

## Local

### Visit to Frome - 7 September

We were met outside the tourist information centre by Mr. Derek Gill, who led us on a tour of Frome, first past Singer's Works, famous throughout the country for its iron and brass church furniture, first founded in the 1800's, then up into the Trinity district. This has been regarded in the 1960's as a slum area and substantial numbers of cottages were demolished to provide new housing. This has in turn been replaced in parts and the old cottages rehabilitated. Many of the cottages have been studied archaeologically in detail and listed, as have the splendid cast iron lampposts of Frome's earlier iron founder Edward Cockey! The name 'Trinity' is derived from the Church, but this was not built until the 1830's. It is the work of the Bath architect, H. E. Goodrich, who did not notice until it was too late, that it had been built facing the wrong direction.

From there we were shown the upper part of St. Catherines Hill with the lanes that led off it, all with their cottages and weaving lofts, to the original route of Rook Lane down into the town from Keyford, and then across the main road and down to St. John's Church via Gentle Street. This seemed most inaptly named, from its steepness but is a recent naming after a family called 'Gentle' who lived here.

The church is a very early foundation, as this was a resting place of the body of St. Aldhelm on route for burial at Malmesbury, but only a tiny fragment of Saxon stonework survives. The present building is substantially a Victorian rebuild. The Rev. Bennett, responsible for the rebuild, was one of the leading tractarians and the "Calvary" in the churchyard is very rare in Anglican churches.

The area of shops around Cheap Street has been severely damaged by fire on a number of occasions, both in the 1920's and more recently in the 1960's. However, a number of the mediaeval buildings have survived unscathed.

The tour ended by the Blue Coat School. We are grateful to Mr. Gill for a most interesting walk and for finding time between a family baptism and a scheduled town tour to guide us through areas of such historical interest.

John Oswin