Spring Newsletter 2023

The first signs of spring have arrived, a carpet of snowdrops, at St Mary's Baconsthorpe

The feel of spring in the air, and the changes in nature invoke a sense of looking forward to warmer days and with that starting to make plans for the year ahead. So, in the spirit of looking forward here are some of the events for you that the Norfolk Churches Trust has to offer this year.

Once again the Trust has been able to offer a tour of the churches of the ***STANTA*** battle area, which is taking place on Friday 31st March. This popular tour sold out in hours, thank you to you that booked and our apologies to those of you that were disappointed this time. We hope to offer the tour again next spring.

Stanford, All Saints

House by the Church is back for 2023. The Trust has been unable to host this popular event since 2019 due to the Covid pandemic, however we are pleased to announce that this special member only event will be taking place on Saturday 13th May from 10am to 5pm. Approximately 20 houses of interest, normally closed to the public, in the North Norfolk area have kindly agreed to open their doors to members of the Norfolk Churches Trust and their guests. The price per person is £50, with proceeds going towards the work of the Trust. To obtain your 'passport' to this unique event, see the events page of our website for booking information.
norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk/events/the-house-by-the-church/

The Trust is pleased to announce that Diva Opera will be performing at Holkham again this year. A summer's evening, a picnic on the lawn in beautiful surroundings, and Britain's foremost chamber opera company taking to the stage with the magnificent Marble Hall as their backdrop, that certainly sounds like summer.

This year's performances will be Giuseppe Verdi's Rigoletto on Friday 28th July and L'elisir d'amore by Gaetano Donizetti on Saturday 29th July.

For more information see the Holkham website:- www.holkham.co.uk/whats-on/diva-opera

The Events Committee is working hard to arrange further dates for your diary. If you have provided us with your email address, we will be in touch when we have confirmed details, otherwise please check our website for updates, norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk/events/ Currently, there you will also see information of events from other organisations including a series of lectures by *The Church Monument's Society* and The Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust Annual Conference entitled *Imagery, Wall Paintings and Screens.*

Hugo Vickers Talk

Hugo Vickers' lecture on Alice, Princess Andrew of Greece that had to be re-arranged due to the sad death of the Queen last September, took place on 4th February. Our thanks go to Mr Vickers for honouring his commitment. The evening, which included a two course supper, was a great success. It is hoped that Hugo Vickers can be persuaded to present more such lecture in the future.

Grants Awarded News

The Grants Committee met in early March and has awarded £49,000, which has been split between the following eleven churches.

Billingford, St Leonard	£6,000	North Elmham, St Mary	£7,000
Bradwell, St Nicholas	£3,000	Sculthorpe, St Mary & All Saints	£3,000
Dereham Baptist	£500	Thursford, St Andrew	£5,000
Field Dalling, St Andrew	£2,000	Waxham, St John	£500
Guist St Andrew	£5,000	Wilby, All Saints	£12,000
Haveringland, St Peter	£5,000		

These grants have been awarded to assist with repairs to windows, pews, and to assist with water drainage.

Wilby All Saints, pictured right, is in the midst of a major repair project. The current phase involves work on the chancel roof and ceiling and to help with movement within the porch. The north nave buttress, which you can just see in the photograph, is currently shored up.

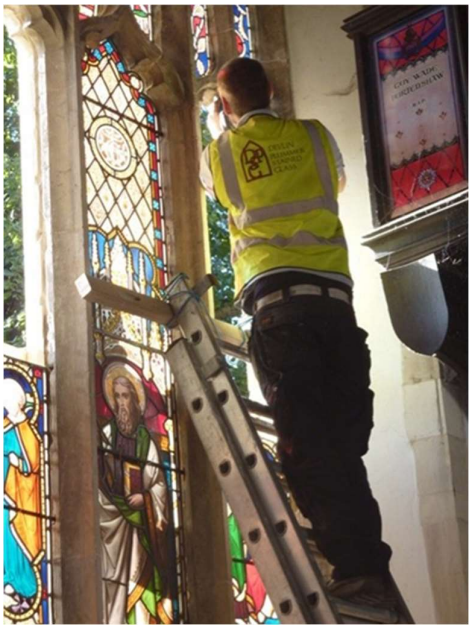
Grants Work Completed

To highlight how the Trust's grants are utililised, here are two examples of churches that have recently completed repairs and restoration work. The Norfolk Churches Trust was able to assist by offering advice and funds towards this important conservation work.

Before restoration

After restoration

In 2021 the Norfolk Churches Trust awarded Crostwight, All Saints £10,000 towards the urgent works required to save its nationally recognised Medieval wall paintings. Many of these works of art were destroyed during the Reformation, which makes the remains at Crostwight so historically significant. Work was completed before Christmas to stabilise the paintings which you can see in the before and after photographs shown here. There are other wall paintings at Crostwight, so if you are in the area, why not pop in and have a look for yourself.



Back in July 2022 the Trust awarded £1,000 to Great Ryburgh, St Andrews towards the repair of one of its stained glass windows which was showing stress cracks. The window had originally been made and installed by the William Wailes Company, one of the leading names in Victorian stained glass. Wailes' windows were known for their bright colours, which is clearly evident in St Andrew's newly repaired window.

As you can see the fundraising events that Trust arranges, and the endeavours of all those who take part in the Sponsored Bike Ride do make a real difference to the buildings that are such an important part of Norfolk's heritage.

So, a big thank you to our members, supporters, and donors.
Without you, there would be no Norfolk Churches Trust.

40th Anniversary of the Sponsored Bike Ride and Walk

1983 saw some significant firsts. Breakfast television arrived in the UK, the compact disc went on sale, the Ford Fiesta was launched, and the Norfolk Churches Trust held its first Sponsored Bike Ride. The original idea of a sponsored fundraising event came from our friends south of the border, attributed to Mrs Judith Ford, wife of the then Chairman of the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. She like Archimedes had a eureka moment in the bath, and the rest as they say is history. Suffolk held the first bike ride in 1982, with Norfolk and Essex joining in the following year. Since then, the event has gone from strength to strength with most churches trusts organising their own local events.

So, from our first bike ride in July 1983, during a heatwave, with the dulcet tones of Paul Young's number one *Wherever I Lay My Hat*, on the radio, Norfolk has raised more than £4.2 million to date. From 1987 the bike ride moved to a more clement September, and now coincides with Heritage Open Days, which seems very apt. With churches and chapels of any denomination receiving half of the money raised in their name, less a small contribution towards costs. This means that more than £2 million has been distributed in the form of grants around Norfolk, as a result of the event. That is definitely something to be proud of.

Some of you have taken part from the very beginning and are now taking part with children and grandchildren. Over the years the event has proved a popular family occasion, but whatever your motivation, whether you partake solo or as a group, the Trust is incredibly grateful to all our participants, sponsors, volunteers, administrators and supporters over the years, the success of this event is down to you.

From the inception, the organisers realised that funds would only be raised if people taking part enjoyed themselves, the idea being 'fun before money.' In some years, the fun element was severely put to the test as the 1989 report testified, 'the chilly wind whipped up the rain to deter all bar the hardiest and most enthusiastic'. However, the following year there seemed to be more encouragement with the report stating that in certain areas there was lively competition between churches and chapels to offer delicious home-made cakes and scones, with the suggestion there be a new dimension to the event, a *Good Food Supplement* added to the open churches list. It was also reported that the charms of the Hare Arms at Stow Bardolph caused a dramatic change in the progress of the team from Upwell St Peter. With all that in mind, we look forward to the 2023 event on Saturday 9th September, however, and with whomever you wish to take part we do hope will be a fun day out around the county, as a celebration of the bike ride's ruby anniversary.

Update on the 2022 Bike Ride

The money has been collected and calculated and some 287 cheques have been posted to churches and chapels, representing their share of the bike ride for 2022. The total raised was £134,301 our sixth best year overall. We have loved reading the stories of your day and seeing your photographs, some of which can be seen on our website and social media pages. Please do keep sending them in.

The winners of the photographic competition and most improved church for 2022 will be notified shortly.

www.norfolkchurchestrust.org.uk

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