



Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust

Bike 'n Hike's Best Ever Result ... **£112,809**

by Madeleine Russell



Dave and Jenny Wells cycled 165 miles between them taking in the Trust's 21 administrative areas. Read about them and David Munchin who cycled from John o' Groat's to Lands End, on p4. See full stories on our website.

2020's event was A Very Different Bike 'n Hike. To be Covid secure, we didn't ask churches to be open (unless they were anyway); we didn't expect refreshments; there were no sign-in sheets; any church or chapel passed could be counted. We asked participants to record churches on their sponsor forms themselves and take selfies if they wanted proof. We know that part of the pleasure of taking part is to see the inside of churches and chapels, receive a welcome and refreshments and, sometimes, access toilets, so we were nervous about the participation numbers.

We need not have worried! Blessed by ideal weather and a recognition that this was a way to raise money for churches when so many other fundraising events had had to be

cancelled, the result was stupendous. Of the £112,809 raised, £48,500 was returned to churches and chapels for their own use. The remaining funds, which include gift aid, are available for the Trust to allocate in grants.

Nine churches gained gold certificates for raising over £2,000. Top marks to St. Nicholas, Harpenden – a total of £4,101.

In a year when charities of all kinds have been struggling, we are immensely grateful for the support of everyone involved: those who take part in any way and the organising team. We have already started to think about this year's event – so please put Saturday, 11th September in your diaries and look out for further news!

Diary Dates

- **Online Auction**
Friday 25 June to
Sunday 4 July 2021
- **AGM**
10 July 2021
- **Bike 'n Hike**
11 September 2021

Would you like to be a Bike 'n Hike Area Organiser?

Area Organisers are the people who liaise with churches and chapels in designated areas, that take part in Bike 'n Hike, and make sure they have all the information they need to encourage participation and fundraising. The areas are roughly equivalent to Church of England deaneries, (20 - 30 churches each), so you can get to know the organiser in each church or chapel.

The team of AOs meets three times a year – two planning meetings and a results

meeting in November. The role is not too time-consuming and is very rewarding, helping both churches and the Trust to raise much-needed funding.

We particularly need help at the moment in Hemel Hempstead, Hertford, Rickmansworth and Sharnbrook areas.

To find out more, please email: bikenhike@bedshertshct.org.uk or see **'How to be an Area Organiser'** on the Trust website.

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 10 July, 2.30pm at St Mary's Church, Church Rd, Stotfold. SG5 4NF

See our website for details: www.bedshertshct.org.uk



Our Endowment Campaign – Auction Stations!

Trustee and Campaign Board Chairman, Richard Genochio shares some exciting news

I'll say it again: Our ambitious campaign to create a £3 million Endowment Fund has three aims:

- Create a third regular income stream so that BHHCT can give more support to hard-pressed churches
- Diversify our sources of funds and therefore
- Reduce the risk of damage to our finances through the possible decline of any particular source.

Success and the bug

By the time Coronavirus made so many activities grind to a halt, we had already achieved £1.8 million towards our target. This has come in the forms of outright cash, pledged and phased monetary gifts over several years, and legacies pledged. Getting this far has been a great achievement. The Campaign Board is determined to build on that success. Early last year our new legacies appeal had to be paused because we could not visit people to talk to them. This is an area of work which we must resume, along with new initiatives to re-energise and re-launch our Campaign.

Promise and Promises

In 2020 we had to postpone our Auction of Goods and Promises. This would have been a glittering occasion with some very

prestigious and attractive lots, and we thought we should have to abandon this potentially very rewarding event. However, Sworders Auctioneers galloped to the rescue and offered a 'Covid-proof' on-line auction at no cost to us. We are very grateful to Sworders for this. We shall have a hugely expanded pool of bidders through access to their world-wide mailing list and website as well as our own members and supporters who would like a chance to bid.

Bids and Offers

The on-line auction will take place over ten days in late June. Details will be available at www.bedshertshct.org.uk soon. Almost all the original offers have been confirmed and now that there is no rigid limit on the number of lots (as in an evening event) we have plenty of room for additional attractive offers (large or small). Please be creative about this and let me - RichardGenochio@gmail.com or Brian Woodrow brianwoodrow38@gmail.com know if you would like to donate a promise or an item – or if you know someone who may be in a position to do so. I hope everyone will want to take a peek at the lots on offer via the website catalogue – www.sworder.co.uk which will be ready in due course.

Richard Genochio

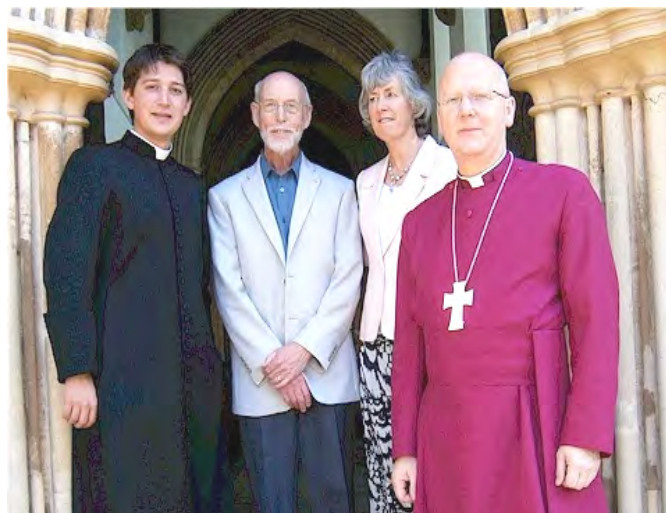
Ken Shrimpton – R.I.P.

The Trust lost a long-standing and hard-working supporter when Ken Shrimpton passed away on 2nd January. Ken became Area Member for Sharnbrook Deanery in 2004 (helping churches with grant applications) and, in the same year, became Documents Manager for the Bike 'n Hike on the retirement of John Macario. He took on more work for the Trust in 2013 as Bike 'n Hike Area Organiser for Sharnbrook, supported by Richard and Linda Singleton in 2016 to share the load.

Ever cheerful, Ken was full of ideas and helped to evolve the Bike 'n Hike over the years. He got sponsorship to print a booklet on the role of Church Organisers and found someone to design for free, the event documents which are still used. What a huge amount of work and enthusiasm Ken put into the Bike 'n Hike. Ken was also devoted to St. Mary, Felmersham. Trustee Tom Sander remembers him fondly and wrote:

"I knew Ken very well when I was Curate of St. Mary's Felmersham. He was one half of 'the dream team' (Churchwardens). Ken was a man of deep faith, integrity, diligence and passion, for not just St. Mary's, but all parish churches and the roles they play in shaping the place of faith

in the local community. I have many fond memories of him and have taken many lessons from his life. I will keep his family in my prayers." Other colleagues wrote of Ken: "a man of great energy and ideas, very likeable too"; "a real gentleman and servant of our Lord"; and "a true stalwart of the Trust". **May he rest in peace.**



From left: Tom Sander, Ken Shrimpton, Jane Wells, Bishop Alan

A year like no other but our work has continued

A year has passed since the last issue of Trust News

– but a year unlike any previous one. We had to cancel most of the activities planned for 2020 because of the Coronavirus pandemic, and scrap the plans for doing them in 2021.

But that does not mean that the Trust did nothing. Activities like study days and visits to churches provide opportunities to meet together and share common interests, but the primary purpose of the Trust is to provide funds to assist the work of maintaining, repairing and restoring the churches of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. That, I am pleased to say, we have continued to do despite the restrictions and difficulties of the past twelve months. Your Trustees have met around a table, on “zoom”, and by e-mail, and during those meetings have awarded grants totalling just over £160,000 from Trust funds and from the money they administer on behalf of the Wixamtree Trust, and the Allchurches Trust which helps fund the provision of roof alarms. We have certainly not been idle.

And this work can continue for the coming year, thanks to the magnificent effort of the participants (and organizers) of last September’s Bike ‘n Hike. Half the money received in sponsorship goes back to the churches nominated by participants, and the rest (plus Gift Aid) provides the bulk of the money for the following year’s grant awards. We must admit

that going ahead with last year’s Bike ‘n Hike was a venture of faith – several other county trusts decided not to risk it, but we are very glad we did, and I want to thank all who helped to make this wonderful result possible. We now look forward to the next Bike ‘n Hike – details elsewhere in this issue – with great expectations, so please join in if you possibly can - on foot, bike or other mode - and help us to continue to support our local churches in keeping their buildings in good order for the future.

We were very saddened recently to receive the resignation of the Trust’s Treasurer, David Mowbray, on the grounds of ill health, and I know all supporters of the Trust will want to wish him a full and speedy recovery. He has served us faithfully for several years and had no option but to relinquish the task he had performed with meticulous care for us. It means that the Trustees are now looking for someone suitably qualified to take on the duties of Honorary Treasurer of the Trust – please get in touch with me or with any of our Trustees if you are willing to consider filling this vital role.

With the gradual easing of the Coronavirus Regulations, we look forward to a more “normal” year for our Trust, and I would thank you all for your interest, support and generosity.

Malcolm E. Grant, Chairman



Terry Warburton MBE - A passion for Church Heritage

We thank former Trustee, Terry Warburton for his years of dedicated service to BHHCT, and share with you his lifelong passion for church buildings, and how he

came to be so involved in church restoration.

Terry was a churchwarden at All Saints’ Leighton Buzzard when the building was ravaged by fire in 1985 just after a restoration programme was completed. Terry says: “I was called by phone to witness its near demise and as it burned, I thought of what it had been through over the previous 708 years and determined that, whatever the outcome of the blaze, I would do my best to see it put back together again.

“The repairs took four years to complete, led by an energetic and resourceful Vicar, a local surveyor who worshipped at the church and others anxious to see the building restored. The fire, and repair work that followed, crystallised my thinking about the value of heritage, and altered the course of my life.”

Ten years on, huge structural faults were uncovered, a consequence of age, soft stone, and long-term effects of the fire. Terry had already agreed to chair the Fabric Committee

despite having a demanding job. It turned into a seven-phase funding and repair project costing almost £2 million. Terry found the challenge irresistible and devoted all his time to it unpaid. He didn’t think it would take seventeen years! He was astonished to be commemorated as a gargoyle on All Saints’ medieval chapel in recognition of his service as Chairman of the Fabric Committee and Preservation Trust Director.

Former Trustee Meric Jenkins eventually persuaded Terry to become a BHHCT Trustee. Terry says: “It was good to be part of such a dedicated group and the Trust’s huge contribution to the ongoing presence of Christianity and to historic preservation. The famous quote on the grave of Christopher Wren could equally apply to BHHCT, slightly amended, to read - “if you want to see its monument - look around you”.

Stepping down as a Trustee was not easy but serious ill health required it. Even so, Terry kept Trust News and the website going until last year. Terry coined the Trust’s strap line “Saving the past for the future”, still used on our publications and stationery, and says: “It seemed to express in a nutshell what the Trust was all about. Churches in Beds and Herts have a lot to thank the Trust for. I wish the Trust well and am sure it will continue its good work, needed now more than ever.”

David Munchin's 980 miles for Bike 'n Hike

Having had to cancel two cycling trips abroad because of Covid last year, I persuaded my wife Ysmena to support me on a John O'Groats to Lands End (JOGLE) bike ride for Bike 'n Hike which I aimed to do in just 7 days (140-150 miles a day).

It was strange to meet Tom Sander (then Vicar of Flamstead and Markyate) at John o' Groats! Tom was going in the opposite direction and reached John o' Groats the day I left. Despite a very cold and wet start in John O'Groats, the first two days went well, covering over 300 miles to the South of Loch Lomond. However, the next day the electronic bike gears failed, and with no other option, we drove home. Not to be defeated, we picked up another bike (you can never have enough), headed for Monmouth and rode the last two stages of JOGLE – the last being the hardest of the seven.

This left a 430-mile gap from Loch Lomond to Monmouth, but my next holiday, six weeks later, was booked for the Forest of Bowland. By adding stops at Loch Lomond and Keswick I finally managed the middle 3 stages over a weekend, although short October days meant starting in the dark each morning.

There was a COVID19 sting in the tail. The last two miles should have been a glorious downhill run to Monmouth but the day before, the Welsh border was closed and I had to stop two miles short. I hope it still counts!

by **David Munchin**, Team Rector of Welwyn



Tom Sander (left) and David meet at John o' Groats

60 Churches in a day for Bike 'n Hike

Dave Wells (pictured front page) explains how he and his wife Jenny sped separately across the two counties by bike:

"We knew we wouldn't have time to stop at most churches to get the card signed, given how many churches there were but we started the day together at dawn, and after Standon, we said our goodbyes and headed in opposite directions. Jenny covered Hertford, Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford and Stevenage in the north and east, then Puckeridge, Braughing, and Buntingford, before dropping south at Cromer, to Walkern, Bennington and home - a total of 28 miles.

My route started with the rollercoaster roads of 'Little Switzerland' to Potters Bar, Radlett, Watford, Hemel, and across Bedfordshire before turning south, to Great Barford, Henlow, and the home territory of Knebworth at 137 miles.

We were fortunate to have beautiful weather with a light breeze. Bike 'n Hike is a great day out, where you can visit as few or as many churches as you like - we probably took it to an extreme! Seeing different churches of all shapes and sizes around the two counties was a great reminder of the physical role church buildings play in our landscapes, as well as housing the excellent work within their communities.

A highlight was a break at All Saints, Houghton Regis, where I was fed and watered with excellent cake and coffee, and a Covid-safe tour and demonstration of the bell tower (not easy in cycling shoes). I was very grateful for the welcoming party of Deborah, Barbara and Jenny back at Little Munden, and treated myself to a day off the bike to recover!"

by **Dave Wells**



BEDS & HERTS
Historic Churches Trust

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