

= Chew Stoke =

Chew Stoke is a small village and civil parish in the Chew Valley , in Somerset , England , about 8 miles (13 km) south of Bristol . It is at the northern edge of the Mendip Hills , a region designated by the United Kingdom as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty , and is within the Bristol / Bath green belt . The parish includes the hamlet of Breach Hill , which is approximately 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) southwest of Chew Stoke itself .

Chew Stoke has a long history , as shown by the number and range of its heritage @-@ listed buildings . The village is at the northern end of Chew Valley Lake , which was created in the 1950s , close to a dam , pumping station , sailing club , and fishing lodge . A tributary of the River Chew , which rises in Strode , runs through the village .

The population of 991 is served by one shop , two public houses , a primary school and a bowling club . Together with Chew Magna , it forms the ward of Chew Valley North in the unitary authority of Bath and North East Somerset . Chew Valley School and its associated leisure centre are less than a mile (1 @. @ 6 km) from Chew Stoke . The village has some areas of light industry but is largely agricultural ; many residents commute to nearby cities for employment .

= = History = =

= = = Prehistory = = =

Archaeological excavations carried out between 1953 and 1955 by Philip Rahtz and Ernest Greenfield from the Ministry of Works found evidence of extensive human occupation of the area . Consecutive habitation , spanning thousands of years from the Upper Palaeolithic , Mesolithic , and Neolithic periods (Old , Middle , and New Stone Age) , to the Bronze and Iron Ages had left numerous artefacts behind . Discoveries have included stone knives , flint blades , and the head of a mace , along with buildings and graves .

= = = Romano @-@ Celtic temple = = =

Chew Stoke is the site of a Romano @-@ Celtic double @-@ octagonal temple , possibly dedicated to the god Mercury . The temple , on Pagans Hill , was excavated by Philip Rahtz between 1949 and 1951 . It consisted of an inner wall , which formed the sanctuary , surrounded by an outer wall forming an ambulatory , or covered walkway 56 @. @ 5 feet (17 @. @ 2 m) across . It was first built in the late 3rd century but was twice rebuilt , finally collapsing in the 5th century . The positioning of the temple on what is now known as Pagans Hill may seem apt , but there is no evidence for any link between the existence of the temple and the naming of the road .

= = = Middle Ages = = =

During the Middle Ages , farming was the most important activity in the area , and farming , both arable and dairy , continues today . There were also orchards producing fruits such as apples , pears , and plums . Evidence exists of lime kilns , used in the production of mortar for the construction of local churches .

In the Domesday Book of 1086 , Chew Stoke was listed as Chiwestoche , and was recorded as belonging to Gilbert Fitz @-@ Tuold . He conspired with the Duke of Normandy against King William Rufus , and subsequently , all his lands were seized . The next recorded owner was Lord Beauchamp of Hache . He became " lord of the manor " when the earls of Gloucester , with hereditary rights to Chew Stoke , surrendered them to him . According to Stephen Robinson , the author of Somerset Place Names , the village was then known as Chew Millitus , suggesting that it may have had some military potential . The name " Stoke " , from the old English stoc , meaning a stockade , may support that idea .

The parish was part of the hundred of Chew .

= = = Bilbie family of bell and clockmakers = = =

The Bilbie family of bell founders and clockmakers lived and worked in Chew Stoke for more than 200 years , from the late 17th century until the 19th century . They produced more than 1 @, @ 350 church bells , which were hung in churches all over the West Country . Their oldest surviving bell , cast in 1698 , is still giving good service in the local St Andrew 's Church . The earliest Bilbie clocks date from 1724 and are highly prized . They are mostly longcase clocks , the cheapest with 30 @-@ hour movements in modest oak cases , but some have high quality eight @-@ day movements with additional features , such as showing the high tide at Bristol docks . These latter clocks were fitted into quality cabinet maker cases and command high prices .

= = = Recent history = = =

In the 20th century , Chew Stoke expanded slightly with the influx of residents from the Chew Valley Lake area . These new residents were moved to Chew Stoke when the lake was created in the 1950s . In World War II , 42 children and three teachers , who had been evacuated from Avenmore school in London , were accommodated in the village . On 10 July 1968 , torrential rainfall , with 175 millimetres (7 in) falling in 18 hours on Chew Stoke , double the area 's average rainfall for the whole of July , led to widespread flooding in the Chew Valley , and water reached the first floor of many buildings . The damage in Chew Stoke was not as severe as in some of the surrounding villages , such as Pensford ; however , fears that the Chew Valley Lake dam would be breached caused considerable anxiety .

On 4 February 2001 , Princess Anne opened the Rural Housing Trust development at Salway Close . Each year , over a weekend in September (usually the first) , a " Harvest Home " is held with horse and pet shows , bands , a funfair , and other entertainments . The Harvest Home was cancelled in 1997 as a mark of respect following the death of Princess Diana in the previous week . The Radford 's factory site , where refrigeration equipment was formerly manufactured , was identified as a brownfield site suitable for residential development in the 2002 Draft Local Plan of Bath and North East Somerset . That plan has generated controversy about balancing land use to meet residential , social , and employment needs .

During November 2012 a series of floods affected many parts of Britain . On 22 November a man died after his car was washed down a flooded brook in Chew Stoke and trapped against a small bridge .

= = Governance = =

Chew Stoke has its own nine @-@ member parish council with responsibility for local issues , including setting an annual precept (local rate) to cover the council 's operating costs and producing annual accounts for public scrutiny . The parish council evaluates local planning applications and works with the local police , district council officers , and neighbourhood watch groups on matters of crime , security , and traffic . The council 's role also includes initiating projects for the maintenance and repair of parish facilities , as well as consulting with the district council on the maintenance , repair , and improvement of highways , drainage , footpaths , public transport , and street cleaning . Conservation matters (including trees and listed buildings) and environmental issues are also the responsibility of the council .

The village is part of the ward of Chew Valley North in the unitary authority of Bath and North East Somerset , which has the wider responsibility for providing services such as education , refuse collection , and tourism . The ward is currently represented by Councillor Malcolm Hannay , a member of the Conservative Party . It is also part of the North East Somerset , and part of the South West England constituency of the European Parliament .

The police service is provided by Avon and Somerset Constabulary with two Community Support

Officer and one police officer covering the wider Chew Valley area . The Avon Fire and Rescue Service have a fire station at Chew Magna .

= = Geography = =

The area of Chew Stoke is surrounded by arable land and dairy farms on the floor of the Chew Valley . It is located along the Strode Brook tributary of the River Chew , on the northwest side of the Chew Valley Lake . While much of the area has been cleared for farming , trees line the tributary and many of the roads . The village is built along the main thoroughfare , Bristol Road , which runs northeast to southwest . An older centre is located along Pilgrims Way , which loops onto Bristol Road and features an old stone packhorse bridge ? now pedestrianised ? and a 1950s Irish bridge , used as a ford in winter . The bridge is 7 feet 6 inches (2 @. @ 29 m) wide and has 36 inches (910 mm) parapets . Houses line both of these roads , with residential cul @-@ de @-@ sacs and lanes extending from them .

Chew Stoke is approximately 10 miles (16 km) south of Bristol , 15 miles (24 km) from Bath , and 9 miles (14 km) from Keynsham . It is 1 @. @ 3 miles (2 @. @ 1 km) south of Chew Magna on the B3130 road that joins the A37 and A38 . The A368 crosses the valley west of the lake . The " Chew Valley Explorer " bus route 672 / 674 , running from Bristol Bus Station to Cheddar , provides public transport access . This service is operated by CT coaches and Eurotaxis and subsidised by Bath and North East Somerset council . In 2002 , a 1 @. @ 9 @-@ mile (3 @. @ 1 km) cycle route , the Chew Lake West Green Route , was opened around the western part of the lake from Chew Stoke . It forms part of the Padstow to Bristol West Country Way , National Cycle Network Route 3 . It has all @-@ weather surfacing , providing a smooth off @-@ road facility for ramblers , mobility @-@ challenged visitors , and cyclists of all abilities . Funding was provided by Bath and North East Somerset Council , with the support of Sustrans and the Chew Valley Recreational Trail Association . The minor roads around the lake are also frequently used by cyclists . Bristol Airport is approximately 10 miles (16 km) away , and the nearest train stations are Keynsham , Bath Spa , and Bristol Temple Meads .

= = Demography = =

The population of Chew Stoke , according to the census of 1801 , was 517 . This number increased slowly during the 19th century to a maximum of 819 but fell to around 600 by the end of the century . The population remained fairly stable until World War II . During the latter half of the 20th century , the population of the village rose to 905 people . Data for 1801 ? 1971 is available at Britain Through Time ; data for 1971 ? 2001 is available from BANES The 2001 Census gives detailed information about the Chew Valley North ward , which includes both Chew Magna and Chew Stoke . The ward had 2 @, @ 307 residents , living in 911 households , with an average age of 42 @. @ 3 years . Of those , 77 % of residents described their health as ' good ' , 21 % of 16- to 74 @-@ year @-@ olds had no work qualifications , and the area had an unemployment rate of 1 @. @ 3 % . In the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 , the ward was ranked at 26 @, @ 243 out of 32 @, @ 482 wards in England , where 1 was the most deprived and 32 @, @ 482 the least deprived . A small number of light industrial / craft premises exist at " Fairseat Workshops " , formerly the site of a dairy . However , they provide little employment , and many residents commute to jobs in nearby cities .

= = Landmarks = =

= = = St Andrews Church = = =

St Andrews Church , a Grade II * listed building on the outskirts of Chew Stoke , was constructed in the 15th century and underwent extensive renovation in 1862 . The inside of the church is decorated with 156 angels in wood and stone , and the church includes a tower with an unusual spirelet on the

staircase turret . In the tower hang bells cast by the Bilbie family . The reconstructed Moreton Cross in the churchyard was moved there when Chew Valley Lake flooded , and the base of the cross shaft , about 80 feet (24 m) southwest of the tower , is thought to date from the 14th century and is itself a Grade II * listed building , as is the Webb monument in the churchyard . The churchyard gate , at the southeast entrance , bears a lamp provided by public subscription to commemorate Queen Victoria 's Jubilee of 1897 and is a Grade II listed structure .

In the church are bronze plaques commemorating the eleven local people who died in World War I and the six who were killed in World War II . There is also a stained glass window showing a saint with a sword standing on a snake , and crossed flags commemorating those from World War II . There is also a memorial plaque to the local Bilbie family of bell founders and clockmakers inside the church , and just inside the porch , on the left of the church door , is a stone figure holding an anchor , which was moved to the church from Walley Court with the flooding of the lake . There is an unconfirmed story that this was given to the Gilbert family , then living at the court , by Queen Elizabeth I.

== = Rectory == =

The Rectory , at the end of Church Lane , opposite the church hall , is believed to have been built in 1529 by Sir John Barry , rector 1524 ? 46 . It has since undergone substantial renovations , including the addition of a clock tower for the Rev. W.P. Wait and further alterations c.1876 for Rev. J. Ellershaw . The clock tower has since been removed . The building has an ornate south front with carvings of shields bearing the coat of arms of the St Loe family , who were once chief landowners in the area , alone or impaled with arms of Fitzpane , Ancell , de la Rivere , and Malet . It is Grade II * listed .

== = New rectory == =

The Reverend John Ellershaw built the new rectory in the 1870s . The last rector to occupy it was Lionel St Clair Waldy from 1907 to 1945 . It was then bought by Douglas Wills , who donated it and the rectory field to Winford Hospital as a convalescent home for 16 children . It was later used as a nurses ' home before being sold for private use . It is now split into several residential units .

== = Grade II listed buildings == =

As with many cities and towns in the United Kingdom , the age of a number of the buildings in Chew Stoke , including the church , school , and several houses , reflects the long history of the village . For example , Chew Stoke School has approximately 170 pupils between 4 and 11 years old . After the age of 11 , most pupils attend Chew Valley School . These two buildings were built in 1858 on the site of a former charity school founded in 1718 . The architect was S.B. Gabriel of Bristol . Additional classrooms were built in 1926 , and further alterations and extensions were carried out in 1970 .

An obelisk on Breach Hill Lane , dating from the early @-@ to @-@ mid @-@ 19th century , is said to have been built as a waterworks marker . It has a square limestone plinth about 3 feet (1 m) high . The obelisk is about 32 feet (10 m) high with a pyramidal top and small opening at the top on two sides .

The importance of farming is reflected in the age of many of the farmhouses . Manor Farm , on Scot Lane (not to be confused with at least two other Manor Farms in the locality) is thought to date from 1495 and , as such , is probably the oldest building in the village . Presently (2007) occupied by Mr and Mrs Slater ; the building has recently (2002) undergone a sympathetic extension to incorporate an old semi @-@ derelict barn onto the main house for use as a garage and workshop . Mr Slater , a Chartered Engineer , is interested in bringing the art of clock making back to the village . Rookery Farmhouse , in Breach Hill Lane , is dated at 1720 , with later 18th century additions to either side of the central rear wing . An attached stable , 20 feet (6 m) northeast of the farmhouse ,

is also a Grade II listed building . School Farmhouse , in School Lane , dates from the late 17th century and has a studded oak door in the side of the house . Wallis Farmhouse , farther along School Lane , is dated at 1782 . Yew Tree Farmhouse , one of the oldest buildings in the area , is a cruck built farmhouse of which there are very few in North Somerset . It was included in the dendrochronology project carried out by the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group 1996 ? 1998 and the crucks gave a felling date of 1386 , the house has been extensively altered and added to over later centuries . North Hill Farmhouse also has 15th century origins . Paganshill Farmhouse dates from the 17th century . Fairseat Farmhouse is from the 18th century and includes a plaque recording that John Wesley preached at the house on 10 September 1790 . In August of that year , Fairseat Farmhouse was " registered among the records of this County as a House set apart for the worship of God and religious exercise for Protestant Dissenters . " At that time the house belonged to Anna Maria Griffon . In the garden is a large evergreen oak (Ilex) which measured 98 feet (30 m) across until half of it broke away in a gale in 1976 .

The Methodist Chapel was built in 1815 / 16 after religious services had been established at Fairseat Farm , and the chapel was rebuilt in the late 19th century with limestone walls with stone dressings and a slate hipped roof with brick eaves stacks and crestings .

In the hamlet of Stoke Villice , which is south of the main village , there is a 19th @-@ century milestone inscribed " 8 miles to Bristol " that also has listed status .

= = Education = =

Chew Stoke Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the village itself and surrounding villages in the Chew Valley . It is a Church of England voluntary controlled school linked with the St. Andrew 's parish church . It has about 170 pupils between 4 and 11 years old . After the age of 11 , most pupils attend Chew Valley School .

The school was founded as a charity in 1718 . Its original buildings were demolished in 1858 and replaced with new ones to designs by S.B. Gabriel that are now Grade II listed . The school bell was donated by the Bilbie family of bell founders based in the village . Additional classrooms were built in 1926 , and further alterations and extensions were built in 1970 .