

The Church of St Candida and Holy Cross, Whitchurch Canonicorum, celebrated its 900th Anniversary in July 1980.

In July 1980 the church at Whitchurch Canonicorum in Dorset celebrated its 900th Anniversary. The church is the only one in the country other than Westminster Abbey to have the bones of its own saint, St Wite, in the church itself. Part of the celebrations was a play, **Legends of St Wite** written by Christopher Dilke, exploring the possible identity of St Wite. The play was performed in the church with the central character being Guntard, the then Rector of the parish. Guntard was also chaplain to William the Conqueror which illustrates the importance of Whitchurch in those days. The **Legends of St Wite** entry on this website contains the programme produced for the play with additional photos added.

As well as the play a Fair was also organised to take place at the same time. That part of the celebrations was organised by Mr David Carter from Morcombelake, pictured below wearing the black jacket and watching the opening of the play outside the Five Bells Inn just a short walk from the church.



Also in the photo is Olwyn Foot, who produced the play, receiving a drink from the landlord of the Five Bells Inn, Mr Rendell.

The Fair was in two parts. The craft and produce stalls were on the church path between the War Memorial and the church gates. Games and fun activities took place in the field to the south of the church. A special bridge was constructed over the stream to allow people to move from the stalls to the field via the path running along the south side of the churchyard..

The stalls were constructed using rough branches taken from nearby trees making them appear as authentic as possible for the eleventh century. Many of the stallholders also wore similar costumes to those worn by the cast of the play.

The pictures below show some of the stalls



Photos taken from the upstairs window of Church House East which, at the time belonged to the church, but has recently been sold to a private buyer and has been completely refurbished.



The photos above show the rough branches bound together with twine and used to support the stall covers.



The Old Curiosity Shop stall and, right a lady using an old spinning wheel.



An open craft stall by Church House East and freshly baked loaves on the chairs outside Church House West.



The majorettes enjoying the stalls after their performance and the handbell ringers performing on the land between the old rectory and Berehayes Farm.



These pictures show the stalls and games being set up on the field. The left one looking towards the church and the right looking in the opposite direction.



The swings were loaned to the church by Barney's Fossil and Country Life Exhibition which was situated at the bottom of The Street in Charmouth. The swings had originally been built by Mr Frank Trevett, a well known and popular hairdresser in Bridport. He built the swings to raise money for the NSPCC. His family donated them to Barney's after Mr Trevett died. Next to that is the Coconut Shy watched by a young John Luxton.



The darts games, left, was run by Janice Matthews and Sarah Cormack. Other photos show the Fair in full swing.

