

8 bench ends are of particular interest and have been photographed:

3 ends – 30, 32, 42 in N aisle have spandrels with caricatures of human faces representing the vices of malicious speech and deceit, and one 22a, has a hand holding a rosary depicted in great detail. All these are 15<sup>th</sup> C and are fully described in Peter Poyntz-Wright's book "The Rural Bench Ends of Somerset" Avebury Press 1983 pps 141 & 142, as follows:-

There are at Cheddar three bench ends that have human faces in the spandrels formed by the arches of plain tracery within the panel. It has been suggested that these carvings represent the vices of malicious speech and deceit, (Ref a) and close examination of their detail reveals that these lower qualities are portrayed in depth. The first of these (32) shows in the L spandrel as viewed a head with three faces, a full face forward and two profiles one on each side. The combined head, which has a small cap on top has two eyes and three noses, and each profile has a mouth showing teeth and a long, twisted tongue. The divided image illustrates deceit and split loyalties, and the twisted tongue represents lies. In the RH spandrel is a confrontation of two heads in profile, facing each other with their noses and foreheads touching. Their lips are drawn back in anger and they seem to be sharing the same tongue. This carving is more difficult to interpret as it illustrates a confrontation (and may be compared with another confrontation (*at S Cadbury*)). Yet the twisted or looped tongue is shared, suggesting some complicity which is hard to equate with the disagreement. It could represent the bearing of false witness, where both witnesses are at loggerheads, each telling lies about the other.

The second of these carvings, (42) contains in the L spandrel, a face with horns rising from the forehead, large round eyes, a nose and mouth from which a twisted tongue protrudes on each side and ends in an animal's head. The lower of these heads on the L side has ears eyes and a tongue in the form of an arrow. Lightly carved and a little indistinct are two ears that project out and down from each side of the (human) head.

Clearly this character is demonic because of the horns and and represents eavesdropping with his ears and a substantial amount of lies and gossip with his twisted and two-directional tongues.

In the R spandrel is a dual face with a cap and a single eye. The profile facing to the R uses the central eye with a long pointed nose, a narrow mouth and a long, flowing beard, and probably represents the more pleasant side of a split character. (*what comes from his mouth is not described but appears to be less than pleasant*) The other half of the 'Jekyll and Hyde' image is shown in the L profile where the same eye is used in conjunction with a sharply turned-up nose and an extended pointed mouth from which an arrow protrudes to fill the L corner of the spandrel.

This is a very descriptive presentation of the traditional two-faced character.

The last of this trio of carvings illustrates lies and eavesdropping (30). In the L spandrel is a caricature of a face in profile showing a bulbous forehead, large eye, turned-up nose and an evil grinning mouth, showing a mass of teeth. From the mouth the epitome of lies is shown by the huge twisted tongue that curls its way to the lower corner of the spandrel.