GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Chairman's notes

Alan Fear

For those of you who missed our annual general meeting on November 1, here's a quick rundown of what happened. After the AGM business, Guy Litchfield gave us an excellent talk about tree diseases, reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

Committee – The AGM re-elected all of the committee, all unopposed: you have to put up with us for another year.

Finance – The accounts were circulated, and it appears we are spending more than we have coming in. So it was agreed that as from 2014, the annual subscription for the society will go up to a minimum of £7.50. We are sorry about this, but it has to be done. *[Nearly as far back as the foundation of the society in 1971 the subscription has been only £5. —Ed.]*

Trees – Last year's tree-planting was very poor. We were out doing jobs, but I'm sorry to say that some weeks there were only two or three of us. So this year we will be out planting only for good causes in and around Glastonbury; I will not be out every week.

The winter rains put back our tree-planting for 2014. Our supplier, Kelways at Langport, was surrounded by water, and Kelways' nursery at Honiton was also cut off by the floods.

We planted two hedges, one for Chris Hecks at West Pennard and the other for Mr and Mrs Cannon at the Old Schoolhouse, Parbrook—a total of 500 plants. Thanks to those people who helped me. The grand total of plantings by the Conservation Society in its 43 years is now 48,500.

Footpaths – We plan to walk as much of our footpath network as we can, to survey the state of the stiles, gates and the footpaths themselves. If any members could help with this, which can be done at your leisure or pleasure, please contact Nathan Pritchard or any one of the committee. (See contact details on page 8.)

Glastonbury in Bloom has a new organization this year with Ian Tucker at the helm, and new plans to brighten the town. The Conservation Society was asked to adopt Paradise Lane—to keep it clear and plant wildflowers along it.

A email request went out in early May to all members, inviting volunteers to turn out on Saturday May 10 to help plant nursery-grown wildflower plugs along Paradise Lane.

Coombe House, August 1 – Keep the date for the annual evening in Alan Gloak's splendid gardens. See page 2.

St Ben's has a new look within

St Benedict's Church reopened in May after half a year of major works inside, including a new floor, while the congregation met at St Ben's School across the road for worship. The open space will better lend itself to activities such as concerts. At the time of this photo, the new movable chairs had not yet arrived.

Full story in next newsletter.

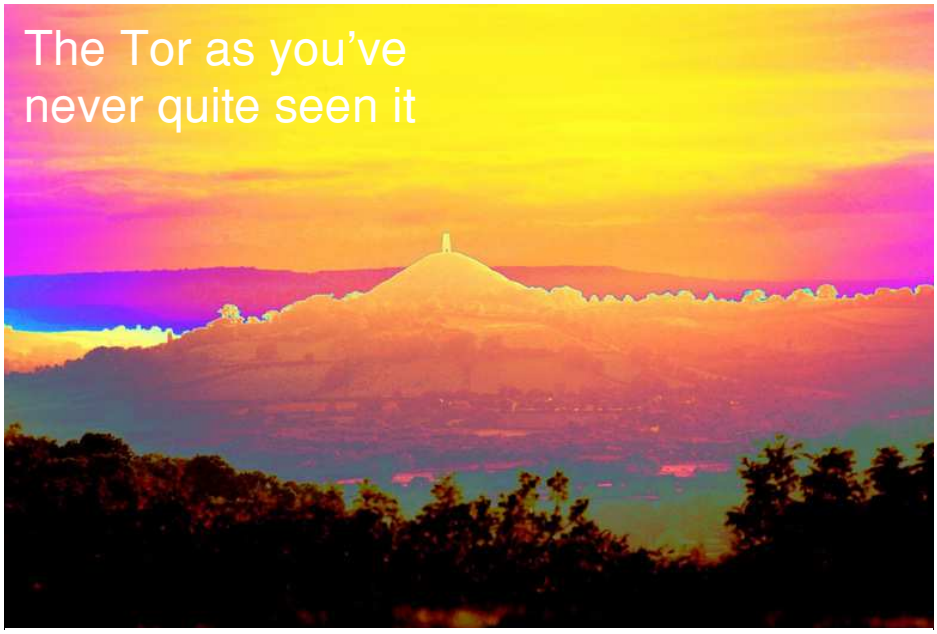
Wildflowers along Paradise Lane *Ian Tucker*

A group of eight Conservation Society members (counting the dog) met on a Saturday morning to plant wildflowers along Paradise Lane. The plugs had begun as seeds planted by Sweetacre nursery—poppies, foxgloves, corn marigold, cornflower and ox-eye daisy.

This is part of a four-year plan by Glastonbury in Bloom to have the town covered in wildflowers by 2018 for the centenary of the First World War armistice.

The Conservation Society is to concentrate on Paradise Lane, which leads from the top of Wick Hollow and down the hill to the old oaks Gog and Magog and the campsite there. The path is so popular among locals and visitors alike that it has deteriorated through overuse. Besides the planting, the plan is to improve the surface and possibly the entrance gate and stile. This is work in progress but well worth a walk on a sunny evening.

Volunteers planting for Glastonbury in Bloom: Denise Michell, Malgosia Chelminska and John Mitchell at the war memorial.



Michael Mathias admits an obsession for photographing the Tor in all its moods from all angles, ever since he retired as editor of the Central Somerset Gazette. He showed some of his portfolio to the Conservation Society on March 21, including his more recent fun with digital psychedelia.

A Knight in Glastonbury: first night *John Brunsdon*

Mayor in May 2011.

The "world premiere" of the film *A Knight in Glastonbury* was witnessed by Conservation Society members on March 28.

Bill Knight, a prominent Glastonian and a founder member of our society, treated us to an entertaining video that recorded highlights of his year of office as mayor . The movie shows the mayor's parade, complete with band, and the reception in the Town Hall, with Bill's young son William fully participating.

Bill proudly showed us his floral displays in Marchant's Yard by the cottages he restored, the scene of concerts by Burtle Silver Band. (This year's concert was on June 7.)

He takes us into Northload Street, passing the award-winning family fish shop with exposed medieval jetty, into the Market Place commenting on its former occupants, and then up the High Street giving us a rare glimpse inside the Masonic Hall.

We are also taken a few doors along from the chip shop to the Who'd'a' Thought It Inn—Bill's transformation some 25 years ago of the old Lamb pub. Nostalgically, Bill shows us his parents on holiday with him as a lad and other family members; we also see annual flooding between Glastonbury and Street, fish supplies arriving at the old railway station and much else.

Bill in uniform days.

Young Bill with his parents at Land's End.

This 45-minute video is well filmed with good sound reproduction and is altogether commendable—credit Keith Fakenbridge of Ashacre Films in Archers Way. Our thanks to John Coles for his projection skills on the night at St John's Centre (which on weekdays houses the Bay Tree Cafe).

Tree diseases increase as global trade imports pests *Adrian Pearse*

In his illustrated talk at the Conservation Society's AGM on November 1, Guy Litchfield of the Sussex agricultural college at Plumpton outlined how the trees that once covered all of Britain were reduced to today's level.

And now the huge modern expansion of global trade is bringing new threats to our trees in the form of pests arriving from abroad.

Britain's tree population developed by a process of succession after the last ice age. About 5,000 years ago, rising sea levels cut Britain off from Europe, resulting in fewer native species of trees than on the continent: Britain has only 33 native species, including just three conifers.

Neolithic peoples began the process of deforestation at about the same period as Britain became an island. They cleared land for farming and used timber for other purposes, and developed coppicing as a management technique. The Romans accelerated the process, but also introduced various new tree species.

Thus from 1000 BC to AD 1000, tree cover fell from 80% of the land surface to 15%. The following centuries brought additional demands, and by 1900 woodland cover fell to 5%. During the First World War, a third of the remaining timber was used. After the war an afforestation programme began, and the Forestry Commission was set up in 1919.

Globalizaion of trade in recent years has brought a significant rise in tree disease and pest threats from abroad.

Chalara, a fungal disease, threatens to wipe out the ash. Yet there is hope that the ash trees here in the Southwest, being derived from southern European stock, may prove more resistant than ash strains in other parts of Britain that derive from northern Europe.

Horse chestnuts are being attacked by the leaf-miner moth, which can be serious if several cycles of attacks occur in one year, and by a bleeding canker or slime flux caused by bacteria.

Sweet chestnut is vulnerable to chestnut blight, a devastating fungus.

The caterpillar of the oak processionary moth can strip the tree of leaves, but the pest has so far been contained. Acute oak decline, caused by bacteria, is a more serious threat.

Pines and firs are vulnerable to red-band needle blight. *Phytophthora ramonum* is a fungus devastating larch trees. It is able to transmute into new strains and thus also threatens other conifers, beech, oak, and both chestnuts.

Other pests include the oak pinhole borer and pinetree lappet moth, which have arrived in Britain. Serious pests approaching these shores are the Asian longhorn beetle, capable of attacking many species, the eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle, the emerald ash borer and the citrus longhorn beetle.

Date for Coombe House gardens

✺ **August 1, Friday**—Alan Gloak kindly invites members of Glastonbury Conservation Society again to enjoy an evening in the splendid gardens of Coombe House, Bovetown, from 6:30 to 8:30pm. In the event of rain the event will be cancelled.

Last year's evening had to be cancelled at short notice because of the death on the very day of Colin Wells-Brown, the gardens' resident designer.

Postal history

This was Glastonbury's post office in 1897—the building that today houses Barclays Bank. The town's telephone exchange was behind.

The photo was among those shown by Allen Cotton in an illustrated talk to the Conservation Society on January 31 about the postal history of Glastonbury. It was full of fascinating detail about the sorting systems and prices and postmarks of years gone by. Allen, from West Bradley, is writing a book on the subject.

Meanwhile, the present post office farther up the High Street, a Grade II listed building (75 years old last year—Newsletter 140) has had an interior refurbishment. Sub-postmaster Gerald Cross said a replacement is coming for the characteristic overhanging sign that a carnival vehicle destroyed in November.

Band of neighbours buys Bushy Coombe to keep it beautiful *John Brunsdon*

Bushy Coombe is one of Glastonbury's beauty spots, much used by folk visiting the Tor on foot. Seats have been there for 100 years, maintained by the local authority.

Our society has cooperated with the planting and obtained a grant from the country council for improving the footpath right-of-way to meet increased usage as the preferred off-road route to the Tor. Because of the gradient and increased heavy rain, the footpath needs ongoing attention.

The 13 acres, however, are privately owned marginal agricultural land—not common land with the right to roam. The previous owner, Rory Weightman, allowed occasional wider use of the land but recently sold 8½ acres to a consortium of local residents who wish to see the coombe continue as a beautiful area.

This means it has to be managed, which involves cattle grazing and restricting the growth of brambles. Failure to do this will actually threaten biodiversity—for instance, blue butterflies will reduce in numbers if their food plant, a species of vetch, is overshadowed by brambles.

Some older trees need surgery. Sadly, another fine beech fell in neighbouring Chalice Hill during the Christmas gale.

Jim Nagel adds: The main instigator of the purchase was James Godden, who lives at 20 Bushy Coombe Gardens. He roused a group of 16, mostly residents of his close and some in Bovetown whose properties abut the coombe, to form Bushy Coombe Land Trust Ltd, a not-for-profit company. They raised £85,000, submitted the winning tender in the auction run by Cooper & Tanner, and took ownership in October.

"We basically want to see the land farmed, cows put back in, brambles managed, and brought back to productive pasture," he said. In March they paid for brushcutters to do a drastic cutback of brambles, which stirred complaints from sections of the community for the great brown patches that resulted. "It was done within the timescales allowed for conservation without disturbing nesting birds," he said. "We will do more in the autumn and keep on top of it. We think it will take several years."

This 1912 photo shows townsfolk sitting on the bench at the top of the footpath to soak in the view over the woods (what is now Dod Lane houses), the town and the Levels in the distance.

Recently the view from the same bench became obscured by overgrowth.

In the 1980s the coombe had a mass of primroses. (Photo by Peter Curtis)

Chronic mud between Bulwarks Lane and the top of the Bushy Coombe path needs attention.

Desmond Miller, a neighbour, said: "When we moved here [30 years ago], the coombe was a mass of primroses at this time of the year. I don't know what has happened to them, whether a farmer sprayed them or what."

The new company formed a steering committee with James doing the first turn as spokesperson. Anyone wishing to assist the new owners in conserving the coombe should contact him on 83 3420.

James, an architect, specializes in the design and construction of timber-framed buildings. The environmental visitor centre at Carymoor is one of his projects. (*greenoakstructures.co.uk*)

2004 article – Rory Weightman wrote an article in Newsletter 111 when he bought Bushy Coombe from Graham Slocombe, who farmed at Edgarley. The article is reproduced on the website, *glastonburyconservation.org.uk* (click the link halfway down in the right-hand column). He still owns the top few acres of the coombe and lives in the gothic barn he converted.

Wisdom on the way

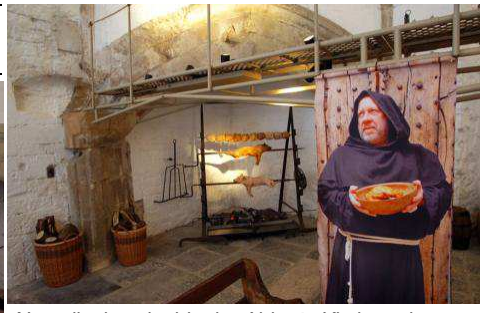
Sage words from Nathan Pritchard, the footpaths coordinator on the Consoc committee: *The footpath and you are One, merely different expressions of creation. Walk gently on the footpath as you travel through life!*

Thatched house in new hands

The former home of the late doctors Bill and Susan Openshaw—the thatched house at 101 Bovetown—has new owners: Gary and Suzanne McConnell. He runs a water-installation business at Shepton Mallet.

One of their first projects was to clear the overgrown Victorian pond garden behind the house. The pond, a haven for wildlife at the top end of Bushy Coombe, is fed by springs coming out of the hillside. Its outflow becomes the Lambrook, which flows under Silver Street on its way to the Brue.

A most unusual kitchen makeover



New displays inside the Abbot's Kitchen show what was cooked and how. The reproductions of Tudor kitchen equipment are authentic.

The 14th-century Abbot's Kitchen reopened this spring after major conservation work. "Along with the Lady Chapel, this has been the most significant and comprehensive programme of conservation at the Abbey in the last 100 years," said the Abbey's director, Janet Bell.

Peter Brears, a specialist in traditional English cookery, advised on the new displays inside the building. He used historical evidence found inside the kitchen itself and his extensive knowledge of other medieval kitchens—among which the Abbot's Kitchen is a rare architectural masterpiece.

Remains of two stone piers in the north and south walls inside the kitchen suggested there may have been an arcaded gallery from which the kitchener, the head cook, could supervise the staff. Reconstructing the gallery was not possible because no evidence exists for its original appearance. But a modern gantry was installed between the piers to indicate the position and size of the gallery. It also carries the lighting and overhead heaters to prevent any damage to the medieval walls.

The work began in 2013 with a high-tech survey of the Abbot's Kitchen that produced a three-dimensional digital model. It helped to understand the octagonal building's complex dimensions, volume and structure. This was the first detailed record of the building since Augustus Pugin undertook a survey in the 1830s.

The survey identified vulnerable stonework, which was stabilized by professional conservators. At the same time, archaeologists recorded and analysed the building and its site.

A short film about the conservation project was commissioned from Somerset Film, a company based in Bridgwater. The film contains insights into how and why the Abbot's Kitchen is so important to conserve and includes interviews with the specialists involved.

A cookbook with two dozen authentic dishes of the period compiled by celebrity chefs such as Rick Stein sells in the Abbey shop for £5—proceeds to the "Rescue our Ruins" appeal.

'Stone and scribe' runs all summer

"Shakespeare's sayings" by John Rowlands-Pritchard

An exhibition of calligraphy by John Rowlands-Pritchard and stone-carving by Kate Semple opened at the Abbey on June 7. Both are Somerset artists. It runs until September 28.

More Abbey events this summer:

- **The Abbot's Table** – A conference about medieval food on Friday **June 13**, hosted by the Abbey at the Town Hall. On the next day is a "food fayre" in the Abbot's Kitchen field.
- **The life of Christ** – Three-hour play with enormous cast, described as "a multi-sensory experience ... full of excitement, joy, laughter and wonder". Fri-Sat **June 20** at 5pm, **June 21** at 6pm, free to the community.
- **Pilgrimages** – This year's Anglican and Catholic dates are **June 21**, **July 13**.
- **Outdoor drama** – *Twelfth Night* on **July 7**; *Treasure Island* on **July 29**; *Macbeth* on **August 22**. (Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* was played on June 2 by a troupe touring by bicycle, called the Handlebards!)
- **Extra openings**, exclusive to Full and Life members of the Abbey, take place on the early mornings of the first Thursdays in June, July and August.

More on the Abbey's website: *glastonburyabbey.com*

St Dunstan's Christ reappears as embroidery

The exquisite embroidery (right) by Helen Stevens, an internationally renowned embroidery designer, was the centrepiece of the exhibition "Dunstan's Needle" in the Abbey this spring. She based it on a picture of Christ (left) that was probably drawn by St Dunstan himself when he was Abbot of Glastonbury, 945–962. It is found in St Dunstan's Classbook, *which dates from around 950 (Bodleian Library, Oxford). The Latin writing identifies the little monk kneeling at the feet of Christ with Dunstan.*

Helen is sure the 10th-century drawing was intended *to be used for an embroidery design: "To the embroiderer's eye this sketch is the very essence of an embroidery pattern—every line the embroiderer needs, every nuance of fluidity, even a suggestion (if you know where to look) of technique and stitch. I took the design and stitched it."*

Her website (helenMstevens.co.uk) has a virtual tour of the Abbey exhibition and downloadable tutorials and details of her books and artwork. Her interest in medieval embroidery has previously been inspired by archaeological material, for example when working with the Mary Rose Trust and later in a project on Anglo-Saxon textiles with the British Museum. She teaches at the Royal School of Needlework.

Glastonbury shows strongly in awards for development *John Brunsdon*

The Mendip planning department held this year's award ceremony at East Pennard House in the annex building which won an award last year. Awards are given to recent building works which show particular merit in various categories.

Ian Tucker as chairman of the Beckery Island Trust and myself, Nancy and Charles Hollinrake as board members were invited for the successful restoration of Abbot Bere's mill at Northover—which is now a small cosmetics outlet specializing in natural ingredients. In the event, the trust was highly commended in the conservation section.

As the evening progressed it was revealed how many Glastonbury building works had received awards or were runners-up in the different categories:

The new owners of Bovetown House won kudos for their sensitive restoration work. Formerly called The Hollies, it had been a Millfield School boarding house for many years. Until the 1950s it was the home and surgery of Dr Pinniger (see Newsletter 111).

Bovetown House (formerly called The Hollies), Coombe Brook off Lambrook Street, Forseys' conversion of the Becks premises at Lowerside Lane, 50 Chilkwell Street (a derelict cottage), the chapel in Silver Street, just to name a few. And there were others, such as the Howdens unit at the Morland site.

All this represents a huge investment and confidence in our town, especially in our old buildings. The good work continues with a new owner restoring the "Bauhaus" factory building at the Morland site.

Likewise, plans have been submitted for works at the Baily's factory, which may take a long time to implement. Let's hope the plans for Ruth Hillard's old house, 21-23 Benedict Street, go through smoothly after a lot of consultation with planning officers.

Chilkwell Street concerns raised at Local Plan enquiry *JB*

The enquiry into the Local Plan took place at Kilver Court in Shepton Mallet. I attended in order to emphasize the importance of resolving the heavy traffic using Chilkwell Street as part of the A361 trunk road—the designated route for lorries from the Mendip quarries to the M5.

I stressed the town council's concern that the intent "to work with other authorities to reroute heavy traffic" should actually happen and not just result in more signs and road markings.

The A361 after all does run through a tight residential area past key heritage and tourist assets, and parts of it are very substandard.

Concern remains that the eastern end of Ashwell Lane remains closed to vehicles following a landslip. Traffic has to use the western junction with the A361 near the head of Coursing Batch, which is far from ideal. The county highway officials consider that a radical correction of the landslip would be too expensive to be justified.

A similar landslip occurred at Tor Cottage in Wellhouse Lane, which was quickly dealt with in the 1970s.

Christmas gale: beech blocks path

Clifford Gould

Peter Goolden (and his sons Ed and Rupert, not in the photo) cleared the Bushy Coombe footpath on Christmas Day and Boxing Day so that the multitudes could go up the Tor. The ancient and huge beeches on our land (Chalice Hill) have been coming down over the last 10 years from old age and disease—sad, as they are an important feature of the Glastonbury landscape.

During the Christmas holiday it was difficult to contact anyone who might be responsible for the safety of this path: Mendip council has not renewed its fee for out-of-hours assistance so there is none. Patricia and I were away, so the Goolden family, our neighbours, voluntarily got on with the job. Please acknowledge their selfless hard work!

A southerly gale blew this beech northwards so that it fell across the path. All the previous ones fell south down the hill. We are monitoring the trees still standing for any further damage.

The whole lot will go in due course, and we would value opinion about their replacement. Forty years ago my father and I planted sweet chestnuts at the bottom of the hill under the umbrella of the beeches, and an oak farther up, which squirrels are destroying. Over the four decades we have planted about 1,000 trees in and around Chalice Hill.

Avalon Marshes festival in July: 'Bringing the landscape to life'

The second Avalon Marshes festival runs for a fortnight in July at sites all around the Somerset wetlands. There will be talks, bike rides, picnics, photo and art exhibitions and activities for all ages.

The BBC radio presenter Chris Sperring launches the festival on **July 12** at 11am at the Red Brick Building on the old Morland site in Glastonbury and will be there all day until 5pm to lead walks onto the nearby meadows and marshes.

The following Saturday, **July 19**, offers an introduction to "geocaching" at the Westhay nature reserve—a hi-tech treasure hunt designed to immerse you in the landscape. Also on offer that day are canoe tours around the secret world of a reed bed, at the Ham Wall reserve.

For a full list of the varied events until the final-day family picnic on July 26, see *www.avalonmarshes.org*

Antiquarian talks *Adrian Pearse*

An evening of Beere, the Abbey's great builder

Richard Beere was born in the mid-1450s to a local family and was possibly educated abroad, Adam Stout said in his talk to the Antiquarian Society in October. Beere became a deacon in 1479 and was installed as Abbot of Glastonbury in 1494 by Bishop Foxe, in place of Prior Thomas Wason, who had been selected by the monks.

Foxe was a friend and supporter of Henry VII, who was anxious to appoint those favouring the Tudor dynasty. Beere was certainly loyal, providing the royal army with shelter in the Abbey precinct, and Henry VII with lodgings during Perkin Warbeck's revolt of 1497. The king's arms were also displayed alongside the west gate to the Abbey.

In 1503–04 Beere headed an embassy to Rome to arrange the marriage of Catherine of Aragon and Prince Henry. After his return Beere, an able administrator, concentrated on managing the Abbey estates and on building projects, such as the saltire arches in the crossing to prevent the collapse of the central tower, as well as the Loretto and Edgar chapels, Sharpham Park house, and probably the crypt beneath the Lady Chapel.

He promoted Glastonbury's claims to the bones of Dunstan, commissioning a feretory for the relics, and supporting his patron Foxe in the latter's dispute with Archbishop Wareham about Dunstan's relics—Canterbury Cathedral also claimed to have them.

Beere undertook a perambulation of the Twelve Hides of Glastonbury *[the Conservation Society led a walk of his route last summer]*. He took close interest in the cults of St Joseph of Arimathea and St Benignus, but he did not promote Glastonbury's Arthurian traditions, possibly because his friend, the historian Polydor Virgil, was sceptical of them.

Joseph of Arimathea was a different matter, however, and a series of miracles of healing at Glastonbury, together with Melkin's Prophecy, were used to promote the cult. The crypt—and, significantly, the well—provided a focus for pilgrims.

Beere commissioned copies of John of Glastonbury, and some were made on the printing presses that were new technology in Beere's time. The holy thorn and walnut tree make their appearance at this time, though they were not connected to the Arimathean traditions for another century. The staff of Joseph—later of course a thorn staff—is seen in the sculpture and glass of this period.

The Abbot rebuilt the church of St Benignus *[today known as St Benedict's church]*. Significantly, it is in line with the Abbey church and Lady Chapel, thus connecting the cults of Benignus and Joseph. This connection can be seen in the series of roof corbels in the church.

Beere died in 1525 and was buried in the Abbey church.

The following reports cover past Antiquarian Society lectures for which we had no space at the time. One further report, *Glass furnaces at the Saxon monastery*, still will not fit; it 's online at glastonburyconservation.org.uk.

Glastonbury as the 'Second Rome'

Glastonbury is often viewed in terms of esotericism and independence in terms of the connection with the mother church, but there are also strong strands of dependency and orthodoxy running to its very origins —Tim Hopkinson-Ball explored this thesis in his lecture to Glastonbury Antiquarian Society.

The earliest evidence from the Abbey site shows occupation in the Roman and sub-Roman periods and maintenance of contact with the Byzantine world. When the original British lost control, the Saxon king Caedwal was baptized in Rome.

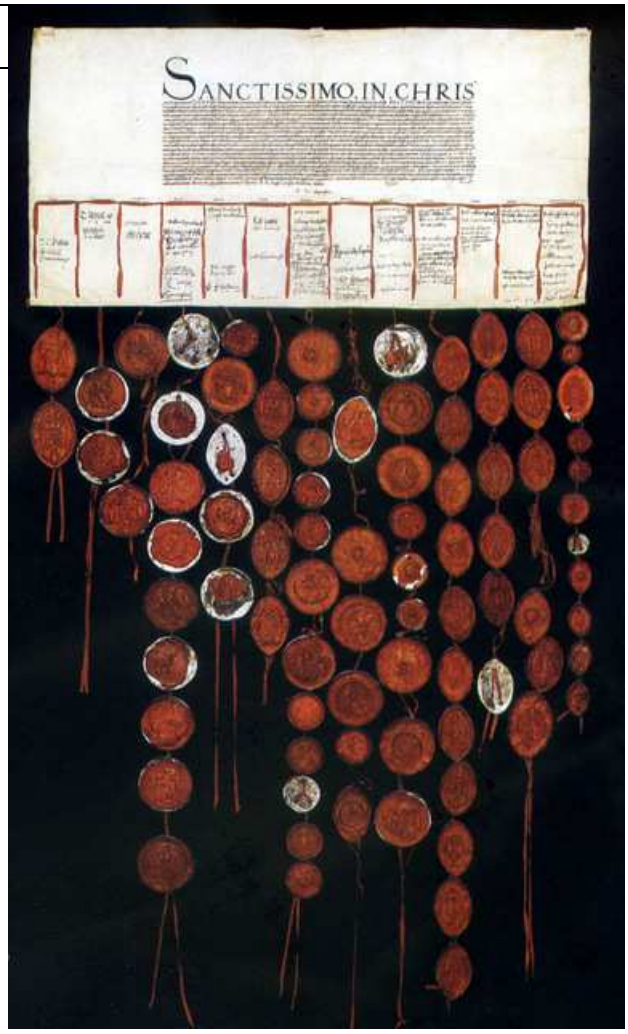
Ine, the King of Wessex 696–726, also went to Rome. He became an enthusiast for the cult of St Peter and founded a hospice in the Saxon quarter, the *Schola Saxona*. The hospice had a church of which St Mary was patron. King Ine built the first stone church at Glastonbury, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. It is conceived as very much an outpost of the Roman church.

In the early middle ages, the journey to Rome took six weeks to three months and could be hazardous. But many, such as Dunstan, and later abbots and monks, made the journey. Papal letters and privileges show that contact and business between Rome and Glastonbury was commonplace.

The connection with Rome and dependence on the Roman church continued the heritage of an origin in Romano-British Christianity. The role of Rome in the liturgy was absolute, and seen in the great store of relics at Glastonbury, one of the largest collections in England. Many of the relics directly connected to the city, so that a pilgrimage to Glastonbury was seen as almost a form of pilgrimage to Rome itself. Glastonbury was called *Roma Secunda* by William of Malmesbury. Glastonbury did not produce any heretical books, and rather had a very impressive library containing many orthodox works. Contact continued until the Reformation.

Rome provided inspiration to visitors from Glastonbury such as Abbot Beere. He saw the architecture and works such as Michelangelo's *Pietà [which was made in 1498–99, so it was new when Beere saw it in 1503]*. On his return to Glastonbury, Beere embarked upon a building spree including the Loretto and crypt chapels.

In the political struggles of the age, Glastonbury's origins and status were used to bolster England's independence. But in fact Glastonbury never challenged



This is the document sent in July 1530 asking Pope Clement to annul Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which Tim Hopkinson-Ball was able to view in the Vatican archives while on a pilgrimage to Rome. The parchment is three feet wide, and red silk ribbons attach 81 wax seals, including that of Richard Whiting, the last Abbot of Glastonbury. Ironically, only 26 years earlier the previous abbot, Richard Beere, had gone to Rome to see the pope to arrange the marriage.

Rome's authority, and was perhaps rewarded by the beatification of three of its martyrs in 1895. [2013 May 17]

Secular and monastic communities

Jon Cannon, the writer of the BBC documentary *Cathedral: the great English cathedrals*, as guest speaker at the Antiquarian Society provided an overview of how the two models for cathedrals—secular and monastic—operated and how their architecture was affected.

A long process of rivalry went on between Wells and Glastonbury—in the late 11th and early 12th century the Wells Cathedral chapter was relocated to Bath, and the remaining monastic community wanted to recover their status, so the rebuilding of the cathedral was perhaps a form of architectural propaganda. In the early 13th century there were attempts to make Glastonbury a cathedral, but by 1220 Wells had the upper hand.

There are many similarities between the two buildings—both had three towers and double-aisled transepts, which are very rare, and both contain a panoply of Lady Chapels. Building periods were concurrent but the styles adopted were very different—Glastonbury built the western Lady Chapel in an anachronistic Romanesque style, while the nave at Wells was in a much more contemporary gothic design.

The different designs have their roots in early church history. Monastic communities were cut off from the world and came together to live by a set of rules; secular communities engaged with the world and operated with colleges of priests. Both serve a church, and both can have a bishop.

Their buildings readily demonstrate these features. Durham has a complex on either side of the cathedral: the monks lived around a cloister at the tip of the peninsula, and the bishop and priests on the town side. Salisbury was a collegiate cathedral with a cloister—not all secular cathedrals have one. About half the English cathedrals were also monasteries.

All secular cathedrals had a vicars' close, as at Wells, which had derived from the need for resident deputies (vicars) for canons who were absent on business or administrative functions. The system was flexible and innovative, and resulted in the development of colleges which became the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Minster churches and chantries also had colleges. Secular cathedrals have a chapter house, usually hexagonal in shape, as a central feature, containing seats for the canons, whose income came from separate areas or prebends. Monastic chapter houses were part of standard layouts and adjoined the cloister, and all monks were members.

Another contrasting feature of secular and monastic cathedrals is seen in the architecture of west fronts. Elaborate screens are a feature of Wells, Lincoln, Salisbury, Lichfield, Exeter and York. By contrast, monastic cathedrals have plain west fronts, often with a large west window, as at Durham, Canterbury, Norwich, Worcester, Ely, Rochester and Winchester.

Inside, secular cathedrals tend to be of a single build, as at Wells (except the east end), Lichfield, and Exeter—all gothic and vaulted. Monastic cathedrals are often not vaulted: Durham, Norwich and Ely are Romanesque, and parts of Winchester and Rochester were rebuilt in gothic style. Worcester, Canterbury and Bath are gothic, but show clear stages of construction. Rebuilding in a uniform style was more common in secular cathedrals, as their institutions were more flexible than their monastic counterparts. [2013 Feb 15]

Recent archaeology in Somerset

Development pressures have caused a large amount of archaeological investigation to be undertaken in Somerset, enabling better interpretation of the evolution of landscape and settlement in various parts of the county, Robert Croft told the Antiquarian Society.

Research at Lyng and Athelney, lost "islands" of Somerset, was revealing aspects of the prehistoric landscape, before rivers were diverted in the mediaeval era. Lyng, one of three Saxon burghs in the central wetlands, possibly had a planned urban layout. Test pits have produced large amounts of Saxo-Norman pottery. Defensive lines around Athelney island were based on Iron Age works, and at Aller, which must have been an important Saxon location, trial digs had found numerous features from the Bronze and Iron Ages. At Greylake, analysis of human bones found in the 1920s showed them to be from 8,000 BC, and the associated non-cave finds are unique in Britain.

Proposed construction work at Hinkley Point has required archaeological work over a considerable area, including geophysical surveys and several hundred sampling trenches, as well as re-interpretation of surviving features such as Wick Barrow and Pixies Mound.

Investigations in advance of the quarry extension at Ham Mill produced evidence of Mesolithic activity at the bottom of the Iron Age rampart, and at Bridgwater the slipping of the West Quay retaining wall had enabled study of the fill around the castle foundations.

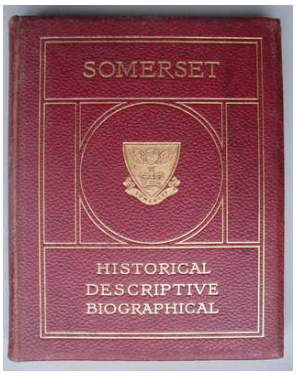
Other work was taking place at Fairfield (at Stogursey in west Somerset) to examine the landscape development and sites of the garden towers, and also at Bruton Abbey. At Castle House, Taunton, extensive alterations had enabled the dating of the roof to 1483.

In the Glastonbury area the Avalon Marshes Landscape Partnership, covering an area 12 miles across from Westhay to Baltonsborough, and 6 miles from north to south, will examine wildlife and cultural heritage, including historic features, and involve many aspects of archaeological research, Mr Croft said.

Audience members were keen to hear results of ongoing work at the Butleigh villa. This will be the basis of a future lecture, they hoped. [2012 Oct 19]

Glastonbury and the Shroud of Turin

A sumptuously produced but now rarely seen book—*Somerset, Historical, Descriptive, Biographical*—appeared in 1908, written by Thomas Escot. It



mentioned a connection between the Shroud of Christ and Glastonbury through the agency of Joseph of Arimathea. As Paul Ashdown told the Antiquarian Society, here is a reference to a legend seemingly lost.

Escot, born near Taunton to an ancient Somerset family, became aware of the legend during his childhood in the 1850s. The Shroud of Turin was not photographed until 1878, when negatives first revealed the famous image.

Paul Ashdown in a paper in the *Downside Review* in 2003 had touched on the matter and its connection with recusant tradition, and resonances with *Melkin's Chronicle* in John of Glastonbury. Two mediaeval references to the shroud and a connection to Glastonbury have surfaced: one written about 1200 in France makes the link, and a second, a life of Joseph of Arimathea written in 1502 [quite possibly by a monk of Glastonbury], fits with the cult of Joseph prevalent at this time.

Adam Stout also suggests links between the Shroud story, the story of the cloth of Syndonia and the gospel of Nicodemus, produced as chapbooks in 1775. They derive from earlier versions, which contain detail found only in the Glastonbury branch of the tradition. [2012 September 21]

John Morland, 1930–2014 *John Brunsdon*

John served on the Conservation Society's committee in its early days and was our official photographer during his many tree-planting sessions over many years.

John Morland died peacefully at home at Cavendish Lodge, with his family around him, on January 20. John was one of the town's endearing characters. Our thoughts are with Jan and the family.

He was born in 1930 at Ynyswitrin, the family seat in Wick Hollow, Glastonbury, to Undine and Brian Morland (Brian was the younger brother of Stephen). After National Service, where he gained not only an Army commission but also his dear wife Jan (née Blagdon), he eventually joined the Morland tannery firm with responsibility for production of sheepskin coats and other items. John and Jan lived happily at their house above Wick Hollow with lovely views and garden, where John personally planted a small woodland. They both excelled at entertaining and sharing with others.

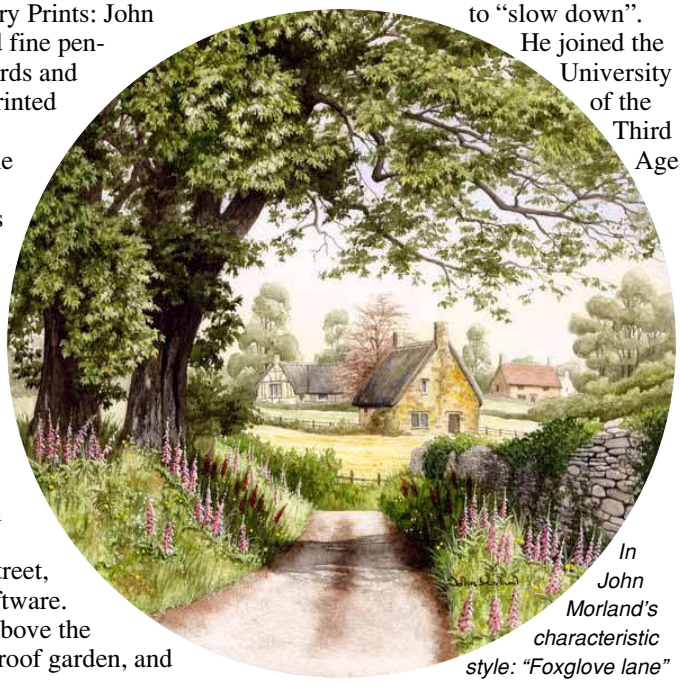
John suffered poor health and left the family firm to pursue other interests. They set up Glastonbury Prints: John industriously produced fine pen-and-ink drawings of birds and flowers, which were printed and then coloured by trained outworkers. The business peaked at a thousand framed prints per week. Many delightful Glastonbury scenes exist; another range of paintings depicts golf courses. He won the Royal Horticultural Society gold medal for his studies in flora.

In 1975 he and Jan opened Glastonbury Galleries at 10 High Street, selling pictures and giftware. They lived in the flat above the shop. Jan enjoyed her roof garden, and both were involved in the influential local "Chamber of Commerce". Their fortunes fell, both with the demise of the old Morland tannery business and of slow sales of their own Glastonbury prints in the recession of 1979–82.

(Ruth, their youngest daughter, still runs a "reincarnated" Glastonbury Galleries in part of the premises behind 10 High Street. Their other daughter, Julia, lives in Congresbury and their son Robert in Cambridgeshire.)

John and Jan moved to a bungalow at the bottom of Bushy Coombe in Dod Lane, where Jan had a splendid gardenful of pot plants, and John developed his skills as a watercolour artist. His style was precise and detailed, and he worked hard to meet the demand from clients. I have a painting of my house, "The Hermitage", which is a focus of interest to visitors.

Lately John ran art courses, as he had to "slow down". He joined the University of the Third Age and led groups of watercolour painters. At the beginning of 2013, suffering from Parkinson's disease, he and Jan moved from Dod Lane to Cavendish Lodge to be closer to the centre of town without steps or the responsibility of a large garden.



In John Morland's characteristic style: "Foxglove lane"

Both Jan and John served on the Conservation Society committee in the past, Jan as secretary. John was in the tree-planting team for many years. Importantly, he was our official photographer and as a result we have a good record of the many plantings undertaken. He then made a folder of photos and mounted the best on display boards, which we continue to use at exhibitions.

John enjoyed life to the full—with his family, fly-fishing, holidays in Scotland, steam railways and his varied work and the whole living environment, but mostly helping his fellow humans, especially when in need of company or attention. We will miss him so much.

A memorial service for John and burial of his ashes took place at the Friends' Meeting House in Street on February 19. Refreshments followed at the Red Brick Building—which was an appropriate venue: John and Jan had supported this redevelopment of the old Morland tannery into an arts centre, and back in November he celebrated his 83rd birthday there, where he had worked for so many years.

Frank Naish: oldest cider-maker *Mary Gryspeerdt*

At 89 Frank Naish, of Piltown Farm in West Pennard, was reportedly Britain's oldest working cider-maker. He was born at the farm in 1924 and died on November 29 in 2013.

He was educated at the Wesleyan Chapel school in West Pennard and later went to Oakmead School in Wells, taking the train from Pennard station.

He began helping his father make cider at a very young age and continued for many years with his late brother Harold. They became something of an institution: customers came from far and near to purchase cider.

The farmhouse was lit by oil lamps and candles, until the brothers finally decided only in 2003 to have electricity installed.

In 2010 Frank was recorded by Ann Heeley for the Rural Life Museum oral archive. He talked about his grafting methods, cider-apple varieties and equipment. The Naishes produced prodigious quantities of cider, regularly 8,000 gallons a year from their own apples.

In recent years Frank joined the Conservation Society and had two orchards planted with old varieties, including a very big orchard with 100 trees.

editorial service Jim Nagel

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