

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



## ANNUAL REPORT 2022



**T**HE vast majority of our church buildings in Northamptonshire are still used primarily for religious worship – maintaining a function which has usually continued for centuries. They are among the most significant examples of a dwindling set of buildings in this country whose functions have continued over such a timespan, including ancient pubs, civic buildings, schools and Oxbridge colleges. But these buildings are even more than that: they are repositories of our community history, not just in terms of registers and memorials, but also by witnessing the life events of their congregations. As Stephen Meakins eloquently says in his Ride and Stride account later in this report: they are ‘the custodians of the emotions of successive generations’. Non-believer Philip Larkin recognised in his 1954 poem, Church Going, that a church is:

‘A serious house on serious earth ...  
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,  
Are recognised, and robed as destinies’,

a place consecrated not only by generations of worship, but also by the baptisms, weddings and funerals which have taken place there.

The Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust welcomes applications from all the church buildings in Northamptonshire – even those built in the twentieth century – a point reinforced in this report by articles by James Miller explaining how to apply for a grant, and by Andrew Presland examining our support for church buildings outside the Church of England. We exist to support the tireless work of churchwardens, PCCs and other supporters of all these special places to preserve them for the future.

**Eleanor Townsend** (*editor*)



## Supporting the Trust

Become a Friend - Leave a Legacy - Give practical help

# Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

Patron:	Her Late Majesty the Queen	
President:	James Saunders Watson Esq, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire	
Vice-Presidents:	The Rt Revd. Donald Allister, The Bishop of Peterborough; The Rt Revd. John Holbrook, The Bishop of Brixworth; David Laing Esq	
Trustees:	James Saunders Watson Esq, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire The Rt Revd. Donald Allister, The Bishop of Peterborough	
	Mrs Hilary Aslett	Bruce Bailey Esq
	John Barker Esq	Edwin Byland Esq
	Mrs Liz Doherty	Revd. Robert Farmer
	Dr Martin Gaskell	Mrs Val Hartley
	Ms Virginia Henley	The Rt Revd. John Holbrook
	David Laing Esq	Gareth Lugar-Mawson Esq
	James Miller Esq	Michael Moore Esq
	The Ven. Richard Ormston	Mrs Susan Parkinson
	Canon Andrew Presland	Ms Eleanor Townsend
	Ms Rosalind Willatts	

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and The Lord Bishop of Peterborough are trustees of the charity by virtue of their offices, and they appoint the remaining trustees. The number cannot exceed sixty, but cannot be less than four, and every trustee has one vote. These trustees administer the management of the charity.

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust was constituted by a Trust Deed dated 10th March 1955.

Registered Charity Number: 1021632

Registered Address: Lancaster House, Nunn Mills Road, Northampton, NN1 5GE

## Trust Officers

Chairman: Gareth Lugar-Mawson	Vice-Chairman: John Barker
Treasurer: Eddie Byland	Grants Secretary: Michael Moore
Secretary and Friends Secretary:	Ruth Fitch (to November 2022)
County Ride and Stride Organisers:	Val Hartley and Liz Doherty

[www.nhct.org.uk](http://www.nhct.org.uk)

*Front cover: St Mary's, Weldon. Previous page: St Andrew's, Harlestone*

# Chairman's Report

I AM pleased to report that 2022 was a successful year for the Trust, both in terms of funds raised and grants awarded.

## Grants

In 2022, the Trust paid out eleven grants to a value of £38,000, the details of which are set out later in this Annual Report. These grants were made possible by the excellent level of income generated by the annual Ride and Stride and from donations, for which the Trust is most grateful.

As you know, the Trustees' policy is to draw on their reserves to meet current needs at current prices while keeping a core amount of £100,000 as a long-term reserve.

In making grants, the Trustees continue to give priority to those churches and chapels which have a history of participation in the Ride and Stride, particularly to those churches which raise sponsorship money.

The Trustees are grateful to Michael Moore for undertaking the role of Grants Secretary and to John Barker and Rosalind Willatts for visiting the applicant churches and chapels and reporting on their circumstances. Sadly Eric Peplow has had to stand down as one of the visitors due to health reasons. The Trustees are very grateful to him for undertaking this role for many years.

## Annual Ride and Stride

At the time of writing, the 2022 Ride and Stride raised £42,514, plus £6,453 from Gift Aid, a total of £48,967. This excellent result reflects the sterling efforts of the Riders and Striders, the Area Organisers, the Church and Chapel Organisers and the Church and Chapel sitters. The Trustees are most grateful to them, as they are to the County Organisers, Val Hartley and Liz Doherty, for their enthusiasm and the many hours they spent in planning and coordinating the event. The Trustees are equally grateful to Eddie Byland, the Trust's Treasurer, for dealing with the numerous individual payments involved and making the Gift Aid claims to HMRC.

Once again, I would like to record the Trust's thanks to Eddie for the excellent and timely way in which he looks after the Trust's accounts.

The Ride and Stride support from the churches and chapels in Northamptonshire is the Trust's main fundraising source. It is largely from the monies raised by the Ride and Stride that we derive our funds to make grants to the county's churches and chapels.



*Holy Trinity, Northampton*

Planning for September 2023's Ride and Stride is well underway and I hope that your church or chapel will take part in it.

### **Donations**

I am pleased to report that the Trust received donations amounting to £1,645 in the year. The Trustees are most grateful to all of our donors for their generous support.

### **Celebration Evening**

After three years of being unable to hold one, we held our Annual Celebration Evening at the home of David and Mary Laing in Grafton Underwood on Wednesday, 20th July and sixty-two guests attended. It was a very warm, slightly overcast, evening, but fortunately the rain held off and everyone enjoyed the occasion very much. The Trustees are very grateful to David and Mary Laing for making their beautiful garden available for this event.

The annual Celebration Evening is an important part of the Trust's calendar, giving the trustees the opportunity to meet representatives from the churches and chapels to which the Trust has made grants, and to thank them for their hard work in looking after their historic buildings. We are also honoured to meet those who work so hard in raising significant funds for the Trust in the Ride and Stride. Traditionally it is held in the gardens of one of the notable houses in the county on a weekday evening in July. The occasion is not only very enjoyable, but also encouraging to those involved in the difficult and time-consuming business of caring for Northamptonshire's beautiful churches and chapels.

### **Annual General Meeting**

We were able to hold our April 2022 Annual General Meeting as well as our November Ride and Stride Review Meeting at the Northampton offices of HCR Hewitsons. My thanks to the partners of HCR Hewitsons for making their conference room available to us for these meetings.

### **Church Study Day**

In August, our annual Church Study Day involved a fascinating visit to four beautiful churches in South Northamptonshire: St James, Edgcote, St John the Baptist, Plumpton, St Botolph, Slapton and St Mary, Easton Neston, all of which are tucked away well beyond the beaten track. My thanks to Bruce Bailey for organising this visit and explaining the features of the churches to us. My thanks also to James and Mary Miller for hosting the picnic lunch in the grounds of their house at Slapton.

Our 2023 Study Day will be on 2nd September, kindly organised again by Bruce Bailey and visiting a sequence of Georgian churches from Cottesbrooke to Southwick.



## **Trust Secretary and Friends Secretary**

Just before Christmas Ruth Fitch stood down as both the Trust's Secretary and the Friends' Secretary. Ruth held both positions for many years and was excellent in both. She was very helpful to me when I took on the role of Chairman and I miss working with her very much. For the moment, the Charities Team at HCR Hewitsons are very kindly helping the Trust with its secretarial work but we would like to appoint a volunteer, or volunteers, to both roles. If anyone reading this report is interested in taking up the challenge, I would very much like to hear from them.

## **National Churches Trust**

We maintain our links with the National Churches Trust (NCT), which operates at a national level to promote the care of our heritage of England's wonderful churches - fundraising, making grants, lobbying where appropriate, and acting as a focal point for the efforts of the individual county trusts of which the NHCT is one. However, NCT no longer participates in a partnership scheme under which it delegated aspects of its grant-making functions to the county trusts.

## **Website**

The website which contains details of the Trust's activities was redesigned and updated in 2022, it now has a more 'professional' look to it. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for additional items or improvements to the site.

## **A New Report Editor**

The Revd. Canon Brian Withington, who took over from Dr Martin Gaskell as the Annual Report's co-editor, stood down as a trustee in 2022. The new editor is Eleanor Townsend who joined the board as trustee at the AGM and co-edited the Report with Brian last year. We are grateful to Brian for his work on the Report last year, and to Eleanor for taking the job on single-handed this year. We wish both of you well.

## **The Future**

I've said it in previous Reports and I say it again, I continue to be impressed with the time and effort spent by what are often relatively small groups of people in maintaining the wonderful churches and chapels in our county.

In Northamptonshire we have some of England's finest examples of church and ecclesiastical architecture and memorials, covering well over 1,000 years of church building. We are fortunate to be able to continue to enjoy them, but they have to be looked after. This very great responsibility lies ultimately with local people, the parishioners and worshippers, as well as those who may have no strong faith, but love and respect the Christian tradition in England. Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust is here to support those who care for these fine buildings.

We do this in order that those who come after us can continue to enjoy and worship in them and play their part in ensuring that they, and the generations after them, may do so too; not only for the next 1,000 years, but for many centuries after that.

The small part Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust plays in achieving that object is the result of the efforts of the Trustees and Council Members and I thank them, our President, James Saunders Watson, HM Lord Lieutenant for Northamptonshire, and our Vice-Presidents David Laing, Bishop Donald Allister, and Bishop John Holbrook for their strong continuing friendship, support and encouragement.

### **In Conclusion**

I hope you enjoy this Report. If you have any comments or suggestions about it, please send them to Eleanor or me.



**Gareth Lugar-Mawson**

*Chairman*

Tel: 01327 830219; Mobile: 07452 930801

Email: lugarmawson@msn.com

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## Grant Committee Report 2022

THE year that has just ended has been a lot busier than the previous two years, with eighteen churches applying for grants. Several withdrew their application, and two others were rejected, which allowed us to pledge £61,500. As you will recall, the Trustees in 2021 decided to limit the time of a grant to three years. As a result, the Trust wrote to several churches advising them of this and asking them to re-apply when their project is ready to run, and when they have revised costs and can complete within a three-year period. Therefore, in the future potential applicants should ensure that they can carry out the work within the three-year period. The Trustees also agreed to improve the NHCT website which would allow applicants to apply initially online, and subsequently submit the documentation via the post. This would include a copy of the last set of accounts, to enable us to process the application and take a better view of an applicant's finances.

At the end of 2021, the alarm grant scheme funded by Allchurches Trust came to an end, and we had, unfortunately, to return £24,000. Despite the scheme being open for three years, we were unable to assist some churches in preventing theft of lead from their roofs as they did not take up the offer. Hopefully they will not regret that decision.

As we have stated in the past when considering applications, the Grant Committee takes into consideration all the criteria laid down by the Trustees, in addition to the history of past applications and in particular, previous contribution to Ride and Stride, which is our main source of income. We encourage all churches to participate in this national event which benefits all churches.

I would like to thank Rosalind Willatts for assisting on the trips, replacing Eric Peplow who had to withdraw for health reasons, and also John Barker for his expertise and Gareth Lugar-Mawson for attending meetings.

You can see from the schedules below the grants and pledges made during the year but, in summary, the Trust contributed as follows:

Building works	6
Porch work	2
Internal work	1
Roof works	3
Servery/toilet installation	1
Churchyard walls	1



Town/Church	Works	Grant Given
Abington, Northampton – St Peter's & St Paul's	Removal of asbestos prior to repairing leak in heating system.	£2,000
Blakesley – St Mary's	Tower and roof work.	£10,000
Boughton – St John the Baptist	Rebuild of collapsed wall.	£500
Castle Ashby – St Mary Magdalene	Repairs to mullions in west tower. This included erecting scaffold and removing windows.	£5,000
Great Creaton – St Michael & All Angels	Installation of toilet facilities and improved servery. Removal of screen and some pews to provide greater access.	£5,000
Irchester – St Katharine's	Repair of roof and gutters.	£3000
Kings Sutton – St Peter's & St Paul's	Internal decoration and plaster work.	£3,000
Lowick – St Peter's	Provision for a temporary rubber membrane roof replacement, following lead theft, while funds are raised for a permanent solution.	£6,500
Raunds - Methodist Church	Roof upgrade access to meet current standards.	£500
Southwick - St Mary's	Groundwork to stop damp to church and monument.	£10,000
Sutton Bassett - All Saints'	Re-slate south side of chancel roof.	£2000
Wellingborough - All Hallows	Specialist cleaning of stained-glass windows.	£3,000
Weston by Welland – St Mary the Virgin	Replacement of dangerous ceiling.	£6,000
Wilbarston - All Saints'	Opening north doorway to provide level access, and new porch to incorporate a WC.	£5,000
		£61,500





Until 2018 the Trustees were able to also recommend churches to the National Churches Trust (NCT) under the partnership agreement between the Trust and NCT, however this scheme has unfortunately changed, and we are no longer able to do this. The Trust continues to welcome applications and tries hard to publicise the availability of funds to make grants.

**M J Moore**  
*Grant Secretary*

*The Bede House, St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers*

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## NHCT Makes a Difference

### **ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, HIGHAM FERRERS**

In 2020, St. Mary's faced a series of problems, including the need for a new heating system and work on the roof, stonework, and the iconic spire, as well as the need for a fitting servery and welcome centre, and once that was done (some £300,000) the requirement for £200,000 of work on Chichele's Bede House. And, of course, the Parish Share.

To support this Grade 1 listed church and its superb outbuildings, an Appeal Committee was formed, and we set out to break the appeal into bite-sized chunks. No-one eats an elephant at one go! We decided to break the appeal into two major phases: Phase 1 would deal with the church, Phase 2 with the Bede House. And no work would begin on Phase 2 until we had completed and fully paid for Phase 1.

You will not want to hear about the schemes and fundraising events, the examples of personal generosity and of minor disappointments, and the hours of hard work. If you have been involved in fundraising, you will know all about this. Suffice it to say that by October 2022, we had raised — with the help of fundraising, legacies, and above all, grants from awarding bodies — the £300,000 we needed, and could then move on to Phase 2.

One of those awarding bodies was the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, which supported St. Mary's in the development of a fine oak servery, now in regular use for the congregation, and for the wide number of more secular events that regularly take place in the church.

All of which means that now we can turn our attention to the Bede House. And that in turn means that grant-giving bodies may be hearing from us again in the not-too-distant future. Our grateful thanks to them all.

If you want to know more about St. Mary's, go to the church website and follow "The Treasures of St. Mary's" which will give you a tour of a dozen "treasures" with photographs and a two-minute explanation of each. Or you can download the "Walking Tour of Higham Ferrers" from the town website which will take you on a 40-minute audio conducted tour of the historic sites of this ancient town. Enjoy!

**Richard Oberman**



*Discreetly designed servery at St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers*



*Window by John Reyntiens in the south aisle, All Hallows, Wellingborough*

## **ALL HALLOWS CHURCH, WELLINGBOROUGH**

The ancient Parish Church is an iconic building in Wellingborough, famed for its lofty spire, its interior but above all its array of stained glass dating from earliest times up to the twentieth century, which adorns every wall of the church.

We are in the process of raising the funding to have all the windows (both inside and out) cleaned as well as new guards being fitted. The windows are in a dirty state at the moment but when completed, they will all look stunning like new. We are very grateful to the Trust for awarding us a grant towards the work which we hope to have completed by next year.

**Anthony Edwards**

## **ST PETER'S & ST PAUL'S, ABINGTON, NORTHAMPTON**

In February 2022 our heating system stopped working and we had to provide temporary heating. The heating engineers could not get water pressure in the pipes and determined we had a leak in the pipework. A lot of our pipes are above ground but some are necessarily below ground, across doorways and the like. We took up some stone floors in these areas but found no leak. The engineers brought in thermal imaging cameras and filled up the system and kept the water level up by hoses and turned on the heating and it worked enough to show where the pipes were holding the hot water. We eventually found the leak in a heating pipe duct concealed 60cm deep below the clergy vestry floor.

In doing so we also identified asbestos insulation on the offending pipes. The duct was immediately sealed and thankfully no contamination occurred.

Samples of the asbestos material were carefully collected by licensed contractors and scientifically tested to confirm it was a notifiable type.

The removal of both the pipes and asbestos required the breaking out of the suspended concrete ground floor under strictly controlled conditions. Following notification to the HSE, the breaking out of the floor and removal of the pipes and insulation was carried out by a specialist asbestos removal contractor. We partnered with Oracle for the controlled asbestos removal.

Once the pipes and asbestos were removed the heating pipework had to be reinstated. We employed heating engineers Labrum of Northampton to reinstate the pipework.

Once the pipework was reinstated the system was filled and tested before the floor could be reinstated. The reinstatement of the floor, carried out by S.C. Builders of Thrapston, comprised the preparation of the existing heating duct brick walls to receive the new precast concrete duct covers together with a cement and sand screed on top in preparation to receive the carpet tile floor finish.

As a result of this work some of the plastered walls of the vestry required repair and redecoration then a carpet tile floor was laid on the new screed to replace the original carpet taken up to expose the duct.

It took from February until the end of August to complete the works. We were ready to do the work in May but waited until the quieter August period for weddings because the work took about four weeks from start to finish and the vestries had to be vacated and sealed until the asbestos contract was completed and a Certificate of Reoccupation was received to carry on the rest of the work. We are grateful to the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust for their grant to help us defray the costs.

## Donald Loe



*Pipework at Abington – before and after*



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST .  
INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31st 2022.**

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME .</b>				
Ride and Stride :				
Year ended December 31st 2020	0		273	
Year ended December 31st 2021	2573		46159	
Year ended December 31st 2022	41308		0	
		43881		46432
Income Tax Recovered		6639		7937
Friends' Subscriptions		3275		3560
Donations		1645		63020
Investment Income : Charinco	1952		1952	
: Bank & Building Society Interest	118		27	
		2070		1979
		<u>57510</u>		<u>122928</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE .</b>				
Grants Paid (Note 1 A) ( Grants pledged but unpaid at the year end are shown in Note 1 B )	38000		55850	
Ride & Stride - Refunds to participating churches	21806		22892	
Administrative expenses including printing .	2218		2544	
Upgrading Website	2540		0	
		64564		81286
		<u>-7054</u>		<u>41642</u>
<b>( DEFICIT)/ SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR .</b>				

**ACCUMULATED FUND**

Balance brought forward January 1st 2022  
(Deficit)/Surplus for the year  
( Decrease)/ Increase in Market Value of Investments

353532	298941
-7054	41642
-12445	12949
<hr/>	<hr/>
334033	353532

Balance carried forward December 31st 2022

**RESTRICTED FUND (ALLCHURCHES TRUST LTD. Re ALARM SYSTEMS)**

( NOTE 3 )

Balance brought forward January 1st 2022

Less: Grants to Churches

: Repaid to Allchurches Trust Ltd

Balance carried forward December 31st 2022

24000	33000	24000
0	9000	0
24000	0	24000
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
0		377532

**REPRESENTED BY :**

Investments ( NOTE 4 )

Bank : Current account

: Deposit account

Building Society account

185454	25671	197899
	69034	
	84928	
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
148579		179633

E.W.Byland - Honorary Treasurer

02/02/2023

334033	377532
<hr/>	<hr/>



## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST .

## NOTES TO THE INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED

DECEMBER 31st 2022

## 1. GRANTS : ACCUMULATED FUND.

## A ) PAID : YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31st 2022 .

	£	Year of Pledge	£
Holy Cross, Pattishall ##	2000	April.2020	All Saints, Great Addington
St.John the Evangelist, Whitfield ##	3000	April.2020	St.John the Baptist, Abthorpe
St.Mary, Weston by Welland	6000	April.2021	All Saints, Adstone( water supply)
St.Mary, Badby ##	5000	April.2021	Emmanuel Church , Northampton
All Saints, Pitsford ##	5000	April.2021	St.Martin, Welton
St.Mary Magdalene, Castle Ashby ##	5000	April.2021	St.Mary Magdalene, Geddington
St.Leonard, Aston le Walls ##	2500	April.2022	St.Andrew, Kettering
St.John the Baptist, Tiffield ##	5000	April.2022	St.Mary, Southwick
St.Mary, Higham Ferrers	2000	April.2022	St.Mary, Blakesley
St.John the Baptist, Boughton	500	April.2022	St.Peter, Lowick
Ss.Peter & Paul, Abington	2000	Nov.2022	Ss.Peter & Paul, Kings Sutton
		Nov.2022	Raunds Methodist
	38000	Nov.2022	All Saints, Sutton Bassett
		Nov.2022	All Saints, Wilbarston
		Nov.2022	St.Michael & All Angels,Creaton
		Nov.2022	St.Katherine, Irchester
		Nov.2022	All Hallows, Wellingborough

## = pledged as at December 31st 2021

B) PLEDGED AND NOT YET PAID AS AT  
DECEMBER 31st 2022.

	£
All Saints, Great Addington	5000
St.John the Baptist, Abthorpe	4000
All Saints, Adstone( water supply)	1000
Emmanuel Church , Northampton	3000
St.Martin, Welton	3000
St.Mary Magdalene, Geddington	3000
St.Andrew, Kettering	6000
St.Mary, Southwick	10000
St.Mary, Blakesley	10000
St.Peter, Lowick	6500
Ss.Peter & Paul, Kings Sutton	3000
Raunds Methodist	2500
All Saints, Sutton Bassett	2000
All Saints, Wilbarston	5000
St.Michael & All Angels,Creaton	5000
St.Katherine, Irchester	3000
All Hallows, Wellingborough	3000

75000

Note : Pledged grants lapse if unclaimed  
after three years of being made available.

### 3. RESTRICTED FUND .

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust received an advance in February 2019 of £ 50,000 from Allchurches Trust Ltd ( ATL) to be used exclusively for providing grants for the installation of roof alarm systems . In accordance with the agreement with ATL , details of this scheme are shown as a Restricted Fund. ATL kindly extended the scheme to December 31st 2021 . Repayment was made in January 2022.

### 4.INVESTMENTS

BLK Charities UK Equity Fund Accumulation	Cost at 31/12/21 & 31/12/2022	Market Value @ 31/12/2021	Market Value @ 31/12/2022	Change in Mkt.value y/e 31/12/22	Interest y/e 31/12/22
5896.125 Units	£ 14970	£ 138146	£ 137986	£ -160	£ 0
BLK Charities UK Bond Fund Income :					
32527.563 Units	60000	59753	47468	-12285	1952
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	74970	197899	185454	-12445	1952
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

### 5. GENERAL NOTE RE: DONATIONS .

Under Solicitors` Accounts rules, client funds held by a solicitor which cannot be allocated or returned, may be distributed as charitable donations . The Trust received such a donation from Hewitsons ( Solicitors) in the sum of £ 3,545 in year ended December 31st 2014, and has given an indemnity to the effect that , if this sum is requested, it will be repaid . The Trust is therefore obliged to maintain its resources at a sum in excess of the above amount .

# Ride and Stride

## ***What is Ride and Stride?***

*'A chance to explore our wonderful countryside and discover England's churches whilst raising money to help with their upkeep and restoration and keep them thriving in our communities'*

**Date for your diary - RIDE AND STRIDE 2023 will be held on Saturday 9th September**

**R**IDE AND STRIDE was 'born' in Suffolk in 1982 as a sponsored cycle ride or walk, and is held annually in virtually every county in England. It was started in Northamptonshire ten years later, in 1992, and was initially sponsored by Nationwide Building Society. A director of Nationwide asked the late Ray Masters, of Weedon, to set up Ride and Stride in Northamptonshire based on the Church of England Deaneries, with an Area Organiser for each Deanery, and a Local Organiser at each church whatever the denomination. He asked his wife, Isabella to be the Area Organiser for Daventry Deanery and she has continued in that role ever since. She has recently decided to retire, after looking after the whole Deanery for 31 years and we thank her for her dedication and support for all this time.



*Cyclists at Silverstone in memory of David Cooper*

Ride and Stride is the main fund-raising event for all the county Historic Churches trusts and, in Northamptonshire, 50% of the money raised is retained by the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust and a cheque for 50% of the money raised is sent to the church chosen by each of the participants. The money raised, along with other funds, is used to give grants for preserving and restoring churches, chapels and meeting houses in Northamptonshire which take part whether they are historic or not. Some participants challenge themselves to visit as many churches as they can by their chosen mode of transport. Others prefer a more leisurely approach, visiting fewer churches and taking more time at each. Both approaches raise sponsorship money to support the work of the Trust.

Churches are usually open from 10am to 6pm and a list of participating churches is produced and made available on our website at [www.nhct.org.uk](http://www.nhct.org.uk), as are contacts in neighbouring counties: Ride and Stride is a countrywide event always held on the second Saturday in September.

## ***Ride and Stride 2022***

As we approached the date of Ride and Stride, we were happy with the response from Local Organisers and churches were pleased to be opening again 'normally' and expecting to welcome participants. Then two days before the day, the news of the death of the Queen was announced and there were questions as to whether the event should be cancelled.

After consulting with the National Committee and the Archdeacons a note was sent out to all Local Organisers:

*We are not suggesting cancellation of Ride and Stride but suggest that churches should be open, and welcome desks should be placed so that those in our communities wishing to spend time in their local church can enter unhindered but welcomed. This has the full endorsement of the Archdeacon of Northampton and Archdeacon of Oakham.*

In essence we left it to churches to decide the appropriate way to respond; most churches were open as promised and around 308 churches took part, and of them the majority were open with a welcome inside. Visitors do appreciate a friendly face, and of course the churches that are remembered and noted are those which have refreshments – see the ‘News from Riders and Striders’. Taking part in the urban areas like Northampton is obviously different to riding around our beautiful countryside and more churches can be ‘clocked’ in the towns.

We are very grateful to those who write telling us of their experiences. Numbers recorded on the registers were down, but we were hoping that sponsorship would already have been promised and that the income money would not be affected too much.

145 churches found Riders and Striders to take part and sent in sponsorship money to our Treasurer compared to 163 in 2021. The total raised was £42,514 excluding Gift Aid compared to £48,731 in 2021. A magnificent total and we are grateful to all those churches who helped reach this figure.

The following churches raised over £1000 each: St Peter’s, Brackley, St Mary’s, Roade, St Michael’s, Silverstone and St Rumbald’s, Stoke Doyle. A special thank you to them.

A particular thank you also to those individuals who raised the bulk, if not all the money for their church – Sheila Edwards from Christchurch Northampton, Pat and Lesley Shrubbs from Roade, Kate Cooper from Silverstone and Felicity Thistlethwaite from Kingscliffe.

Publicity and promotion is always a challenge and we are grateful to those who encouraged Riders and Striders via their parish magazines and websites. We are very pleased with our updated website which allows us to report back on the stories and success of the Ride and Stride Day. It would be good to find a social media savvy volunteer to help us with promoting Ride and Stride on Facebook.

This is yet another really good year and a real tribute to all those volunteers who work to make Ride and Stride in Northamptonshire the success that it is particularly in these difficult times.

Particularly:

- The enthusiasm of Local Organisers who kept us informed of their church arrangements as they changed, and persuaded folk to ride and stride and find sponsors.
- Our team of Area Organisers who each have a group of Local Organisers, work tirelessly, starting in the spring collating information about which churches will be open. We are grateful to Ruth Fitch for all her support with the Methodist churches over the years, and in her role as Secretary and Friends Secretary for the NHCT, and wish her well in the future.

- Eddie Byland, our Treasurer who sends cheques for 50% of the amount received in sponsorship to each church.

And of course, thank you to all the Riders and Striders - without their enthusiasm and grit Ride and Stride Day wouldn't happen!

**Liz Doherty and Val Hartley** - County Organisers



*Welcome refreshments at St Mary the Virgin, Weston by Welland*

## **News from Riders and Striders**

### **Anitra Bull (Deanshanger Methodist Church)**

'We had a lovely day with the Chapel open not just for Ride and Stride callers but visitors wishing to pay respects to Her Majesty the Queen, a very poignant day. We did not have Sitters and Shufflers as I once suggested for those unable to walk and cycle but a rota of members who enjoyed being in the Chapel, sometimes alone, finding it a peaceful time.'

### **Bea Martin (St Leonard's, Loddington)**

'Not a lot of visitors, but the church got a good clean and we were sponsored for doing that so some money will be raised!'

### **Joan Lee (All Saints', Northampton)**

'My final total was fourteen churches but perhaps the most interesting church was St Peter's & St Paul's in Abington Park. They had organised a special ribbon and prayer royal mourning tribute on the railings which made the day more special (an elderly volunteer on duty offered drink and a selection of biscuits). I enjoyed the event and will hopefully take part again as it raises important support for all churches.'

### **Sheila Edwards (Christ Church, Northampton)**

Sheila Edwards is a churchwarden at Christ Church. One of her favourite pastimes is walking, and over the years Sheila has walked many miles for Ride and Stride. Christ Church, and Sheila's friends, have sponsored her for the last five years, and each year the sponsorship has increased. In 2022, after walking to nine churches, in four hours and thirty minutes, Sheila raised the huge sum of £705.



*Sheila at the halfway checkpoint at Christ Church, Northampton*

### **Stephen L Meakins (Castle Ashby)**

'Less than forty-eight hours after the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Head of the Church of England, I found myself sitting in my parish church ready to receive and welcome Riders and Striders.

My eyes were drawn to a framed manuscript that recorded the installed Rectors since 1238. I was reminded of hearing how our late Queen had presided over fifteen Prime Ministers during



her reign and as I studied the manuscript further I observed that the building I was sitting in had presided over nineteen monarchs beginning with Henry III.

This gave me a sense of perspective and highlighted, in my mind, how important it was to preserve the many churches throughout the United Kingdom, not as historic legacies but as living and breathing edifices which have as much meaning today as they did at the time of their building.

Over the years the church has inspired architects, artists, musicians and craftsmen, but more importantly they have become the custodians of the emotions of successive generations. They have witnessed the joy of christenings, weddings, first communions and the sadness of funerals. They stand as non-judgmental silent and trusted bastions of vows we have taken, and probably broken. They are the sacred repositories of our innermost confessions.

As we move into the third Carolean era, remember the church is always at our service and ask ourselves are we at the churches' services?'

.....

***Kate Cooper (St Michael's, Silverstone)***

Kate Cooper who raised £1,120 in total, was our biggest contributor this year. This was using Just Giving. 'We raised the money in memory of my late husband, David Cooper. He died just as the pandemic was starting and we never had any event in his memory. He had done the Ride and Stride twice before with Peter Coles and was a keen cyclist so it seemed fitting. He had been confirmed into the church the year before his death and we liked going into churches wherever we went. His daughter was keen on the idea and from our families, we just managed her and her boyfriend along with my daughter and son-in-law with whom David had a good relationship. However, as was evident from the amount raised, all David's friends and family were pleased to contribute to something in his memory.'

.....

***Pat Shrubb (St Mary's, Roade)***

'Les and I walked to all the churches in the benefice on Saturday 10th September. The weather stayed dry and the temperature was comfortable to exercise in.

Les and I would like to say a big thank you to Karen Stubbs who kindly did the transport for the day and was on standby if needed. Karen dropped us both off at Courtenhall church where we started the sponsored walk by going across the fields to St Mary's Church, Roade.

Over the course of the day there were volunteers who manned the foyer of St Mary's to register the riders and striders and serve refreshments. We were welcomed by Jenny Dudley with her beaming smile and would like to say a big thank you to her and all the volunteers including Glenys Linford who set everything up first thing in the morning.

We walked on to Roade Methodist Church where we met some cyclists who were raising funds for toilets to be installed in their church. After a little chat we carried on to Ashton church where we ate our lunch in the porch. After lunch we carried on to Hartwell Church where we enjoyed some more refreshments from Denise Brack and Susan Cross. Hartwell had a Hat exhibition which was very interesting.

Karen came to Hartwell and enjoyed refreshments with us and kindly gave me a lift home. Les took a brisk walk home after ambling along with me for a few hours.

Les and I would also like to say a big thank you to Eric Linford, the Ride and Stride co-ordinator [Local Organiser], who sourced all the volunteers for St Mary's and all the sponsors who have donated £1,034, of which Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust will give 50% back to St Mary's church.'



*Les and Pat Shrubb at Courtenhall*

### **Catherine B (Kingsthorpe Baptist Church)**

“Catherine J and I did our “Ride and Stride” around Northampton churches. We started our day off at St. Marks which is a modern building established just over sixty years ago for the residents of Whitehills, Spring Park and Obelisk Rise.

This was my fourth time of taking part in the Ride and Stride and I’ve taken pictures of the outside of churches many times so this year I was looking for something different in the places we visited.

Our second stop after walking down Welford Road and into High Street was our home church – Kingsthorpe Baptist – tucked away and quite a simple building. Some of our congregation quite a few years ago, made this beautiful banner with this wonderful text “God so loves the world”. The original church building dates from 1835.



*Banner in Kingsthorpe Baptist church, Northampton*

After walking through into the heart of Kingsthorpe village we visited our third church – St John the Baptist or the Church on the Green as I’ve always known it (having been born in Kingsthorpe). This building has been around since the twelfth century. Another banner but this time for Kingsthorpe’s Mother’s Union.

We then crossed Harborough Road, walked along Clarence Avenue and came across Holy Trinity Church in Balmoral Road, and I chose to reflect on the memorial to the fallen from the Great War and the Second World War. At one of the later churches we visited, there was an exhibition around WW1 and it emphasised how common it was for individual streets to lose quite a few young men in the same battle. I wonder if that was the case for those named.

We then continued down Kingsthorpe Grove into Kingsley Road, through a couple of terraced streets and on to Kingsley Park Terrace and Kingsley Park Methodist church – which has served the local community for over 133 years. I liked the quirky picture outside – very true words “Without God you’re snookered”.

Continuing up Kingsley Park Terrace and crossing the road, we found ourselves in St Matthew’s Parade and in St Matthew’s Church. This church was built by the Phipps family as a memorial to Mr Pickering Phipps (1836-1890), the head of Phipps Brewery in Bridge Street. I quite liked this christening font that you can see as you enter the Church – I wonder how many Northamptonians have been christened here?

St Peter’s & St Paul’s was our next stop and another banner, this time for Abington’s Mother’s Union. We were invited to sign the book of condolence for HM the Queen here and it seemed right to do so. The church is in the middle of Abington Park and as Lois had now joined us, we made the most of the surroundings, walked through the park, found a bench to sit on and enjoyed our lunch in view of the rose garden and many squirrels and pigeons!



*Font in St Matthew’s, Northampton*

At the end of Christchurch Road is Christ Church, and we liked how the building incorporated new and old. Christ Church was consecrated in 1906 and its parish extends from the boundary of Abington Park towards the town centre. Local architect, Matthew Holding designed the church in the fourteenth-century style. The west end of the church was completed in the 1980s, designed by another local architect, Maurice Walton. The church houses a fine Aeolian organ, a gift of the Barratt family in 1961 when it was moved from their family home in Kingsthorpe.

We then walked along Wellingborough Road cutting through towards Billing Road to get to Victoria Road Congregational Church, which was established in 1873. I loved the flowers and the banner - “Holy Spirit, fill this place.”

Next up for us was All Saints' Church in the town centre. There has been a church in this spot since the eleventh century and as many people know the church was rebuilt again after the Great Fire of Northampton in 1675. The church has a very grand feel to it and an immense sense of history, and of course many civic occasions are held here. The friendly churchwarden showed me a nativity scene that's normally shut away in a cupboard until it's displayed at Christmas time.

Moving across town to walk down Gold Street we eventually reached St Peter's Church, Mare Fair. This Anglican church ceased to hold regular worship here in 1995 but since then has been lovingly restored by the Churches Conservation Trust so that its architecture, decorations and furnishings can now be fully appreciated. Having visited previously I chose to take a picture that does show off the ceiling but also an unusual hanging decoration that was left, I was told, by a performing group after one of their productions in the church.



*Outside St Peter's, Northampton (L-R Lois, Catherine B, Catherine J)*

Then literally over the road to Doddridge Street and Castle Hill United Reformed Church. The building, as confirmed in the banner, dates from 1695 and is the oldest surviving non-conformist Church in Northampton. The eminent preacher Dr Phillip Doddridge was Minister here from 1729 for 22 years. So much has changed in the Spring Boroughs area of town, but this church still remains.

And through the underpass that takes you under Horsemarket to our last Church – Holy Sepulchre. We arrived here at 3.35 pm. It is one of only four remaining medieval "round" churches in England. It is steeped in history, but manages to include modern-day features (like a coffee shop area), which do feature in a few of the other churches we visited. They have

another christening font but this time with a lovely display of flowers on top instead of its usual cover.

So finally – this is us, outside St Peter's! We had a great day enjoying each other's company, the weather was kind to us and collectively we've raised over £470.

Hopefully this short report gives you a flavour of what there is to see in these individual Churches around Northampton. They all have their own different style but what is clear is that over the years so much has been done to help fellow Christians to worship and support their faith in these beautiful buildings. And through Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust – long may that continue.'

.....

### **Ali Carver (St Mary's, Weston by Welland)**

'The weather was perfect cycling weather, mostly sunny, not too hot and only a light breeze. Having not ridden my non-electric bike in more than a year, I was a little sceptical about how I would cope with the hills but as Ride and Stride isn't about racing or speed, I just took my time, enjoyed the beautiful countryside and surprisingly didn't have to get off and push once.

I didn't pay enough attention to the list of open churches and found one or two that were shut, or open but with no registration form... I even turned up at one where a wedding was scheduled! But with the wonders of technology I just took a selfie next to the church sign or noticeboard and pedalled to the next one. I met some very friendly ladies and gentlemen manning the churches, and a few made biscuits, sweets and cold drinks available which was most welcome. One lady at Church Langton had people sponsor her to man the church for eight hours! And a young man manning the ruin of St Mary in Arden in Market Harborough was very friendly.



*Ali Carver and friends outside St Mary's, Weston by Welland*

He manned the site all day but only had a few visitors which is such a shame as it is such an interesting place.

My final stop was in my home church of St Mary the Virgin, Weston by Welland, where a team of villagers had held a coffee morning which they extended to 6pm to accommodate all riders and striders, offering them free drinks and cakes to encourage them on their way. I was very glad of the refreshments and friendly chat and I think that it was so appreciated by all the visitors that plans are already being made to do the same again next year. I should say that the coffee morning had been planned long before the news of our lovely Queen's death, and we were mindful of the rules regarding activities in the church so considered cancelling it, but decided a relaxed and friendly space to come and share thoughts and memories would be a good thing. Quiet music was played, space for prayer and quiet contemplation was not intruded upon, and indeed it was a friendly and supportive place.'

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## Getting a Grant For Your Church or Chapel

**T**HE FIRST thing to say is that getting a grant is very straightforward. So, if you have a problem with your church building or its fixtures and fittings, and need additional funds beyond your own resources – apply.

The funds held by the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust are there to be used. The process is straightforward so just print off the form, fill in and send back by post.

Go to [www.nhct.org.uk](http://www.nhct.org.uk) and almost the first thing you will find is a drop-down menu for Grants. Click on Information, and from there click on apply for a grant which takes you to the form. The form has just two pages to fill in, divided into six parts. NB During 2023 the form will be replaced by an online system.

Part One asks you to provide the basic details of your church/chapel – where it is, what is its designation, which diocese is it in – mainly in this county Peterborough though for Roman Catholic churches it will be Northampton, and for chapels non-denominational affiliations. If your building is listed you can note that, then a few questions about use, population of your parish, average church attendance etc. A larger space is provided so that you can make further observations about your church and its community, its historical and architectural features and generally demonstrate its continuing role in your community. There is also an opportunity to send in images of your church and let the trust know if you have a guidebook, whether it is opened regularly and what you normally spend on maintenance each year.

Part Two is the nub of the application dealing with the nature of the repairs you have to undertake. Here there are no questions, simply room for you to set out the work that needs to be done. Keep this brief but make sure all essential information is given.

Part Three deals with the likely cost of the work. Here you need to give details of your architect and/or builder with their reports and costings, including both professional fees and construction work. Make some allowance for contingencies (perhaps 10% of the above) and do not forget VAT even though you are likely to be able to recover this.

Now we come to the money in Part Four. The trust needs to know all potential sources. You need to declare what exists in funds that you already have, backed up with a copy of the last year's accounts, any pledges received and brief details of other grant-funding bodies you might well be considering, eg Heritage Lottery Fund, National Churches Trust etc. Fill in what you already have or is pledged against the total cost, which will provide the trust with your deficit. This will be the figure that is taken into account, alongside the nature of the work, as to what grant you will receive.

Part Five is called Professional Advisor and Permissions. What is required here is details of your architect or surveyor, whether you have detailed drawings from them and if you have, whether you are including them with the application. For buildings governed by the Church of England, a simple



yes or no is required to any approval given by the Diocesan Advisory Council and an indication as to whether you have been granted a Faculty.

You are now almost there. All that is required in part 6 are the details of the applicant and the digital signatures of your incumbent and church treasurer. Also indicate whether your church takes part in the annual Ride and Stride (the chief source of NHCT's revenue) and whether your church is a Friend of NHCT - again just a yes or a no.

Once done, email the form to the Grant Secretary, Michael Moore, michael.moore@breathe.com; or send it by post to 1 Horrocks Way, Kettering NN15 5DH. Michael will then take over and oversee the application until it finally goes in front of the whole committee who jointly make the final decision on grants. This part of the process can take up to six months, but it is often shorter. Initially Michael will get in touch to arrange an onsite visit, probably with another member of the board, to meet the applicant and to see what is involved. He will assess not only the work that is to be done but also the architectural/historic importance of the building and the religious and non-religious activities that take place there.

The application, plus Michael's report, then goes to the Grant Committee which currently includes the chairman Gareth Lugar-Mawson, Michael Moore, the chartered building surveyor John Barker and the historian Rosalind Willatts. It is their job to consider all applications, keeping in mind the total amount of money available at any time. Their fiscal recommendation then goes before the whole board which meets twice a year in April and November.

The applicant will then be advised by letter or email of the decision. If successful, the money is paid once the work is completed and a certificate from the architect, or builders' invoice is forwarded to Michael. To protect funds for other projects, the work has to be completed within three years of the grant.

There are rare occasions when a repair becomes urgent and cannot wait till the trust board meets. In these circumstances the Grant Committee has the facilities to make a grant immediately available to assist.

As a Trust we encourage grant applications, indeed it is our major raison d'être. So if your church needs supporting, do get in touch!

**James Miller, Trustee, NHCT**

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST			
<small>Registered as a Charity No. 1021432</small>			
<small>Return completed form to Grants Secretary: Mr M.J. Moore, 1 Horrocks Way, Kettering NN15 5DH Telephone: 01535 653550</small>			
<b>GRANT APPLICATION FORM</b>			<small>Office use only Application no:</small>
<b>YOUR CHURCH</b>			
Village/town and postcode			
Dedication/church name			
Denomination & diocese/area			
Grade of listing or unlisted	Population of parish		
Average weekly attendance	How many services are held each month?		
<small>Description of your church and its community: include details of interesting architectural features or historical associations, the church's role in the current community</small>			
Photographs enclosed	Yes	No	Guide book enclosed
Yes	No	Yes	No
Is the church unlocked during daylight hours?			
Yes			
No			
Approximately how much is spent on repairs to fabric each year?			
£			
<b>REPAIRS NEEDED</b>			
Summary of repairs for which you are applying			
<b>COST OF THE WORKS</b>			
Cost of repairs listed above:		Are these costs estimated or accurate figures based on competitive tenders?	
Contractor's work		Estimated/Accurate*	
Professional fees			
Contingencies			
VAT at 20% on works and fees			
TOTAL COST	£	* delete as applicable	
<small>continued overleaf</small>			

*Application form from the NHCT website*

## “Grants To Churches In Northamptonshire Of All Denominations...”

THE TRUST'S website (<https://www.nhct.org.uk>) set out that the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust was founded in 1955 with the object of raising funds to make grants to churches in Northamptonshire of all denominations for their “preservation, repair and maintenance, improvement, upkeep, beautification and reconstruction”.

### Grants paid

Since then, the vast majority of grants have been paid to churches within the Church of England, although other denominations aren't totally unrepresented. In particular, the website (<https://www.nhct.org.uk/Main/GrantsMade>) records that between 2013 and 2021, grants were paid to Baptist



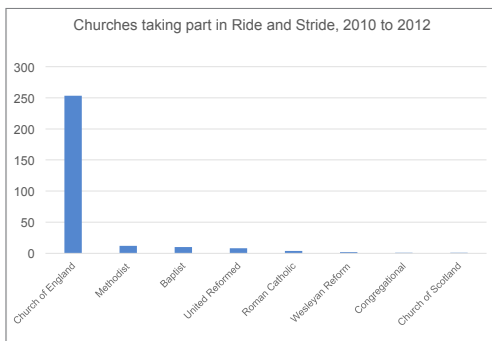
churches at Gretton, Kettering (Rockingham Road), Litchborough and Ringstead; Astcote Methodist Church and United Reformed Churches at Brigstock, Creaton and Great Doddington. Since then, in 2022, a grant has been awarded to Raunds Methodist Church.



### Participation in Ride and Stride

Looked at another way, in terms of churches taking part in Ride and Stride, the latest Ride and Stride spreadsheet show that, of the 291 churches taking part between 2010 and 2022, 253 (87%) were Church of England churches, with 38 (13%) therefore belonging to another denomination. These 38 can be broken down as follows:

- Methodist 12
- Baptist 10
- United Reformed 8
- Roman Catholic 4
- Wesleyan Reform 2
- Congregational 1
- Church of Scotland 1



*Or, for readers who prefer a graph:*

The amounts raised by Ride and Stride tend to be lower for other denominations, accounting for 8% of the total altogether, albeit still over £36,000 out of a total of £471,000 over the twelve years. The report on Ride and Stride in this year's Annual Report includes a brief account by some members of Kingsthorpe Baptist Church on their participation in the 2022 event in the Northampton area.

### Friends

A third measure of involvement in NHCT activities is the number of churches of other denominations which are Friends of NHCT. At the time of writing, there are two: Astcote Methodist, Towcester and Wellingborough United Reformed Church.



Wellingborough United Reformed Church

### But aren't most historical churches Church of England ones anyway?

Yes. It's not at all surprising that the Church of England dominates the graph above for this reason, although it's hard to find precise figures on how the historical churches (however defined) in Northamptonshire are spread across denominations.

The website [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk) nevertheless provides some useful information as far as listed buildings are concerned, although it recognised that many historical church buildings aren't listed, either because it has been decided that they are not of sufficient merit, or because they simply haven't been assessed.

To delve into the figures (from accessing the site <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/northamptonshire#.ZALuUbfLc0H> as at 18 March 2023):

- Of the 197 **Grade 1** listed buildings in Northamptonshire, 120½ could be said to be Church of England churches, where the “½” is the Anglican and Methodist Church of St Giles in Desborough and just one is of another denomination: St John’s Roman Catholic church, Northampton
- Of the 306 **Grade 2\*** listed buildings in the county, 141 are Church of England and two are United Reformed Churches, at Rothwell and Wellingborough.



*Hope Methodist Church, Higham Ferrers*

Counting the **Grade 2** listed buildings in the county is more complex because they are listed separately by civil parish or ward and further work would be needed to assemble comprehensive information. Delving into some entries reveals some examples, such as the former Park Road Methodist Church in Rushden, Towcester Roman Catholic Church and Woodford Halse Moravian Chapel all being Grade 2 listed, as well as various chest tombs in some Church of England church yards, such as Desborough and St Mary’s, Rushden.

Delving deeper, some other churches within other denominations aren’t listed at all, but are within a **conservation area**, suggesting that they may be historical. Hope Methodist, Higham Ferrers, comes into this category, for example.

Details of the current conservation areas within the county are accessible from the North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Council websites at the following links:

- <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/search?type=search&searchTerm=conservation%20areas>
- <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/conservation-andheritage/conservation-areas>

## **Making the most of the opportunities provided by NHCT**

Any umbrella organisations, individual churches or individuals of any denomination are invited to join in with one or more of the following:

- **Taking part in Ride and Stride** by contacting Val Hartley ([richardvalhartley@btinternet.com](mailto:richardvalhartley@btinternet.com)) or Liz Doherty (07713396130 or [emdoherty@sky.com](mailto:emdoherty@sky.com)); or
- **Becoming a Friend**, by visiting <https://www.nhct.org.uk/Main/Friends>
- In addition, individual churches in need of funding for any “preservation, repair and maintenance, improvement, upkeep, beautification and reconstruction” are encouraged to **apply for a grant** by visiting <https://www.nhct.org.uk/Docs/NHCTApplication.pdf>.



*Brigstock United Reformed Church*

**Andrew Presland, Trustee, NHCT**

# Summer 2022 Church Tour led by Bruce Bailey



FOR SEVERAL decades Bruce Bailey has led Friends of the NHCT on an annual tour of the county's churches. His incomparable knowledge of them was quietly imparted to those on the tours, and his skill in organising co-ordinated visits to remote churches impressive. The year 2022 was no exception. On the hottest day of a very hot summer, we visited the far west of the county, starting at EDGCOTE, by the River Cherwell, where in 1469 so many Welshmen lost their lives in battle. A church with a massive yew tree, a manor house and an old stone Rectory. That was all. The church was a gem, seemingly untouched by the twentieth century. Box pews, ledger stones, slabs which formerly contained brasses, and a wonderful set of Tudor and later monuments, some in relief with figures and sets of weepers of children, many wall monuments – some by Rysbrack.

And then to PLUMPTON. Two or three houses only on the road and the church behind trees a field away. But what a church! It looks like a model one might put on a wedding cake: tower, nave, chancel and porch. With no settlement to support it, the church had been declared redundant. But a consortium of local people (including one of the NHCT trustees) purchased the church and repaired it so that it might be open for occasional special services and concerts. The church had been rebuilt in 1822 by Jesus College, Oxford as a plain, small "standard" church. Full of light from clear glass, painted Regency box pews and on the south-east wall of the nave a delightful wall plaque of 1683 by Cibber from the original church. An earlier three-sided sundial under a ball had also been reset externally on the 1822 porch. Plumpton showed one way of dealing with a redundant, remote rural church.

During the long lunch break at Slapton, where a wedding was taking place, the tour visited nearby BRADDEN. A small, pretty stone village with a church at its end looking medieval, but on entering had been drastically "restored" in the mid nineteenth century. Parts of the church, such as the tower, were medieval but the rest had been happily Victorianised with pews and small red tiles.

SLAPTON village is tiny and remote with only a few houses around. The church is ancient and small with interesting decorated tracery to its small windows. The glory of the church is its wall paintings on every wall. The Trust recently grant-aided new lighting for these. An enormous St Christopher is in his usual place opposite the south door, walking through fish-filled water where there is a mermaid looking in a hand mirror. Amongst the many medieval themes of the paintings is a large one showing St Eloi, a seventh-century missionary Bishop of Noyon who was a skilled goldsmith and blacksmith. He is depicted shoeing a horse's leg which he removed, shod, then replaced on the horse.



The last church, EASTON NESTON, too was remote being reached via a long drive through the estate village, past the great house of Easton Neston and through its parkland. But it was not a small country church. It was a substantial medieval church and very much an estate church with family monuments from Tudor brasses to seventeenth-century large monuments with recumbent figures. The north chapel acting as a private family chapel was full of seventeenth-century chairs and had a beautiful modern monument of delicate italic writing on a glass sheet. A tiny feature was an exquisite, small medieval alabaster. Ladies of the church provided excellent cake and tea to round off the tour.

Our thanks to Bruce Bailey for organising and leading the tour, and to Trustee James Miller who opened his gardens and outbuildings for people to eat picnic lunches in the much-needed shade.

**Rosalind Willatts, Trustee, NHCT**



- 
1. Original door and doorway to the North room, off Edgcote chancel.
  2. Sun dial, St John the Baptist, Plumpton.
  3. St Christopher wall painting, St Botolph's, Slapton.

# Friends of Northamptonshire Historic Churches

**From: Name(s)** .....

**Address:** .....

**Postcode:** .....

**E-mail (PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS):** .....

I/We would like to join the Friends of Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust.

I/We

- a. Have completed the Banker's Order below. (*preferred option for NHCT*)
- b. Enclose a cheque for £..... (payable to Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust)

## Gift Aid Declaration

If you are a UK taxpayer and able to donate under the Gift Aid Scheme, it will cost you nothing and will increase the value of your donation to the Trust by 25%. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to offset any gift aid payment against your personal Income Tax.

I am a UK taxpayer and I will pay in the year an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax to be reclaimed by the Trust.

**Signed** ..... **Date:** .....202

The minimum donations requested are: £10 for individuals  
£20 for Churches / PCCs

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust is registered with the Charity Commission No. 1021632

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## Banker's Order

To (Bank/Building Society): .....

Bank Branch address: .....

Postcode: .....

Sort code:

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**Name:** .....

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....202

Please pay to: Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

C/o NatWest Bank plc                      Sort code: 56-00-60    Acc No 05608961

On the ..... day of (month) ..... 202

The sum of £..... (words) .....

And the same sum annually until further notice.

Please send application form to:  
Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, Friends' Secretary  
E-mail: lugarmawson@msn.com  
c/o HCR, Lancaster House, Nunn Mills Road, Northampton, NN1 5GE



# Dates for your diary:

## **CELEBRATION EVENING:**

Wednesday 26th July 2023, at Rockingham Castle by kind permission  
of James Saunders-Watson (by invitation)

## **CHURCH STUDY DAY (for Friends of NHCT):**

2nd September 2023

## **RIDE AND STRIDE:**

9th September 2023



*St Luke's, Cold Higham*

With thanks to all those who contributed to this Report.