

Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Spring Newsletter

2021

News from our Vice-Chair

*RIGHT: The Revd Canon David Pritchard
Vice-Chair of Trustees*



The Retirement of our Honorary Secretary

Two years ago David Stazicker informed the trustees that he wished to retire from the position of Honorary Secretary on 1st May 2021. For the past twelve years David has made a very significant contribution to the Trust both as a member but particularly as Honorary Secretary. At committee meetings David's mastery of detail has been second to none. We are delighted that David will continue as a trustee and will co-ordinate our conferences and on-line lectures. In normal times we would have been able to thank David in person but Covid19 has denied us that opportunity. We thank David immensely and wish him well in all that lies ahead.

Appointment of Administrator

The Trustees are pleased to announce the appointment of Sue Holgate as the Trust's first Administrator. Sue comes into this role with a comprehensive knowledge of the diocese and county as well as having been a member of the Trust for several years. We look forward to her joining us. From now on all correspondence which previously would have been sent to David Stazicker should go to Sue – her email address is: admin@camhct.uk.

Other new email addresses are:

Treasurer finance@camhct.uk
Grants grants@camhct.uk
Membership members@camhct.uk
Ride & Stride Treasurer r-s-treasurer@camhct.uk

Zoom Conference

A Zoom Conference for members was held on Tuesday 20th April at 7.30pm. Our Chair, Sir Hugh Duberly, began the meeting by informing members about the work of the Trust in the past twelve months. Loans (totalling £126,000) and Grants (totalling £40,700) were awarded to 23 churches. Income from membership subscriptions (Personal 176; Churches 141) came to £10,870.75 (inclusive of Gift Aid). The total amount raised by the 2020 Ride & Stride (R&S) increased from £16,469 (2019) to £20,152 – from this total £9,523.51 was returned to churches. The R&S sub-committee received invaluable help from Orange and Blue (national R&S consultants) and Holly Isted, the Diocesan Support Officer.

The Trust was founded in 1983 and 2023 will be our fortieth anniversary year. To celebrate this landmark there will be a service in Ely Cathedral at 5.30pm on Tuesday 27th June 2023 when the Bishop of Ely will preach. Following the service there will be a reception – further details will be issued in due course.

A New Website

For many years, the Trust has been indebted to Graham Phillips for its website. Those who are 'users' of websites have little idea of the skills and knowledge required by those who set them up and manage them! We are extremely grateful to Graham for the work he has done so well for us 'behind the scenes'.

Faced with several changes in personnel and the opportunity to rationalise the operational infrastructure of the Trust, the trustees invited Orange and Blue (O&B) to set up a new website which would make use of the latest developments in website technology and enhance user experience. The new website came 'live' on 20th April – do look at it – you'll see how easy it is to renew subscriptions, make donations and give Gift Membership to friends and family. As soon as the Trust's YouTube channel is operational you will be able to access a recording of April Zoom conference from the website.

David Pritchard

Vice-Chair of Trustees and Chair of Executive Committee

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.

Hon Secretary's Report

In a "normal" year you would be expecting us already to have held an Annual Conference in April and to be announcing a series of church tours on summer Sundays and a visit by coach to a cathedral city. This year like many organisations we have looked at the uncertainties that still exist, and decided to proceed with caution, arranging on-line events in place of the usual ones. As our Vice-Chair reports on page 1, we held an on-line reporting session for members on 20th April, and we are grateful to those of you who took part and contributed comments or questions.

Other organisations' experience shows that the move to on-line events is an opportunity to expand our audience beyond the county and its environs and engage with people in other parts of Britain and overseas. Instead of the Conference there will be a series of lectures, largely comprising the presentations that were planned for the cancelled Conference in 2020, monthly on Tuesday evenings from May to September. We shall not charge a fee for participation but will invite donations. Details are on page 4 and joining instructions will be circulated nearer to the dates. We are also planning on-line events featuring local churches including those that have benefitted from the Trust's loans and grants.

These activities are of course ancillary to the Trust's main business of assisting churches with the cost of repairs and improvements. As we have observed before, churches' need for financial support from the Trust is likely to be all the greater in the wake of the pandemic. Squeezed between the loss of usual fundraising opportunities and demands from equally cash-strapped Diocesan or equivalent authorities, they nevertheless have to maintain their buildings in good order and undertake projects to improve their usefulness to their congregations and the wider local community. Experience so far suggests that despite the difficulties they are continuing to come forward with schemes in undiminished numbers.

The other side of this coin is that the Trust needs to maintain and increase the income which enables it to award grants. The principal sources of this income are membership subscriptions and the annual sponsored Ride and Stride. More on each of these subjects appears elsewhere on this page.

It is now a little over twelve years since I succeeded Nick Cleaver as your Honorary Secretary. I have greatly enjoyed making some modest contribution to this eminently worthwhile cause, but two years ago I gave notice that I would wish to stand down this year on reaching a "significant" age. This is not just a matter of inevitably diminishing energy. The world continues to change with increasing speed and the Trust must rethink

itself to make full use of new means of communication, without which we lose touch with a large part of the potential audience that we need to cultivate. As the jargon has it, analogue organisations cannot survive in a digital era. Meanwhile, despite our efforts we have been unable to find a volunteer to take over as Hon Secretary, and so, as our Vice-Chair reports on page 1, we are among other changes engaging a paid Administrator. While retiring as Secretary I am happy to continue as a Trustee and to help organise events.

David Stazicker

Hon Secretary – "ex" by the time you read this

Membership

Membership numbers have again remained fairly static. As we emphasise elsewhere in this newsletter, churches' need for financial help from our grants is undiminished and likely to increase, and membership subscriptions are one of the two sources on which we depend to pay for these. We therefore repeat yet again our encouragement of you all to help recruit new members, among other things by making gifts of membership. We fully understand the impact of the pandemic on churches' finances, but urge PCCs to look on subscriptions to the Trust as a kind of mutual insurance.

At the last count there appeared to be an unusual amount of arrears, and for the same reasons, while appreciating the pressures so many people are under, we hope you will see the importance of continuing in membership.

Also on our website is a Banker's Order form. Payment by this method is very helpful to us if you feel able to adopt it.

Ride and Stride

We were agreeably surprised that despite Covid-19 the 2020 Ride and Stride reversed the declining trend of recent years and raised at total of £20,152 as compared with £16,469 in 2019. This was due to superb efforts by the churches and supporters who surmounted the difficulties and took part. We returned £9,523.51 to churches and retained £10,628.49. We hope to recover £3,315 in Gift Aid, giving a total of £13,943.39 towards the amount we can award in grants in the next financial year.

This year the event will take place on Saturday 11th September. We have already alerted churches to the date and we hope that with the help of the new website and other improved use of technology we can raise even more than in 2020. So please visit the website in time to ask sponsors to support you, and watch social media for easy ways to take part.

Grants

Even with the Covid lockdown, applications for grants and loans have been coming in at an increasing rate. In some cases, the driver has been the award of Historic England's Emergency Heritage at Risk Grants up to £25,000 for projects costing no more than £30,000. By tackling the most urgent works first, it makes sense, particularly with the contractor on site or scaffolding still in place, to then go further with the help of other grant giving bodies. This is being done successfully, not only at All Saints, Croydon and St Mary, Whaddon, (reported in the last Newsletter), but now at St Giles Cambridge and St Peter, Carlton. St Giles has some 50 windows to maintain and were able to plan discrete packages of work.



St Giles, Cambridge

St Peter's was not so fortunate; it knew that urgent repair was needed to the nave/chancel arch but had only planned to put scaffold up at the west end to investigate structural movement there. On close inspection, urgent works to stabilise the west wall have been identified and they are now proceeding with one of our grants.

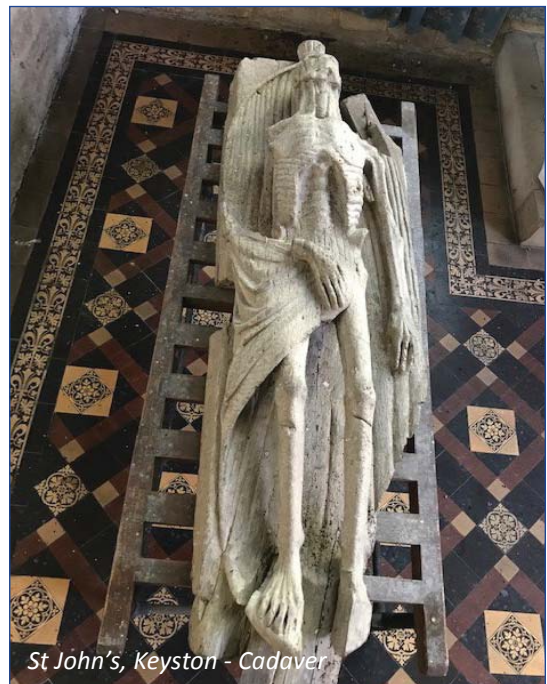


St Peter's, Carlton

Unfortunately, All Saints Morborne has not been so successful with their fund raising and remains very much on the Buildings at Risk Register. Like Morborne, St Paul, Gorefield, also has a leaking roof, this time from slipping slates, but using a great deal of their own funds topped up with a grant and loan, hope to start soon, bats permitting.

Apart from wind, weathertightening and structural problems, roof alarm applications continue and although CHCT can now only offer £1,000 towards these, it is good to see the AllChurches Trust continuing their grant aiding roof alarms as well.

We don't often get memorial applications, so it was pleasing to have one from St John, Keyston who wish to conserve a 15th century wooden cadaver. Bats have been an issue here and the Bat Trust not only funded a conservation report, but will also fund a perspex cover and stand for the grant aided restoration.



St John's, Keyston - Cadaver

Even before the last meeting, where nine new applications were under consideration, we had some seventeen outstanding applications where grants and loans had been offered, but not taken up, one going back to over two years ago. Our thanks go out to St Andrew, Great Staughton and St Michael and All Angels, Chettisham, who offered to release their grants and loans for the present time to help us fund as many Cambridgeshire Churches as possible.

For our progress throughout the year, please follow us on our website at <https://www.camhct.uk/grants/> This web page shows the particular awards and is updated after every meeting.

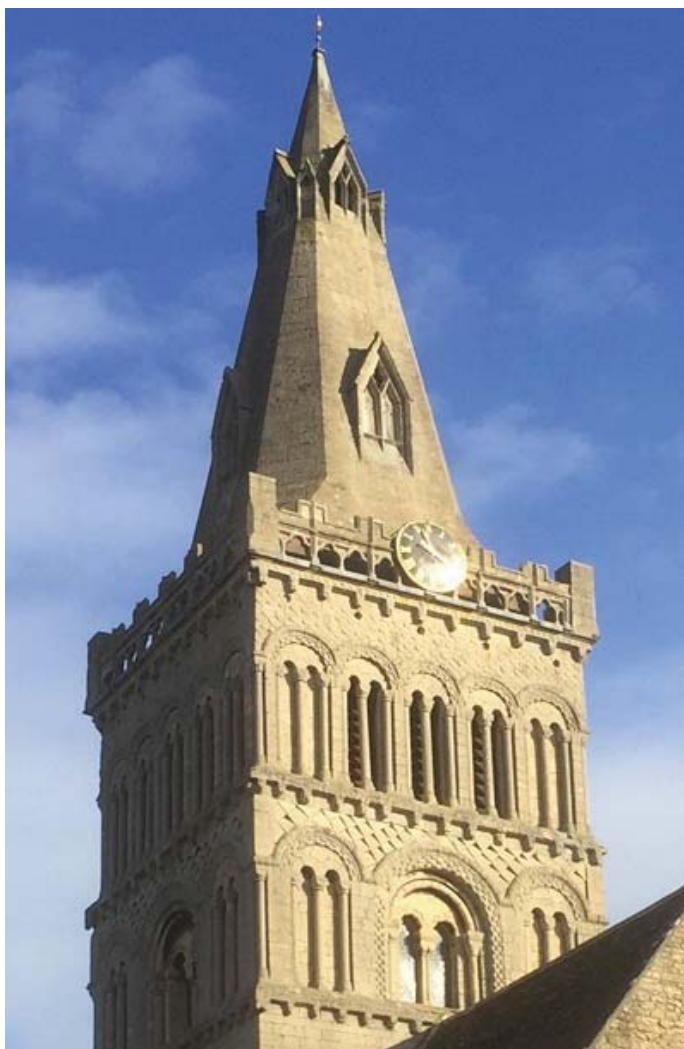
Graham Pledger
Grants Secretary

On-Line Events

You should all be aware by now that because of the continuing uncertainties about the Covid-19 pandemic, and what it may or may not be safe to do at any given point in the coming months, we have decided to err on the side of caution and not arrange any events or visits to be attended in person this year. Instead, we are taking a leaf from the book of many other organisations and arranging on-line events. This creates a positive opportunity to reach a wider audience, beyond Cambridgeshire and its environs and even overseas.

On-Line Lectures –

“Timely Pointers to Heaven – Towers, Spires, Bells, Clocks and Sundials”



St Kyneburgha's, Castor

Photo by kind permission of William Craven

Most of the speakers originally due to appear at our annual conference in April 2020 have agreed to give their presentations on-line.

The programme is as follows – joining instructions will follow :

Tuesday 18th May 7 pm

Bells and bell frames - Robert Walker

Architectural historian, former bells adviser to Ely Diocesan Advisory Committee, former Secretary of Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Tuesday 15th June 7 pm

Sundials and Prayer Times - Dr Frank King

Fellow in Computer Science at Churchill College, Cambridge, University Bellringer and Keeper of the University Clock, and Chairman of the British Sundial Society

Tuesday 20th July 7 pm

Change ringing explained - Gareth Davies

Cambridge bellringer, postgraduate researcher, and member of the History and Archives Workgroup of the Central Council of Church Bellringers

Tuesday 17th August 7 pm

Turret clocks - Chris McKay

Horologist, author of books on clock care, repair and maintenance and clocks consultant to Salisbury Diocesan Advisory Committee

Tuesday 28th September 7 pm

Towers and Spires – Robert Walker

We are also planning on-line talks about churches in the county, and will circulate details.

Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

Registered as a charity in England and Wales No 287486

Trustees

Sir Hugh Duberly CBE KCVO (Chair)
The Revd Canon David Pritchard (Vice-Chair)
David Ball
Nicholas Grantham
David Stazicker
The Revd Simon Talbott
Alison Taylor
The Revd Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite
Canon Tim Walters (Hon Treasurer)

Executive Committee

The Revd Canon David Pritchard (Chair)
The Revd Dr Lynne Broughton
William Craven
Graham Pledger (Grants Secretary)
The Revd Canon Annette Reed
The Revd Tim Thompson (Ride & Stride Treasurer)
Canon Tim Walters (Hon Treasurer)

Administrator

Sue Holgate