

## Sherborne Castle and North Cadbury Church

Thursday afternoon, 14 July

Sherborne Lodge, later renamed Sherborne Castle, was built by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1594, on the site of an early Tudor hunting lodge within the deer park. After Raleigh's arrest on a charge of treason, the lodge was bought in 1617 by Sir John Digby, a diplomat. He added four wings to the rectangular house, giving it its present H-shape. Eighteenth century alterations included replacing the diamond-pane glass with sash windows and the acquisition of fashionable furniture. Invoices in the archive document the purchase of furniture from the mid-18th century, both for this house and for the Digbys' London house at 35 Brook Street, leased from the Grosvenor Estates until 1860. Ince & Mayhew were the main suppliers.

Distinctive features of Raleigh's building are the shell-headed niches in the courtyard and plaster ceilings with his heraldic device in the Great Parlour, Great Bedroom and Great Chamber, the principal room of the house. The chimneypiece in the Great Chamber is by William Arnold, with a later Digby device set into the strapwork cartouche. Raleigh's hall on the ground floor was refurbished in an antiquarian style in the 1930s, when oak furniture was brought in from the Servants' Hall, including a west country early 17th century chair and a 17th century table with an ogee frieze along the bottom of the stretchers. Two early 17th century wind porches in the Oak Room, which is in one of the wings added in the 1630s, may have come from the Digby estate at Coleshill in Warwickshire. They would originally have been in rooms off a staircase.

After a splendid cream tea, Bob Osborn gave a presentation on the medieval carved bench ends of South Somerset, focussing on the Corton Ridge workshop, active c.1475-1540 (see <http://www.wbdpublications.co.uk/08-benchends/index.htm>). The afternoon finished with a visit to see the poppy-headed carved bench ends in the Church of St Michael and All Angels in North Cadbury, Somerset.

*Liz Hancock*