



Gather-ing is initiated by Somerset Art Works in partnership with The National Trust and is curated by Craftspace

Stewart Francis Easton

'His piety knows knows no bounds'

Hand and machine stitched interactive quilt

Produced in collaboration with locally based group The Quirky Quilters, composer Michael Tanner and sound artist Gawain Hewitt.

Drawing upon The Priory's links with the chapel of St Nicholas, I have created an interactive quilt depicting four major life events of St Nicholas. I wanted to make a work which reversed the concept of 'taking' (i.e. a tithe) and created instead something in celebration of giving.

With special thanks to The Quirky Quilters for their expertise and enthusiasm.

Jacky Oliver

Winnowing basket

Flail

Breast Plough

Etched, hand-pierced and forged metals

History has been etched onto the tools, illustrating different aspects of the geography and, equally as important, individual agricultural workers whose labours brought the harvest to the barn. Each piece culminates in a linear structure taken from a particular map of the area. The patchwork of fields create a biography of The Priory and Stoke sub Hamdon, a snap shot of different eras, giving an added identity to the tools. Details reference various documents including the Domesday book, book of hours, census records, birth and marriage records, newspapers, maps and folk songs.

The tools selected are from times when workers used hand tools before industrial developments in agriculture mechanised these processes.

The making of these artefacts reflects the repetitive nature of the tasks completed with these tools; the hand piercing, forging, soldering and preparation for etching are all traditional metalwork techniques.

With appreciation and thanks to David Walker at Somerset Archives and Lesley Strutt for their generous help with research.

Helen Snell

Stigmata Forks

Water jet cut mild steel and ash wood

I wanted to explore the underlying tensions and contradictions between pagan and Christian rituals surrounding fertility, sex, birth and harvest. The relationship between the ten forks is inspired by notions of social and moral hierarchies, each farm giving a tenth of their produce to the Church in a material and spiritual exchange.

With grateful thanks to blacksmith James Deane at Taplow Forge in Devon for his unstinting support and patience.

Gillian Widden

A series of woven forms based on the proportions, mass and capacity of a bushel

Made using traditional weaving techniques with a contemporary twist and contemporary materials. Following the Norman conquest, the bushel basket was introduced as a form of measurement for dry goods such as grain or peas, and so would have been in frequent use during the early life of the tithe barn.

1. **'.....And there was light'** - Six sets of fairy lights woven around a cylinder form based on the capacity of a bushel (8 gallons/36.36 litres).
2. **Flight of Fancy** - Paper rope, dove and goose feathers
Referencing the dovecote, this loosely woven structure gives the impression of 'coming undone' reflecting its dilapidated state. The choice of paper as a material links to the writing done by scribes at the Priory.
3. **A Set of Bushels** - Long grasses from the fields, raffia
A full bushel, a half bushel, a 10th bushel, a 100th bushel and a 1000th bushel, sewn together using blanket stitch.
4. **Make Hay while the Sun Shines** - Hazel, natural wood dyes, Indian ink, green hazel dowels. The coppiced hazel is stripped by hand, split with a bandsaw, steamed and bent into two half bushel sizes.
5. **A Tithe of Teasels** - Fuller's teasels (*Dipsacus sativus*), wire, Indian ink, threaded on wire and coiled. These teasels were grown in Somerset for centuries, and were used to raise the nap on cloth.

The teasel harvest is part of Somerset's agricultural history and there is even a record of tithes being paid on teasel plants in Winscombe. The basket has been filled with Fuller's teasels to the approximated capacity of a bushel.

6. **The Bodger's Basket** - Coppiced, split, stripped, charred hazel, green hazel dowels. Working to the capacity of a bushel, the form is reminiscent of animal/chicken baskets. 'Bodger' refers to someone who uses traditional woodcraft skills, or someone who makes or repairs something clumsily. In this work there is skill but the basket is oddly shaped.
6. **'By the pricking of my thumbs.....'** Caylx and stalk of the Fuller's teasel, wire, raffia, Indian ink. The black 'open mouth' is akin to that of a medieval gargoye.

With thanks to Richard Hann and his team at Montacute for use of a bandsaw machine in their workshop.

Christopher Jelley - Poetry technologist

For me the tithe barn is the hero of this story and I needed to design a way for visitors to engage with artist, space and place beyond the passive.

The posts, charged and etched with each artist's key words are scanned not read, so every visitor's experience is different. But in order to close the loop between the tithe barn, artists and visitor I created the Word Hoard sheet.

Through the physicality of rubbing you extract the words which are pertinent and resonate for you, which in itself continues the ancient crafting tradition of harvesting, sorting and gathering.

The artists have also been contributing to a project blog
<http://gather-ing.tumblr.com>

Artists' Websites

Stewart Easton	stewart@stewarteaston.co.uk
Jacky Oliver	jackyoliver.co.uk
Helen Snell	www.axisweb.org/p/helensnell
Gillian Widden	www.gillianwidden.co.uk
Christopher Jelley	storywalks.info

Somersetartworks.org.uk

Craftspace.co.uk