

FRIENDS of KENT CHURCHES



Annual Report 2016
AGM: Saturday 20th May 2017



St Mary, Stone in Oxney



Alan Jose of Charing Crematorium and Margaret Williams of the Friends at the Christmas Carol Service

Front Cover: St John the Baptist, Wittersham

FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES

A visit to St Mary, Stone in Oxney and St John the Baptist, Wittersham.

67th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 20th May 2017

At **2.00pm** a visit to **St Mary, Stone in Oxney**. Norman Penny will give a talk on the Mithraic altar stone with its relief of a bull and there will also be a talk on St Mary, a complete Perpendicular church overlooking the Marsh.

At **3.00pm** the AGM will be held at **St John the Baptist, Wittersham**, a church which appeals because of the simplicity of its plain white walls which emphasise the stone work and shaped octagonal pillars. The tower of St John is so tall that it makes the rest of the church look deceptively low but inside the church is spacious and a good setting for our AGM.

The AGM will be followed by a talk on the church and the restoration of the stonework, which we were pleased to support with a grant, and then tea.

AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.
3. To receive the Chairman's Report.
4. To receive and, if thought fit, adopt the Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016 and to appoint an auditor for 2017.
5. Any other business notified to the Secretary in advance.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016

Dear Friends,

I am pleased yet again to report on a successful year for the Friends of Kent Churches. The Ride & Stride in 2016 reversed the downward trend of the last few years and raised £133,406, £5,000 more than in 2015. This is so encouraging and we hope that we can continue this in 2017. The next Ride & Stride day is on Saturday 9th September and even if cycling or walking does not appeal, there are many other ways of raising money such as sponsored bell ringing or even sponsored spring cleaning which all go to make Ride & Stride day a special day and raise money for Kent's churches.

During 2016 members visited fourteen churches and a cathedral and listened to two excellent lectures. All were very well attended and the visits were always appreciated, often because they were to churches which might never otherwise be visited and all of which had a special charm.

In 2015 we had fewer grant applications than usual, a pattern which was shared with other county trusts, but in 2016 this was reversed and we made grant offers totalling £180,000. We paid £100,050 to churches in 2016 and a further £147,000 will be paid to churches once their projects are completed. We also recommended six churches to the National Churches Trust for grants totalling £15,000.

We have different committees who organise all these activities, the Ride & Stride Committee, the Grants Committee and the Visits Committee and we have a very experienced Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary, all of whom work hard to achieve these successes and without whom they would not happen. We are very lucky indeed to have them.

We have had a few retirements and we say a big thank you to Sarah Bracher, organiser of visits to West Kent and Angela Parish, ticket secretary. Jane Boucher, secretary, also thinks the time has come to step down and we are looking for a new secretary. We were also very sad to lose Doug Redman from the Grants Committee who died on 17th May. He was a joy to work with and will be greatly missed both for his sense of humour and his knowledge.

Finally, Kent's churches mean different things to different people but we are all here because we believe they should stay part of our lives and we should pass them on to the next generation and I urge you to read the very thoughtful article which our President has written on page six about their importance in all our lives.

Mary Gibbins

New members

A warm welcome to our new members who joined (or rejoined) in 2016. If you know anyone who would like to join us, do encourage them to sign up. The membership form is on the website.

David Barnard (Life member)	Christine & Jolyon Drury	Jane Best Shaw
Rosemary Dymond	Morag Hare	Martin Wyatt
Allyn & Jacqueline Thomas	John Bailey	Jill Rutland
John Stone & Gretchen Goddard	Richard Still	Hugh Cooper & Mary O'Keeffe
Jacqueline Stally	Christine Flannery	Shelagh Durbridge

Changes

Sarah Bracher was Chairman of the Friends some years ago and has more recently organised the annual visit to three churches in the west of Kent. She has now decided to step down and we are pleased that Sir Paul Britton who gave us a very interesting talk on the parish churches of West Kent has agreed to take her place.

Angela Parish who has been membership secretary and then ticket secretary has also decided to call it a day after over ten years in the roles and she has been replaced by Jill Rutland.

We are enormously grateful to Sarah and Angela who have so willingly given their time to make all our events so successful and hope to go on seeing them at our events.

We are looking for a new secretary

Jane Boucher who has been secretary of the Friends for some years has also decided to hand over to someone else. The role is mainly liaising with churches which want to apply for grants and to correspond with them when a decision has been made. Jane reckons it takes about an hour and a half a week, but it comes in phases and she is busier around the time when the grants committee meets. If you are interested, please contact Jane on 01227 721659 or jane.boucher@btinternet.com and she will be able to tell you more about it.

Jane has also been minute secretary in the past and we are very grateful for the work she has put into the Friends. She writes an excellent letter and is always a friendly voice on the phone.

Sir John Swire CBE KstJ DL

We were very sad to hear that Sir John Swire had died at the end of November. As chairman and then life president of the Swire Group and Deputy Lieutenant he was active in many areas including supporting the Friends. Each year we received a very welcome donation from his trust and we are pleased that Paul Smallwood attended the thanksgiving service on our behalf which was held at Canterbury Cathedral on 20th February.

Legacies and donations

We have received some generous donations this year including one from Derek Davis, a member, and another from the collection held at the funeral of Colin Patience a life member and churchwarden of St Thomas the Apostle, Harty. Charing Crematorium repeated their generous gesture of last year and presented us with a cheque at their Carol Service which is held each December together with Pilgrims Hospice, especially for relatives and friends of those who have died.

We are also pleased to report that we have received notice that we will receive a legacy from Rosemary Ottley who used to live in Godmersham.

A big thank you to them and to everyone who has supported us over the years.

Facebook

The Friends of Kent Churches Facebook page is now up and running. Go to our page by putting 'Friends of Kent Churches' into the search tab, and then 'like' any of the posts that appeal. To receive future posts click 'like' at the top left of the page. Please feel free to post your photos and comments on visits and lectures as they happen.

SPONSORED RIDE & STRIDE

Ride and Stride 10th September 2016



We are pleased to report that the 2016 Ride & Stride raised over £5,000 more than the previous year and the total including Gift Aid was an amazing £133,406. More riders took part, more churches raised money and the total number of visits to churches was up by 500 to 10,800.

Rosemary Dymond who wrote last year about her ride was not, for once, the rider who visited the most churches. Darren Blunden from Newington and Nigel Matcham from Lyminge both visited 70 this year. It is difficult to imagine how they manage it and congratulations to them. Others took a more leisurely pace and all are to be congratulated for raising large amounts of money for their own churches and the Friends.

The great thing about the Ride & Stride is that everyone can do it in the way that appeals to them and plan their own route. For Darren and Nigel it is visiting as many churches as possible, while others want to spend more time in each church enjoying the refreshments and seeing churches they have not visited before. And all get pleasure out of seeing different parts of Kent and supporting its churches.

Fourteen churches raised over £1,000 in 2016 and two, St Thomas Sevenoaks and All Saints Ulcombe, who both support us very generously each year raised over £2,000. Another big fund raiser was All Saints Loose who were just £5.52 short of £2,000.

But it is the large number of churches that support the Ride & Stride that make the large total. We know that some churches are not in a position to raise large amounts of money but every contribution helps and is much appreciated.

So, a big thank you to everyone who cycled, walked and sat in churches to welcome all visitors and made the event such a success.

Ride and Stride 9th September 2017

The next Ride & Stride is on Saturday 9th September and it is never too soon to start making plans. There are lots of different routes for cyclists and walkers, using cycle paths, pilgrimage routes and circular walks. Many traditional footpaths are from church to church and it is not difficult to plan a route. St Peter & St Paul, Ash (ash-church.org.uk) has circular routes on its website and other long distance routes which can be followed using a train for the return journey are the Way of St Augustine (ramsgatetown.org) which runs from Ramsgate to Canterbury and the North Downs Way which is clearly marked, although if you don't want to spend time going up and down the steep slope it might be easier to follow the Pilgrims Way at the bottom of the scarp. Another route is the one from London to Canterbury along the Darent Valley and then to Aylesford, Charing, Boughton Aluph and Chartham.

Although we talk about Ride & Stride, cycling and walking are not the only ways of raising money for your church and the Friends. Some churches have sponsored bell ringing for example. Another church organises sponsored singing. A group of choristers start at their own church and then move on to other churches, singing at each and gathering more singers as they go. In 2015 fourteen members of the choir of St Paul, Rusthall took part, the biggest group from any church.

This year it was St Peter & St Paul, Saltwood who got together the biggest group, sixteen in all.

One enterprising church had sponsored spring cleaning taking advantage of the fact that people were going to be in the church. Other churches because they are open and expecting visitors now make it a special day by organising displays and talks on the church's history or a flower festival, all ways for people to celebrate their own church and encourage people to visit.

Good luck in whatever way you decide to make 9th September a special day!

Gift Aid

Gift Aid makes a big difference to the amount raised each year. £17,578 or more than 13% of 2016's total comes from Gift Aid. All it requires is making sure that sponsors tick the appropriate box on the sponsorship form and that the sponsor's name, house name or number and post code are included. All information that Roland Niblett then transfers onto the Gift Aid claim form.

Gift Aid is not claimable if the sponsor does not pay income tax so some tact is required but for every £1 of sponsors' money another 25p can be claimed so well worth doing.

Gaining Sponsorship

Not all of us are good at asking for sponsorship but an easier way may be to use the internet and justgiving. Emailing friends is a lot easier (and quicker) than asking face to face and those who do not want to contribute need not reply, so that they do not feel pressurised.

Another way is to ask more people but insist they only give a small amount. Then they give more willingly and it is easier to ask next time

Some employers will do match funding and it is worth asking, it can make a real difference. All details of the Friends are on the Charity Commission website so that an employer can be satisfied that we are a bona fide charity and that the money is going to a good cause.

Finally it is worth remembering that every penny of sponsors' money goes to Kent's churches. We have limited expenses because we are all volunteers and those that we do have are carefully controlled and come out of other funds.

HISTORIC CHURCHES, HUMAN VALUES AND NATIONAL STABILITY

In its modest yet vital way the Friends of Kent Churches helps to keep fine buildings intact and useful. But our work is far more important than simply keeping stones together or roof tiles from slipping.

Every church, of whatever denomination and whether ancient or modern, has a story to tell. On a local level they are keepers of the collective memory of a community and they link that memory to the identity of the nation. That may sound as if churches are merely museums but of course they carry the past into the present and the history they carry is as much the history of now as of then.

In every church there are a collection of family histories. For some who worship or visit there, living memories abound of the significant milestones of family life. Chiselled into our being are recollections of a birth, a death, a marriage and many friends with whom we have shared the most poignant moments of community life. If we lose those memories senility creeps in and our very identity is on the wane.

With those pieces of personal and community history we build up a framework of workable human values. How do we describe the things that make us tick? The underlying assumptions we have in order to enjoy abundant life can never be taken for granted. Churches are places where it is possible to reflect on the very basis of our lives. Those virtues are strengthened by the time we spend in reflection and by the ways in which we are able to rehearse with each other the concepts which make our lives flourish. Churches, for many, are places of teaching where, for generation after generation, people have learned the basis of human virtue and how to encourage it in others as well as ourselves.

In a world where 'post-truth' can find its way into our dictionary, indicating the political instability which has invaded even western societies which hitherto have prided themselves on their democratic integrity, we need our churches to remind us of the values which hold humanity together. For many of us they are also places where we can rediscover the creative energy to live out the truth which the world leaves behind (is that what post-truth means?) at its peril.

Architects and churchwardens know how important it is to look after the gutters. Without that attention to detail the whole structure would be in danger. In the same way the Friends of Kent Churches do well to look at the big picture and remember that the detailed work, to which they generously contribute, leads ultimately to the kindling of virtue in individuals, communities and nations.

Rt Rev Michael Turnbull

ALL SAINTS, MURSTON

All Saints, Murston, a Grade II* church, applied to us for a grant in October 2015 when it became apparent that the whole nave roof apart from the apse needed relining, re-battening and re-tiling. The cast iron eaves, guttering and downpipes also needed replacing. The total cost came to £60,000, a large amount for a church in a small parish with an electoral roll of 28 to raise, especially when only one person on the roll was in work.

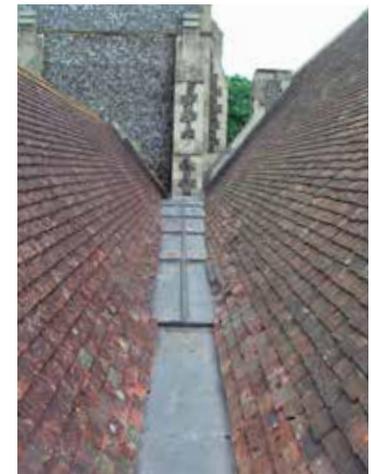
When we visited All Saints to discuss their application we were immediately impressed by how much was going on. The church is a community hub which is open every weekday morning and has a community café, a branch of the Kent Savers Credit Union, a parents and toddler group and hosts meetings of the CAB, Job Centre Plus, Swale Action to end Domestic Abuse, KCC, Amicus-Horizon which provides social housing and Cruise Bereavement. The church also runs projects for 11-18 year olds and over 55 year olds.

Since the work on the roof has been completed they are now opening a debt advice centre.

Repairing the roof was fundamental to keeping this thriving community going as without the work the church would only deteriorate and the Friends were very pleased to be able to give a grant to All Saints and to recommend to the National Churches Trust that it be given one of their partnership grants.



All Saints, nave roof before repair



All Saints, nave roof now repaired

THE FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES
SUMMARISED FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2016

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds*	Total Funds 2015	Total Funds 2014
	£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM				
Investment Income	22,325	8	22,333	18,516
Donations	9,049	0	9,049	5,331
Legacies received	0	0	0	4,563
Grants	1,000	0	1,000	1,000
Sponsored Cycle Ride & Gift Aid	128,593	0	128,593	129,660
Membership & Outings, Lectures	8,354	0	8,354	8,659
TOTAL INCOME	<u>169,321</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>169,329</u>	<u>167,729</u>
EXPENDITURE ON				
Charitable Activities				
Grants to Churches - Approved	174,310	5,690	180,000	131,080
- Lapsed/Declined	-500	-450	-950	-4,000
	<u>173,810</u>	<u>5,240</u>	<u>179,050</u>	<u>127,080</u>
Sponsored Cycle Ride - Distribution to Churches	55,540	0	55,540	54,727
John Briggs Memorial Lecture	405	0	405	
Members' Outings and Lectures	2,815	0	2,815	3,634
Administration				
- Independent Examination	1,176	0	1,176	1,166
- Sponsored Cycle Ride Expenses	4,227	0	4,227	2,878
- Other (including printing, postage, etc)	2,825	20	2,845	4,137
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>240,798</u>	<u>5,260</u>	<u>246,058</u>	<u>193,622</u>
Revaluation of Investments	50,364	0	50,364	12,312
Realised Gain/Loss on Sale of Investments	54,256	0	54,256	-14,697
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	<u>33,143</u>	<u>-5,252</u>	<u>27,891</u>	<u>-28,278</u>
Total funds brought forward	564,097	19,066	583,163	611,441
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u><u>597,240</u></u>	<u><u>13,814</u></u>	<u><u>611,054</u></u>	<u><u>583,163</u></u>

* These funds arise from the WREN (landfill) scheme and £50,000 being administered by the Charity on behalf of the Trustees of a Will.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2016

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds*	Total Funds 2015	Total Funds 2014
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0
Investments	420,117	0	420,117	462,208
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	<u>420,117</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>420,117</u>	<u>462,208</u>
CURRENT ASSETS				
Loans to Churches	8,000	0	8,000	10,000
Other Debtors	737	0	737	444
Cash at Bank	311,204	19,160	330,364	187,243
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>319,941</u>	<u>19,160</u>	<u>339,101</u>	<u>197,687</u>
LIABILITIES				
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year				
Grants approved but unpaid	141,654	5,346	147,000	75,580
Creditors	1,164	0	1,164	1,152
	<u>142,818</u>	<u>5,346</u>	<u>148,164</u>	<u>76,732</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>597,240</u>	<u>13,814</u>	<u>611,054</u>	<u>583,163</u>
THE FUNDS OF THE FRIENDS				
Unrestricted	597,240	0	597,240	564,097
Restricted	0	13,814	13,814	19,066
	<u>597,240</u>	<u>13,814</u>	<u>611,054</u>	<u>583,163</u>

* These funds arise from the WREN (landfill) scheme and £50,000 being administered by the Charity on behalf of the Trustees of a Will.

TRUSTEES' STATEMENT

It is not practicable to include in this document the full accounts of The Friends of Kent Churches as required by the Charities Act 2005 due to their length. We therefore present summarised accounts as permitted by the legislation. These may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. For further information the full annual accounts and the reports of the Trustees should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from the Chairman.

Mary Gibbins
Chairman and Trustee
5th March 2017

GRANTS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016

The number of grant applications increased again in 2016 after a lull in 2015. Indeed the amount of money required by the churches was so great that we offered grants to 36 churches totalling £180,000, above the £160,000 that we had budgeted for. Our July meeting was too soon after the AGM in May for any applications for facilities grants to have been received, but four have been made for our January 2017 meeting.

The death last summer of Canon Douglas Redman deprived the grants sub-committee of one of its long-standing members. He had served the committee for nearly twenty years, and in spite of ill-health in recent years, he took a full part in visiting churches in the south of the county, and attended our sub-committee meetings whenever he could. We will miss his sharp sense of humour and well-turned phrases, which were tempered by the charity with which he approached grant giving and life in general. He had a wide knowledge of Kent churches, and there seemed to be few little known and out of the way places that were not 'one of my former parishes'.

We have however been able to recruit Jonathan Carey, who has just retired as a church architect with Donald Insall. His wide knowledge and long experience of churches, particularly in East Kent will be of great value to us.

The National Churches Trust, to whom we make recommendations for Partnership Grants, have just introduced their 2017 grant conditions. These appear to extend Partnership Grants to small facilities projects and projects over £100,000, but in practice the conditions are not likely to make Partnership Grants attractive for these types of project. The NCT's new conditions appear somewhat daunting, but most of the new requirements are for facilities and large projects, and are therefore unlikely to apply. As ever, details are available on our and NCT's websites.

Charles Banks

FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES GRANTS PAID IN 2016

Bradbourne, St Mary the Virgin	£ 2,000	Lydden, St Mary the Virgin	£ 5,000
Chilham, St Mary	£ 1,500	Maidstone, United Reform Church	£ 8,000
Dartford, Holy Trinity	£ 2,000	Minster Sheppey, Abbey	£ 15,000
Denton, St Mary Magdalene	£ 2,000	Murston, All Saints	£ 22,500
Egerton, St James the Great	£ 2,000	Ringwold, St Nicholas	£ 3,000
Hawkhurst, Baptist Church	£ 3,000	St Mary in the Marsh, St Mary	£ 500
Herne, St Martin	£ 10,000	Saltwood, St Peter & St Paul	£ 2,500
Higham, St John	£ 7,500	Willesborough, St Mary the Virgin	£ 2,000
Hunton, St Mary	£ 6,000	Womanswold, St Margaret	£ 550
Lower Hardres, St Mary	£ 5,000		
		TOTAL PAID	£ 100,050

In addition we also made recommendations to the National Churches Trust for grants of £2,500 each to six other churches.

A further £147,000 remains to be paid to churches who have been made grant offers but who have not yet completed their projects when grants become payable.

St MARTIN, HERNE

St Martin, a large, fine, mainly 14th century church with 19th century restoration, was placed on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register in August 2014 because of its severely deteriorating stonework at the west end and low level damp throughout, with leaking rainwater goods and slipping tiles.

They applied to us for a grant in October 2015 for the first stage of their repairs which concentrated on the areas which were worst affected. They had already received a Heritage Lottery Fund grant but this only covered 80% of the cost.

The main damage was to the tower and West Window which John Newman in Pevsner describes as 'outstandingly fine and substantial'. The stonework around the windows was so damaged that water was coming in and damaging stonework inside and the wind got through the now ill-fitting pieces of glass.

We were very pleased to be able to give a grant to this important Grade I church which is carrying out the first stage of essential repairs to preserve this wonderful church for the future.



St Martin, crumbling stonework of west window

THE COMING YEAR'S EVENTS

SUMMER VISITS

Please apply for tickets for the following visits on the enclosed form which is also available on the website. **All visits, apart from the one to Rochester Cathedral, start at 2.00pm.** Timings for the rest of the afternoon will be given on the day. To save postage members can choose to have their booking confirmed by email or by telephone, just fill in the appropriate part of the form. Payment can either be made by cheque or by bank transfer, and full bank details are on the visits page of the website. If paying by transfer please let Jill Rutland (jill.rutland@hotmail.co.uk/01732 843248) know you are doing so and which visits you are paying for so she can add you to the list.

Wednesday 21st June: a visit to West Kent led by Sir Paul Britton tel 01732 365794.

St Luke, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JE is a Victorian church in the late Gothic style by Bentley who designed Westminster Cathedral. The glowing East Window is by von Glehn and Bentley designed the pavement, altar rails and font, so a co-ordinated design. Definitely different. There is a large church car park and further parking on the road.

St Mary, Leigh TN11 8RG has a Victorian exterior but inside you can clearly see the various stages of building and reconstruction since the 13th century. The north aisle was demolished in the 15th century but early stencilling is visible on the remaining pier and over the arches. There is good 20th century glass and a most interesting 16th century brass plus an excellent collection of headstones in the churchyard. Pevsner describes the 14th century glass in the north aisle as 'exquisite'.

St Peter & St Paul, Tonbridge TN9 1DA has recently been redecorated. Originally Norman as is the Castle opposite, the church has been altered over the centuries. There is a good range of hatchments and memorials including seven to the family of Jane Austen and connections which have recently been re-cleaned. Those involved in re-ordering will be interested in the new church centre, created out of the extra south aisle built in 1820 to accommodate boys from Tonbridge School.

Wednesday 12th July: a visit to exceptional churches near magnificent houses, led by Richard Latham tel 01303 862881. As there is so much to see we decided to limit this visit to two churches.

St Mary, Chilham CT4 8BY is well known for its monuments including the one to Lady Mary Digges (1632) with four figures representing Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude surrounding an 11ft high black column. The village itself is very attractive and has been used as a set for various films with its Tudor buildings and overlooked by Chilham Castle. There is limited parking in the centre but there is a carpark near the entrance to the village.

St Lawrence the Martyr, Godmersham CT4 7DS is part Saxon and part Norman and restored in 1864 by Butterfield whose high quality work is seen in the screen and other fittings. The North Tower contains an apse which is thought might be the surviving remnant of a rare Saxon chapel. It contains a carving of an Archbishop possibly one of the earliest representations of Thomas à Becket.

After a talk on the church, the curator of the Godmersham Heritage Centre will talk on Jane Austen and the Knight family. Jane Austen's brother, Edward Knight, owned Godmersham Park House nearby and she visited several times and must have attended church at St Lawrence.

We will then move to Godmersham Park House for tea in a marquee in front of the House. The Heritage Centre next to the church will be open for visitors at a charge of £2.50 payable at the Centre.

In Jane Austen's anniversary year we are very fortunate to visit the grounds of Godmersham Park House, inspiration for Mansfield Park, which is not open to the public.

Wednesday 6th September: a visit to three churches near the Royal Military Canal, led by Paul Smallwood tel 01303 813198.

St Rumwold, Bonnington TN25 7BW is a charming small church in a special setting. The chancel is Norman and completely unaltered. It has a squat weather boarded tower with leaded cupola and impressively large pulpit with sounding board, and its simple white walls create a special atmosphere.

St Peter & St Paul, Bilsington TN25 7LA is another small church with a short tower and low roof. There are traces of the original Norman church and the various changes over the centuries. The Royal Arms remain prominently in place over the chancel arch. Nearby there is a 58ft obelisk, a memorial to Sir William Cosway MP.

St Mary the Virgin, Kenardington TN26 2NF provides wonderful views. Its unusual shape is a result of damage in the past and what remains is the south aisle and chapel, giving a lopsided but charming effect. We visited this church fairly recently but it is worth another visit to see the re-ordering carried out in 2013 when an imaginative extension was added to the north side reconnecting the tower to the medieval nave, creating a much more usable space.

Tuesday 26th September: a visit to Rochester Cathedral with a guided tour by the surveyor to the fabric, John Bailey.

We are privileged to be taken round Rochester Cathedral by John Bailey who has generously given his time to share his expert knowledge of the architecture of the Cathedral, the second oldest in England. His tour will focus on how the building has changed over the centuries from Bishop Gundulf's work and the rebuilding in the 12th and 13th century following the great fire to the work carried out by Cottingham and others in the 19th century to save parts of the building from collapse.

He will also examine what the cathedral might have looked like if Rochester and Canterbury had not fallen out in the 1240s. The tour includes access to all areas at ground and crypt level.

Please meet outside the West Door at **1.30pm** to start the tour at 1.45pm. The visit will be followed by cream tea in the refectory at 4.00pm.

Tickets can be obtained from Jill Rutland using the enclosed order form and costs £10 to include tea and a donation to the Cathedral.

BRIGGS EVENT

Saturday 17th June: the Briggs lecture will be held at **3.00pm** at **St Peter & St Paul, Luddesdowne**. The speaker will be the Very Rev Dr Michael Chandler, former Dean of Ely Cathedral, and he will talk on the Oxford Movement. Members will remember him as canon residentiary at Canterbury Cathedral before he moved to Ely and the very interesting talk he gave us on Bec Abbey.

We are very pleased to sponsor this year's Briggs lecture which is being held to celebrate 150 years since the church was re-consecrated following reconstruction. A new beginning for a church with much older origins. All money raised will go to support the church.

The talk will be followed by a cream tea in the village hall. The church will be open from 2.00pm for visitors to view the wonderful decoration. Parking is at the church and the village hall, which is close by. Please contact the organiser if you need to get close to the church door.

Full details and application form are in the leaflet enclosed.

Date for your diary:

The Autumn Lecture will be on 8th November when Matthew Saunders MBE, Hon Director of the Friends of Friendless Churches will talk about its work since it was founded in 1957.

Full details and booking form will be in the Autumn Newsletter and on the website.

ACTIVITIES IN 2016

These have already been reported on in the Autumn Newsletter as follows:

WINTER LECTURES

The Spring lecture on Wednesday 2nd March was given by Sophie Andreae on *Catholic Churches, a More Recent Heritage*.

The Autumn lecture on Wednesday 2nd November was by John Goodall on *The Medieval Parish Church in Kent*.

BRIGGS EVENT

The year's Briggs event was held at St John the Baptist, Tunstall on 9th July when a talk on the church's monuments was followed by a recital and refreshments. Thanks to the generous support received, over £1,000 was raised for the church's restoration project.

SUMMER VISITS

On Saturday 14th May our AGM was held at St Peter & St Paul, Upper Stoke followed by a visit to Hoo St Werburgh, two churches which have carried out major repair projects and which we have been pleased to support through grants. The talk by William Palin on his work at Sheerness and Greenwich was greatly enjoyed as was the generous tea provided by the church.

On Thursday 14th May we visited St Mary the Virgin Woodlands, St Mary the Virgin Kemsing and St George Wrotham.

On Tuesday 12th July we visited St Nicholas Newington, St Peter & St Paul Saltwood and St Leonard Hythe.

On Thursday 15th September we visited St Mary the Blessed Virgin Eastry, St Andrew Tilmanstone and St Augustine Northbourne.

As always, these carefully chosen churches, sometimes hidden away and occasionally locked, were ones that we might never have seen but for the work of the organisers who co-ordinated the visits and were greatly appreciated.

Finally on Tuesday 27th September we visited St Paul's Cathedral, London for a stimulating guided tour followed by an afternoon visit to three City churches nearby: St Vedast, St Mary Aldemary and St Stephen Walbrook.

A big thank you to Sarah Bracher, Paul Smallwood and to Richard Latham who organised two visits this year. It was Sarah's last year as organiser and we are so grateful to her and to Angela Parish who has stepped down as ticket secretary for everything they have done for the Friends.

Sir Paul Britton, who many will remember for his talk on West Kent churches, has kindly taken over Sarah's role in organising visits to West Kent churches and Jill Rutland has taken over Angela's role as ticket secretary.

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The membership stands at 222 Ordinary Members

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94 Life Members (£200)

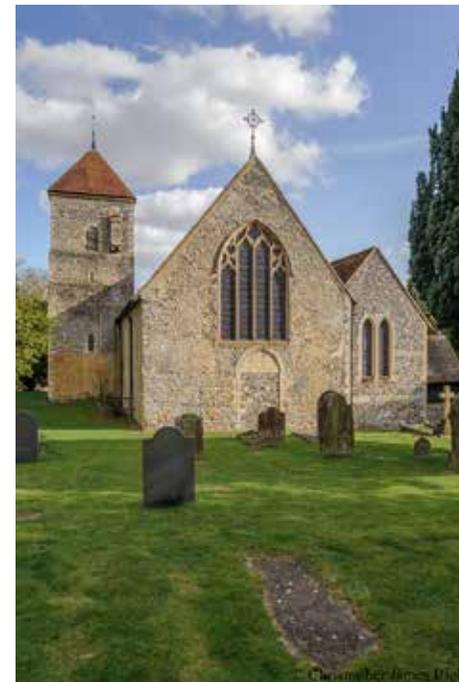
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Subscriptions for 2017 are now due. Unless paid by Banker's Order, they should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Sue Platts, Cornerways, Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford TN25 4PF (plattsplace@hotmail.co.uk) before the end of May.

Registered Charity No: 207021



Tympanum St Lawrence the Martyr, Godmersham



St Lawrence the Martyr,
Godmersham



Wildman Memorial, St Mary, Chilham