

St Catherine's Church, Sacombe – Exhibition 2nd to 4th October 2009

Over 200 people visited the little church in Sacombe over the weekend to see an exhibition of documents and images reflecting the church's long history.

The event started on Friday evening with a preview reception. Church members, friends and every resident in the parish were invited. The opportunity was taken to introduce to local people and visitors the question of how the church might best serve the community and wider area in future and what development might be needed to ensure its survival. The Rector, Rev David Payne, gave a thought-provoking address.

On show were documents from 1700, the oldest from the Meriton Trust. This charity was set up to buy apprenticeships for poor local boys and some of the old indentures still exist, from 1782 to the 20th century. Boys were sent to learn “the art of gardening” and, more recently in 1924, “the business of tooth brush fashioning” at Addis's in Hertford. Clothes and tools were bought to equip boys and girls for work. Shop bills and solicitor's letters bear some still familiar local names.

The tragic death of William Luck in the Sacombe whirlwind of 1877 was presented through *Hertfordshire Mercury* accounts of the day.

The parish Muster Roll, a beautiful illuminated book recording those who served in both World Wars, aroused particular interest. There was a wealth of supporting information to help those researching family history. The church regularly receives enquiries from as far afield as Canada from descendants of Sacombe ancestors.

Elsewhere the story of Samuel Saunders was told. He was one of the founders of Lloyds of London, who lived in Sacombe and is buried there. A continuous slide show presented images of the church in its natural setting, showing views of the landscape and the many species of flora that have made the churchyard a County Wildlife site.

Original documents were displayed in cases loaned by Hertford Museum. Thanks were expressed to the Museum and to Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies for their advice and support, and Mills and Reeve, Solicitors of Cambridge, for their technical assistance.

The Church Council would welcome any views or support direct to unitedbenefice@btinternet.com. There is a questionnaire to download and complete on a separate page under “News”.