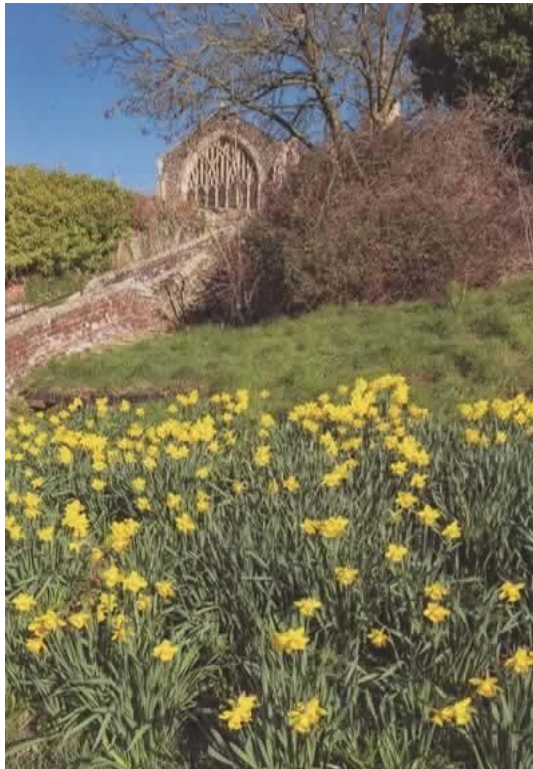




SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER



Beccles, St Michael's

Suffolk Historic Churches Trust

Registered Charity No. 267047

Brinkleys, Hall Street, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9JR

Telephone: 01787 883884

email: shct@btconnect.com

Website: www.shct.org.uk

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**As always, this Newsletter is also available on the Trust website
under the "Latest Newsletters" tab**

Front cover photo courtesy of The Friends of St Michael's Church, Beccles

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

They say that as you get older the years whiz by ever faster and it feels like only yesterday that the Trustees had an Away Day in 2021 to start planning how we should best mark the 50th Anniversary in 2023. And how best to celebrate the achievements of the giants on whose shoulders we stand, who ensured that the charity not only survived but established itself with a reputation as the most innovative County Church Trust in the UK – inventor of the bike ride, champion of what became the listed Places of Worship VAT exemption Scheme and much more besides. All as is fitting for a county with such a glorious heritage of 500 mediaeval churches. And in so doing to make sure we also recognised the wonderful people in PCC's up & down Suffolk who year in year out love & cherish their buildings.

Well, our anniversary year has gone off to a cracking start. In January we had double page features in Suffolk Magazine and in Suffolk and Norfolk Life magazine. February saw the announcement that under the Jubilee grants scheme which we advertised in 2022 we were going to grant aid no less than 51 churches with the total sum of £150,000; readers may remember that we set out to celebrate the Queens Jubilee with a special £70,000 fund targeted at small projects for repairs like church gates, hatchments, minor organ repairs and the like. To begin with applications were light but as closing date loomed there was a sudden rush and the expected 40 applications became nearly 160. Fortunately thanks to a lot of hard work by the organisers last years' Ride and Stride and Pedal & Drive brought in over £180,000 and together with the unexpected receipt of two wonderful legacies the Trustees felt able to more than double the Jubilee fund to meet that demand. March followed with an exceptionally successful Winter Study Day where over 70 Friends were treated to a wonderful review of the history of our great Trust by Howard Stephens, a dramatically presented insight into the Victorian era in both building and restoring churches by Vice President Canon Roy Tricker, and finally a tour de force on every aspect of the decoration of the mediaeval church in his inimitable style by another of our eminent Vice Presidents Clive Paine. A trio of talks no one who was there will ever forget.

And we intend to keep up the pace through our Anniversary year. We will raise awareness of our work talking about the Trust at every Deanery and mounting a big Garden party to draw in new supporters. We plan to stage a record-breaking bike ride and to then cap the year with a great multi denominational Service of Thanksgiving in the Cathedral on September 17th when we will endeavour to have representation from every church and chapel in Suffolk.

We will also plan to start two projects that will live on long after our Anniversary year - one relating to the promotion of Friends of Churches groups and the second involving assembling & making accessible the Church Guides to every church in Suffolk.

Lastly, I would ask you to read the little article on Legacies below. Our Friends & supporters who above all love our glorious heritage of churches and chapels well understand the challenge which the next generation will face looking after these churches. Hopefully many of you would like to mark the 50th anniversary of Trust by leaving a Legacy or making a gift of a multiple of £50 either to your own lovely church or to the SHCT itself.

Hopefully I will see you at one of our 50th Anniversary events.

Geoffrey Probert

DIANA HUNT

Suffolk Historic Churches Trust has been close to Diana's heart for more than forty years. Her involvement with the Trust began in about 1982, first as a Bike Ride organiser and then as a member of the Trust's Bike Ride Committee of which she became chairman in 1987. From 1990 Diana was a member and then chairman of the Trust's Executive Committee. In 1997 she became a Trustee and Chairman of the Advisory Committee, successor to the Executive Committee.

Along the way Diana accepted an invitation to be a member of the Grants Committee of the National Churches Trust. She became involved in the development of the successful NCT/County Trusts Partnership Grants Scheme which ran from 2011 to 2018. For a short period she was chairman of the SHCT Grants Committee. When Celia Stevens succeeded her as committee chairman in 2009 Diana stayed on as a member and keeper of the minutes. She attended her last Grants Committee meeting in October 2022. She felt quite keenly that the limit of £10,000 which applied to a single grant was too low and she championed the doubling of the figure to £20,000, the current maximum when circumstances allow.

Between 2014-2023 Diana has been involved in organising the Trust's Study and Field days.

In 2013 Diana accepted an invitation to become President of the Trust, a position she held until she stood down at the end of 2022. As President she has been no remote figure. She has seldom been absent from meetings of the Trustees and the Grants Committee where she was listened to with great respect.

In addition to the above, Diana has carried out much practical work which has included interviewing prospective trustees and committee members, helping with fund raising seminars and providing coffee and biscuits at our meetings.

The Trust owes Diana a huge debt of gratitude. Although she has formally relinquished her many roles we all hope that she will continue to contribute to the Trust's success for many years to come.

John Devaux

GRANTS COMMITTEE

It has been said that the past year has been a great time to be chair of Grants.

Jubilee Grants

More than fifty applications were received from across the county for a wide range of projects. Examples included a lectern, a wheelchair ramp, a memorial bench, restoration of hatchments, a new flagpole, and repair of clocks, organs and windows. The sums claimed ranged from £500 to £5000. The original budget for the awards was £70,000. In the event some fifty-one grants totalling £152,000 were made.

Special thanks to Rachel Sloane, the Trust's Hon Publicity Officer, for spearheading the publicity campaign which resulted in so many applications. Nicholas Pearson, Chairman of the Finance Committee, who had so much enthusiasm for the project and who ensured that sufficient funds could be made available for meaningful awards to be made to fifty-one applicants. Adrian August, Secretary of the Grants Committee. In January 2023, in addition to dealing with the ten main applications, Adrian processed more than fifty Jubilee applications in the course of which he created (i) an eighteen-page illustrated "brochure", and (ii) a user-friendly schedule which explained to the Grants Committee members all they needed to know when considering whether an application was eligible and, if so, what sum could be awarded.

Main Grants

During the period April 2022 – March 2023 the Grants Committee's quarterly budget for its main grants has been £35,000. In April 2022 4 grants were made totalling £10,750; in July 10 grants: £50,050; in October 8 grants: £44,900; in January 2023 10 grants: £60,000. The total for year 2022/3 was **£165,700** – a record. This was possible as funds had been carried over from the year 2021-2.

For 2023-24 the quarterly budget has been increased to £37,500.

In Summary

Grants made during the year 2022-23 -

Main £165,700

Jubilee £152,000

Total £317,700

John Devaux
Chairman Grants Committee

WINTER STUDY DAY

Fifty Years of the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust

The Trust's Winter Study Day 2023 was held at Haughley Park, with thanks to Robert Williams and his team, on Saturday 4th March. A good turnout of 70 Friends of the Trust assembled for coffee and to listen to the three presentations of the day. This started with Howard Stephens giving a summary of how the Trust came into being, some of the challenges and hurdles it has overcome and a glimpse into the future.

By the early 1970s a number of our ancient churches had fallen into ruin and had long been disused. The churches of the County faced several problems: not enough clergy - fewer men were being ordained and no women and that stage; furthermore, those who were being ordained were generally older and would have a shorter period of active service. Fewer clergy meant that the threat of more redundant churches was very real.

The buildings were not getting any younger and building costs were always on the rise. With the introduction of the quinquennial inspection, more problems were being exposed but the resources were woefully inadequate to help maintain the buildings. State aid was still some years away (it eventually came through the Department of the environment and English Heritage in 1978). The overall effect was that there was greater pressure to make more churches redundant – in 1971 six churches had been earmarked for redundancy and demolition or disposal.

His Grace, the Duke of Grafton was President of the Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) and, fortuitously, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (HCPT), the forerunner of the National Churches Trust. In his annual address to the SPS the Duke spoke of the urgent need to do something about preserving the incomparable heritage of Suffolk's Churches. The Reverend John Fitch, then Rector of Brandon and Santon Downham, took up the challenge and produced a paper setting out a policy for conservation and identifying those churches most at risk. With encouragement from Norman Scarfe, the paper was published by SPS.

In 1972, HCPT was celebrating its 20th anniversary and mounted an exhibition in the Chapter House of Westminster Cathedral. The Duke then persuaded HCPT to move the exhibition to Bury St Edmunds and later to Framlingham and to give the exhibition a Suffolk flavour. It was a great success, arousing much interest and support and the result was the formation of a committee to set up Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. A Trust deed was drawn up and the Trust formed in 1973, with a grand formal launch later in the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, by Lord Kenneth Clark.

Of course, the key issue was the raising of funds for distribution to churches in need. The first few years were difficult but with the start of the annual Bike Ride in 1982, fundraising raised some 30% of the Trust's income; a major appeal for our Churches in Danger was launched and this also made a very welcome addition to the income, as did substantial grants from Local Authorities. As funds were accumulated, and in the days of high interest rates and good returns on the Stock Market, by 1990, investments were making a welcome 20% contribution. The picture remained reasonably constant for the next 10 years, with Friends of the Trust also making an important contribution.

By 2000 contributions from Landfill Tax rebates were significant, but local authorities were finding budgets tight, and their contribution was fading away. Individual churches benefitted from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme, whereby they could claim back from DCMS to cover the cost of the VAT on their repairs. A few years later, as landfill sites started to close and interest rates fell the importance of the Bike Ride was greater than ever. In spite of all the ups and downs, over the 50 years of the Trust an average of over £135,000 a year has been granted to Suffolk Churches of all denominations.

Many people have helped the Trust along the way, from The Duke of Grafton and the initial Board of Trustees. Alfred Williams, Jill Ganzoni, Hester Agate, Ivan Howlett, Frances Parkinson, Joy Rowe and so many others, including a good number of husband and wife teams. Without such dedication it is difficult

to see how the Trust could have been such a success. None less than the other speakers of today, Clive Paine and Roy Tricker.

The Trust still faces enormous challenges with prices of materials and scaffolding always on the rise and the spate of lead theft in recent years. But here the Trust took the initiative and organised an appeal to raise over £100,000 so that roof alarms could be funded by the Trust for those churches with lead rooves. Of course English Heritage succeeded by Heritage Lottery Fund also made a large impact and many Suffolk Churches have received generous grants.

There was then a short case study of the repairs at Hargrave, where the east wall on the chancel was in imminent danger of collapse but with help from the Trust and the determination of one man, supported by his local community, the necessary funds were raised and the repairs completed, all within 2 years.

Looking to the future, the challenges facing the trust are as great as ever. Ever fewer clergy, ever increasing costs and an ageing population making it difficult to find volunteers, are some of the immediate problems. Who will hold the knowledge in the future? How can the Trust raise greater funds? How can the Trust engage more with the young?

In the interval between speakers the Chairman of the Trust explained what the Trust was doing to celebrate its 50th anniversary and some of the ideas already in hand to meet the challenges that had been outlined, as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter.

19th Century Church Building and Restoration in Suffolk

The second presentation of the day was given by Roy Tricker who wanted to explain how he had become a convert and a fan of the Victorian influence on Suffolk's churches. He talked of box pews and pulpits and the interface between them. In some cases the pulpit had been moved to the centre of the aisle, by the chancel steps; in other cases to a position halfway down the nave and against, perhaps the north wall or arcade, but ultimately ending up where it is usually seen today in the north east corner of the nave.

In many cases the exterior of the church had also been extensively changed, with roof lines altered, earlier decoration being removed or built over and porches being added or enlarged. Back inside the church there had been debate, indeed, argument about the altar table itself, which the church hierarchy wanted to remain clear of ornamentation. This had been overcome in some instances by the introduction of a reredos giving the appearance that, perhaps a cross was actually standing on the altar, but it was in fact, simply a part of the structure of the east wall.

Often the Victorian architects had drawn on traditional early styles with lancet style windows, sometimes grouped into windows with many lights. Inside there were also examples of magnificent and flamboyant decoration, the designers using their skill to overcome possible objections from the establishment. Some of the new builds in the Victorian period were completed with the economical use of materials and so many were built in simple red brick, but still managed to be spectacular buildings featuring so many of the characteristics of the traditional churches. A particularly outstanding 19th century church is Higham St. Stephen by Sir George Gilbert Scott which the SHCT Friends visited during the 2011 Field Day.

The presentation was beautifully illustrated with many photographs and drawings from Roy's own collection, all of which served to underline the point he was making: that the Victorians had made a significant contribution to preserving our churches and bringing them to a good state of repair, often much more discretely than is generally thought and Roy hoped that he had managed to put across at least some of his enthusiasm and love of the Victorian era. He certainly had succeeded!



Higham, St Stephen

Furnishing and Decorating the Medieval Church

After a welcome, warming lunch, Clive Paine took us back to medieval days, to talk about how our churches were furnished and decorated five or six hundred years ago. The first section of the talk was on rooves and Clive described some of the amazing designs in the County, with canopies of honour, arch-bracing, hammer beams and the wonderful decoration over our heads. Some relatively plain such as at Blythburgh, some flamboyant and colourful such as at Palgrave and Southwold. Of course, many were of angels or figures with musical instruments or books, but there were also examples of humour carefully included and needing an alert pair of eyes to see and understand. There was also a scene from the chancel roof at Gazeley (of which more later) with Noah using an adze to build his ark.

The next section was on figures and niches. It was fascinating to look at some ancient niches, both within and outside, from which the figures had been removed long ago, but the outline of which could still be traced. Clive gave a range of examples from around the County. We then moved on to look at Stained glass, with some splendid illustrations. Particularly striking were the window at Long Melford, with the Pieta and another at Gazeley, where the window had been rebuilt using fragments of the original glass and showing in the centre what was clearly part of another pieta. There was also the vivid Archangel at Ufford, and, again at Gazeley four lights above the east window representing St Edmund, St Faith and St Apollonia and a symbol of the Trinity.

Next, we were taken to the medieval world of wall-painting, starting with the musicians at Barrow and St Edmunds wheel at Thornham Parva. Many of the paintings have now faded, many bear the signs of several separate generations of paintings, one over another, and it needed an expert like Clive to point out what was visible but not necessarily understood. Popular themes had been St George and the dragon the tree of life, the seven deadly sins and St Christopher, invariably over the north door so as to be the first thing one saw entering the church, thankful for safe passage. St Edmund featured in some of the more gruesome paintings. Many such paintings have long since been covered but others, such as at Troston or the Doom at Wenhaston have been wonderfully restored.

Clive went on to describe various styles of font and in particular the seven-sacrament fonts showing baptism (both by affusion and by immersion), penance, ordination, extreme unction, matrimony, confirmation and mass, all illustrated with some excellent close-up photographs. Next, to woodwork with a look at some fascinating bench ends such as the sciapod at Dennington, thought to be unique in the county, until recently another has been found in the chancel roof at

Gazeley. (Clive also showed a picture of Kate Bush in sciapod pose!) As with the roof decorations, there was often a display of humour.

Easily missed beneath our feet there are also many beautiful tiles which decorate the floors, especially in the chancels and we saw examples of patterns and runs of tiles making up a larger design and some individual tiles with the most delicate work. We looked briefly at pulpits and lecterns, some ornate, some very plain and ending with the pre-reformation brass eagle lectern at Woolpit. Still on the theme of woodwork we also looked at some splendid doors and their intricate decoration and carving. On the exterior of the churches there were many examples of exquisite flush work, most showing a religious theme but some bearing the mark of the maker, mason, patron or donor. A common feature of many Suffolk churches is the work of Master Mason Hawes of Occold and his workshop; we saw examples of the over-lapping wings of angels, characteristic lion drip-stones and miniature shields complete with hanging cords.



Wingfield, Hawes Arcade

Clive could not resist showing us a few more pictures of his beloved St Mary's in Bury and he had brought with him the famous 'star' from the Barrett Chantry. We were then taken back to Gazeley to look at the amazing chancel roof, so high that it seems to have gone almost unnoticed until a visitor from New Zealand took some wonderful pictures which are now the subject of a booklet available from the church. The examples included a short series showing St John the Baptist with a lamb, Salome, Herod and the head of John the Baptist on a plate. As so often, there is also humour with a man caught with his trousers down and another clearly needing a loo!

It was a long, but fascinating day and our thanks go to all our speakers for making it so interesting and informative.

Celia Stephens

REMEMBERING KIT BIRD



It was in November 1995 that Kit Bird took over as Secretary to the Trust. His background was one of distinguished service as a civil servant in various departments both in and out of England. His well-honed administrative skills and

natural diplomacy made him a successful Secretary who helped to implement developments within the Trust designed to ensure that it remained a practical champion for the churches and chapels of Suffolk.

Until 1995 (apart from the very early days when the Trust shared an office with the Suffolk Preservation Society in Lavenham) the Trust had no address save that of the incumbent Secretary. With Kit's appointment came the opening of the office at Brinkleys in Long Melford. Two modest rooms let at a very reasonable rate meant that at last the Trust had an administrative home and space to house its growing archive. Under Kit's guidance Trust stationery and literature adopted a new and co-ordinated look and the scope of Newsletter was widened to include articles encouraging those who cared for churches and chapels.

When the Duke of Grafton retired after 23 years as Chairman of Trustees in 1996 the Lord Tollemache took over. Committees were rationalised in order to assure compliance with the latest Charities Act and an assistant Secretary was appointed to assist Kit with administration. And there was a lot of administration as the Trust became very busy. In May 1997 a Funds for Fabric Workshop was so successful that another one was arranged for February 1998. A wide range of expertise was on display and Parishes were able to question the experts and find encouragement for the daunting tasks that faced them. There was a very successful Golf Day in 1998, soon followed by a talk from Simon Jenkins when he published England's 1000 best churches and a Glitter and Jewels evening at Helmingham Hall. All these events, and many others, were designed to raise awareness of the Trust as well as money. At that time too the Trust had an Exhibitions Officer, Margaret Steavenson, who travelled round the county to events such as the Suffolk Show, Heveningham Country Fair, Woodbridge Tide Mill and local Schools informing people of the work of the Trust. It was a busy and successful time thanks to the hard work of Kit and his team.

It was during Kit's tenure that the grants made to the Trust from the District and County Councils began to decline as did the money from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. However, Gift Aid was introduced in 2000 and the Bike Ride continued to raise substantial funds each year. There were some wonderful surprises too including an anonymous gift of £25,000 given to the Grants Committee on the condition that it was all spent as soon as possible!

One of Kit's final tasks with the Trust, after 7 very busy years, was to organise a workshop at Haughley in March 2002 for 70 parish representatives to explore fund raising ideas for places of worship needing to carry out work in order to be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act which would become effective in October 2004. Lady Euston spearheaded the event with Kit providing the administrative support.

They were busy and productive years. Kit was a pleasure to work with. We missed him when he retired but as he said at the time "It's Spring, and my bees are busy on the blackthorn and the old boat is crying out to be on the water and the family need a bit more attention than they are getting".

I know he had a happy retirement and he and Cara moved to Sussex quite recently. I hope his bees went too! Suffolk churches and chapels and of course, the Trust have reason to be very grateful to him. As for a boat, you can see from the photograph that he enjoyed being on the water and this picture shows him at Dunkirk in 2005 on board Ferry Nymph one of the extraordinary and much-loved Dunkirk Little Ships: rather appropriate you may think. We shall not forget him.

Diana Hunt

MY MEMORIES OF EARLY DAYS OF SUFFOLK HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

by County Councillor Joanna Spicer, MBE, DL

I attended my first meeting as new Trust Publicity officer in December 1980 - making 42 years now of supporting the Trust in some way. I am not sure what year I also became a trustee as we operated an "executive committee" model for many years.

My first job (Stephen Ryder was chairman then) was doing all the publicity, printing and the guide for the Flower Festival held at the Jockey Club in 1981. I then did a series on churches in the East Anglian Daily Times, wrote some leaflets and did all the publicity and printing for the first 5 or 6 years of the Bike Ride.

For the first Bike Ride in 1982 I joined Julia Henniker and Judith Fforde who were the joint chairmen and also with Hester Agate, Monica Philbrick and Frances Parkinson. We met in each other's houses and I often had my toddler with me. The first concept was for a "route" around designated churches such as Stowmarket Churches had organised earlier. Suddenly there was a "lightbulb" moment when we all said

"Why have a fixed route ,,, , Why not any route to any church ?".

Although we were clear it was to be places of any denomination, we still referred to the "deaneries"! Identifying the deanery (area) organisers was shared between us and the original 20 were marvellous at recruiting the parish organisers. In our Area (the Ixworth Deanery) we still have 5 parish organisers from the original group of about 30.

We needed a “brand” for the publicity material which was all being printed at Thurston Station by Drecroft. (For several years after they did the Bike Ride printing for other counties as well as Suffolk.) I am amused, and indeed a little proud, looking at printed material today how little has changed from my original design and text. I chose a “gold” colour for the posters and sponsorship forms which has stood the test of time as has the pale green for the instructions for parish organisers.

Many of you will remember the original “logo”. Our babysitter then was Hilary Ruck who lived in Pakenham. She was doing art “A” level at the time and as we left one evening I challenged her to come up with ideas. She drew the cycling Bishop, the teenager and the young lady that featured in our publicity for many years.

We launched the first Bike Ride in Ipswich – with our patron (The Duke of Grafton) together with the Bishop (then John Waine) and the group cycling downhill from the Bishop’s House in Park Road. I handed out press releases and we were on television as well as the ever-supportive East Anglian Daily Times.

That first Bike Ride made over £55,000. To my everlasting shame at our “wash up” meeting I suggested we should not risk a repeat of something so successful. What a relief I was overruled by all the others!

In 1983 Norfolk joined in and I organised a joint launch on the county border at Homersfield Church. I took part with my two-year-old daughter in her bonnet on the back of my bike. Other launches I remember organising were at Maldon jointly with Essex in 1985, one at St Mary’s in Bury St Edmunds and another at Wetherden with our VIPs on an eight-seater bicycle.

It seems incredible to me that all of this complicated organisation was achieved before mobile telephones or email. I was asked what I remember of the first bike ride? I do remember being exhausted after cycling to just 8 churches, but now despite being 40 years older I can manage up to 20 in a day!

I think I stood down as a trustee in the early 1990s after I was elected to Suffolk County Council. Then Christopher (my husband) became more involved. He was Bike Ride Chairman for Suffolk for 6 years and then I much enjoyed supporting him during the ten years he organised the Study days and preparing picnics and the tea for the summer Field days. Christopher is still a Trustee and member of SHCT Grant’s Committee

Now once a year Christopher and I give a little party, as we have done for the last 40 years, for the organisers of the 30 villages in the Ixworth area. We give them their envelopes of printed material and talk about the importance of getting up the posters, finding new participants, safety and of course the importance of Gift Aid! We salute them and all those across Suffolk that have cycled and walked to raise more than £5 million for our churches and Chapels with 41 annual events.



The launch of the first Bike Ride in 1982 by the Duke of Grafton and the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

RIDE AND STRIDE – 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

Last year presented a different challenge, not lockdown, but the sad loss of Her Majesty the Queen, whose mourning period coincided with our Ride & Stride Day on 10th September. After much deliberation and thought, it was decided that the event should go ahead. It was very much in the spirit of the time and it presented an opportunity for churches to open and allow people to pay their respects and sign a book of condolences at the same time as participating in a county event. The Trust proved to be right in their judgement, and the Day was a considerable success. There were sadly, churches that did not participate and remained closed, and some were unmanned.

However, the response was a great achievement of £180,000, down marginally from 2021, but nonetheless, a fantastic result. Gift Aid again was on the increase, and the Classic Car Rally, again increased both it's popularity, and it's contribution.

2023 is another year of huge expectation and challenge. In the 50th anniversary of the Trust, we are full of ambition and energy to make it a year to remember. We are hugely appreciative of the effort the organisation demands on the day, and the volunteers that make this Day such a success. Manning the churches is a big ask and we hope as many of you will be there to help and greet the cyclists, walkers, and drivers. Where there are problems with manning, please facilitate

with a table and a facility for signature. Please keep your churches open if possible. We all love to make the visit a proper visit, and to be able to admire what is inside as well as outside.

Spring feels like it is at last in the air, and we look forward to seeing you over the coming year and to a day to remember in September.

Simon Ronan Ride & Stride Committee Chairman.

USING TECHNOLOGY ON YOUR RIDE AND STRIDE ADVENTURE.... By Greg
Spray, SHCT Woodbridge Area Organiser

To start with I am not a technical or software expert, I just use some technology to help me enjoy cycling and outdoor activities to the full.

Mapping the churches

There are a number of tools that could be used depending on the detail required.

I am going to map all the churches in my area (Woodbridge #7). Depending on how long this takes as I've 43, this could be an idea for the other AOs. I'm going to use Google Maps, via their MyMap function.

The Ordnance Survey app is an alternative to using Google Maps, but I've found that it is less intuitive to use.

Including a route

Another mapping option is the Ordnance Survey app. This is a chargeable map app, and it is possible and relatively easy to build your own map which can be printed or formatted as a GPX file, which can be uploaded onto a bike GPS system (e.g. Garmin Edge). You open the app, search for a location (perhaps home) and then tap on 'create a route'. You simply use your finger or mouse to track the route to each church or destination and then save the map. It can then be downloaded and uploaded onto a phone or iPad or GPS device as a GPX file. This would be ideal for both cyclists and walkers.

Planning a route

As mentioned above, Google Maps or the Ordnance Survey app are both options. One of the benefits of the OS app is that you get a contour cross-section showing how up and down the route may be and a very useful and rather conservative time projection. I use this very often. It can be saved and shared.

Paper maps are an obvious alternative - I'd use an OS maps 1:25000 scale known as an Explorer map.

Another way to create a local map is also app based and also requires a smart watch (e.g. Garmin VivoActive) and the Garmin Connect app. This is really useful if you want to pre-ride a route, for example around the local area. If you set the watch to record a bike ride, when you finish and stop the application, the route plus health measurements (calories burnt, heart rate, etc.) are recorded onto the Garmin Connect app, which will also show altitude, wind direction, speed, etc. - all the interesting stuff that gadget anoraks love! This data can be saved and even shared with friends.

STRAVA (www.STRAVA.com) is another very popular bike and running app which combined with a smart watch allows routes and activities to be recorded, saved and shared. I've never used STRAVA, so am unable to comment.

KOMOOT is another app-based mapping, planning and recording system. It requires a subscription and relies on previous members' activities and algorithms based on your location and interests. I used this when I explored the Outer Hebrides last summer.

Using a GPX file via a GPS device provides directions, turnings, etc. So it's less easy to get lost.

Accurate location of a church (or any place, feature, or pub!)

Using '*what3words*' is an excellent method for a church to provide a precise location for visitors, emergency services, etc. This is accurate to 3 metres and more accurate than a postcode and easier to create than an OS 6-digit map reference. Using the *what3words* app, just stand in front of the church's door or gate, and the app will provide a random unique 3-word code. This is unique to that location. My local church in Snape used *what3words* as its emergency locator when we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee this year in case we needed urgent assistance at the venue.

I would recommend that all churches and place of worship find their *what3words* reference and include this in their address and "in case of emergency" information. The emergency services now use *what3words* as their preferred locator system.

Using a GoPro

I also record routes and rides using a GoPro attached to my cycle helmet, and then share these with friends. This is particularly useful when trying to sell the idea of doing the event or joining me. My 2022 *Ride & Stride* route was one I did

with my wife who hadn't ridden any longish distances for 30+ years. She has a new e-bike and asked if she could accompany me. We rode to all the churches in the Alde River Benefice (plus one other). We filmed the journey with the encouraging (?!) soundtrack and have now shared with members of the benefice and others.

I hope that you will find my input useful. As I stated at the beginning, I am not a technical or IT expert, and just a user of technology that I find useful. I certainly would not cycle without my iPhone's tracking turned on, nor without my GoPro or Garmin smart watch. I still get lost at times but having the technology to hand is both a comfort and great help.

If you have any questions, please contact me. gregspray5@gmail.com

CHURCH PHOTO COMPETITIONS:

On our big fundraising day in September we have two photo competitions. The first one is for walkers and cyclists, as many people taking part in Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride Day like to take photos and, for three years now, we have had a competition for a set of photos, which we can also use in our publicity. Entry is free, but we ask that you are sponsored by family and friends on your journey.

The prize is a £75 voucher, for the best set of photos, and £25 voucher for the best individual photo. (They may be taken by the same person of course!) The prizes are kindly sponsored by a supporter.

Last year the six photos to be taken on Ride and Stride Day were of:

1. A church or chapel door
2. A memorial plate, plaque or gravestone
3. A non-conformist church (ie, not Church of England but Methodist, Baptist, Unitarian Meeting House, etc)
4. A church window.
5. A free choice... whatever you wish to mark about your day.
6. A selfie of you celebrating outside a church when you complete your journey. (Cheers, waves and excitement are encouraged!)

Please note the submitted photos may be used for publicity for the Trust, encouraging others to support our work, and the photographer will be credited when any are used. Some of our past winners have also been interviewed on BBC Radio Suffolk!

Last year our winners were John Barable (aged 13) from Belchamp St. Paul, Sudbury and the best individual photo, was taken by Derek Worrall from Ipswich with his view of the inside of St Andrew's Church in Felixstowe.

John was taking part again in the fundraising event that he last did when younger, and his sponsor money will be divided between Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and Clare Baptist Church. In one day, he cycled between 11 churches (44km by bike), accompanied by his father Phil. Perhaps you have a teenager in the family who would be inspired to take part if he or she were taking some photos for the competition? All ages are welcome to compete.

A decision will be made nearer to September on the photo's required this year but will be of just four rather than six! Look for details on our website and on social media.

The second photo competition is for drivers of cars in the Pedal & Drive Car Rally. A bottle of champagne goes to the best photo that combines car, church and cyclists/walkers! Again, the photos are used (with credit) in our publicity.

The Ride and Stride set of photos are judged by an independent judge, professional artist Larry Jackaman. She has some tips of how to get the best photos:

Clean lens - the tiniest speck of dust or smudge on your lens will show up on your photograph. It's something that comes second nature when using cameras but often forgotten when using a mobile phone.

Self-timer - this is a handy feature to include yourself into group shots and great to ensure no blur which can be caused by pressing the button or an unsteady hand.

Rule of Thirds - I prefer to call it a 'theory of thirds', this is where you position your subject or horizon off-centre rather than in the middle of the frame. Most cameras and mobile phones have a grid of 9 boxes for this use. Try photographing the same subject at different points on the grid to see how the composition changes.

Framing - framing a subject can emphasis your focal point and helps with composition; eg if you're outside, use items to create a frame such as trees or buildings and, for a view from a window or door way, include its frame.

Sun light - check the direction of the sun, look at where the shadows lay, these can add to your final shot or detract from an element you are wanting to focus on. It can also be used to create fab silhouettes but remember direct sunlight can bleach your image too.

Angles/viewpoint - Try different angles by taking a shot from a lower or higher viewpoint, looking up, down, or even at 45 degrees.

Reflections - in water, glass (windows) and mirrors can add interest.

Most important tip 'Experiment and have fun!'

THE SUFFOLK WALKING FESTIVAL FOR SUFFOLK HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

May is the month to discover more walks in Suffolk as it is when the Suffolk Walking Festival is held, and this year some guided walks are of special interest to church lovers.



2019 Challenge Walkers Day 4. Credit David Falk

Seventy walks are planned between 13 and 29th May in 2023 and each has a walk leader who can interpret the landscape, knows about the history of the area or has specialist knowledge for that walk.

“We have the launch on 13th May at the beautiful Thornham estate with five walks in one day,” David Falk the Festival Director explained. “The Henniker family have been there since the 1800’s so we have a walk about the history of the estate, two foraging ‘tasting walks’, nibbling food as we go, there is a night safari, and a walk from Thornham to Mellis Common, along Cow Pasture Lane, a 1000-year-old droving trail, coming back via the 14th century St Mary’s church, at Thornham Parva with its frescos.”

Simon Knott on his website Suffolk Churches says,

“You have to step inside to discover Thornham Parva church is one of the most remarkable small churches in East Anglia, a treasure house, an aesthetic

pleasure, a delight. ...A church that attracts visitors from all over the world. If it were in the Victoria and Albert Museum, we would willingly travel to London to see them and pay handsomely for doing so.”

There the walkers will see a depiction of the martyrdom of St Edmunds and learn more about the 14th century church.

There are two church-related walks for Rogation Day, when on 15th May a long-distance walk will leave St Edmundsbury Cathedral to follow the parish boundary of St Mary's with St Peter's. You can also join in with 'Beating the Bounds' for Rogation Day on 20th May with a challenging and varied walk following the boundaries of the ecclesiastical parishes of Exning with Landwade, St Agnes Exning and St Mary Newmarket.

Some of the 70 Festival walks are free and for some there is a small fee which go towards covering the cost of organising the Festival, and any specific expenses, such as transport or refreshments. Most of the marketing and all the ticket sales are now online and the advertised walks state the length, time it will take and level of difficulty.

More details will be on the walking festival website at <https://suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk/>

Ticket sales opened on 1st March 2023.



St Mary's, Thornham Parva (credit Simon Knott)

Rachel Sloane
Hon Publicity Officer

ROUND TOWER CHURCHES SOCIETY



Cranwich Church, Norfolk. First church to be funded 1974.
Photograph credit: Round Tower Churches Society

It was almost exactly 50 years ago that the Round Tower Churches Society was launched.

In the past half century, the Society has awarded grants to round tower churches in England (and one in Scotland) of almost £400,000. With a membership now at 500, the Society has just published a special golden jubilee edition guide to the country's round tower churches.

Starting the Society was to prove challenging. An attempt to form a Round Tower Society had failed in 1971, according to the founder, Bill Goode. Apparently, there was a lack of typists to duplicate a magazine.

In February 1973, retired television engineer Mr Goode made another attempt to start a Society at Lowestoft. However, through a combination of colds and 'flu, only three people attended. One of those present, Mr G H Peake undertook to get a magazine duplicated.

It was agreed to hold another meeting on March 2 when six potential members attended and four gave apologies. The Friends of Round Tower Churches was formed and with a committee and officers in place, it was agreed to open a bank account and apply to register as a charity.

At that meeting, the following were elected – chairman and secretary, Mr W J Goode; magazine editor, Mr G H Peake; project officers Mr J L B Todhunter and Mr B Tricker, questions and answers officer Mr B Harmer and Mr F Farman; postal clerks, Mr Farman and Mrs O Abbott.

The name of the Society was agreed - Friends of the Round Tower Churches Society with an annual subscription £1, vice-presidents £5. A few months later, it was decided to shorten the title and drop the word, Friends.

In October, membership had reached 44 and eight members joined the following month. The repair fund at November 10 stood at £23.

By December 1973, the treasurer Mr I Mitchell reported that the target for membership at the end of the Society's first year was 100 with a goal of raising £500 for a repair fund.

In the latest report to members, ahead of the Society's annual meeting on May 13, the chairman Stuart Bowell thanked members for the tremendous support over the years. Several large and generous legacies had made it possible for the Society to help dozens of churches.

Mr Bowell was looking to the latest summer tours – and details are on the Society's website. He added that many members have been generous when renewing annual subscriptions. Many, in fact, a majority topped up their subscriptions above the £20 minimum (or £30 for couples).

Others also send donations, which helped fund grants. In the past four years, the Society has given more than £60,000 to round tower churches.

He recalled that the Society's first grant in 1974 from the repair fund was £20 to Cranwich to help defray the cost of re-thatching.

He reported on further recent progress. The re-building at Beachamwell proceeds after the devastating fire a year ago and St Peter's, Fornsett, has received a key development phase grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We can only hope it will qualify for a final delivery grant of more than half a million pounds to restore this much-loved church – incidentally featured in the Society's logo. Work is proceeding at other churches including Geldeston and Tasburgh.

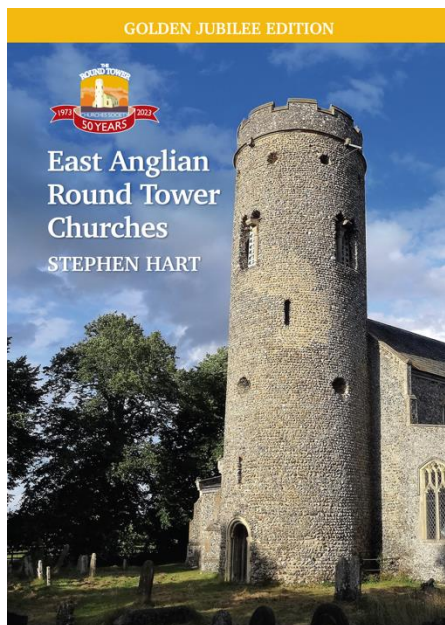
The annual meeting will be held at Gunton Church, near Lowestoft, on Saturday, May 13, 2pm. Our late founder, Mr Goode and his wife Ada were regular worshippers at St Peter's Church, where his ashes lie.

Copies of the 28-page booklet, East Anglian Round Tower Churches by Stephen Hart, cost £5. It lists all England's round towers. Apply online –

nickwiggin@hotmail.com Payment may be made online. The booklet is stocked at Norwich's City Books.

Details of how to join the Society– website www.roundtowers.org.uk

Michael Pollitt, vice-chairman, Round Tower Churches Society



*EA Round Tower Churches Guide
Photo credit: RTCS*



The late Bill Goode at Gunton church. Photo credit: RTCS

SHCT MEMBERSHIP BANKERS' ORDERS

As many of you will know we have had to change our bank from RBS to CAF Bank which has meant that standing orders for membership needed changing. We had hoped just to be able to use a different RBS account but that wasn't possible. Many of you have already received notification of this and have made the change to CAF – for which we are most grateful – but others have yet to do so. We apologise to anyone who has had to change their mandate twice.

The new account details are CAF bank online (SHCT general account) Sort Code 40-52-40 Account number 00035163.

Cheques payable to Suffolk Historic Churches Trust can still be sent to the office in Long Melford.

A new Bankers Order form is included with the newsletter as a flyer for those who need it. We apologise again for the inconvenience but your membership is hugely valuable in raising fund to enable us to pay out grants to our beautiful Suffolk churches.

Would you like to write a Chat?

Our fortnightly Churches and Chapels Chats proved very popular during the pandemic but then fell into abeyance. They have now been revived on a monthly basis.

Trustees and members of our Grants Committee have enjoyed preparing them. But we are sure that amongst our members and supporters there are scribes who would love to write one too. If you are one of them please drop a line to our Hon Secretary Jill Taylor on shctwebsite@gmail.com