

Cricket St. Thomas Holiday 2021

Haywards Heath & District Probus Club



The Haywards Heath & District Probus Club had a splendid holiday in Somerset at Warners Cricket St. Thomas Hotel from 20th to 24th September 2021. This paper will hopefully provide warm memories for those who attended the holiday. For those who couldn't participate, for whatever reason, this is what you missed – and perhaps you will be able to join us next year.

COACH TRIP

Robin Harrison organised an optional coach trip to Glastonbury and Wells. It provided an enjoyable visit to the Abbey at Glastonbury and the Cathedral at Wells, both of which are reported on next:

Glastonbury Abbey

Glastonbury Abbey is connected with legend in a way that is unparalleled by any other abbey in England. Since Medieval times, the Abbey has held legendary status as the earliest Christian foundation in Britain linked to Joseph of Arimathea and the burial place of King Arthur. Today it is a tranquil setting where you can discover the stories, explore the 36 acres of grounds and enjoy a range of events and activities. The earliest historical evidence of the monastery at Glastonbury comes from charters of the late 7th century which show grants of land made by three Saxon kings, matching the earliest archaeological evidence of a church on the site. However, by the time of Abbot Dunstan, the myth of a much earlier foundation had gained popularity – a belief that followers of Christ settled here within the 1st century CE and built 'The Old Church'.

Three distinct phases of Saxon church have been recorded, the last being part of Abbot Dunstan's ambitious remodelling and expansion of the Abbey. By the time of the coming of the Normans, the Abbey was the wealthiest in England.

See more at: <https://www.glastonburyabbey.com/history.php>

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Wells Cathedral (pictured right)

Wells Cathedral is an Anglican cathedral in Wells, Somerset, dedicated to St Andrew the Apostle and seat of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, whose cathedra it holds as the mother church of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The first Gothic Cathedral to be built in England, Wells Cathedral is famed for its unique architecture. Built in 1176–1450 to replace an earlier church on the site since 705, it is moderately sized for an English cathedral. Its broad west front and large central tower are dominant features. It has been called "unquestionably one of the most beautiful" and "most poetic" of English cathedrals. The Gothic architecture is mainly in the Early English style of the late 12th – early 13th centuries, lacking the Romanesque work in many other cathedrals. Building began about 1175 at the east end with the choir. The stonework of its pointed arcades and fluted piers bears pronounced mouldings and carved capitals in a foliate, "stiff-leaf" style. With 300 sculpted figures, its Early English front is seen as a "supreme triumph of the combined plastic arts in England". The east end retains much ancient stained glass. Unlike many cathedrals of monastic foundation, Wells has many surviving secular buildings linked to its chapter of secular canons, including the Bishop's Palace and the 15th-century residential Vicars' Close. It is a Grade I listed building.

See more at: <https://www.wellscathedral.org.uk/your-cathedral/history/>



Picture Credit:
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WHERE IS CRICKET ST. THOMAS?

Cricket St Thomas is a small parish in Somerset and lies in a valley between Chard and Crewkerne. The parish has a population of 50. The A30 road passes nearby. It is noted for the historic manor house known as Cricket House and its estate in recent times (1997) became a wildlife park (home to 600 rare and endangered species including lemurs, primates, camels, reptiles and wildfowl) which in its heyday had nearly 350,000 visitors a year.

The name Cricket St. Thomas is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "cruc," meaning a hill or ridge - a reference to Windwhistle Ridge that formed the manor's northern boundary.

HISTORY

The Cricket St. Thomas estate, originally a manor, included most of the northern part of the parish of Winsham, and for generations, many Winsham people have lived and worked on the estate. The manor is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is described as "Land of the Count of Mortain", paying tax to the king for six hides, or about 720 acres (291.4 ha). It had two slaves, six villagers, five smallholders and a variety of livestock and was valued for tax purposes at 100 shillings. It was at that time within the Hundred of South Petherton.

In the 11th century the manor was held by the de Cricket family. In the 14th century, Michael de Cricket sold the manor to Walter de Rodney, who subsequently conveyed it to John of Clevedon. Several ownership changes by sale or family transfer took place until, in 1775, Richard Hippisley-Coxe sold the manor to Admiral Alexander Hood, 1st Viscount Bridport, 1st Baron Bridport, who on his death bequeathed it to his younger great-nephew Samuel Hood, 2nd Baron Bridport, the husband of Charlotte Mary Nelson. Charlotte was the 3rd Duchess of Bronté and daughter and heiress of William Nelson, 1st Earl Nelson, 2nd Duke of Bronté – he was the elder brother and heir of the great **Admiral Horatio Nelson**, 1st Viscount Nelson, 1st Duke of Bronté. Samuel and Charlotte's son Alexander Hood, 1st Viscount Bridport, 3rd Baron Bridport (Viscountcy created 1868), 4th Duke of Bronté in Sicily, sold it in 1898 to the chocolate manufacturer Francis Fry, as the estate had become heavily mortgaged. In 1966, the Taylor family purchased the estate as a 1036-acre property in the early stages of decline. The present manor house was built after a fire in 1820 and was designed by Sir John Soane. There were four farms, 26 cottages, and Cricket House with 20 acres of gardens and two secondary houses. Today, lawns of the country mansion still feature giant cedars under which Lord Nelson and his mistress Lady Hamilton are believed to have spent many happy hours. A willow that grew on the estate is reputed to have been a cutting from the tree overhanging Napoleon's tomb on St Helena.

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THE PARISH CHURCH

The parish church in the gardens of Cricket House now has a chaplain to minister to the hotel's 450 guests and 260 or so employees who work in the hotel and estate.

The church is dedicated to St. Thomas, and its existence was first recorded over 800 years ago, with registers going back to the mid-16th century. In the early part of the 19th century, the church was almost totally rebuilt by Samuel Hood, 2nd Baron Bridport, and traces of the earlier ancient Saxon and medieval building have been mainly lost. It has memorials to the Hood and Nelson families and has one of the few wooden fountains in England.



List of Incumbents of Cricket St. Thomas.

(No Record.)	-	Thome de Cruket
1315	-	Johes de Golynghop
(No Record.)	-	Waltri de Hull
1325	-	Robtus de Upton
1327	-	Johnes Porch
1327	-	Johem North
1342	-	Ricum Moigne
1348	-	Thoma Syrman
1352	-	Waltun de Uprenhove
1360	-	Willi Whyte
(No Record.)	-	Johes Hunte
1414	-	Wilm. Hudeley
1417	-	Thom. Newton
1423	-	Johnem Tamer
1426	-	Johem Mowdekyn
1432	-	Wilm. Wylyng de North Peret
1440	-	Johannem Breckchampton
1458	-	Johnem Hucker
1470	-	Johnem Dene
1482	-	Johanne Imberley
1507	-	Thoma Pleynemor
-	-	Thomas Luccock
1522	-	Willma Haybald
1545	-	Christoferum Collante
(No Record.)	-	Willm Squier
1565	-	Amittum Merforde
1598	-	Nicholaum Hardie
1614	-	No Record
1644	-	Timotheus Hayte
1662	-	Johannes Langlate
1689	-	Edmundus Saunders
1691	-	Thomas Smith
1731	-	Henricus Doodl
1732	-	Alexander Mallett
1742	-	Samuel Yerd
1757	-	William Roper
1759	-	Thomas Scoombe
1765	-	John Hipsley
1798	-	John Golden
1835	-	John Templeman
1846	-	Robert Pearse Clarke
1879 (United with Winstham)	-	Charles James Shaw
1880	-	T. M. Shaw (Curon-in-Charge.)
1920	-	Daniel Hall Spencer
1922	-	William Hugh Phillips
1947	-	Fredrick Davenport Richardson
1962	-	Theodore John Childs
1968	-	Alexander Gordon Fairweather
1982 (United with Thorescombe)	-	Bernard Lionel Dainton
1987	-	Louise Davies Harman
1989	-	Richard Anthony Jenkins
	-	Brian Ralph Sutton



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TO THE MANOR BORN AND CRICKET HOUSE

The Grade II listed Georgian mansion, Cricket House, was filmed as the fictitious "Grantleigh Manor" in the British TV sitcom series *To the Manor Born*, broadcast from 1979 to 1981 and written by Peter Spence, whose father-in-law was then the owner of the property. Cricket House was again used as "Grantleigh Manor" in a 25th anniversary special of *To The Manor Born* shown on TV in 2007.

Cricket House is located upon the hillside of the estate. It overlooks Tiddlers Lake, which runs through the grounds. Lunch is served on the terrace and in the house. The terrace provides a beautiful view of the surrounding land, lawns, gardens and trees.



The Club holiday was masterfully organised by Robin Harrison (pictured left).

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WARNER HOLIDAYS

Cricket House and the Wild Life Park area were sold to Warner Holidays in 1998. A £20 million development followed, and it now houses an adult-only 220-bed hotel, leisure spa and entertainment centre. The hotel provides extensive entertainment, including nightly live performances and excellent dining. Warners say it is 95% occupied all year round.



Picture Credit: "Warner Leisure Hotels - Cricket St. Thomas" by heatheronhertravels is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

There are Historic rooms and suites in Cricket House, the Grade II listed mansion, and stylish accommodation in the Courtyard and Walled Gardens are surrounded by 160 acres of parkland in a peaceful valley setting in the West Country.

The Walled Garden is a quiet location near the leisure club and is home to 164 Standard and Signature rooms, some with patios.

Contemporary Royale rooms include all the extra treats of the Signature Experience. Some rooms have feature beds and sitting areas.

Cricket St. Thomas offers a wide range of activities and leisure facilities, and most are included in the cost of the hotel stay:

- Air Rifle Shooting
- Archery
- Nordic walking
- Putting
- Bowls
- Croquet
- Games room

Access to the indoor heated swimming pool, steam room, sauna and fitness studio is included free with every stay. WiFi throughout the hotel is also free. For a little extra cost, the Spa is the perfect place to spoil yourself, with a wide range of treatments for men and women.



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Some people ask - what is there to do at Cricket St Thomas? There are self-guided walks. Nearby attractions include:

- Forde Abbey and Gardens (2.6 miles away) - a 900-year-old historic house with 30 acres of gardens and lakes.
- Lyme Regis (14 miles away) - an ancient town that boasts breathtaking scenery.
- Perry's Cider Brewery and Museum (3.5 miles away) - a family-run cider farm with a tea room and eatery.
- Cricket St. Thomas Golf Club is located off the A30 road near Chard. The club has over 80 years of history and provides members and visitors alike the chance to play on a beautiful parkland course with outstanding views across the surrounding countryside.

PICTURE GALLERY

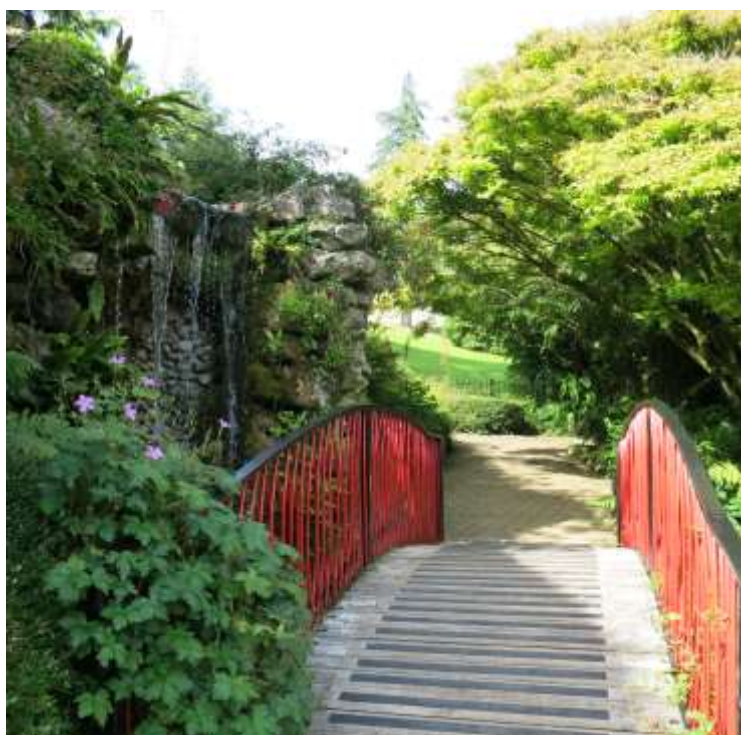
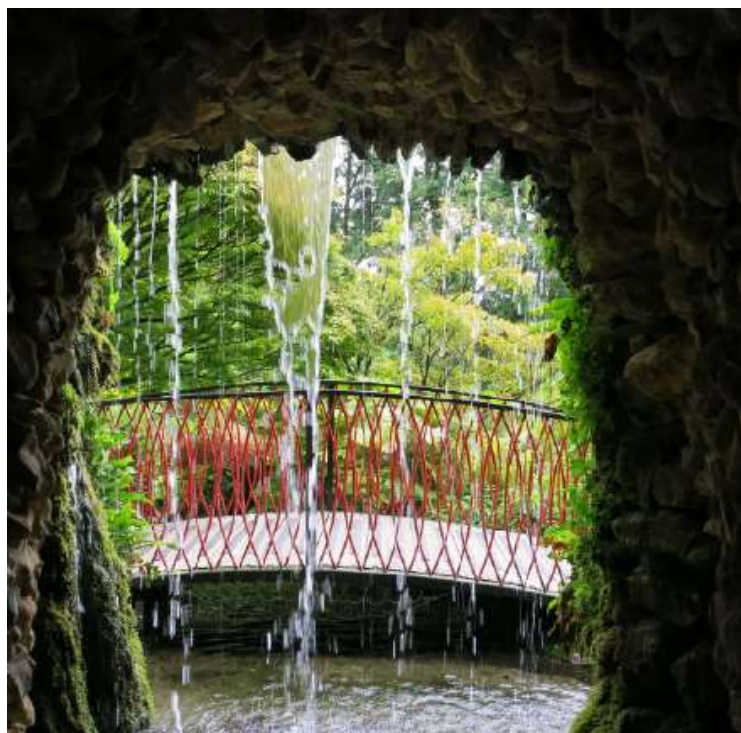
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RECOMMENDED READING

Cricket St. Thomas, Pages 133-141, A History of the County of Somerset: Volume 4. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1978 – see <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol4/pp133-141>