

News & Annual Report 2016



Caring for Christian churches and chapels in Essex and East London



St Peter & St Paul, Stondon Massey was visited on one of our popular Study Days in 2015. See the report on page 11.

Inside this newsletter



Sir Barney White-Spunner will give the Gepp Lecture on 18 May. Turn to page 12.

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Message from our Chairman

'Britain is no longer a Christian country and should stop acting as if it is' was one of the headlines that greeted the publication, in December 2015, of the report prepared by the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life. Yet the report acknowledged the valuable role that churches play over and above being places of worship: 'their physical and social infrastructure continues to play an important role in the provision of social welfare and the promotion of social justice. Many rural churches are now considering the role their buildings can play as a community hub.'

A rather more important report, as far as the Church of England is concerned, was published in October. The Church Buildings Review provides an interesting snapshot of the situation. Over three-quarters of the Church of England's 15,700 churches and cathedrals are listed buildings. 91% of rural churches are listed, and the Church of England is responsible for around 45% of England's Grade I listed buildings. In the Diocese of Chelmsford, 53% of our 582 church buildings are listed Grade I or II*.

Upkeep of these historic buildings is clearly a huge burden that falls upon a relatively small number of shoulders. Over 57% of churches are in rural areas, where only 17% of the population lives, and a quarter of these churches have congregations in single figures. The report looks at various ways in which church buildings might be adapted to broaden their use, and gives as an example St Giles, Langford, where a



Dr James Bettley

small shop has been operating since 2009. Some churches have been reordered to become community venues as well as places of worship: St Margaret, Wicken Bonhunt, is a successful example in this diocese. Initiatives like these can very often be the best way of keeping a rural church open for worship.

The sustainability of parish churches in rural communities – which have perhaps lost their pub and village shop, and have no village hall – is something that is of great concern to our Gepp Lecturer in 2016, Sir Barney White-Spunner. We share his concern, because the best way of keeping buildings in good physical shape is to use them. That's why we have now extended our grants programme to support improvements as well as repairs. Let's have more applications!

Finally I would like to thank Fiona Nelmes who is standing down as our Ride+Stride organiser, after eight years in the role, for her organisational flair and dedication.

**James Bettley DL,
Chairman - FECT**

Events

Our first event in 2015 was the highly successful AGM and Gepp Lecture held in Chelmsford Cathedral. Our guest speaker, Rowan Williams (Lord Williams of Avonmouth), gave a wonderful lecture on four churches that had given him inspiration during his ministry. The talk was well received by the large audience and Lord Williams took questions from the floor. The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell gave the vote of thanks. During the interval the committee served delicious canapés to complement the wine served by Gepps.

In June we held our annual garden day at Kelvedon Hall near Brentwood, the home of Henry and Katie Channon. Unfortunately the weather did not play ball and it was not possible to serve the teas outside. However, our generous hosts more than made up for the dreary conditions with their wonderful tours of the house and art collection. The Events Committee came up trumps with a memorable tea.

Claire Cottrell hosted an art exhibition by Winston Oh at her home in Birch. Although the attendance was poor, we managed to sell sufficient pictures to make a profit. We have since raffled a couple of the Winston Oh pictures; the lucky recipients appeared delighted with their prizes.

Our annual Christmas Gift Fair held at Hylands House was a great success. This is largely due to the hard work of Rachel Grainger and her able deputy, Emma Brice.

The beautiful backdrop of Hylands provides a perfect setting for a most enjoyable day shopping and socialising. The committee pulled out the stops with their huge contribution to the smooth running of the day. We were fortunate that Vincent Thompson, High Sheriff of Essex for 2015/16, agreed to open the fair. He and his wife, Diana, spent some considerable time talking to the stallholders; they were also excellent shoppers!

The FECT Christmas card for 2015 featured a detail of the reredos from Waltham Abbey. We were most grateful of the talents of FECT member, Roger Jiggins, who kindly agreed to take the images. He is a most able photographer and we are hugely indebted to him. The card proved extremely popular and was sold out by mid-November.

Catharine Hutley, DL
Chairman – Events Committee

E-mail events@foect.org.uk,
tel 01371 820344



Our Christmas Gift Fair at Hylands House was a great success - Organiser Rachel Grainger with Vincent Thompson, the High Sheriff

Southend Branch

At least the rain held off while we enjoyed our morning coffee at Hylands House in April. Then it was off to Writtle, where we certainly needed our umbrellas when crossing the Green and before gaining the sanctuary of the church. After an interesting talk and a look around, we headed to Fyfield for 'afternoon tea at lunchtime' and our AGM. We then visited delightful Blackmore church before returning home.

In May we stopped at Poplar Nurseries near Marks Tey for morning coffee before proceeding to beautiful Bures church. This was followed by a tasty lunch with Wickham St Paul, Twinstead and Gestingthorpe WI. Then it was on to Gestingthorpe church, noteworthy for its brass plaque to Captain Oates of Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition, before our homeward journey.

Morning coffee was enjoyed at Braintree garden centre in June before setting off for Cavendish church, with its poignant collection of Flanders crosses, and a delicious lunch in the village hall prepared by the former members of Cavendish WI. We then visited impressive Clare church before heading home.

The final trip, in September, started in heavy rain but finished in sunshine. Our first stop was the Railway Tavern at Kelvedon for morning coffee, followed by a visit to beautiful Dedham church. Then it was off to Wrabness WI for 'afternoon tea at lunchtime' followed by a visit to Mistley



St Laurence's church, Blackmore was visited by our Southend Branch in May 2015

church and a chance to walk down to the River Stour and the two classical towers designed by Robert Adam.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our speakers for giving up their valuable time to talk to us about their respective churches. Space precludes me from acknowledging them individually. We are also very grateful to all those who kindly gave us refreshments, which are always much appreciated.

**Sandra Markham,
Chair – Southend Branch**

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tel 01702 477537

Grants

I always start my reports by comparing last year to previous years and this seems a good place to start now. The number of repair grants offered in 2015 was 19, two more than 2014 and the amount offered was £114,000, a slight increase of £5,500.

Whilst this is good news, the Friends still had unused funds at the end of the year. The Trust remains concerned that churches are not always aware of the grants available. Often we hear of parishes that have carried out repairs and have not applied for a grant. The grant forms are very simple to fill in; there is plenty of help available either from the Secretary, John Bloomfield or me, and our contact details

are given at the end of this report. There are no limits to the value: we have made grants in the current year ranging from £1,000 up to £15,000. We are constantly trying to reach out to all who are proposing to carry out repairs and would encourage all who read this report to pass on this message.

The Grants Committee met on four occasions as usual, and were kept busy at each meeting. Every parish applying for a grant was visited by a committee member to gain an insight into parish life and to finalise figures, as these might have changed since the application form was completed.



The architect's plans could be delivered for Revd Rose Braisby, left, and churchwarden Sheila Bearman at St John the Evangelist, Ford End after we made our first improvement grant.



A grant of £15,000 to St Margaret's, Stanford Rivers in 2014 helped to get the church roof re-tiled last year.

These visits are essential and I would like to thank the committee members for the valuable time they give, both at the meetings and on the visits. All the members deserve thanks; however, extra mention must be made of Ann Hilder, who has retired after more than 20 years' service, for her work in the east London area and for liaising with the environmental waste scheme, WREN. Unfortunately Glenys Thorton also stepped down and we

thank her for her work. We are delighted to welcome a new member, Demus Lee who will be taking on the area previously covered by Ann. We are still short of members and I would welcome anyone who has time to spare to contact me. Sadly I have to report the deaths of two former members of the committee, Revd John Morley, who chaired the committee for many years, and Jim Boutwood, whose building knowledge was invaluable.

I would like to reiterate a point in my previous reports about the diversity of applications. The age of the building, its location in our region and the value of the work does not influence the committee in any way. This year's applications covered most of Essex but not the east London boroughs. This is surprising considering the size of some of the buildings.

In past reports I have made reference to the majority of grants being roof repairs, but this year there were only six roofing projects and most of the rest were masonry repairs. We will have to wait and see whether this is a sign that more churches have now put their roofs in good order. I usually choose one or two interesting projects to highlight the diversity of applications. However, this year while all were thoroughly deserved, the grants were for basic repairs to masonry and roof tiling.

In 2014 we awarded £15,000 to St Margaret, Stanford Rivers for the retiling of the nave roof. The parish was successful in raising the balance of funds and in September work commenced. Once the tiles were stripped, the roof timbers were found to be so decayed as to be unsafe. Despite a contingency sum of £10,000 being included in the original tender, the parish found themselves needing to raise a further £11,000. The parish had worked very hard to reach the initial funding target and now found themselves in financial difficulty. Therefore, as a special case, the Grants Committee awarded a second grant of £10,000 to enable the work to be completed.

I can report for the first time on our new Improvement Grants. Although we were surprised not to use all the funding available, these grants have been a great success. The first grant was to St John the Evangelist, Ford End. The offer of £10,000 towards a new lavatory and associated works allowed the project to proceed, and the grant was paid in July. St John the Baptist, Layer de la Haye and St Andrew, Wormingford both received offers of £15,000 towards new lavatories plus servery and kitchen facilities respectively. The final offer of the year was to Harlow St Paul, where there was a lavatory but it was not accessible to wheelchair users. A grant of £5,000 will enable the upgrade to proceed.

Finally I repeat my yearly appeal for parishes to present the committee with a range of applications and I note that FECT serves all Christian denominations. Sadly this year only Church of England churches benefited from grants.

**David Lodge MBE,
Chairman – Grants Committee**

E-mail cardav87@talktalk.net
tel 01621 850 079

**Application forms for grants are
available from John Bloomfield**

E-mail john.bloomfield@btinternet.com
tel 01708 745273.

To find out how to apply for a grant log on to www.foect.org.uk/grant_application.php.

2015 Grant offers in full

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Ashdon All Saints	Stonework and Plaster repairs	£4,000
Aveley St Michael	Rainwater installation repairs	£5,000
Bradfield St Lawrence	Window Masonry repairs	£3,000
Colchester St James and St Paul	Sundry repairs	£1,000
East Tilbury St Catherine	Masonry repairs	£7,000
Fairstead St Mary	Re-tiling of Roof	£8,000
Great Baddow St Paul	Re-tiling of Roof	£8,000
Great Bardfield St Mary the Virgin	Re-tiling Chancel Roof	£10,000
Great Bromley St George the Martyr	Masonry repairs	£5,000
Great Clacton St John	Masonry repairs to Quoins	£10,000
Great Wakering St Nicholas	Spire Repairs	£4,000
Latton St Mary	Re-tiling Vestry Roof	£4,000
Little Easton	Re-tiling Roof	£8,000
Roydon St Peter	Window Masonry repairs	£8,000
St Osyth St Peter and St Paul	Masonry repairs	£2,000
Salcott Virley St Mary	Masonry repairs	£1,000
Stambourne St Peter and St Thomas	Roof and Masonry repairs	£10,000
Stanford Rivers St Margaret	Oak repairs to Nave Roof	£10,000
Stisted All Saints	Tower and Nave Roof repairs	£6,000
	TOTAL	£114,000

Improvements

Beneficiary	Improvements	Amount
Ford End St John the Evangelist	New Lavatory and Associated work	£10,000
Harlow St Paul	Upgrade Lavatory to DDA standard	£5,000
Layer de la Haye St John the Baptist	New Lavatory and Servery	£15,000
Wormingford St Andrew	New Lavatory and Kitchen	£15,000
TOTAL		£45,000



A grant of £7,000 helped conserve a 12th-century doorway at St Catherine, East Tilbury, which was revealed during construction of their new extension.

2015 Ride+Stride

“It was a perfect autumn day” for the 2015 Ride+Stride despite it raining “cats and dogs” in Braintree later in the afternoon. Many churches must be congratulated for raising more than they did last year but unfortunately it seems that numbers were down again; and so overall, at the time of going to print, we had raised £76,712, which is slightly up on 2014. But “every little helps” and even if visitor numbers were disappointingly low, “a nicer group of people you could not wish to meet”.

This year, notable individual achievements included a participant from Hadleigh, who cycled just over 100 miles from Canvey Island, via Chelmsford, to St Peter-on-the-Wall, Bradwell and back again; a participant from Brightlingsea who visited almost 70 churches in under seven hours; and a participant from Wix who walked the dog, cycled and then drove over to Braintree in order to give her mother in a wheelchair a tour of local churches. Many churches were complimented on their friendly welcome and refreshments, St Mary’s Little Baddow getting particular praise; and there were other activities on offer and enjoyed by participants, including flower festivals, book sales, art and craft exhibitions, a teddy bear’s picnic and a steel band.

It was noteworthy that over the county border in Sudbury, the town was “buzzing” with riders and striders and churches recorded dozens of visitors. Perhaps the event in Essex is feeling the pressure from other sponsored cycle rides and is indeed, as one participant commented, getting “old hat”.



Revd Neil-Allan Walsh centre led a team from Leytonstone who cycled to 34 churches and raised £400 in the 2015 Ride+Stride.

So, with this in mind, I am standing down as the county organiser for the event and we welcome John Pickthorn as the new incumbent. John spent his career working for banks in the City of London. He comes from Woodbridge in Suffolk, but has lived with his wife Sarah in Saffron Walden since 2012. An enthusiast of the rich variety of East Anglian churches, he is keen that we should preserve our splendid cultural heritage. We wish John the best of luck in his new role.

This year the Ride+Stride will be on **Saturday, 10 September**. More information can be found on our website, www.foect.org.uk/rideandstride.

Fiona Nelmes,
Organiser – Ride+Stride
Contact John Pickthorn
E-mail jeppickthorn@gmail.com
tel 01799 523 311

Study Days *by our Vice-Chairman, Christopher Starr*

I am very pleased to report that the Friends and their guests enjoyed two excellent Study Days in 2015. There was a large turnout on both occasions, with almost one hundred people attending the Autumn Study Day in October.

The Spring Study Day in May saw us in the vicinity of Chipping Ongar visiting a cluster of interesting medieval parish churches. Beginning at St Mary the Virgin, Stapleford Tanney we progressed to St Margaret, Stanford Rivers, paused for a picnic lunch, then resumed our tour at St Thomas the Apostle, Navestock, then St Mary and All Saints, Lambourne with our final destination at St Mary the Virgin, Stapleford Abbots. This small group of churches, each unique in its own way, ranged from the technical marvel of medieval carpentry in the fourteenth-century bell tower at Navestock, to the extraordinarily rare Early Georgian interior at Lambourne. Curiously, considering these churches are all situated in open countryside, four out of five of them were damaged by enemy action in World War Two.

In October we concentrated our efforts on four splendid churches located between Chelmsford and Brentwood, each of them, fortuitously, provided with parking and lavatory facilities. It is noticeable how such amenities are increasingly available in our Essex churches and the situation may improve still further now that the provision of lavatories is eligible for grants from the Trust. Our first stop was at St Peter and St Paul, Stondon Massey, burial place of one of England's finest composers, William Byrd.



Dr Christopher Starr's Study Day in October visited Stondon Massey.

Then on to St Mary the Virgin, Fryerning where we noted the fine stained glass memorial to Airey Neave MP. After lunch we reconvened at St Giles, Mountnessing, one of the few churches in the county with brickwork dating from the Commonwealth period. Our final church that day was St Margaret, Margaretting where in addition to enjoying delicious refreshments we were able to examine the ancient Communion silver, and listen to the organ playing and the church bells ringing (not at the same time).

Our thanks as always are due to the incumbents, churchwardens and parishioners who helped make our visits so interesting and enjoyable. Thanks also to Susan Clark-Starr who put in place excellent administrative arrangements for both days.

On behalf of the Trust I would like to pay tribute to the late Canon John Fitch who died aged 92 in 2015. He not only initiated our Study Days in 1989 and led them for 10 years, but he also edited the excellent *Essex Churches and Chapels* published by the Trust in 1996.

Forthcoming events

Wednesday 4 May – Spring Study Day

The next Spring Study Day will take place in the vicinity of Saffron Walden and will visit St Mary the Virgin, Arkesden; St Mary and St Clement, Clavering; All Saints, Rickling; and St Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo. For further information please contact Mrs Susan Clark-Starr on 07956 463628 or susanclarkstarr@hotmail.co.uk. Full details of the Study Day will be sent out in the Easter mailing.

Wednesday 18 May – Sharing the Space, Sharing the Spirit: 2016 Gepp Lecture

Our speaker will be Lieutenant General Sir Barney White-Spunner KCB CBE, pictured below, most recently Executive Chairman of the Countryside Alliance, and a passionate advocate of the importance of churches in rural communities. Holy Cross Church, Felsted 8.15 pm, following the Annual General Meeting at 7.15 pm and refreshments from 7.45 pm. Open to members and non-members; admission free. Please email jamesbettley@btinternet.com to be sent further information; it would help us to know if you are planning to attend.

Wednesday 8 June – Garden visit

By kind permission of Jack and Vicky Inglis, an exclusive visit to Kelvedon Hall, Kelvedon CO5 9BN, 2.00 pm-4.30 pm. Varied six-acre garden surrounding a pretty 18th-century farmhouse. Tickets £12 per person, including tea. Details will be announced nearer the time, or contact Leonie Marks, leonie.marks@btinternet.com.

Saturday 10 September – Ride+Stride

To raise funds for the Trust and participating churches. 10.00 am to 6.00 pm. Everyone can ride, stride, steward or sponsor! Find out more at www.foect.org.uk/rideandstride.

Saturday 8 October – Autumn Study Day

Details to be confirmed, but we expect to be visiting Great and Little Waltham and Great and Little Leighs.

Thursday 13 October – Christmas Gift Fair

Hylands House Chelmsford, 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Our most popular annual event, with many new stalls each time. For further details, please contact Emma Brice - emma@colemansfarm.co.uk.



All Friends of Essex Churches events for 2016 can be found at www.foect.org.uk/events.php

Our Gepp Lecturer on 18 May will be Sir Barney White-Spunner.

“You have answered my call” says our Membership Secretary

A year or two ago I threatened, if that is the right word, to stand down as Membership Secretary when your contributions reached half a million pounds during my tenure. Tongue in cheek, I said, “So you know how to get rid of me; just increase your contributions and the quicker we will reach the money target and you will let me off the hook.”

Well, since I took on the job 11 years ago, I have now banked over half a million pounds of your gifts. A total of £532,200 in fact. Magnificent! Thank you very, very, much on behalf of the churches you have befriended. But don't jump to conclusions. I am not intending to jump ship just yet. On the other hand don't expect me to go on until together we reach £1,000,000.

Just as a matter of interest and for the record, subscriptions from individual members amount to £234,702 of the total. These are definitely Friends with a capital 'F' and include those of our members who belong to the Southend Branch. Church congregations have donated £137,167; again Friends with a capital 'F'. Donations, some one-off, some regular, amount to £111,090; these are also friends of Essex churches but who are not actually members.

The largest individual contributor over the 11 years has been The Augustine Courtauld Trust followed by Her Majesty's Treasury. The latter has passed £49,241 to us through Gift Aid claims.

Members matter

Last year, I predicted that some 70 members would not be renewing their membership due to long-standing arrears. Unfortunately this has proved to be a fairly accurate prediction. Serious as it is, we gained 22 new members in 2015 and our total now stands at 536; counting couples at the same address as one.

A new feature is Life Membership. A year or two ago a member enquired as to

whether or not we had such a category. We didn't but the Executive thought it a good idea to introduce one. We now have six life members. Life Membership is not for everyone but if you would like to take this step, I can let you have details and an application form. The subscription set by the Executive is a one-off £200 for individuals and £300 for couples; that is a factor of 10 times the recommended minimum for annual members.

Members' subscriptions

Many of you will have committed your annual contribution to us by Standing Order. Others will have already sent me a cheque. For everyone else, now is the best time to renew. A renewal sheet is enclosed with this report; copies are available from me. If you would like to set up a Standing Order or have not already Gift Aided your subscription, there are sections for this on the renewal sheet. Please remember that any new Standing Order will cancel an existing one.

To keep our overheads to a minimum, we do not acknowledge subscriptions as a matter of course. Please accept our thanks now. If you would like a receipt, please indicate accordingly when you complete the renewal form and I will be happy to send one.

Keith Gardner,
Honorary Membership Secretary

E-mail keith@thegreenwood.me.uk
tel 01708 688576



A grant of £10,000 augmented support from the government's Listed Places of Worship: Roof Repair Fund and other sources to give St Mary's, High Ongar a new roof. Pictured at a site meeting are (left to

right) contractor John Cater, architect David Ferguson and churchwarden Peter Lewin.

For information about the government fund log on to www.lpowroof.org.uk.

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 December 2015

Total 2014 £'000		Total 2015 £'000
36.9	Subscriptions and donations	35.8
0.0	Legacies	0.5
75.9	Fundraising - Ride&Stride	76.7
14.4	Fundraising - other events	19.9
11.4	Interest and dividends	15.9
138.6	Total Income	148.8
(2.8)	Governance & Support costs	(2.1)
(4.5)	Fundraising/publicity costs	(2.7)
(2.9)	Ride&Stride - fundraising expenses	(2.9)
(31.8)	Ride&Stride - 50% returned to churches	(33.2)
(5.1)	Other events - fundraising expenses	(7.4)
(97.8)	Grants for work payable to churches	(159.0)
(144.9)	Total Expenditure	(207.3)
(6.3)	Net expenditure	(58.5)
13.5	Gains on investments	0.0
(2.6)	Unrealised loss on investments	(0.8)
4.6	Net movement in Funds	(59.3)

Summary balance sheet as at 31 December 2015

2014 £'000		2015 £'000
282.8	Investments - market value	282.0
358.0	Cash and deposits	313.0
2.3	Sundry debtors	0.7
643.1	Total assets	595.7
(102.5)	Undrawn grants	(117.0)
(5.7)	Creditors - Gutter Clearance	(5.7)
(3.9)	Accruals	(1.3)
531.0	Net assets	471.7
	Represented by	
531.0	General Fund (unrestricted)	471.7
531.0	Total funds	471.7

Treasurer's Report

The summarised accounts on page 15 show a 7% increase in gross income, broadly across all headings. With the introduction of grants for church improvements (£45,000 in this first year) there were £61,000 more grants awarded for church-work than in 2014.

The overall effect was to reduce funds carried forward by £58,500 – but the Trustees had been holding back earlier legacy income for this very purpose. Regretfully few applications were received in 2015 but hopefully this ball will now gather momentum.

As always we give thanks to all those who support the Friends with subscriptions, donations and fund-raising activities throughout the year.

Please note that now we are having an independent examination of our accounts there is no requirement for the previous style of formal certificate to this summarised version.

Harry Marsh,
Treasurer

E-mail harry.marsh@talktalk.net
tel 01245 478038

Legacies

Canon John Fitch is remembered by Christopher Starr on page 11 of this report. John's final contribution to the work of the Friends came in the form of a legacy that will help generate income for grants. We urge all our members to consider remembering us in their wills; as well as benefiting the Trust, bequests to charity can also reduce liability to Inheritance Tax. Please contact the Treasurer if you would like advice on suitable wording – Canon Harry Marsh, 5 Vicarage Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford CM2 8HY, E-mail harry.marsh@talktalk.net, tel 01245 478038.



A grant of £4,000 helped All Saints, Ashdon make stonework and plaster repairs.

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2015 – 16

Patrons:

The Bishop of Brentwood, the Bishop of Chelmsford, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex.

President:

Peter Martin MBE DL.

Executive Council and Trustees:

James Bettley DL (Chairman), Christopher Starr (Vice-Chairman), Canon Harry Marsh (Treasurer),

Martin Stuchfield MBE DL (Secretary), Keith Gardner (Membership Secretary), Jeremy Beale, Jill Cole, Catharine Hutley DL, David Lodge MBE, Sandra Markham, Ralph Meloy, John Pickthorn.

Advisory Council:

John Bloomfield, Ray Clements, David Hoppit, Simon Mynott.

We are grateful to all our supporters and members.



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