

ST CUTHBERT (OUT) HERITAGE ASSET LISTING GROUP

Good evening one and all.

Now, I am going to quote the St. Crispin's Day speech from Henry V...

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.....

Lisa is the brains and glamour of our group, Tony is the steady hand and the voice of reason, and Martin has oodles of local knowledge. Me – I am the comic relief with bad knees!

And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here...

So, whilst you have all been at home doing nothing and watching daytime TV, episodes of Repair Shop and Bargain Hunt, we have been busy on the project.

Due to the County Council and Unitary Council changes in Somerset and the introduction of Local Community Networks, it became apparent that St. Cuthbert Out Parish Council would need to know what could be considered a heritage asset within the parish and to differentiate what was in its care, and what was in the care of the other bodies.

The four of us started this 'journey' in June 2022.

Now, the project was to identify any heritage assets within the parish - what is 'out there', to quote *The X Files* – to make a note of their existence, and to plot their locations, alongside what we know about them, onto a map on the SCOPC website, for local people and visitors to access easily. We also hope to use plaques to further raise the community's awareness about these assets. The map is in its infancy at the moment. Our other aim is to, where possible, protect our heritage sites, to keep them safe and improve them for future generations. No easy task but one worth doing. We would also like to develop a range of walks for people to follow, perhaps using a phone app.

Although Lisa is the Deputy Clerk, Tony and Martin are councillors, and I am a former councillor... we are all working on this as volunteers. Tony is our 'linkman' to the council, with powers to access the website alongside Lisa. He reports back to the council for permission to carry on in the direction that we are going and to also allow you to guide us a little – only a little.

Now I can hear you all cry 'what qualifies as a Heritage Asset'?

Our sense of this has evolved over time –
By way, first, of members of the community's suggestions.
About 20 residents, now, have gotten in touch with us via our email account and the SCOPC site ...in response to a series of articles we were able to publish in the Wells Voice.

Lisa, Tony, Martin, and I have also gone out on several expeditions across the countryside physically looking for assets hidden in fields and on roadsides. Now, we don't wander aimlessly around the parish – we follow ordnance survey maps and via footpaths and lanes... This involves good stout boots and in my case a couple of co-codamol. We try and keep a photographic record, where possible, of our finds – which will hopefully also find their way onto our map.

So, what have we found? What have we decided counts as a heritage asset?

Old stone stiles, overnight lock-ups, outhouses, bridges, river crossings, ancient stones, mills, plague slabs, garden privvies, gate posts, road side mileposts, council road/street furniture, ancient woodlands, paths, water pumps, tank traps, pill boxes, look out posts, statues in odd places, old wall writings, strips of land... the list is endless it seems. We have recently realised that tumuli have to be included together with other archaeological sites. Waterways are another interesting aspect which may come into play - as I say, *endless!*

One particularly memorable example for me:

If on your travels, you see large rectangular stones erected at field gates in the villages these are known as Draycott Wedges, hewn from the local quarry many years ago – “who knew”?! Well, Martin DID! There are two just by Waitrose in Wells, which I have puzzled over for quite a while whilst waiting at the traffic lights. I suppose it should have been obvious, as there were fields there before the by-pass and the houses!

Part of our task is also to research what we find – their dates of origin, use, etc. We have, for example, been looking into the Stop Line Green, the Highbridge to Bath GHQ Defence Line, established in 1940. At Dinder there are 17 tank traps which I had no idea were there. They have all been moved into the one field and are stunning! I'm advised by Tony that all are not in the field as some were dropped in the nearby gully and the rest are as we see them.

We have also achieved some successes in terms of intervening to protect our heritage assets and making them more visible.

- Wookey Hole Caves have agreed to fund and reinstate the 'Charabancs' sign at the northern end of Wookey Hole High Street with the Somerset Forge's assistance. Apparently the consensus is that there were two signs and one was at Deer Leap – we're working on it!
- David Wilson Homes have agreed to fund a plaque for the Penleigh POW Camp & the Thales site, Wookey Hole Road which was engaged in very secret work, post war!!
- The East Somerset Railway have agreed to fund a revised information panel for the old cattle pound, at the Dulcote end of the Multi user path.

So, what's next?

This Summer, we will keep collecting, logging, and researching assets! We hope to provide more articles for the local press, to publish in not only the Wells Voice, but also The Leveller and the Wells Journal, to share our progress with the community and to find out even more information. We will, of course, keep walking ...o'er hill and dale, camera and picnic in hand.

Hot off the press as at yesterday: Lisa has made some progress with Parish Online and has now added 'Ancient' & 'Water courses & features', renamed WW2 as Military, changed industry & trade to industry, trade & agriculture, as well as categorised some items more accurately and her last words were that she has a better idea – if she was the Professor of Cunning at Oxford University she would be awesome!!!.... so watch this space.

We will also be researching the following:

- Maesbury P.O.W. Camp
- 18th /19th century Racecourse(s) at Whitnell Corner, Priors Hill & (in Burcott) Somerleaze
- the rifle range which lies between Knowle Hill and Battlebury – according to Tony the clue is in the name!!! (in use up to 1945)
- Seven former public houses: Victoria Arms, Slab House, Easton Inn, the Pound at Coxley, Red Cow Inn at Haybridge; Horse & Jockey at Coxley; and Hurst Batch at Wookey Hole.
- Lax Folly & Lax Seat on Knapp Hill, West Horrington
- And Worminster Hill and Cross – also known as 'Dragon Hill' – based on the myth of a dragon who used to live there and would terrorise the residents of both Dinder and Glastonbury (which I personally think is quite a worthwhile pastime!).

If anybody has any personal knowledge of heritage assets that you would like us to include and to research, do grab one or all of us at the end or get in touch via our email address (stcuthbertout.heritagelist@gmail.com).

Also, if anybody would like to go on a magical mystery tour of some of the parish's heritage assets, so that you can see the kind of thing that we are banging on about, please do let us know – again, at the end of this meeting, or via email (stcuthbertout.heritagelist@gmail.com).

HERE ENDETH THE LESSON

Does anybody have any questions?