



supporting church  
buildings for 60 years



# Keeping Churches *Alive*





*Churches have been part of our local and national landscape for so many centuries that their presence is often taken for granted. But the continuance of this is down to hard work, dedication and the injection of resources, and the National Churches Trust is proud to have played a part in helping keep churches alive for the last 60 years. Over the next 60 years the challenge will be different, and maybe even greater, but we approach it with confidence and commitment.*

Luke March

Chairman,  
National Churches Trust

# 60 years of supporting church buildings of historic, architectural and community value

**In 1951, the state of repair of parish churches in Britain was a serious problem. This was not a new situation, but the culmination of decades of neglect, stemming from the socio-economic changes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when tithes were abolished, when the squirearchy began to fade, when the slow move from country to town became a flood and when the boom of the Industrial Revolution had turned to bust and left urban deprivation in its wake. These circumstances were exacerbated to crisis point by the almost total cessation of maintenance and repair during the Second World War.**

Urged on by the Pilgrim Trust and the Society of Antiquaries, the Church Assembly (now the General Synod),

set up a Commission to determine what needed to be done to reverse the position. The Commission found that £4,000,000 was needed to put the ecclesiastical built heritage of the country in order. It was the recommendation of the Commission that a charitable trust should be set up to raise and distribute funds to churches of architectural and historic significance.

## **Historic churches**

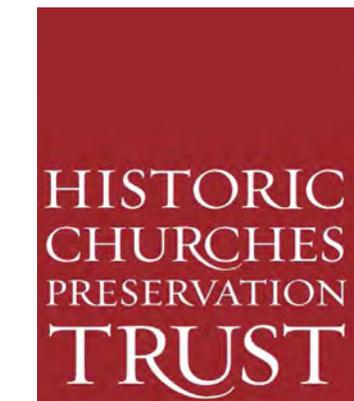
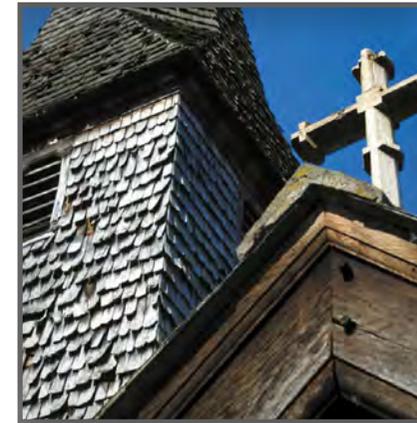
So, after discussions in 1952, a trust deed for the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (HCPT) was drawn up in 1953. Drawing on the generosity of private donors, legators and charitable trusts, for over 50 years the HCPT operated primarily as a grant giving trust, providing vital funds for repairs to historic churches.

From the outset, the HCPT supported churches of all the major Christian denominations, as well as chapels and meeting houses.

In 2007, a new charity, the National Churches Trust, was created to take forward the work of the HCPT. As well as funding repairs, it also had a wider remit to support and promote church buildings, provide support, advice and information, raise awareness and act as a catalyst for bringing in new resources to the sector.

## **National Churches Trust**

Today, the National Churches Trust remains the only national, independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting church buildings of historic, architectural and community value across the United Kingdom.



## **The National Churches Trust's key areas of work include:**

- Providing grants for the repair, restoration and modernisation of church buildings.
- Supporting projects that enable churches to engage with their local communities and keep their buildings open.
- Collaborating closely with other heritage organisations, local churches trusts and volunteer networks across the UK in their support for churches.
- Encouraging good management and regular maintenance of church buildings by providing practical advice, support and information.
- Providing new ways of promoting visits to churches and bringing a new generation of people into contact with church history and architecture.
- Working to increase awareness among the public and decision makers of the value of places of worship.

## **The Incorporated Church Building Society**

**The Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS) was a close associate of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust in its early years. Founded in 1818, the Society came into being with the flourish of church building that followed the French Revolution.**

It had similar aims to the Trust, though restricted to Anglican churches. In 1983, the Trust was invited to take over the management of the Society, and in recent years the trustees of the ICBS made its funds available for supporting the Trust's grants programmes.

Finally, in 2013 Parliament, which had put the ICBS on a statutory basis in 1828, and the Charity Commission agreed changes to its rules, which brought its affairs under the National Churches Trust for administrative and regulatory purposes.

# Grants are at the heart of our support for places of worship

**By the end of 2012, the total of grants and loans allocated by the Trust since 1953 was in excess of £37 million, which in current prices equates to over £85 million. Grant amounts have averaged around £1.4 million annually (£1.5 million with loans included).**

## Repair Grants

Repair Grants have always formed the majority of the Trust's support of places of worship. A continuing priority has been repairs to roofs and rainwater goods. If a roof leaks, then the building gets damaged and one gets an even bigger problem.

The basic eligibility criteria for a Repair Grant application have remained the same throughout the Trust's history:

the award is made for essential fabric repairs to any place of worship (with the exception of cathedrals) which is of a recognised Christian denomination and is open for public worship.

Places of worship of any age can apply and today the National Churches Trust is one of the few grant-giving organisations that will consider applications from both listed and unlisted Christian places of worship across the UK.

Decisions are made by an independent Grants Committee comprised of experts from the church and heritage sectors.

Since 1953, grant amounts have ranged from £33 4s 4d (Mileham, Norfolk, awarded 1957) to £100,000 (Portsea, Hampshire, awarded 2000). The curious amount of the smaller grant dates from the early days of the Trust when, to prevent, the entire collapse of a building, the Trust

undertook to pay all the bills, as at Thurleigh in Bedfordshire and Great Witley in Worcestershire.

The higher grant was a result of the decision taken in 1999 by the Trustees to institute Millennium Grants to assist those churches facing overwhelming deficits. Up to then, the highest level of grant available was £7,500. With parishes facing deficits of up to £250,000, or even substantially higher for a large inner city church, this amount had become, over the years, a drop in the ocean.

## Making a difference

The Trust actively seeks to ensure that its grants make a difference to the progress of a project of works and the new grants were therefore a solution to achieving this aim against the background of rising costs.

The Millennium Grant scheme was further developed in 2003, becoming the Cornerstone Grant scheme, now offering grants of at least £40,000.

*“Our grants have helped churches, chapels and meeting houses throughout the United Kingdom”*

This development of the scheme was made as the Trust gained experience in handling these larger grants and realised that for a church with extremely limited fundraising opportunities, a bill of £25,000 could be just as insurmountable as a million pound repair project.



St Arvan, Monmouthshire, Wales



St Michael and the Holy Angels, West Bromwich



St Peter, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

# Helping places of worship throughout the United Kingdom



©John Longman

St John the Baptist, Little Maplestead, Essex

**The variety of fabric repairs funded by the Trust is never ending and, on occasion, both entertaining and alarming: from Ashford Bowdler in Shropshire where the church chancel was in danger of falling into the river without an emergency underpinning project, to wooden roofed churches attacked by flights of belligerent woodpeckers. There is scarcely a Christian denomination in the country which has not been assisted, from the Church of England to Serbian Orthodox, from Unitarians to Congregationalists.**

When it comes to discussing the individual churches which the Trust has helped, the range of material is so rich as to make any choice difficult. It is perhaps not surprising that the Trust has helped virtually every church named in Simon Jenkins' *'England's Thousand Best Churches'*. Whichever way one analyses the grants – by architectural style or importance, historical interest or significance, by geographical area, by rural or urban



community, by denomination – the Trust's net has been spread wide.

Geographically, all four corners of the British Isles have been covered by grants; from St Lawrence, Jersey to St Magnus, Lerwick in the Shetland Islands, from Christ Church, Lowestoft in Suffolk to St James, Moy in County Tyrone. In addition to England and Wales, the Trust has been giving grants to places of worship in Northern Ireland since the 1980s and in Scotland since the 2000s.

## **Norman splendour**

Architecturally, the churches range from the Saxon gem of Earls Barton in Northamptonshire, through the Norman splendour of New Shoreham, Sussex, the Early English of Uffington, Berkshire and Decorated of Patrington, East Yorkshire. Then into the flowering of the Perpendicular movement and the great wool churches such as Lavenham, Suffolk, and the exquisite angel roof of March, Cambridgeshire.

The explosion of the Neo-Classical and Baroque is reflected in the grants to Ingestre, Staffordshire, St Paul's, Covent Garden, London and many of the other great London churches built by Wren and his contemporaries. Extremely rare English rococo is shown at Great Witley in Worcestershire.

The 19th century with its plethora of styles from Pugin's Gothic throwback at Cheadle to the Arts and Crafts of Holbeton in Devon is well represented in the grants list. Awarded a grant in 2012 was the Roman Catholic church of St Augustine in Ramsgate where Augustus Pugin realised the principles of design that he used throughout his career.

Increasingly, 20th century churches are finding it necessary to repair roofs and walls. Those which have received grants from the National Churches Trust include St Wilfrid's Church, Halton, Leeds, pioneering in its use of concrete vaulting, and the church

of Our Lady Star of the Sea on the Isle of Anglesey, a high round-arched concrete building that looks like the hull of an upturned boat.

## **Independent churches**

Nor must the heritage of the Independent churches be overlooked, from the seventeenth century domesticity of the Quaker Meeting Houses, as at Claverham near Bristol, to the stolid splendour of the nineteenth century Welsh Baptist foundations, typified by the China Street Chapel at Llanidloes.

Historically, all churches hold a significance for their surrounding community, and some Trust funded churches have connections with national figures. Elstow in Bedfordshire was home to John Bunyan in his youth and became, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the starting point for Christian's journey.

# Ensuring that churches, chapels and meeting houses remain living buildings

**Other national figures with connections to Trust funded churches include John Wycliffe, translator of the Bible into English, who was rector of Lutterworth before his death in 1384. Burnham Thorpe in Norfolk has strong links with Nelson where his father was rector and flags from a number of Nelson's ships hang on the walls. The villages of Bredwardine and Clyro were home to the Victorian diarist, the Reverend Francis Kilvert.**

The Trust has also assisted many churches where the great, the good and sometimes the infamous are buried: the philosopher Thomas Hobbes at Ault Hucknall, Derbyshire; the founders of the Industrial Revolution Richard Arkwright and Abraham Darby at Cromford,

Derbyshire and Broseley, Shropshire respectively; the composer Edward Elgar at Little Malvern in Worcestershire; the writer Elizabeth Gaskell at Brook Street Unitarian Chapel at Knutsford in Cheshire; the spy Guy Burgess at West Meon in Hampshire.

Guidebooks give entertaining accounts of local worthies, as this example from Thakeham parish church on their rector who was appointed in 1834: *"It seems it was not unusual for Mr Hurst to stop in the middle of a service and request the clerk to go to the local inn to see how many customers the landlord had. If the number exceeded that of his congregation, he would abruptly close the service and suggest that they had all better adjourn to the inn."*

## Community Grants

The importance of providing facilities such as toilets and kitchens and improved access for members of the public is now recognised as a key

way in which churches can remain at the heart of local communities. That is why, in 2008, the National Churches Trust introduced the Community Grants Programme.

The programme enables wider and more active community use through the installation of new facilities and so ensures that the UK's churches and chapels remain living buildings integrated into their local communities. Since 2008 the Trust has awarded Community Grant offers totalling £1.3 million.

## Welfare work

A prime example of a place of worship benefitting from a Community Grant is Memorial Community Church in Plaistow, in the east London borough of Newham. The church building, which was originally called the Memorial Baptist Church, was opened in 1922 to house the congregation and the church's welfare work, and it remains a vital and welcoming community hub.



In 2011 the Trust awarded the church a £20,000 Community Grant to pay for the installation of toilets and improved access, including a ramp, new flooring, wide self-closing doors and an intercom system. The grant funding allowed much greater use of the church by the local community for projects to help the homeless, young people and the elderly. These include the Bridges Project, which gives breakfast every Saturday to at least 70 homeless people.

## Supporting local people

Next door to the church is a sheltered housing scheme. Many of its residents have mobility problems but the provision of a ramp and toilets meant that more of its residents could attend activities organised in the church, including a new 'Active Tuesdays' group.

In 2012–13 the Trust administered a one-off grant from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which allowed it to award several

significant grants to listed places of worship doing vital work to support local people by providing resources that are not available elsewhere.

Under this scheme, places of worship that have been helped include St Mary, Malpas, Newport. Situated in a deprived suburb, this Grade II listed church was built on the site of a 12th century Cluniac monastic cell, with the current neo-Norman Gothic building rebuilt in 1850.

## Enhanced facilities

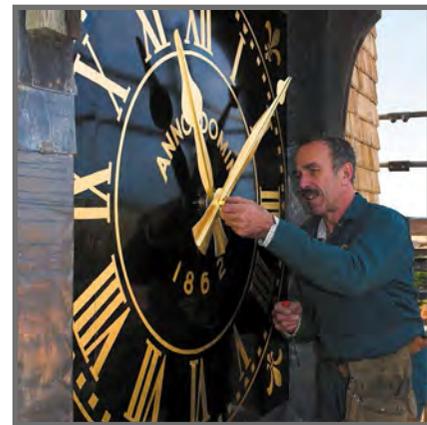
There was a need for greater community cohesion in the area and the National Churches Trust awarded a £50,000 Community Grant to help construct a meeting room, provide disabled access and a small kitchen. Use of the enhanced facilities include surgery sessions for a parish nurse scheme and activities for teenagers.

Another example of funding under the DCMS scheme was in West Bromwich where the town centre has undergone major regeneration.

Here the Grade II listed church of St Michael and the Holy Angels received a £40,000 Community Grant. Outdated and inadequate facilities meant that the church was underused for community activities. The funding helped to upgrade toilet and catering facilities. This helped the church meet the specific needs of the local community, for example through the provision of English language classes for new migrants, IT classes and dementia care.



# Providing advice and information to help churches, chapels and meeting houses



*“Coordination across the church heritage sector”*

**In addition to continued grants for repairs and modernisation, in recent years, the focus of the Trust has widened to aim at bringing more resources to the sector, raising awareness of the plight and contribution of places of worship, and finding additional ways of supporting them alongside grants.**

To this end, the Trust has developed a wider range of support, advice and information, available both through its website and through a dedicated member of staff, to provide churches with tips on where to seek funding, ideas and technical advice.

The Trust has been at the forefront of efforts to encourage wider coordination across the church heritage sector, including leading the development of what has now become the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, which brings together various denominations and heritage bodies involved in caring for places of worship.

In undertaking its work, the Trust has sought to ensure that it has a good understanding of the sector in which it operates and the buildings with which it works. Therefore in addition to working closely with partner organisations, in 2010 the Trust undertook a major national survey.

## **In-depth knowledge**

The National Churches Trust Survey, which sought to understand how the UK's church buildings are maintained, funded, managed and used by their communities was the largest-ever exercise of its kind. The representatives of thousands of church buildings from all parts of the UK engaged with it. The findings provided more in-depth knowledge for the Trust on the repair and maintenance problems encountered by church buildings and helped to quantify the important role played by volunteers in caring for them.

Whilst identifying that a small but critical number of buildings are in



urgent need of help, the survey's results also highlighted the wide variety of purposes other than regular worship to which these places are put, with many used for charitable works, cultural events and for activities involving children and young people.

## **Local churches trusts**

Spreading awareness of the needs of churches and encouraging participation in their restoration and revival at both national and local level has also always been an important part



of the Trust's remit. Six local churches trusts – in Cheshire, Essex, Kent, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire and Wiltshire – were active in 1953. Since then, most of England has been covered. The Trust has sometimes helped to get things under way, but the local churches trusts are all individual and independent charities in their own right.

In recent years, the links between these local trusts and the National Churches Trust have been strengthened through dialogue and cooperation. Nationally support has been provided to the annual fundraising drive 'Ride+Stride' which takes place in most counties and raises much-needed funds for churches and their local churches trust.

The National Churches Trust has also facilitated the work of the Historic Churches Liaison Group, renamed the Churches Trusts Forum in 2013, the body through which local churches trusts work together and which now has an annual conference.



Through its Partnership Grants the National Churches Trust has devolved part of its grant-making to local churches trusts to take advantage of their local expertise and knowledge, and has been instrumental in the creation of new trusts where none existed before, including Greater Manchester in 2006 and Cumbria in 2008.

# Supporting the cause of caring for places of worship



**The launch of the Trust in the early 1950s was a poor time to try to raise money. It seemed, then as now, that every charity in the country was chasing a diminishing resource of available money. Heritage, especially of the built environment, was not perceived as one of Britain's glories and economic strengths as it is in the 21st century.**

Added to these difficulties the foundation of the Trust clashed with other national appeals for individual churches. And besides this, there was a movement within the Church of England which felt that, as an Established church, it was the State who should provide the aid, as was the norm in continental Europe. The estimated required amount in 1953 of £4,000,000 – roughly equivalent in today's terms to £40,000,000 – was as large a mountain to climb as Mount Everest. But just as Mount Everest was conquered in 1953, in the first two years of its existence the Trust had

begun to chip away at the foothills of its own mountain and had raised £250,000.

Over the years the variety and scope of fundraising that has driven the Trust forward is remarkable and testament to the goodwill, existing to the current day, for supporting the cause. From exhibitions, premieres, concerts and performances, to donations by authors of their royalties and benefit dinners, people across the UK have continued to help.

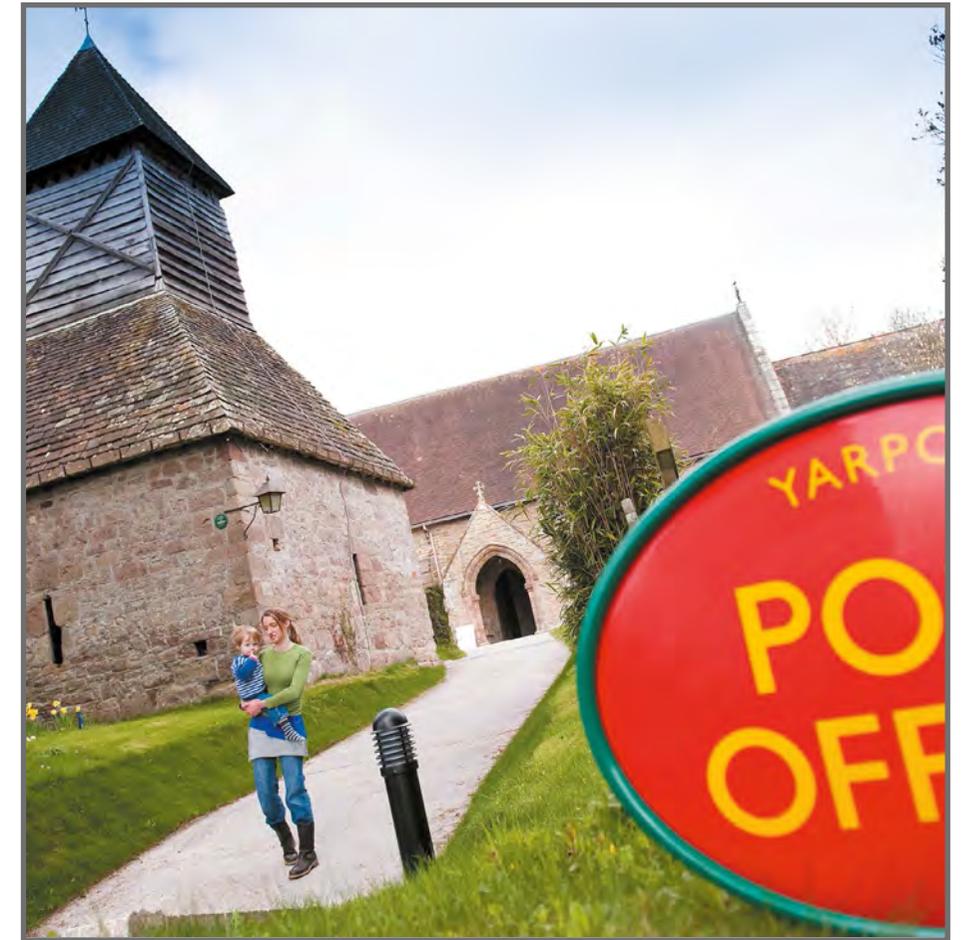
## **Generosity of donors**

The Trust's funds have been augmented by the generosity of the charitable, corporate and individual donors who have supported the Trust; some since its foundation. Particular thanks are due to the Pilgrim Trust, which, having been instrumental in the establishment of the Trust, has supported it, year on year, ever since. The Dulverton Trust has likewise

*"The generosity of charitable, corporate and individual donors"*

supported the Trust from the start and continues to do so. The Trust has attracted donations from other charitable trusts, from City livery companies such as Goldsmiths, from business and from private individuals. For many years, until economic pressures grew, the Church Commissioners gave annual donations, and churches and their communities still do so.

The Friends' scheme was set up in the early 1990s in response to a growing number of private supporters. Today Friends receive regular updates, special offers and invitations to events, with new recruits joining regularly. Friends help the Trust keep abreast of issues of common interest and concern and newsletters provide topical information and news not only for those interested in looking after their buildings, but also for people who enjoy visiting churches and learning about their heritage.



*St Leonard's Church and community shop, Yarpole, Herefordshire*

## **Enthusiasm of supporters**

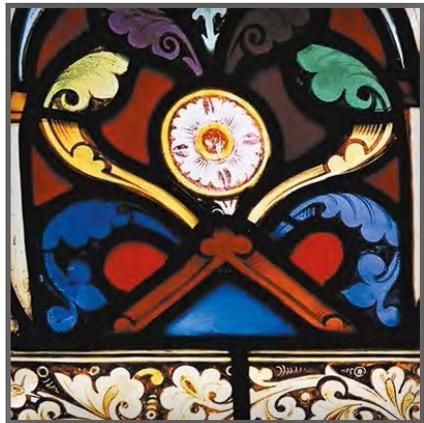
The Trust is fortunate to have received many generous bequests over the years and continues to benefit from gifts left by way of a legacy. The enthusiasm of supporters is reflected by the good work their donations enable.

*To become a Friend of the National Churches Trust please email [friends@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:friends@nationalchurchestrust.org), visit our website or call 020 7600 6090.*

# Patrons, Presidents and Trustees



HM The Queen



HRH The Duke of Gloucester

**The Patron, Presidents and Trustees who have supported and served the Trust so faithfully have together formed another cornerstone in its progress.**

At its foundation, Her Majesty the Queen graciously agreed to be the Trust's Patron and remains so today, while the Duke of Edinburgh accepted the Presidency from 1953 to 1965.

The Trust is proud that since 1953 each and every Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York has endorsed the work of the Trust by acting as Trustees up to 2005 and as Joint Presidents from 1980.

The whole roll call of Trustees is a formidable list of leading politicians, churchmen, architects, historians, architectural historians, and business leaders.

The appointment of Sir Winston Churchill in 1953 started a tradition of Prime Ministers joining the Trustees which lasted until 1976.

The Trust has also been honoured by the support of HRH The Duke of

Gloucester KG GCVO as a Trustee from 1985 and since 2004 as Vice-Patron.

The renowned champion of churches, Sir John Betjeman, was a Trustee from 1967 to 1980. From the architectural world came Sir Edward Maufe and W I Croome; representing architectural historians, Sir John Summerson and Alec Clifton-Taylor, along with the distinguished historian, Sir Arthur Bryant.

The participation of the Duke of Grafton on the one hand and the Arthur Deakin, Chairman of the Trades Union Congress in the 1950s on the other, show the breadth of the appeal of the Trust.

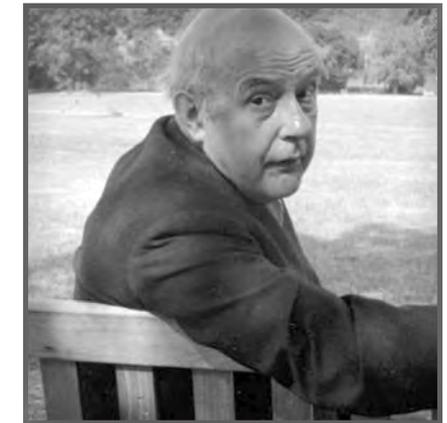
In 2013, four new Vice Presidents were appointed to the National Churches Trust. Huw Edwards, broadcaster and journalist, The Most Reverend George Stack, Archbishop of Cardiff, Reverend Canon Roger Royle, Canon Emeritus to Southwark Cathedral and Richard Taylor, writer and lawyer and author of the best selling book, 'How to Read a Church'.



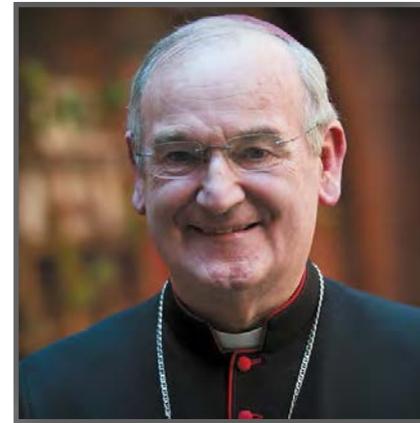
The Duke of Edinburgh



Sir Winston Churchill



Sir John Betjeman



Archbishop George Stack



Huw Edwards



Arthur Deakin



Richard Taylor



Canon Roger Royle

# Chairmen, Secretaries and Chief Executives

**It can be argued that any charitable enterprise owes its success to three elements: its Trustees, its staff and its supporters. The Trust has been remarkably rich in all three factors. In Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, the ebullient, determined and forthright Conservative politician, the Trust found exactly the right voice it needed to launch and establish it as a serious force in the 1950s.**

Serving first as both Secretary and Executive Committee Chairman, Bulmer-Thomas was passionately devoted to this cause. His letters show him persuading potential donors to give their support, travelling throughout England visiting the churches who had appealed to

the Trust, charming distinguished architects to take time out of their schedules to visit remote parishes and report to the Trust, challenging and spurring on dioceses and parishes who did not believe that the money could be found to retain their local heritage. Bulmer-Thomas' commitment to church buildings is amply demonstrated by the fact that he went on to found The Friends of Friendless Churches, taking the work of the Trust to the next stage for those churches whose congregations and financial resources had dwindled away until closure was inevitable.

## Success of the Trust

The success of the Trust soon proved that combining the roles of Chairman and Secretary was impractical and the role of Secretary was taken on by Hugh Llewellyn-Jones in late 1953. Hugh Llewellyn-Jones served the Trust with great loyalty until his retirement in 1980, steering the Trust through various difficult phases when

the Trustees faced tough decisions about the range and scope of their work. Churches continued to benefit, quite literally, from the legacy of Llewellyn-Jones who, on his death, left a generous legacy to the Trust for its continuing work.

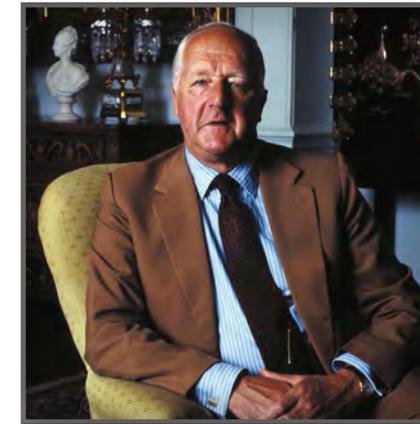
Following Llewellyn-Jones' retirement, the HCPT had three further Secretaries: Ian Radford (1981-89), Roger Heptinstall (1990-93) and Michael Tippen (1994- 2001). In 2002, when James Blott took on the role, the title changed to Director.

## Taking up the baton

Following James Blott's departure in 2005, the title changed again, this time to Chief Executive, in line with the decision of the Trustees to move the Trust forward into a new phase of development and Andrew Edwards was appointed as such in 2006. Andrew Edwards led the organisation through its transformation into the National Churches Trust, and was succeeded by Claire Walker as Chief Executive in 2011.



Ivor Bulmer-Thomas



The Duke of Grafton



Claire Walker

Following Ivor Bulmer-Thomas as Chairman cannot have been an easy task, but seven people have taken up the baton: Viscount Crookshank (1956-60), Anthony W Tuke (1962-1967), the Duke of Grafton (1968-1997) and Lord Nicholas Gordon-Lennox (1997-2002), the Very Reverend Dean Henry Stapleton (Acting Chairman 2002) and Michael Hoare (2003-2012).

Michael Hoare was a key driving force behind the creation of the National Churches Trust, and after nine years as Chairman was in 2012 succeeded by Luke March.

The role of Chairman at the Trust is not a sinecure: it is a practical office requiring time and effort from its holder and the Trust is grateful to all the Chairmen who have supported and developed its work through their work.



# A passion for churches

*In conversation with the National Churches Trust, Lord Cormack, Trustee of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust 1972-2004 and now a Vice-President of the National Churches Trust, reflects on over 40 years of work and support for historic churches.*



Lord Cormack

**I was elected to Parliament in June 1970. I had always had a great interest in historic churches and architecture generally. But during a short post-election holiday my wife and I took in the Golden Valley in Herefordshire where we visited some marvellous churches. It was when I was in Abbey Dore that I became conscious of the fact that we were not going to keep our great historic churches unless their often small communities had real help to do so, and by real help I meant state aid.**

***“Our extraordinary legacy of historic churches”***

So I decided to campaign in Parliament for state aid for historic churches and I introduced a Private Members’ Bill, which was debated in 1972. Although my Bill was not enacted, the cross party support and national interest it generated helped to underline the real necessity of doing something about our extraordinary legacy of historic churches.

Eventually the campaign for state aid came to a successful conclusion with money channelled originally through the Historic Buildings Council and then through English Heritage, the creation of Michael Heseltine in the early years of the Thatcher government. And in 1994 came the National Lottery.

When I was preparing my Bill I wrote to a number of people who I thought might be able to furnish me with good examples and useful statistics and one of those to whom I wrote was Hugh Llewellyn-Jones, the Secretary of what was, in those days, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust.

## Very important churches

Hugh was a very remarkable chap and he gave me some wonderful examples of very important churches with tiny congregations to sustain them. He was very supportive of what I was seeking to achieve in Parliament but more than that he wanted to get me involved in the Trust. So in 1972 I was invited to become the youngest Trustee.

Shortly afterwards I was appointed to the grants committee which was the most fascinating committee on which I have ever served. In those days it was chaired by the Dean of Gloucester, Seiriol Evans. He was not only a colourful character (the last Dean always to wear gaiters) but he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of historic churches.

Also on the Committee was the Duke of Grafton, the Chairman of the Trust, who became the doyen of heritage campaigners, and two very remarkable women, Billa, Lady Harrod and Isobel,

Lady Radnor. They were absolutely passionate about historic churches, and Lady Harrod had founded, and chaired, the largest of the county trusts in Norfolk.

To cap it all we had John Betjeman, whose guide to historic churches is still the best book in print on English historic churches. He could be very incisive, but he could also be wonderfully anecdotal. And he spoke with a warmth and affection about historic churches which was palpable.

We used to meet in the old Constitutional Club at the bottom of St James’s Street at least six times a year. We would assemble in the morning at around 10.30am for coffee and then start going through the applications methodically. One of the Trust’s architect advisers was always in attendance.

## Historic importance

We would go through the list of grant applications very carefully. Every parish

had to make a detailed submission and it was also considered necessary for a member of the grants committee to have visited the church, not necessarily in connection with that specific application.

Occasionally an application would come from a church which none of us knew. So it was I found myself going to the little church of Aston Eyre, which is just outside Bridgnorth in Shropshire. I went because they needed a grant to restore their church. They had over their north door one of the finest pieces of Norman carving in the country, a Tympanum of Christ entering Jerusalem.

If we were satisfied that a church met the criteria of historic and architectural importance, we would seek to give it a grant, so long as we were convinced that what they were seeking to do was right, and being done under the direction of a reputable architect, and by builders who knew about restoration. When we were satisfied

on all the criteria the only question was, how much do we give them? In those days the biggest grants we gave were generally between four and five thousand pounds, but we would also sometimes advance a loan to be paid back over a suitably long period.

I think there is still a great appreciation of our historic churches not confined to believers. Simon Jenkins with his book *‘England’s Thousand Best Churches’* has brought many people through their doors. He is not a believer, but he does care deeply for the beauty of the churches about which he is writing.

Those of us who are Christian have an extra dimension to our appreciation, because we believe they are, first and foremost, places of worship, and must be kept for that purpose. But it is absolutely true that there is among people who rarely darken the doors of churches a desire to maintain them.

*Continues on next page*

# A passion for churches

*Lord Cormack continues his conversation about historic churches.*

I had a personal example of this many years ago when I was Churchwarden in the Parish of Brewood in Staffordshire. We suddenly discovered an outbreak of dry rot. During the course of one Sunday every house in the parish was visited. Almost everyone gave, whether they were Anglicans, Roman Catholic or Free Church, or non-believers. They gave because the thought of the village, without its focal point, was something they did not want to contemplate. So they dug into their pockets, some quite deeply. By Evensong we had raised half the money we needed.

## Future generations

Of course, as church buildings get older they get more fragile. They need more attention. So the challenge is to ensure that future generations are as aware of their importance to the fabric of our national life, as their fathers and mothers, and grandfathers and grandmothers, have been.

In Lincolnshire we ran a competition in 2012 for primary school children for the Prayer Book Society. The children copied out their favourite prayers and illuminated them. I suggested that the Lincolnshire Churches Trust (of which I am Vice President) should give the winning schools free membership. That has been very successful. The schools have had speakers from the Trust. They have told the children all about their own churches and the neighbouring ones. They have had drawing competitions.

That is what you have to do. You have to excite the young. That is the biggest challenge of all.



*“As church buildings get older they get more fragile”*

*Lord Cormack is one of the longest serving Parliamentarians of recent years.*

*Lord Cormack was elected Member of Parliament for Cannock in the general election of 1970. Following boundary redistribution he was elected Member for South Staffordshire in the 1974 general election which he represented until his retirement in 2010. Lord Cormack founded the All Party Parliamentary Arts and Heritage Group and served as its Chairman for 30 years.*

*He was created a life peer in 2010 as Baron Cormack. In 2011 he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire.*



# The National Churches Trust: Into the future

In recent years heritage has become the new 'buzz' word for increasing numbers of people in the country. The National Trust has around four million members: confirmation of the increasing importance to a significant proportion of the population of saving and preserving the legacy of past generations for everyone to enjoy.

## Hub of activity

Churches go beyond being places of static preservation: they are often the crucial epicentre of their community, providing a home for local groups and activities, such as play groups, job clubs, support groups, musical events and concerts. In doing so, the churches continue a thread from the time when churches were the hub of all local

activity, when Old St Paul's Cathedral in London provided a venue for hiring servants, finding a scrivener, or simply being a meeting place for discussion.

What does it cost to keep this thread from being broken, to ensure it is woven into the future? The Trust estimates that last year the gap between need and funds available from other sources for repair projects which were considered by the Trust for grant aid was over £9 million. The Trust covered £1.2 million of this deficit but it is obvious that much more needs to be done and the Trust must find new sources of funding to close the gap. It must also continue to assist churches in programmes of routine maintenance to stop the minor repair becoming a major catastrophe; it must spread awareness of itself to communities unaware of its work.

60 years on from the foundation of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, many of the nation's churches are in a

*"Churches are the crucial epicentre of their community"*

far better condition than they were in 1953. This is a testament to the work of the Trust and those who have given generously so that it has been able to provide over 12,000 grants and loans since its creation.

## Wider community

But it is also a tribute to the dedication and hard work of the small groups largely of volunteers who keep many of these places of worship going. Not to say that the task is complete. Unlisted churches are unable to access those funds available to the more historic churches, and as time passes, churches of more recent construction over the last century are added to those facing major repairs.

That is why the National Churches Trust is committed to promoting the use of churches to the wider community, enabling future generations to use, learn from and enjoy these buildings.



St Martin in the Bull Ring, Birmingham



# Help for your church, chapel or meeting house from the National Churches Trust.

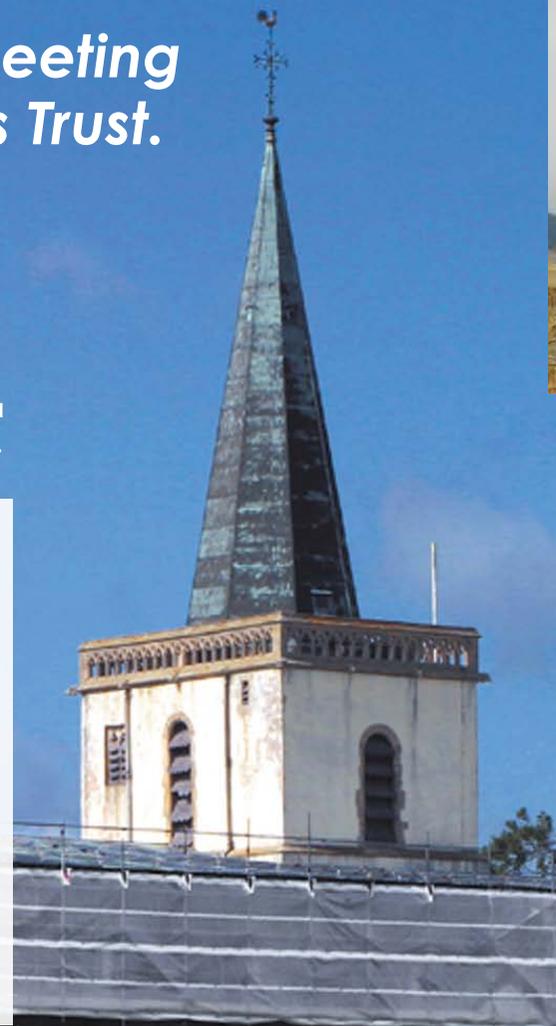
## How to set up a Friends Group.

People love your church. It may be where they worship. It is also a symbol of the local community, past and present, where they catch up with friends at regular coffee mornings, a beautiful building they walk past on the way to school or a place for a moment of peace and reflection in a busy world. It is also a reminder of home for those who have moved away.

A Friends Group gives your church a way of engaging with the world around you, of inviting interested and likeminded people to be a caring and practical part of your church life. The enthusiasm, commitment and local knowledge within your community is invaluable. It is also a way of saying that the church building is not just for the congregation, it is there for the community (as medieval churches were originally).

The National Churches Trust has developed an invaluable toolkit to help you set up a Friends Group for your church, chapel or meeting house. It will guide you through the process, and includes thinking about who might be involved, formalising your structure, and what your group might do.

You can download the full toolkit for free from our website at [www.nationalchurchestrust.org](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org)



## Could you help us by remembering the National Churches Trust in your Will?



Currently The National Churches Trust can only afford to support one in every seven churches who apply to us for help. Sadly we are turning down many very worthy applicants.

Each year, we rely on the very special generosity of our supporters who choose to leave us a gift in their Will to help us make a difference to communities across the UK.

We understand how personal this choice is, but would like to ask if you would consider helping us with a legacy, after you have looked after your family and friends.



**The National Churches Trust survey estimated that over 50% of the UK's church buildings facilitate activities such as nurseries and youth groups, and over 40% are used for support services including debt or drug counselling and for arts, music and dance.**

To find out more about leaving us a legacy, in confidence and with no obligation, call us on 020 7600 6090 or email [info@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:info@nationalchurchestrust.org)

We would be delighted to send you our free booklet explaining legacies in greater detail.

National Churches Trust, PO Box 72075, London EC1P 1PQ

Registered Charity Number: 1119845

Will you help us safeguard  
our nation's heritage?



To become a Friend of the National Churches Trust: please join via our website at [www.nationalchurchestrust.org](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org) or contact us on 020 7600 6090 or at PO Box 72075, London EC1P 1QJ

For more information about our work: visit [www.nationalchurchestrust.org](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org)

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