**Heritage of St Andrew’s Church, West Hatch**

The parish Church of St Andrew dates from the 15th century, but was extensively restored in 1861 when the north aisle and probably the vestry and organ bay were added by Benjamin Ferrey.

In August 1989 an electrical fault in the organ, built by the vicar in Victorian times caused a fire which severely damaged the church, especially the chancel.

West Hatch with its small population was faced with finding an enormous sum in excess of insurance, to fully restore St Andrew's. Rector Richard Jay and Churchwardens Brian Freake and Bill Willcox set up The Phoenix Fund which, after three years of constant effort by a small band of parishioners, raised more than £30,000.

The Fund was given a huge boost by Richard Dolphin who published the campaign world-wide, setting up The Friends of West Hatch with its monthly informative and jokey newsletter, The West Hatch Courier Tribune. As well as America, support came from Archbishop Brian Davies and his Diocesan Office in New Zealand and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, together with many others including the little Fiji Islands. Here in England the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey. became a Friend, along with other churches and businesses.

Our booklet "Fire Power" (another fund-raiser) shows the full extent of just how many things were tried to reach the target. About the only thing rejected was maggot-racing!

The first service in the restored church was during Lent 1992, with flowers and love from Desmond Tutu. On 10 May 1992 the church was rededicated by Bishop of Bath and Wells, Jim Thompson, followed of course by a parish party.