



# Dorset Historic Churches Trust

*Conserving the past – enriching the future*

## **Church Crawl – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

**Piddletrenthide, Piddlehinton, Alton Pancras, Buckland Newton.**

A brilliantly sunny morning brought nearly forty members of the DHCT out of winter hibernation for a spring journey along the beautiful Piddle Valley, looking at four contrasting but fascinating churches.

The party met at All Saints Piddletrenthide and after a warm welcome from the chairman, Simon Pomeroy, and the Vicar, The Revd Roger Butcher, they studied the church under the careful tutelage of Dr Tim Connor. Outside, the tower and its noteworthy Latin inscription of 1497 were pointed out and inside the beautiful south aisle. The church is noteworthy as having been served by The Revd James Hicks, whose memorial slab is in the chancel. His brother, the influential Dorchester architect and Thomas Hardy's teacher, John Hicks, rebuilt this church – and subsequently many more in the district. Organiser and stained glass expert Sue Smith then spoke about the windows, especially those memorialising members of the Bridge family. She went on to introduce Mr Bim Roy, who explained the importance of the Clayton and Bell window, made to remember the sacrifice of Captain Gerald Pollard in the horrific Gallipoli campaign.

The party then moved down the valley to St Mary the Virgin, Piddlehinton, a less ambitious though less altered church in a lovely setting. Three small but most interesting windows were described and Dr Connor pointed out a number of important features here, including the bare-stone chancel and a chest tomb with notable and rare nail-head decoration.

Lunch for the day had been ordered at The Thimble Inn, where generous hospitality was found.

Alton Pancras – dedicated to the teenage Roman martyr – also occupies a pretty stream-side site. The building was restored in 1875 by George Crickmay, John Hicks' successor and is a relatively straightforward building, enlivened by some truly top-class stained glass, especially the window under the tower depicting St Francis and the very fine north nave window by Leonard Evetts.

The final church visited on this "crawl" was Holy Rood, Buckland Newton. The age of this site is shown by the Saxon figure over the south door. The early English gothic style of the chancel is very successfully carried out, and the nave and aisles are well balanced and pleasingly light. A recent addition to the church is the lovely modern organ and its balcony – these gave the opportunity for the DHCT organists, David and Sue Bruce Payne to entertain the group with a selection of hymns, designed to show off the various sounds available from the instrument.

As is traditional, the day was rounded off with tea and cakes – in this case in the spacious porch of the church, giving members a chance to consider their favourite buildings before dispersing to their corners of the county.

The next Crawl will take place on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> June, meeting at St Michael and All Angels, Steeple. If interested in booking a place, please email [susanmorgansmith@gmail.com](mailto:susanmorgansmith@gmail.com) or ring 01725 552225.

**President:** HM Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mr Angus Campbell

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