

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2024

FRIENDS of KENT CHURCHES

Charity Number 207021



www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk

From the Chairman

The big event for the Friends this year is the celebration of our 75th anniversary at a service of Evensong at All Saints, Maidstone on Saturday 21st September. All Saints' is the largest parish church in Kent and is a building which has in recent years benefited from two substantial repair grants from the Friends, so it is very fitting that our celebratory service is to be held there.

The Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff of Kent will attend, as will the Leader and Vice-chairman of Kent County Council, the Mayor of Maidstone and the chairman of the National Churches Trust. Our past-president (and now patron) the Rt Reverend Michael Turnbull, formerly Bishop of Durham and of Rochester, will give the blessing.

We have commissioned two pieces of music specially for the occasion, an organ fanfare written for us by Roxanna Panufnik and an anthem with both words and music by Simon Mold.

The service begins at 3.30pm and will be followed by refreshments. There is no charge though there will be a retiring collection to help to meet the costs of the event.

Some members have expressed concern about car parking but in fact this will be quite straightforward. We suggest you park in one of the 'pay and display' Lockmeadow car parks in Barker Road (beyond the Law Courts), which are well signed and should have plenty of spaces. You cross the River Medway by the modern footbridge to reach the church. You will see All Saints and the footbridge from Lockmeadow. There are some steps up from the riverside walkway to the south door of All Saints - or level access if you go around to the north door.

We want the service to be a significant occasion which signals what important work our charity does and therefore we hope that as many of our members as possible will come. We have also invited all churches participating in Ride & Stride to send representatives. If you would like to join us, please let us know (for catering purposes) by email to frfkch@outlook.com or text to 07585 254840.

Paul Britton

New Members

Our church membership increased slightly in the first half of the year to 306 but the number of individual members declined to 473 as a result of removing from our list those who had recently died, or ceased to pay. So total membership is 779.

We welcome the following new members so far in 2024:

Gary Blinch

Lorna Durrani

Savid Garrard

Lesley Grice

Bibi Griffiths

Christine Hawthorne

Anthea Hopkins

Martin Latham

Paul Nightingale

Jo Nyirenda

Miss S Probert

John Stone

Enid & Nigel Watson

Liz & Bob Watts

Cynthia Weeks

Stephanie Wright

Churches:

Chatham, St John

Darenth, St Margaret of Antioch

Yalding Baptist Church

Grants

In 2024 we have made grant offers totalling £169,500 to the following 36 churches and chapels:

	£
Bexley, St Mary	£5,500
Broadstairs, Christ Church	£5,000
Canterbury, All Saints	£15,000
Chalk, St Mary the Virgin	£500
Chatham, St John	£8,000
Coxheath, Holy Trinity	£5,000
Cranbrook, St Dunstan	£3,500
Darenth, St Margaret of Antioch	£1,500
East Peckham Methodist Church	£2,000
Erith, St John	£4,000
Faversham, St Mary of Charity	£8,000
Folkestone, Harbour Church	£10,000
Folkestone, Holy Trinity	£7,000
Foots Cray, All Saints	£1,000
Four Elms, St Paul	£1,500
Frittenden, St Mary	£2,500
Hastingleigh, St Mary	£2,500
High Halden, St Mary the Virgin	£3,500
Iwade, All Saints	£6,000
Kingston, St Giles	£7,500
Maidstone, St Martin	£6,000
Newenden, St Peter	£1,000
Nonington, St Mary	£3,000
Ruckinge, St Mary Magdalene	£10,000
Smarden, St Michael the Archangel	£1,500
Stalisfield, St Mary	£2,000
Staplehurst, All Saints	£10,000
Sutton-at-Hone, St John the Baptist	£10,000

Tudeley, All Saints	£1,500
Upper Hardres, St Peter & St Paul	£4,000
Warehorne, St Matthew	£2,000
Whitstable, All Saints	£1,000
Willesborough, St Mary	£2,000
Wrotham, St George	£5,000
Yalding Baptist Church	£3,000
Yalding, St Peter & St Paul	£8,000

How our Grants are used

The photographs below show, on the left, scaffolding the bell-turret of All Saints, Fooks Cray prior to repairs, towards which we gave a grant of £2,000; and, on the right, the scaffolded interior of St Margaret, Underriver during redecoration of the nave ceiling and installation of a kitchen, where we gave a grant of £5,000.



Events

An application form for these events is enclosed as a separate sheet.

Lectures:

Thursday 17 October 2024 at Lenham Community Centre ME17 2QT at 2.30pm, followed by tea. Tickets cost £12.

The Parish Church Photographic Survey by C B Newham. The Survey aims to achieve a complete photographic record of England's rural parish churches. Mr Newham will show us a sample of his incomparable collection of photographs of these churches and their contents, with particular reference to Kent.

Cameron Newham is an information technology consultant, photographer and church historian whose quest to complete the Parish Church Photographic Survey has so far taken him to nearly 9,000 sites in England. His magnificently illustrated book, *Country Church Monuments*, was published in 2022.

Wednesday 5 March 2025 at Lenham Community Centre ME17 2QT at 2.30pm, followed by tea. Tickets cost £12.

The Precinct of Canterbury Cathedral in the time of Thomas Becket by Professor Paul Bennett. Canterbury Cathedral gets a great deal of attention, unlike its splendid precinct. In this lecture Professor Bennett will redress the balance by looking at the 'Waterworks Drawing' made in about 1165, which shows in great detail the appearance of the precinct at the time of Thomas Becket. Many of the buildings depicted still survive.

Paul Bennett is a distinguished archaeologist who has spent most of his professional life at the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, where he was Director (1986-2001). He is consultant Professor of Archaeology at Canterbury Christchurch University.

Royal Arms in Kent Churches

The Royal Arms are a frequent sight in Kent churches, as in those of other counties. They are usually painted on canvas or oak boards in a wooden frame, though occasionally they are painted on plaster on the wall. Sometimes they are carved in wood rather than painted. They are a post-Reformation feature, the consequence of King Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy of 1534 in which the monarch became Head of the Church. They were often displayed above the chancel arch or hung from the arch. In some cases, they were painted on a tympanum, a wooden hoarding shaped to fit the arch: the only surviving example of this arrangement in Kent is at Fordwich, illustrated below. It is ironic that, whichever of these arrangements was adopted, this symbol of monarchy was in effect substituted for the Rood, with its depiction of Christ crucified, which tells us something about the aims of the Reformation.



Fordwich: William III

The Royal Arms have changed often, reflecting political and dynastic change, in the 800 years since the Arms of England – the familiar golden three lions on a red ground – were first used in 1198 by Richard I on his seal. Edward III quartered the English Arms with those of France (golden Fleur de Lys on a blue ground) in 1340 to support his claim to the French throne. James I added the Arms of Scotland (a red lion on a yellow ground) and Ireland (a golden harp on a blue ground). William III introduced the rampant horse of Nassau, the symbol of the Dutch Royal House, in the centre of the Arms in 1688 (as shown in the Arms at Fordwich), but this was dropped by his successor, Queen Anne. George I included the Arms of Hanover in the fourth quarter of the Royal Arms: these were moved to centre in 1801 when the Arms of France were at last omitted under George III. Finally, the Arms of Hanover were dropped on the accession of Queen Victoria, who was not Elector of Hanover, leaving the Royal Arms as they are today.



Westerham: Edward VI



Hoo: Elizabeth I

The earliest surviving Royal Arms in Kent are those of Edward VI at Westerham and Elizabeth I at Hoo St Werbergh (see previous page). In both cases the right-hand supporter is a Tudor dragon rather than a unicorn, the latter an introduction of James I. Arms of the Stuart kings are fairly common, especially those of Charles II, who in 1660 obliged for the first time all churches to display the Royal Arms. An example, carved in wood and dated 1660 is at Ashford, shown here:



Charing: George I



Ivychurch: George III

The Arms of the Hanoverian Kings, especially of George III and his son George IV, are very common. Examples are the Arms of George I at Charing and those of George III at Ivychurch (see previous page).

There is a good series of Georgian Royal Arms in the Romney Marsh churches. These are generally rather rustic – folk rather than fine art – but are very enjoyable, for instance those at Ivychurch or Brookland (see below). The painter, who will probably have been the local sign-painter, often seems to have enjoyed depicting the lion and unicorn supporters, the lion looking sometimes very fierce and sometimes comical.



Brookland: George II

Much the finest sets of Arms in Kent are, however, those to James II at West Malling and George II at Cranbrook (see photographs on back cover), the former very rare. Both are of carved and painted wood and both are good enough to grace a City church, indeed, both are likely to have been carved by London craftsmen.

In some churches it seems to have been the custom to change the arms at each change of sovereign. The old Arms might be altered for economy or new Arms might be painted on top of the old or on the back of the canvas. Sometimes more than one set survive, for instance at Westerham, Hoo and Ash-next-Sandwich. The practice of over-painting explains why the Arms of the later Hanoverian Kings are the most common.

After George IV's death in 1830 the custom of displaying the Arms largely died out, though there are some Arms of Victoria, for instance at Leeds and even, at Wittersham dated 2002, of Elizabeth II (see photograph below).



Wittersham: Elizabeth II

It is worth noting that Arms often carry the initials of the monarch concerned or the date, helping greatly with identification, or the names of the donor or the churchwardens – a blatant piece of self-advertisement. Finally, do look out for the motto "Fear God Honour the King" which sometimes appears below the Arms as, for instance, at West Malling.

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West Malling: James II



Cranbrook: George II