where in 1836 he became the Salisbury Diocesan architect.



Looking west

He designed the more memorable Italianate church at Wilton. The nave and chancel form a single space with a wooden roof; beyond is a west end ante-chamber. Furnishings are of Victorian date but artifacts from the previous church on this site survive here: a C15th octagonal font, some medieval stained glass placed in Victorian lancet windows, a Hanoverian Royal Arms and some pretty C18th brass sconces. A

whimsical touch on the walls of the chancel is a set of four early C20th polychrome plaster panels of angels playing musical instruments, referencing lines from Keat's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.



Edward William Tennant monument

As Michael suggested, this church is essentially a mausoleum. The Tennant family of Wilsford House was associated with the church up to the 1980s. The estate was leased in 1913 to Sir Edward Tennant, (later 1st Baron Glenconner). He married Pamela Wyndham of Clouds House, East Knoyle. A monument for their 19 year-old son, Edward William Tennant, killed in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, bears a tribute to his fortitude. On a 1920s slate memorial tablet Eric Gill, the sculptor and letter cutter, inscribed a text for Wynlayne, wife of the poet Oliver Foster Lodge of Painswick, and depicted an elegant figure of a woman, a baby at her feet. There are individual monuments for men who died in the Second World

War. Also commemorated are the diplomat Richard Sykes murdered by the IRA in 1976 and Captain Nigel Bailey RN, who died in 1991 having served as High Sheriff of Wiltshire. In the churchyard we admired the artistic headstone by Roderick Gradidge for Diana Blow, Pamela's grand-daughter, who died in 1967.



Still by the River Avon we soon arrived at the **Priory Church of St. Mary and St. Melor, Amesbury**, and gathered outside an imposing cruciform church with a low central tower. There was a Saxon royal estate at Amesbury where a nunnery was founded by Queen Aelfrida in 979. Relics of the Breton boy saint, St. Melor, were kept in a shrine at the church making it a place of pilgrimage. In 1177 Henry II re-established the Priory under the Benedictine Order of Fontevault. It flourished and became a favourite retreat of royal and noble women. With the Dissolution of the Monasteries the cloister was demolished and the Priory buildings passed to Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and to subsequent private owners becoming "Amesbury Abbey" which was rebuilt in 1661 and again around 1830.



Timber roof

The church was set to one side of the Priory buildings and it also served as a parish church. We saw a flint building with a Norman nave and more obviously, an Early English C13th church, as presented in the tower, prominent transepts and chancel. The interior is lofty, spacious and light-filled with massive piers at the central crossing. Features include a Norman square Purbeck marble font, C14th tracery of the south window of the chancel, a C16th wooden screen and low tie beams in a timber roof of similar date. C14th fragments of stained glass survived. The south aisle has a Perpendicular wagon roof, with corbels and bosses displaying caricatures of figures. The architect William Butterfield was responsible for what Michael described as a 'brutal restoration' of 1852-53. His unfortunate attachment of a turret to the north-east corner of the crossing was much criticised. He did though insert



Square Norman font

lancet windows at the east end and transepts and designed the pulpit and furnishings. Further restoration occurred in the early C20th and in 2019-20 emergency funds, including a grant from the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, were raised for work on the nave roof which was in danger of collapse.



After lunch we met at **St. Nicholas Church, Cholderton**, in a small village east of Amesbury in the Bourne Valley. The austere flint, hall-like building has a bell turret at its north-west corner. A surprisingly rich appearance lies within; we were greeted by the Church Warden, Crawford Stoddart. In 1836 the Reverend Thomas Mozley



Minton floor tiles

was appointed Rector of a humble church at Cholderton, the living of Oriel College, Oxford, where he had studied and became a follower of the High Church Tractarian movement. Within four years he approached Thomas Henry Wyatt to design a replacement church. This was to incorporate a fine wooden roof, removed from a Benedictine monastery, which Mozley had discovered in Ipswich. At great personal expense for Mozley, the project was completed in 1850. The interior resembles a college chapel. Beyond the western entrance is a space separated from the nave by a stone screen displaying carved angels bearing heraldic shields. The ten-bay hammerbeam roof certainly makes an impact. Light from eight tall windows, north and south, falls on exceptionally fine Minton floor tiling extending the length of the building. Oak benches, facing east, have prominent crockets at the ends with ornament of fruits of the earth carved by London and Ipswich

craftsmen. Stained glass throughout is consistent in style and there are few monuments here. In recent years, The Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust has supported restoration work on the windows and bell turret.



Our final destination was **St. John the Baptist Church, Allington**, in a Bourne Valley village. This small church was declared redundant in 2010 and was fortunately adopted by the Friends of Friendless Churches. It is formed of a robust castellated southern tower and a very short nave and chancel. The material is flint with a subtle patterning of square stones. Of the earliest building, fragments of a Norman doorway remain on the north wall. The church was largely rebuilt between



Copy of the C13th font

1847 and 1851 by its curate architect, Reverend William Grey. Like his contemporary Thomas Mozley, he studied at Oxford and also became a Gothic Revival Tractarian and active member of the Oxford Architectural Society. His career covered his ministry in Wiltshire and working as architect for the Diocese of Newfoundland, for which he designed numerous churches. In Allington his new church was restrained and in sympathy with the design of the previous building. The font copies the C13th original and has a decorative pointed, pierced wooden cover. In 1878 the walls of the chancel received stencilled decoration of vines, fleur-de-lys, roses and stars and stained glass of the Crucifixion for the east window. This scheme was dedicated to Fulwar William Fowle, Rector at St. John's for sixty years.



Chancel

On our behalf, David Evans, Secretary of the Friends of Wiltshire Churches, thanked Michael Hodges for planning a very enjoyable tour of churches in varying styles and scale and for conveying enlightening historical detail for each of them.

Tour of Bath including the Abbey

led by Christopher Rogers

Friday 13 October 2023

reviewed by Martin Knight

A visit to Bath is special and there were 22 of us who gathered full of anticipation outside the **Abbey** on a rain threatened morning. The Friends have been planning this tour for several years but had been thwarted by dates and the huge restoration project at the Abbey which is now complete. We were not to be disappointed.

Christopher introduced us to our Abbey guide, John, who made sure that whilst we were outside the west front we noted the carving of King Henry VII, in whose reign the Abbey was completed, and Jacob's ladders depicting the virtues required to ascend to heaven, not to mention an angel coming down head first (probably too proud).

Inside, competing with the many other visiting groups, we were immediately struck by a huge globe suspended from the ceiling in the middle of the Abbey. Looking at it from underneath, it was amazing to realise how little land there is in the southern hemisphere. John explained the history of the building and that what we see now is the third incarnation. Now fully reopened after a £20m refit – the Footprint Project. This project had the objectives of restoring the sinking floor, extending the space available in the surrounds to accommodate the Song School and Education Centre, and

becoming more environmentally friendly.



Footprint Project seating in Education Centre

The first cathedral was built by the then Abbott of Wells and parts of the original pillars within the building still exist. Elizabeth I persuaded the rich and famous to donate for major repairs during her reign. The coats of arms of these donors in stained glass were originally displayed on the high south facing windows. These have now been collected into one north facing window. John also explained that 4000 bodies were buried under the floor during the C18th and C19th. They were eventually removed because of the smell.

We then went outside across to the Song School and looked down on the practice room from a stunning balcony. This acoustically sound space is all part of the Footprint

Project which also includes an education centre, better space for concerts etc. and a commercial kitchen for events. We came back into the main Abbey building where John explained the new underfloor heating system which is fed from the Roman baths. Water from the baths comes in at 35 degrees, into a loop round the Abbey where a heat pump is required to stabilise the temperature at 28 degrees. There is no cost saving but it allows a greater footprint to be heated and it is, of course, much greener. In finishing, we went downstairs to the Education Centre and a final look at the Song School where we were able to mingle amongst the choristers' music scores. We parted with our thanks to John guiding us on such an interesting visit which combined the beauty of this historic building with a vision for the future.

We then walked towards the river and the Roman Catholic church of **St John the Evangelist**, North Parade. What a contrast this was to the Abbey both inside and out. The tall tower and spire dominate the external image which is one of a typically Victorian building. Chris reminded us of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. George Hanson, who was deeply inspired by Pugin's Gothic, was chosen to design this church. He wanted something that was prominent on the skyline and would signify that the Catholics were back. Started in 1862 and finished in 1865. Built of both ashlar and rustic. Thanks to the religious, and particularly Roman Catholic, revival the Hardman family of Birmingham

moved out of button and medal making into making metal work and stained glass for churches. The design of the glass and metal work were by Cuthbert Pugin, Augustus's second son, and made by his successor John Hardman Powell.



St Johns interior

On entering the church – what a different feeling to the Abbey – we were immediately struck by the magnificent screen which was installed in 1905. Made of steel but with all the ornamental details in wrought iron and gold leaf painted flowers and leaves. The statues on top of the screen, made of plaster of Paris, are said to have come from Oberammergau. The main part of the screen is topped by a pelican in her piety, underneath are a series of large fleurs de lys.

After such a full and informative morning, we were all in need of some lunch which was found amongst the many hosteries that Bath has to offer. Fully restored, we then visited the

church of **St Michael's Without**. So called because it was the first church to be built outside the city walls. Very often referred to now as 'next to Waitrose'! The current church was built between 1835 and 1837 by G F Manner in an idiosyncratic development of C13th Gothic. We were met inside by a thriving café. The church has similar lancet windows to Salisbury cathedral which clearly had a big influence. It has the design of a 'hall church' which is very unusual in Britain. They are more often found in Germany but the best known is St Stephen's in Vienna. They consist of three equally high units: the nave and two aisles. Christopher summed it up as a straightforward parish church and a good example of pre-Gothic revival.

Finally, we braved the threatening rain and walked up the hill to **St Swithins** (note the spelling), Walcot, where we took refuge under a tree to listen to Christopher giving us some history and pointing out the grave of George Austen, Jane's father, who was at one stage Rector as well as getting married there. A church had been on this site since the C10th and, in those days, Walcot was a hamlet



outside Bath. By the early C18th the road was lined with smart houses and the old church was no longer fit for purpose; a new church was built designed by local architect John Palmer.



St Swithins interior

On entering we were struck by the simple design with its galleries very much in the prevailing Wren style. 'Georgian at its best'. In recent years, the pews have been removed, replaced by chairs, creating a flexi space. The walls are covered in monuments (which a local resident had cleaned recently) and plaques to the great and good of the period as it was very much the 'go to' church of the time. It was also good to see the crypt being used as a coffee shop and creche – an interesting sign of the times. We bade our farewells and thanked Christopher for coming so far to give us such an inspiring day in such a magnificent city.



Hartham Church is a rather remarkable building, quite as large as many parish churches, built in 1862 as the private chapel for the Hartham Park Estate at Corsham. It is a Grade II listed building.

Ride+Stride

Saturday 9 September 2023

by Keith Rayward

Ride+Stride 2023 took place in a heatwave, with the temperature peaking across Wiltshire at 30C. Riders and Striders sought cover and relief along leafy lanes and enjoyed the cool porches and naves of churches and chapels along their chosen routes. The welcome and refreshments provided by many places of worship were especially welcome this year as participants rested between hot legs of their planned routes.

Some 160 Churches and chapels were open and 234 Riders and Striders took part. Many recollections of the day and pictures were shared afterwards. Routes covered all parts of the county, from North to South, West to East. Start times varied, with some starting early to beat the heat and others taking their time to get going. It was another day to remember and, regardless of the heat, the enjoyment and achievement on the day were marvellous.



Intrepid partners

There were many commendable contributions and achievements on the day, as recorded below in the Prize List. We appreciated all of the stories from the day.

The Alderbury cycling team of five cyclists included Barbara, who is blind and travelled from Bournemouth to join her team. Mike and Barbara rode a tandem bike along a 30 mile route.



Brakspear family at Malmesbury Abbey

The Brakspear family cycled from Corsham to Malmesbury Abbey, restored in the past by Harold Brakspear. They called into churches in a wide arc from the West to the East of Malmesbury in their morning ride.

Elizabeth Andrew of Steeple Langford cycled for her team of four churches, visiting 33 places of worship and found a wonderful way of cooling down on a beautiful quarry stone floor in one of the churches she visited.

Paul Gorford travelled light, relying with good faith on the hospitality and sustenance along his route. He set off

from St John the Baptist, Hindon, walking through Berwick St Leonard, along part of the Monarch's Way to Fonthill Bishop, then on to Tisbury, New Wardour Castle and All Saints Chapel, finally returning to Holy Trinity at Fonthill Gifford at 5pm.



Walkers gather at St Andrews

It was also a day for the large teams. Many congratulations to St Andrew's, Wootton Rivers who have been awarded the Brooke Cup for the third year in a row, with St James, Bratton being worthy runners up. The Brooke Junior Cup was won for the second year in a row by St Michael and All Angels, Shalbourne, with St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham coming second. The list of prizes and high achievers is below.



St Michael & All Angels, Shalbourne



Kiruthik – most raised by Under 16 Cyclist

Altogether some £50,500 was raised to support the mission of the churches and chapels of Wiltshire. We owe heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to make the day a success.

Next year – Ride+Stride 2024 will be the 40th Anniversary of Wiltshire Ride+Stride. We intend to mark this achievement in a unique way and urge everyone to enjoy celebrating this special day as a Parish, Rider and Strider and Sponsor. Please save the date – Saturday 14th September 2024. The prize-winners are as follows...see Table on next page.



Nigel Jackson & John Stott at Corsham



Brooke Cup for best achieving Parish		Score
1. Brooke Cup & £500	St Andrew's, Wootton Rivers	123,000
2. £200	St James', Bratton	26,663
3. £100	St. Bartholomew's Church, Corsham	9,797

Junior Group Cup (Under 18)		
1. Junior Group Cup & £100	St Michael & All Angels, Shalbourne	8,490
2. £50	St. Bartholomew's Church, Corsham	540

Individual Achievements

Individual	Church	Amount Raised
------------	--------	---------------

Most Money raised by a cyclist - aged over 65

1. Lesley Wilson	Malmesbury Abbey Church, Malmesbury	£1,350.00
2. Elizabeth Andrews	St Nicholas of Myra, Little Langford	£1,051.04

Most Money raised by cyclist - aged 17 to 65

1. Jilly Wright	Salisbury Cathedral Church, Salisbury	£1,531.25
2. Catherine Bridger	Christ Church, Worton	£1,529.77

Most Money raised by cyclist - aged 16 and under

1. KIRUTHIK JEYAKUMARAN	St. Bartholomew's Church, Corsham	£207.25
2= Joshua Herrington	St Lawrence's Church, Stratford-sub-Castle	£100.00
2= Digby Herrington	St Lawrence's Church, Stratford-sub-Castle	£100.00

Most Money raised by walker - aged over 65

1. Charles Graham	St George's Church, Preshute	£850.00
2. Richard Ayles	Christchurch Church, Derry Hill	£825.00

Most money raised by walker - aged 17 to 65

1. David Mooney	St Michael & All Angels Church, Winterbourne Earls+Dauntsey	£681.27
2. Sarah Pritchard	St May's Church, Lydiard Tregoze	£415.25

Most Money raised by walker aged 16 and under

1. Ofis Hendersen	St Peter & St Paul's Church, Heytesbury	£62.50
-------------------	---	--------

Most inspiring photograph

1. Enthusiastic team	St Michael & All Angels Church, Shalbourne St Andrews Church, Wootton Rivers St Mary's Church, Alderbury
2. Walkers gather at St Andrews	
3. Intrepid partners	

Most churches visited

1. David Ferguson	All Saints Church, Durrington	51 churches
2. Stephen Cox	Christ Church with St Mary's Church, Swindon	41 churches

Oldest Cyclist

1. James Gooding	All Saints, Broughton Gifford, Great Chalfield & Holt	85 years
2. Jeremy York	St George's Church, Preshute	81 years



St Cyriac, Lacock

Editorial

by Caroline Keevil & Kt Keevil Whitehead

Welcome to the bumper 70th Anniversary issue of the Annual Report. Thanks go to Luke March and Marie Thomas at Salisbury Cathedral for being so helpful arranging for Juliet to take the photographs for our centre spread. Thank you to our reviewers this year – Geoffrey Till, David Evans, James Hepburn Scott, John Osborne, Clare Miles and Martin Knight. And thank you to those who have provided us with images - Brian Woodruffe, Nigel Jackson, Clare Miles, and especially to Juliet Holt who has joined us this year when she is available to come on the tours to take the photos and for her photos at the concert in Salisbury Cathedral

This year we produced the new promotional brochure, a bit different to the traditional 3-fold, much simpler to update, we hope you like it. Please email ck@carolinekeevil.co.uk if you would like some to give to your friends.

We would also like to thank Nigel Jackson for his knowledge & advice. Finally thanks to our proof readers Patrick Wintour and Clare Miles.

Future Events

Saturday 20 April 2024

AGM & Annual Lecture. St Thomas's Salisbury 3.00 pm, Dr Emma Wells talk on cathedrals

Friday 10 May 2024

Church Tour. Bradford on Avon area to be led by David Evans.

Sunday 16 June 2024

Summer party. Evensong to celebrate 70 years at Malmesbury Abbey followed by reception.

Friday 28 June 2024

Church Tour. Lydiard Tregroze to be led by Christopher Rogers.

September 2024

Church Tour. SW Wiltshire area to be led by Michael Hodges.

Saturday 14 September 2024

Ride + Stride

October 2024

Church Tour. Malmesbury area to be led by Christopher Rogers.

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



Going on a church hunt at Eastleach