



Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Autumn Newsletter

AUTUMN / WINTER 2024

Our new Vice-Chairman introduces himself

Our immediate past vice-chairman, David Pritchard has been invited to reflect in the Newsletter on his period in office with CHCT and how he sees us progressing in the future. David has been a pillar of strength during his time in office and most generous with time and support to me as I learn the ropes in anticipation of taking over from him. He will be a very difficult act to follow, and I hope everyone will be patient as I find my way around the mechanics of the trust and the points of liaison with the diocese.

In saying that, may I take this opportunity of introducing myself and explain my history with CHCT.

I was born in Windsor soon after the Coronation of the late Queen and was brought up in the Thames Valley. After my formal education at Epsom College (in those days a school for the sons of doctors of which I was one) and Leeds University, reading law, I was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1976. I practised as a barrister until I joined the Magistrates' Courts Service. In 1995 I came to Cambridgeshire to be the Clerk to the Cambridge, Ely and Newmarket Justices and moved from London to Godmanchester. My wife, Sammy and I have worshipped at St Mary the Virgin since we arrived, and as lawyers we were encouraged to take on roles within the parish. For me this included organising and participating in the annual CHCT sponsored Ride and Stride event. As a fit man in early middle age, this was a pleasure, but I find myself still riding from church to church to raise funds 30 years later.

My role in Cambridge ceased and I returned to private practice as a barrister in 2001, and in 2004 was appointed a District Judge, an office I held until 2022 when I retired. Before I retired, I found myself on the CHCT Ride and Stride sub-committee, bringing more than 25 years of experience in trying to encourage members of St Mary's congregation to form a team to raise sponsorship for the trust. Like everyone else I watched as the numbers, especially of parents and their children, declined over the years and accelerated during and after COVID and like everyone else have been preoccupied with trying to reverse this trend.

I confess I neither expected my role to go beyond feeding back from my own experience and putting forward ideas to increase CHCT's income generating but on David's retirement, was asked to succeed him supporting our chairman, Neil McKittrick, who I had met many times during our professional lives.

I am grateful that so much existing experience will continue to support me and am pleased to say that the Trustees have succeeded in identifying highly qualified professional volunteers willing to strengthen the team. David has observed in his closing notes that the road to success is always under construction. The well-established team, the new members and I look forward to taking up our picks and shovels to take forward the plans which are now being evolved.

Nicholas Leigh-Smith

The Trust is an independent charity whose primary task is to give financial help in the form of grants and interest-free loans towards the cost of repair and improvement of churches and chapels of all denominations throughout Cambridgeshire. Its funds accrue mainly from membership subscriptions and from the annual sponsored Ride and Stride. Members receive twice-yearly newsletters and other information about the Trust's activities including in normal times an annual conference in the Spring and Sunday afternoon church tours in the summer. Minimum annual subscription £20 for up to two individuals at the same address, £50 for corporate membership for churches.

Administrator: Sue Holgate, 9 The Chase, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 3DR. Phone 01353 668438

Email: admin@camhct.uk.

For our formal Annual Report and Financial Statements visit www.camhct.uk or ask the Administrator for a printed copy.

Church Tours

The church tours in May, June, July and August were again well attended and we are very grateful to William Schenck and the Revd Dr Lynne Broughton for leading respectively the May and the June and August tours. We hope that they will be able to assist similarly in 2025, Neither of them was available in July and that tour was led by David and Elizabeth Stazicker. We are continuing to explore whether we can find any additional suitably qualified guides to join the team.

Annual Conference

The conference on 13th April on materials and working methods was well attended and well received. There were some minor practical shortcomings arising from the use of a temporary conference room at Wolfson College but we hope that their building works will have been completed and we shall return to the Lee Hall for our 2025 conference on Saturday 5th April when a distinguished panel of speakers will address the subject of Belief, Liturgy and Structure from the Anglo-Saxons to Charles III. Full details and booking arrangements will appear in the New Year.

David Stazicker

Save The Date

**Saturday 5th April 2025 - Wolfson College, Cambridge
'Belief, Liturgy and Structure'**

We hope many members will save the above date and put it in their 2025 diaries soon. David Stazicker, the Conference Organiser, informs me that it is almost 16 years since we had a course on Liturgy and Structure and we both agree that it is high time we had another.

Hence the working title for 2025.

Each of our speakers will look at various aspects of development and the lectures will pass from early days through to the present day. Although final details have yet to be settled, we expect that the day will cover :

Early development with the evolution from Roman basilica to nave, chancel and sanctuary. How and why did this happen?

The high and later Middle Ages - 4th Lateran Council, transubstantiation, purgatory, and the role of guilds
From the Reformation to Hanoverian England, iconoclasm, the Book of Common Prayer, the Laudian 'Counter Reformation' and church furnishings, such as 3-decker pulpits and box pews

The Victorians - choral services, the Tractarians, and
The Modern Age - nave altars, revised forms of service, 'Fresh

Expressions' and community use of churches.

This promises to be another excellent Conference and we encourage you to come along and perhaps bring a friend with you.

We hope to be back in Lee Hall in Wolfson and we acknowledge that for a number of reasons it is preferable to the Dining Hall which we were allocated this year.

Further details and booking arrangements will be on the website early in the New Year.

I look forward to seeing you again on 5th April.

Neil McKittrick, Chairman

Reflection

As I will soon be moving to Oxfordshire our chairman has invited me to reflect on my period in office with CHCT and consider what the Trust might look to achieve in the future.

It has been both an honour and a joy to support CHCT in the important work it does for the churches of all denominations in the county. The trustees, the executive committee members and all who support CHCT are in my view unsung heroes for without them the trust would not be where it is today.

One of my first endeavours was to encourage the trustees to meet for an 'Away-Day' to consider past, present and future. This was held in the Cathedral Centre and chaired by +David Thomson, Chair of the Trust. With the 40th anniversary of the Trust approaching the trustees gave serious consideration to launching an appeal so that more funds could be made available for distribution to parishes.

With the arrival of Covid the trustees decided a fund raising appeal was no longer viable. In its place they opted for a Legacy Appeal which was successfully launched in 2023 at a reception in the Bishop's Garden following an impressive Festal Cathedral Evensong at which the Bishop of Ely preached. During that service the Bishop presented certificates to those Riders/Striders who had raised commendable amounts of sponsorship money in 2022. We were delighted that +Dagmar agreed to present certificates during Evensong this year to those who raised significant sums for us in 2023.

During Covid the website was updated so that friends/members of the public could buy tickets for events, purchase Gift Membership for friends and family and promote/support the annual Ride and Stride event. Another Covid innovation was the use of Zoom for the 2021 annual conference.

Like all volunteer-led charities, finding volunteers to fill vacancies has been, and will continue to be challenging. I am delighted that the Church Tour team, so ably led by David Stazicker and Lynne Broughton, now has an additional guide, William Schenck, a longstanding Trust member and Ely Cathedral guide.

Finding new ways of raising funds continues to be important. Many of you will remember that we have recently been encouraging parishioners, church members and supporters to 'do-anything' to raise funds on Ride & Stride day should riding/striding not be possible, and many of you have done so.

Looking ahead I'm pleased to say that thought is currently being given to develop a new style of fund raising as an add-on to the annual Ride & Stride fund raising event.

It is often said that success is a journey not a destination and that the road to success is always under construction. I wish the CHCT every success and look forward to supporting its work as a distant member.

David Pritchard

Grants Report

We finished our financial year 2023 to 2024 with our May 2024 meeting and this meant that by then from a total of 19 applications, 16 offers had been made resulting in grant offers of £29,600 and interest free loan offers of £83,000.

Almost all of the applications were for small projects, (stone and roof repairs), related to earlier Quinquennial Inspections, (QI's). One of these was at **Stetchworth, St Peter** where the tower is now fully scaffolded. (See one photo attached).



• *Stetchworth St. Peter.*

Only St Leonard's, Southoe, related to a much larger project, that of installing a kitchen, toilets and under floor heating. Work there is not planned until 2025, but it is hoped that an early CHCT offer might encourage other grant giving bodies to come forward. At the time of going to press, whilst some £40,000 has already been pledged and an expression of interest has been made to Heritage Lottery, the PCC, conscious of other QI work still to be done as well, are also looking at ways to reduce the capital costs of this once £500,000 project.

We would like to think that an early CHCT offer of grant and loan back in 2022 to 2023 helped **St Andrew's, Soham** to secure their Lottery Bid. (See two photos attached). This was a project with building works costing around £200,000 but they had to spend another £100,000 on "Heritage Engagement Activities" in order to secure the Lottery funding. Soham



• *St. Andrew's, Soham.*



is currently front page news on our website, see <https://camhct.uk/>, so do click the "Read More" and take a look at their "Evaluation Report". It contains three links to youtube videos as well, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0HE82Hp2Ck>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1P3hIQCP39M> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skSuAkplw5w>. Well done to the Reverend Eleanor Whalley and all her Team. That's Phase 1 completed; when will you have the energy to start Phase 2?

Less glamorous, but equally important was the now completed external stonework repairs to **All Saints, Tilbrook**, also from our 2022 to 2023 funding. (See 2 photos attached.)



• *All Saints, Tilbrook, porch before and after*



Perhaps Heritage Lottery funding has now become a little easier to achieve. They have just announced their strategy for the next 10 years which includes awarding £100 million to Places of Worship in the next three years. There are four principles now:-

- **Saving heritage**
- **Protecting the environment**
- **Inclusion, access and participation**
- **Organizational sustainability.**

These replace the former nine outcomes. Every application must take account of all 4 principles, but can be directed mainly at one of them. See their website at <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/heritage-2033-our-10-year-strategy>

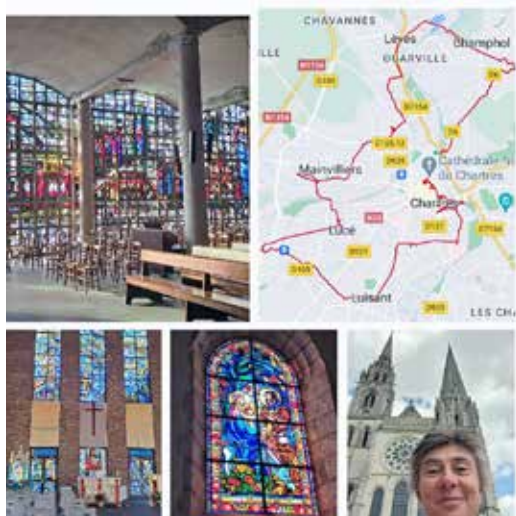
As for our current year, 2024 to 2025, we have only had one meeting in July, one of four planned for this year, but have already offered £12,000 in grants and £10,000 in interest free loans, see <https://camhct.uk/grants/> Our next grants deadline is 13th November 2024.

Graham Pledger

CHCT Ride and Stride goes to Chartres!

A good friend (and secretary of the CHCT!) pointed out to me that being away in Chartres, France, on September 14th was the perfect location to take part in the CHCT Ride + Stride 2024. So, after studying a map very closely, I walked 22.31km on a beautiful September morning and managed to visit 13 churches, finishing at Chartres Cathedral. The highlight of the walk was being invited to join in the celebrations for Our Lady of Velankanni at St François, Lucé, which sadly I had to turn down as I had several churches left to visit. Thanks to some very kind and generous friends and family, I have managed to raise a healthy sum to be split between the CHCT and St Peter ad Vincula, Coveney.

Rebecca



Dates for Your Diary

Saturday 5th April 2025 - Annual Conference at Wolfson College, Cambridge – Belief, Liturgy and Structure from the Anglo-Saxons to Charles III – details to be announced.

Sundays 11th May, 8th June, 13th July and 10th August 2025 - Church tours - Itineraries to be announced later.

Ride and Stride Saturday 13th September 2025.

David Stazicker

CHCT Ride & Stride goes to Lindisfarne!



On Saturday 14 September we were staying on the beautiful island of Lindisfarne (Holy Island) in Northumberland and so we thought we would take part in Ride & Stride on the island. Although there are three churches on Holy Island, we thought it was a bit feeble just to visit those for our challenge so we decided to walk the Pilgrim's Way over the sandy/muddy estuary.

For those who don't know about this, when the tide is in, the Island is cut off from the mainland. However at low tide, there is a way marked by poles from the mainland across. This is traditionally walked bare foot by pilgrims to the holy sites of St Aiden and St Cuthbert, has been so for many centuries – it was the only way to cross before the causeway was built in the 20th century. However we wore our wellies and set off on a beautiful day.

Halfway across are huts where those who don't make it can shelter from the incoming tide.

The only sounds are the calling of the seals on the nearby sandbank, the curlews and other waders feeding on the mudflats.

We raised over £500 for the Trust, half of which will go to the church of St Peter ad Vincula in Coveney.

Thank you to all those who supported us and supported others participating in Ride and Stride events. It is the Trust's main source of income and all money raised will go towards helping churches in Cambridgeshire keep their buildings in good order.

Jan and Sue

Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Registered as a charity in England and Wales No 287486

Trustees

His Honour Neil McKittrick (Chair)
Nicholas Leigh-Smith (Vice-Chair)
Susan Pope (Hon Treasurer)
David Stazicker
The Revd Canon Simon Talbott
Alison Taylor
The Revd Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite
Geoffrey Hunter

Executive Committee

Nicholas Leigh-Smith (Chair)
Susan Pope (Hon Treasurer)
The Revd Dr Lynne Broughton
William Craven
Graham Pledger (Grants Secretary)
The Revd Canon Annette Reed
John Farmer (Ride & Stride Treasurer)

Administrator

Sue Holgate

www.camhct.uk