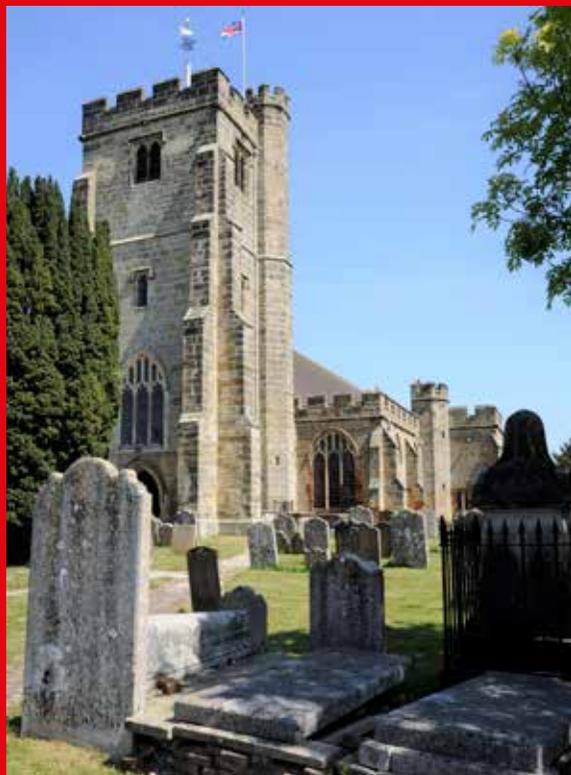


# FRIENDS of KENT CHURCHES



**Annual Report 2020**  
**AGM: Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2021**



**St Nicholas, Sandhurst**



**St Nicholas, Pluckley**

**Front cover: St Laurence, Hawkhurst**

# FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES

**A visit to St Nicholas, Sandhurst TN18 5NS and  
St Laurence, Hawkhurst TN18 4RS**

**70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Saturday 10th July 2021**

**We meet at 2.00pm** at St Nicholas, Sandhurst for the AGM. The church has a large car park which you approach from the village and the A268 to the north. The AGM will be followed by a talk on the church which is a large, early 14th century building with a fine tower.

We then move to St Laurence, Hawkhurst where we will have a talk and tea. St Lawrence, which overlooks The Moor, a large green at the southern edge of the village, is an imposing 14th and 15th century building with a spectacular east front. One can park on the roads near the church and around the green.

## **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 2020 and to appoint an auditor for 2021
5. To note the retirement as President of the Rt Reverend Michael Turnbull CBE and, under Rule 4, to elect Mrs Sarah Bracher MBE as President.
6. Under Rule 4 to elect the Hon Mrs Jennifer Raikes and Mr Paul Smallwood as Vice-Presidents.
7. Under Rule 10 to re-elect the following to the Executive Committee:  
Sir Paul Britton Richard Latham Ven Peter Lock Leslie Smith Margaret Williams
8. Under Rule 10 to elect the following to the Executive Committee:  
Rosemary Dymond Dr Susan Hooper Nigel Wheeler Paul Wallace
9. Under Rule 11 to elect the following to the Executive Committee, having been co-opted during the year:  
Ray Hart John Lumley
10. To elect Rosemary Dymond, Ray Hart and Nigel Wheeler as trustees.

11. To agree that the following amendments be made to the Constitution:
  - i. Rule 3 (Patrons) shall read: 'With their consent the following shall be patrons of the Association: the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; the Bishop of Rochester; the Lord Lieutenant of the County of Kent; and such other eminent people associated with the county as the Executive Committee may determine.'
  - ii. the first sentence of Rule 13(a) shall read: 'The Executive Committee shall meet at least 4 times a year, whether in person, by video-conference or otherwise digitally'.
12. Any other business notified to the Secretary in advance.

### **Explanatory note**

Summary accounts and a balance sheet for 2020 are shown at pages 4 and 5 of this report.

Rule 3 of the Constitution provides that the holders of 3 specific offices may be Patrons of the Association. The Executive Committee would like the power to invite in addition other eminent people linked with Kent to be Patrons and this amendment would permit this. The Committee proposes to use the power sparingly.

Rule 13(a) at present requires that the Executive Committee should meet at least 4 times a year. During the pandemic meetings in person have not been possible and we have used video-conferencing and email but the present wording seems to preclude such methods. This proposed amendment makes it clear that such methods are acceptable.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Dear Friends,

Just as the Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on each of our lives, so it has on the activities of the Friends. We were forced to cancel the whole of our programme of events in 2020, including two attempts to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). I am very sorry that this was necessary but many churches in Kent were closed to visitors for much of the year, there were severe limits on the number of people who could meet indoors and we concluded that even if we had gone ahead with a reduced programme, many members would not have wanted to risk attending events. We also decided that it was not practicable to hold an AGM digitally. The Executive Committee has, however, continued to meet digitally, our grants programme has continued and Ride and Stride went ahead and was a great success in very difficult circumstances.

As I write this report, it is unclear in what condition our churches – both the institutions and their buildings – will emerge from the pandemic. The churches as institutions are likely to have been weakened, both in terms of the size of congregations and of financial resources. A number of Church of England dioceses are known to be in poor financial health and are taking drastic steps to reduce clergy numbers. The possibility of mergers between dioceses is under discussion. Many of the buildings

have not yet reopened and many will have suffered physically from neglect over the last year, resulting from lack of routine maintenance and lack of regular heating. The number of major repair schemes being undertaken has been much reduced, partly as a result of the decision of the National Lottery Heritage Fund to suspend grants for repairs to historic buildings. Our own grants have been undersubscribed and we have not been able to spend the available budget. We must hope that as the emergence from lockdown gathers pace, congregations will have the confidence to reopen their buildings and restart both physical worship and the many other activities provided by our churches on which communities depend. The one bright spot has been the Government's Culture Recovery Fund which has funded grants, both revenue and capital, to many churches across England including, in Kent, Canterbury Cathedral and St Botolph, Northfleet.

We have arranged our programme for 2021 - described later in this annual report - on the assumption that the Government's plans for easing the lockdown will proceed to schedule. If that proves not to be so we may need to change our plans and we will keep you informed via e-mail and in the autumn newsletter. For the AGM and our church tours, we intend to revive last year's programme: the former will be held at Sandhurst in July once all Covid restrictions have been lifted, with tours to Boughton Malherbe, Egerton and Pluckley later in that month and to Offham, Wrotham and Ightham in September. Details of these tours and of a visit to Rochester Cathedral in early October are given later in this report. Later in October there will be a lecture at Lenham.

Our President, the Rt Reverend Michael Turnbull, has decided to stand down and we shall miss his efficient and humorous chairmanship of our AGMs. The Executive Committee propose that Michael should be appointed one of our Patrons (subject to the rule change mentioned above which the next AGM is asked to approve). Sarah Bracher, formerly chairman of the Friends and currently Vice-President, has kindly agreed to offer herself for election as our new President. Paul Smallwood, who has been a member of the committee and a trustee for many years and was formerly chair of the events sub-committee and managed our investments so successfully, is also standing down. We are very grateful for everything that Paul has done for the Friends and we propose that he should be a Vice-President, as also should Jennifer Raikes in recognition of her fine contribution to our work in various capacities over many years, including a period as chairman.

Lucie Neame is standing down from membership of the Executive Committee and we are very grateful to her for her help. If elected at the AGM, Paul Wallace and Susan Hooper will join the Committee as members, as will Rosemary Dymond and Nigel Wheeler, who are also offering themselves for election as trustees. Nigel has been an ex officio member in his capacity as chairman of Kent Ride and Stride but it is now proposed that he should be a member in his own right. Rosemary has long attended meetings as a guest, given her involvement in Ride and Stride extending well beyond Kent.

***Paul Britton***

**THE FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES**  
**SUMMARISED FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR 2020**

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Funds * £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
<b>INCOME FROM:</b>				
Investment Income	12,176	-	12,176	19,886
Donations and Grants	8,079	-	8,079	6,172
Legacies and Funeral Collections	-	-	-	31,297
Sponsored Cycle Ride & Gift Aid	132,233	-	132,233	138,248
Membership & Outings, Lectures	5,627	-	5,627	8,978
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>158,115</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>158,115</b>	<b>204,581</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON:</b>				
<b>Charitable Activities</b>				
Grants to Churches - Approved	109,389	4,617	114,006	191,000
- Lapsed/Declined	(2,000)	-	(2,000)	(15,000)
	<u>107,389</u>	<u>4,617</u>	<u>112,006</u>	<u>176,000</u>
Sponsored Cycle Ride - Distribution to Churches	54,442	-	54,442	61,042
John Briggs memorial lecture	-	-	-	125
Members' Outings and Lectures	395	-	395	3,665
<b>Administration</b>				
- Independent Examination	1,212	-	1,212	1,200
- Investment Management	1,818	-	1,818	-
- Sponsored Cycle Ride Expenses	4,587	-	4,587	5,167
- Other (including printing, postage, etc)	3,477	-	3,477	2,935
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>173,320</b>	<b>4,617</b>	<b>177,937</b>	<b>250,134</b>
Revaluation of Investments	26,738	-	26,738	65,363
Realised Gains/Losses on Sales of Investments	(86,871)	-	(86,871)	4,361
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	<b>(75,338)</b>	<b>(4,617)</b>	<b>(79,955)</b>	<b>24,171</b>
Total funds brought forward	630,547	39,000	669,547	645,376
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>555,209</b>	<b>34,383</b>	<b>589,592</b>	<b>669,547</b>

\* These funds are being administered by the Charity on behalf of the Allchurches Trust to fund the installation of roof alarms.

## **BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds * £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>				
Tangible Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-
Investments	380,994	-	380,994	440,893
<b>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>380,994</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>380,994</b>	<b>440,893</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
Loans to Churches	-	-	-	-
Other Debtors	2,675	-	2,675	1,614
Cash at Bank	329,312	36,883	366,195	367,263
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>331,987</b>	<b>36,883</b>	<b>368,870</b>	<b>368,877</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year				
Grants approved but unpaid	156,572	2,500	159,072	139,000
Creditors	1,200	-	1,200	1,223
	157,772	2,500	160,272	140,223
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>555,209</b>	<b>34,383</b>	<b>589,592</b>	<b>669,547</b>
<b>THE FUNDS OF THE FRIENDS:</b>				
Unrestricted	555,209	-	555,209	630,547
Restricted	-	34,383	34,383	39,000
	555,209	34,383	589,592	669,547

\* These funds are being administered by the Charity on behalf of the Allchurches Trust to fund the installation of roof alarms.

### **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.

Paul Britton  
Chairman and Trustee  
May 2021

## BOOK OFFER

'A Saunter through Kent with Pen and Pencil: Romney Marsh Churches'

Members may be interested in an offer from Oakweald Publishing of copies at a reduced price of this book on the churches of Romney Marsh by Sir Charles Igglesden. In the period 1899-1946 Sir Charles published 34 volumes on his saunters through Kent, covering more than 240 villages in the county. This volume on Romney Marsh was first issued in 1942 but most of the copies were destroyed by bombing. Copies are now rare. This newly published facsimile of the original edition, normally priced at £29.99, is available to members of the Friends at the special price of £20, including post and packaging. To order a copy visit [www.oakweald.org](http://www.oakweald.org) or contact Malcolm Horton (email: [info@cw.cw.uk.net](mailto:info@cw.cw.uk.net) or telephone: 01233 712112).

## NEW MEMBERS

The Friends currently (April 2021) have a total of 598 members, including both individuals and churches. The breakdown is:

Individual members	233
Life members	91
Churches (Canterbury diocese)	172
Churches (Rochester diocese)	102

The total is slightly lower than a year ago but that is not surprising given that most churches were closed for much of last year and few people will have seen our publicity material in churches which is a primary source of new members.

A warm welcome to the following who have recently joined or re-joined the Friends. If you know anyone who would like to become a member do encourage them to sign up. A membership form can be found on the website.

Esther Browning	Doreen Ives and Christopher Wakeman
Diana Darke	Paul Robertshaw
Josephine Gamgee	Angela Snowden
Barry Hartree	Tony and Debbie Turner
Susan Hooper	Neville White
Malcolm and Lenny Horton	

### Churches:

Broadstairs, St Peter in Thanet	Northfleet & Rosherville, St Botolph & St Mark
Dover Unitarian & Free Christian Church	Underriver, St Margaret
Hastingleigh, St Mary	Whitfield, St Peter

## SPONSORED RIDE & STRIDE

### Ride & Stride 2020



The sponsorship and donations received from the annual Ride & Stride event form a major part of The Friends of Kent Churches' income and this largely determines the financial support that can be passed on to churches in grants. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, running the 2020 Kent Ride and Stride hung in the balance until a matter of weeks before the event. Fortunately, the pandemic situation in our area improved to the point where the committee were able to spring into action and run an event which proved to be a resounding success, both in terms of the enjoyment had by participants and the funds raised. To boost everyone's spirits 12 September 2020 proved to be the most beautiful warm late summer day, ideal for riding and striding!

Nationally, 2020 saw 23 counties participating in Ride and Stride. This is a lower number than in recent years when more typically more than 30 counties have participated. Understandably, a number of counties felt unable to organise a ride and stride event in the light of the uncertainty of the pandemic in some parts of the country. Despite the depletion in counties participating in 2020, a magnificent £1,230,000 was raised nationally. Kent ranked third out of the 23 counties taking part in terms of the amount raised. Ride and Stride was one of the largest community activities taking place in Kent in 2020. Financially we were only surpassed by Norfolk and Suffolk – there lies the challenge for 2021!

The total amount raised by Kent Ride and Stride, including Gift Aid, was £133,880, only 5% lower than the total raised in 2019 (itself one of the largest totals achieved by Ride and Stride in our county), an amazing effort. The number of churches taking part was up by 6 on the previous year at 713, although when it came to the day, unsurprisingly, there were quite a number which felt unable to open due to COVID restrictions. The number of churches with sponsored participants was slightly down on 2019, although there had been an equivalent rise in 2019, so all in all the 2020 numbers were remarkable in the circumstances. The number of sponsored riders, striders and church sitters was considerably down on the previous year at 690. However, the amount raised per person sponsored increased by nearly 25% to £194 and this following a 17% rise in 2019, a very gratifying trend!

The estimated total number of visitors welcomed by churches open on the day was about 6,600. Quite a number of participants did not return their churches visited sheet in 2020 and this may well be due in part to the fact that so many churches were closed and had no sign-up sheets. A particular effort will be made in 2021 to ensure that churches do display a sign-up sheet if they are unable to welcome riders and striders personally.

The church raising the most money this year was St Lawrence, Mereworth, a fitting tribute to the enormous efforts of Tessa and Andrew Wells and family who have contributed so much to the Friends of Kent Churches and Kent Ride and Stride over the years.

The most visited church was again St George, Ivychurch with 107 visitors (one more than last year!) and Nigel Matcham visited a staggering 87 churches just pipping last year's winner, Darren Blundell who this year visited 84 churches.



Rob Seall – still looking good on his 30th anniversary ride. Cycling for Golden Green Mission Hall.



All smiles: Shirley Goodsell, Sue Baumbach and Heather Mackay from St Leonard, Deal having visited 25 churches.



Nick Fox and Sam Boyce from Christ Church URC Westgate-on-Sea – photographed themselves at all the 44 churches they visited!



Robert Coe also took photos of every church visited with his daughter Katherine during their stride supporting St Nicholas, Sholden.



St John the Baptist Church, Sutton at Hone Girls Aloud! Pat de Winton striding out.



Sophie and Harry Amos on their scooters supporting St Botolph, Lullingstone.

Again this year, there were some wonderful achievements and stories from participants. Young and Old (but all young at heart) took part. Geoff Riches from St Michael and All Angels, Tenterden cycled around 12 churches – and celebrated his 94th birthday the following week. Sophie Amos from St Botolph, Lullingstone scootered to 6 churches – just before her 3rd birthday. Her older brother Henry took part in his third Ride and Stride with his grandmother and walked and scootered around 8 churches in just over 2 hours. It was a 30th anniversary ride for Rob Seall. He followed the same route that he covered 30 years ago. Nick Fox and Sam Boyce took photos at every church they cycled to, as did Robert Coe and his daughter Katherine who are regular church striders and sitters.

Organising the day involves a huge effort by the committee and area and local organisers. The Friends are most grateful to them and the many participants and sponsors. Half the money raised by each participant goes to their own church if they so wish, the remainder coming to the Friends of Kent Churches to finance the grants programme.

### **Ride & Stride now has a Vice Chairman and a New Treasurer**



The Ride and Stride committee are delighted that Roland Niblett has accepted the position of Vice Chairman. As many are aware, Roland has made an amazing contribution to Ride and Stride over many years, particularly as treasurer and he now continues to help out in so many ways. His treasurer role is a hard act to follow but Susan Hooper has enjoyed taking up the challenge for 2020. Needless to say, Roland handed over exemplary records. Susan looks forward to meeting many of the area and local organisers in person when we are able to meet up. For now, just a picture!

Susan setting off from Cranbrook for her Ride and Stride 2020.

### **Farewell**

Ride and Stride said a fond farewell to Tessa and Andrew Wells who have contributed so much. They have shared their beautiful home, Mere House, for preparation and distribution of paperwork and delightful socials as well as having taken on so many responsibilities themselves over the years. In 2020 Tessa continued to oversee the printing of all the material for Ride and Stride, despite an imminent move and Andrew and Tessa hosted the annual area organiser event in their garden with a delicious tea. We wish them well in their new home in Wiltshire.

Deborah Robinson, our County Organiser stepped down after the 2020 event and the Committee are very grateful to her for her contribution over recent years. Lucy O'Flaherty has taken on the role for 2021.

### **Ride & Stride Saturday 11th September 2021**

The next Ride & Stride day is on Saturday 11th September 2021. Let us pray for good weather for a third year running and that this tremendous collective effort to support the churches of Kent continues to flourish.

## GRANTS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

One of the joys of being a member of the grants committee is the visits we make to the various churches which have applied to the Friends for financial support. Unfortunately, this year for obvious reasons for the most part we have been unable to dash around the Kent countryside to nose around our historic and wonderful buildings and meet those hard-working and committed people most concerned in raising funds to keep the places open to the public and as a sacred place for worship.

So, we have been reduced to contacting people by phone and seeing how their respective projects are progressing. We hope that things will soon change and we'll be able to visit once again. Of course, churches have also had difficulty in getting tenders out and back and also work started. Despite all this we received fifteen applications for our Winter meeting, awarding £60,700 to thirteen churches and eleven applications at our Summer meeting, awarding £44,850 to ten churches. All of these grants were approved by the Executive Committee. Whilst as a grants committee we haven't navigated the wonders of Zoom and the like, we have managed to hold meetings and confer reasonably well via email.

Of the total numbers of churches applying, seventeen were from Canterbury and nine from Rochester. We have tried in the recent past to encourage more applications from Rochester but regrettably are not always successful.

Whilst we have underspent the grant money available because of the fewer applications this year we have felt it prudent not to be over-generous as we think that there might be a flood of applications once the pandemic has calmed and churches are able to begin to get round to sorting out Quinquennial Inspections and other repairs. This year, 2021, when churches may well be financially strapped, we shall have £152,800 to award so we hope for plenty of applications!

The Allchurches Trust's offer of helping to fund roof alarms has had a slow take-up. We made three grants worth in total £4617 from Allchurches' funds during the year, together with four grants worth £3839 from our own funds. There is still more than £10,000 available from Allchurches (the grant scheme ends in November 2021) and FKC will also help to fund any application, which should result in most cases fully funding the complete installation. The scheme is aimed at deterring lead theft but all roofs are eligible. What might be putting churches off, maybe, is the cost of the maintenance of the alarm.

A list of grants made during the year to churches appears below.

I am most grateful to all the members of the committee for their hard work and diligence in making reports of contacts made and always giving wise and helpful advice. To Jonathan Carey, Nick Crutchfield, Mary Gibbins, the Hon. Jennifer Raikes, Leslie Smith, Philip Wallace, Nigel Whitehead and, of course, Deb Sutch the Secretary who fields all the queries and deals with all the correspondence, our debt of gratitude.

***Peter Lock, Chairman, Grants Committee***

## FRIENDS OF KENT CHURCHES GRANTS PAID IN 2020

Grants paid in 2020 totalled £89,817 and are listed below. A further £157,572 remains to be paid to churches once they have completed their projects or work to the value of their grant offer.

Bethersden, St Margaret	£500
Borden, St Peter & St Paul	£4,000
Broadstairs, St Peter in Thanet	£10,000
Chilham, St Mary	£1,000
Eastchurch, All Saints	£1,500
Erith, Christ Church	£5,000
Folkestone, St Mary & St Eanswythe	£20,000
Great Chart, St Mary	£617
Hastingleigh, St John	£500
High Halstow, St Margaret	£20,000
Kilndown, Christ Church	£200
Lyminge, St Mary & St Ethelburga	£2,000
Mereworth, St Lawrence	£5,000
Sandhurst, St Nicholas	£1,500
Stelling Minnis, St Mary	£5,000
Whitfield, St Peter	£3,000
Womenswold, St Mary Of Antioch	£5,000
Yalding, St Peter & St Paul	£5,000
<b>TOTAL PAID</b>	<b><u>£89,817</u></b>

These photographs show some recent results of the Friends' grant-giving. The first pair of photographs show a small and unobtrusive extension adjacent to the south porch at St Mary, Elham containing a lavatory. We offered a grant of £7,500 in 2020 towards this work, which has been carried out to a very high standard. The second pair illustrate repairs to the windows on the north side of the nave at Holy Trinity, Milton Regis. Much of the tracery was very decayed and some of the stonework has had to be replaced. The Friends are supporting a large programme of repairs to the church, of which these works form part, having offered one of our largest grants - £20,000 - in 2019.



**St Mary, Elham - exterior of the new extension**



**St Mary - facilities within the extension**



**Holy Trinity – window repairs**



**Holy Trinity, Milton Regis – scaffolding on the nave north wall**

## PLANNED EVENTS IN 2021

### Visits

Because of the late start this year, there will be two church tours, rather than three as in a normal year. Both the tours below are ones which had been planned last year but which were cancelled. In addition, there will be a visit to Rochester Cathedral.

**Both of the church tours below start at 2.00pm** and timings for the rest of the afternoon and details of where to park will be given at the first church. There are two ways of applying for tickets. If paying by cheque, please use the enclosed application form which is also available on the website. A written confirmation will be given if you include a stamped addressed envelope otherwise acknowledgement will be by email or telephone. If paying by bank transfer, please make payment to Friends of Kent Churches, CAF Bank Sort code 40-52-40, Account number 00022279 and let Jill Rutland (jill.rutland@hotmail.co.uk/01732 843248) know which visits you are paying for so you can be added to the list. Please pay by bank transfer if possible and use the reference 'Tickets'.

**Thursday 22 July:** a visit to churches between Maidstone and Ashford led by John Lumley tel 01233 756249. Tea will be provided at Pluckley.

St Nicholas, Boughton Malherbe ME17 2BD is a small church with a 14th century nave and aisle, a late medieval tower and a 19th century chancel. There are brasses and some good minor monuments. The most remarkable feature of the church must have been the O'Neale monument of 1663, a three-sided pyramid on lion feet which was dismantled in the 19th century: parts of it were re-used in the vestry floor. This is an opportunity to see a church which is normally locked. Parking is in the village street outside the church; an adjacent field may be available, in which cases signs will indicate where it is.

St James, Egerton TN27 9DJ on the edge of the Chart Hills overlooking the Weald. A 14th century church with a fine tower which, from the evidence of bequests, was building in the 1460s and 1470s. There are good roofs, some fittings and a fine recumbent effigy of a knight brought from the bombed church at Little Chart.

St Nicholas, Pluckley TN27 0QT a 13th and 14th century church with a late 15th century south chapel, prettily placed in a handsome village mostly built by the Derings of Surrenden. The church has good screens and brasses, some of them forgeries of about 1630 designed to display the lineage of Sir Edward Dering.

**Wednesday 15 September:** a visit to the area west of Maidstone led by Paul Britton tel 01732 365794. Tea will be provided at Ightham.

St Michael, Offham ME19 5NY stands next to Church Farm but otherwise alone in the fields about half a mile north of the village: it is an example of that common Kent phenomenon, a church serving a settlement which has moved elsewhere. The nave is early Norman, as may be the north tower; the chancel is of the 13th century. There was a south aisle which had been demolished by about 1330, so the village was already contracting at that early period. The church has a simple but very beautiful interior. Parking is on the road outside the church (and may also be available in the yard of Church Farm).

St George, Wrotham TN15 7AH is an imposing church standing in the middle of its village and above a small market place. There is work of every century from the 11th to the 17th, including a large east window brought after the war from St Alban, Wood Street, a blitzed Wren church in the City. There are good fittings and monuments; and no

church in Kent has a better collection of Victorian stained glass. Parking is available in the village, especially in Bull Lane which runs east towards the A20.

St Peter, Ightham TN15 9JD stands just north of the village centre. The church, which has early Norman origins, has an attractive medley of textures in its ragstone and ironstone walls patched with brick and, unusually, a 16th century north aisle wholly of brick. There are fine roofs, fittings and, especially, monuments and hatchments to the Cawnes and Selbys of Ightham Mote. Two of the monuments are of outstanding quality.

**Tuesday 12 October:** a tour of Rochester Cathedral, led by the cathedral architect, John Bailey, followed by tea/coffee and cake. The tour will begin at 2.30pm and those attending should gather in the nave. Tea will be at 4pm. Evensong is at 5.30pm for anyone who wishes to stay on to attend.

There will, in addition, be two tours of the high parts of the cathedral, the first beginning at 1.30pm and the second at 4.45pm. Only seven people can be accommodated on each tour, so places will be allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis. Participants need to be fit and to wear flat-heeled shoes. There is no additional charge for this tour but those taking part are invited to make a donation to the cathedral. If you wish to apply for a place, please use the enclosed application form and Jill Rutland will let you know whether you have been successful – please supply an email address for this purpose.

### **Briggs Event**

The Briggs Event is sponsored each year by the Friends to help the host church raise funds. The Friends contribute to the cost of a lecturer and other associated costs of staging the event. No church has arranged an event yet for 2021: any church interested in doing so should get in touch with me at pauljbritton@live.co.uk or 01732 365794.

### **Autumn lecture**

Our autumn lecture will be at Lenham on Wednesday 20 October and will be given by Joe Elders, Head of Buildings Strategy at the Church Buildings Council of the Church of England on the subject: *How, for what and for whom should we keep our church buildings?* Further details will be given in the autumn newsletter.

## **ACTIVITIES DURING THE LAST YEAR**

The whole of the planned programme of visits and lectures in 2020 had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. Nor was any Briggs event possible.

However, we were able to reschedule as a Zoom lecture on 10 March John Vigar's talk which was originally to have been given in March 2020. Over fifty members participated. In *Seventeen Churches – the Churches Conservation Trust in Kent* we were taken on a splendidly illustrated tour of these churches by a guide who knows them intimately, because John was, until a few years ago, the Trust's area manager for the south-east. John's commentary was an engaging mixture of the history of these buildings, their architecture and archaeology and their sometimes perilous journeys from redundant parish church to the secure future as public monuments provided by the Trust. They are an eclectic group, ranging from the early Norman, two-cell chapel in a lonely farmyard at Paddlesworth, near Snodland to the rather grand town church of St Peter, Sandwich. Many have good collections of fittings and at least two – Knowlton and Waldershare – excellent monuments. This was a most enjoyable talk and made one thankful that the CCT has saved these splendid buildings for our collective benefit.

## HIDDEN TREASURES – PARISH PLACES AND PEOPLE

*Peter Lock, Archdeacon of Rochester 2000-2009*

As a parish priest one gets a unique opportunity to inherit some delightful and historic or notable churches for a short space of time. Many of these buildings reek of prayer and the rumble of parish lives.

I spent all my ministry in Rochester Diocese where I started in 1968 as a Curate at St John the Baptist, Meopham. The spacious church there had been virtually rebuilt after an earthquake in the early 14th century and was dedicated in 1325. Its wide chancel arch had a couple of notches on it, high up, either side. Further exploration found the remains of a staircase which would have taken you up onto the rood screen long since gone. The notches were where the rood or cross beam of Christ would have stretched. I recall also clambering into the ornate 17th century pulpit reputedly brought from St Margaret, Westminster, and finding the steps rickety and the small, low door almost impossible to open. Not a good start to a first nervous sermon! I think they leave the door open permanently now.



**Meopham's Pulpit**

The then (Lay) Reader, John Wesley Palmer, lived on the Green next to the old windmill. During one long winter he was rather bored so he made a replica of the windmill from his own design using Meccano parts. The sails went round driven electronically and the whole structure, about six foot high, was illuminated with tiny lights. It was so splendid that he agreed that I might use it in church at Whitsun, illustrating the symbolic power of the wind at Pentecost. However, transporting the windmill proved quite a task. In moving it from his house John had to undo some of the main structure as it wouldn't go through his front door. Thence on to the back of a lorry we trundled down to the Church, hoping bits wouldn't fly off. I don't recall how we got it back after the service. I think it was in one piece!

My second curacy was at St Matthew, Wigmore. Architecturally at the other end of the scale from Meopham, its interesting 1960s design is based on a spiral which draws you into the church as you walk in over a type of small symbolic bridge where stands the font, a large rock (I believe brought from the Holy Land), with flowing water down its side. The square Kentish ragstone altar is set on a stone floor higher than the rest of the 'nave' and is almost central in the church. This means you can lead different types of services on any side of the altar to smaller or larger congregations placed in different parts of the church. You leave the church through the doors which take you into the Community Centre. It's as if you're drawn in through baptism and then from the altar sent out into the world to serve the community. I think that was the main creative, theological concept. All Saints, Hartley was my first incumbency. It's a tiny Norman church which at best in my time held about eighty people maximum. Its west end was in recent years extended to increase seating and introduce social facilities. During my ministry there we merged with the Parish of St Mary, Fawkham. Neither church building was built on a grand scale, both are of similar proportions, but they had bags

of atmosphere. The late Bishop David Say used to comment that standing in Fawkham churchyard you could have been in the depths of Devon. Fawkham too had a wonderful, now fading, 13th century wall painting of Christ seated in glory. I've always thought how difficult it is to paint someone face-on seated. In the wall painting Christ's legs seem to be splayed out in a rather ungainly way! To my mind, the striking tapestry by Graham Sutherland at Coventry Cathedral also has a similar problem with Christ's knees.



**St Mary, Fawkham**

From there to Holy Trinity, Dartford, a church of great history, again dating from Norman times, where there was a tomb to a paper-maker and jeweller, Sir John Spilman, who in the days of Elizabeth I was granted the whole monopoly of the market by the Queen for producing white writing-paper and he would sue anyone who tried to imitate his product. To ensure he could tell his product from one which was false, he made a watermark of his own on each sheet: the mark was a foolscap – part of his coat of arms. Hence the paper size: foolscap. (Rather more imaginative than the size 'A4!').

There is an imposing Elizabethan monument in the church to Sir John and his wife Elizabeth with the coat of arms proudly represented, complete with the fool wearing his cap.



**The Spilman monument & the Foolscap. Photos by permission of the Revd. Martin Henwood, Vicar of Dartford**

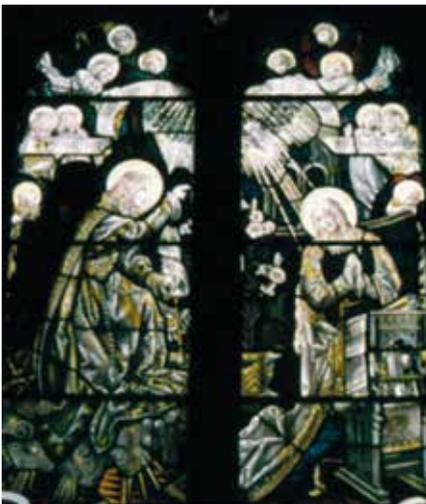
Before moving to Rochester, I was the Vicar of Bromley Parish Church (SS Peter & Paul). The church there had been completely destroyed by the Luftwaffe in 1941 leaving only the tower standing, defiantly. Whilst on duty a young sixteen year old firewatcher, Hazel Kissick died on that night and a window in the Children's Chapel is dedicated to her. Amongst the treasures from the rebuilding in the 1950s are a magnificently carved pulpit by the 'mouseman', Robert Thompson, some fine stained-glass windows by Margaret Edith Rope (after the style of the Arts and Crafts movement and a friend of Harold Gibbons, the then church's architect), her pupil Clare Dawson, and the Resurrection window by Carl Edwards. Inspirational stuff indeed.

These are just a few memories I have amongst many others of some remarkable buildings and the people and places and small details which make up so much of our Christian and social history that is so easily overlooked. They are indeed hidden treasures - both people and places.

## 20th CENTURY ANNUNCIATIONS

Leslie Smith

In the Autumn 2020 Newsletter I illustrated John Piper's Annunciation to the Shepherds at Lamberhurst (below, left), so here are some more Annunciations in 20th century stained glass. Staying with the Shepherds, Luke 2: 9 describes the event: *And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.*



Piper emphasised not only their awe, but also the curiosity of the sheep. This ovine trait is also depicted in this quatrefoil at Holy Trinity, Sissinghurst, by Joseph Nuttgens in 1946. But of course, the Annunciation most depicted by artists is that of Gabriel's appearance to Mary as described in Luke 1: 28-38 with the oft quoted *Hail, thou that art highly favoured! The Lord is with you* and Mary's response *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* (KJB 1611).

In late Victorian glass this was often a big production number, with attendant heavenly host, as here, in 1900, at St Peter & St Paul, Borden, by Curtis, Ward and Hughes.



But within a few years, Arts and Crafts artists, working in small studios such as the Glass House in Fulham, and being involved in all aspects of the craft, were producing windows of a more intimate and human scale, such as this lovely tracery trefoil by Caroline Townshend c. 1904, at St Mary, Greenhithe. That same sense of intimacy is also evident in the left light of the 1920 east window at St Peter, Oare by F.C. Eden.



This panel, from St Mary of Charity, Faversham, is from a window of 1948 by Martin Travers. Mary is depicted in a blue robe kneeling at a prie-dieu, and the flooring is tiling, indicating the event is taking place indoors. Gabriel, carries a gold wand, has multi-coloured wings, and points heavenward.



These two windows are by Kentish artists Frederick Cole of Nonington, who died in 1998 (left, in the 1960s church of St Martin, Maidstone) whose work is spread across Kent, and Thomas Freeth, who died in 1994, in St George, Beckenham, (yes, still in Kent as far as FKC is concerned). Freeth was a local art teacher.



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*John Lumley succeeded Paul Smallwood as Chairman of the Outings Committee in Summer 2020*

**Subscriptions for 2021 are now due. Unless paid by Banker's Order, they should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Sue Platts, Cornerways, Sandhurst Lane, Ashford TN25 4PF (plattsplace@hotmail.co.uk) before the end of May.**

Subscription rates are: £10 for individuals/£15 for two at same address; £200 for life members; at least £10 for Church and Historical Society Members.

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