



Chairman's Welcome



A warm welcome is extended to all our readers with the first Newsletter of 2023. With the sun shining and the colours of spring in abundance, it was good to be able to meet with over 50 of the Trusts' Friends on our first visit of the year on Saturday 22nd April.

We were very well led by Dr Chris Brooke and Prof Michael Jones, exploring St James Halloughton, St Michael's Hoveringham and St Aidan's Caythorpe. A busy afternoon which finished up with a delicious tea at Caythorpe Village Hall.

It is a real privilege to be able to explore our heritage in such a relaxed manner and to have the history so carefully unpacked. There is always something new to be seen and learn on these visits and if you have not had the chance to experience them, please keep an eye on our very good website for further visits during the year, or consider becoming a Friend of the Trust. My thanks are extended to Anthea for organising the event and to Chris and Michael for their guidance. If you know of any interesting churches in the county that you would like to visit, please contact Anthea.

Final preparations are being made for our summer party at Welbeck Woodhouse on the 22nd July, which is shaping up to be an exciting event in a special venue. Keep the date free and await further details.

As we look forward to May and the Coronation of King Charles III, you may be fortunate to be able to join with bell ringers throughout the UK to celebrate the event, which will also give us all the opportunity to hear an amazing variety of bells across the county. On the subject of bells, it was a privilege at very short notice to be able to contribute towards the cost of some urgent repairs that were required to stabilise the south transept gable of the Grade 1 listed St Mary's Church in Nottingham, which had begun to rock gently while the bells are rung. Although there will be scaffolding in place, the bells will now be safely rung on the 6th May!

Thank you again for all your support and enjoy the spring and the opportunity to appreciate our churches across the county. Enjoy the Newsletter and do share it with your friends!

Graeme Renton - Chairman

Friends' Visit Halloughton, Hoveringham and Caythorpe Churches



Dr Chris Brooke talks to the Friends about Hoveringham church

The first Friends' visit of 2023 was a real treat; not only did we get to explore three very different and very interesting churches, but we also were allowed to visit the 13th century tower of the prebendal house at Halloughton. Courtesy of Mrs Crane, we were allowed to take the staircase to the top of the medieval tower with its fabulous views over the surrounding countryside. Such tower houses are very rare in this region; the only other example of a tower house in Nottinghamshire is at Beauvale Priory.

St James Halloughton is a fairly small 13th century church, nestled in a pretty church yard. The church was greatly "restored" by the architect Ewan Christian in the later 19th century. At the west end of the church are two striking windows, installed in 1977, the gift of Miss Ellen "Nellie" Gash.

Mrs Gash was the last in a family which had been in Halloughton for over a hundred years. One window depicts the mother church, St Mary at Southwell, along with a scallop shell, the symbol associated with pilgrims and St James. The other shows an oak tree and axe, symbols of the occupation of Mrs Gash's father, George Gash, who was the woodsman for Halloughton Wood.

Our next church at Hoveringham was very different; the original medieval church was demolished and a replacement built in 1865. The Victorian church is constructed in red brick with yellow brick courses for decoration. Inside is a large double alabaster tomb to the memory of Sir Robert Goushill and his wife Elizabeth Fitzalan. It dates from the early 15th century, and NHCT trustee, Professor Michael Jones, told us the tragic story of how, in 1403 Sir Robert was wounded fighting for Henry IV at the Battle of Shrewsbury. For his conduct on the field Robert was knighted, before being treacherously stabbed to death by his servant.

The third church of our visit couldn't have been any more different! St Aidan's at Caythorpe is almost unique in that it is a Tin Tabernacle which is still being used for worship today. These temporary churches were quickly erected to provide a community with a church or chapel for worship; St Aidan's was built as a Chapel of Ease for the village of Caythorpe in 1900. Very few of this type of church are in existence today; almost all have been replaced by permanent buildings, and others have been relocated, or used for secular purposes. This Tin Tabernacle is a very interesting survivor, and although evidently in need of some maintenance and restoration work, has been recently granted Grade II listed status, securing its future, with maybe future funding from our trust.



Caythorpe's Tin Tabernacle of 1900

As is traditional, the afternoon was rounded off with an ample spread of sandwiches, sausage rolls and various cakes, all provided by the good folk of Caythorpe. The refreshments were much enjoyed by all!

Andrew Paris - NHCT Trustee

NHCT Grant Aided Project Worksop Priory - Blind Arcade Restoration

At some point during the 1850s Sir Gilbert Scott created a new stone reredos to sit behind the High Altar in Worksop Priory. It has six recesses, each with trefoiled and recessed heads topped by a crocketed canopy, and every recess is divided by a marble colonnette that terminates in capitals with gilded, stylized foliate ornament with some naturalistic foliate decoration. The backs of each recess in the arcade have gilded, intertwining and stylized foliate carving in stone.

In 1929 the interior of the priory church was partially remodelled and the transepts were restored in 1935. It was probably at this time that the reredos was moved into the newly reconstructed north transept where it was set against the north wall as an ornamental 'blind arcade'.



Worksop Priory former reredos - prior to restoration

In 2017 extensive repair works were undertaken in the nave of Worksop Priory which included the removal of Victorian plaster from the walls. An inspection of the reredos revealed that conservation work was required, not only due to the recent dust and dirt pick-up as a result of the works, but flaking paint was evident along with the loss of much of the original gilding.

Through the Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust, funding for the conservation work was provided by the Alan Evans Memorial Fund, the Veneziana Fund and by the Friends of NHCT .

Conservation work by Michelle Pepper entailed careful mechanical cleaning, starting at the top and working down, using vacuum and brushes followed by repeated moist swab

cleaning using 3-5% non-ionic surfactant in de-ionized water before neutralization with plain de-ionized water swabs. Following treatment the surface was allowed to dry out and 18 months later a select amount of new gilding was applied, carefully restricted so as to offer the optimum amount of gilding without making the arcade appear too new (even though it was evidently more heavily gilded originally). The gilding also needed to work with the balance of the remaining colour left on the arcade.

Dr Chris Brooke - NHCT Trustee

NHCT Trustee Profile

Professor Jenny Alexander



*Professor Jenny Alexander
NHCT trustee since 2000*

NHCT Friends will recognise Professor Jenny Alexander as the energetic and enthusiastic leader of many of our church visits! With a high-powered torch in hand, she points out many features in the churches, giving an interesting and greatly informed background to each. This month Prof Alexander is interviewed by newsletter editor, Andrew Paris.

AP Tell us a bit about yourself.

JA: I'm professor of History of Art at Warwick University, specialising in medieval and early-modern architecture, with teaching and research interests in English, Spanish and French buildings. My love of parish churches goes back a long way. I spent my childhood in the Cotswolds where the churches are amongst the finest in the world, ranging from tiny Anglo-Saxon village churches to the great wool churches of the later middle ages. As a result I have never lost the delight in opening a church door and wondering what it will reveal about the lives and faith of the village, past and present.

AP: When did you become a trustee of NHCT, and why?

JA: I've been a trustee since 2000, and was invited to join by Dr Chris Brooke whom I've known since we were both students at Nottingham University. It seemed a chance to offer my skills and knowledge to an established and successful trust that was making a real difference to churches of all denominations.

AP: Why is the work of the NHCT so important?

JA: Churches mean many different things to people, and always have. They bear witness to faith over a very long period and encapsulate the history of an area in ways that are unparalleled by any other means. I believe that it is our responsibility to make sure that their roles continue into the future, we are their custodians, and don't have the right to make decisions that the future will regret. I see the Trust's role in this to be one of making people aware of the significance of these buildings for people's engagement with where they live, as well as about keeping the roofs on. One of the delights of the NHCT is working with the Friends, sharing visits to the churches and making discoveries together that reveal the history and stories of these buildings.

AP: I believe you have a particular interest in an aspect of stonework.

JA: My research engages with the practicalities of buildings, with an emphasis on the means and methods of construction. I'm interested in seeing how medieval and later builders solved the problems of actually building medieval churches, cathedrals and the country houses of the early-modern period, from sourcing the stone to engineering the buildings. Part of this has involved close study of the buildings' fabric and I'm currently working on a book, *Stonemasons Marks on Buildings in Britain: Origins, Meaning and Purpose*, which should be out next year.

AP: What are the particular challenges facing parish churches now and going forward?

JA: Stories in the press present a gloomy view of the future for the parish church, citing figures of declining and ageing congregations, and urging changes to the way we regard these buildings. Parish churches have, however, faced challenges in the past, you only have to look at the number of medieval churches that are smaller now than they once were, with aisles removed and their arcades blocked up, to see that villages have had to deal with periods of hardship before. Equally, prosperity has sometimes presented challenges as well, with some decisions made by well-funded 19th century restorers unlikely to be acceptable today. Churches have come through, and with goodwill they can again, though new thinking is going to be required, and we now have new means of reaching out to people at our disposal which we should engage with fully. Public curiosity for the past has never been stronger, and if we can take our stories to them, and show how they are their stories as well, then we'll be in a stronger position to campaign for greater support from a wider range of sources.

AP: What are the plans of the trust to help these churches?

JA: The trust will give ongoing advice and financial support for churches' renovation and restoration projects. We need to recruit more Friends, particularly from younger generations; making contact with local history groups, universities and even schools may help with this. We plan to raise the profile of the trust; we want more churches to know about the support we can offer, and more funding providers to understand the valuable work the trust does. We would also like to increase community engagement, particularly to increase participation in Ride+Stride which is a major part of our fundraising.

AP: Thank you very much Jenny.

What Does Legacy Mean to You?

Our ancestors created a wonderful heritage for us when, lovingly and with great faith, they built the parish churches which are such a feature of our towns and villages in Nottinghamshire. In many instances building work on these churches continued over generations, and further additions and enrichments took place over subsequent centuries. The history, architecture and decoration of these sacred spaces are a priceless inheritance.

Sadly, this rich inheritance is under threat; many of the county's historic churches, chapels and meeting houses are fighting a battle against the ravages of time. With smaller congregations and falling funding, there is now little money available to churches to maintain and protect their carvings, decorations, windows, and even the very structure of the building. How awful it would be to lose these treasures for future generations.

The NHCT provides financial support for churches undertaking renovation or restoration projects.

Recent grants have been given for repairs to stained glass windows, maintenance of a church steeple, restoration to bells, and repointing to stonework, and roof repairs. All such work is essential to preservation of a treasured heritage, but comes at a cost. NHCT is completely funded voluntarily; we receive no government funding and rely on private donations, legacies, and funding from other grant-giving charitable trusts. We need to make sure that these unique and historically important buildings get the repairs and renovations they need to remain at the heart of their local communities.



St Katherine's at Teversal

Once you've taken care of your loved ones, would you consider leaving us a gift too?

Leaving a gift in your Will to the Nottinghamshire Historic Churches Trust isn't just a gift, it's an investment in the future of our heritage. A legacy in your Will will help the Trust to preserve these precious buildings for future generations. A bequest in your Will is one of the greatest gifts you can give to a charity. These legacies help care for the places that enrich our lives - supporting the historic buildings and irreplaceable history for everyone to enjoy.

You're never too young to consider leaving a legacy to ensure that future generations will enjoy our county's rich heritage of churches and chapels. We welcome all legacies, however large or small, and we promise to use your gift to make a difference in protecting the future of the heritage of churches in Nottinghamshire. All legacy income is spent on direct project work and is never spent on general administration costs.

If you wish to leave a legacy to the NHCT in your Will please contact one of the Trustees or a Trust Officer who would be delighted to discuss this with you.

The Trust can be contacted via:

Secretary - Mrs Anthea Moat on 01909 472324 or email: nhct@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer - Jon Dawson on 0115 987 7291 or 07581 729 520 or email: jon@jndaccounting.com

Grants Administrator - Mrs Margaret Lowe on 07757 800 919 or email: info.nhct@gmail.com

Fundraising Co-ordinator - Mrs Maureen Hallam on 01636 812580
or e-mail: maureenjhallam@googlemail.com

'Ride+Stride' Administrator - Mrs Margaret Lowe on 07757 800 919
or email: info.nhct@gmail.com

Newsletter Production - Andrew Paris on 0771 460 3060

www.nottshistoricchurchestrust.org.uk

Registered with the Charity Commission No. 1171623

