



DIARY DATES

19 MARCH 2022 FROM
 MEDIEVAL QUARRY
 TO VIRTUAL REALITY -
 THE MEDIEVAL
 PAINTED
 SCULPTURES OF ST
 CUTHBERT'S, WELLS.

NEWSLETTER

A - Z Back on the road! A legless knight!

From treasure in 'them thar ills' to
 'Better take gardening gloves'!

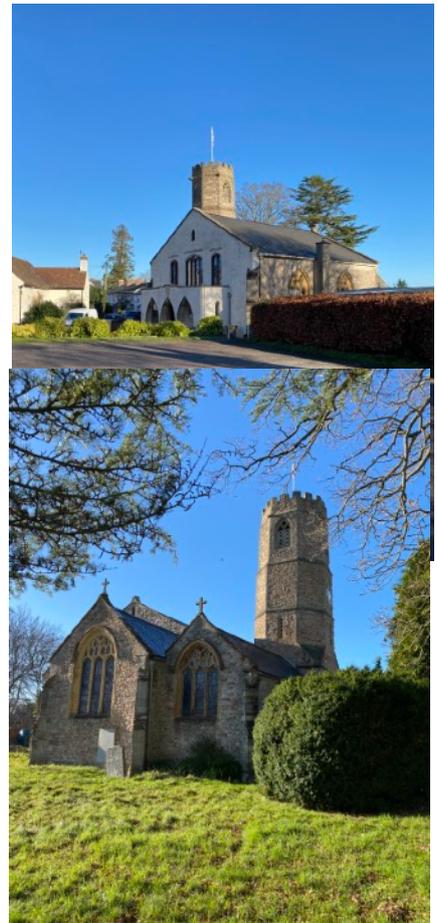
Monksilver and Nettlecombe

The prime purpose of Somerset Churches Trust is to keep Somerset's churches and chapels alive. The Trustees welcome applications for grants and our expert assessors will consider the applications and provide advice to the Trustees.

I, on the other hand, am not an expert but I am enthusiastic about our role in helping (typically small) communities keep their places of worship alive. What I do like to do is see the local parishes a) because I find it of interest and b) because I can generally go for a decent walk in the countryside!

My objective was Nettlecombe and I had thought a walk from a nearby village would be good. Where better to start than Monksilver? Something to do with monks and money?

A lovely journey to Exmoor (via Bishops Hull - admittedly not the most direct route). Flask of coffee to combat the freezing but sunny weather. Of course, it warned out that Monksilver* was not awash with precious metal but All Saints is a gem.



* According to the great academic source (Wikipedia) Monksilver means Monks wood!

St Peter & St Paul, Bishops Hull



Talking of Knights, Sir Francis Drake married his second wife in Monksilver in 1583.

An adjacent attraction is the Notley Arms - sadly, my dedication to the task precluded a visit!

Next, to check the map! Of course, I had planned the route at home on my computer - just needed to synchronise with the Ordnance Survey App. Er..... no phone signal. What an amateur!

Thus, my walk started at Woodford where there are signs to Nettlecombe.

St Mary's, Nettlecombe

‘The church stands so close to the Elizabethan mansion that not even a hedge separates the two. The village was removed to Woodford when the park was landscaped in the 1790’s.’ (Pevsner)



A gentle walk up along lanes and through parkland led to Nettlecombe Court: ‘which lies in a secluded valley at the eastern edge of Exmoor National Park. The house is a striking example of a Tudor and Georgian country mansion set within its own grounds. The grounds are made up of heritage parkland, ancient woodland containing many veteran oak trees as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of its lichen communities.’

Nettlecombe Court is owned by Field Studies Centre which was founded in 1943 ‘to provide opportunities for schoolchildren to study living plants and animals in their natural environment.’ My interest was in St Mary’s, situated in idyllic surroundings.

However, the church is no mere exhibit. While I was looking inside, I was joined by a young lady who thought it time she should see inside the church as she had been working at the centre for some weeks! I think we were mutually surprised to see another person looking around!



What that demonstrates is the joy of a chance shared discovery: ‘have you seen this?’ ‘Come and look at ...’; ‘that’s the coat of arms in the (Court) dining room’; ‘a one-legged knight’!

A delightful, much-loved, church with an active PCC coping with a myriad of challenges! In addition to the main beam



in the tower which appears to be held up by a combination of ‘string and a prayer’ (funds being raised to remedy), there is the medieval scandal of a legless and armless Sir Simon being ‘crammed into the vestry wall with Lady Maud’! The things one can discover!

Axel Palmer

How do we study our churches and chapels? Update.

Prompted by receiving a new book, *The Secret Language of Churches and Cathedrals - decoding the sacred symbolism of Christianity's Holy Buildings* Richard Stemp, (Watkins Media 2016), I wondered what other books members found useful in understanding our wealth of ecclesiastical buildings?

Philip Skelhorn introduced me to *How to study and old church*, A Needham, (Batsford 1944) and I imagine many will have on their bookshelves:

England's Thousand Best, Churches Simon Jenkins (Penguin 2000)

Britain's Holiest Places, Nick Mayhew Smith (Lifestyle Books 2011)

English Parish Churches and Chapels, Matthew Byrne (Bloomsbury 2017).

On the basis that there is ‘no monopoly on wisdom’, I wonder what books (and podcasts etc) which members find useful, which might helpfully be highlighted to the benefit of those who have gaps on their shelves which need filling!

Please send an email to sct@combefarm.co.uk and I will collate and publish a list in the next months.

Axel Palmer

What about other online resources?

It is undoubtedly the case that the pandemic has proved very challenging for many organisations and other organisations - large and small - have responded by putting more content online. While we have a thirst for meeting face-to-face as soon as we can, online resources will continue to make a valuable contribution.

Although many of the online resources are free, some require a membership subscription, which provides opportunities: firstly, to experience other research; and, secondly, to help support other organisations in need (like ourselves) because of covid restrictions.



#ForPeopleWhoLoveChurches



There is an interesting Lecture series on Thursday lunchtimes (and available on 'catch-up').



Historic Religious Buildings Alliance provides up-to-date information and links to other organisations in the field.

www.hrballiance.org.uk



Our local Heritage Trust has a wealth of resources online (some need ££).

www.swheritage.org.uk

These are just a few - please let us know what online sites have been discovered, so we can circulate other members.

How can you contribute to our fundraising?

Donate

Ride+Stride 2021 is coming up soon but you can still make a donation now to help us keep Somerset Churches and Chapels alive.

Just visit the website, click on the **"DONATE"** button and follow the instructions.

The good news is that all it takes is a couple of clicks. Axel will brave the cold, wet, mud etc and you can obtain that warm glow of assisting by staying at home and smiling!

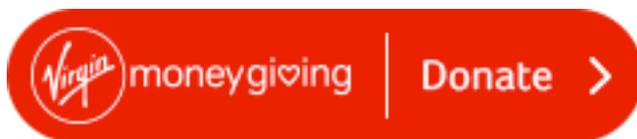
Membership

Members are the 'life blood' of Somerset Churches Trust - we could not do anything without you. In effect, the Trust is a 'self-help' organisation. Put simply, we raise money from friends and supporters and give to churches to help keep them alive. We endeavour to keep people informed and (when we can get out) promote interest in our christian heritage in Somerset by hosting a range of church tours (Crawls) and talks. We need new members because, say, aggregating 100 subscriptions of £30pa enables us to provide a grant of £3,000. So, please encourage friends to join today by visiting our website, clicking on Membership and then How to Join and following the instructions. If every member encouraged just one person to join, we would double our subscription income!

Amazon Smile



Help Somerset Churches while you shop. Amazon have a scheme where they will donate 0.5% of purchases (Ts & Cs apply, of course) to Somerset Churches Trust. Registration is simple - log into www.smile.amazon.co.uk with your usual details and select charity.



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