

Somerset Snippets

The Newsletter of The Friends of Somerset Archives

Issue 18

October 2010

From Anne Leamon, Chairman

Dear Members

The Friends of Somerset Archives are at an important milestone in their history. We were formed in October 2005 and I was appointed Chairman with the support of an extremely able committee, very enthusiastic members and the full support of Somerset Record Office mainly in the guise of Tom Mayberry.

We were set up to provide voluntary assistance to the Record Office and to raise funds to purchase documents that the RO would like saved for Somerset people.

We have had some very successful events but unfortunately the events of this year have not been well received by members and we have had to cancel four through lack of support. Coupled with this the RO has been closed since March for original documents and July for microfiche. Whether this has had a bearing on event attendance I cannot say.

Whilst the Friends were originally shown diagrams of the new Heritage Centre and consulted re members concerns and ideas unfortunately this consultation has rapidly ground to a halt. We offered assistance with Study days, cleaning of the documents and even trialling the new Heritage Centre but unfortunately our offers were not taken up, we have been ignored!

The transcription of Tithe awards is progressing extremely well with some very able and enthusiastic volunteers and despite the difficulties incurred my husband and I have managed to photograph all the Awards. Originally the completed Tithes were to be put onto the Record Office website as a 'pay per view' system with Friends having free access, as a means for the Record Office to raise revenue.

Sadly this has not happened and I understand completed discs have been handed out to the public, not input onto the main frame of the RO computer. It was also hoped that we would be able to photograph the smaller Tithe maps which are essential to use the actual award but this has not been encouraged. Understandably the very large maps need to be photographed digitally which is very costly, I understand.

The various committee members have worked very hard over the years to ensure the success of the Friends but unfortunately, the majority of the Committee members feel the support, encouragement, and involvement of the RO has been lacking.

Re the present Committee, it is certainly time I stepped down having been Chairman since the Friends started. Sue Berry, who is Vice Chairman and Events Secretary, Brian Airey, Treasurer and Membership, Robin Leamon, Tithe Apportionment Project and Anne Murch, Deputy Newsletter Editor all wish to resign. This leaves Carol Dimmer, Minute Secretary, and Liz James, Newsletter Editor.

Therefore the choices facing you, as Members are now:

- 1) if the Friends are to continue you need to appoint a:
 - a.) Chairman,
 - b.) Vice-Chairman.
 - c.) Treasurer,
 - d.) Events Secretary,
 - e.) Membership Secretary
 - f.) Tithe Apportionment Project person.
 - g.) Deputy Newsletter Editor
- 2) Should the Friends continue but amalgamate with another group i.e. the Friends of the Somerset Museum?
- 3) Close. In both option 2 and 3, the money held in the bank account would be held in trust until the Record Office can advise of a suitable document they wish to purchase.

The Annual General Meeting is to be held on 4th December at St.Paul's Church Hall, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare at 7 p.m.. I do hope you will consider the points raised here and give your full consideration to the way forward for the Friends of Somerset Archives. If you have any suggestions or queries as to the work involved in being a member of the Committee, please feel free to contact myself at annleamon@aol.com or 01823 351315 or any committee member.

This Newsletter has started off with a somewhat sombre article and this may be the last Somerset Snippets. I've enjoyed being the Editor for the past couple of year and although I haven't been able to get to many events I have valued my membership of The Friends.

Liz

Trials and tribulations of an archivist

Esther Hoyle, senior archivist at the Heritage Centre, gave us a fascinating insight into the modern archivist's job in her personal talk on the trials and tribulations of an archivist.

Esther came to Somerset after working at the University of York's Borthwick Institute, which houses the Diocesan collection for Yorkshire as well as other records, and after completing her training as an archivist.

She is now one of four archivists at the new Heritage Centre and is the senior archivist responsible for learning activities, including work with schools, running courses and putting on exhibitions, and for the management of the visitor services team.

All the archivists take part in the duty rota which involves spending the day answering queries coming via e-mail, telephone and the staff in the search room. The duty archivist is going to have a desk in the new searchroom to help with more detailed enquiries and to be on hand if the searchroom is busy. She explained the need for archivists to learn

a lot about their new county and the vast collections in the strong rooms when they first come into their post. She also explained how some members of the public, largely as a result of their experience on the internet and watching programmes like "Who do you think you are?", have rather unrealistic expectations of how much help they can be given and how quickly information can be found. The programmes have nevertheless had a positive role in increasing the interest in family history and the use of archives as a consequence.

All the archivists are involved in the receipt of accessions which have to be catalogued, boxed and found a place in the strong rooms. They now in the new centre have a dedicated room for this task. Any documents which meet the criterion of illustrating the history of Somerset are likely to be accepted. Documents are of varied interest for the archivist but some can give them a real glow, as when an anonymous parcel arrived containing a missing early Yeovilton parish register.

Interpreting older documents can be time consuming, particularly when in Latin. Esther studied Latin at school and university but explained that medieval Latin can be quite different with florid sentences and words with altered meanings. She also illustrated the many Latin terms which earlier parish registers have for the same word, for example "were married" and "illegitimate". She showed us a slide of a Tudor "inspeximus" which had complex descriptions of dates. The dates on which fairs could be held required working out from the date of a holy day for example. The condition of some very old documents can make for difficulty.

She explained her belief that in a modern archive office there needs to be an equal balance between the needs of the documents, including their preservation, the depositors and the visitors. This isn't easy in a time of diminishing financial resources but the new Heritage Centre has brought benefits from bringing the staff of local studies, archives, historic environment and museums together.

Despite the title Esther gave the impression she really enjoys her job and we enjoyed her talk!

Don't forget your local resources -

News from South Somerset:

The Museum of South Somerset has added two rare coats that have important historical connections with Yeovil to its collection following a generous donation from a local charity shop.

Heritage staff from South Somerset District Council received the gentleman's jacket and ladies' leather coat from Brainwave of Princes Street last week.

The jacket was made in 1961 by Parsons and Shute, a reputable tailor that was based in Hendford in Yeovil. The item, which is still in excellent condition, still has the name of its original owner in the jacket pocket.

Until now, the only item relating to Parsons and Shute held by the museum was a branded wooden coat hanger. The leather coat was especially made for the Yeovil Sheepskin Shop and South Somerset District Council is currently researching its age and origins.

Both items will now be included in the large and historically significant textile collection held at the museum's storage facility, the Community Heritage and Access Centre (CHAC) at Lufton, Yeovil.

Both the museum and CHAC are open to the public and are run by South Somerset District Council.

Friends of Somerset County Museum
On Tuesday, 16th November, the Friends are holding their AGM at 7.30 p.m. at the Meeting Room of Taunton Library, Paul Street at 7.30 p.m. This will be followed by a talk from Sue Berry - "Legalese & Jargon@ convolution & confusion"

Visitors are welcome for a small fee. If you want to confirm that the meeting is going ahead please telephone 01823 275810.

One man's view of some Somerset churches in the 18th century

In 1791 the Revd John Collinson published his *History of Somerset*, a very worthy but, it has to be admitted, a rather dry work. Much of it was based on the research done for him by Edmund Rack of Bath the first Secretary of the Royal Bath and West of England Society, in the years 1781-1787. Rack's original notes of his research have survived and are held at the Bristol City Record Office and a photocopied set can be seen at Somerset's new Heritage Centre. They are in the process of being published in their entirety so that, if this article wets your appetite to find out what Rack said about your own church, with luck you won't have to wait too long.

As evidence for the interior decoration and furnishings of late 18th century Somerset churches, Rack's work is without equal. He starts by giving the size of the church and its tower, with the height(s) of the nave and aisle roofs and whether they were decorated in any way. In Bruton, for example, "The church, which is dedicated to St Mary, is a stately gothic structure 127 ft long and 54 wide, consisting of a nave, chancel, north and south iles, a vestry room and two porches, all coverd with lead. At the west end is a fine embattled tower 93 ft high, ornamented with pinnacles and niches in which statues were formerly placed. This tower has six bells, a clock and a saints bell. On the north side of the north isle is another embattled quadrangular tower 50 ft high. This was the original tower of the church. The nave roof is 38 ft high. It is not ceild but the timbers of the arch are richly ornamented with carving, both cherubs and foliage. The chancel roof is 26 ft high and grandly embellishd with ornamental carving and stucco work."

He nearly always comments on the state of the flooring, the seating, and the cleanliness of the church. In Bicknoller church he says "Here are four large good pews, and six small and ordinary. The rest of the seats are carved oak backd benches... The paving of this church is mostly small square bricks. In the north ayle, the boarded floor under the seats is shamefully broken up and the church dirty" while at Stowell "The boards under the seats are crumbling to dust and a plentiful crop of fungi are sprouting up there". At Brushford "The chancel is damp, the flooring of the church very

indifferent, and the whole kept rather dirty." At Kilton "The floor very ordinary and the walls damp and mossy... The floor is very shamefully broken up under the seats and the wainscoting against the north wall coming down." At Hinton Blewitt the stones of the pavement were "mostly broken and sunk at one end so as to render walking dangerous". One word, execrable, summed up the floor at Marston Magna.

At Charlton Mackrell several of the pews "are much decayd. The rest of the seats very old oak backd benches with carvd ends." At Crowcombe church he admired the carved bench ends, saying "In this church are some of the most ancient carved oak seats in England. They were erected in 1534, and on the ends are a great many antique figures curiously carved... The 28 new pews at Ansford were painted cream and in Treborough the five new deal pews were the only thing worth notice as the rest of the church was "kept in a nasty shameful condition, being much fitter for a stable than a place of worship".

The upkeep of the church chancel was sometimes the responsibility of a lay rector and Rack comments that at Barrington "The chancel, which belongs to Earl Paulet, is in a shameful condition - the walls are coverd with green and black moss and the floor is intirely broken up - and every part of the church is dirty and coming to decay". He remarked at Westbury that "The chancel and chappel belong to the Rodney family and is seperated from the nave and south ayle by a very ordinary open work screen and folding doors fitter for a stable than a church". Conditions at Hawkridge church were even worse. The chancel roof is "dropping in and in the floor are great holes quite down to the coffins... In Seavington St Mary the nave roof was "in very bad repair, the water coming down into the mid passage and seats in many places" and the chancel had "no floor laid at all". Earl Paulet was the lay rector here also.

He noted the condition of the pulpit, the decoration of the font and the state of the communion table in many of the churches he visited. For example, at Chipstable "The pulpit is small and low, and has no sounding board, but an old green cushion and cloth." At Somerton "The pulpit is ancient but very good, and exhibits some very fine carving." and at

Kingsdon "The pulpit is very antique and curiously carvd and painted."

He expressed his indignation at Crowcombe where "The font is a curious remain of antiquity, and still retains some of the figures originally carved upon it; but this and the painted glass in the windows bear evident marks of the hot intolerant zeal of the fanatics in the last century, who under the pretence of distroying idolatry, with gothic barbarity scarcely permitted any species of religious decency to escape their sacriligious hands." Some churches had installed new fonts by Rack's day and he described Wellington's in some detail. It was "a curious new font of white marble in the form of a bason, with a handsome mahogany cover on the top of which is an acorn, gilt. This font stands on a slender pedestal of black, white and grey marble, with curious brass supporters of scrol work fixd in the base."

The communion table in Luxborough church had "a crimson cloth laced and fringed with white". At Podimore Milton the communion table was "fit only for the fire" while the one at Stowey had "the remains of a green cloth which the moths have nearly demolishd..." and Northover's was "very old and dislocated, being in value 2d...". In Kilmersdon the table was enclosed with a railing and along its top was an inscription in gold letters which read "Thus was the thankfulness of the well-dispos'd expressed for staving the Great Plague 1625".

Many churches by the end of the 18th century had singers' galleries for their choirs. Rack often comments on these, noting where in the church they were, whether they were panelled or were decorated with any paintings. At Castle Cary the singers' gallery had "a small organ. The front of this gallery is handsomly painted and in the middle of it is a painting of David playing on his harp... Above are two very antique but disgustful figures in carvd work." At Ashcott Rack noted " At the west end of the nave is another gallery for the singers, whitewashd in the front, with a coarse painting of David playing on his harp, and two verses from the Psalms" and at Ditchat "The singers' gallery is at the west end of the nave, and fronted with oak; in the center pannel David thrums it on his harp in all the colours of the rainbow." Stringston had converted the rood loft over the screen into a singers' gallery, the front of which was " embellishd with old carving and gilding" and Withycombe had

done the same with "an antique open Gothic screen on which is a cornice enriched with carved foliage and gilding... Over the screen is the singers' gallery, in the front of which is the Decalogue." He also notes churches where an organ had been installed, Bishops Lydeard having "a very good organ loft... and in it is a large handsome organ built in 1751".

Rack practically always noted the screens which separated the nave from the chancel. Many of these were later removed in the 19th century and his description is sometimes all we have to tell us what they were like. At Mudford it was an "open work gothic screen painted to represent porphory." Wrington had "an ancient open work gothic screen, ornamented with balls and pinnacles and a profusion of curious carving on and about the cornice which is very rich and beautiful". Although we perhaps now think of the Victorian era as the one when many churches were "restored", this was a trend which began in the 18th century. At the time Rack inspected Castle Cary church he wrote that there was "an openwork gothic screen 11 ft high, much carved and painted blue" which divided the chancel from the nave. "Over this in a square frame is a large painting, which on the side next the chancel is intended to represent Our Saviour on the cross with some of his followers bewailing his death; on the other side is the royal arms." On this page of his notes is a marginal insertion in a different hand "Screen taken down and removed" showing that between his visit and 1791 the parishioners of Castle Cary had done away with their presumably medieval rood screen.

Rack held strong views on the artistic merits of the paintings and decoration in many churches. At Wedmore "is a large painting of the crucifixion, but indifferently executed." while at South Brent over the "old organ now disused, is an emblematical painting of moderate execution". Ditchat's art work was given short shrift, described as "a large painting of the Resurrection of the Dead at the last day, being a miserable copy of [blank]. Over the east end of the nave is another coarse daubing of the Transfiguration." Doultong had "an old coarse painting of Adam and Eve, the tree and the serpent, with death rising out of the ground at their feet." He was happier with the painting over the altar in Dunster church, "a fine painting 7 ft by 10 in a gilt frame. The subject is the healing of the Israelites by the erection of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. The grouping, drapery and keeping are

very good, and the expression strong and animated in three of the figures". Biddisham, although "a humble pile" had a chancel roof "prettily ornamented with stars and roses, black and blue, in stucco work", the chancel roof at Weare was "painted an azure sky with clouds and stars intermixed", Puckington had a ceiling "painted with cherubs blowing trumpets" while Crewkerne, however, had a ceiling "very gaudily painted in a miserable style".

Some churches seem to have used their side aisles as places to keep building materials or rubbish. Rack noticed at Burnham that "the south aisle is made a repository for bricks, mortar and other lumber" while at Creech St Michael "the north aisle is quite neglected and full of rubbish" and the south aisle at Hillfarrence was "a repository for rubbish and lumber".

Occasionally, Rack found a church for which he had nothing but praise. West Camel was "well paved and kept dry and clean", High Littleton was "a small but very handsome building rebuilt in the year 1735 and kept in remarkable neat order" and Combe Hay was "very clean and has throughout an air of neatness and simple elegance seldom met with". Unfortunately, comments such as these are the exception rather than the rule and his summing up of Cudworth "This church is unceiled, dull, gloomy, dirty and ruinous" is probably a more accurate picture of the state of Somerset's rural churches at this time.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

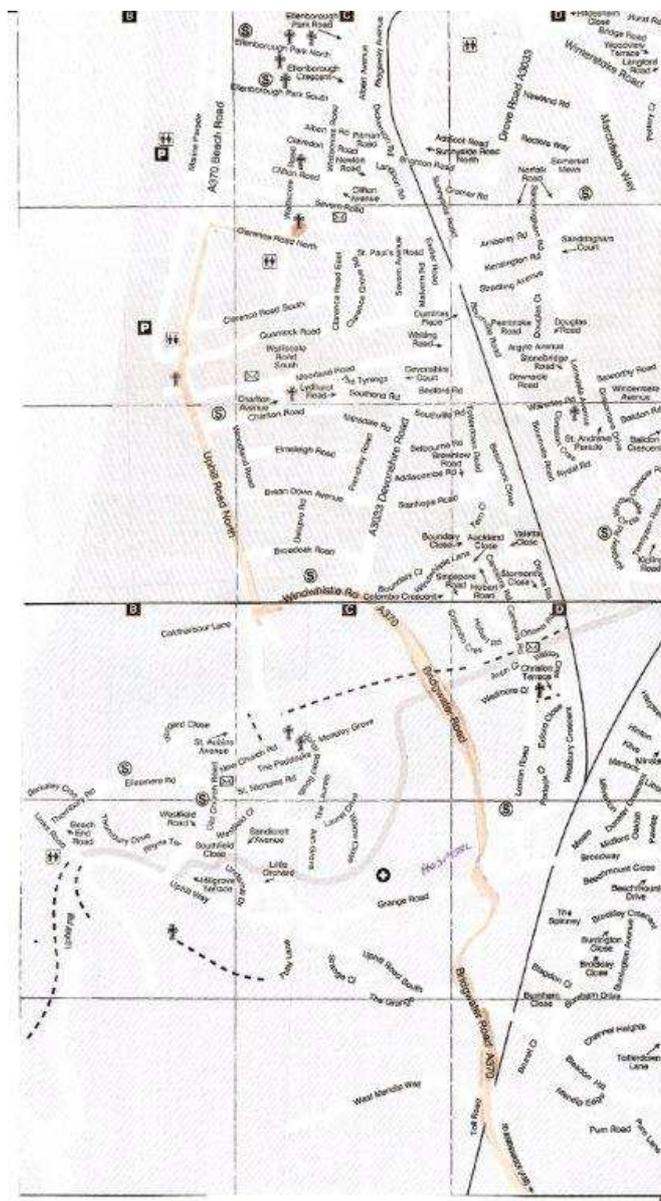
4th December at 7pm

The full address is
St Paul's Church Hall
Walliscote Road
Weston super Mare
BS23 1EF

Directions are
From the south take Burnham on Sea turn off from M5 follow A38/A370 to Weston. At the Hospital roundabout continue straight along to sea front. Turn right into Clarence Road North. At crossroad the church is opposite on left hand side and the car park is adjacent.

From the north from Junction 21 follow the road into Weston. Having past Tescos on your right hand side turn left into Walliscote Rd at the mini roundabout and travel past the Police station for about 1/2 mile. The church is on your left.

Brian will place signs "FOSA" with an arrow at strategic places to assist



EVENTS

2nd Nov. The Heritage Centre - 7.30 p.m.
Edmund Rack: a man of the Enlightenment in 18C
Somerset - a talk by Mark McDermott

Please contact Sue Berry 01823 276233 or berrygreen@tiscali at least a **week before the event**, if you wish to book a place

I am not sure if the following event will still be taking place:

7th December - The Heritage Centre - 7.30 p.m.
A guided tour of the Heritage Centre

By Dr Janet Tall

I recently typed up a historical account of the Establishment of the Dissenting Interest, Winsham, which you may find of interest:

At the Restoration of Charles the 2nd to the Regal authority of this Kingdom many truly pious and learned Divines who had with much honour filled the chairs of the Doctors in the Universities, and the Pastoral charge in the churches during the Interregnum of Commonwealth of England, were ejected to the number of 2,000 according to the account of the very worthy Dr Calamy, deprived of their livings, and by the power of the King, Nobles and Commons passing the Act of Uniformity in 1662 were set aside as public teachers and silenced on pain of great penalty touching their person property and life. Under this tyranny many godly families for conscience sake, were forced to secede from the Episcopal Church as established by the laws of England: and suffer the lot of their truly honourable, well beloved, venerable sequestered Pastors. This moved the jealousy of the Crown so that these excellent and reverend persons with all their adherents were roughly handled by both church and state. Monarchy rode rampant and the mitre triumphant, while the sweet twins of Heaven Religious and Civil Liberty lay expiring under the wounds of tyranny and bigotry; Temporal and Spiritual power combining to effect the irrevocable fall of all that is dear to Christians and enlightened men. This reign brought forth the Book of Sports a God dishonouring production, an eternal stain upon the hand that wrote it, and the power, which suffered it to appear. Indeed Satan sat enthroned in his glory all the life of this Prince he died 1685. James Duke of York succeeded him, was crowned 1685, was a brave and intrepid warrior, but a timid and persilanimous Prince, he held out false lights of freedom while the core of his heart was foul and rotten papistry: in this year the Duke of Monmouth and his followers faintly stirred for freedom, but unsupported he fell a sacrifice with many of his worthy men. William of Nassau Prince of Orange under divine favour assisted by the Nobles and

gentry of England was raised to accomplish the glorious ends of delivering the Protestant interest from the tyranny of James and entanglements of the Church of Rome: Nov 4th 1688 religious and civil freedom set her foot on British ground, shook the throne of James, and roused the spirits of the free born sons of Britain. On Dec 12th 1688 James the 2nd abdicated the British throne, went off to Ireland and at the battle of the Boyne was completely routed and disrobed of all his royalty: after troubling the land 3 years he fled and became a pensioner on France and Rome. Thus ended the unhappy reign of the Stuarts, and tyranny of the Papal power. William the third mounted the throne April 11th 1689 with these peerless jewels in his royal diadem Religious and Civil Liberty. May the crown of Britain long shine illustrious in these splendid ornaments. King William of glorious memory, the most noble Peers with the right honourable the commons of the realm (in parliament assembled) these three great estates of the British Empire by virtue of their separate prerogatives in the constitution of the Kingdom did by an Act of Parliament unite the royal most noble and right honourable authority in solemn confirmation of the rights and privileges of the Nation, that all subjects enjoy universal toleration in matters of religion, this extended to all Protestant members of the British Empire to pay Divine worship to Almighty God, where and how their consciences might direct them. On this memorable event many honourable and wealthy families of Winsham and its vicinity took shelter under the Act, licensed a house, congregated together called and settled a Pastor, and worshipped God under their own vine and fig tree, none daring to make them afraid God, the King, the Nation, and the Law allowing it.

This church leaves this declaration on record.
We do not object Kings we do not object most noble Peers, we do not object puissant Princes, we do not object right honourable Persons we do not object the gentry of the land.

We do heartily object
Tyranny, slavery, papacy and its remains
Protest against it, and are
Dissenters
March 25 1791

The names of the Divines who laboured at Winsham in the middle of the 16th century I could not obtain. It is very certain that the Rev. Saml Bolster

ministered in the congregation the latter part of the last century, how long is not accurately known. The interest was numerous and rich. This gentleman was succeeded by the Rev Simon Grinstead who preached and taught school: The church put a house in order, and set it apart for Divine worship, the lease is dated 1703. Mr Grinstead continued in the work of the gospel until the year 1726 when he left this part, and was followed by four of the neighbouring Ministers, their churches consenting to their attending in monthly succession, these were the Revd Mr. Strong, Rev Mr. Knight, Rev Mr. Batten, Rev Aaron Pitts who officiated in 1737: on these Divines declining the Rev Mr. Bradshaw was appointed to the charge of the congregation and became resident Minister, in 1739 when he removed the Rev Mr. Samuels in conjunction with others laboured. After this the Revd Mr. Damer was here, sometime about the year 1750. This gentleman quitted the work and many of the Lord's dear servants gave their attendance till the Rev Mr. Patrick engaged to supply constantly: this was about the year 1756. On this gentleman withdrawing the Rev Mr. Harley was settled Minister over the church during this gentleman's life, the members built a new house of worship and gave up and vacated the old one in the year 1760: this Minister was called to his rest soon after he occupied his new place of labour and is interred under the pulpit. After his departure several of the Pastors of the adjacent churches took the work amongst them, and kept open the doors until the Rev Mr. Phillips was called over the people; and was an inhabitant of Winsham in the year 1772. During this Minister's abode Mr Pocock attended at the Lord's table: these gentlemen gave up their charge and were followed by the Rev Mr. Bryant who was many years concerned in the labour of the gospel at Winsham, he was here about the year 1777, when this Minister ceased attending, many as opportunity served, gave their labours, as the Rev Mr. Pittard, Rev Mr Herdsman, Rev Mr Glasscott, Rev Mr Rowles, Mr Pitts, Mr Hay and others occasionally. On these gentlemen dropping it the Rev Mr Hatch became stated a few years, 1782; on his shutting up preaching, the place was occupied by the Rev Thos David 1783 he continued a probationer till the year 1788 when the church called and ordained him Pastor: he became resident at Winsham until the year 1790 when he withdraw to London, the present incumbent took the charge, and solicits his successors carefully to register the

transactions of the Church and not let them drop into oblivion.

March 25 1791.

The Rev John Hemsworth was succeeded by the Revd Harrington who continued the pastor for some years, when circumstances necessitated his removal. In 1810 the Rev Wm Durnford from Plymouth Dock took the charge, and the cause became a very flourishing one. The old Chapel being found too small and inconvenient, a new one was built in 1811 together with a dwelling house for the Minister adjoining, and a piece of ground behind the Chapel was given for a garden for the Minister by Mr Hugh Trenchard of Maudlin. During Mr Durnford's pastorate, several new Chapels were built in the neighbourhood, and the congregation at Winsham, which crowded the Chapel when first erected, declined considerably in consequence: many of the members, and others, attaching themselves to the new places, as nearer their own residences. Mr Durnford died in 1829 and was succeeded in 1830 by the Rev Thos Childs of Mevagissey, who was in delicate health when he came and lived only till 1832.

The Revd. John Wells of Lambrook became the next Minister in 1832, and continued till 1836. The cause had now dwindled down to a very low ebb, and as a change of Minister was considered desirable, Mr Wells was requested to leave, and in 1837 the Revd David Evans from Stringstone Somerset succeeded him. Mr Evans continued here till 1859 when he was afflicted with an illness which confined him to his bed for six months, and left him in such a shattered state of health, that it was suggested to him to resign, which he did. The cause still continued in a dead and lifeless state during the whole of Mr Evans' residence here, and the congregation very small. After Mr Evans, the Revd John Cooke Westbrook was called to the pastorate at Michaelmas 1859 and filled the office until Xmas 1861, when he resigned the charge in consequence of ill health. He was a delicate man, and totally unfit to combat with the mass of sin and error which for so long a time had been accumulating in this place. There was, however, a little sign of revival during his ministry, and a slight increase in the congregation. At his suggestion this book was bought and all the records of the church, and other entries made in it up to this time but he quite neglected to keep it up and all the transactions during his ministry were obtained and entered after he left.

In February 1862 the Rev W. Gooby late of Alexandria, Egypt, received a cordial and affectionate invitation to become the Pastor which he accepted. In April of the same year he was solemnly set apart to the work of the Christian Ministry. He continued to exercise his ministry with considerable acceptance until December 1864 when he resigned the pastorate in consequence of his having received and accepted a call to the Congregational church in Newbury. During his pastorate the school-room was erected.

In January 1865 the Rev Thomas M Prentice, of Maryborough, Ireland, received a unanimous invitation to become the pastor. This invitation he accepted. In May of the same year he was ordained to the Christian ministry. During his ministry the Chapel was thoroughly renovated and repaired, and candles with which the Chapel had been previously lighted, gave place to paraffin lamps to the great comfort of the worshippers.

Nov 13th 1882 At a public meeting called for the purpose a Purse containing Twenty six sovereigns was presented to the Rev T M Prentice on his removal to Tettenhall Wood Congregational Church Staffordshire.

Jan 7th 1883 The Revd Alfred Griffin of Bath having accepted an invitation from the Church and Congregation commenced his pastorate.

November 1892 the Rev J Hall began his pastorate which lasted until December 23rd 1894. The congregations had gone down and for 6 months the services were conducted by various Brethren from Chard and Ilminster.

Mr Fred Wm King was appointed Evangelist and began his work on Sunday June 2nd 1896. Closed Nov 29th 1899, having accepted the pastorate of Charmouth Church.

Mr H Hammond was appointed on Dec 1 1899 and commenced his ministry Jan 7th 1900. Many particulars of ministry entered in printed report and minutes. Mr Hammond closed this period of his ministry here Sept 13th 1903 to take up work in Oakehill district.

October 28 1903. Mr John Jeremiah Jordon, of Pitney and Low Ham, commenced his ministry here, which owing to failing eye sight he had to close Oct 26th 1905.

Nov 5th 1905 Mr Weardale Phillips commenced his ministry; further particulars in printed reports and minutes, was ordained after passing County Union Exam and left for Enfield, after closing his ministry here Feb 24th 1907.

March 10th 1907, Mr Hammond came from Nettlebridge to again take up the ministry here but as stated in minutes closed his ministry Dec 6th 1908.

Jan 7th 1909 Mr J Taylor of Lydeard St Lawrence commenced his work here, see minutes for particulars, June 25th 1911 left for Broadwindsor.

July 16th 1911 Mr Edgar J Stamps of Honiton commenced his work here as Evangelist. March 1914 removed to Lydeard St Lawrence as Evangelist there.

April 1914 Mr W J Gadsby removed from Kingsdon and Ilchester to take up his work here and remained until February 1918 when he left to take the pastorate of Bishops Hull, Taunton.

Mar 14th 1918 Frederick John Pavey from Milverton and Bishops Lydeard commenced duties here, removed to Kingsdon and Ilchester May 16th 1922.

Mr W Williams removed from Kingsdon and Ilchester on May 16th 1922 and rendered valuable service to the Church until April 20th 1925. His services were appreciated by all. Removed to Bishops Hull.

Mr H J Haggett commenced duties here on June 24th 1925. He had previously been engaged in missionary work. His ministry was active and greatly appreciated by many. During his stay the schoolroom was renovated including the outside steps, the manse repaired and also money raised for the manse roof. A YPS was formed, which helped the life of the church. The cradle roll was introduced to the Sunday School and a Sunday School hymn book procured for its use. He closed his ministry on Sunday, Sept 25th having received a call from the church at Milborne Port at the farewell communion service 4 were welcomed into membership.

Newspaper account of
WINSHAM - INTERESTING HISTORY OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - THE NEWS,
SATURDAY, NOV 21 1914
(see photocopy)

September 7th 1921

Services in connection with the re-opening of our Chapel after repairs and redecoration were held. At 4.15 p.m. Rev Richard Newell A.T.S. of Yeovil, the Secty of the County Union, preached from Matt 27.42

5.30 pm tea in schoolroom

6.45 pm Public Meeting Chairman J S Prentice Esq JP of Ilminster, Speakers Rev Geo S Woodeson of the Baptist Church Chard, Rev H Cheney of Axminster and Rev R Newell. The Pastor-Evangelist, F J Pavey gave a brief statement of the finances of the Renovation fund. Previous to commencing the work by Sales & Co £100 had been raised, the bills that had been received amount to £135 and other a/c not received would make it about £140, the collections at the 2 meetings amounted to £2.19. 4. Mr R N Southcombe, Chairman of the County, who was unable to be present, promised £1.1.0, Mrs Jordan had undertaken secure money for a carpet for the pulpit and Mrs Appley to renew decorative cord and fringe of the Bible rest. Mrs Bishop covering of organ bench, Mr Bishop board and stucco to inside of school porch which did not pass through the a/cs.

The work was carried out by Messrs W C Way & Hutchings Bros of Thorncombe, with which every one seemed satisfied with the manner it was done and price charged.

The School-room badly needs repairs inside but that for want of money we must let remain over for a time. On Sunday, September 11th these services were continued when the Preacher for the day Mr W J Gadsby the late Pastor when a pleasant and helpful day was spent.

Sunday April 30th 1922 Church Anniversary, Mr Wm Williams the newly appointed Pastor, conducted the services on Wed May 3rd we received a visit from our Moderator the Rev E P Powell MA who preached in the afternoon from 2 Theos 3.5, Tea followed in the schoolroom.

The evening meeting J S Prentice Esq JP presided who presented on behalf of the church to Mr & Mrs F J Pavey (the Pastor) a handsome striking clock, suitable inscribed, wishing Mr & Mrs Pavey every blessing in their new sphere at Kingsdon & Ilchester. Helpful addresses followed by the Moderator and the Rev A T Cosford of Chard, a very good day.

*****S
Since being Editor I have introduced you to my 5 x Gt Grandfather, Benjamin Hebditch. As this may be the last edition I thought you might like a little more information on his life.

Benjamin Hebditch's life

1860 Remarks Continued

June 7th In consequence of my confinement through affliction, being the first time in my life, for 7 days. Being now much better and able to review God's mercies towards me thro many years in the wilderness above so many thousands of my fellow creatures, I now feel disposed to leave on record for my Dear children's information only, with my Grandchildren as well, a few particulars of the leading particulars of my protracted life which many of them they may find in my Books especially under the head Remarks.

I was Born the 8th of May 1791 in the same House I now live in, and I do not think there is another in the Parish of South Petherton has lived in the same house so many years - but it is now thought best I should leave it for dear Wm very soon. When about 7 years old, my Great Uncle John Weare of Stratton gave me half acre of land which I exchanged with father for Slate Close and also 30 pounds to put me to some trade but I learnt the trade as a Dowler Make of my Brother Simeon and kept it on for about 15 years when the trade wore out as the callico superceded the trade.

I employed in the winter season spinners, weavers & from 70 to 100 hands when Flax was selling from 5/- to 15/ per Dozen and Dowlas from 14d to 2/6 pr. yard at this time there were about 12 Flax Pits between our House & Yeabridge in which Flax was put in & coverd with water for 9 or 12 days before spreading upon the grass. I have weavd many pieces of Dowlas.

I was sent to Mr Noons School in South Street, where my Daughter Anna now lives, several years taking every Monday Morning a 6d for the past week's learning. This being my only opportunity for improvement as to schooling.

In Jany 1814 I was admitted to the Church at Petherton and in Sept 1821 I was unanimously chosen Deacon, in the place of my Father with my Brother Simeon and at the Death of 2 sons in-laws' Father (J Vaux) I was chosen Churchwarden & continued successfully for 15 years following - also I filld the offices of Tax Gatherer & Guardian

& was the Cash Overseer before the Union call 1850r

I was a Teacher-Treasurer in the Sunday School for about 20 years and Clerk in the Chapple say 15 years and very many times struck off the Tunes in my Pew or ran up in the Gallery to begin the Tunes

Also for many years I attended the Week Night Meetings once or twice a week & had to pitch off the Tunes.

I was joint Executor with my Best & Kindest of Brothers of my Father Will. Also Executor of Dear Wm's Will, and of my Brother-in-law's Revd John Wells & Mr Joseph Humphry who livd for 56 years where Lord Portman's New House is at New Cross is, Beside many others especially Miss England whose Estate I sold at Middlenny near Drayton for over £5000 which I Recd in London being the first and last time I was there.

I married Miss Sarah Harding of Petherton the 2 Jany 1827.

We have had Wm Benjm who has now 3 sons & 1 Daughter - Sarah Harding now Vaux who has 2 Daughters and Anna now Vaux who has 2 Daughters and Robt Wm who is now living with us but who thinks of marrying Miss Jane Daniel of South Petherton who is a Member of our Church. May they all with their Parents meet each other in Heaven at last.

Now for my Temral mercies which have been more than can be numbered.

I was born of pious Parents - all my Brothers & sisters I believe are now in Heaven.

I have a good Healthy wife who traind up her children in the fear of the Lord.

No man living has a Family of 4 children freer from Deformity and defects of Intellect and better good common sense I believe and I hope all pious & loving each other & they have all Kind loving Partners so that I have never to complain of either of them.

I have enjoyd almost uninterrupted good Health through Life

Somerset Heritage Centre opening hours

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Items For Sale

We still have a number of books and CDs that Paul Mansfield has kindly donated to the Friends for sale to help raise funds. We have the following titles.

Norris' Taunton Journal 1725 to 1727. Indexed and filmed by Paul Mansfield.

A full facsimile of the original with an index on one cd-rom for £4.00 post free to the U.K. and £4.60 overseas.

Books

A Catalogue of Unfortunate Incidents – Inquests and Death by Misadventure in 18th Century Somerset and Surrounds. - £6.00 including UK postage

Please make cheques payable to The Friends of Somerset Archives and send to 102 Monks Dale, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3JH

Thank you to Paul for this kind gesture