

Below is a copy of the programme produced in July 1980 for the play, Legends of St Wite, written by Christopher Dilke about the identity of the Saint whose remains are buried inside the Shrine in the church at Whitchurch Canonorum in Dorset. It was part of the church's 900th anniversary celebrations and took place in and around the church starting at the Five Bells Inn. There weren't photos in the original programme designed by Albert Duplock, they have been added later.



The year is 1080.

Fourteen years earlier in 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, cousin to Edward the Confessor, had swept across the channel to find England undefended.

Two weeks later he met Harold at the Battle of Hastings, William's victory, his subsequent coronation in London, and the brutal crushing of any opposition, put England firmly in the hands of the Normans.

The old Anglo-Saxon culture and way of life was forced into change. The land no longer belonged to the people, the woods were no longer a free source of food. The land of Norman-England belonged to the new King, who shared it out among his barons. Vast areas were designated as the King's own hunting forest, including Whitchurch and this part of West Dorset. Here, strict and harsh laws were imposed upon the Saxons forbidding them any game.

In 1080, England was an occupied country. There must still have been tension between the Saxons and Normans. Guntard, a Norman, who had been chaplain to William the conqueror, was the newly appointed Rector of Whitchurch. Here was a religious Saxon centre, a place of pilgrimage, the Shrine of St. Wite — and it was in the heart of the King's own forest!



Duncan Salter, Ron Dalton, Pippin Campbell, Jurgen Schneeweiss, (Guntard), Joan Dalton, Jeanette Broadhurst, Tony Broadhurst and Alan Knight.



Outside the Five Bells Inn



The play cast, in full costume, starting the action watched by members of the public. In the photo, left below, Mr Christopher Dilke, writer of the play, is watching with his faithful whippet, Poppy, and below right the cast are walking down to the church singing the Pilgrims' Songs accompanied by Gordon Watson on the recorder.



Pilgrim's Songs

Sprig of Thyme

Once I'd a sprig of Thyme
Did flourish both night and day
Till at length came along
A pretty young boy
Who stole my thyme away

Once I'd a sprig of sage
Did bloom from March to May
Till at length came along
A lively young lad
Who stole my sage away

Once I'd a heart so free
My days were carefree and gay
Till at length came along
A handsome young man
Who stole my heart away.

Wite's Song

words by Wilf Gibson

I will sing thee a song of a maiden who lives by the sea
I will sing thee a song of a maiden who lives by the sea
Her hair is so golden and fair as the ripened corn,
The warmth in her eyes seemed to beckon to me.

My journey was so weary, so far, it was hard for to tell
My journey was so weary, so far, it was hard for to tell
I gave her of some berries, and she took them
Oh so gratefully. Take this holy water said she it's from yonder well.

My eyes they were sore, and the water said she it would cure them
My eyes they were sore, and the water said she it would cure them
So gently she bathed them oh! so gently she bathed them
And I could see clearly my maiden so pure.

I asked her why did she wait by the well in the lea all alone
I asked her why did she wait by the well in the lea all alone
A warning the sailors to beware of the hidden tides
The sea horses which draw their boat ashore and wreck it on the stone.

Beware the dark raven who flies on the crest of the wave
Oh beware the dark raven who flies on the crest of the wave
A signal I will give to thee as I make my way down to Charmouth
So light up the beacon and all shall be saved.

Legends of St. Wite

by Christopher Dilke

Produced by Olwyn Foot

Scene: The Church of Whitchurch Canonorum 1080



Christopher Dilke with his faithful dog, Poppy, and Olwyn Foot talking to Colin Wood, with the Bishop of Salisbury in the background.

Cast In Order of Appearance

Present Rector	Robert Raikes
Guntard, First Rector	Jurgen Schneeweiss
Collet	George Diment
1st Pilgrim	Ron Dalton
2nd Pilgrim	Philip Morgan-Smith
3rd Pilgrim	Julian Newton
Witta	1st Pilgrim
Wynfrith	Robin Smith
Nun	Jan Wojcik
German Warrior	Jim Larcombe
Blanche, Princess of Brittany	Helen Best
Blanche's Lady	Joan Dalton
Winwaloe, Gwethenoc, James — Blanche's children ...	Nicola Meadley, Andrew Knight, Verdun Trott
Jeanne, fisherman's widow	Jan Wojcik
Jeanne's children	Paul White, Naomi Raikes
Black Jack	2nd Pilgrim
William, a pirate	Jim Larcombe
Alban	Jonathan Smith
Pilgrim children	Helen Wood, Sue Astley
2nd Pirate	Robin Smith
3rd Pirate	Bruno Mevel
Isobel, a slut	Pippin Campbell
King Athelstan	Julian Vale
Attendant	Simon Lake
Matnedoi, Breton Leader	Bruno Mevel
Bretons	Phillip Morgan-Smith, Irene Crow, Maggie Webster, Peter Joyce, Margaret Watson, Gordon Watson, Pippin Campbell

Wite, a hermitess	Pippin Campbell
Wayfarer	3rd Pilgrim
Sweyn, Danish Commander	Tony Meadley
Erik, Danish Officer	Jamie Smith
Danes	Paul White, Verdun Trot, Ray Smith, Jim Larcombe, Bruno Mevel, Robin Smith
King Egbert	Julian Vale
Dunstan, a courtier	Simon Lake
Mary, a sick girl	Sally Peach
Mother	Jeanette Broadhurst
Father	Ray Smith
Equerry to Baron	Charles Wilson
Baron Galfred de Mandeville	Duncan Salter
Sheriff of Dorset	Hubert Smith
Earl of Moreton	Christopher Dilke
Baron's Chaplain	George Smith
Huntsmen-stretcher bearers	Tony Fooks, Alan Knight, John Broadhurst, Colin Wood
Huntsboys	Stephen Broadhurst, Tony Broadhurst

Musicians

Recorders Gordon Watson, Andrea Smart, Helen Wood, Naomi Raikes, Philip Morgan-Smith
Singers Maggie Webster, Irene Crow, Peter Joyce, Margaret Watson, Gordon Watson,
Pippin Campbell, Philip Morgan-Smith
Drums Bruno Mevel, Olwyn Foot
Brass Ian Mais, Robert Bartlett.
Musical Director Michael Dover
(thanks to whose talent and organization such a high musical standard has been acheived)

Music

Pilgrims themes for recorder,

Breton Chant and

The Hunting Party ensemble written and arranged by **Kenneth Eade**

The Netherbury Plainsong from a 13th century manuscript discovered in a cavity in the
Netherbury Church wall.

Sprig of Thyme and

St. Wita's Song Old Dorset folk tunes, words arranged by **Wilfred D. Gibson**

Stage Manager **Nigel Carter**
(who has worked so hard and with unfailing energy and enthusiasm)

Assistant Stage Manager **Paul Raikes**

Lighting **Stage Electrics, Exeter**

Lighting Technical Advisor **Wallace Lee**

Backcloths and Gonfalons **Jenny Best** (who has spent hours working with magnificent results)

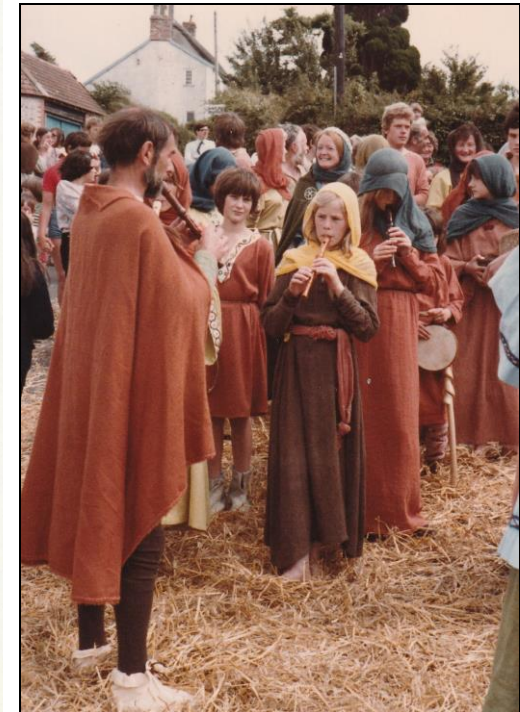
Costumes **The Pilgrims, family and friends**

A special thankyou to Mrs. Vellacot who designed and cut the patterns. Mrs. Pike who cut out the majority of the costumes. Cherry Duplock for her expert advice on the dying of the cloth. Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Eden and Mrs. Symes for helping with sewing and dying, and especially Mrs. Alice Dilke for her research and for co-ordinating and being responsible for the whole process.

Programme and Poster design **Albert Duplock**

Publicity **Karl Kolya**

A Special Thanks To:— Sir Esmund and Lady Durlacher for their patronage. Gordon Watson for supervising the recorders, Ian Mais for supervising the brass ensemble. John Broadhurst for helping with stage construction. Helen Best for many of the stage materials. The Five Bells public house for their co-operation and assistance. Christine Joyce and Wilfred Barnes for their animals. Old Hinkhams restaurant for allowing the noisy pilgrims to assemble there. Exeter University for advice on lighting. Jack Short and Roy Sims for fetching staging and lighting equipment. Robin Smith for carting poles, providing straw and polythene. To the cast themselves for their enthusiasm and co-operation, many of whom have been to great lengths to make authentic props. And to all those who have helped with many small tasks — really, a thank you to the Community.



Gordon Watson leading the recorder players. Naomi Raikes facing him.



The Rev Robert Raikes, Vicar



The top photo shows the stage that was constructed at the front of the church with a large ramp leading from the centre aisle. The bottom photos show the backcloth made by Jenny Best which filled the whole of the arch leading to the chancel.



At youre Graces commande I have patientlie exploured the antient legendes
concerninge the Sainte whos tombe is adjoineing my sanctuarie of Witercerce.
Some saye the Sainte was a monke who conbearted the Allemans and was ordained
Bishoppe. Others averre she was a Princesse of Bretagne who marched on the
water. Yet the most likelie tale to my minde is of a yonge Saxon maide who
carried tidings of a landinge by the Danes to King Egbert and was tortured and
died. That this ladie long interred and become moulde has miraculouse powers is
proved by the healinge of Galfride de Mandeville Baron of Mersshwood, who was
wounded by an arrowe in the hunte and likelie to die untill the Sainte appeared
and cured his illes. Thjs I sawe with my owne eyes. I will declare her the true
Wite si le Roy le veult.

Guntard



Actors waiting to go on stage



Hubert Smith seated, left, and back row right, Colin Wood, Alan Knight, John Broadhurst, Tony Fooks. Front row: Steven Broadhurst, George Smith, Charles Wilson, Duncan Salter and Tony Broadhurst.

