

Friends

of the National Churches Trust



SPRING 2020

inside

Coronavirus and churches

By Claire Walker, Chief Executive, National Churches Trust



Our thoughts are with all our Friends and supporters who are living through the coronavirus pandemic, the biggest public health emergency of our lifetimes. Many thanks to those of you who have been in touch with messages of support – they are much appreciated by all of us.

A particularly special message has been sent to us by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, our Vice Patron. He conveys his best wishes to all our

Friends, supporters, staff and volunteers during this unprecedented period of uncertainty and worry. He is very much aware of the concerns that we all have and wants us to know that we are all very much in his mind.

The priority must be to minimise the spread of the virus and to make sure that care and support are provided to those whose health or well-being are at risk. As this issue of our Friends newsletter goes to press, churches have been advised to close. It is of course vital that churches follow government public health advice and directives.

However, we have heard of many examples of churches working in partnership with government, voluntary organisations and other faiths to ensure that the most vulnerable continue to be supported.

One example is that of the Union Chapel in Islington, London, which we grant aided in 2015. The Chapel is a base for a large number of organisations helping local people. One of their coronavirus initiatives has been to collect hand sanitisers and soap for local homeless people.

Local people

Throughout the UK, churches have always put the needs of local people at the heart of their work. Despite the practical public health difficulties caused by the coronavirus, this will continue to be the case. Face to face help is being supplemented by the use of online support in the form of social media and web chats.

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Union Chapel, London

© Pat Tuson / Alamy Stock Photo



**Celebrating
Mayflower 400**

See pages 6 - 7



**Discover
Church Fonts**

See page 11

More funding for churches

As the UK's church buildings support charity, we want to make sure that as many churches, chapels and meeting houses as possible remain open, in good repair, and able to benefit local communities.

Since 2007, we have helped nearly 2,000 churches with grants. Last year, our grants supported 188 churches and chapels and helped to remove 28 churches from the Historic England Heritage at Risk register. But with over 900 churches still on the Historic England register, and with many more also at risk in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, there is much more that needs to be done to help the UK's places of worship.

The good news is that 2020 will see the National Churches Trust increase the amount of money we award to churches for repairs, maintenance and the installation of much needed community facilities.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, including more money being left to the Trust in legacies, we plan to increase our grants budget to £1.4 million.

Grants for repairs

2020 will also see the National Churches Trust take over the administration of the Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants from the Church of England. We will allocate £200,000 worth of these grants this year, with the same amount being allocated by the Church of England. We hope to have £400,000 to allocate in future years.



The Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants programme supports Grade I or II* churches in England and Wales, Grade A or B+ listed churches in Northern Ireland, and Grade A or B listed churches in Scotland. Funding is available to church buildings of all denominations. Applications can be made

via our existing Gateway or Cornerstone application process - this means that a church could be awarded two grants for a project, one from the National Churches Trust's own funds and one from the Wolfson programme. This has the added benefit of saving time and effort in applying for and managing grants reporting. **More details** www.nationalchurchestrust.org/wolfsongrants

Coronavirus and churches

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At the National Churches Trust, as I write, our work continues but in accordance with the latest Government advice, all our staff and volunteers are now carrying out their duties from home. This may mean that it may take longer for letters to be answered and I hope that you will bear with us until things settle down to the 'new normal'.

Despite the coronavirus, the history, beauty and community benefit of the UK's churches, chapels and meeting houses will continue to resonate in people's hearts.

Support for our work continues to grow and this year we will be able to increase our grant giving to £1.4 million, as well as simplifying applying for funding by administering the Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants.

Last year, our first ever online auction raised almost £10,000 for our work. In early March, before the coronavirus escalated, Charles Banks (pictured above) from the USA, together with family and friends, managed to enjoy his winning lot, a special private tour of the Royal Naval College Chapel in Greenwich with Sir Michael Palin CBE.



Generous supporters

Thanks to our generous supporters we had a wide range of lots to auction, including bespoke tours of Lincoln Cathedral and York Minster and a collection of church guide books and pamphlets donated by one of our longstanding American Friends.

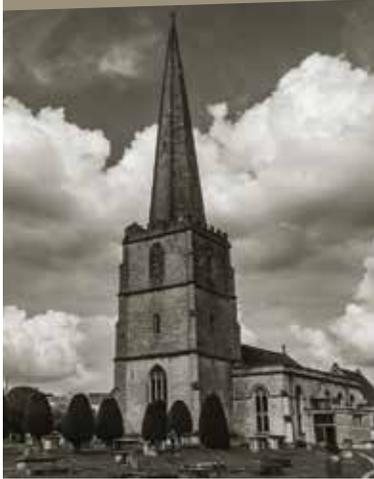
I very much hope we can hold a second auction this autumn – we will keep you updated as I anticipate some even more exciting and varied auction lots, including some more 'money can't buy' behind the scenes tours.

If you have any ideas for prizes that would be popular or would like to donate something church related that you think would be suitable for an auction, do please get in touch. I would be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in our work and for joining us in our love for ecclesiastical heritage. Please do stay safe over the coming months.

Chris Banks

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Applying for a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund can be that much easier with an experienced partner to guide you through the process. At Gifted, our aim is to give you the confidence and capacity to raise the money you need for the projects you believe in. We work with volunteer leaders in church communities across the UK and bring the most experienced team in the field to the challenging landscape of major gifts and grant fundraising.

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Sacred Wales Experiences



St Cwyfan's church, Llangwyfan

Helping churches and chapels create bookable tours is a big step towards boosting their income and long term sustainability.

Although delayed by the coronavirus situation, later this year we will be launching our 'Sacred Wales Experiences'. They will include activities such as 'coasteering' and visiting churches by bike, sampling local Welsh food and fascinating tours with behind the scenes access. Each church involved will receive a donation from each Experiences booking.

One of the first will include visiting churches by bike. Led by history enthusiast, experienced cycle leader and native Welsh speaker Eli Elis-Williams (from Green Lane Bike Tours), each bike tour will include

afternoon tea and each church visited will receive a donation.

We are delighted that our Bleeding Yews and Bluestones tour in Pembrokeshire is now on the BBC Wales website. You can see a gallery of places visited at: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000ckym

Mae cynorthwyo eglwysi i greu teithiau y gellid eu rhagarchebu a 'Profiadau' yn gam mawr tuag at roi hwb i'w hincwm a'u cynaliadwyedd hirdymor.

Er eu bod wedi cael eu gohirio am y tro oherwydd y sefyllfa coronafeirws, yn nes ymlaen eleni byddwn yn lansio ein profiadau cymru Sanctaidd. Byddant yn cynnwys gweithgareddau fel arfordiro ac ymweld ag eglwysi ar gefn beic,

danteithion Cymreig lleol a theithiau cyfareddol a chyfle i fynd y tu ôl i'r llen. Bydd pob eglwys sy'n rhan o'r cynllun yn derbyn cyfraniad ariannol o bob 'Profiad' a archebir.

Bydd un o'r teithiau cyntaf yn cynnwys ymweld ag eglwysi ar gefn. Fe'i harweinir gan Eli Elis-Williams, hanesydd brwd, arweinydd seiclo profiadol a siaradwr Cymraeg (Green Lane Bike Tours). Bydd pob taith yn cynnwys te prynhawn a gwneir cyfraniad ariannol at bob eglwys yr ymwelir â hi ar y daith.

A ewch i wefan y BBC i weld lluniau o'r lleoedd yr ymwelwyd â hwy ar y daith 'Yw Gwaedlyd a Cherrig Gleision': www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000ckym

Get social

If you are not already following us on social media, now is a good time to do so.

Social media is a powerful tool in building and maintaining our connections and this has become even more important due to the coronavirus.

We use Facebook and Twitter to share news and information about our work and the latest developments in church heritage. Social media also makes it easy for our Friends and supporters to tell us and the wider world about their local churches.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Which is why we are starting to increase our use of Instagram where we can share eye-catching photographs of the UK's beautiful churches.

In addition, you can also find us on Flickr and LinkedIn.

You can follow both our corporate National Churches Trust and our ExploreChurches church tourism social media profiles.

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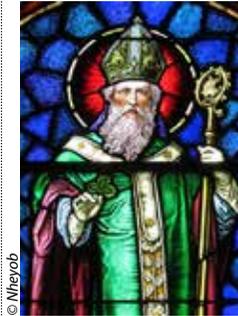
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If you'd prefer to receive a monthly digest of our latest news, sign up to receive our e-newsletter at www.nationalchurchestrust.org/enews

Treasure Ireland

The National Churches Trust is to lead a new project to support historic places of worship in Northern Ireland.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Department of Communities and the National Churches Trust, the project will run over three years. Treasure Ireland includes a grants fund which will offer between £500 - £10,000 for repairs and maintenance to prevent fabric deterioration that if left unchecked often leads to larger



St Patrick

problems, expensive to repair.

The project also aims to increase the number of people visiting churches in Northern Ireland for days out or as part of a holiday. At least 100 churches will be added to the National Churches Trust's ExploreChurches website providing visitors with a one stop digital gateway into discovering the architecture and history of Northern Ireland's religious heritage.



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Good Guardianship

St James the Great, Cradley, Herefordshire is the first winner of our new Good Guardianship Award. Run by the National Churches Trust in partnership with The Pilgrim Trust, the new award rewards local people for excellence in planning the maintenance of a church or chapel. The church received a prize of £5,000 towards the ongoing care of their place of worship.



© Andy Sillit

Stephen Sklaroff, Trustee of the National Churches Trust with representatives of St James the Great at our Local Treasures awards event, held at the Mercers' Hall in London in November 2020.

Spring clean your church



Prevention is better than cure and regular church maintenance is always preferable to large repairs. Here are three maintenance tasks that should be top of your list this Spring.

1. Use binoculars to check your roof for any frost, snow and wind damage. Also check that gutters and downspouts are working.
2. Check all external brickwork and stonework for frost damage. Key are mortar joints where masonry is susceptible to deterioration.
3. Examine the trees in your churchyard to see if they need trimming or pruning before growth starts.

Don't be alarmed if you find work that needs doing!

Help is at hand with MaintenanceBooker, our heritage website that helps keep churches and chapels in good condition and takes the hassle out of booking maintenance jobs. Together with The Pilgrim Trust, we are offering a grant of up to 50% towards the cost of maintenance services, to a maximum of £500.

Registration is FREE.
Full details at www.maintenancebooker.org

High Toynton's tower disaster



19 January 2020 is a day the people of High Toynton in Lincolnshire will not forget; the tower and spire of their beloved St John the Baptist fell to the ground.

In 1872, the Victorians rebuilt the church and thought incorporating a tower would make a good spectacle. Unfortunately they didn't reckon with the depth of the graves on this ancient site. Within 20 years the tower was being underpinned and latterly movement had been monitored. More recently, modern technology indicated that there was little movement. However,

on a beautiful frosty January morning, the tower collapsed.

Alison Bell PCC Secretary, said: "This event was a terrible shock. The church was not fully insured and the cost to secure the site was £30,000. But the village has rallied round and has loaned the church the funds. This disaster has sparked renewed energy and we are excited about the future, confident we will rebuild and provide an attractive 21st century space for both community and church."

Claire Walker, Chief Executive of the National Churches Trust said: "The tower collapse at St John the Baptist

in High Toynton was a highly unusual and unexpected event. Thank goodness that no-one was hurt and congratulations to the village for having helped with funding emergency work to make the building safe. It is important that all churches carry out regular inspections of their churches and fix anything that could compromise the safety of their building. Our Foundation Grants offer grants of between £500 and £5,000 towards urgent maintenance works and small repairs and can also fund small investigative works and surveys." **Full details:** www.nationalchurchestrust.org/foundationgrants

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The parish church and the manor house



Historic Houses, founded in 1973, is a cooperative association representing and promoting the interests of independently owned houses, castles and gardens across the UK. James Birch, Historic Houses' President, sees his organisation and the National Churches Trust having a common mission.



For centuries, the parish church and the manor house have been twin symbols of Britain's village heritage; both the buildings and the people who live in and use them have been at the centre of local communities. But social change has presented historic houses and historic churches with a shared set of problems.

Their overworked custodians struggle to keep up with routine maintenance, while deeper structural problems build up in their fragile ancient fabric until the bill for urgent repair work far outstrips the resources available. So often built to accommodate far more people than they serve today, the narrowing of their social and economic base does as much harm as erosion of their physical foundations. To survive, these places must be used – both for their original

purpose, as places to live or to worship, and in innovative ways that bring them new audiences, who may go on to become supporters and champions.

Lived-in homes

There is no realistic alternative to historic houses remaining homes, even if we wanted one. Ever since Sir Ernest Gowers was asked to chair a working group on the 'problem' of country houses by Clement Attlee, government has recognised that the resources needed to acquire and maintain the thousands of Grade I and II* listed houses across Britain as museums or empty public monuments could simply never be found. But more than that, the Gowers Committee judged public or charitable ownership among the worst possible outcomes for a historic house. Remaining as lived-in family homes is more meaningful as well as more affordable.

The value of long-standing ties can be seen in the very real relationship that many of our houses have with their local church. Whether they're the burial places of generations of their ancestors, or just their nearest



Wolterton Park, Norfolk

neighbour, our owners often feel a sense of responsibility for their churches that takes the form of hosting fetes and garden parties, serving on committees, or donating the proceeds of open days.

Peter Sheppard, who lives with his partner Keith Day at Wolterton Park, is a perfect example. These heritage superstars are painstakingly restoring a former seat of the political Walpole family. Peter is also chairman of the Norfolk Churches Trust, which has pioneered a fundraising event called 'The House by the Church'. Owners of significant houses near churches open for visitors on one day a year in aid of the Trust.

Our members are tireless entrepreneurs, running tourist attractions and special events and turning outbuildings into cafés and shops. Activities like weddings link house and church once more, while for others we're friendly competitors – yoga workshops or baby-and-parent mornings, for example. For any historic

building this evolution of purpose – keeping what's still vital from the past but always seeking out new roles – is key to survival.

Support preservation

That's why, exactly seventy years after the Gowers Report, we're working closely with the National Churches Trust on our shared mission – to get people into the wonderful ancient buildings of Britain, to help them understand the threats they face, and ask them to do their bit to support their preservation. We hope they'll enjoy themselves along the way.

This spring we've been telling our sixty thousand members about the joys of ExploreChurches.org and reviewing Dr Matthew Byrne's excellent book, *English Parish Churches and Chapels* – all

by way of nudging them to become Friends of the Trust and get out and about to see some of the fabulous places they'll be helping to save.

Of course, the coronavirus is, as I write, curtailing many activities, including visits to churches and historic houses. Although visits to historic houses may be on ice for the time being, we must all hope that normal life will resume sooner rather than later.

At Historic Houses, around three hundred of us have got together to create the country's best free-access membership pass for historic houses, castles and gardens. What's more, we're offering a discount on membership to Friends of the NCT. On top of that, every time someone uses the NCT's code we will donate a further £5 to the Trust for them to continue their important work. We're stronger together.

James Birch

Sign up at [historichouses.org/join](https://www.historichouses.org/join). Use promotional code **NCT520** to get £5 off and we will receive a further £5 donation.



Pilates at Stradey Castle

© Stradey Castle 2019

Explore the origins of the



The National Churches Trust's ExploreChurches website is the UK's digital entry point for church tourism.

The website is the perfect place to discover churches and to find out all the information you need to visit them. In 2019, the number of churches featured on the site increased to over 4,000. It now includes all the UK's cathedrals and major churches.

Themed lists are one of the websites popular features.

To mark the 400th year since the Mayflower's pioneering voyage, one of the latest themed lists tells the story of the passengers and crew who undertook the epic journey inspired by a desire to start a new life. Some sought religious freedom, others a fresh start in a new land.

Journey with us through some of the churches where they worshipped and discover for yourself the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims.

Find out more at:
www.explorechurches.org/mayflower-400

Radical preachings All Saints, Babworth

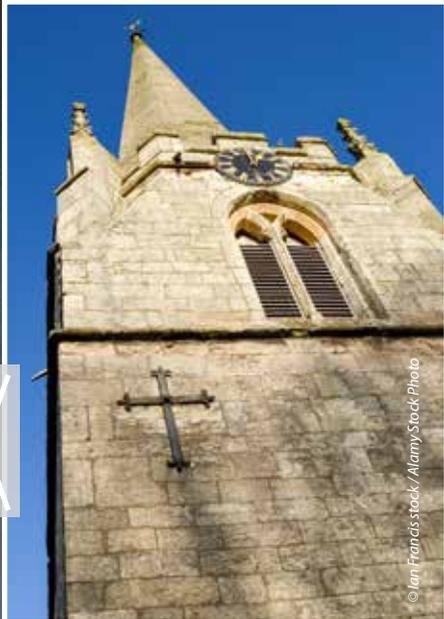
Richard Clifton was rector of All Saints from 1586–1605. His radical preaching led to accusations from the Archbishops of not conforming to church rules, thus sparking the origins of religious separatism. Clifton was taken in at Scrooby Manor from where he continued to preach and lead the Scrooby separatist congregation in secret.



Governor of Plymouth Colony St Helena, Austerfield

William Bradford attended St Helena's where his uncle was baptised and was churchwarden. He joined the secret Scrooby Congregation and became a follower of Richard Clifton. William Bradford went on to become Governor of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts and was the second signer and primary architect of the Compact in Provincetown Harbor. Inside, the church has the original font as well as stained glass commemorating William Bradford and his role in the Mayflower story.

Mayflower Pilgrims



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The church Elder St Wilfrid, Scrooby

It is hard to believe that the small hamlet of Scrooby, with its elegant 13th century limestone church and slender steeple is the place where a secret movement was created, leading to the creation of new settlements in new lands. Parishioner William Brewster was instrumental in establishing a separatist church, using nearby Scrooby Manor for meetings. Educated in Greek and Latin, Brewster became the Elder of the church and led the congregation on the Mayflower.

First attempt to flee St Botolph, Boston

In 1607, the separatists attempted to leave England for a new life in Holland. Travelling in secret from Scooby to Boston, they were caught, imprisoned and sentenced to death. Fortunately, they escaped and returned to Nottinghamshire to try again. St Botolph's church, with its iconic tower, has fine stained glass in memory of the Pilgrims.



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© Roy Lister / Alamy Stock Photo Plymouth

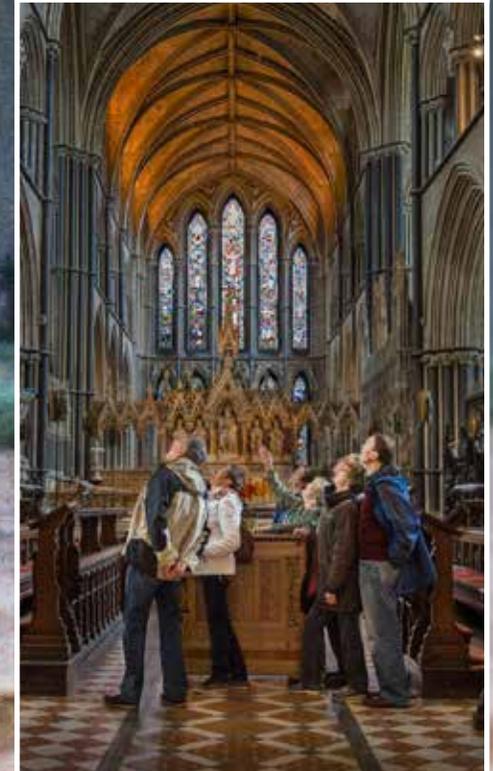
Leaving for the New World

Plymouth Minster

The Mayflower was hired in London but Plymouth was the last place it stopped before setting sail on 6 September 1620 with 102 passengers. Within Plymouth Minster is the Door of Unity, named in honour of the close connections between Plymouth and the United States.

Cattle to America Worcester Cathedral

Edward Winslow was born in Droitwich Spa in 1595 and educated at Worcester Cathedral. In 1617, he travelled to Leiden to join Brewster and the separatist group. A prominent member of the early pilgrims, he went on to serve as Governor of the Plymouth Colony three times and brought the first domestic cattle to America.



Meet the National Churches Trust team Caroline Welch – Church Support Officer, Wales



What does your job involve?

I've got a dream job. Based in Wales, I'm leading on 'Experiencing Sacred Wales'. This is showcasing the wonders of ancient Welsh churches, and bringing tangible financial support to them through increased visitor numbers and the creation of bookable 'Experiences'. It is a mix of grass roots training, high profile PR, marketing, photography and film.

What do you most like about your job?

The best bit of the role is the people I'm working with. People make or break a job – and I feel so lucky to be working with so many kind, supportive and experienced colleagues across the Trust, as well as those I've connected with in Wales.

How did you become interested in churches?

I fell into church heritage almost by accident 20 years ago – landing a job with the Friends of Friendless Churches - and I've always been drawn to landscape, the vernacular, the places where time stood still.

Which is your favourite church?

My favourite church is Grade II* St Justinian's Llanstinian near Scleddau in Pembrokeshire. A simple, medieval stone church in the most gloriously unspoilt setting; there's a real atmosphere about the place. It's one of the Saints and Stones Pilgrimage churches, trails which we'll be giving a lot more publicity too on our website, www.explorechurches.org. Llanstinian church is closed at the moment, but I'd love it if our work could be the catalyst for it reopening to visitors once more.

Information about all of our staff and about our Trustees, Presidents and Vice-Presidents and members of our Grants Committee can be found on our website. Please visit www.nationalchurchestrust.org/about-us/our-people

Helping historic churches



Lancaster Priory

© Travellinglight / Alamy Stock Photo

32 churches are to benefit from our latest grant awards, sharing in funding totalling £333,000.

They include All Saints church in Hove which is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The church is the work of John Loughborough Pearson, the architect of Truro Cathedral. It is one of the largest 19th century Gothic revival churches. Our £40,000 Cornerstone Grant will help to fund a project to repair two east towers which are in a perilous state. Their repair will help to ensure the long term viability of what is a remarkable building.

Another church receiving a National Churches Trust Cornerstone Grant is Lancaster Priory. Funding of £13,000 will help fund repairs to the tower at the Grade I listed building, making the church watertight and preserving its historic fabric.

Mother church

Lancaster Priory is of huge historical and architectural importance and one of the most frequently visited parish churches in the North West. It is the mother church of the City of Lancaster and stands proudly above the city with the nearby Castle.

Dame Pauline Fielding and Mr Andrew Nicholson, Churchwardens at Lancaster Priory, said: "We are delighted with the outcome of our appeal to the National Churches Trust and grateful to receive such a generous grant. It is a most welcome and significant contribution towards the total needed to restore the tower to a fit condition so as to serve the Priory and the City of Lancaster for years to come."

Local landmark

As well as helping historic churches, we also fund unlisted churches. A £7,000 grant will help St Boniface church in Birmingham, which dates from 1958 and serves a council estate on the outskirts of the city. The church is a popular community building and local landmark. Our grant will help to pay for a project which will encapsulate asbestos around the girders in the ceiling of the main worship area.

In Wales, St Michael's church in Tintern, Monmouthshire receives a £10,000 grant to install toilets and a kitchen. The church, which has medieval origins, serves a village which has seen the closure of its Post Office, school and hotel. The new facilities will be of great benefit to local people.



Are you curious about Medieval England?

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Alarms stop metal theft

E-bound

E-Bound AVX Ltd



St Bartholomew church, Colne

Profile by Olenka Hamilton

As the price of metal has increased over the past few years, so has the incidence of lead theft. Although insurance can help with repair bills, the replacement of a lead roof can cost churches many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

A security company called E-bound has spent the past decade developing a unique alarm system, which it manufactures, specifies, installs and maintains for clients.

E-bound, a member of the National Churches Trust's Professional Trades Directory, now has nearly 1,200 churches

on its books, as well as a castle, a few supermarkets and some restaurants, for whom it manages and services alarms. "We haven't quite cracked St Paul's in London, but have a few cathedrals," says Hannah Goodley, operations manager at the Peterborough based company.

One alarm system costs around £4,500, and once installed is serviced regularly by E-bound engineers.

While the company started out thinking they could just adapt a run-of-the-mill burglar alarm, they soon realised



Roof of St Bartholomew, Colne

that church roofs are such challenging environments to police that a more sophisticated alarm would have to be invented. "You need to get signals through thick stone walls and consider the presence of wildlife," Goodley explains. "The system needs to be wireless because of conservation and it needs to be simple because there will be multiple people using it." Furthermore, since churches vary enormously structurally, every system has to be different.

Alarms fitted to every church

A great success story for the company has been in Suffolk. Working together the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich managed to fit alarms to churches. After the alarms were installed, the thieves, who were doing up to four raids a night at the time, simply left the area. While the alarm system doesn't necessarily mean the thief is caught, it has proven to be an excellent deterrent.

Our Professional Trades Directory offers a wide range of trades people who can help you with work to your church, chapel or meeting house.

With over 200 companies in our directory, you should be able to find the right person for the job. Anything from a leaking roof or stained glass that needs repairing to new toilet facilities that need installing, you can find the right person. Many members can help with other heritage buildings and private houses.
www.nationalchurchestrust.org/ptd

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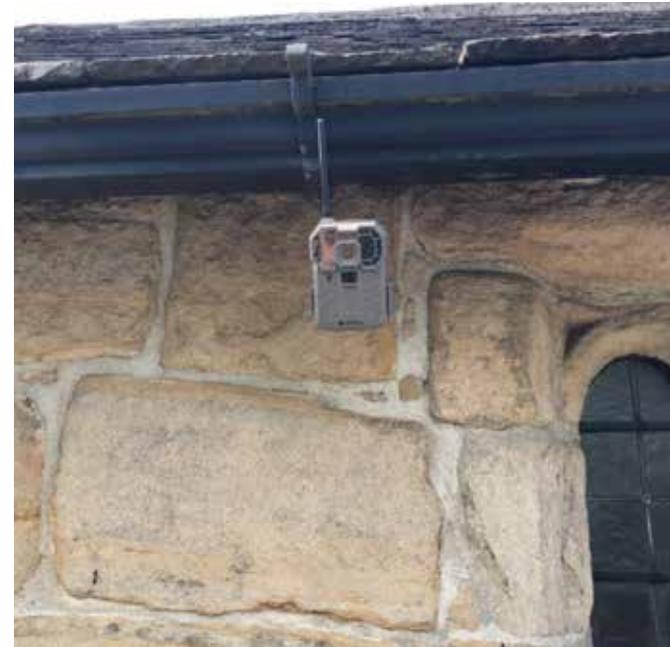


PROFESSIONAL TRADES DIRECTORY

The E-bound alarm system saved the day

The system certainly seems to work. It saved St Bartholomew in Colne (pictured left), which was recently targeted three times in quick succession, from what would otherwise have been a significant loss. On each occasion, the E-bound alarm system saved the day by scaring the intruders off empty-handed.

"The main purpose of a roof alarm is to deter intruders from stealing the lead, detect intrusion at the earliest opportunity and reduce the risk of a significant loss occurring," Goodley sums up. "Whilst St Bartholomew's did suffer repeated attacks over a short period of time, the damage suffered was minimal and the intruders were not successful in removing any lead from the site."



E-bound alarm

It works so that when an intruder enters, the alarm system is triggered and sends a signal through to the alarm receiving centre which calls on the key holders of the church to attend. Meanwhile, a booming voice command sounds telling the intruder to leave. It is so unexpected, it was dubbed "the voice of God" in an article in The Daily Telegraph a few years ago.

Then follows a short sharp sound, which is supposedly less easy to ignore than the ongoing beeping noise which is often associated with everyday car alarms. Finally, a strobe flashes for 20 minutes.

CONTACT DETAILS

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www.e-bound.co.uk

Supporting the National Churches Trust



St Philip & St James, Tarrington, Herefordshire

By Ian and Cheryl Sowerby

Over the years, we have enjoyed visiting churches, large and small, and we have a fondness for many of them. We were married in the small 13th century church of St John the Baptist at Bransford, Worcestershire. Being rather remote, and before the days of 'sat nav' we worried that our family and friends wouldn't be able to find it! But they did!

Our liking for long distance walks has taken us from Coast to Coast, through Dales and Wolds. We wish we had counted the number of churches we visited on the 630 mile long South West Coast Path, stopping to take shelter, removing our walking boots and having a bite to eat. Spotting a spire in the distance gives a sense of progress

and exploring the churches certainly made the walk more memorable.

We live in Herefordshire, overlooking the 'Hop Group of Churches'. St. John the Baptist at Yarkhill nestles in the landscape, and Tarrington church is much loved as a beautiful building and meeting place, where every spring snowdrops dazzle.

Splendid cake

A fondness for churches runs in the family. The 1952 wedding of Dorothy and Bernard Peters at St Mary's church, Bishops Frome was celebrated with a splendid cake (pictured above right) created by Uncle Bernard. A Master Baker, he created a scale replica of St Mary's church weighing in at a massive 25 pounds!



When we retired we started to think about making a legacy. At first, we considered a donation to the maintenance of Bransford church, but soon realised we wanted to help other churches as well. These buildings are an integral part of the landscape, making an important contribution to local communities and to people's lives. But they can no longer be supported and maintained solely by local residents.

We had read about the National Churches Trust, but didn't know anything more about it, so we picked

up the phone. Expecting an anonymous recorded message inviting us to leave a voicemail, it was a surprise to find that we were put straight through to Claire Walker, Chief Executive.

Personal touch

Talking to Claire, we immediately felt the very personal touch of the organisation. She answered our concern that we weren't actually that religious in a friendly and kindly manner. Church attendance is not a prerequisite for support. Quite simply, the Trust is a well-run charity for people who love church buildings and is not affiliated to any particular denomination.

Since that initial conversation, we have attended events, including Christmas concerts and the 2019 Local Treasures awards. We have seen for ourselves the commitment from staff, volunteers and friends in supporting churches and chapels. All this dedication makes us confident that we have made the right decision to leave a legacy to the National Churches Trust.

If you would like further information about leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Claire Walker, our Chief Executive at legacy@nationalchurchestrust.org or on 020 7222 0605.

News in Brief

20 years of caring for God's acre

In order to raise the profile and celebrate the unique heritage of burial grounds, a photographic celebration has been created around monthly themes. A selection of photos will create an end of year travelling exhibition. More details contact: andrea@cfga.org.uk



Study into church benefits

A new research study is being carried out by the National Churches Trust into the social and economic benefits that churches provide to local communities and to the UK. It will build on a similar study, undertaken in 2010, which looked at the physical condition of places of worship and the way they are managed, funded and used by their communities.

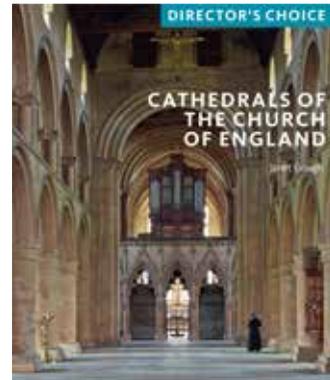
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Book Reviews



Cathedrals of the Church of England

By Janet Gough
Price £14.95

2020 has been designated Year of the Cathedral by the Church of England. Perfect time for a new edition of *Cathedrals of the Church of England*. It's written by Janet Gough, past Director of the CofE's Church Buildings division; her knowledge and passion for the subject shine through the pages of this small but perfectly formed paperback.

Each cathedral has two pages devoted to it, one being a stunning photograph and the other a concise description with just enough information to whet your appetite for a visit.

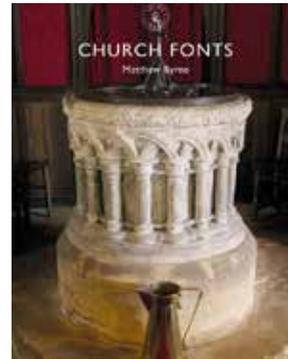
The book is a slim 96 pages, so it is portable and won't take up valuable space on your bookshelves. The high production values of the book make it ideal for a coffee table, or even as a breakfast bar and it serves as a thorough introduction to the glories of England's 44 cathedrals.

The new edition has space for two additional cathedrals. The first is St Germans on the Isle of Man, which was made a cathedral in 1980. The second is Westminster Abbey, founded in 960 as a monastery, and created a cathedral in 1540 for 15 years. It is now a Royal Peculiar and setting for great state occasions as well as an extraordinary repository of national history, art and architecture.

We have three copies of *Cathedrals of the Church of England* to give away in a competition. Simply answer the question: Whose Saints death in an English Cathedral 850 years ago is being marked in 2020? Email your answer to info@nationalchurchestrust.org by 15 May with Book Competition in the subject line.

Church Fonts

By Matthew Byrne, Shire Books



The National Churches Trust is delighted to be continuing its association with Shire Books on the publication of *Church Fonts*, a new book by Matthew Byrne, a long time supporter of our work.

Matthew, a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society has been exploring, studying and photographing churches for nearly 40 years. Many Friends will know of his work through *English Parish Churches and Chapels*, a beautifully illustrated book of photographic portraits and descriptions of 26 English churches and chapels.

The font is, perhaps, the most important part of any church. For centuries, no infant in the parish was thought to be saved from damnation until christened and fonts, as the vessels for this crucial rite of passage, were a pre-eminent tool in the Church's fight against the Devil.

This new book is a great introduction to church fonts and is perfect for anyone who wants to know more about how they were made and their changing styles from the Anglo Saxon to the 21st Century.



SPECIAL OFFER

We have negotiated a special offer for Friends and supporters of the National Churches Trust who wish to buy a copy of *Church Fonts*. The book is on sale in bookshops at £8.99. However, if you buy the book online from us, it will only cost you £7.50, including postage and packing. To buy the book, go to www.explorechurches.org/fontsbook

Meet our Friends

Jyoti Chanrai



Why are you interested in churches?

The architectural beauty of churches fills me with awe and wonder. I love the English countryside, and a church steeple or tower in the distance draws me like a magnet. I'll often detour to get up close, and am sometimes disappointed to find it locked. Though I am not a Christian, the quiet calm and solitude of the interior provides a soothing balm. If I can light a candle, that makes it complete.

Why did you become a Friend of the National Churches Trust?

I love visiting churches, and their history fascinates me. As church going numbers decline, I appreciate the enormous costs involved in their upkeep. It breaks my heart to see churches being converted to residential dwellings. In maintaining

these buildings, the Trust plays a creative and vital role in preserving our history and wonderful heritage.

Which is your favourite church and why?

This one is like having to choose a favourite child. I recently stumbled upon the ancient St Swithun's in Quenington, a pretty village in the Cotswolds and loved its original Norman carvings over the two doors. Another contender would be St Mary's in nearby Fairford, consecrated in 1497 - which luckily escaped Henry's attentions and retains its 28 original stained glass windows.

If you are reading this and are not already a Friend of the National Churches Trust, why not join us?

Every new Friend receives a joining gift of *English Parish Churches and Chapels*, a delightful and inspiring book of photographs.

A full year's membership costs only £30 when paid by direct debit. Join online at www.nationalchurchestrust.org/friends

BOOK REVIEWS

OFFERS FOR FRIENDS

We have a range of offers for Friends and supporters including:

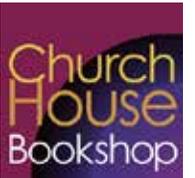


Join Historic Houses Membership of Historic Houses gives you free access to over 300 beautiful historic places across the UK. Although the coronavirus situation is currently preventing visits to heritage sites, this offer can be claimed at

any time. Supporters will receive £5 off annual membership and we will receive a £5 donation when you use the code **NCT520**. www.historichouses.org/join-online

Discount at Church House Bookshop

Claim your 10% discount on books and greeting cards online using voucher code **NCTRUST10** www.chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk



Subscribe to The Oldie Friends can subscribe for just £1 an issue. Not only do you save money, The National Churches Trust will also receive £10 for each subscription. **Just visit www.subscribe.theoldie.co.uk and enter the code NCT18**

Home insurance with Ecclesiastical

We are delighted to offer a 10% discount on Ecclesiastical Home Insurance. To take advantage of this offer quote NCT19. Ecclesiastical will also donate £130 to us for any new home insurance policy. **Just use the reference NCT130 when you call 0800 783 0130 for a quote.**



There are full details of all our offers for Friends on our website at www.nationalchurchestrust.org/offers

Favourite churches

In these strange times of isolation due to the coronavirus pandemic, we invite you take a virtual journey with us and explore the churches that are dear to our hearts.



St Patrick, Pattrington, Yorkshire is the choice of Nigel Mills, our Senior Church Support Officer.

Visit www.explorechurches.org/our-favourites and find which churches are the favourites of our staff.

Friends help us celebrate

On 18 December 2019, over 400 of our Friends and supporters filled St James's church, Piccadilly to celebrate the Trust's work.

A special thanks to everyone who attended and in particular to those who took part.

These included Huw Edwards, Bill Bryson OBE and Sir Michael Palin CBE, Vice-Presidents of the Trust, Dame Penelope Wilton DBE, Joe Stilgoe, the Parkgate House School Choir, singers from the ENO and also Reverend Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James's Piccadilly.

Thanks as well to our sponsors for the event, CCLA Investment Management Ltd. Thanks also to Buzzacott LLP and Distributed Sound & Video.



© Andy Sillet

Huw Edwards, Bill Bryson OBE, Sir Michael Palin CBE and Joe Stilgoe



© Andy Sillet

Dame Penelope Wilton DBE



© Andy Sillet

Paul Sheehan, Adam Sullivan, Karen Foster, Claire Pendleton



© Andy Sillet

Parkgate House School Choir

2020 TOURS AND EVENTS

Due to the coronavirus, we have had to postpone all our tours and events at least until the end of July 2020.

We very much hope that the situation will have resolved itself by the end of the year. Please make a note of the date of our 2020 Christmas concert. This is due to take place on Wednesday 9 December and will be held once again at St James's church in central London. You can keep in touch with the latest news about our events on our website at www.nationalchurchestrust/events