

## Chairman's notes

*Alan Fear*

Conservation Society members are again invited to an evening in the breathtaking gardens at Coombe House, Bovetown, on **Friday August 3** [details below]. I look forward to seeing you there.

**New Thorn** – Back in spring, a date was finally agreed for planting the new Holy Thorn. So with a small gathering of invited guests and a lovely sunny day the Thorn was planted on April 1, Palm Sunday, at the same site on Wearyall Hill. Within two weeks some faceless person snapped the new planting about six inches above the graft. Luckily for the tree, it was pruned back to a bud and so far it is doing very well.

**Bounds beaten** – On the Saturday of Jubilee weekend, I led the beating-of-the-bounds around Glastonbury. The weather was just right for this 15-mile walk, although by the end most of us were sunburnt. We had 44 people start the walk, and 34 finished. So thanks to all who did all or just bits of the walk.

**Footpath surfaces** – The footpath going up Bushy Coombe from Dod Lane has been gravelled. County did the job, and to date it has not cost us a penny. Jim White of Wick Farm contacted me about gravelling Paradise Lane: many tourists staying at his Old Oaks caravan park use this lane to walk to town. So we are looking to share the cost of this with Mr White and gravel this footpath.

**Trees** – This year's tree-planting has faltered. I did four quotes for plantings, but nothing came out of these. So we have done a bit of tidying-up in Bushy Coombe and at Higher Wick Farm. While we were at Bushy Coombe, the local branch of the Women's Institute came along and we helped them plant a tree for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

**No dates yet** – I apologize for no talks being booked for this winter. I was let down by someone else. So we are working for next season, when we hope to go out and about to see rare parts of the town and the area. Watch this space.

**Coombe House gardens open to Consoc members**

**Friday August 3, from 6 to 8:30pm**



12-year-old George Tucker has the location of this boundary stone at Hartlake Farm beaten into his memory to pass it on accurately to future generations. (Stuart Marsh and Alan Fear at left.)

Don't tell George, but in case he forgets the spot, the digital camera—in a phone owned by Jo Stevenson, headteacher at St Dunstan's—did not. It made radio contact with satellites and filed precise coordinates inside the photo: North 51° 9.86', West 2° 40.2', altitude 9.65, camera bearing 277° (ie, pointing west).

• The custom of beating the bounds goes back at least to the laws of Alfred the Great. Parish boundaries mattered for taxation and burial rights. Similar traditions are found in many other cultures, such as the Roman and Chinese. Of course modern surveying methods made the practice obsolete in the 19th century. Some authorities say three years must elapse before a repeat.

## Young George is sure to recall his Jubilee 'beating' the bounds of Glastonbury *Stuart Marsh*

As part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the Conservation Society organized a rare repeat of the traditional "beating the bounds" walk around Glastonbury's old borders. (See map on page 2.)

We gathered with great excitement at the football ground on the Saturday morning, June 2. Alan Fear had already visited all the landowners along the route to check for obstacles.

44 eager people strode out—young and old and different sorts. It was a chance to chat to old friends and new, as we wound along Green's Drove and Great Withy Drove and then the long straight on the bank of the Hartlake river to the first refreshment stop at Hartlake Bridge, where the Wells road crosses.

The first boundary stone—dated 1705—was at Hartlake Farm, where the Redlake and Whitelake rivers join to form the Hartlake. Mayor Ian Tucker and some of us held his 12-year-old grandson George upside-down at the stone. Some say the old tradition was to beat the boy, but this was a 21st-century politically correct variation. The idea is that the youngster will never forget the exact location of the stone and will be able to point it out to future generations.

On we went over rougher pasture and

a few detours because of rhynes, but we stayed roughly on course. It was beautiful countryside and new to most of us, as it was off the beaten track (so to speak).

We passed Graham and Gordon White's 75-acre plantation wood, in what in the Abbot's day would have been part of Norwood. Our leaders got briefly lost, but we soon arrived at the main road at Havyatt, where we had a pitstop—Derek Miller, retired from running St Anne's Nursery, provided a WC. He has lived there for 50 years and had some stories to tell.

At Havyatt the Avalon pioneer minister, the Revd Diana Greenfield, encouraged us with the traditional prayer for the land.

The weather was just perfect: warmish with light cloud. On we went, passing another boundary stone. Again we had to divert from the route because of rhynes, and came to a more familiar track and Kennard Moor Drove along the river, and on to Cowbridge—the lunch stop.

The vanguard set off around the last bend, to Coldharbour Bridge and then into the finishing straight. Of the 44 who started, 34 arrived back where we started the 15-mile perambulation, weary and triumphant after seven hours all told.



# Was a panther also beating the bounds of Glastonbury?

What was the big black cat-like animal that Paul Branson saw on a drove just outside the Glastonbury boundary?

Paul, an artist, was on his way to paint a scene on the Levels on June 18, a Monday morning about 10 o'clock, driving slowly along Rock's Drove. This is a bumpy track near Coldharbour Bridge (*see map below*), leading past flooded former peat works.

About 100 feet ahead of him he saw on the road "an enormous black panther thing, 5 to 6 feet long, with a curl at the end of a long tail. It stopped for ten seconds or so, looked at me, then whisked into the bushes."

He was able to measure the animal according to the width of the road.

A local sheep farmer came by while Paul was painting and said he had had a lamb taken and its part-consumed



Paul's drawing of the black creature he saw, superimposed on a photo of the actual location, a rough drove nearly parallel to the Meare road. Grass on verges was mown in the few days between the sighting and the photo. Sheep are in the field left of the road.

carcass left behind. A fox would have started eating near the rump, but this predator had started near the throat.

A few hours later Paul returned to the scene with his neighbour Allan Keevil, a retired University of the West of England manager. They saw flattened long grass on the verge of the road where something big had been lying, possibly with its eye on sheep grazing in the adjoining field.

Nearby they also found droppings—if it was a cat, the correct term is "scat". A sample is in Allan's freezer in hope of having it analysed at a veterinary lab.

"I have seen the beast," Paul said.

For at least 20 years similar sightings of panther-like animals have been reported—at Bruton, Mells, Coleford, Priddy, Wookey, Shipham quarry and Axbridge and Yeovil in Somerset, as well as at many places in Dorset and Devizes in Wiltshire—and the "beast of Exmoor". A website exists to log sightings: [iolfree.ie/~dorsetbigcats](http://iolfree.ie/~dorsetbigcats)

# Queen honours Arthur's champion



The Queen stepped down from her dais to invest Geoffrey Ashe with the MBE on March 22, a week before his 89th birthday. A footman had taken him through long Palace corridors in a wheelchair.

Geoffrey was the first modern scholar to establish factual roots for the King Arthur legends. His prolific books on the subject began with *King Arthur's Avalon: the story of Glastonbury* in 1957. His "one contribution to Hollywood", he says, came when Warner Bros produced the film *Camelot*: they rang to ask him the location, his prompt reply was "Somerset!", and they went with it.

He says the concept of Arthur, as a mythical and historical figure, remained relevant to monarchs of England, and he feels his work "met the Queen's approval", as she showed interest in the period.

Geoffrey and his wife Pat live at the foot of the Tor. Both are members of the Conservation Society. He can often be seen giving talks to groups of overseas visitors in the Abbey. (JE, JN)

**Daily Tor award** – John Brunsdon received an "outstanding voluntary-service award" from the National Trust in April, for his 25 years of climbing the Tor daily, to "keep an eye on things".

# Take your secateurs for a walk *Nathan Pritchard*

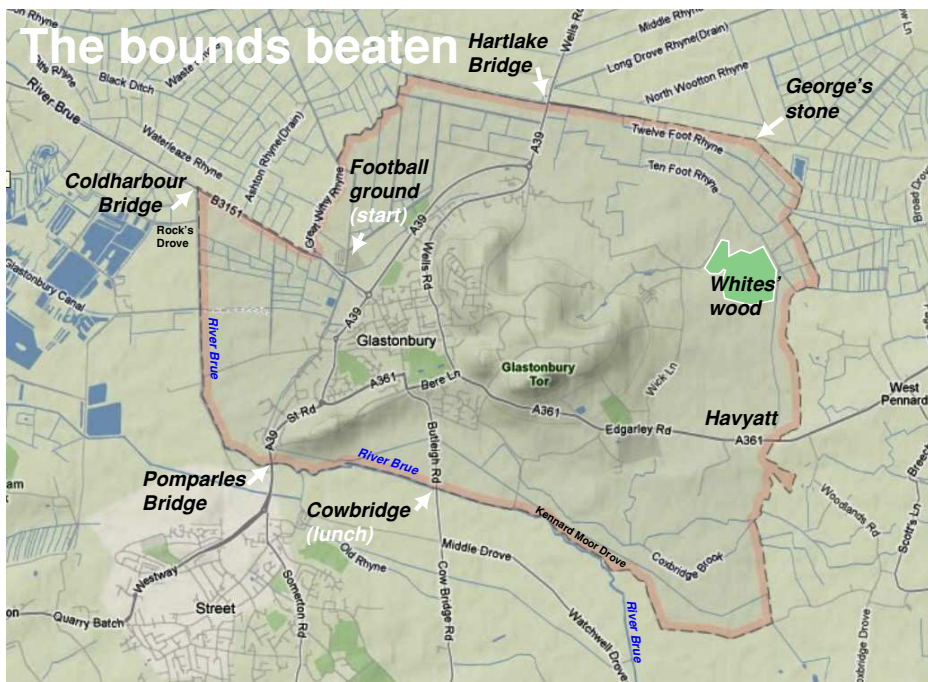
Keeping Glastonbury's footpath network open is a challenge after the lush growth of those wet, wet summer weeks. Many volunteers give their time to make sure the footpaths are passable and free of obstructions.

If you can help, do adopt a section of footpath near you and help keep it clear of encroaching vegetation, or just take

secateurs with you on your next walk in the countryside and snip as you stroll.

You do not have to do any major work—just do what you're happy with. Contact me [*page 8*] if any spot needs me to come along with the power strimmer the Conservation Society now owns.

If we all do a little here and there, everybody can enjoy our footpaths.



It's a 15-mile walk around the boundary of the old borough of Glastonbury. (The ancient Twelve Hides of Glastonbury was a far bigger area.) Queen Anne gave the borough its charter in 1705, and to commemorate the 250th anniversary in 1955 Mayor Henry Scott-Stokes instigated a set of boundary stones to replace those that had disappeared. The borough was abolished in 1974 when local government all over England was reorganized, setting up Mendip District Council.

## 'Article 4' will give Conservation Area more protection *JN, Judith Edmondson*

Glastonbury's Conservation Area will soon have extra protection against insensitive development. This has come about because of a formal Appraisal of the Conservation Area last year that was enabled by a £1,000 grant from the Conservation Society.

At the town council's request, Mendip District Council will serve an "Article 4 direction" to Glastonbury under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, to give its full title.

This means that owners of all buildings in the Glastonbury Conservation Area will have to apply to the council before making any alterations that may damage the historical and architectural character of the building, and therefore that of its neighbourhood.

The rules are similar to the planning restrictions already in place on individually listed buildings. Unlisted buildings, however, will not incur the usual application fee when seeking planning permission under Article 4.

Maintaining the character of Glastonbury is important for posterity, as well as for tourism, which depends on the singular atmosphere of the town. To achieve this, the rules will aim to restrict development to that which will enhance the area's special character, protect the

quality of the environment and encourage the use of local and traditional skills and building materials.

One key change that Article 4 hopes to prevent is the replacement of timber windows by modern PVC, which heritage officers cite as having a "potentially immense" impact on the house. Removal of boundary walls and walls separating gardens to enable off-street parking will also be opposed, as will "inappropriate" roof alterations and other sorts of "unsympathetic and uncharacteristic change".

An Article 4 direction is usually brought in without a public consultation, or else some property owners would rush to make potentially damaging alterations before the new rules came into effect. However, alterations made before Article 4 is in effect will not need to be reversed. Works to improve energy-efficiency of homes will continue to be encouraged within the new guidelines.

A leaflet giving details about Article 4 and how it will be enforced will be posted by Mendip to owners of all properties affected. See the Conservation Society website for more information ([glastonburyconservation.org.uk](http://glastonburyconservation.org.uk)).

Glastonbury Conservation Society at its inception 40 years ago was the moving force that led to the designation

of the original Conservation Area in 1976, protecting the Abbey, High Street and immediately adjacent shops. In 1992 it was extended to encompass the Tor, Chilkwell Street, Bushy Coombe and surrounding areas. A further small extension during the 2011 Appraisal took in more of Benedict Street.

Article 4 came into existence in an Act of Parliament in 1990 but it was rarely used, not particularly effective, and difficult to apply because it always required approval of the Secretary of State. The 1995 order streamlined it, so that many more councils across the country introduced Article 4 directions.

In Mendip, Wells is so far the only area with Article 4 in effect; others are under consideration. South Somerset has Article 4 directions at Wincanton, Bruton and Castle Cary. One comes into force in Bath in July 2013.

## Pennard lead stolen

Will the diocese allow East Pennard to re-roof its 14th-century minster church with a lookalike for traditional lead? The village spent two years raising £40,000 to have the ancient lead recast and reinstated. On June 25, only months after the work was finished, thieves struck. They hit West Pennard and Dinder too.

## Glastonbury's going for a third blooming gold in 2012 *Alan Gloak*

"And to Glastonbury, gold!" Oh, sweet words first heard in 2010 in Bath at the prizegiving of Southwest in Bloom! Then twelve months later at Newquay we heard: "Glastonbury, gold!" Now the effort is on to make it a hat-trick at Weston this September.

The work on the 2012 town displays started in late November at Sweet Acre nursery, when I had a brainstorming session with Andrew Pople and Julie Kerr, the other pair of hands behind Glastonbury in Bloom. We got all the more wacky ideas out of the way—the giant crown and corgi in flowers, that sort of thing—and became more practical. We needed to maintain our high standard not only of flowers but other things like our town cemetery, the allotments, the schools, B&Bs, recycling and the many other facets that go into Southwest in Bloom.

Plants must be ordered, the water-tender serviced and put away for the winter, ideas sown. By February we were discussing with Linda Culliford and Stan Sweet, the owners of Sweet Acre, dates for the hanging of the baskets and, because it's Jubilee year, what the main colour scheme was to be.

Linda and Andrew came up with an idea to honour the Olympic torch as it



*Floral Olympic torches light up the Town Hall.*

came through Glastonbury. This meant a search for gold Fablon material, found of course at Whiting's in Wells. The result can now be seen outside the Town Hall.

The baskets were planted in the first half of April and hung up ready to grow. But of course we had the coldest, wettest April on record, so the growth was much less than we had hoped; however, things improved in May, and up the baskets

went for the Jubilee. The water-tender was brought out of its winter home, serviced and put back on the road

While all this was going on I was discussing with Paul Bannell the new pillars around the lampposts outside the church. The idea came from Wells in Bloom, and we made a few alterations, but why invent the wheel twice? These were made and erected in June.

By now the baskets were up and growing. Each morning Stephen Willis and Harry Neale were up bright and early to water more than 280 baskets and other displays around the town. Still so much to do. The beds had to be weeded and all got ready for the unannounced visit of the judges from Southwest in Bloom (mid-July) and Mendip in Bloom (late July or early August).

Glastonbury really likes to put on a show for her visitors, and we know from overheard comments how much people enjoy coming to our town. We enjoy doing it; yes, the competitions are fun and bring prestige to the town. But, early in the day—say 6 o'clock on a warm sunny morn when the flowers are opening up, the High Street empty apart from one or two—you can smell the scents in the air and then really, really enjoy Glastonbury in Bloom.



## Abbey's medieval crafts on display this summer

• “From fire and earth” is the title of an exhibition at the Abbey, displaying what archaeology has revealed about different crafts found in the Abbey ruins. Stained glass, pottery, decorated floor tiles and carved stonework are among them. The exhibition runs **until September 16**.



• “Reflections on Glass” is the next major exhibition, from October 5 until January 27: five Somerset artists, each with a different approach to this highly adaptable medium.

Some other events in the Abbey this summer:

- **July 26, Thursday\***—*As You Like It*, presented by Rain or Shine Theatre. 7pm–10:30.
  - **August 5, Sunday**—Fun dog show. Entries from 1pm, judging from 2pm, stalls, refreshments, more.
  - **August 16, Thursday\***—*Twelfth Night* presented by Festival Players. 7pm–10:30.
  - **September 7, Friday\***—“Night at the Abbey”: illuminations and music for all tastes. 6pm–10.
- (\*Tickets from the Abbey shop.) News of the Abbey’s fundraising appeal is at [rescueourruins.com](http://rescueourruins.com)

The historian Tim Hopkinson-Ball addressing the famous Grace Cup, on loan to the Abbey earlier this year. At right is the Abbot of Downside, Dom Aidan Bellenger. Both are Abbey trustees.



**A correction** – Mary Gryspeerdt writes: “The first paragraph of my article ‘Ancient tankard returns from Wardour Castle to Abbey’ in the previous issue [Newsletter 136] received an editorial change which proved rather misleading. There is actually no reliable evidence to suggest that the Glastonbury Grace Cup was in existence in 1539, but continuing research is being conducted to establish the date and origins of the famous tankard.” [The editor apologizes for putting his foot in it.]



## Town gives thanks for the life of Keith Miller

St Benedict’s Church was full on June 28 for the funeral of Keith Miller, the retired owner of the family hardware shop that had traded for four generations. Keith died on June 15 at the age of 82.

The talk by his son Jonathan retold tales of Keith’s boyhood adventure in the  
*Keith and Mary Miller behind the counter of Miller’s Hardware, Benedict Street, on the day he sold the business and retired in May 2007.*

workshop behind the store with a small bomb he found in a downed German plane, of his trademark Sunday rock cakes at home, of his unflinching consideration for customers, of off-duty fun and travels with the bowling club.

“Iron in the blood”—articles from Newsletters 122 and 126 in 2007–08 are reproduced on the website: [glastonburyconservation.org.uk](http://glastonburyconservation.org.uk)

## Vice-chairman to step down at next AGM

The Conservation Society’s 41st annual general meeting went off without hitch on December 2, even though turnout was slightly lower than usual because the newsletter was late.

Officers and committee were re-elected unanimously [listed on back page with contact details]. Ian Rands announced that he will stand down as vice-chairman at the 2012 AGM. “So we will be after someone to replace him,” said Alan Fear, entering his second year as chairman. “Also we would like some more women on the committee, as Janet Morland is feeling isolated.”

### John Snow & Co. AP

After the business part of the meeting, John Coles presented two films about one of Glastonbury’s most prominent businesses, the John Snow timber yard. A sawmill has stood here on the edge of Glastonbury since the 1750s, and it became one of the largest in the country. Timber was pit-sawn—a double-ended saw, with one man on the surface, one down in a pit—until saws powered by steam traction engines took over in the 19th century.

The Great War was a particularly

busy period, and there was brisk demand for oak to make wheels for gun carriages. In the Second World War, Snows made shuttering to construct Mulberry Harbour for the D-Day landing. After the war, timber for building purposes was in great demand.

In 1950 Snows took over the sports department of Baily’s tannery and produced cricket bats, tennis racquets and hockey sticks—examples of which were displayed at the meeting.

John Coles started work in 1959 as an apprentice “saw doctor”—the company made its own bandsaws. Large electric motors drove the saws, and their use often resulted in lost fingers.

Norman James was in charge during the 1960s, succeeding his father Frank, who had taken over the business in 1909. The firm provided oak planking for Hampton Court, as well as producing sheds, greenhouses and fence panels besides sawn timber.

The large sawmill closed in 1984, and its machinery went to Ghana. The current operation is owned by Bradfords.

The second film was produced by the BBC in 1962 and showed aspects of Norman James’ work, not only at Snows



Telegrams: “Snow, Glastonbury.” Telephones—Glastonbury, 13. Wells, 18. Bristol, 629.

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100-year-old ad says you can phone Snows on Glastonbury 13, Wells 18 or Bristol 629.

but also as a prominent town and county councillor and mayor. During his tenure at Snows, five former aircraft hangers were moved to Glastonbury and remain in use today at the timber yard.



# Sixth-generation descendant visits Dod Lane farm roots John Brunsdon

Richard Weaver and his wife called at my house at the bottom of Dod Lane while visiting Glastonbury from Virginia in the United States, researching family connections—from six generations before him.

His roots reach back to William and Ann Fear. They and eight children lived at Bushy Coombe Farm, which existed in Dod Lane in the mid-19th century. William Fear was born at East Brent in 1796 and died in 1875; Ann Whitting (or Whiting) Fear was born 1799 at Nyland, near Wedmore, and died in 1882.

The 17th-century thatched farmhouse stood on the site of the present 3 and 5 Dod Lane, whose garden wall is the truncated front wall of the former farmhouse. Outhouses and a barn survive behind number 5. The last residents of the old house were the Snell family, who later lived at Mafeking, 67 Wells Road, and farmed on Common Moor.

The farmhouse was demolished in



This photo of Bushy Coombe Farm about 1906 hangs in a frame at 5 Dod Lane, A. K. "Dick" Green's home for nearly 50 years. The identity of the black child in the doorway is a mystery.



The fine-quality early photo (left) of Ann Fear is by the renowned photographer Walter Tully (whose later skylit studio survives, on the top floor of the present Dilliway & Dilliway shop, 19 High Street). William and Ann's daughter Emma, born 1825, emigrated to the USA in 1857 with her husband Seth Lee (right) of Rodney Stoke. She died in 1865 at Skaneateles in central New York state. Emma and their son Charles, born 1856 in Glastonbury, are in the middle photo. "Charles Fear Lee is my grandmother's grandfather," said Richard Weaver, the American visitor to Dod Lane.

1926 for the manorial estate—Mrs Maclean was Lady of the Manor of the Glaston Twelve Hides; she lived to be 100 at Chalice Hill House, in Dod Lane opposite the farmhouse. The present pair of houses on the site were built by E. G. Wright and Sons in 1927. (Wrights' shop and office building is now the Hundred Monkeys Cafe in the High Street.)

William and Ann Fear were buried at the prestigious new cemetery in Wells Road. There are no headstones, but the burial site is recorded. Some of our readers may be cousins.

◆ Mr Weaver recently discovered that Seth Lee and his only surviving child, Charles, revisited England for the winter of 1872–73. Their return passage was to be on *HMS Atlantic* but at the last minute they changed ship. On arrival they learned that the *Atlantic* had sunk off Canada.

## Wilfrid Road stars in Street's heritage days, a national event

The Street Society (the counterpart of Glastonbury Conservation Society) is participating in the national Heritage Open Days in September with a celebration of Wilfrid Road, Street's only listed road. Three of the houses will be open for viewing.

The Open Road—on September 9, a Sunday, 2–5pm—will include games and entertainment in Wilfrid Road and tea and cakes for sale on the green behind numbers 39 and 41. Part of the road—which meets the High Street at the open-air swimming pool—will be closed to traffic.

Heritage Open Days is a national event ([heritageopendays.org.uk](http://heritageopendays.org.uk)) running from Thursday to Sunday, **September 6 to 9**. The Street Society plans a whole weekend of events:



G.J. Skipper's decorative Jacobean design and the folksy cupola at Cobden Terrace—20 houses built in Wilfrid Road for Clarks workers in 1869, now listed Grade II—did not please Mrs Helen Clark. His replacement, his nephew William Reynolds, used an Arts and Crafts style for the houses on the other side.

- An illustrated talk on the history of Clarks, both the business and the family, presented by Charlotte Berry and Tim Crumplin on the Friday at 7.30pm.
- Timed visits to Clarks' new Alfred Gillet Archive Office on the Saturday, 10am–2pm.
- Illustrated talks at Strode Theatre, including the writer Kathryn Ferry on the Victorian home and the Arts and Crafts movement, on the Saturday at 3pm.

Tickets (free from Strode Theatre box office) are needed for these three indoor events because numbers are limited.

- The Shoe Museum, normally open only Monday–Saturday, will also open on the Sunday afternoon.



# Glastonbury Abbey restored: 200 years of imagination *Adrian Pearse*

In the centuries since the Abbey's destruction, many have attempted to produce visual reconstructions of it and in some cases went on to propose actually rebuilding parts of the structure.

Dr Tim Hopkinson-Ball outlined and analysed the many attempts, in his talk to Glastonbury Antiquarian Society in November. They all reveal the almost unique respect and veneration the ruined Abbey has engendered at various periods since the Dissolution in 1539.

Despite decades of research, modern reconstructions often leave a great deal to be desired and even contradict surviving evidence. The view of the Lady Chapel presented to visitors is reasonable in terms of the paintwork, but, Dr Hopkinson-Ball said, has major errors in the floor design, the costume of the priest and the portrayal of drapes instead of a stone screen. In the museum the depiction of the chapel includes the undercroft—but it was not constructed until well after the period shown.

However, the model in the museum by Nicholas Gaffney, made of cardboard on a wooden core, is both reasonably accurate as far as evidence permits and shows the spectacular majesty of the complex at its greatest extent. [The model was commissioned by the Abbey trustees. Gaffney worked on it from 1965 until 1975, and published a book about it in 1977.]

Notable illustrative reconstructions include the work of Arthur Henderson in the 1930s, published in book and postcard formats. He was certainly ambitious in the scope of his efforts, with internal and external views, and much is successful, but there are major problems with his depiction of the north porch and with window detailing to the cloisters. Moreover, he introduced a nave choir and other oddities.

Earlier in the century, Frederick



*Henderson's ambitious sketches (published 1935) hold largely true, but his north porch is wrong.*

Bligh Bond included reconstructive drawings in the various editions of his *Architectural Handbook*—but his view of the crossing has a major mistake in the design of the scissor arches, and his general depiction from the north is very poor. His psychic colleague Captain John Allen Bartlett [Bond gave him the pseudonym John Alleyne] produced beautifully artistic reconstructions, but they are historically inaccurate.

In the early 1900s there were proposals for actual rebuilding of parts of the structure. Sir Charles Marston, for example, suggested rebuilding the Abbey to create a Cenotaph of Empire, and in 1908 a suggestion was made to rebuild part of the choir. William Caroe, the architect in charge of consolidating the ruins after the Church of England acquired them in 1908, certainly went much further than today's restoration policies would permit.

John Mellor's booklet on Glastonbury Abbey in 1873 proposed a detailed restoration of St Joseph's Chapel. It was but one of a number of suggestions and plans produced at this period, of varying and often poor quality, but attracting the attention of leading gothicists such as James Parker in 1880 and Sir George Gilbert Scott, who in 1867 published a work on Glastonbury that included reconstructive drawings.

Perhaps the most ambitious scheme was that of Dom Charles Feraud of Downside: before his death in 1847 he was active in efforts to restore St Joseph's Chapel as a Catholic sanctuary, to the extent of collecting subscriptions.

All reconstructive efforts, however, even with the benefit of archaeological research, are seriously hampered by the lack of detailed evidence provided by the minimal remains of what was once a vast structure.

## “... But not of bignes ...”— the Abbey stone collections

About 1666 the rector of Chedzoy, Andrew Pascal, described rooting up ancient monastic foundations at Athelney. They found many small fragments, “but not of bignes” to show what the building was. The description is also applicable to Glastonbury, as Jerry Sampson revealed back in October in his analysis of the Abbey stone collection. (He is a specialist archaeologist of ancient buildings and lives near Glastonbury.)

Pre-Victorian illustrations of the ruins, such as those by Richard Newcourt of Somerton (engraved by Wenceslaus Hollar, 1665) and William Stukeley (1723) show that little more remained standing then than survives today—the greater part of the structure

## Events for summer and beyond

- \* **August 3, Friday**—*Members' evening at Coombe House gardens, Bovetown*, by kind invitation of Colin Wells-Brown and Alan Gloak. 6pm to 8:30pm. ... **C**
- \* **August 17**—*The Hood family*: The Revd Robin Ray, who married into it, talks about the history of the family with its connections to Butleigh and the Navy. ... **C**
- \* **August 18, Sunday**—*160th Shepton Show*, with Heritage Tent. ... **M**
- \* **September 6–9, Thurs–Sun**—*Heritage Open Day* (see separate article) **Street**
- \* **September 13**—*Old photos of Shepton's people, places and events*, 10am to 9pm, copies for sale. ... **M**
- \* **October 18**—“*Wartime Somerset*”, 2-hour film by Henry Buckton. ... **M**

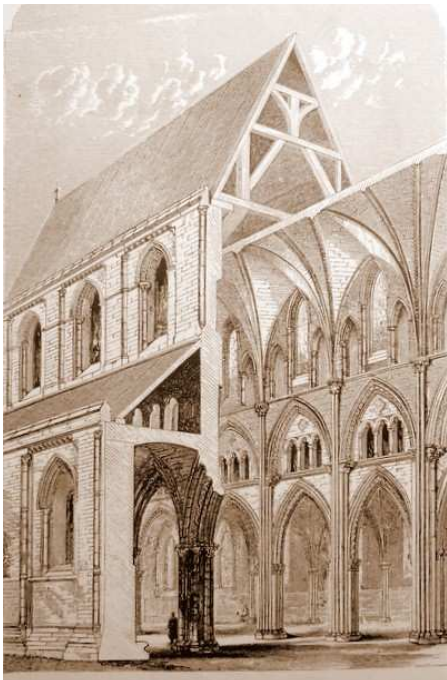
Where and when (unless otherwise stated)

**C** = Glastonbury Conservation Society. Meetings are on **Fridays at 7:30pm** at St Mary's Hall, Magdalene Street (parking at rear, entrance via Morrisons)

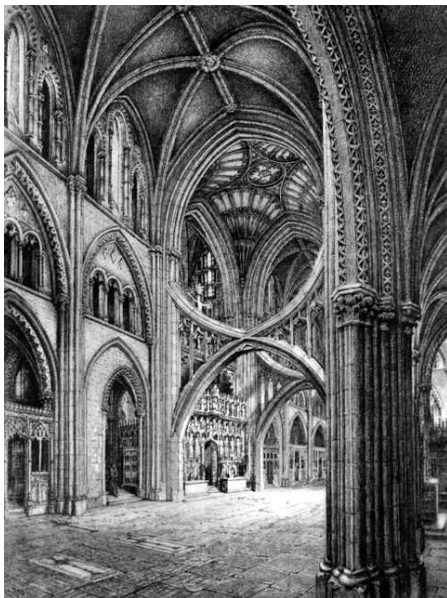
**M** = Shepton Mallet Local History Group: **third Thursdays at 7:30pm** at the Salvation Army hall, BA4 5BU (contact Pam Preece, 01749 34 2941).

Our website, [glastonburyconservation.org.uk](http://glastonburyconservation.org.uk), has links to neighbouring societies.





"The choir of Glastonbury Abbey, if restored (after a drawing by Mr G. Gilbert Scott)" [1867].



Bond's 1907 drawing wrongly imagined scissor arches at the central crossing of the Abbey.

had been destroyed in the century and a half following the Dissolution.

There is very little information on the sequence of this process:

- It appears that the buildings were substantially intact until the 1550s. A petition for reoccupation to Catholic Queen Mary reflects this condition: four monks were asking to move back.
- But soon after the Protestant Elizabeth came to the throne in 1559 we hear of sale of lead to Wells and removal of the rest to Jersey—which reveals the

### Glastonbury past and present

Maggie Stewart and Francis Thyer showed "then and now" aspects of Glastonbury in a short audiovisual presentation on December 2. (It was first shown in Somerset Arts Weeks.) Their work selected from mainly postcard images depicting the extent of changes during



Nicholas Gaffney's model in the Abbey museum, finished in 1975, is based on careful research.

stripping of the roofs and start of demolition.

- In the 18th century Stukeley and Roger Gale (1672–1744) describe some sections that today no longer stand, and John Cannon's memoir (covering 1684–1743) and the *Avalonian Guide* (early 19th century) show that quantities of material were still being dispersed, but these depredations were relatively minor.

The detached fragments that make up the stone collection present problems of provenance: there is no record of exactly where some were found, and some are in fact not from the Abbey. Ron Baxter, an academic member of the Glastonbury Abbey Symposium, is working on the Romanesque material, and research suggests that Henry of Blois' west cloister may have survived the fire of 1184. Much of the stone from the pre-fire structures was used in the foundations of the re-building.

Some expected fragments of stonework are missing from the collection, notably black marble from Arthur's tomb and alabaster. There is little Purbeck marble, but numerous examples of stiff-leaf carving from the 1230s, and also an impressive group of carvings in a white limestone—possibly from Beer, on the Dorset coast.

Using masons' marks and comparison of workmanship, it is possible to identify the work of particular masons, for example Roger and William de Buneton, noted sculptors active at Glastonbury in the 1240s and responsible for similar work at Wells. Other masons can be shown to have worked at Ottery St Mary, Wells and Glastonbury, and some fell victim to the Black Death in the mid-14th century. Dr

the last century, with commentaries by various luminaries including John Brunson. Scenes included the High Street, Market Cross, Benedict Street, the Town Hall, the Abbey and gatehouse and St Patrick's Chapel, Lambrook Street and Bovetown.

Sampson illustrated the various clues and features revealed by the stone fragments, which indicated elements of the structure often completely lost, or techniques such as hot mastic repairs to stonework, initially used by royal masons. Fragments also preserved traces of paintwork, lead grouting and even graffiti.

### The town's 1911 coronation medal AP



*Newsletters 126 and 127 contained items about a Glastonbury medal commemorating the 1911 coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. It was dug up in a garden in Hampshire and was in a consequently decayed condition. The photos here show another example,*

*complete with crested suspension bars and pin. It appears to be made of a low-grade metal with a gilt wash by Gaunt of Birmingham. In this near-pristine condition it is probably a rare item.*





# Bridgwater College joins Redbrick project at old tannery site *Jim Nagel*

The Redbrick buildings at the old Morland site had a major boost in June when Bridgwater College joined the project to refurbish them as studios and workshops for local art and craftspeople.

Trainees will begin work on the site this summer. Portable teaching buildings are due to arrive, and the college will take permanent space when renovation is complete in December.

Of all Somerset colleges, Bridgwater is the strongest for vocational training in construction—plasterers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians-to-be commute from a wide area, including Glastonbury. These courses are free for people seeking work: they can drop in at the Redbrick cafe to find out details from college staff.

As a result of the college signing the contract, other backers are prepared to release additional funds to complete the work on two of the three buildings, said Robin Howell, a Redbrick spokesman.

Somerset Art Weeks in September will be the first public use of the Redbrick buildings. Paul Branson and two other artists are preparing shows. Gareth Mills, proprietor of the Speaking Tree bookshop and warehouse, has joined the organizing committee.

The Redbrick project has already celebrated its new life with its first live entertainment: a surprise 50th birthday party on June 21 for Stuart Constable, the man who has run the on-site cafe for the past year.

**New-look millstream** – Behind the old stone-built Baily building near the tall chimney on the 31-acre tannery site, the Beckery Island Regeneration Trust has remodelled the millstream, working to tight environmental specifications.



The redbrick buildings at the entrance to Glastonbury from the M5 are derelict no longer. They have a new roof, new windows, new terrace and landscaping—and now a new team of labour.

The stream was cleared of silt and then coir mats were laid on the sloping bank containing seeds of native water plants. Water marigolds are now in flower.

The new brick wall and railed concrete pathway hide new corrugated steel shoring that consolidates the foundations of the building, which is listed Grade II. Internal scaffolding now supports parts of the building, and its roof is waterproof. Access doorways have been blocked while the trust consults partners and prepares a business plan to present to potential funders.

The trust's overall concept for the Baily buildings is a "business nursery" to stimulate local employment. They could house two or three biggish businesses plus small offices for people working on their own, with a shared reception area.

**Surprise at t' mill** – Renovation on the ancient Northover Mill, adjoining the Redbrick complex, turned up a surprise: a flight of old steps leading from inside the mill down to the millstream.

A grant from the county council's

economic development unit helped repair the roof and replace its triple-roman tiles. Windows, taken away for renovation and repair, are now back in place. New rail fencing was installed.

The mill dates back to Abbot Bere and is listed Grade II, though little of the medieval structure remains. It was last occupied as a private house, by the Revd James and Edna Culross in the 1980s, and has been derelict since. The late Southwest Regional Development Agency decided it over in 2011 to the Beckery Island Regeneration Trust.



Northover Mill, from 1517, is the first building in Glastonbury seen by visitors from the M5.

## Tesco, Whitbread and Howdens leave just one three-acre plot seeking a developer

Steelwork began to rise on June 18 for a 25,000-sq-ft Tesco store on the former location of Avalon Plastics on the town edge of the old tannery site, backing onto B&Q.

The southwest A39 entrance to Glastonbury will soon be dominated by a £5-million 60-room three-storey Premier Inn and adjoining Brewers Fayre pub-restaurant seating 190. The corporate parent of both is Whitbread—whose ambition is 65,000 bedrooms in Britain by 2016. Site work began this month; opening is expected in spring 2013.

Cubex Land, the Bristol-based

developer that bought most of the Morland site from the Regional Development Agency before it was abolished last year, applied this month for planning permission to build three trade units and an 8,000-sq-ft high-class outlet for Howdens Joinery on land just behind the hotel. Howdens sells only to the building trade and has 500 outlets around Britain.

"We now have just three acres of serviced land left for development," said Paul Hobbs, an agent for Cubex. That remaining site is adjacent to the big chimney of the old Baily tannery.

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Swallows returned to the Baily buildings, their happy northern home for 30 years, to find a new walkway along the remodelled millstream.