



Supporting Christian Churches &  
Chapels in Essex & East London

# FECT NEWS 2009

incorporating the Accounts for 2008

## NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Yesterday I picked up my son from friends in Henham. Never having visited St Mary's church, I called in and was delighted to find it unlocked. Set in a pretty village next to a farm, and opposite the pub, the remains of a late 11th century blind arcade on the east wall indicate that the church has been there since the Norman invasion, history indeed. It is absolutely my favourite kind of church: light-filled with hatchments, ancient pulpit and font, venerable benches and the bonus of a most unusual 1790 monument to Samuel Feake. Signed by William Vere, it is decorated with a life-like relief of an



*Henham St Mary, Photograph: John Hoskins*

East Indiaman in full sail (*see below*). Above it is a remnant of a medieval wall painting. There is much of interest here and as I wandered around enjoying the peace, it struck me that this is exactly what the Friends of Essex Churches Trust exists to help with our grants. Henham church and its numerous sisters in Essex and East London are an essential part of our sense of place. Imagine the scene without churches and chapels. Actually, because they are crucial, it seems to me to be impossible.



*Feake monument, Photograph: James Bettley*

Our whole purpose at the Trust is to help finance the repair and restoration of churches and chapels. We paid out nearly £200,000 in grants last year. David Lodge's grants committee report tells you in more detail how we do this. The money for the grants fund is raised from our events which include Study Days and the Ride & Stride, and vital contributions from our members and congregations. The final sum is topped up by valuable sums from the Southend Branch, and monies clawed back from the Chancellor through the Gift Aid scheme. All this is done energetically and willingly by every committee member, and my goodness, they work hard. I am hugely impressed by the sense of vigour and commitment which drives our charity and which has made it such a pleasure to be part of. I wish my successor all the satisfaction and fulfilment that nine years of involvement with the Friends has given me.

*Julia Abel Smith*

Website: [www.foect.org.uk](http://www.foect.org.uk)



# RIDE & STRIDE 2008

The Ride & Stride was once again blessed with fabulous conditions: "Wow! What a fantastic day! Sunshine all the way, no wind". "It was ideal cycling weather with the sun coming out during the morning". The 2008 event raised £106,409. This figure is up on last year, and is the seventh year in a row where the total amount raised has been above £100,000.

In Fryerning, there was a huge rise in visitor numbers with the local scouts running their own sponsored cycle ride and



*Cream teas at St Mary, Stifford*

donating half of what they raised to FECT: "we had to run down the road for extra biscuits – custard creams go down well with the boys!" Perhaps next time they should go and visit the ladies of St Mary, Stifford who serve delicious cream teas.

In Great Bromley, "Twenty one cyclists arrived from London, disappointed they couldn't get in to see our hammer beam roof, instead formed an impromptu guard of honour and clapped the bride into church." These were cyclists from the Redbridge branch of the London Cycling Campaign, a regular participant in the Ride & Stride. June Cocksedge is a member of the branch and still riding regularly at 80. This year June and the group stayed in Harwich and visited 17 churches in Essex. The group would like to visit the Colchester area in September 2009 and are looking for accommodation. If anyone has any suggestions please contact me.

And finally, stewards reported "being a steward is far less strenuous than cycling" and that they "had a good time chatting and eating up all the biscuits". But we need more stewards. The cyclists from Norton Mandeville reported that "of the 20 churches we visited, only 6 were manned". They felt "that as all these churches may at some time need to seek a grant from FECT, that it would have been nice if more had put, for just one day, effort and enthusiasm into a scheme that does such wonderful work in helping to keep our lovely churches in good repair". So next year, please can we try and have more churches open. It is worth it! As the stewards in Boreham reported: "It was a wonderful day in every aspect: weather, friendship with other churches and renewing old acquaintances from previous years." Many thanks to all who took part. The 2009 Ride & Stride will be on Saturday, 12th September.



*Steve & Matt Hasler after 63 miles and 52 churches*



*Glen & Suzy Opie outside St Andrew, Boreham*

*Fiona Nelmes, County Organiser  
01245 380365 fionanelmes@lineone.net  
Photographs by Fiona Nelmes*

## SOUTHEND BRANCH

Another successful year with a record donation of £1,900 to central funds, thanks in part to additional activities arranged by individual members. Membership still buoyant giving a mailing list of around 100. Thanks to our current members for continuing to introduce new folk.

Our first trip was to Clare, where after a talk on the church of St. Peter & St. Paul, members dispersed: some to take it easy in the delightful old style tea rooms, others wandering about this lovely old town and the Antiques Centre. The more energetic attempted the many walks about the place. Tea was taken at Belchamp Walter village hall, followed by our AGM. Been there before and we shall go there again one fine day.

After the County AGM at Sandon, including the excellent address on the Knights Templars (what a story), our third outing was to Rochester where all were free to enjoy walking about this historic place, including of course, the Cathedral. Then to TEA. Another tick for the W.I.! They never fail to please, even foreigners from North of the Thames! The views in the glorious sunshine that day from the heights of Frindsbury across the Medway were splendid.

September came and on a bright showery day, we had the pleasure of a very nice talk on St. Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo. Then, happy memories of 2008 were completed in spectacular style with TEA at Swards End W.I. What a welcome! What organisation! What nice kind people! What a TEA! We'll be back again for sure.

Ride & Stride day needs a mention, in particular for the £450 raised by Westcliff, St. Peter. Following similar results for 2006/7 our members, Ernie Crump and Laurie Pears, a combined age of 170 years, raised the best part of this, Laurie by walking to about 20 churches and Ernie cycling around twelve miles. How about that?

With the pleasure of our outings, the friendship of our members and all those we meet, a recent grant to St. Mary's Church Benfleet, is, perhaps, a gentle reminder of the end result. The Committee thank you all.

*Don Woracker, Southend Branch Secretary  
01702 203027, donworacker@hotmail.com*

## GIFT AID

In 2008, the Friends reclaimed £16,183.56 in Gift Aid relating to the sponsors of the Ride and Stride, and members' annual donations. This was enough for us to offer at least one substantial grant to a church or chapel for repairs.

For Treasurers the introduction of a simple envelope scheme is sufficient to open the door to another source of much needed income. However, many places of worship still do not have such a scheme, and readers are urged to take up the matter with their Treasurer to ensure that every single penny can be 'clawed back' from a perfectly willing Revenue and Customs.

I was prompted to raise this matter as I have just received a request from the British Legion to complete a Gift Aid Declaration. If all the Legion's members comply, they stand to gain an extra £520,838 in previously unclaimed donations. Definitely worth having!

*Alastair Stewart, Gift Aid Secretary  
01245 222445 walterscottage@hotmail.com*

## STUDY DAYS

James Bettley has led the FECT Study Days since 1999, when he took over from John Fitch. Now, 21 Study Days and 105 churches later, he is handing on to Christopher Starr.

The first Friends of Essex Churches' Study Day was held on Wednesday 24 May 1989: there were visits to churches at Wethersfield, Finchingfield, Great Bardfield, and Bardfield Saling, punctuated by a picnic lunch at Spains Hall and tea at Great Saling. So the pattern was set: four or five churches, taken at a not-too-hecktic pace, on what soon became the first Wednesday in May and the first Saturday in October; bring your own picnic and hope for a fine day, or failing that a church extension or village hall to shelter in; and hope also that one or other church in the course of the day will offer to provide tea or coffee. In the twenty years since then, we have seldom been disappointed. October 1992 was very wet, and no tea was forthcoming, but picnics were eaten in Debden village hall, so the day was not a complete washout. The most memorable picnic venue in recent years was Robert Erith's magnificent garden at Shrub's Farm, Lamarsh. Progress in the availability of modern facilities, by way of kitchens and lavatories, has improved noticeably over the years, to the greater comfort of all.



*Umbrellas at the ready: Middleton, October 2000*

The main aim of the Study Days is to fulfil the educational role of the FECT, to provide access to churches that might not otherwise be open, and, from time to time, to introduce people to unexpected delights that might otherwise be overlooked. Since 1989, when the Study Days were inaugurated by Canon John Fitch, we have visited about 190 churches in all parts of Essex and East London, from West Ham to Harwich and from Hadstock to Southchurch. A few of these have been visited twice, some years apart, but there has been very little repetition over the years. The vast majority have been Anglican parish churches, and perhaps we might have been more adventurous; but there have been notable exceptions, such as Brentwood Cathedral, the Orthodox Monastery at Tolleshunt Knights, and the Black Chapel at North End. Other highlights have included Evensong in St Peter's Chapel at Bradwell-on-Sea, and Ronald Blythe's talk at Wormingford.

Anyone reading this is perhaps hoping for a tale of some disaster to enliven the narrative. With as many as 140 people (although usually about half that number) navigating from one country church to the next, one might think that more people would have got lost, or stuck in a muddy car park; but our regulars are a resourceful and hardy lot. We have switched from cars to coach on three occasions, when the territory required it – East London in 2005, Southend in 2006, Clacton and Frinton in 2007 – but on the whole people prefer to be

independent, and to be able to make their escape before the end of the day if it's all getting too much. Perhaps the experience of one of the coaches being incapacitated by a pheasant on the way back from London had something to do with this. Churches have almost always been open when they were meant to be, with incumbents and churchwardens on hand to welcome us. We are especially grateful to those who have gone to the extra trouble of getting out treasures that are not normally on display, such as silver and early Bibles.

The first Wednesday in May very often seems to be the first nice day of the year, while the first Saturday in October is usually the day before Harvest Festival, and even if the church is still being decorated we usually manage not to get



*Sitting comfortably: Elmstead, October 2002*

in each other's way. Once or twice the church has been double-booked, but on those occasions we prevail by sheer force of numbers – a mother-and-toddler group is no match for us – although fortunately we have not yet had to gatecrash a wedding. Some clashes can be fortuitous, as when we were unable to make a formal visit to Rettendon, but nonetheless descended like locusts upon their lunchtime fair, to the great benefit of both parties. John Fitch and I have been fortunate in not having had to worry about the practicalities of the Study Days: he was able to rely on Elizabeth Hoare, and I on Marion Scantlebury. She knows just how to solicit the offer of tea for ninety, and there is hardly a village in Essex where she and her husband, Hugh, do not know a farmer with a field for extra parking.



*James Bettley in full flow: Runwell, September 2001*

Now the FECT Study Days are embarking upon their third decade, under the expert guidance of Dr Christopher Starr. We can look forward to visiting new churches, and to revisiting old ones but seeing them through new eyes. The delights of Essex's churches and chapels are indeed inexhaustible.

*James Bettley*

*James will be in charge of our website from May and if you have any contributions for the Church of the Month page, please send them to [jamesbettley@btinternet.com](mailto:jamesbettley@btinternet.com)*

## **MEMBERSHIP TRUST US TO BE DIFFERENT**

Yes, the Friends of Essex Churches Trust is different. Unlike some charities, we don't pester you for money. Are you like me? Are you moved to help a deserving cause and then find, regular as clockwork, successive begging letters drop on the mat? Sometimes a stamped, return envelope is enclosed, month after month. Coins are stuck on with sellotape. Ball point pens protrude from packets. Parcels come with tote bags, umbrellas and just recently, even a fleecy blanket.

FECT is different, we don't do that. Our supporters are fully fledged members of a family and have a say in how the Trust is run. All we ask is an annual subscription, as much as you can afford, to offset the ravages of time which beset our rich heritage of churches and chapels. For many years the suggested, annual minimum was £15.00 for individuals and £20.00 for couples. Last year these were raised to £20.00 and £30.00 respectively. If you have not already done so, could you possibly increase your giving? You will see the enclosed Membership Renewal Form reflects these changes.

Compared with the everyday costs we all face, the subscription we seek is quite modest. If you pay by cheque, then please do what you can to send a little more than in the past. If you pay by standing order and would like to revise it upwards, please use the proforma on the Renewal Form and send it to me so I can forward it to your bank. If Gift Aiding appeals to you, please also fill in the section provided for this purpose. Like other charities, we have inserted a space on the Renewal Form in case you wish to make a donation in addition to the subscription.

Finally, I earnestly want to thank you for your loyalty in the past year. Subscriptions and donations have held up remarkably well considering the economic downturn. One-off donations vary considerably from year to year but subscriptions, donations from congregations and Gift Aid are substantially the same as in 2007, which in itself was a good year. In the past it has been my practice to thank individually everyone who sends money by post. In future I have decided to stop doing this because of further increased postal charges unless I am specifically asked to send a receipt. Please accept this as a collective thank you from The Friends of Essex Churches Trust.

*Keith Gardner, Honorary Membership Secretary 01708 688576 [keith@the.greenwood.me.uk](mailto:keith@the.greenwood.me.uk)*

## GRANTS REPORT

The Grants Committee met on four occasions, and the meetings were well attended. At every meeting at least one Archdeacon was present and their contributions were invaluable; special thanks should go to The Ven. Peter Taylor, who has now retired. Also during the year Marion Scantlebury retired and was thanked for her hard work.

A total of 24 grant applications was considered, and every church or chapel was visited by a committee member who then reported at the meetings. The reports were extremely helpful when the committee was assessing whether to offer a grant and also the value of the offer. During the year, I have consulted with other grant aiding bodies, such as the Essex Environment Trust, to enable the best use of our resources. Of the 24 applicants, only two were non Anglican: Bradfield Methodist Chapel required urgent guttering repairs, and Heddingham Baptist Church needed essential structural repairs to its timber frame and external rendering. Whilst the majority of applications are from the Church of England, we would like to see more applications from other denominations.

After discussion, each applicant received a grant offer. The offers ranged in value from £200 awarded to Navestock, St Thomas where emergency electrical repairs were needed, to £20,000 to Walton Le Soken, All Saints for underpinning, which our committee felt was extremely important given the location of the church. We look forward to receiving more applications in 2009.

*David Lodge, Chairman of the Grants Committee*

*Application Forms: John Bloomfield, 01708 745273 john.bloomfield@btinternet.com*

### Grants offered in 2008

Navestock, St Thomas	Essential electrical	£200
Heybridge, St Andrew	Additional grant	£5,500
Chadwell St Mary	Plaster repairs and repointing (WREN)	£8,500
Grays, SS Peter & Paul	Remodelling work to N Aisle (WREN)	£10,000
	Roof Repairs	£6,000
Little Totham All Saints	External masonry and plaster repairs	£12,000
Aldham, St Margaret	Porch and plaster repairs	£8,000
Elmdon, St Nicholas	General repairs	£12,000
All Saints, Walton le Soken	Subsidence	£20,000
Loughton, St Mary	Lead flashings and guttering	£7,000
Moreton, St Mary	Tower brickwork	£5,000
Hockley, St Peter	Repairs to column stonework	£2,000
Bradfield, Methodist	Replacing guttering and pipework	£1,500
Becontree, St Mary the Virgin	Roofing Repairs	£10,000
Forest Gate, Emmanuel	Dry Rot Eradication	£15,000
Stratford, St John	Repairs to West Wall	£5,000
Fryerning, St Mary the Virgin	General Repairs	£5,000
North Shoebury, St Mary the Virgin	Plaster Repairs	£750
Great Bardfield, St Mary the Virgin	Plaster Repairs	£5,000
Sible Heddingham, Baptist	Repairs to Render	£9,000
Fyfield, St Nicholas	Repairs to S Aisle Roof	£8,000
Moulsham, St John the Evangelist	Repairs to N Transept Roof and Porch	£10,000
Writtle, All Saints	Repairs to Tower Roof	£10,000
Benfleet, St Mary the Virgin	Repairs to Windows and S Porch	£3,000
Belchamp Walter, St Mary Virgin	Electrical Repairs	£10,000



Methodist Church,  
Bradfield

Photograph:  
James Bettley



SS Peter & Paul, Grays

Photograph:  
Fiona Nelmes

## TREASURER'S REPORT

A year ago I recommended that we bring down our reserves gradually to about £250,000. Thus, during the year, grants totalling £194,450 (including £18,500 from the WREN fund) were approved by the Grants Committee. However, we saw a significant fall in the value of our investment portfolio, so that the desired reserve level has almost been reached in just twelve months. On the income side there was a fall in the value of donations and gifts, but an increase in the proceeds of fundraising activities. Investment income was on a par with the previous year. Overall our net income before grants was a shade under £130,000. Expenditure on administration continues to be extremely modest. In total we issued grant cheques of £199,700, ranging from £200 to £20,000, to 30 churches. For 2009, our grant giving will need to be far more modest. Interest income is bound to be reduced and who knows what further horrors may beset the economy? So for the coming year the Trustees have agreed a grant allocation of £125,000.

*Ian Dudley, Honorary Treasurer*

### Summarised accounts for the year ended 31 December 2008

Total 2007 £'000		2008 Restricted Fund £'000	2008 Un-restricted Fund £'000	2008 Total £'000
21.1	Subscriptions	0.0	20.6	20.6
29.4	Donations	0.0	26.1	26.1
8.5	Legacies	0.0	0.2	0.2
60.2	Fundraising - ride & stride	0.0	59.7	59.7
13.6	Fundraising - other events	0.0	16.1	16.1
22.4	Interest and dividends	0.9	21.5	22.4
0.0	Gazetteers sold	0.0	0.1	0.1
155.2	<b>Total Income</b>	0.9	144.3	145.2
(1.0)	Support costs	0.0	(0.6)	(0.6)
(1.8)	Governance costs	0.0	(1.9)	(1.9)
(3.5)	Fundraising/publicity costs	0.0	(2.2)	(2.2)
(3.8)	Fundraising expenses - ride & stride	0.0	(4.1)	(4.1)
(5.2)	Fundraising expenses - other events	0.0	(6.6)	(6.6)
(154.0)	Grants payable	(18.5)	(175.9)	(194.4)
(169.3)	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	(18.5)	(191.3)	(209.8)
(14.1)	Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	(17.6)	(47.0)	(64.6)
6.1	Gains/(losses) on investments	0.0	(69.6)	(69.6)
(8.0)	Net movement in Funds	(17.6)	(116.6)	(134.2)

#### Summary balance sheet as at 31 December 2007

2006 £'000		2007 £'000
271.6	Investments - market value	202.0
329.0	Cash and deposits	257.4
3.7	Sundry debtors	5.6
604.3	Total assets	465.0
(149.0)	Undrawn grants	(143.8)
(1.7)	Creditors	(1.8)
453.6	Net assets	319.4
435.1	Represented by	
0.0	General Fund (unrestricted)	318.4
18.5	Gazetteer Fund (unrestricted)	0.2
	Landfill Tax Credits (restricted)	0.8
453.6		319.4

#### Auditors Statement to the Members of The Friends of Essex Churches Trust

We have examined the above summarised financial statements.

**Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Auditors** The trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statements in accordance with the recommendations of the charities SORP.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and Trustees' Annual Report. We also read other information contained in the summarised annual report and consider the implications for our report if we became of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

**Basis of Opinion** We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

**Opinion** In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2008.

Edmund Carr LLP, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors

*146 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0AW, 13th March 2009*

### MAY, 2008 - MAY, 2009

Patrons: the Bishops of Brentwood and Chelmsford, H.M. Lord Lieutenant for Essex

President: George Courtauld

Executive Council and Trustees

Chairman: Julia Abel Smith; Vice-Chairman: Claire Cottrell; Hon. Treasurer: Ian Dudley; Hon. Secretary & Hon. Membership Secretary: Keith Gardner; James Bettley, David Lodge, Ralph Meloy, Fiona Nelmes and Don Woracker

Advisory Council: John Bloomfield, Ann Hilder, David Hoppit, Simon Mynott, Tim Pratt, Neil Stedman, Alastair Stewart and Sarah White

## EVENTS REPORT

We have had four events during the year. Starting with a visit to Beeleigh Abbey in February for 30 people, we then we had a very successful and enjoyable concert given by The Kelvedon Singers at Kelvedon Church in March. Our summer Tea Party, held at the home of Mrs Sarah Courage, High Sheriff of Essex, went very well despite the rain, with a bring and buy and raffle. Finally, our Christmas Gift Fair at the new venue of Hylands House, near Chelmsford was a great success, with a wide variety of stalls and lots of delicious cakes donated by members of the committee.

*Claire Cottrell,  
Chairman of the Events Committee*



*Hylands House, the new venue for the Christmas Fair*

## CALENDAR FOR 2009

Wednesday 6th May

### SPRING STUDY DAY

Dr James Bettley's swansong visiting Copford, Layer Marney, Messing, Little Braxted & Great Totham.  
Details from Marion Scantlebury (01279 731228)

Thursday 14th May

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**, tea & talk by the Very Revd. Philip Need, Dean of Bocking, on his 'peculiar' church and its history. St Mary's Church, Bocking 3.00 pm (please book tea with Keith Gardner 01708 688576)

Saturday 12th September

### RIDE & STRIDE

To raise funds for the Trust and participating churches and chapels.  
10.00 am to 6.00 pm. *Everyone can ride, stride, steward or sponsor!*

Saturday 10th October

### AUTUMN STUDY DAY

This event will be the first led by Dr Christopher Starr with, we are promised, a new slant. Details later from Marion Scantlebury (01279 731228)

Wednesday 21st October

### CHRISTMAS FAIR

Hylands House, near Chelmsford, with many new stalls.  
10.00 am to 3.00 pm



*Marisa Petre's popular cake stall*



*Stately surroundings for stylish stalls*

*All three photographs were taken by Keith Gardner.*