

TRUST NEWS

Saving The Past For The Future



FLAMSTEAD VISIT: HOW A MEDIEVAL CHURCH WAS SAVED

In March, a group of the Friends visited St. Leonard's Church, Flamstead, to see the medieval church and understand what happened after, in 2017, the roof was found to be rotten. The church was threatened with closure for safety reasons, unless £1 million could be raised in eighteen months!

We were welcomed by Rev'd Jo Burke and given a tour by Ed Thomas. The wall paintings were of particular interest. One clearly shows a falconer although his hawk is less distinguishable. Amusing as there had been recent stories in the media about people in Flamstead being attacked by a hawk!

The church was saved through a Lottery Grant although St. Leonard's still had to raise £286,000 in matched funding. The Lottery process is very much focussed on caring for heritage and St. Leonard's set up their Heritage Project to fulfill the criteria demanded by the process. Mark Jenkin gave us a very informative talk about the various things that the Project included. The activities were designed to appeal to all age groups; to include both the church and the village; cover a wide variety of interests and needs; and to feature the church's very special medieval graffiti and wall paintings.

Our Grants Secretary, Andrew Lambourne, lives in Flamstead and led the fundraising appeal including the Lottery grant. He spoke about what a Lottery application involves but set this in the wider context of fundraising for church projects; how to go about it; and the avenues to explore.

In the end, £1.13 million was raised for the church and much hard work has gone into the project over the years since 2017. Our visit showed us very clearly how worthwhile all their efforts have been.

Archie Russell



Flamstead- medieval wall painting of the crucifixion

**Book now
for our
Churches
Tour
on 7 June**

see the
booking form for
details

*All Saints Church
Leighton Buzzard
will feature on our
Churches Tour*



**More dates for
your diary**

June 7

Churches Tour

July 19

Annual Meeting at St
Owen's, Bromham

September 13

Bike 'n Hike

October 4

Concert by the Galliard
Trio - St Mary's, Ware

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to another edition of Trust News.

We were all shocked and saddened by the sudden death of our colleague Trustee, Theresa Britt, just before Christmas. Her enthusiasm and energy are a great loss to the Trust and to the wider church community. A full obituary is included in these pages.

Many of you will know about the Listed Places of Worship Scheme which has allowed churches to claim back VAT on vital maintenance projects which the Trust helps to fund. Unfortunately, the Government has decided to limit the amount available for the coming financial year – there is an overall cap on the funding available and each church will be limited to claiming a maximum of £25,000. The Scheme will then be closed and we all appreciate the effect this will have on congregations raising funds to care for their churches.

There is a current campaign to encourage the Government to change its mind and there was a well-attended Westminster Hall debate in Parliament. Please write to your local MP explaining the negative impact on all congregations, particularly in small rural churches.

BHHT has just completed its first year as a different legal entity, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation rather than a Trust, although we have kept the name as before. The main burden of the change has fallen on our Treasurer, Trevor Groom, with the need for a new bank account and other formalities. Trevor has also overseen the move to making all

our payments by bank transfer, including for the Bike 'n Hike (for which we used to use the antiquated Payflow system). Our grateful thanks to Trevor.

Many of you will remember the Jubilee Campaign which raised money for an Endowment Fund.

The Fund currently stands at £527,515 and is fully invested with the CCLA in a range of products. It has gained interest of over £23,000 during the year which has added to the amount available for grants.

There is much the Trust would like to do but we need some more pairs of hands. Please see the advert for volunteers and if you, or someone you know, could spare some time to help with the running of the Trust, please get in touch.

Finally, elsewhere in this newsletter is information about two forthcoming events – a church tour in the Leighton Buzzard area and a concert by the Galliard Trio at St. Mary, Ware.

Also, please note that our Annual Meeting this year is at St. Owen, Bromham on 19th July at 2.30pm – more details to follow.

I hope to see you on one of these occasions but, meanwhile, do get in touch with any comments or ideas – chairman@bedshertshct.org.uk

Madeline Russell



*Madeline Russell,
Chairman*

CAN YOU HELP?

... the Trust in supporting and celebrating our churches and chapels.

The Trust is looking for more voluntary help in the following areas:

- **Publicity - raising the profile of the Trust and use of social media**
- **Fundraising - including help with our major fundraiser, the Bike 'n Hike**
- **Grants - liaising with and supporting church applicants**
- **Encouraging and widening our group of Friends, both individual and corporate**

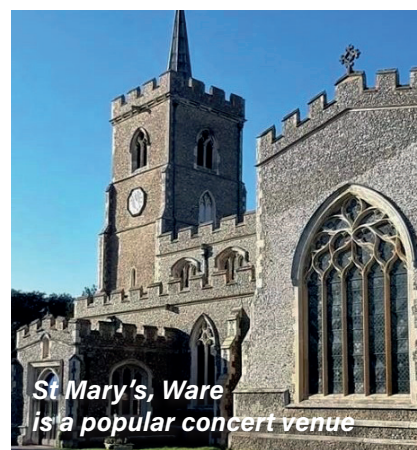
Please contact: chairman@bedshertshct.org.uk explaining your interest and how you would like to help.

DELIGHTFUL MUSIC IN A WONDERFUL SETTING

Concert at St Mary's Church, Ware - Saturday evening, 4 October

Music can be emotional, uplifting or just make you feel good. The Galliard Trio will play a varied mix of classical music - a real treat with something for everyone, followed by refreshments. The Trio is playing in aid of Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust and we are grateful for their support and that of the church.

We will send out full information on the concert and how to book in the months ahead – see also our website and Facebook page. In the meantime, please put Saturday, 4th October in your diary. Find out more about the Galliard Trio: <https://galliardtrio.wordpress.com/>



*St Mary's, Ware
is a popular concert venue*

OUR CHURCHES TOUR 7TH JUNE

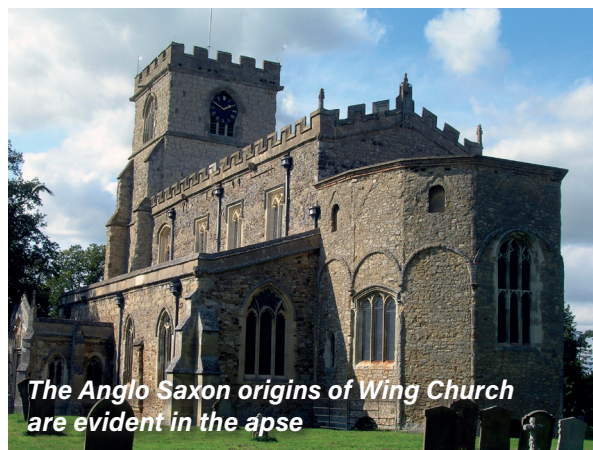
Our next Churches Tour on 7 June takes in five churches of great interest in the Leighton Buzzard area. We start the day with refreshments at St Mary's, Eaton Bray. It's one I know well as it is a former parish of mine, and you can marvel at the skill of early 13th century stone masons. It also has some interesting historical royal connections. We then go to St Mary's, Ivinghoe - a cruciform church of noble proportions, unusually large for a village.

St John the Baptist in Aldbury is a medieval church heavily restored in Victorian times - but preserving a chantry chapel with screen and monuments transferred here from Ashridge in the 1570's. Aldbury is also where we stop for our pub lunch - payable separately.

Then it's on to All Saints, Wing, and according to Pevsner it is, "one of the most important Anglo Saxon churches in England," with a crypted apse which has stood here for around 1200 years. Finally, All Saints, Leighton Buzzard - a late 13th century town church of impressive proportions, re-ordered after a serious fire in 1985. It also has a splendid angel roof - the gift of Chaucer's granddaughter, Alice de la Pole. Afternoon tea will be served at All Saints before returning to the railway station car park.

I hope you will be able to join me - there will be time to have a good look around and of course take photos at each of the churches as well as hear a bit more about their history. Please see the booking form for further details.

Malcolm E. Grant



The Anglo Saxon origins of Wing Church are evident in the apse

BIKE 'N HIKE 2024 — ANOTHER GREAT TOTAL - £103,647

It's hard to find different words to acknowledge all your support after another amazing year.

THANK YOU to everyone who took part or helped in any way to raise another significant amount of money for our churches and chapels. £44,097 has gone straight back to the churches that took part and the remainder, which includes gift aid, will be used by the Trust for grants.

Special thanks to churches which raised over £2,000 and will receive a gold certificate recognising their efforts in support of the Trust. They are:

St. Mary, Bletsoe - £3,750.00

St. Mary, Northchurch - £2,367.50

All Saints, Bedford - £2,356.00

St. Peter, Berkhamsted - £2,106.25

St. Mary, Reed - £2,087.50

The Bike 'n Hike began in 1991, the same year as the Trust, and it is still our major fundraiser as well as helping churches to raise money for their own purposes - maybe building works but could be anything from supporting the Sunday School to buying kitchen equipment!

The event has gradually evolved over the years in terms of its documents, background administration and encouraging people to take part in other ways, such as walking round towns and cities out of area (supporters visited London

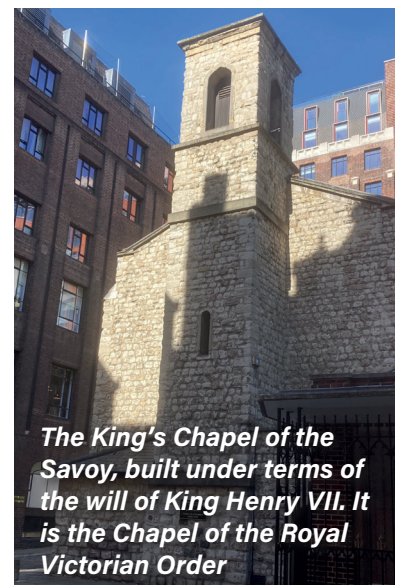
churches in 2024 - see photo); using mobility scooters; and even using cars. But the basic formula of visiting as many churches and chapels as possible on the day remains the same - as does the simple attraction of being out in the fresh air walking or cycling. Decide what is a personal challenge, something that people will sponsor you for, and go for it!

By the time you read this, preparations will be underway for another year. A great team of people liaise with all the churches and chapels - our Area Organisers - and I want to say a big thank you to them and to all the people in individual churches who make sure that their church is welcoming, with the signing-in register and refreshments. It means so much to those taking part.

So, 33 years under our belt and here's to the 34th Bike 'n Hike on 13th September.

Let's make it Lucky 13 and aim for £110,000!

Madeline Russell



The King's Chapel of the Savoy, built under terms of the will of King Henry VII. It is the Chapel of the Royal Victorian Order

FOLLOW AND LIKE US ON FACEBOOK @BEDSHERTSHCT

REMEMBERING THERESA BRITT

We were much saddened by the unexpected death of Theresa Britt, one of our Trustees, at Christmas time. Theresa who was a cherished wife and mother, was married to The Reverend Bill Britt, Vicar of Stotfold and Radwell and they have three grown-up sons. Theresa played a full part in supporting many aspects of parish life- from prayer groups to toddlers. Theresa was passionate about the rich heritage, architecture and modern role of our churches. This, along with her warm personality and focused commitment made her an exceptional Trustee – a role she took up in 2019, having long been a great supporter of BHHCT.

Theresa proved invaluable as a Trustee, leading on our communications work, helping organise events, and all done with grace, sensitivity and a willingness to take on all manner of tasks and be a great member of the Trustee team.

After a career with the Open University, Theresa embarked on some academic studies of her own. In 2021 she was awarded a Post Graduate Diploma in Parish Church Studies from York University, and late in 2024 she was appointed Chair of the St Albans Diocesan Advisory Committee.



Our friend and colleague, Theresa Britt

It was no wonder that the church was standing room only for Theresa's funeral where family, friends, parishioners and colleagues gathered to say farewell to a woman loved and missed by so many. Our heartfelt condolences go to her husband Bill and their family.

Katrina Grant

ALL SAINTS LEAVESDEN: WHEN WOODPECKERS ATTACK

You might be delighted to see woodpeckers in the garden or hear them on a woodland walk but these eye-catching birds can cause enormous damage when they hammer into the timber cladding of buildings to attract a mate or drill for a nest site with their chisel tipped bills.

All Saints Church, Leavesden was designed and built in 1853 by Sir George Gilbert Scott- better known as the architect of St. Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial. The Church is of flint and the spire is clad in wooden shingles. It suffered significant damage from woodpeckers which had made so many holes that shingles had disintegrated or fallen off, letting in water and other birds, and causing an enormous mess of nesting detritus and damage.

Our Grants Committee was able to give a modest grant of £2,000 towards repairs. The National Churches Trust has a list of churches most at risk from damage- including by woodpeckers, and one church in Essex even re-used the old shingles to make a decoy mini spire in the grounds to entice the birds to attack it rather than the church.

Happily, for All Saints, repairs were carried out in January 2025 and the spire is now restored and keeps the rain – and the birds out.

Katrina Grant



All Saints spire with scaffolding in January – woodpeckers not welcome

Contact us

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Treasurer: Trevor Groom, treasurer@bedshertshct.org.uk *Grants Secretary:* Andrew Lambourne, grants@bedshertshct.org.uk

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BOOK NOW

YOUR INVITE TO OUR CHURCHES TOUR 2025



Capital carved in soft chalk stone at Eaton Bray Church (Bedfordshire Archives)

SATURDAY 7TH JUNE 2025

- * High-flying angels and a heavenly spire
- * A wonderful Anglo Saxon church
- * Work by the finest medieval craftsmen
- * A Renaissance tomb to die for
- * And... a Wild Man!

Discover these and more in five magical churches where Beds, Herts and Bucks meet. Our guide Canon Malcom Grant will share his knowledge and passion.

The coach tour starts at Leighton Buzzard Railway Station at 9.30 am and ends there at 5.20 pm. There will be refreshments at the first church and afternoon tea at the last. We will have lunch at the Greyhound Inn in the charming village of Aldbury (paid separately).

The cost is £30 for Friends and £40 for guests, which includes coach, refreshments and afternoon tea.

Please complete the booking form overleaf and send it with your payment as soon as possible (5 May at the latest).

We will confirm your booking by email. Full details of the tour will be sent before the day.

CHURCHES TOUR 2025

SATURDAY 7 JUNE

BOOKING FORM

I WOULD LIKE TO BOOK THE FOLLOWING
TICKETS FOR THE TOUR:

Friends of the Trust £30; other guests £40

Saturday 7th June 2025
(Book by 5th May 2025 at the latest)

No. Friends tickets	No. Guests tickets	Total £

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

EMAIL _____

TELEPHONE _____

Please enclose a cheque to be made payable to The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

Or tick this box ☐ to confirm that you have transferred the amount above to:

Account Name: The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire
Historic Churches Trust, Sort Code: 20-05-73,
Account Number: 43234452

Please add the reference '**Buzzard**'
so we can identify your payment.

Post this form to: David Bevan,
21 Waterloo Road, Bedford, MK40 3PQ



Aldbury - Pendley Chapel Parclose