

St Mary's, Croscombe

There is some Norman stonework but the church was mainly rebuilt by Sir William Palton in the fifteenth century. The wagon roof with carved bosses commemorates the family's importance in the cloth-weaving industry. The Treasury was added in around 1500, with a heavily barred window to deter intruders. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the Fortescue family were Lords of the Manor and gave much of the woodwork over many years. The magnificent rood screen with two levels, with the royal arms of James I (1603–25) at the top, gives emphasis to the Reformed Church and separates the congregation from the sanctuary. Immediately in front are the Clerk's desk and matching reading desk. [Ed. The overall effect is similar to St John the Evangelist in Leeds, although taller and less well lit. See p. 24 above.]

The box pews, with a wide variety of unusual and excellently preserved carvings on the pew ends, were



Beautifully carved foliage and scrollwork on a pew back. *Photo Linda Hall*



The delightful Jacobean alms box fixed to a pillar near the south door; front view showing the nail fixing it to the pillar.
Photo Linda Hall

constructed between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries. The heavily decorated pulpit and canopy were donated by Bishop Lake of Bath and Wells in 1616. There are two oak panel back arm chairs of the Somerset type. There are many and varied hinges on the furnishings, some obviously replacements, as screws

were used; others have original nails. [Ed. Among all the magnificence, my personal favourite is the little Jacobean alms box fixed to a pillar close to the south door.]

Peter Stone