



NEWSLETTER



ELECTION TIME - WE HAVE THE ANTIDOTE!

The weather is improving (we have even had sun!), Bats are flying (what joy for churchwardens on a Sunday morning). We have much to be thankful for.

And to celebrate the Election result (or, maybe, not) What better than a CRAWL? (Prayers optional!).

SATURDAY 6 JULY @ 1.30PM.

PILTON, DITCHEAT AND CROSCOMBE



Church Crawl, Saturday, 6th July, 2024

Pilton, Ditchheat and Croscombe

Hosted by Richard Raynsford

The star studded churches of this 'crawl' exhibit the most spectacular appearance both inside and out for the communities they have served for over a 1,000 years.

St John the Baptist, Pilton. (BA4 4DX)

dates from the 11th century, is Grade 1 listed and was most probably on the site of an earlier Wattle & Daub church built by early missionaries. The present Norman & medieval building, together with the local Tithe barn, are testament to the wealth of this community and its patron, Glastonbury Abbey.



Tea/ Coffee on arrival at 1.30 pm for a prompt start at 2.00 pm.

St Mary Magdalene, Ditcheat (BA4 6RB)



there has been a church on this site since 824 AD although the present church has 12th century origins. Inside this Grade 1 listed church, built by the Abbots of Glastonbury, apart from

many treasures is a large wall painting of St Christopher dating from the late medieval period.

Arrive here at 3.00 pm

Blessed Virgin Mary, Croscombe. (BA5 3QS)

this magnificent Grade 1 listed church with its Jacobean woodwork dated to 1616; its boxed pews, canopied pulpit and



two desks for the parish clerks.

However, the furniture that dominates the church of St Mary is the rood screen complete with cross.

**Afternoon tea here at 4.30 pm.
Donations please**



2024 Crawl Programme

Somerset is blessed with many beautiful churches from the magnificence of our Cathedral Church of St Andrew in Wells (1), Bath Abbey (2) and Taunton Minster (3) to the smallest church in the country still holding regular services - St Beuno at Culbone. All are steeped in history with story's to tell to those with a fertile mind, a vivid imagination and the courage to participate. Somerset is also a large county so to do justice to the treasures within our midst takes a little effort but the rewards are plentiful.

Our Church Crawls for 2024 begin on 6th July with three superb churches, all Grade 1 listed and located to the west of Frome. This crawl includes the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Croscombe, with it amazing interior woodwork of box pews, canopied pulpit and rood screen. August takes us to the recently designated Taunton Minster together with Trull, All Saints, where the 15th century 'Dragon Window' of fine stained glass is a real treasure not to be missed. In September we visit the oldest church in the county, St

Quiricus & St Julietta at Tickenham. Also included are Weston in Gordano, St Peter & St Paul, and Wraxall, All Saints. In October we will visit the churches of the Publow, Compton Dando, Queen Charlton and Burnett, to be followed later in the month by a concert, a guided tour and afternoon tea at the Cathedral. In November we will host a workshop featuring churches in the Chew Valley with a focus on planning, fundraising and bringing a major church project to fruition. And our final crawl of the year takes us to Bath and a guided tour of the Abbey now resplendent following its recent major restoration.

So there's much to look forward to and we'll look to your company at Somerset Churches Trust's Church Crawls programme for 2024.

Philip Skelhorn. Trustee

5 October: Churches in the Chew Valley

Queen Charlton, Compton Dando, Burnett and Publow. Planning is still fluid but we might do an optional 12 noon visit to one church and then a pub lunch, followed by the other 3 churches at 2 pm, 3 pm, and 4 pm for tea. Burnett have offered to do the tea.

Tony Davies. Hon. Treasurer.

Autumn: The £1m question? How to fund and manage a church project.

Most parish churches will at some time or another have to embark upon a project. So, Somerset Churches Trust propose to hold a workshop so that hard-pressed Churchwardens / Treasurers don't have to 'reinvent the wheel'! If a village of 600 people can successfully raise £1m for a church project, what can we learn? With several 'site visits' we will cover: planning, DAC, fundraising, archaeology, PR.

Axel Palmer. Trustee.

26 October: Wells Cathedral - the bits we walk past!

We are planning a personalised tour of Wells Cathedral, led by one of our Trustees who also happens to be a Cathedral Guide. Whilst many of you will probably know the cathedral very well, for this event we will be accompanied by a guide who has always been fascinated by the Latin inscriptions on tombstones and the often

intriguing facts and anecdotes their translation can reveal. It promises to be an informative and enlightening tour!

Anthony Sutcliffe. Trustee.

This village does not exist! But it has a church! Where is it?



In the middle of Salisbury Plain!

St Giles Church is in the lost village of IMBER (but you won't find it on OS Maps!).

Of course, it is slightly out of Somerset! Requisitioned by the War Office in 1943, the villagers hoped to return one day! Certainly worth a visit on the occasional open days during the year. It is now managed by Churches Conservation Trust, with a very active Friends Group.

'A church left over from a ghost village

This lovely thirteenth-century church stands in rolling downland deep inside the military training area of Salisbury Plain. It is all that remains of the ghost village of Imber (now just abandoned houses), which was evacuated for military training purposes in 1943.

The distinctive fourteenth-century tower has five pinnacles. The interior, divested of its fittings, allows you to appreciate the architecture and atmosphere of this unique church, as well as the remains of medieval wallpaintings with a rare depiction of the Seven Deadly Sins, and a set of seventeenth-century bell ringing changes painted on the north wall of the tower.

Outside the sloping churchyard contains fine seventeenth and eighteenth-century tomb chests. This church is only open occasionally to visitors.' For more information, please visit: <http://www.imberchurch.org.uk>

80mph gales - perfect to climb Glastonbury Tor!

We can see it for miles around, the iconic tower on top of Glastonbury Tor. Axel Palmer took his grandchildren (boys aged 5 & 9) for a rather windy walk up the Tor (and the youngest nearly blew away) but who would put a church in such a windswept place?

Several buildings were constructed on the summit during the Saxon and early medieval periods; they have been interpreted as an early church and monks hermitage. The head of a wheel cross dating



from the 10th or 11th century has been recovered. The original wooden church was destroyed by an earthquake in 1275, and the stone church of St Michael built on the site in the 14th century. Its tower remains, although it has been restored and partially rebuilt several times. In 1786, Richard Colt Hoare of Stourhead bought the Tor and funded repair of

the tower in 1804, including the rebuilding of the north east corner. It passed through several generations to Reverend George Neville, when it was then bought as a memorial to a former Dean of Wells, Thomas Jex-Blake, who died in 1915.

The National Trust took control of the Tor in 1933, but repairs were delayed until after the Second World War. After 2000, enhancements to the access and repairs to the tower, including rebuilding of the parapet, were carried out.

Archaeological excavations during the 20th century sought to clarify the background of the monument and church, but some aspects of their history remain unexplained. The Tor is mentioned in Celtic mythology, particularly in myths linked to King Arthur, and has a number of other enduring mythological and spiritual associations.

In William Blake's poem Jerusalem, could he be talking about Glastonbury Tor when he asks:
'And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?'

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/st-michaels-tower-glastonbury>

And then visit Somerset Rural Life Museum (a hidden gem + cafe + parking). The children survived to enjoy the cafe!

However, as Philip Skelhorn reminds me:

Execution of last Abbot who refused to hand over Glastonbury Abbey

‘Glastonbury Abbey was one of the final monasteries to be dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. The abbey was valued as the second wealthiest in England – only Westminster Abbey was richer – with an annual income which was greater than that of the king.

Following a mock ‘trial’ for robbery and other crimes, the 80-year old Abbot Richard Whiting (1525-39) was hanged and quartered on Glastonbury Tor, together with two of his monks. Whiting was dragged through the town on a hurdle up the Tor, where he “took his death patiently“.

After hanging, his head was cut off and placed over the great gate of the abbey. The four quarters of his body were preserved in tar and then displayed at Wells, Ilchester, Bridgwater and Bath, as a warning to others who might think about defying the king.’

<https://research.reading.ac.uk/glastonburyabbeyarchaeology/digital/the-abbots-complex-c-1150-c-1725/dissolution/>