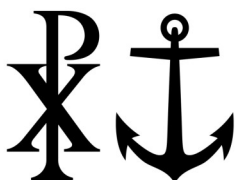


A Guide to Christ Church



Benefice of Christ Church and St Mary's, Frome
Diocese of Bath and Wells



Christ Church Frome



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

A short history of Frome

St Aldhelm is the patron saint of Frome. He founded an abbey at the top of a hill on the edge of Selwood Forest near the river '*Froome*' in 685AD at a time when many monasteries were being built.

The church of St John the Baptist now stands in this place and the rich history of its origins has been researched, revealed and recorded for posterity by the Rev'd Colin Alsbury, an historian and archivist. He has also had Church Cottage, an earlier building, renovated to become the Aldhelm Archive, named for Aldhelm Asberry Ashby, whose grandfather was a sexton at St John's. Christ Church archives will be found there, while Aldhelm Ashby's remains rest at Christ Church.



The agricultural settlement around the original abbey was mentioned in the Domesday Survey in 1087 as the 'settlement of Froome-Selwood', a name it would retain until the late 19th Century. It doubtless explains why Frome is pronounced Froome to this day!

As the Middle Ages progressed, the surrounding countryside proved ideal for rearing sheep and fine quality wool contributed to local prosperity. An affection for teasels persists as they were widely used to tease out the raw wool and it's well known that they benefit wildlife. Frome reaped the benefits of the wool trade during the Napoleonic Wars 1790—1815 when the British military were known for the colour of their uniforms, in particular Frome Blue, a colour still produced today.

Frome became a leading centre of the wool trade, together with Trowbridge and Bradford-on-Avon, with manufacture and dyeing of fine woollen cloth adding to local affluence. Monuments to two of the main benefactors of Frome are in the Christ Church churchyard: George Sheppard, whose family dominated the trade for more than two hundred and fifty years, and Thomas Bunn.

Competition from towns in the northeast of England and technological developments led to a decline in the wool industry, but the town and surrounding villages were able to benefit. Manufacturers were attracted by a ready supply of water and cheap labour, as well as proximity to the coal mining town of Radstock. They established iron foundries.

During the 19th Century JW Singer and several smaller companies moved in. Singer's became synonymous with the casting of many significant, high quality commemorative statuary and wrought-iron work.

Printing was another industry that flourished in Frome. Butler and Tanner was a key player locally and nationally. The Frome printing works premises became a housing estate only fairly recently.

A Free Church for Frome

In the early years of the 19th century, the population of Frome expanded from 8,749 to 12,411, mainly in poor families working in the manufacture of cloth. St John the Baptist, earlier known as St Peter, could accommodate a congregation of 1,600, but most places were allocated by rented pews and so a number of Anglican churches were built to meet the needs of the growing population, especially those who could not afford pew rent.

One of the sites chosen for building a new church was known as Pack Horse Ground. The open space on the west of Frome had many uses, from sporting events, such as boxing and single stick combat, to grazing, mainly for horses. Coal brought in from the Radstock coal fields was unloaded at the Packhorse Pub opposite and horses led across Christchurch Street West to graze; drivers found refreshment at the pub.

In 1815 an appeal was launched for the sum of £8,000 to build the new church. As less than half was raised economies were introduced.

The architect was George Allen Underwood, whose other most notable works include Montpelier Spa (1817), the Masonic Hall (1818-1823) and the Plough Hotel, which was demolished in 1982 to build Regent Arcade, all in Cheltenham. The design of Christ Church is not a common one and it holds much that is of particular interest.

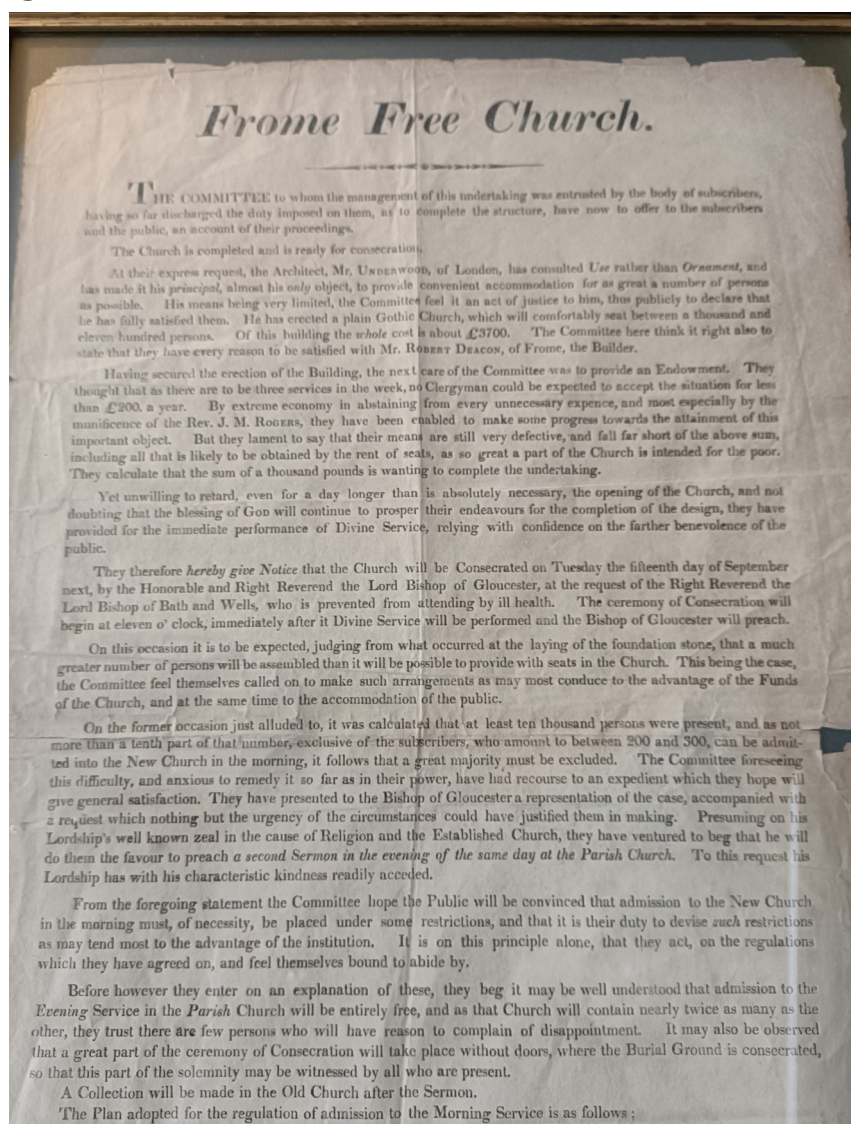
Building work, undertaken by Robert Deacon of Frome, cost £3,700. Soon after construction had been completed, Parliament voted a million pounds to build churches to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon!

The cornerstone of Frome Free Church was laid with much pomp and ceremony on Tuesday 15 April 1817. On that day, a service was held at the 'Parish Church' (St John the Baptist) at 11 o'clock. The sermon was given by Rev C Philott, Vicar of Frome, after which a collection was made for the *Free Church* and a procession formed at the church and in the churchyard.

The Order of Procession included: *'Four Constables; A Band of Music, Choir of Singers; A man carrying a Flag; Two Churchwardens with White Wands, carrying each a Silver Chalice with Wine and Oil; the Clerk, in his Gown, carrying a bunch of Corn, tied with Blue Ribbons; Beadle in dress/ Sexton in full dress/Beadle in dress.'*

Following *'Town Crier with Brass Plate'* in the parade up Bath Street were architect and builder, The Marquess of Bath, who laid the corner stone, a number of clergy, committee members and dignitaries, masons and carpenters, scholars and *'The Matron and Children of the Asylum, two and two; The Master and Blue-coat Boys, two and two; Old Men of the Hospital; Old Women of the Almshouse.'* Sunday School children and teachers followed with another flag and lastly *'Two Constables'*.

Christ Church was completed within 18 months. On 25 August 1818 Crockers, Printers in Bath Street Frome, published a declaration offering subscribers and the public '*an account of the proceedings*'. Queries were referred to the Rev Joseph Algar or Mr Wickham, North-Hill.



The new *Free Church* was consecrated on 15 September 1818. It has been serving the people of Frome ever since.

The past centuries and thousands of families who have worshipped there are reflected in the very fabric of the building and many are remembered in memorials in the extensive churchyard.



At Christ Church, the original proposal was to let the seats in the gallery and allow the poor the use of the lower part of the church, but although styled '*Frome Free Church*', Christ Church was not free of pew rents until 1871 when an offertory system was introduced.

In 1870 there were no vestries at the east end and the second set of double gates formed an entrance to the school until 1891 when the Public Offices were built. They are now Frome Town Hall.

On the arrival of Reverend Sydney Cooper, a local architect was employed to prepare plans for new vestries, transepts and the extension of the church 23 feet westwards. A faculty was granted for the work of W George Brown in 1896 and structural alterations began a year later.

In 1899, the south transept was built and the organ installed on the first floor where it has remained. The area below, now known as the choir vestry, was the Baptistry and it had an ornate ceiling. Building was entrusted to Mr Barnes, also of Frome.

In 1910, a choir gallery was built across the chancel by voluntary labour. This had the effect of once more darkening the chancel and again separating the choir from the congregation, although it gave clergy and communicants more space in the chancel. When Sydney Cooper left in 1912, he had been responsible for great improvements costing a total of £1,500, a large sum for a poor parish.

Brian Bullock remembers when in 1968 the 150th anniversary of the Dedication of the church was celebrated and the choir gallery was again removed by voluntary labour. It was generally agreed that it enhanced the general appearance of the church, making it lighter, more airy and further improving the acoustics which are widely acknowledged and regularly attract performers and audiences.

As one hundred years earlier the choir had been brought down from the west gallery to the Nave history repeated itself. The work, re-arrangement of the chancel and decoration throughout was supervised by Laurence King of London.

St Mary the Virgin was the last church to be built in this era. It was consecrated in 1864 and is now in the same benefice as Christ Church.

St Mary The Virgin was also designed to be a 'free church', as conceived by William Bennett, who renovated St John the Baptist and did much to address problems of lack of education, poverty, poor housing and malnutrition in Frome. He saw social ills as a 'blasphemy against the image of God in man'.

Both churches retain an association with related schools and institutions, while memorials, street names, exhibitions and societies that pay tribute to William Bennett and other benefactors add to the cultural heritage of the old market town.



Windows

The Gothic Revival in the 19th century had an impact on the huge number of new churches being built and most are filled with large and colourful 'story-telling' windows.

Artists and scientists worked together to revive the techniques of medieval glass production and decoration, including the manufacture of pot-metal glass. Pot-metal glass, with colour running right through it, is achieved by mixing metal oxides into molten glass in a pot, and hadn't been used much since the late 16th century.

It took many attempts for Victorian glass technicians to understand its properties and recreate it, but once pot-metal was finally put into production, its rich colours meant it was used widely by artists working in the Gothic Revival style.

The window at Christ Church depicting the parable of the Good Samaritan, each light showing part of the story, was installed in 1888. Harry Hams, a former churchwarden and local clothier, left £150 for the purpose and also for a window at Holy Trinity, which has the most impressive collection of Edward Burne-Jones stained glass in the South West, a set of nine windows designed by the famous Pre-Raphaelite artist and manufactured in the workshops of William Morris 1880—1903.





The 1883 **font window** shows Christ's baptism and His blessing the little children in the central light, Noah leaving the ark and Moses crossing the Red Sea. The alabaster lamb on the sill near the font was carved by James Forsyth of London in 1881.

The windows at Christ Church were smaller in the early days when there was a triple-decker pulpit in the central aisle and galleries on three sides of the nave. They were enlarged in the late 1840s when the freestone mullions had proven to be too weak to withstand the force of the weather.

The windows are better viewed from inside, especially when the sun is shining through, as they are protected by polycarbonate sheeting, which aids insulation, but does not enhance their beauty from outside.

The windows were made by the Horwood Brothers of Frome whose earliest attempts in 1842 on the north aisle are not of good quality, but others are much admired.

Carved fish are a feature of the stone **baptismal font** which can be moved. It came from St John's in the 1840s when their medieval font was found, restored and reinstated. A brass font jug is an example of Singer's Art Metal Works of Frome. It is decorative but is no longer used.



The **Dommett** window (1882) shows the Annunciation and Nativity and it is on record that this window cost £60.



The Paschal Candle has long been part of the tradition. It is blessed every Easter morning at dawn, the new fire symbolising the Light of the World. Since 2019, when St Mary the Virgin, Welshmill, and Christ Church were brought into the same benefice, light is brought back to light the candle from the dawn service at St Mary's.

The 18th century **silver sanctuary lamp** in Christ Church was the gift of Sydney Cooper, Vicar there from 1894 to 1912. It is believed to come from a church in Rome. When he left in 1912, he had been responsible for great improvements costing a total of £1,500, a large sum for a poor parish.



The Horwood north window, originally the main east window that was fitted in 1879, shows the Ascension and Crucifixion in the centre flanked by angels and disciples.

Below left Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene with the text 'Touch me not' and on the right an illustration of the text 'He is risen'. On top is the Hand of Blessing with angels holding musical instruments.





The decoration in the church was completed by members of the congregation. The stencilling on the ceiling intensifies towards the chancel to lead the eye eastwards to the altar and it

was reflected in communion rail kneelers which were also made by members of the congregation. There was a Communion rail, but like the kneelers, it is now seldom used. The Signs of the Passion are depicted on shields above the pillars.

The **Chancel**, near the altar, is reserved for the clergy and choir, and typically separated from the nave by steps or a screen. In Christ Church there are steps.



The **pulpit** came from Westfield, near Radstock, but was originally from All Hallows, Easton Bristol and is circa 1830. The design was copied on the chancel furniture which was made by a local craftsman, Richard Green.

The **crucifix** on the pillar was brought back from Malawi by two members of the choir some years ago.

The **lectern** was presented by a former Curate SB Lobb (1864-1867), It was carved from a piece of oak from Wells Cathedral.

One of the most distinctive features of Christ Church is the **rood** with its attendant figures of St John and St Mary. It was carved by Herbert Read of Exeter (1908) and caused great controversy and a Consistory Court hearing when first erected.

In 1909, the Chancellor of the Diocese ordered its removal as 'an illegal ornament'. Supported by his wardens and congregation, the Vicar refused to comply.

The dispute continued after the Vicar's departure and was settled only when the Bishop compromised by allowing the crucifix to remain if the figures either side were removed. Only then was he prepared to 'licence' a new incumbent. Some years later when the Bishop retired St John and St Mary were restored.

It was during the removal of the south gallery in 1961 that the potential weakness of the pillars was revealed and for months the church was filled with scaffolding until all the pillars could be strengthened. The roof of both aisles had to be rebuilt at a cost of £3,000. Electricity replaced gas at a cost of £200, an estimate of £148 having been declined in 1904.

The outer west doors date from 1918 and commemorate the centenary of the church, nothing more being possible in war time. The inner glazed west doors were added in 2013 when the church was re-ordered to include the cloakroom and servery, which was modernised in 2023.

The side door near the font was added in 1852 as part of a small extension to give access to the choir gallery which was at the west end at that stage.

A children's area was developed in the past decade and is also in this corner of the church in the north aisle.

The beautiful statue of **Our Lady**, pictured on the inside front cover, dates from 1936 and honours the Blessed Virgin Mary. You are invited to light a candle and offer prayers.





The **reredos**, or screen, with its five moulded arcades of Caen stone (1880) commemorates a former Vicar, Hill Dawe Wickham. In 1913 the paintings by local artist Grace Cruttwell were added when it was moved back slightly and raised during the construction of the sacristy behind the chancel. It depicts St Aldhelm, founder of Frome; St George; the Nativity; St Catherine, patron of Frome; and Bishop Thomas Ken (July 1637–19 March 1711).

He was considered the most eminent of the English non-juring bishops and he is buried at St John the Baptist. His hymns are still sung frequently and a building is named for him in Frome. He gave one of a pair of silver goblets to St John's and every year it is taken to join the other at a commemoration service at Wells Cathedral.

During a more recent re-decoration a brick wall was discovered behind the reredos showing the names of parishioners thought to have participated in the 'buy a brick' fund-raising scheme. A Latin inscription above records the gift. The small northwest doorway has the arms of the Diocese, the St Andrew's Cross, and of Hill Dawe Wickham, Vicar in 1852.



The **gargoyles** outside date from 1851.

Below the east window is a stone Calvary by Harry Hems of Exeter (1905). The worn date on the corner is 1896, when the vestries were commenced and above the doors the initials of JG Parfitt and J Thorburn, churchwardens in 1899.



The **high altar** was carved by Harry Hems of Exeter in 1894. He depicted Christ in Glory with adoring angels. The gift of the altar is recorded on the side of the retable, the decorated panels, now on the altar of the Lady Chapel.

The Stations of the Cross were placed around the church in 1943, the cost being met by donations in memory of those named on the plaque fixed on the side of the servery that was originally at the west door, prior to the reordering of this end which was completed in 2013.

They depict Christ's last journey to Calvary, beginning next to the entrance to the Lady Chapel and working anticlockwise round the church. They often serve as a focus for Lenten meditations.



The Lady Chapel

The Lady Chapel is set aside for private prayer and was traditionally used for healing services, at the beginning and end of Stations of the Cross services and for Maundy Thursday vigils.



On the ceiling are symbols of Our Lady, the crowned initials MR for Maria Regina.

The east window by Pearce & Cutler of Birmingham shows Our Lady flanked by St Margaret and St Catherine.





The altarpiece beneath the window has the marks of the Passion and was originally on the High Altar. It is a copy of the famous 'Adoration of the Lamb' by Hubert and Jan van Eyck (1432) in Ghent Cathedral and was a gift from John Howard Lewis to mark his retirement as vicar in 1934.

Many of the tapestries, hangings, banners and kneelers made by members of the congregation over the past centuries remain in the church. They serve to remind those who come to pray, to meet in fellowship and to celebrate baptisms and weddings, or to give thanks for the lives of family and friends who have passed on, of those who put their hands to useful work and also prayed for peace and loving kindness.



Music at Christ Church

To mark the 50th anniversary, the narrow pews in Christ Church were replaced with those we have today. To add to the celebrations, the choir that was moved from the west gallery to the chancel was surpliced, which was considered to be a revolutionary step.

History does not relate the opinions of the choristers when they were moved, but the Vicar, Rev'd GF de Gex, later commented, "Instead of the members being in the gallery cracking nuts, or carving their names on the gallery, they were under the eye of the Clergy and in a position which compelled them to conduct themselves with becoming reverence.



Christ Church has always been known for excellent acoustics. The first organ was a second hand one purchased in 1829. It had two rows of keys and by the early 1870s was in need of repair.

The Vicar was recorded as saying, "Its poor old bellows tottered well nigh to bursting and the new seats seemed to smile upon the poor, infirm wind chest. So it was sent to the doctor in Bristol and appeared red, fresh and brilliant with its new stops and new compass radiating pedals on 28 August 1873." The 'doctor' was Vowles of Bristol and the cost was £289 and 8 shillings.

From Times reported this on Wednesday 3 September 1873:

Pedal Organ CCC to F 30 notes Pedals Concave and Radiating.

Pedal Bourdon, Large Scale, 16 feet ... CCC to F. 30 Pipes
COUPLERS

1. Swell to Great Organ 2. Great to Pedals 3. Swell to Pedals

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

19 Drawknobs; 920 Pipes and Five Composition Pedals

The occasion of the organ's return saw the first Choral Eucharist at Christ Church. A hundred years later in 1973, the organ was renovated and modernised by George Osmond & Co of Burrington, with the addition of an eight foot principal and a four foot flute to the pedals. These pipes were recycled from the organ of Porlock Methodist Church. The inaugural recital on the restored organ was given by Dr Peter King of Bath Abbey.



Christ Church is on the west of Frome, Somerset, still a thriving market town. The extensive churchyard is bordered by Christchurch Street West, Frome Town Council Hall, Avanti Park School and private houses.

All areas of the churchyard are closed. Somerset Council maintains the original area around the building. Families visit regularly as interest in family ancestry has prompted enquires from all over the world. Dr Philip Bendell is adding records from Christ Church and St John's to the Bath Burial Index he is compiling so that everyone can access the data.

The upper churchyard was developed in 1930 and is known variously as New Ground or Parson's Paddock, acknowledging the flock of sheep brought in some years ago to keep the grass short after it was cleared of brambles and restored to good order by Brian Bullock, John Grylls, John Price, and George Stephenson.



The most recent burial ground is the Garden of Remembrance where ashes are interred and roses grow in a secluded area bordered by neat hedges and old stone walls. It was designed by Patsy Stephenson and has been maintained by Brian Bullock, who has sung in the choir at Christ Church and cared for the church and churchyard for longer than half a century, and his wife Barbara.

Notable benefactors

Thomas Bunn was born in 1767 and is one of the best known of the notable benefactors of Frome. His family prospered and he was a man of independent means, a philanthropist, a member of the congregation and a solicitor who gave his services free of charge. He went to school in Wells and Bath and trained in Chard and at Clement's Inn.

Following the example of Robert Raikes in Gloucester, his sister and mother, both named Jane, started a Sunday School at Monmouth House. Within five years 250,000 children had enrolled across the country and by 1831 it was a national movement hosting 1.25 million children.



Bunn was an active supporter of the anti-slavery movement and was dedicated to the local community. As a member of the Frome Turnpike Trust he was reported as saying, "My object has always been to improve the whole." He was responsible for widening the road across the south of the town from Badcox to Wallbridge. This created more convenient thoroughfares and increased the property value of numerous buildings.

Today this important road is Christchurch Street West, with the Memorial Theatre and War Memorial across from Christ Church and Frome Town Hall. One end forms the junction with Bath Street, Christchurch Street East and Portway, for which Thomas Bunn was responsible. He proposed other key improvements to the town, inspired by Bath and its neoclassical architecture. One of his pillars was made into a memorial. It is on the left of the exit from Christ Church near Frome Town Hall nearly opposite the Memorial Theatre.

Thomas Bunn's remains are buried within iron railings close to the south west corner of the building in a place designated as a plague pit in 1832, but the outbreak of cholera did not reach Frome and he bought the plot.

In 1999, his grave was restored by the Frome Historical Society, founded in 1958 and known as the Frome Society for Local Study. In spring, Lilies of the Valley and other bulbs attract early bees and insects.

George Sheppard

The history of this worthy citizen is well documented in the Somerset Standard 8 July 1832 and he is listed in the National Archives Vol 5c, Page 493. Born in 1773, he was a contemporary of Thomas Bunn and a good friend.

George Sheppard bought Fromefield House when he married Mary Ann Stuart in 1797 and their first daughter was born there in 1800. She was the daughter of Captain Sir Thomas Byard, who was one of Nelson's captains. The business was known as 'The Firm of William, Byard and George Sheppard'.

He developed factories at Spring Gardens, which he purchased from Mr Adams. He also bought Rodden factory which had been a flour mill since 1680. It was under his direction that the staple trade of Frome reached its greatest prosperity. Cloth was taken to London and wool brought in by coach.

George Sheppard died on 2 February 1855. The Rev Phillott, who had been Vicar of Frome for three years at the time, conducted the service.

The original large tombstone at Christ Church (pictured right) had railings, but they are no longer in place. The inscription reads *'Beneath lie the mortal remains of George Sheppard late of Fromefield House. He died February 2nd in the year of Our Lord 1855, aged 82'. Entwined on top 'Hallelujah Praise be the Lord'. Elizabeth Hulbert d 18 Feb 1868 (64) dau of George Sheppard.*

(This tomb is number 149 on the 1949 map.)



In memoriam

Aldhelm Samuel Asberry Ashby was born in Radstock on 27 June 1882. His parents were Francis Ashby and Mary Stocker. His grandfather, George Ashby (1827–1903), was Sacristan and Sexton at St John's and Aldhelm was baptised there on 15 July 1882 by the Vicar Rev'd William James Early Bennett.

By 1891 young Aldhelm and his family were living at Flints, Frome, and by 1901 they were at Sunnyside Place. His first position was as a commercial clerk, but from 1903, when his grandfather died and he was 21 years old, Aldhelm became Sacristan and Sexton of the Frome parish churches, apart from Holy Trinity.

He moved into 'The Mansion' adjacent to St John's, in which his grandfather had lived for many years. This property was considered uninhabitable in 1913 and Mr Ashby was moved out. It was purchased by the Vicar and Churchwardens and rebuilt at the cost of £600. It is now named 'Church Cottage' and has become a charming centre for Frome's archives.

Aldhelm's call-up was delayed as he was the only person who knew where graves were and where they should be dug, there being no burial authority in Frome. However, from 31 August 1917 he served in the Army, transferring on 15 February 1918 to the Royal Flying Corps and on 1 April 1918 to the Royal Air Force as a photographer.

A year after his discharge 30 April 1920, Aldhelm established a photographic business at 1 Bath Street, where the family had moved in 1921. His photographs over the next two decades form a significant resource for understanding the history and people of Frome.

He died on 6 August 1958 at the age of 76 and was buried at Christ Church. The archives for St John the Baptist, for which the Rev'd Colin Alsbury has been responsible, are named for him and for the patron saint of Frome. Records from Christ Church can also be found there.

Edgar George Alfred Smith, Private 9th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, died on 10 March 1944 aged 20; his grave is north of the church building. He was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Bernard Smith, who lived in Water Lane Frome, Somerset. He died whilst serving with his unit just before his 21st birthday after two years in the army.

The Somerset Standard of Friday 17 March 1944 described him as popular with his former workmates at a construction company and his senior officer testified to his usefulness and the quiet efficiency in which he carried out his duties. The remains were brought to Frome and rested for the night in the Church of St. Catharine's, Park Road, where in his youth he had regularly served as an altar boy.

The interment of young Pvt Smith took place at Christ Church Burial Ground on Tuesday morning, preceded by Requiem Mass at St Catharine's conducted by Father Carrigan and attended by many members of his family, friends and colleagues.

The wooden war memorial shrine In the south aisle was made locally in 1922.

In 2007 a plaque was installed below to mark the 60th anniversary of the death of Wilfred Dolby Fuller VC, the only person in Frome to have been awarded a Victoria Cross. To the right are his picture, the laid-up standard of the Frome branch of the Royal British Legion and a replica of his medal. His monument is in the section of the churchyard between the building and Christchurch Street West.

Frome's war memorial at the Memorial Theatre, which is a few steps down the street from Christ Church, is one of many cast by J W Singer & Sons for towns, villages, schools, churches, businesses, the military and governments, home and abroad after the First World War. They include Boadicea on the Embankment in London, the figure of Justice atop the Central Criminal Courts and Buckingham Palace gates.



One of Singer's employees, Charlie Robbins, who had served in the war, modelled for the statue that stands outside Frome's Memorial Theatre down the road from Christ Church.

It was placed there in 2014 to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and Remembrance Day is celebrated there every year on 11 November in memory of the conflict ending 'at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month' during WW1.

J W Singer & Sons cast war memorials until that side of the business was sold in 1927.

Commonwealth War Graves

WW1

Cyril Starr Allen: Corporal 3rd Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers
15 November 1918 (1.306)

William Percy Avenell: Gunner 201st Battery Royal Field Artillery Labour Corps 22 February 1920 aged 29 (111/1427)

Frederick Charles Crook: Private Prince Albert's (Somerset Light infantry)
10 December 1918

Graham Grant: Private 1st/4th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment
6 February 1916 aged 25 (111.6650)

Jack Hallett: Private 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards 23 January 1920
aged 28 (111.568)

Henry James Maidment: Private 1st Battalion Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry) 23 July 1915 aged 26 (111.135)

John Duncan Paulin: Colour Sergeant Border Regiment Labour Corps
12 February 1919 aged 34

Arthur Edward James Pike: Private Army Service Corps 12th Motor Transport Company 28 March 1918 aged 30 (111;2.73)

William James Potheary: Bandsman 1st/4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders 20 June 1921 aged 30

Thomas Singer: Private 7th Battalion Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry) 14 February 1917 aged 39

Walter Charles Sparey: Private Depot Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry) 1 March 1918 aged 28

Commonwealth War Graves Commission—example of records

Grave	Rank	Unit	War	Marker	CWGC remarks/location reference
LEWIS G M K	Spr	Royal Engineers (Bomb Disposal)	WW2	PM	Matching kerb, chippings. 2 behind and 4 left of CH to Carpenter

Note:

What3Words Location are recorded in the seventh column so that the volunteers can easily locate the burial site or memorial by a GPS App.

WW2

George Armstrong: 4th Battalion Coldstream Guards 16 March 1942
aged 26 (NG)

Thomas Ernest Carpenter: Petty Office Stoker: HMS Victory Royal Navy
28 November 1939 aged 50 F Grave 32h

William Cole: ARP Warden, with Ernest Barnes and Jack Berry, 15 April
1941 aged 56

Arthur Wesley Frapwell: Sergeant RAF Volunteer Reserve 13 April 1943
aged 22 Section E Grave 1

Glenfear Mansel Kenward Lewis: Sapper 207 Field Company Royal
Engineers 3 October 1940 aged 21 Section G Grave 45

William Ivor Ralph Lukins: Driver 207 Field Park Company Royal
Engineers 1 March 1944 aged 27

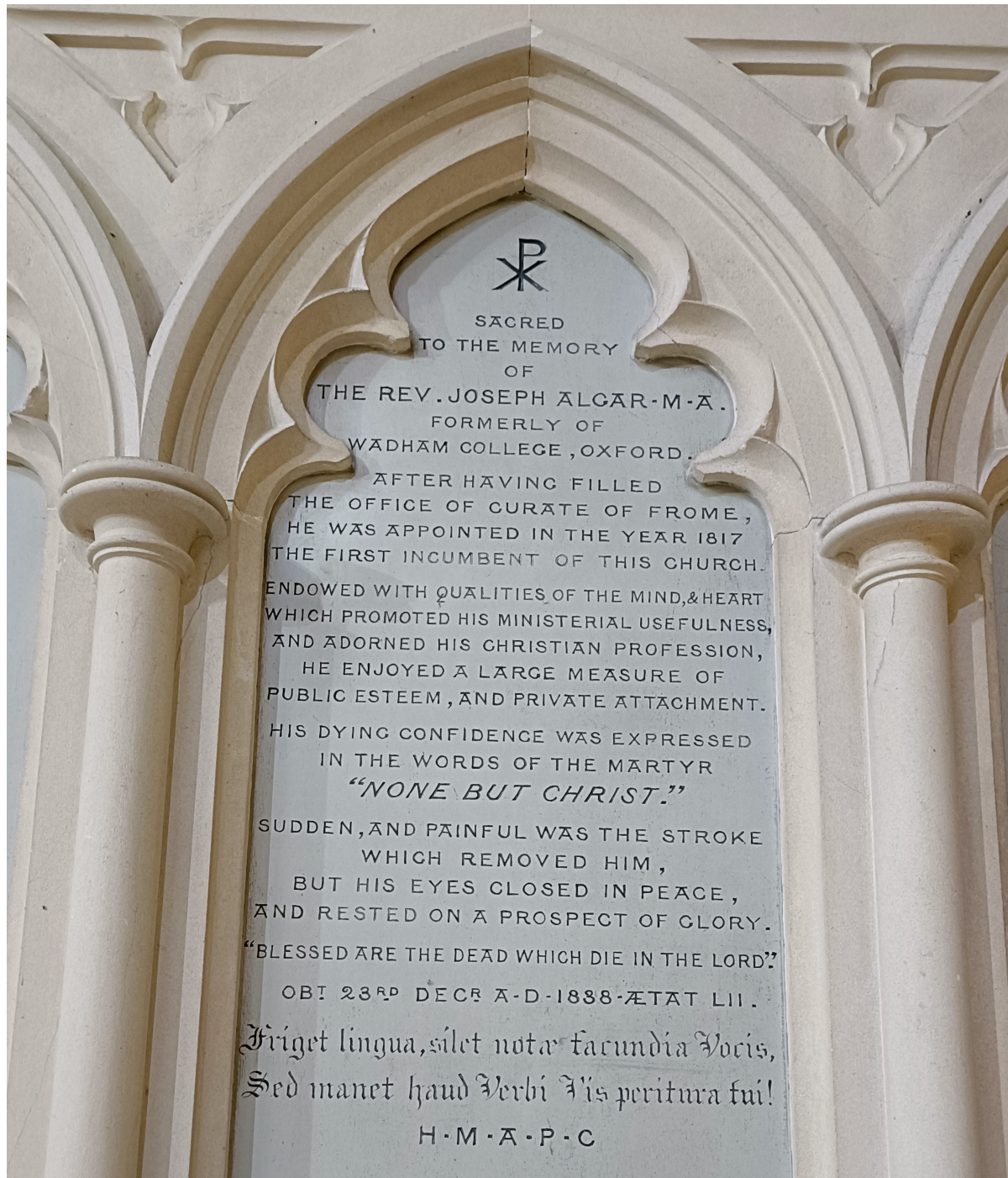
Frank Aaron Pearce: Corporal Royal Marines 26 December 1944 aged 55,
served in both World Wars and is buried north of the church tower.

Edgar George Alfred Smith: Private 9th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry
10 March 1944 aged 20, his grave is north of the church memorials.

Kenneth Edwin Snook: Police
Somerset Constabulary 26
April 1942 aged 25

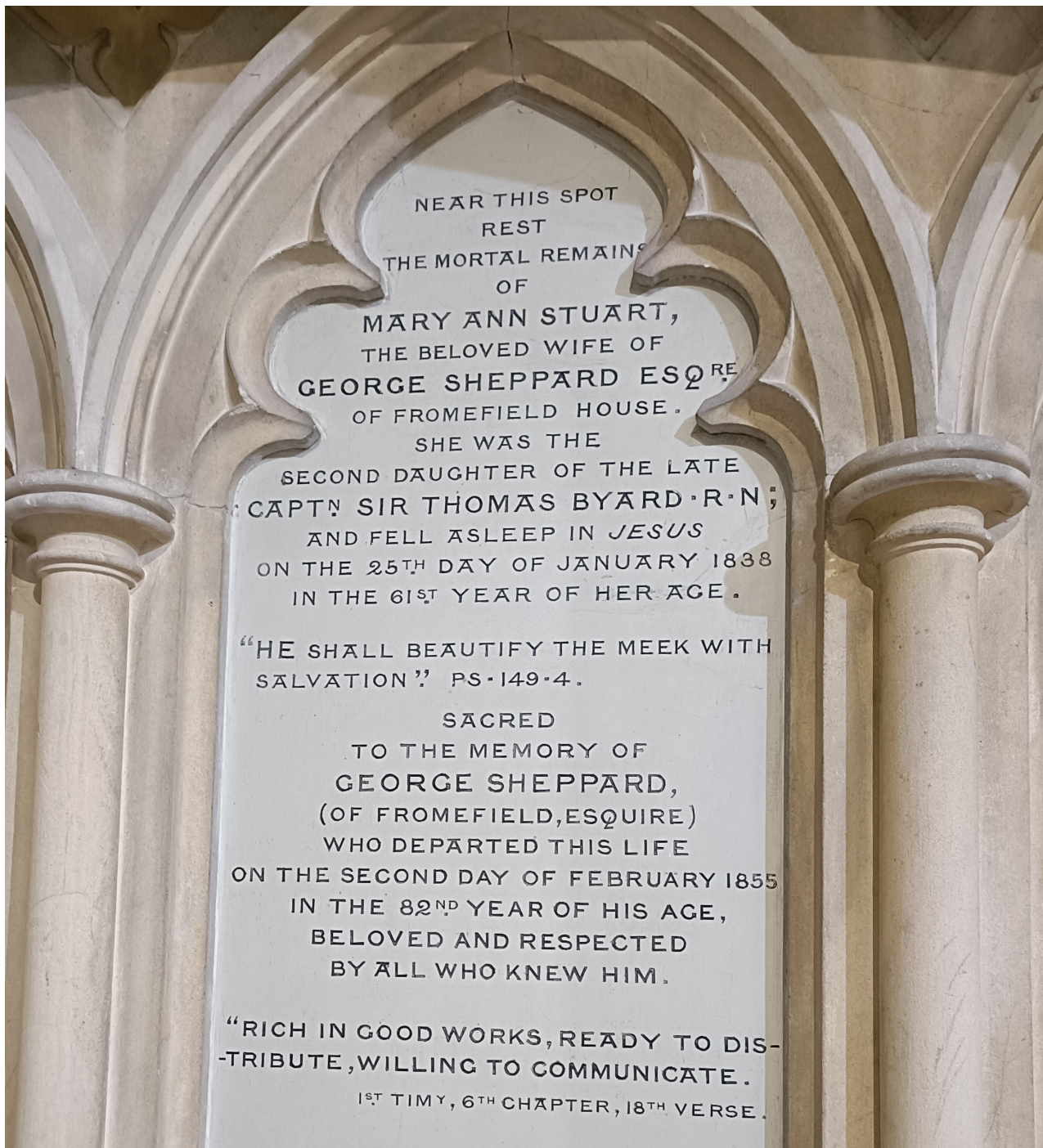
Frome's Fallen Heroes World,
David L Adams



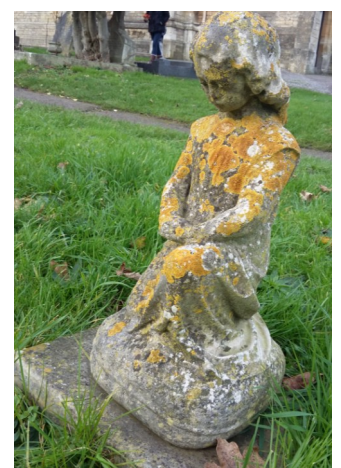


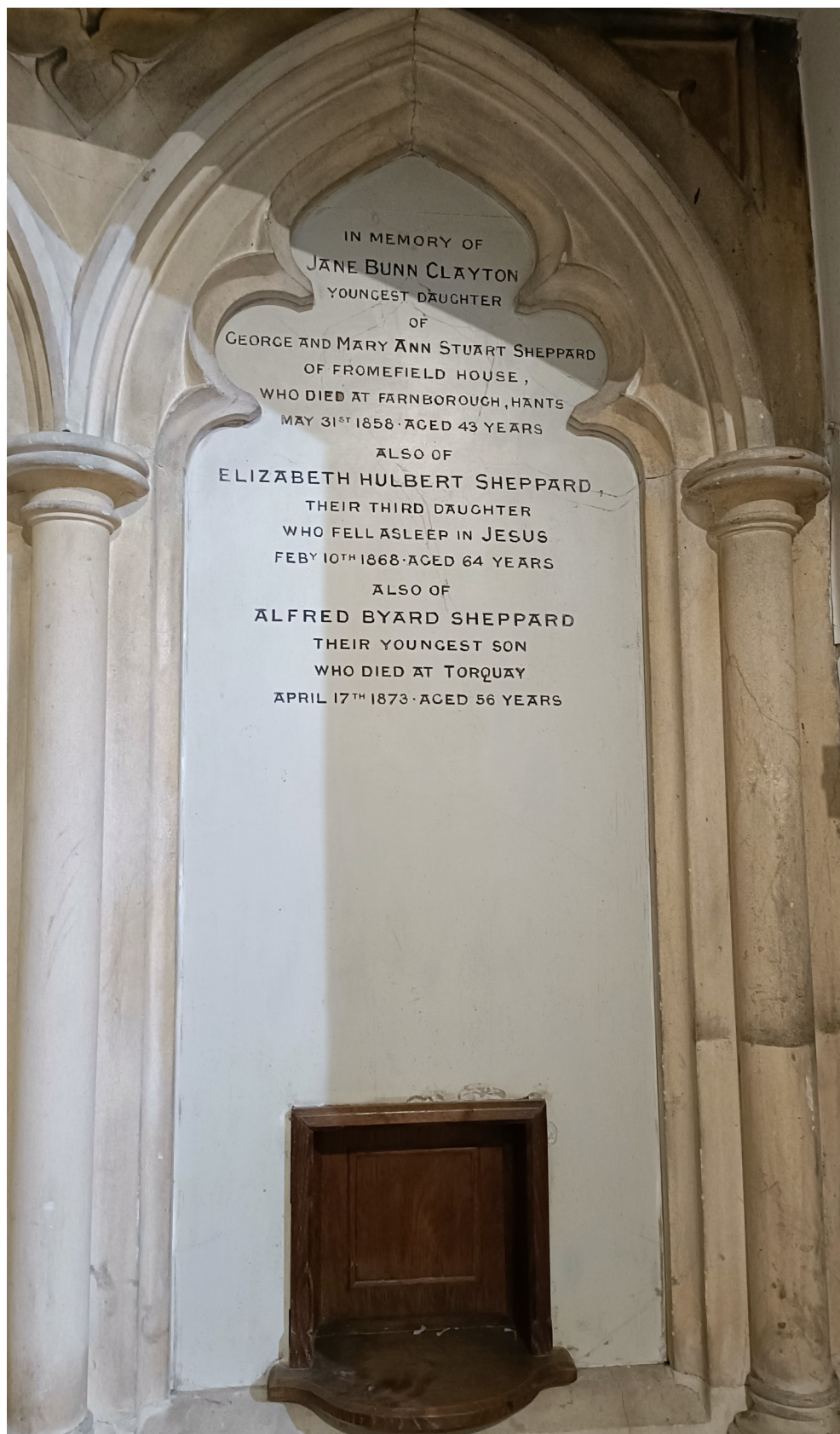
The Rev'd Joseph Algar who held the position of Curate of Frome when Christ Church was built at the cost of £3,900 was nominated Minister by the Rev'd Charles Phillott MA, Vicar of Frome. His appointment was unanimously approved by the Committee of Subscribers. The endowment consisted of 40 acres of land at Grandon which had been in the occupation of Thomas Harding, nine acres of land and an orchard at Paulton, owned by John Flower, £93.18s. 3d and the house where he was residing at Keyford with garden and field.

The registrar of the Bishop's Court at Wells conveyed the half acre of ground with the newly erected church by deed on 4 September 1818 to the subscribers, who left it in trust for ecclesiastical purposes.



The tribute on another memorial for the Sheppard family is timeless:
'*Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*'

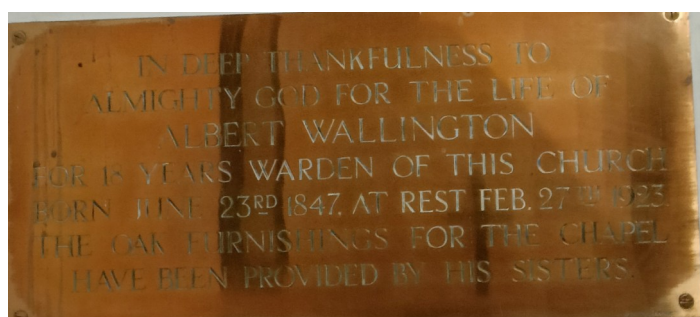




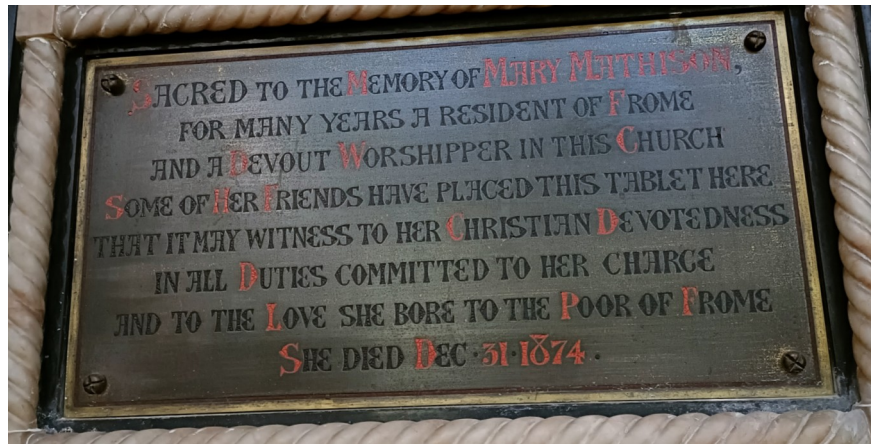
A panel dedicated to the Sheppard family mentions the youngest daughter of George and Mary and their third daughter Elizabeth, as well as their youngest son, Alfred Byard.

Access to the Reserved Sacrament can be seen below this marble panel in a secure cupboard in the sacristy called an aumbry, or ambry.

Brass plaques were a traditional way of honouring people. The one pictured below is dedicated by Susan Sheppard to her husband to record moving the East Window in 1905 and restoring it in 1929.



Other brass plaques of particular interest are those dedicated to Clergy, as well as to past members of the congregation.



A brass plaque describes the courage of Lance Corporal Fuller in action in France. Seeing a party of the enemy endeavouring to escape along a communication trench, he ran towards them and killed the leading man with a bomb; the remainder, nearly 50 of them, finding no means of evading his bombs, surrendered to him.

He received his Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 4 June 1915 for most conspicuous bravery at Neuve Chapelle on the 12 March 1915. On 30 September 1915 he was further presented with the Russian Cross of St George, also by the King at Hospital in Sheffield.

In spite of his former sporting prowess, Corporal Fuller was discharged as medically unfit on 31 October 1916. He then joined the Somerset Police, but ill health forced him to resign. He died on 22 November 1947 and is buried at Christ Church.

On 15 March 2015 serving police officers joined Grenadier Guards to honour Wilfred Dolby Fuller VC at a special service to mark the 100th anniversary of his bravery during the First World War and his daring deed was recalled at a service in Christ Church, Frome.

Somerset County Gazette reported that serving members of the Grenadier Guards and mounted police officers were in ceremonial dress, while the constabulary mace was carried by a guard of honour and there was ceremonial drumming by the guardsmen attending.

After the service there was a gathering around Wilfred's grave and wreaths laid by the family, British Legion, the National Association of Retired Police Officers and Avon and Somerset's Assistant Chief Constable Julian Moss.

In addition to the celebrations locally, a group of police officers self-funded a trip to Neuve Chapelle, France, to visit the site of Wilfred Fuller's act of bravery. They laid a wreath at the Le Touret memorial to missing soldiers on behalf of Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

The trip organiser was PC Lee Giles, who said: "I feel strongly that the memory of our forebears and their achievements during this conflict is kept alive."

Environmental initiatives in the churchyard

In 2021, Helena Crouch from the Somerset Botany Group undertook a survey in the historic churchyard of Christ Church. A wealth of species were found to have survived in the thick grass that had been neatly cut for decades. This set the scene to quicken the pace of environmental initiatives that would support biodiversity and lessen the loss of species.



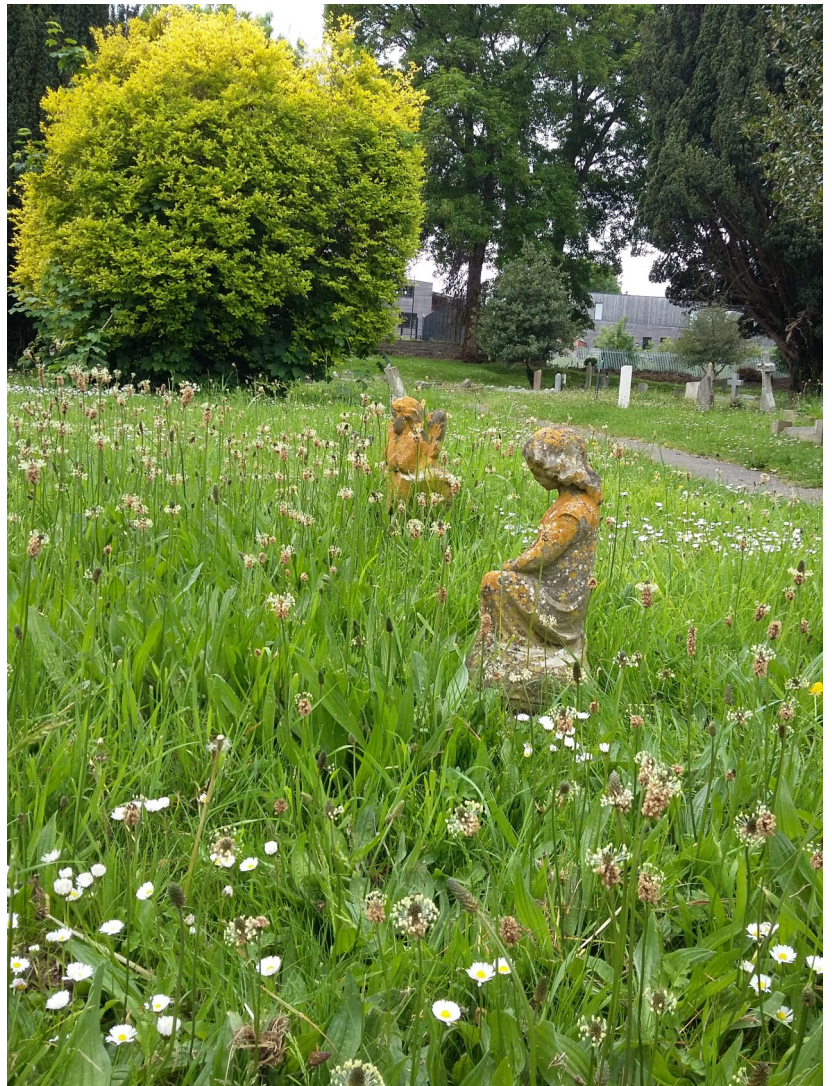
The first planting for a wildlife corridor started that year along the top boundary fence between Avanti Park School and New Ground, creating a place to reconnect with nature. Climbers and hedge plants were selected to support insects, birds and other wildlife. The second stage of the project was facilitated by a local grant of £500 in 2023.

The biodiversity programme at Christ Church includes managing an area identified as being species-rich near the huge Copper Beech to the north. It was demarcated with representatives from Somerset Council and Idverne, the agency that maintains public areas which include 'closed' churchyards.

NoMowMay, coupled with the council's environmental cutting régime, was introduced, along with guidance from Church of England partnerships such as *Wilder Churches* with Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Diocese and *Caring for God's Acre*.

By 2023 there was a network of environmental initiatives offering information, resources and inspiration. Frome Town Council's Wild Bunch donated bird nesting boxes and hedgehog homes.

The application to join A Rocha UK Eco Church was updated in 2023 and in 2024, more trees and flowering bushes will be planted, following the tradition of caring for the environment and for future generations.





Celebrating our trees

Christ Church has many large old trees that support wildlife. Narrow-leaved Limes along Christchurch Street West, planted at the time Selwood School pupils joined in a local initiative, attract many insects. The huge old Copper Beech and Chestnut trees give shade to passers-by and refuge to birds and squirrels while Ash trees are particularly important for fungi, invertebrates which live in dead wood, lichens and other plants. Those at Christ Church are large, mature trees, with assorted cracks and hollows that provide nesting sites for woodland birds, and roosting sites for bats.

Plant a tree in '73 and plant some more in '74

Pupils from Selwood School joined a Civic Society/council tree-planting programme in 1973 and 1974. The trees they planted at Christ Church are wonderful specimens. A tree map was made available in '23 and displays are mounted regularly to encourage community participation and support. The Frome Churchyard Trail during the annual Frome Festival introduced many local folk to these important green spaces.



Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to all who have contributed in any way and provided information for this updated version of the Christ Church guidebook, in particular: Derek Gill; reference is gratefully acknowledged to the guidebook he wrote and designed and other publications, such as his 1968 issue of Chi-Rho, the parish magazine.

My thanks to Jean for her kind assistance and support and their son, Rob, for the aerial photographs of church and churchyard.

Thanks to those who assisted in retrieving documents and other archival material from the attic above the vestry: Rev'd Liz Dudley, Rev'd Harry Wainwright, Peter John, John Grylls and Dr Phil Bendall, whose work on burial records is also gratefully acknowledged.

Our thanks to Rev'd Colin Alsbury for receiving the records.

Brian Bullock, thank you for sharing the invaluable memories you have from half a century and more dedicated to Christ Church.

Our thanks to Frome Museum. Frome Library and volunteers from the War Graves Commission.

The contribution is gratefully acknowledged of those who care for our extensive churchyard and the diverse species it supports, in particular: John Grylls, Brian Bullock, George Stephenson and Dr Sarah Eyles, Somerset Council and Frome Town Council. We thank the Post Code Lottery for the Magic Little Grant!

Caroline Thornycroft 2023 Frome

