

Repositioning of Pulpit and Addition of Handrail 2017 - 19

Derek Shorrocks the author of the Church Guide produced in 1992 noted that at that time the steps appeared to be the wrong way round. This was because the steps were originally in the position they are now, after reordering, however in 1939, the then rector, John Storey, wished to have the pulpit turned round so that the view of the chancel was no longer hidden at that side. The pulpit has now been returned to its



original position, as it was in 1909 to enable the chancel arch to be completely clear of any obstruction.

On completion of the major reordering project at St John's in December 2017, Jim Read, the PCC member responsible for health and safety issues, in consultation with our insurers, identified some issues that needed attention. One was the need for a handrail on the access steps into the pulpit.

In deciding how best to solve the handrail problem, account has been taken of the adjacent wrought iron screen in front of the organ chamber. This screen

representing the Tree of Life was made by a Mr J Horrobin, a blacksmith from Roadwater in West Somerset, to a design by the then Church architect, Robin Shirley-Smith, to commemorate the life of Frederick Cresswell-Higgs Rector from 1958 until his death in 1969 and was dedicated in 1973.

The same blacksmith business is now run by artist-blacksmith, Ben Horrobin, nephew of the Tree of Life maker, and he produced a design for the pulpit handrail to complement the existing ironwork. This work was completed in April 2019. The company is now called Quantock Forge and Fabrications Ltd and is based at Bicknoller in West Somerset.