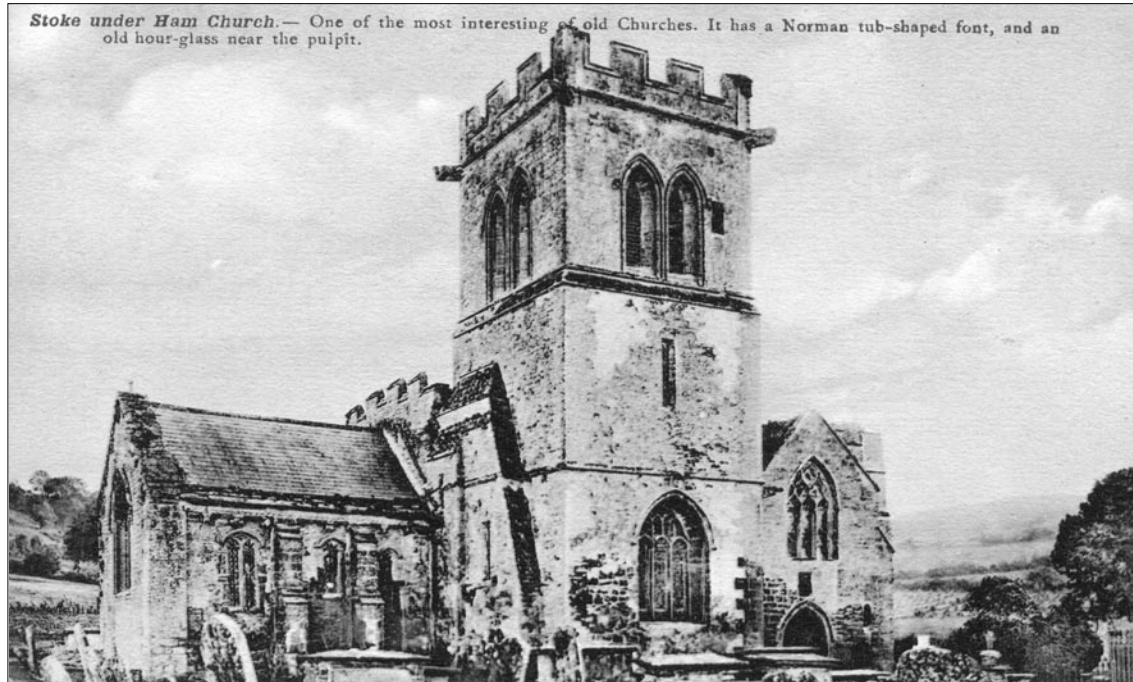


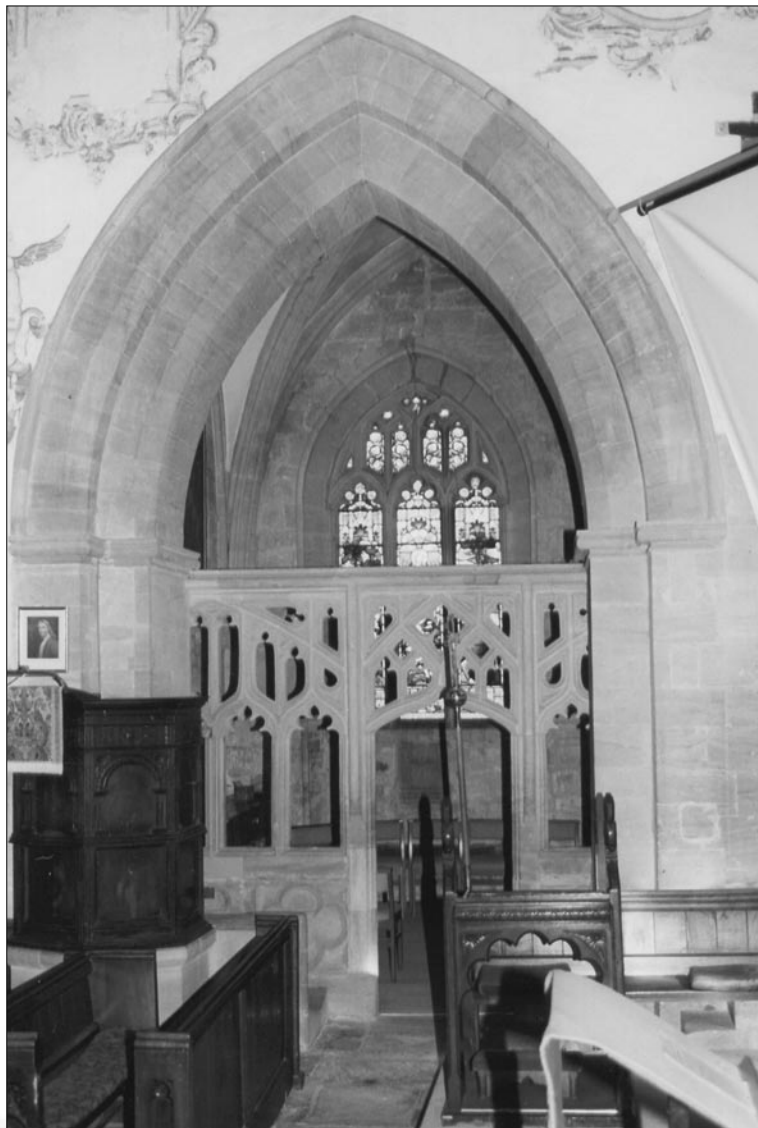
Churches and Chapels



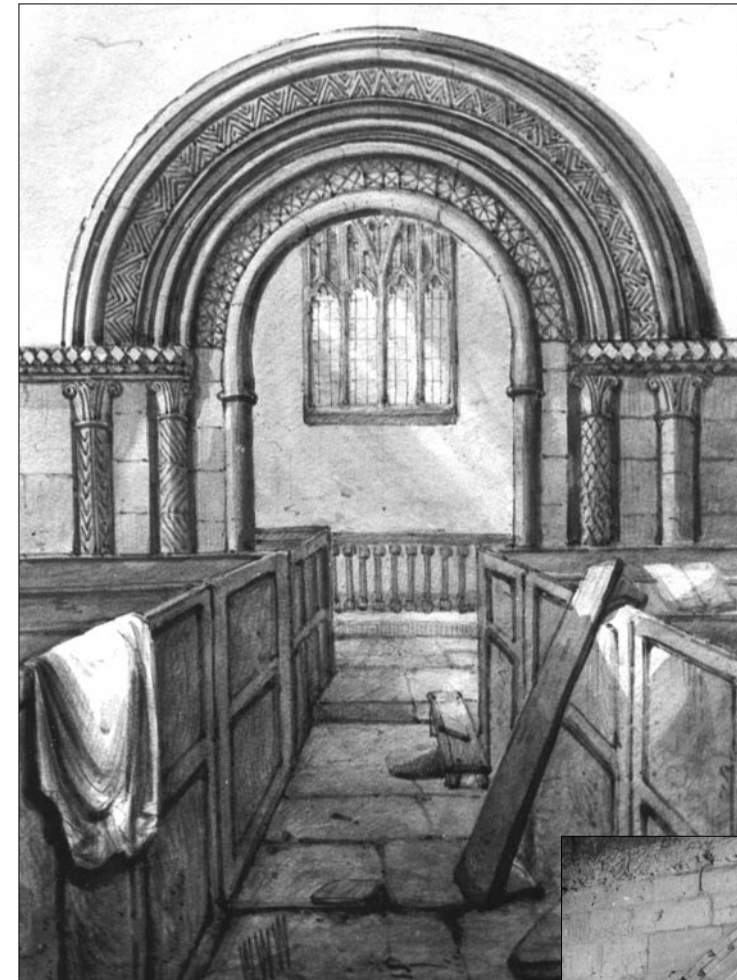
The parish church of St. Mary the Virgin, north view. The 13th century tower, 14th century porch and later windows now cover up the original Norman church.



Above:
Gargoyles from the ruins of St. Nicholas Chapel (Beauchamp family Mausoleum), now in a private garden. The chapel of about 1270 ceased with the Suppression of Chantries Act 1545. It was in secular use in the 17th century but later like the castle used as a source of building stone.

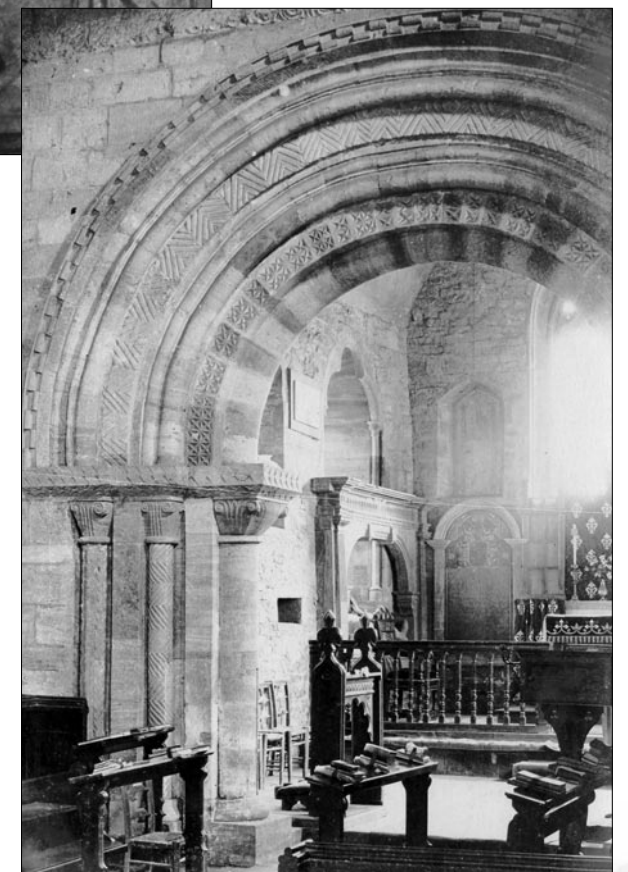


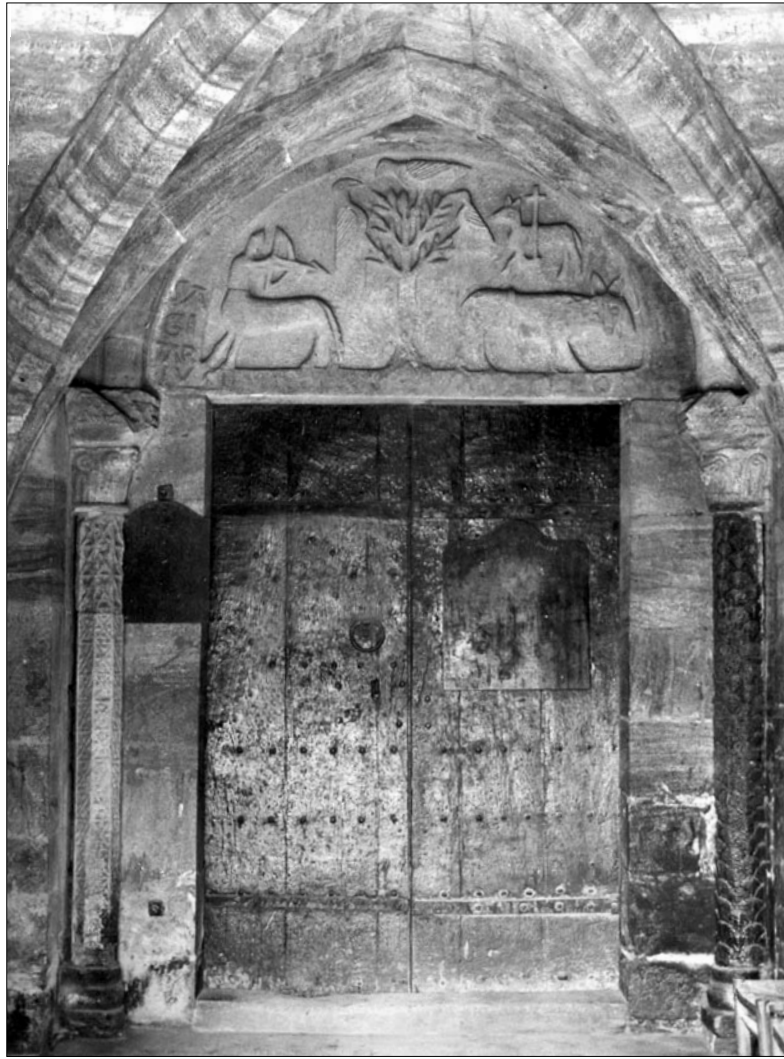
Arch of the North transept, 13th century Early English. The 14th century screen is from St. Nicholas Chapel, Stoke Castle (demolished in the 17th century).



Original Norman arch from a watercolour by W.W. Wheatley 1848. Note the box pews. By kind permission of Somerset Archeological and Natural History Society.

Norman arch as remodelled by Benjamin Ferry in 1857. The outer order (alternate billet) and cushion capitals are of that date.





Original Norman Tympanum, one of only six in England. The meaning is a subject for debate. Walled up when the porch was added and re-discovered in 1857.

Below:
Millennium Ringers at St. Mary's Parish Church, Stoke. Starting at 12 noon, 1st January 2000.

Left to right:
1. Alan Perry - call changes
2. Druscilla Perry - 2nd
3. June Ridout - 4th
4. Terry Foy - 5th
5. Mary Graham - treble
6. Martin Bailey - 3rd
7. Paul Adams - tenor.



St. Mary's Church Choir, Stoke 1928/29

Rows left to right. Top row: 1. Phillip George 2. Sidney Bambury 3. Tom Palmer 4. Stan Phillips 5. Dennis George 6. Henry Palmer 7. Tom George **2nd row:** 1. Greta Saunders 2. Constance Waterman 3. Edna Helliar 4. Kate Warr 5. Florrie Crook 6. Margaret Palmer 7. Kath Thorne 8. Hilda Davis 9. Sybil Gomm 10. Lily Palmer 11. Joyce Thorne 12. Hilda Chant 13. Audrey Hallett **3rd row:** 1. Hubert Pester 2. Percy Channon 3. Tersius Fane 4. Margaret Hain 5. Rev. D. Ballard 6. Willy Creek 7. Fred Dyer 8. Will Warr 9. Emrys Prout 10. Henry Davey **4th row:** 1. Bert Warr 2. Dorian Hallett 3. Jack Drew 4. George Palmer.

Stoke sub Hamdon
Bible Christian Chapel
dated 1842, closed
around 1878, probably
due to the increase in
popularity of the
Congregational Church
in North Street.



The Wesleyan Methodist New Church stone laying ceremony, West Street, Stoke sub Hamdon, May 5th 1909, builders - Yandle & Sons of Martock.



The Methodist Church, West Street built 1813 complete with gallery on a site known as 'Western End'. It was one of the oldest in the Wesleyan Methodist circuit. Demolished around 1909 along with adjoining buildings to make way for public improvements.



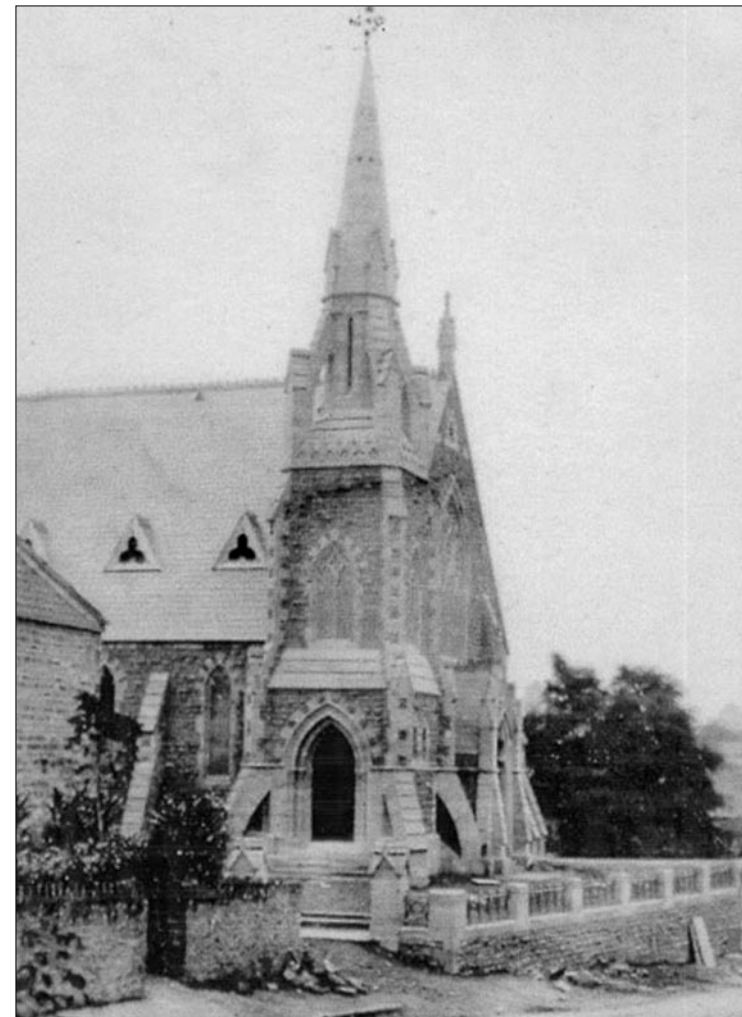
The new Wesleyan Methodist Church, built in West Street in 1909.



Hamdon Hall started life as a church dedicated to St. Nicholas and was a gift from the Prince of Wales, later George V in 1905. In 1926 it was made into a social venue and called Hamdon Hall, services being transferred to All Saints Hall. During WWII it was requisitioned as a messing hall for troops. In 1954 after a spell in private hands it became the village hall and was demolished in 1975, the same year as the Memorial Hall was built on the Plot.



Interior of St. Nicholas Church, Stoke sub Hamdon.



The earliest known photograph of the Congregational Church soon after completion in 1866. Note there is no clock and a cottage stands where the manse has been built (around 1876). The site for centuries was known as Cole's Pool.

Below:
The interior of the Congregational Church shortly after the organ was installed in 1881, the choir sat in a small gallery at the back.





An early group picture of the Superintendents and Teachers of the Congregational Chapel, Stoke. Taken between 1882 and 1885. *Left to right, 1st row:* 2 and 3. Julia and Louis Southcombe, Julia was responsible for installing the organ in the chapel. *2nd row:* 3 and 5. Richard and Mary Southcombe 7. Rev T. Webster *3rd row:* 7. Elizabeth Hooper 8 and 9. Jane and Tom Southcombe.



Stoke Congregational Choir pre 1920.

Rows left to right. Top row: 1. Donald Southcombe 2. Alice Chaffey 3. Lloyd Brice 4. Emma Stone 5. Dorothy Best 6. Elsie Baker 7. Percy Southcombe 8. Donna Guppy 9. Ada Harris 10. Emme Murley 11. Alma Palmer 12. Helen Southcombe 13. Ron Male 14. Henry Chant *2nd row:* 1. Clara Waterman 2. Mabel Welsh 3. Alice Chant 4. Leila Harris 5. Bert Warr *3rd row:* 1. Will Welsh 2. Lina Minchington 3. Hedley Chaffey 4. Eileen Palmer 5. Vernon Richards 6. Minnie Lawrence 7. Jack Cooper 8. Elsie Taylor 9. Ern Turner.



Congregational Sunday School Parade 1906, walking up Langlands and turning into the Plot where a marquee was erected alongside swingboats and other outdoor entertainment. Up to 650 children and adults took part.



Congregational Sunday School Parade outside the glove factory of J.H. Walters c1930. This was a yearly event held on a weekday, hence the gloves outside the factory.



Congregational Harvest Festival 1937, showing the popularity of the church to all ages, the groups mentioned on the wheel are:

The Choir,
The Girl's Guild,
Junior Dept.,
Primary Dept.,
The Cradle Roll,
Intermediate Dept.,
The Boys Brigade and
The Woman's Own.

Below:

View of the
United Reformed Church
(previously
Congregational) and
Manse, North Street,
Stoke taken in the 1960s.

