



DIARY DATES

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

NEWSLETTER

A - Z: a freezing day for a church visit! Woollies required for a visit to ... er ... Woolley! (And Langridge and Upper Stainswick!)

Somerset Churches Trust treasurer, Tony Davies, is always keen to remind me that there is more to Somerset than Exmoor and The Levels! So, a trip to the far North East Somerset beckoned. On a freezing Saturday morning, I headed in the direction of Bath Racecourse, eschewing the NHS jab centre to venture down to a hidden valley.

Last year, Tony Davies and William Newsom did our first 'virtual crawl' taking Langridge as their subject and now it was my turn to see for myself. First, the joy of yet another church being open.





Langridge - view from the rear; towards the altar; and a display panel.

William and Tony’s pilot virtual crawl, featuring St Mary Magdalene Langridge, just north of Bath, can be viewed at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=2AiVALbHCkA>

Woollies on!

Next, walking stick and battery gloves to hand (yes, age is catching up with me) and over the fields from Langridge to Woolley.

One of the positives of frozen tundra is that what was (and would soon become again) a muddy track and thus a ‘challenge’!



My principal reason for visiting Woolley was that the congregation had applied for a grant to repair the Cupola (just peaking out of the hillside view). I like to see all



churches which apply for grants because I enjoy seeing what dedicated parishioners are doing to keep their churches alive - the Trust strapline.

The little church guide booklets are always interesting. Woolley, a 'double thankful parish' had a population of 68 in 1100 resizing to 104 in 1831 and back to 61 in 1997! Pevsner was rather 'sniffy' about the church architect (John Wood the Younger of Bath) but what a joy to find it and who could miss the door!

Next, over the hill to Upper Swainswick (that means a) a hill and b) up!).

Upper Swainswick



Inside, a mix of traditional pews and chairs and their welcome for visitors evident by a tray of tea and coffee and a kettle and a retro sign of welcome!



A hidden valley? Yes - between the two roads leading out of Bath towards M4 J18 and on a freezing day, all three churches open.

How do we study our churches and chapels? Update.

More suggestions on potential sources, with many thanks to those who have pointed me in the right direction!

The Secret Language of Churches and Cathedrals - decoding the sacred symbolism of Christianity's Holy Buildings Richard Stemp, (Watkins Media 2016),

How to study and old church, A Needham, (Batsford 1944)

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).

Rice's Church Primer, Matthew Rice (Bloomsbury 2013)

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.



Churches Conservation Trust

#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!

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