

Holiday with a Religious Theme

Holy places in Devon and Dorset - following the 'Golden Cap' group of parishes' pilgrimage trail. DAY ONE: Shute Barton, Kilmington, Colyton and Seaton.



The beautiful church of St John the Baptist in the village of Hawkchurch, Devon, where we stayed for a week. It was built in Saxon times, but heavily restored in 1862.

Hawkchurch is a village three miles north east of Axminster on the border of Devon and Dorset, and about 6 miles south of Somerset – it's four miles north of Lyme Regis. We stayed in **Windwhistle Cottage** (let through [Sykes Cottages](#)) for a week from 15th-22nd June 2018.



Windwhistle Cottage in Hawkchurch was where we stayed for a week in June 2018.

On Saturday we made use of our National Trust membership to visit a property that is only open on four occasions a year – **Shute Barton**. The rest of the time it's let out by the Trust as a holiday cottage.



Shute Barton

Shute Barton is the remnant of a medieval manor house with Tudor additions. Built in the mid-15th century, it has changed many times since. Some original features can still be seen today, including a fireplace large enough for two oxen – one of the largest in the UK.

Built and owned by the Bonneville family, Shute Barton passed on to **Thomas Grey** when he married Cecily Bonneville.

The Greys were forced to sell the Shute estate to the **Pole** family due to loss of reputation, when they attempted to gain the throne of England with **Lady Jane Grey**.

Sir John William de la Pole pulled down part of the old house, reusing the stone to construct a new residence called Shute House at the end of the drive (not NT). The purpose of this was to impress the Prince Regent, who, despite Pole's efforts, only stayed for one night.

The original building became known as Shute Barton, which translates from Old English to mean Shute Farmhouse. It was given to the National Trust in 1959 by the Carew Pole family. Until 2010, descendants of the Carew Poles still lived at the house.



The huge fireplace at Shute Barton where two full oxen were roasted on a spit to mark John George Pole's 21st birthday in January 1829.

On the estate there is a beautiful church dedicated to St Michael.



The chancel at St Michael's Church, Shute Barton, which was open for coffee on the open weekend when we visited Shute Barton house.

On leaving Shute Barton, we went to the village of **Kilmington**. The **parish church of St. Giles** was rebuilt in 1862 and it contains a large marble monument to Thomas Southcott of Dulshayes that was erected in 1735. The church itself was built around the tower, an earlier structure featuring a six-bell peal and gargoyles.



St Giles, Kilmington.



Inside St Giles Church, Kilmington.

In 1559 both churchwardens at St Giles were recorded as being women. Then it was quite customary for women to hold the office, but to have two was rare.

A window depicting the church's patron, St Giles, is on the north wall. Giles lived from c 650AD – c 710AD. 'Giles the Hermit' withdrew deep into the forest near Nîmes, where in the greatest solitude he spent many years, his sole companion being a deer, who in some stories sustained him on her milk. Giles ate a Christian vegetarian diet. This retreat was finally discovered by the king's hunters, who had pursued the hind to its place of refuge. An arrow shot at the deer wounded the saint instead, who afterwards became a patron of the physically disabled.



The hermit St Giles, with his companion, a red deer.

From Kilmington we travelled on to Colyton, which boasts of being a 'Rebel Town' through its association with the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685. James Scott, 1st Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II, claimed to be rightful heir to the throne and attempted to displace James II. The rebellion ended with the defeat of Monmouth's army at the Battle of Sedgemoor on 6 July 1685 by forces led by Feversham and Churchill.



A colourful display of thirty six heraldic banners flutters from buildings in Market Place and around the town. They represent families and guilds of historic importance within the Parish of Colyton.



The parish church of St Andrew, Colyton.

The church was built around 100 years after the Norman Conquest. It was subsequently added to, and the final change just before the Reformation was the octagonal lantern on the square Norman tower. It is said that the inspiration for this unusual feature was the tower of Bruges Town Hall, likely to have been familiar to the wool merchants of Colyton.



The west window at Colyton is the largest of any English parish church.



The Courteney/Beaufort monument. Originally thought to be Margaret Courtenay, but subsequently identified as Margaret Beaufort, granddaughter of John of Gaunt.



The Lady Chapel, the private chapel of the Yonge family, who came to Colyton in the reign of Elizabeth I and lived at the Great House in South Street. The area in front has been cleared of pews and is used for meetings, and prayers-in-the-round.



The Pole Chapel contains a number of Renaissance style monuments. This is Sir John Pole who died in 1658. He was an MP, and Sheriff of Devon. He was created a Baronet by Charles I, in return for funds to develop crown plantations in Ulster. His wife predeceased him - her effigy has been placed facing the other way by the sculptor!

The Poles originally came to Colyton in the 16th century when they bought Shute house and lands (which we visited earlier in the day) and part of Colcombe Castle Estate.

Another member of the Pole family was Elizabeth Pole, who is well known in the USA as the foundress of Taunton, Massachusetts in 1637. She is claimed to have bought it from the Tetiquet tribe of Indians for a bag of beans and a knife.

The Saxon Cross is the oldest and greatest treasure of the church, dating from 900-1000 AD.



The Saxon Cross has been described as the best pre-conquest sculpture in Devon. It had been built into the west face of the tower and was discovered only after an extensive fire in 1933.



On display in the Pole Chapel is a 'chime barrel' which allows one person to ring all six bells in sequence. It dates from the early 18th century.

On leaving Colyton, our final destination on day one was Seaton seafront. Seaton sits on the 96-mile long Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site, more commonly known as the Jurassic Coast. From here it is possible to visit rock strata dating from three geological periods in a 185 million-year 'geological walk through time'.



Sculpture on the sea front at Seaton.



'Joggers' - sculptures on the sea front at Seaton.

Martin and Magda Jones

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Sources of information:

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Monmouth Rebellion

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