



FOST news

Friends of St Thomas' Church Northlew

Art & photography exhibition



FOST's art and photography exhibition in May was a great success, attracting about 200 visitors. The event raised over £1,300, shared equally between Northlew Church repairs and the North Devon Hospice.

Alongside exhibits from local artists and photographers, special entries from our school and toddler group, the Hospice, Made-Well and the Well-Being Cafe ensured there was something on display from all ages and abilities.

Thank you to our visitors, exhibitors and volunteers for making the exhibition so worthwhile.

Save the date...

On *Saturday 13 September* our open day will support the work of Devon Historic Churches Trust. We are planning to highlight the many different aspects of church life in Northlew - its history, care for the building and nature, community activities, fund raising, hospitality and, of course, worship.

If you have any old photos of church activities or weddings/baptisms that you are happy for us to scan for the displays, please let Val know - 01409 221690 or valofgreen@gmail.com.

DEVON
HISTORIC
CHURCHES



Supporting FOST

FOST news is an occasional newsletter with information about our church building and fund raising events. If you would prefer an electronic copy, just let us have your email address.

You can support the Friends' work by taking part in fund raising events but if you would like to get more actively involved and/or become a member, please contact Jackie Ellis jackie.ann.ellis@btinternet.com 01837 658750 .

Secure donations can be made using our QR code - and you can Gift Aid your contribution at the same time.



FOST is a Registered Charity
No 1070123

FOST facts

The churchwarden's staff, or wand, signifies their role in maintaining order and overseeing church property. In the past it could be used to break up disturbances or to wake up sleepers in the congregation during sermons.

Coming up

*Sundays 6/*13/20/27 July*
09:30 Morning Prayer
*Communion service

*Sundays 3 /*10/17/24 August*
09:30 Morning Prayer
*Communion service

FOST finds

NORTHLEW. A circumstance occurred in this parish lately which nearly terminated fatally to a whole family. It appears that they were desirous of getting rid of a large number of rats with which they were infested, and procured a quantity of poison for the purpose, which was mixed into a paste with flour, a portion being then used, and the remainder reserved for a future occasion. This, which was left open, was taken by one of the members of the family as some of the kneaded dough left from the last baking, and was mixed with the new batch, and partaken by one or two of the family, who becoming ill and showing symptoms of having taken poison, medical assistance was promptly secured, and they are in a fair way of recovery.

A lesson for us all.

Source: Exeter & Plymouth Gazette June 1850

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Spotlight on...

A recent spring clean in the vestry revealed a hidden treasure - a *framed wooden board* marking a £50 grant for the re-seating of the church in 1883. The grant was given by the Incorporated Society for Building and Churches on condition that the seating would be available to all attendees free of charge.

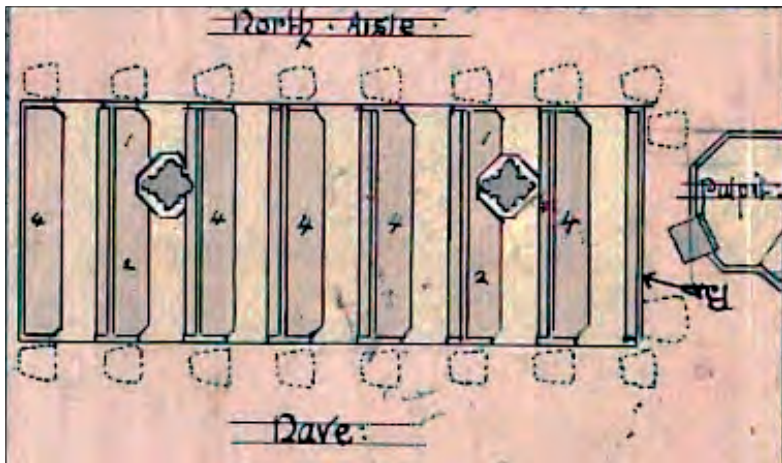
This was a departure from the traditional practice of private, paid pews. At that time it was common for church wardens to allocate specified seats in return for substantial rents - for a month, a year or for life - while unfortunate paupers were crammed into benches in odd corners. The amount payable no doubt related to how close the pew was to the pulpit and the status of the person renting.



GRANTED *£50 A.D. 1883 TOWARDS RESEATING AND RESTORING THIS CHURCH. ALL THE SEATS ARE FOR THE FREE USE OF THE PARISHIONERS ACCORDING TO LAW.

**About £7,770 in today's money*

William Kelly's pew with the bench end carved with the initial W is in prime position by the lectern. But then he did help pay for the extension of the church, the Rutleigh Chapel and the original seating in the 1500s.



The Architect's plans for the refurbishment of the church in 1883 show pew seating on the north side of the Nave for 26 people with another 18 seated on chairs

The Society's rules on seating

The Society's stringent conditions, which were in accordance with the Church Seats Act 1872, appear to have been followed faithfully in Northlew:

The seats must be so placed that no part of the congregation shall turn their backs upon the Lord's table, and in the nave and nave aisle should, if possible, face the chancel.

There must be an open passage up the whole length of the centre of the church, from west to east, and from the principal entrance, not less than three feet six inches wide where the width of the nave is under eighteen feet or four feet where this width is exceeded. Side passages must not be less than two feet nine inches in narrow aisles, but three feet where practicable.

Square or double pews will not be allowed. The Society strongly recommend the introduction in all cases of low, open seats; doors to the sittings are unnecessary and inconvenient. Under any circumstances the seats throughout the body of the church must be in this respect uniform.

The distance from the back of one seat to that of the next must depend in great measure on the height of the backs. Where the funds and space

admit, convenience will be consulted by adopting a clear width of three feet; but a width of not less than two feet eight inches from centre to centre will be allowed if the back of the seat is not more than two feet eight inches in height. This height is in all cases to be preferred, both for convenience and for appearance.

If a greater height be adopted, the distance from back to back must be increased one inch at least for every additional inch in height; but under no circumstances must the height exceed three feet. There must not be any projecting capping on the top of the backs. Facilities for kneeling in all cases to be provided. The width of the seat-boards for adults to be not less than thirteen inches.

The seats in the chancel must face north and south, and be so placed as not to interfere with the free access of communicants. Sittings on movable benches placed in the passages, or on seats with their backs fixed against the north and south wall, are not considered by the Society in the enumeration of sittings to be provided.

Twenty inches in length must be allowed for each adult, and fourteen for a child. Seats intended exclusively for children must be at least twenty-six inches from back to front, and must be provided with backs.