

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



Newport Pagnell SS Peter & Paul

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022 / 2023

www.bucks-historic-churches.org



President

The Countess Howe
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire

Vice-President & Trustee

The Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson
Bishop of Buckingham

Chairman & Trustee

The Rt Hon Sir David Lidington KCB CBE

Trustees 2022 / 2023

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Mrs Cherry Aston	Inspection Committee Member
The Hon Mrs Farncombe DL	Appeal and Inspection Committee Member
Mr Andrew Finn-Kelcey	Inspection Committee Member
Mr Philip Hynard	Secretary to the Trust
Mrs Marilynne Morgan CB	Chairman, Friends of Buckinghamshire's Historic Churches
Lady Peel	Secretary to the Appeal Committee (resigned as Trustee July 2023)
Mr Robert Ruck-Keene	
Mr Laurie Johnson	Treasurer to the Trust
Mr George Anson	Appointed Trustee March 2023
The Hon Christopher Tyrer DL	Appointed Trustee March 2023
Mrs Mary Saunders MBE	Chairman, Inspection Committee
Mrs Mary Villiers OBE DL	Appeal and Inspection Committee Member

Appeal Committee Members

Mrs Joanna Barclay DL
Mrs Kate Eckett
Mrs Mary-Jane Gibson
Mrs Candida Godber
Mrs Nina Newton
Mrs Anne Oakley

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THE PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

At a time when climate change is upper most in our minds, we need to look for innovative ways to ensure the viability and sustainability of our beautiful churches in the county.

The challenges facing our cultural heritage in the face of climate change are real and complex. Sadly, the frequency of extreme weather conditions have underlined the vulnerability of many of our ancient churches, whilst the challenge of trying to heat these buildings through the winter is a very real one. They are complex buildings, constructed using traditional skills and materials that are expensive to maintain and repair.

Our churches are places of sanctuary, worship, celebration, commemoration, and community gatherings, and serve as a resource for people of all faiths and none. Importantly these buildings have enormous historic significance in England's past.

There is much excellent work underway in parishes around the county, led by the church wardens and PCCs who ensure the sustainability of our churches and keep them in use and accessible.



Our churches should provide a thriving community asset, and the work of the Bucks Historic Churches Trust enables many improvements and vital repairs to be undertaken. Investing in these buildings provides a thriving community asset and BHCT is pivotal in supporting the churches in the county.

I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to the volunteers and Trustees for their ongoing commitment.

Countess Howe
Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire
President

THE CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

When I wrote the introduction to last year's Annual Report, the nation was mourning the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Now, a year into the reign of King Charles III, it is worth pausing to reflect on His Majesty's lifelong interest in and support for the conservation, restoration, and renewal of our built heritage. He has championed traditional, vernacular design and materials, shown respect for craftsmanship, and insisted with a passion that buildings should combine functionality with aesthetic beauty. Those values are ones that the Trust too holds dear.

In the last twelve months, we have given £53,000 in grants to churches and chapels within the historic county of Buckinghamshire (including Milton Keynes) and an additional £5,000 from the All Churches Trust.

The number of grant applications this year has been smaller than we expected, perhaps reflecting the interruption and delays that covid restrictions imposed on investigative works and on the organisation of repair and restoration projects. The Trustees of BHCT would encourage eligible churches and chapels to approach us for help as part of a wider fund-raising drive.



Sadly, thefts of roofing lead continue to expose the fabric of ancient churches to harm. The Trust has in the past year given grants both to replace stolen lead and to pay for roof alarms to deter thieves.

Thanks to the Friends of BHCT and to the Trust's own volunteer fundraising team we have been able to add to the Trust's coffers. Every £ donated adds to the sum available for grants. So if you have bought a ticket to one of our events, or taken part in Ride and Stride, you have contributed to helping our work of conserving some of this county's oldest and most beautiful buildings for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

We are always in search of both new funds and new volunteers. If you would like help organise Ride and Stride or other events or serve as a Trustee or leave a legacy to BHCT in your will, please do let us know.

I am grateful to every one of our supporters and to the Trustees who give voluntarily of their time.

Sir David Lidington
Chairman

CHURCH DEDICATIONS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

When the Inspection Committee visited Simpson recently about their grant application, we were asked if we knew when the dedication had changed from St Nicholas to St Thomas. This caused me to reflect generally on dedications even if I've not found an answer to that particular question.

Almost every church has a dedication. Churches were being dedicated in honour of saints in the Mediterranean world by 400 and the practice spread to Britain – the Church of St Martin in Canterbury already existed when Augustine arrived in 597. Much of the history of Britain's villages, towns and regions is bound up in the identities of the patron saints chosen for churches, chapels, altars, festivals, fairs, and features of the landscape. The choice of a patron saint helped individuals and communities to make sense of themselves, their surroundings and the circling seasons of the agrarian year. In Great Horwood, for example, where the church's patron saint is St James, his Feast was kept within living memory in accordance with the old calendar (ie in August rather than in late July) with Evensong and a procession with the Silver Band. This continued in the form of a funfair until the Coronavirus pandemic.

It has been suggested that the choice of saints for church dedications in medieval England was influenced by the order of the heavenly intercessors in litanies of the saints. In such litanies, the Apostles head the list, and hence the frequency of churches named after St Peter, St Paul, St Andrew, etc., often as multiple apostolic dedications. Martyrs were regularly represented by St Laurence, and confessors by the ever popular St Nicholas. Much prominence was given to St John the Baptist, St Anne, and St Mary Magdalene. Not surprisingly a predominant number of parish churches came under the patronage of St Mary and in Buckinghamshire it is the most popular dedication, followed by All Saints. Although there are examples, dedications in our county to St Andrew and St John the Baptist are below the national average.

There were also practical factors to explain the custom of naming churches after the saints – the need to identify churches and the need to reclaim and consecrate former pagan sites (for example, the Old Church at Stoke Mandeville built on the site of a Roman shrine). The rise of the cult of saints and their relics also influenced the choice of dedication. A collection of relics relating to St Firmin, Bishop of Amiens, was venerated at North Crawley, one of only two churches in England with this dedication.

Monastic landholdings also influenced the choice of patron saint, for example at Sherington and Newton Longville. The Bishop of Coutances owned land in North Buckinghamshire after the Norman Conquest and Sherington St Laud was dedicated to a Sixth century Bishop of Coutances, St Lô.

At Newton Longville, Walter Giffard, who was one of the most important Commissioners of the Domesday Book, acquired the manor (as well as a large number of other manors spreading from East Anglia to Dorset). He gave it to the Cluniac Priory he had founded at Longueville in Normandy to pray for his soul.

In order to look after their landholdings, the Priory set up a daughter house at Newton Longville where the parish church is dedicated to St Faith, a late third-century martyr from Conques whose cult spread to England along the pilgrimage routes. Yet another saint whose cult spread along pilgrimage routes was St Giles who has several churches dedicated to him in Buckinghamshire.

A very popular place of pilgrimage in the fourteenth century was the shrine of John Schorne at North Marston. He discovered a healing well and performed many healing miracles. Although he was never canonised, he was regarded by many as a saint. The shrine became so popular that in the fifteenth century the Bishop of Salisbury obtained permission from the Pope to move the shrine (and its lucrative income) to St George's Chapel, Windsor.

North Marston is one of a significant group of parishes in North Buckinghamshire which are dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The others are Beachampton, Leckhampstead, Lillingstone Lovell, Moulsoe, Turweston and Twyford. Bishop Kenneth Kirk, who was Bishop of Oxford from 1937 until his sudden death in 1954, wrote a book about church dedications in the Diocese of Oxford and argued that such a cluster of similar dedications must be indicative of pilgrimage routes converging from the south and southwest heading towards the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk, perhaps the most famous pilgrimage shrine in mediaeval England.

After the Reformation, the Church of England discouraged the veneration of saints, but retained their names for churches, particularly in towns where it was topographically necessary. Occasionally church dedications were lost or forgotten. Interest in church dedications revived in England in the 18th century.

Browne Willis, the Buckinghamshire antiquarian, sometime MP for Buckingham and founder member of the revived Society of Antiquaries, wrote numerous books about parliamentary and church history, and about his native Buckinghamshire. He catalogued churches throughout England and their dedications, although some of these appear to be conjectural. For example, he describes the church at Simpson as dedicated to St Nicholas whereas nowadays it is dedicated to St Thomas (although there is a modern stained glass window depicting St Nicholas and his miracles). He mentions a chapel at Gawcott dedicated to St Andrew, whereas the church built by the Reverend Thomas Scott is dedicated to Holy Trinity.

Browne Willis was himself responsible for a significant change of dedication at Fenny Stratford. He replaced the former chantry chapel dedicated to St Margaret and St Catherine with an entirely new church dedicated to St Martin. This was a memorial to his grandfather, the physician Dr Thomas Willis who lived in St Martin's Lane in the parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields and who died on St Martin's Day.

When Browne Willis died, he left money for a sermon to be preached on St Martin's Day and for the firing on that day and other significant occasions of the 'Fenny Poppers', six small cannons.

During the 19th century when new churches were built for expanding populations, dedications to the divinity, such as Christ Church and Holy Trinity, became more common. In the Twentieth century dedications such as Christ the Worker or St Francis became popular.

At the beginning, I mentioned that almost all churches had patron saints. There is, however, one church in Buckinghamshire without any dedication – Little Hampden.

Mary A L Saunders
Chairman, Inspection Committee



GRANT-AIDED CHURCHES 2022/2023

St Mary le Moor, Cadmore End

A plain country church with no aisle, an open timber porch and big tiled roof which requires repair. Repairs are also needed to the east and west gables and the bellcote.

The Trustees agreed a grant of £10,000 against a funding shortfall of £71,263.



St Michael and All Angels, Aston Clinton



Externally this church's chancel is early C14. The rest is Perpendicular and the interior much restored. The Trustees found suggested adaptations and improvements ineligible for a BHCT grant. Urgent works are needed to the roof and no funds are available to meet an expected £3,676 shortfall.

The Trustees agreed £1,000 towards these priority repairs.

St Mary the Virgin, Great Brickhill

Built of dark ironstone, St Mary's has a stuccoed central tower.

Repairs to the north, south and tower roofs have received support from the National Churches Trust and a grant from BHCT of £10,000.



St Mary, East Claydon

Extensively restored by Scott, the Trustees agreed a grant to St Mary's of £5,000 towards the cost of replacement of lead on the tower roof and damaged timbers.



St Nicholas, Little Horwood



Little Horwood St Nicholas has been much altered since the C13. It is of coursed rubble stone with the west tower including large ashlar blocks and was substantially restored in 1899 by J P St Aubyn. The Trustees noted that replacement of stolen lead roofs and repairs to the bellframe had been carried out recently. They agreed to offer £1,000 towards repair of damage to the walls and gable caused by masonry bees.

St Mary the Virgin, Mursley



Extensively restored in 1865/7 St Mary's is built of crumbly limestone. The quinquennial inspection called for repairs to roof tiling, and replacement of failed guttering, rainwater channels and glazing.

The Trustees offered £3,000 towards a funding shortfall of £49,000.

St Peter & St Paul, Newport Pagnell

South aisle buttress repairs are urgently needed as is demonstrated by the photograph. The site is very exposed and there is a public footpath adjacent to the south of the church.

The Trustees agreed a grant of £4,000 towards a shortfall of £71,000.



St Mary Magdalene, Flaunden



St Mary's is a compact plain structure of flint, with brick quoins and dressings and is thought to be the first church to be designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

The trust agreed a grant of £3,000 towards roofing and stonework.

St Peter and St Paul, Great Missenden

The Trustees agreed a grant of £6,000 to continue repairs to the stonework.



The **Buckinghamshire Historic Churches Trust** exists to help.

Churches are very expensive to repair and many of the most precious are in very small communities which cannot carry the whole burden of conservation and maintenance.

You can help, too, by an annual donation or by remembering the Trust in your will.

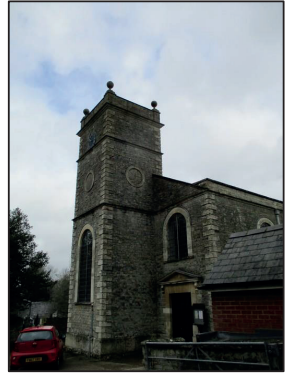
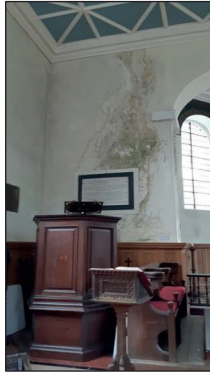
For more information see our website or contact our Secretary, whose address is on the inside front cover.

www.bucks-historic-churches.org

Holy Trinity, Gawcott

Designed in the classical Georgian style by the Rev Thomas Scott (father of George Gilbert Scott) and restored in 1894 by John Oldrid Scott, Holy Trinity Gawcott has been the subject of an ambitious programme of interior improvements which are ineligible for BHCT support.

The Trustees were, however, pleased to agree a grant of £3,000 to enable resurfacing of the east wall of the nave and the north wall of the chancel with lime plaster.



St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden



The trustees agreed a grant of £10,000 towards structural improvements in advance of a major reordering of the interior which is ineligible for a BHCT grant.

All Saints, Dagnall

A combined mission room and church day school, All Saints is built of red and buff bricks in broad bands.

The trustees agreed a grant of £2000 towards the cost of structural repairs.



St Mary, Ballinger



Ballinger St Mary was built as 'a school and lecture room for the poor' in 1873 by A E Watson of The Lee Manor who was also responsible for the construction of The Lee New Church.

It is a modest but attractive building of local brick and flint. The Trustees awarded a grant of £2000 towards the repointing of brickwork following removal of render (also supported by the Trust last year) and other minor repairs.

FUNDRAISING

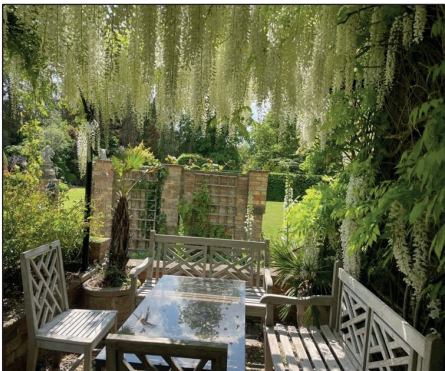


Our President, Countess Howe, with George Anson in his garden at Lilies.

Gardens near the Church

We were once again blessed with glorious sunshine for our third *Gardens near the Church* day on 21st June which drew some 179 visitors. Seven special but quite different private gardens were generously opened for the day together with six wonderful parish churches close to these gardens; Cublington, Dunton, Hardwick, Soulbury, Stewkley, and Wing. Light lunches were served to those who had prebooked and enjoyed either in or outside Wing church.

The day raised just short of £8,500 for the Trust and we are hugely grateful to all the garden owners for so willingly opening their gates for us. A wonderful day – thank you one and all.



Ride + Stride

Ride + Stride took place this year on a very hot Saturday in September and, although currently without a County Co-ordinator, Joanna Barclay continued to spare time to encourage participants in the various Deaneries to take part. We are most grateful to her. The result financially is not yet known, as the monies are still coming in, but it is an important fundraiser for the Trust and thank you to all who participated this year.

If anyone would be interested in helping to organise this annual national fundraising event, we would love to hear from them. Please contact, in the first instance, the Secretary to the Trust, whose email address can be found on the inside front cover.

Chequers

We have been given permission to hold a fundraising event at Chequers next summer which is a huge privilege and very exciting. This is likely to be an evening reception with tours of the house and garden. As yet the date is still to be confirmed but invitations will be issued in March and as tickets will definitely be limited, please apply as soon as possible to ensure your place. It will, I am sure, be a memorable evening not to be missed.

An Evening of Seasonal Music and Song

We are also planning to hold an evening reception in St Peter and St Paul Church, Great Missenden in late November or early December 2024 incorporating seasonal music and song with, of course, our renowned home-made canapes! This event will be advertised on the website as soon as dates and performers are confirmed.



My sincere thanks to all members of the Appeal Committee and indeed everyone who supports our events.

Caroline Abel Smith
Chairman, Appeal Committee

FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

The Trust's Report for 2022 was completed before the final Friends' event of the year - our Annual Lecture in November, when the Trust's Chairman, Sir David Lidington, spoke on *Secrets of the House of Commons* at St Mary's, Princes Risborough. We knew this would be a popular talk – in fact its popularity well exceeded our expectations. It was both fascinating and entertaining and attracted lots of good questions, as well as raising a good sum for the Trust. The only sad thing was failure of the streaming/recording, which was beyond our control.

In mid-May we arranged our first Friends' London visit since November 2019, a visit to the Charterhouse London, which really is one of London's secret gems. On a perfect Spring Day some 40 Friends and friends of Friends gathered outside the imposing gates in Charterhouse Square at the beginning of an excellent tour in two groups. The Charterhouse is just outside the City of London boundary and was originally a monastery which somehow escaped total destruction during the dissolution of the monasteries, and became one of the very few surviving Tudor houses in London.

In the early 17th century it was bought by Thomas Sutton, one of the richest men in England at that time. On his death, not all that many years later, he bequeathed the site to a trust for the establishment of a school (Charterhouse School which left the site in the late 19th century when it relocated to Godalming), a very lovely and unusual chapel, and what was known then as a hospital, i.e. an almshouse, for 40 Brothers (now open to women as well as men). Nowadays there is also rented accommodation and an infirmary. We have all, I think, seen bits of the Charterhouse on TV or in films, not least its cobbled streets and its huge Hall complete with enormous fireplace. It is a wonderful place to visit – for further information see <https://thecharterhouse.org/>.



Our Annual Crawl was held on what turned out to be a perfect day in late August when we visited first St Mary Magdalene, Latimer and then St Mary Magdalene, Flaunden, with an excellent pub lunch at the Green Dragon in Flaunden in between. Once more the crawl was expertly led by Liz Chalmers.



These two C19th churches, one, Flaunden, designed for his Uncle the Rev Samuel King by Sir George Gilbert Scott – his very first church – and the other substantially redesigned by him, are fascinating, indeed stunning, and beautifully kept.

It was a wonderful Gilbert Scott fest, and proof if proof be needed that he was indeed a great architect.

Our thanks as ever to the two churches for making our visits possible, and in particular for the great welcome they gave us.

Our last event of the year will be our Annual Lecture in November, a talk by the medieval historian John McNeill at St Mary's, Princes Risborough on the intriguing subject of things to look out for on entering a church. St Mary's is again providing facilities to allow us to stream the lecture and I am sure there will be no IT glitch this year!



The Friends have three aims - to raise awareness of the Trust; to involve more people in the Trust's activities; and to raise funds for the Trust. In 2022 we were able to donate £5,500 to the Trust.

As ever I must thank all our Friends for all their support and generosity this year. We continue to attract new Friends (more always welcome – see <https://www.bucks-historic-churches.org/friends/> for further details).

This year we signed up our very first church in our new corporate membership category, and we hope that more churches who have benefitted from Trust grants will follow their example. Other organisations are also welcome. And it costs only £30 a year.

Marilynne A Morgan CB
Trustee and Chairman of the Friends

The Trust's Income and Expenditure 2022-2023

Incoming Resources			Expenditure		
	2022/23	2021/22		2022/23	2021/22
From Donors					
Gift Aided subscriptions	£162	£591	Main Grants	£52,000	£24,500
Annual subs/donations	£2,105	£555	Roof Alarm Grants	£1,000	£500
Friends of Buckinghamshire Churches	£6,043	£6,059	Allchurches Trust Grants	£5,000	£2,493
Grants/donations from PCCs	£3,560	£3,465	Allchurches Return of Funds	£35,748	
Legacy Income	£2,000	£2,000	Annual report	£442	£466
			Printing / stationery / postage etc	£305	£125
	£13,870	£12,670			
Ride & Stride less expenses	£14,168 £-3,490 £10,678	£12,921 £-1,913 £11,008	Travel expenses	£0	£0
Summer Reception & other events less expenses	£9,310 £-310 £9,000	£8,466 £-371 £8,095	Insurance	£345	£345
Golden Jubilee Book Sales	£10	£0	Bank service charges	£310	£366
Investment Income			Administration fees	£1,143	£815
Dividends	£31,677	£32,050	Web site expenses	£801	£3,851
Interest on investments	£800	£29	Other expenses	£0	£0
Bank interest	£96	£8			
Other Income					
Misc. Income	£0	£200			
Restricted Fund Allchurches Trust	£0	£0			
Grants Written Back	£7,000	£0			
Total incoming resources	£73,131	£64,060	Total expenditure	£97,094	£33,461

Ride + Stride



About to head off from All Saints Church, Buckland on their electric bikes.



A group from St Mary Magdelene Church, Latimer, who walked between the Churches in their benefice.