



HERITAGE MATTERS

THE HISTORIC BUILDING OWNERS' NEWSLETTER

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Buckland St Mary Wellhouse restored

Somerset County Council's Conservation Team has recently completed the repair of the grade II listed well house at Buckland St Mary, on the edge of the Blackdown Hills.

Built of local chert stone with a splendid Hamstone tile roof the structure, dated 1876, houses a drinking fountain. It is of a similar date to the adjacent church and village school, and is a key feature of the conservation area.

Outward spread of the roof had resulted in cracks in the masonry, exacerbated by extensive ivy growth. The roof has been dismantled and re-laid, the walls repointed in lime mortar and the decorative finial repaired. South Somerset District Council and Buckland St Mary Parish Council contributed to the cost of the work, and this project is a good example of what can be achieved when several organisations work together.



Contacts

Feedback and suggestions

We hope you enjoy this edition of Heritage Matters. We welcome your comments and suggestions of topics that you would like to see covered in future issues. Please send your comments and ideas to Alison Henry, South Somerset District Council, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT, Telephone 01935 462648 or email: alison.henry@southsomerset.gov.uk

For conservation and planning queries please contact your local authority.

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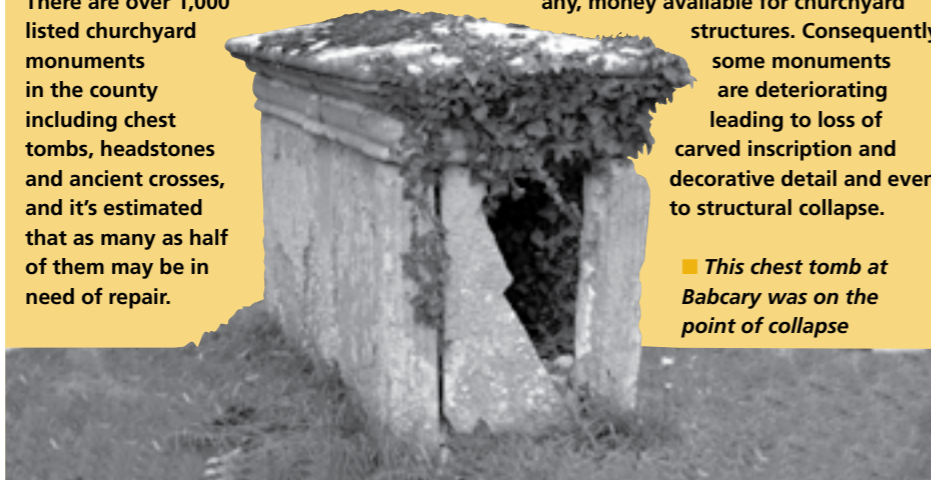
Grants for Churchyard Monuments

Churchyard monuments are the most common type of listed structure at risk from deterioration, and a new grant scheme is being launched in Somerset to help with the cost of essential conservation work.

Churchyard monuments are an important part of our architectural and historic heritage and contribute to the familiar landscape of many villages and towns. There are over 1,000 listed churchyard monuments in the county including chest tombs, headstones and ancient crosses, and it's estimated that as many as half of them may be in need of repair.

Conservation work to such structures is often comparatively inexpensive, but many parishes struggle to cope with maintaining the main church building so there is little, if any, money available for churchyard structures. Consequently some monuments are deteriorating leading to loss of carved inscription and decorative detail and even to structural collapse.

■ *This chest tomb at Babcary was on the point of collapse*



■ *This monument in the churchyard at Broadway was structurally unstable*

The Somerset Churchyard Monument Grant Scheme will enable essential conservation work to be carried out to many of these monuments to halt further deterioration. The scheme is supported by a generous donation from St Andrews's Conservation Trust and from Somerset County Council, with contributions from South Somerset and Mendip Districts. The rate of grant will be 75% for grade II listed monuments and 95% for grade I and II* monuments. The



■ *After careful reconstruction*

scheme will initially run for three years from April 2009.

A Churchyard Monument Grant Scheme has run for 5 years in South Somerset and it is thanks to the success of this scheme that it is now being extended to cover the whole of Somerset (apart from North Somerset). Grants have been offered to 22 monuments in South Somerset and conservation work completed so far ranges

from removal of invasive vegetation followed by re-pointing, to full dismantling and reconstruction of unstable chest tombs. John Bucknall, architect to Ilchester, Podimore and Limington commented that the scheme has been immensely effective in



■ *After skillful repair and strengthening*

repairing 7 monuments in those parishes, which could never have been tackled otherwise.

As well as supporting repair work, the grant scheme will also ensure that the carved inscriptions, which are an important source of historical and genealogical information, are recorded and deposited with the County Records Office and the Somerset and Dorset Family History Society.

For further details of the grant scheme please contact your local conservation officer.

Wells Cathedral Green

The Wells Cathedral Green enhancement project (featured in issue 11 of Heritage Matters) is now well underway.



■ Work in progress on the new perimeter road

Mendip District Council and Wells Cathedral, working in partnership with Somerset County and Wells City Councils, English Heritage and Avon and Somerset Constabulary put together proposals to improve public safety, tackle some of the vehicular damage to the paving, enhance the environment and secure the long-term management of the Green. Six new native lime trees have been planted and a new perimeter road has been laid to provide limited vehicular access for the Cathedral and residents. It is hoped that these works and careful management of the space will allow the Green to be enjoyed by visitors and local residents throughout the 21st century. Despite the adverse winter weather the project is on schedule and is expected to be complete by mid-April.



■ Landscaping next to the new lime trees

Somerset Heritage Centre

A new Somerset Heritage Centre is being built at Norton Fitzwarren on the edge of Taunton. The new centre will provide state-of-the-art storage for archive and museum collections, as well as greatly enhanced study facilities. The project will draw together various heritage services, currently scattered over 15 locations, and will provide a one-stop shop for information about Somerset's past, enabling many more people to learn about and enjoy Somerset's rich heritage. The centre will house the Somerset Record Office, museum reserve collections and administration, the Historic Environment Service, technical functions relating to archives and museums including conservation, design and digitisation, the Victoria County History, and the Somerset Studies Library. Building work has started and the centre is expected to be ready by late 2010, and together with the redeveloped Museum of Somerset at Taunton Castle, will transform public access to Somerset's heritage as a source of learning, inspiration and enjoyment.

Traditional Buildings Fair

In October last year, Shepton Mallet played host to the Traditional Buildings Fair, organised by Somerset Conservation Officers Group in partnership with Shepton Mallet Townscape Heritage Initiative.



The fair was opened by Kevin McCloud of Channel 4's Grand Designs and it is estimated that well over 500 visitors attended. The event proved a great success with over 30 exhibitors providing advice on guidance on the care and repair of historic buildings. Traditional building skills and crafts such as thatching, ironmongery, lime plastering and paints were all represented along with specialist conservation contractors, architects, surveyors and advice on energy efficiency and insurance.

In addition, the recently restored Grade II* Merchants House in the Market Place was opened to the public. The building owner (and main contractor) Jon Maine and his architect (Henk Strik of Caroe & Partners in Wells) offered guided tours, which raised £1,800 for the local St Margarets Hospice.

Due to the success of the day it is hoped that Shepton Mallet will host similar events in the future. Keep an eye on Heritage Matters for further details.

■ Sean Wheatley demonstrating lime plastering at the Traditional Buildings Fair

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Landmark restoration

A Martock landmark has recently undergone a major refurbishment and conservation programme to prepare it for 21st Century use.



The grade II listed Market House, which belongs to Martock Parish council, dates from the eighteenth century, and, with its elegant arcade, forms a focal point at the junction of three turnpike roads in the heart of Martock.

Wedmore-based architects, Benjamin+Beauchamp, have overseen the conservation and refurbishment work. The majority was carried out by Ellis and Co of Shepton Mallet and involved repairs

to the roof and parapet, upgrading the roof insulation and cleaning and conservation of the stonework. Sash windows were repaired, services upgraded, underfloor heating installed on the ground floor, and the building decorated and refitted.

An elegant glass-walled office in the undercroft will be the hub of the Market House's new role as Community Office, Heritage and Learning Centre. Inside there will be information on a wide range of

local events, services and facilities, as well as meeting space and workstations. The Heritage Centre will draw together work undertaken by researcher Alanna Ivin and archaeologist Jerry Sampson about the history of the building and the wider area. The building is fully accessible with the installation of a lift to provide disabled access to the community room on the first floor.

Grant funding was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Somerset Rural Renaissance Partnership, the Community Council for Somerset and South Somerset District Council.



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Market House, Martock

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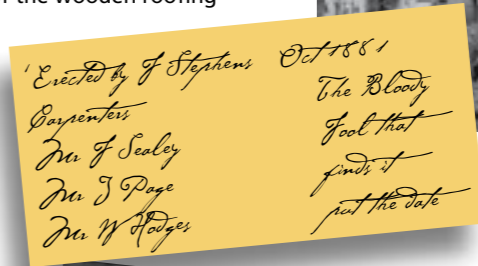
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A message from the past

A carpenter working on the roof of the old dairy at historic Tyntesfield in North Somerset recently made a rare discovery that shed light on the original builders. Martin Evans of conservation contractors Ellis & Co spotted writing on one of the wooden roofing boards.



"We still don't know who the architect is but we are hoping that this lovely writing might help us in our search" said Mary Greenacre of the National Trust, which owns Tyntesfield. "It would be truly wonderful if we could trace the families of these men to find out more about their lives and we need the public's help".

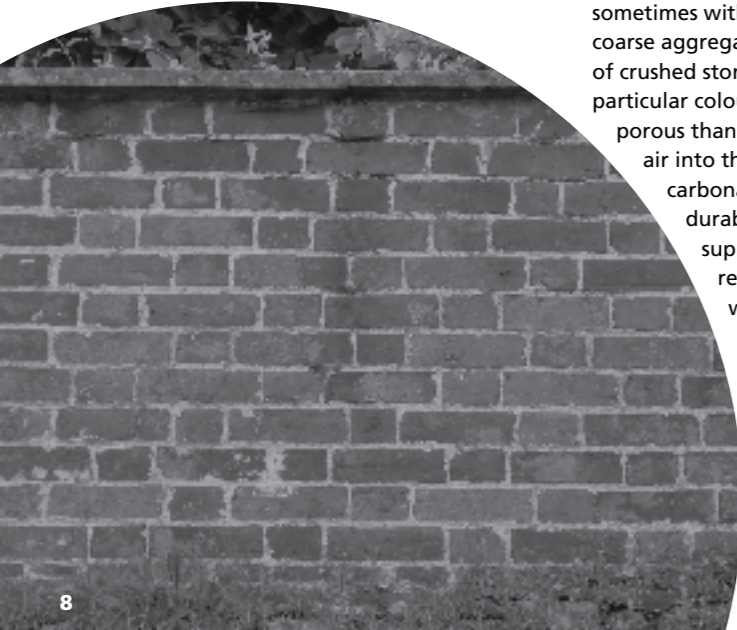


intact. Major restoration started this year and the dairy, which formed part of a model farm, is being repaired and converted to visitor facilities including a shop and café. Tyntesfield opens this year on the 4th April and visitors will get a fascinating insight into the extraordinary conservation work being undertaken.

If you think you can help the National Trust to find out more about the men named on the board please contact Lisa Nunn on 01275 461960 or email Lisa.Nunn@nationaltrust.org.uk

Tyntesfield is considered one of the greatest Victorian country houses to have survived

There's more to lime mortar than lime



Previous issues of Heritage Matters have looked at the importance of using the correct lime for conservation projects. However, it's just as important to consider the other component of lime mortar – the aggregate – when selecting the materials for re-pointing.

The choice of aggregate is important in determining the appearance and performance of the lime mortar. Aggregate adds bulk to the lime, helps to reduce shrinkage as the lime dries out and contributes to the strength of the mortar. The most common type of aggregate is sand, sometimes with the addition of grit where a coarse aggregate is needed. Small quantities of crushed stone dust can also be added for particular colour or texture, and, being more porous than sand grains, can help entrain air into the body of the mix aiding carbonation and producing good, durable mortars. Stone dust is often supplied as a fine powder, which requires the addition of more water to make a workable mix, and makes the mortar more prone to shrinking and cracking. If stone dust is added it should either be crushed and sieved to

■ *Lime has a strong whitening effect on any aggregates with which it is mixed, so many historic lime mortars are traditionally pale in colour*

produce a well graded aggregate or used only in small proportions with sand forming the bulk of the aggregate.

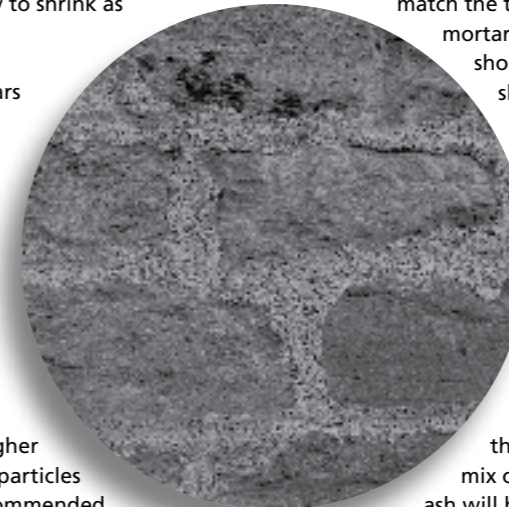
Generally sand should be well-washed to remove impurities such as clay, salts and organic matter that could all affect the performance of the mortar. Sand should be stored away from possible sources of contamination (cats are a particular menace!), and ideally in dry conditions. It is much easier to accurately measure volumes of dry sand than damp or wet sand. This is because most sands swell and increase in volume when damp and this 'bulking' must be taken into account; a greater volume of damp sand will be needed for each volume of lime.

Most current advice on the use of lime mortars advocates using well-graded, sharp aggregates. This means that the aggregate particles are angular rather than rounded

and that there is a range of particle sizes from fine to coarse. Such aggregates will interlock well, the smaller grains filling the spaces between the larger ones. Aggregates in which the particles are all the same size or are soft and rounded do not interlock to the same extent and will form weaker mortars that are more likely to shrink as they dry out.

Most historic mortars did not conform to this advice and were composed of whatever aggregate was available locally. Very often this was simply un-sieved sub-soil, rather than a well-graded sand, which contain a higher proportion of fine particles than would be recommended today. However, old mortars often contain chunks of unburned lime and ash from the lime kiln and this gives texture

■ *Historic mortars often contain coarse chunky particles which give texture and character to the mortar*



to the mortar despite a high level of fines, particularly after a couple of centuries of weathering. Such mortars are very different in appearance to modern mortars made with uniform builders' sand.

Although it is usually desirable to try to match the texture of the original mortar when re-pointing care should be taken to avoid slavishly reproducing mortars that are too fine and may not perform well. Look closely at the old mortar to see what coarse particles are present. It is the large particles that contribute most to the texture of historic mortars so very often the addition to a mortar mix of some grit or coarse ash will help re-create the appearance of old mortar without the need for copying it precisely. Clearly the texture of the mortar should reflect the width of the joints, as it would be impossible to use a coarse mortar to re-point fine joints, but wider jointed stonework invariably looks best with a gritty mortar.

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David Gordon, a Historic Buildings Consultant near Ilminster, recommends re-cycling old lime mortar, and has crushed and re-used old mortar, mixed with lime putty and sand, in the repair of his listed cottage. It saves having to take bags of old mortar to the dump and provides a bit of essential 'gristle' to the new work, helping it blend in with the old. Careful workmanship and tending is all that is needed to deal with any minor shrinkage.

The colour of a mortar is influenced by the choice of aggregate. It is the fine particles that contribute most to the colour of mortars, so a small amount of a strongly coloured fine-grained aggregate will have a much

more powerful effect on colour than the same amount of a coarser aggregate of the same colour. However, lime tends to whiten any aggregate with which it is mixed so that lime mortars tend to be pale pastel shades. When carrying out re-pointing or re-rendering it is usually best to try to match the colour of the original pointing rather than that of any later work.

Useful sands for work in Somerset are West Knighton (a yellowy-brown gritty sand), Hillhead (coarse red sand), Bideford Grit (coarse brown gritty sand) and Forticrete (white sand with some gritty particles), available from local lime mortar suppliers. Most builders' merchants sell sand of unspecified origin and it is only by looking at it and feeling it that you will be able to assess whether it is suitable for lime mortar.

David offers a cautionary tale for the use of lime mortar. A few years ago, whilst renovating a listed building in Ilminster, he blocked up an inconveniently located doorway

■ **Some Victorian mortars contain large quantities of ash as part of the aggregate, and are dark grey in colour. They should not be confused with cement mortar when it comes to re-pointing. If you look closely at an ash mortar you can see individual chunks of black aggregate in a grey matrix, whereas a modern cement mortar would be uniformly grey.**

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using concrete blocks. Recently, a change of use necessitated re-opening the doorway. Thankfully he had bedded the blocks in lime mortar and they came apart easily without harm to the blocks, the building or himself, and he was able to re-use the concrete blocks elsewhere. Imagine if he had used cement mortar...?

Somerset Success in Village Church for Village Life Award

The villagers of Norton St Philip are celebrating winning the £10,000 first prize in a prestigious Country Life competition.

The Village Church for Village Life Award seeks to discover the finest example of a historic, rural parish church that has successfully engaged the wider community to create a focus for village life in the 21st century.

In common with many rural villages, Norton St Philip has recently seen the loss of its shops and post office, and the village hall was not an appropriate venue for small gatherings and events. Architect George Chedburn was commissioned to develop the church of St Philip & St James as a new focus for the village. In the north aisle, the pews were replaced by a free-standing two-storey glazed oak structure called The Hub, housing a meeting room, kitchen, lavatory and vestry, with versatile additional space in front. As well as providing a venue for an estimated



■ **The new glass and oak structure in the north aisle of the church, providing meeting space and other facilities.**

300 village meetings a year, The Hub is used regularly by a variety of groups, from mothers and babies to a 50-strong youth club. Concerts and exhibitions are staged, and there is a monthly coffee morning and produce stall.

Much of the cost of £175,000 was met by village fundraising events, including suspending the vicar in a glass box in the church for a day - a stunt that generated £35,000 in donations.

For details of this year's competition see www.countrylife.co.uk/villagechurch

Victorian Society launches Cemetery Chapels Campaign

Garden cemeteries, with their twin chapels were a nineteenth century phenomenon that rapidly became a familiar part of the urban landscape.

However, despite the fact that in some urban areas cemeteries form up to half of all green space, the open space is often underused and many of the chapels are boarded up. No one even knows exactly how many cemeteries and chapels there are.

The Victorian Society is now calling for help from the public to document the state of cemetery chapels as part of a national campaign. It's asking people to explore their local cemetery and report back on the condition of the chapels there.

As part of the survey the Victorian Society is also asking how people think the cemetery chapels should be used in order to secure their future and would like to hear about chapels that are successfully in use.

For more information about this campaign visit the www.victoriansociety.org.uk

Understanding your building: the key to conservation

The starting point for any building conservation project should be a clear understanding of what is important or special about the building.



■ The plan and form of a building can tell you a lot about its development. The lower part of this cottage is earlier than the higher wing.

It may seem obvious that you need to understand what you have before you decide how to conserve or alter it, but all too often plans for a scheme of repair or alteration are drawn up without realising their potential impact on the special interest of the building. This often leads to conflict with the planning authorities followed by frustration on all sides. Understanding a building is a two-stage process. The first stage involves researching the date of the building and analysing how it has altered through time. This can be done using evidence in the building fabric, such as the style of architectural features, details of the roof structure, or the presence of blocked windows or doors, which might give some idea of its age and evolution, as well as using documentary sources, such as historic maps. This is a fascinating process and, with practise, you can become a skilled house detective as you learn to look for and

■ The style of architectural details changed through time. These windows are both in the same building but date from different periods and show how the building has changed through time.



interpret the clues in the building. The second stage of understanding a building involves comparing it with other buildings, both locally and further afield, to place it in a wider context and understand its relative importance.



Understanding a historic building is worthwhile for several reasons; most people who live in old houses like them and are interested in them, so knowing more about their historic home can be very rewarding; it also means that we are likely to care better for our historic buildings, as on the whole we value things more if we appreciate them properly.

Understanding also has an important role in conservation legislation. The Government's advice on implementing listed building legislation is contained in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15), which says that applicants for listed building consent should "provide the local planning authority with full information, to enable them to assess



■ Old maps can be helpful in dating cottages. This tithe map of Marston Magna dates from about 1838 and shows many of the cottages and houses that are still there today.

the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting. An authority should not accept an application for consideration until it has sufficient information to provide such understanding".

Anyone applying for listed building consent must submit a Design and Access Statement, explaining the design principles behind

their proposals, showing how the proposals take account of the special architectural or historic character of the building, its important physical features and its setting, and justifying the approach being proposed. If you don't understand what is important about your building it will be impossible to assess the impact of your proposals on it, or to justify alterations.

A building archaeologist or building historian could undertake this work for you, and for some listed building consent applications you will have to employ a professional to ensure that the research and information are thorough and credible. However, learning more about the history of your house can be great fun, even if you are not applying for listed building consent. There are a number of excellent books on the subject, and Somerset Records Office run courses on researching house history (see page *** for details of forthcoming courses). You could also consider joining the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group, a voluntary organisation dedicated to recording and interpreting the traditional houses and buildings of Somerset. Membership offers a great opportunity to explore some fascinating buildings not normally open to the public as well as increasing your knowledge of vernacular architecture.

FURTHER INFORMATION

"How Old is Your House?" (revised 3rd edition) by Pamela Cunnington, published by Alphabet and Image Ltd, 1999

"Discovering Your Old House" (4th edition) by Iredale, D. & Barrett, J, published by Shire Publications, 2001

"Informed conservation: Understanding historic buildings and their landscapes for conservation", by Kate Clark, published by English Heritage, 2001. See www.english-heritage.org.uk (product Code XH20171)

"Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300 – 1900", by Linda Hall, published by Countryside Books, 2005

Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group – www.svbrg.org.uk or telephone Denny Robbins on 01935 826396

"Your Somerset House: How to Trace the History of Your House at the Somerset Record Office" by Shorrocks, D, revised by Sue Berry & Janet Tall, Somerset Heritage Service, 2005

Thatched roofs and fire prevention

It is a common misconception that thatched houses are more likely to catch fire than other types of building. In fact, there are proportionately fewer fires in thatched buildings than in non-thatched properties. However, once a fire takes hold in a thatched roof it will spread rapidly, so the damage caused can be much worse than in buildings with slate or tile roofs.



Smoke detectors and fire alarms will alert occupiers when a fire breaks out, giving them the chance to escape unharmed and to call the emergency services, but in most cases that will be too late to save the thatch, and possibly the entire property, from being engulfed by flame. So, for thatched buildings fire prevention is essential.

The causes of thatch fires

Many people think that thatch fires are caused by sparks issuing from a chimney and falling to rest on the thatch. However,

research has shown that it is very difficult to ignite thatch this way, especially when the thatch is cold and damp, which is usually the case at times when fires are lit.

About 90% of all fires in thatched buildings are caused by faults in the chimney, and of those, about 80% relate to chimneys fitted with a wood-burning stove. Wood-burners are designed to operate at high temperatures to give maximum heat output and a clean burn. Consequently, the flue gases escaping up the chimney are much hotter than would be produced by a traditional open fire.

Most chimneys are built of a single skin of brick only 4" thick. The hot flue gases heat the brickwork as they rise up the chimney. Where the chimney passes through the thatched roof, it is insulated by the thatch so it retains more heat in this area than in the sections passing through the roof space or projecting above the roof. Many traditional combed wheat reed roofs are made of multiple layers of thatch and in cases where the thatch is over one metre deep it is quite

■ **Once a fire takes hold in a thatched roof it will rapidly spread causing extensive damage. Not much of this roof structure survives following ignition of the thatch**

possible for the bricks in the chimney to heat up to the point where the thatch will start to smoulder and eventually ignite. Chimneys positioned centrally along the line of a roof are at greater risk than gable chimneys as they are insulated by the thatch on all sides.

The top of the chimney should normally project at least 1.8m above the top of the thatch. If the chimney is shorter than this it is a good indication that the thatch may have built up to considerable thickness. Extending the height of the chimney will not necessarily reduce the fire risk, as there will still be more than a metre of chimney insulated by the deep thatch layer.

As oil prices have risen in recent years and as people are choosing more environmentally sustainable sources of heating, there has been a large increase in the number of homeowners installing wood burning stoves. It is probably no coincidence that there has also been an increase in the number of fires in thatched buildings. Furthermore, the surge in demand for wood fuel means that many log suppliers run out of seasoned logs early in the autumn, and resort to offering green timber, particularly ash, as an alternative. Burning unseasoned wood deposits tar on the inside of the chimney. As well as being a combustible material and

therefore acting as a fuel in any chimney fire, tar can attack lime-based mortar, resulting in crumbling of the historic mortar lining and degradation of the brickwork joints, increasing the risk of fire in the roof.

Fire prevention in thatched roofs

Chimneys should be swept by a qualified chimney sweep, to remove deposits of soot and tar. Twice a year is recommended, although it depends on the frequency of use and on the nature of the fuel being burned. The chimney should be inspected regularly by a chimney engineer or building surveyor for signs of deterioration of the bricks or mortar. If you are having thatching work carried out ask the thatcher to check the condition of any parts of the chimney exposed by stripping off the old thatch. Any defective bricks or mortar should be repaired

However, it is important to remember that if the thatch is more than a metre deep even a sound chimney can be a potential fire risk by conducting heat into the thatch. Installing an insulated flue liner is the best way to avoid heat transfer. There are various systems on the market including rigid and flexible steel or lightweight concrete sections. Whatever system you choose, there must be a heat barrier between the flue and the chimney



■ **Central chimneys surrounded by a deep thatch layer are at most risk from over-heating and thatch fires. The thatch surrounding this chimney was over 1.2 m in places**

to avoid heat transfer into the brickwork. The liner must be installed by a qualified and experienced installer who understands the special risks associated with thatched properties. An inappropriate or poorly installed liner may not reduce the risk of a thatch fire. Even if your chimney is already lined it should be regularly inspected for faults, especially if you burn wood, as tar can corrode metal liners.

If your thatch is very thick you could consider installing a heat detection system. Such systems will raise the alarm if the temperature of the chimney masonry and the thatch approaches a critical temperature. This early warning allows time to damp down the fire in the wood-burner or grate before the thatch ignites. Alternatively a stovepipe thermometer can be used to monitor the temperature of the flue gases exiting from a wood-burner, so

that the fire can be managed in such a way as to avoid dangerously high temperatures in the upper part of the chimney.

Spark arrestors were once commonly fitted to chimneys of thatched roof, but unless they are scrupulously cleaned to remove soot and tar there is evidence that they increase the risk of fire. Spark arrestors are no longer recommended.

Thatch fire safety - Dos and don'ts

Do...

- Have your chimney lined with an insulated liner
- Have your chimney swept at regular intervals
- Have your chimney inspected by a qualified engineer or surveyor
- Keep the loft space free of straw debris
- Have the electrical wiring in your house checked by an electrician to ensure it is safe
- Install a smoke detector in the loft, linked to an alarm in the hallway or landing
- Use bulkhead light fittings in the loft and switch off the loft light when leaving the loft
- Consider installing an outside tap with a long hosepipe permanently connected
- Make a note of your Ordnance Survey Grid reference and keep it next to the phone or stored on your mobile phone – giving a grid reference can speed up the fire service's response to an emergency call
- Keep a fire blanket in the kitchen and a fire extinguisher easily accessible

Don't...

- Burn unseasoned wood
- Fit a spark arrestor - when clogged with tar and soot they are more likely to contribute to a fire than to prevent one
- Light bonfires close to a thatched building
- Use blow torches, hot air guns or soldering equipment in the loft or close to the thatch
- Don't store combustible materials in the loft
- Overload electrical sockets
- Fit outside security lights close to the thatch
- Run electrical cables through the loft unless absolutely essential
- Fit recessed lighting in ceilings below a thatched roof

Somerset Churches & Chapels

There are over 700 places of worship in Somerset, often in tiny villages where congregations are sparse. Many are beautiful old buildings but the cost of maintenance and repair can be extremely high.

The Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels is a charitable environmental trust, formed in 1986, to raise money and make grants for the repair of churches and chapels in Somerset, whatever their denomination. It also exists to encourage greater interest and involvement in the heritage of religious buildings, which are so much a part of our towns and villages.

The Friends derive income from membership, donations and events and their main aim is to pass this money on as soon as possible to churches and chapels in need. They have a good track record of grant distribution; by April 2006, in the decade since its founding, the Trust had been able to offer £258,500 in grants to more than 120 churches and chapels in Somerset.

Membership is now some 600 strong and is spread throughout the county and further afield. It includes individuals, families, PCCs, church and chapel congregations and business organisations. Members enjoy a varied programme of events including church crawls and illustrated talks.



Somerset's churches, and especially their magnificent towers, are internationally famous, but the cost of maintaining them is immense, often far beyond the means of those who attend them. This commemorative book, which marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of The Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels, surveys when and how many of the county's churches were built, why and how different styles were used and who paid for them. This book is written by experts and profusely illustrated by a wide range of colour and black and white photographs, engravings and drawings, together offering an up-to-date study of church architecture and history in Somerset. All profits from sales will help the Friends to help more churches.

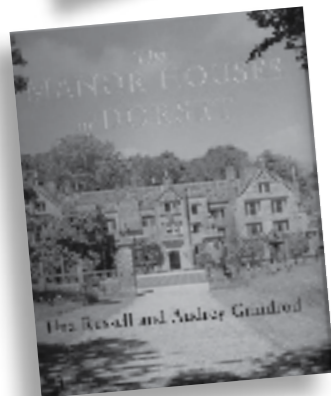
Copies available from Hugh Playfair, Blackford House, Blackford, Nr Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 7EE. Telephone: 01963 440611 Email: bijpg@tiscali.co.uk

Somerset Churches and Chapels by Robert Dunning, Halsgrove 2007, price £14.99 plus postage and packing

You can support the work of the Friends of Somerset Churches and Chapels by becoming a member. Individual annual membership costs £10. For details of how to join please contact the membership secretary. **Membership Secretary, FSCC, 3 Glastonbury Road, Wells, Somerset. BA5 1TW. email: gillandchris@hawking.freeserve.co.uk**



Bookshelf



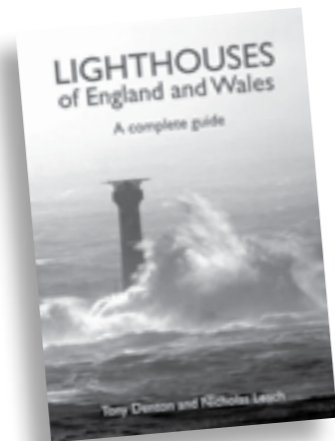
The Manor Houses of Dorset by Una Russell and Audrey Grindrod, Dovecote Press, price £25

This book charts the fortunes of the Dorset's Manor houses

and those who lived in them. Some are still lived in by the descendants of those who built them, others have become modest farmhouses. A handful have endured partial demolition, whilst restoration by recent owners has given others a new lease of life. Tales of love affairs, contested wills, imprisonment for debt, the tragedy of war, extravagance, even murder all contribute to the richness of this book which is illustrated with 200 specially commissioned colour photographs and nearly 100 engravings, portraits, watercolours and drawings.

Lighthouses of England and Wales: A Complete Guide by Tony Denton & Nicholas Leach, Landmark Publishing Ltd 2007, £ 19.99

This book brings together for the first time details of all the significant lighthouses around the coast. As well as many high quality photographs, it contains histories of all the lighthouses (major and minor) as well as details of their exact locations and current use. The authors' passion for lighthouses shines through in this book.

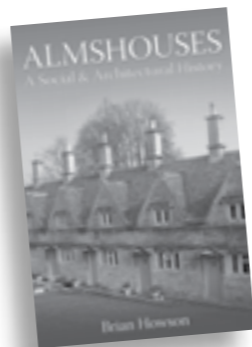


Discovering Churches and Churchyards by Mark Child, Shire Books 2007, price £12.99

A well-illustrated guide to the architecture of English parish churches, in the handy Shire format.

Almshouses, a Social and Architectural History by Brian Howson, History Press 2008, £16.99

Brian Howson outlines the development of almshouses, from their origins as mediaeval hospitals, through the Tudor and Stuart periods, to Georgian and Victorian times.



WHAT'S ON WHAT'S ON WHAT'S ON

SOMERSET RECORD OFFICE

INTRODUCTION TO SOMERSET HOUSE HISTORY

11th May, 21st September

An introduction to the archival sources available at Somerset Record Office, including a tour behind the scenes to find out how the SRO cares for Somerset's archival heritage, and how documents are repaired and preserved. There will also be chance to gain practical experience by working in groups to uncover the history of a Somerset property.

This course is free of charge but you must reserve a place. Please phone 01823 278805 or email archives@somerset.gov.uk

SPAB SOMERSET REGIONAL GROUP

HISTORIC TIMBER REPAIR COURSE

14th – 15th May
Clerks Cottage, Spaxton,
Nr Bridgwater, Somerset

A mixture of practical and theoretical sessions covering repair philosophy, selection of timber, hewing and sawing, structural issues, metalwork and fixings, glues and

resins and types of joints and repairs. Cost £225 including lunch and refreshments.

Telephone Robin Miller on 01823 324422 or email r.miller@jonathan-rhind.co.uk for further details

SPAB

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE REPAIR OF OLD HOUSES

6th - 7th June
Kingston Lacy, Wimborne, Dorset

A weekend course for historic homeowners; lectures & hands-on workshops, covering building conservation, dealing with damp, timber decay & repair, surface finishes and roofs. Practicals include re-pointing with lime & making limewash. Cost £150

Telephone the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings on 020 7456 0915 for further details or visit www.spab.org.uk



GREEN FAIR AND SCYTHE FESTIVAL

14th June
Thorney Lakes, near Langport



This year's combined Green Fair and Scythe Festival will build on the success of previous years and is set to be better than ever before. The programme of events includes live music, displays of local sustainable projects, expert eco-advice, stalls selling local produce, rural crafts, a bar and food. The event is entirely powered by wind and solar power, and there will be experts on hand to give advice on household renewable energy systems. Scything courses will take place on Saturday 13th June, with the 4th West Country Scythe Competition taking place on the Sunday.

Cost £5 for adults, free entry for children. Telephone 01458 252463 for more information or visit www.greenfair.org.uk

WHAT'S ON WHAT'S ON WHAT'S ON

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

FESTIVAL OF BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

18 July – 2 August

A nationwide festival encouraging people to get involved in archaeology. A range of special events, organised by groups, societies and organisations provide a good opportunity for everyone to become involved with archaeology and the historic environment around them.

For more information visit

www.festivalofbritarchaeology.org.uk

SEDGEMOOR DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSERVATION DAY

30th July 2-7pm

Bridgwater Town Hall

As part of the Festival of British Archaeology Sedgemoor District Council is holding a Conservation Day to raise awareness of archaeology and conservation and the role of local authorities in promoting the historic heritage. Various local societies, organisations and traditional building craftsmen will be exhibiting, and experts will be on hand to answer questions.

For further information contact Kathryn Saunders on **01278 435227** or email kathryn.saunders@sedgemoor.gov.uk or marina.dunstone@sedgemoor.gov.uk

THE MAGDALEN PROJECT

STONEWALLING

22nd April

LIME RENDER

29th April

Magdalen Farm, Winsham, Chard, Somerset TA20 4PA

A wide range of rural craft courses are held throughout the year.

Telephone Catherine on **01460 30144** or visit www.themagdalenproject.org.uk for further details

MIKE WYE & ASSOCIATES

LIME

24th April, 8th May, 22nd May,

19th June, 3rd July, 17th July

Buckland Filleigh Sawmills, Buckland Filleigh, Beaworthy, Devon EX21 5RN

One-day course on the use of lime in building

Cost **£70** including lunch and VAT
Telephone Mike Wye on **01409 281644**
or visit www.mikewye.co.uk
for further details

DORSET CENTRE FOR RURAL SKILLS

LIME DAY

Provisional dates **16th May, 24th June, 15th July, 15th August**

A one-day course covering theory and practice of plasters, renders, mortars and washes.
Cost **£95** including VAT and materials.

OLD HOUSE WORKSHOP

20th June, 14th August

West Farm Barn, West Farm, Farrington, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 8RA

A half-day course to learn how older properties should be maintained.

Cost **£45** including VAT

Also a variety of other craft and sustainable building courses will be held during spring and summer. Telephone **01747 811099** or visit www.dorsetruralskills.co.uk for further details

