

News & Annual Report 2017



Caring for Christian churches and chapels in Essex and East London



Which is your favourite church? Turn to page 2.

Inside this newsletter



Dr John Goodall, the Architectural Editor of *Country Life*, will give the Gepp Lecture on 17 May. See page 12. Do bring a friend. The Lecture is open to non-members.

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Which is your favourite church?

A message from our Chairman

Which is your favourite church? It's a question I am often asked, and I usually evade the issue by saying 'the one I am visiting next', because that feeling of not quite knowing what one will find as one opens the door for the first time is exciting, and can never be repeated on subsequent visits. It's not easy to give a straight answer, because most people who are habitual church visitors have many favourite churches, and in Essex and East London we are fortunate to have an astonishing variety of churches to explore, all of them with something special or interesting about them.

They may be impressively large, like Saffron Walden or Waltham Abbey, or charmingly tiny, like Ulting or Little Totham. Their attractiveness may lie in their simplicity, like East Mersea, or in their lavish decoration, like Little Braxted. They may be oases of calm in a busy urban setting, like East Ham, or they may be in remote rural locations, like Norton Mandeville. They may be unbelievably old, like St Peter-on-the-Wall at Bradwell, or relatively modern, like St Paul's in Harlow. They may be unique, like the timber church at Greensted, or they may be just one example of the output of a prolific architect, like Scott's church at Greenstead Green.

Unassuming exteriors may conceal surprising contents, like the medieval wall paintings at Fairstead or the Waldegrave monuments at Borley or the Morris glass at Ugley or the fragments of Zeppelin at Little Wigborough. They may have particular personal meaning, such as Ingatestone,



Dr James Bettley

where I was married, or Althorne, the very first church I tackled when I took over our Study Days.

Many people's favourite church will be their own parish church, especially if they have been involved in the demanding business of looking after the building. Churches, we are often told, are about people not buildings, but the power of the building to draw people in and to win their affection and devotion should not be underestimated. This is why we raise money and make grants to help those who have responsibility for our wonderfully diverse collection of church buildings, so that they can continue to do the job for which they were built – and more – for generations to come.

James Bettley DL
Chairman – Friends of Essex Churches Trust

COVER: Window in St Paul's church in Harlow (1957-9). Photograph by Philip Whitehead.
OPPOSITE PAGE: Some more favourite churches. Post a picture of your favourite church to our timeline at www.facebook.com/foect and tell us what makes it special for you.



All Saints' Church in Ulting



Church of St Mary Magdalene church in East Ham



All Saints' Church in Norton Mandeville

Southend Branch

In April, after coffee at the Railway Tavern, Kelvedon, we went to Finchingfield Church and also had a quick look around the newly-restored Guildhall. It was then on to Swards End WI for lunch, followed by the Branch AGM, after which we visited lovely Radwinter Church.

May saw us in Kent. Unfortunately, whilst at our coffee stop in Lullingstone Country Park, one of our members had a bad fall. Time constraints meant we had to leave her and a companion to await the ambulance while we made our way to High Hurstwood Church. Afterwards we had lunch with Fairwarp WI in the heart of the Ashdown Forest and then visited Fairwarp Church. Our member remained in hospital but we picked up her companion on our return journey.

Our June trip coincided with Referendum Day. After morning coffee at Poplar Nurseries, we visited Great Tey Church. Village halls were being used as polling stations but fortunately Ridgewell WI were able to use a renovated chapel, where we enjoyed 'afternoon tea at

lunchtime' before travelling to Stisted Church.

On our last trip, in September, we returned to the Railway Tavern at Kelvedon for morning coffee. Then, in a change to the published programme, we visited beautiful Ardleigh Church. Lunch was provided by Elmstead Market WI, after which we travelled to Brightlingsea, where we visited All Saints' Church on top of the hill followed by renovated St James' in the centre of town.

I would like to thank all our speakers. We are also very grateful to all those who kindly gave us refreshments.

Sadly the Branch is closing this year, with a final celebration to commemorate the past 60 years at St Clement's Church in Leigh-on-Sea on Wednesday 5 April 2017 starting at 2.15 pm.

Sandra Markham
Chair – Southend Branch

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Events

2016 started with a wonderful performance by the Essex Voices in Great Waltham parish Church. This was well attended and a great success, with 150 people turning out on a cold, wet February night, the warming canapés

provided by the Events Committee being particularly welcome.

In May the AGM and 4th Annual Gepp Lecture were held in Holy Cross church, Felsted. The speaker, Lieutenant General

Sir Barney White-Spunner KCB, CBE spoke eloquently on 'Sharing the Space, Sharing the Spirit'. His comments on parish churches and their practical and innovative uses provoked much debate. The canapés provided by the Events Committee and the wines by Gepps were delicious, and complemented an informative and enjoyable evening.

In June we held our annual garden day at beautiful Kelvedon Hall. Hosts Jack and Vicky Inglis could not have been more welcoming, and provided a fine opportunity to explore their magnificent gardens. The Committee excelled with a sumptuous tea for the high turn-out.

Our Christmas Gift Fair at Hylands House, Chelmsford was a great success, largely due to the hard work of new Fair Organiser, Emma Brice. Hylands is an ideal setting, and Emma's eclectic selection of stalls means the Fair continues to be a major event in the county's autumn calendar. We were fortunate that Lord Petre, one of



Our Christmas Gift Fair was opened by our patron, Lord Petre



In praise of cake: Our friendly events team in action

our patrons, performed the opening ceremony and, leading by example, found much to buy. Attendance was at a record and commission from sales increased by more than 15%.

Our Christmas card for 2016 featured a detail from the East window of St Andrew's church, Good Easter, photographed by Simon Knott. This was a very popular image and the card sold well.

Finally I would like to thank all the Committee members for their hard work and particularly Catharine Hutley for her leadership as Chairman of the Events Committee. She has devoted immense time and energy to the smooth running of events held over the last three years, and helped to raise considerable funds for FECT. Fortunately she remains on the Committee as Treasurer; so we continue to benefit from her skill and experience.

Rachel Grainger
Chairman – Events Committee
 E-mail events@foect.org.uk

Grants

The number of Repair Grants offered in 2016 was 14, five fewer than in 2015, and the amount offered was £106,500, a decrease of £7,500.

After work has been carried out, we often hear of parishes that have not applied for a grant. Our grant forms are simple to fill in and there is plenty of help available either from the secretary, John Bloomfield, or me; and our contact details can be found at the end of this report. There are no limits to the value of a grant: we have made grants in the current year ranging from £1,500 to £15,000. We are constantly trying to reach out to all those who are proposing to carry out repairs, and I would encourage everyone who reads this newsletter to pass on this message.

The Grants Committee met as usual on four occasions and were kept busy at each meeting. Each parish applying for a



The Church of St Mary the Virgin in South Benfleet was awarded £10,000 for repairs to the South aisle roof

grant was visited by a Committee member to gain an insight into parish life and to finalise figures which may have changed since the application form was completed. 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 their visits. The work which goes on is carried out totally by volunteers.

We are delighted to welcome a new member, Robert Brabner, who came forward after reading my appeal last year. Robert previously worked for English Heritage and his knowledge of churches is very welcome. The Committee invites further expressions of interest in becoming a member.

This year's applications covered most of Essex but not the London Boroughs, where there were no applications for the second year running, which is surprising considering the size of some of the buildings.

In past reports I have referred to the majority of grants being roof repairs. Last year there were six and this year there were seven, which is half the applications. Included among these was the replacement of shingles to the spire at Kelvedon Hatch and a number of gutter repairs. The majority of the rest were masonry repairs.

In 2016 Layer de la Haye was awarded a grant under the new Improvement scheme. While the work was being carried out, the

parish was faced with a major problem. Dry rot was discovered in the floor of the south aisle and £15,000 was needed to carry out the repairs which included the temporary removal of the organ. The parish had placed all their fund raising efforts on the improvements project and did not know how they were going to raise further funds. We were delighted to be able to step in and offer the full amount needed to complete the repairs.

Last year for the first time I was able to report on our Improvement Grants. A total of four applications amounting to £45,000 had been offered. This year two small grants amounting to £6,250 were offered, leaving over £100,000 unallocated.

Steeple received a grant offer for a new lavatory and Debden also received a grant offer for a new kitchen.

May I close by repeating my yearly appeal for applications from all the Christian denominations. This year only Church of England churches benefited from grants.

David Lodge MBE
Chairman – Grants Committee

E-mail cardav87@talktalk.net
tel 01621 850079

Application forms for grants are available from John Bloomfield

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



St Christopher's Church in Willingale was awarded £15,000 for roof repairs

2016 grant offers in full

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Bardfield Saling St Peter and St Paul	Roof and Gutter Repairs	£4,000
Clavering St Mary and St Clement	Window Repairs	£1,500
Colchester St Botolph	Tower Roof and Masonry Repairs	£15,000
Colchester St Peter	Masonry Repairs	£6,000
Fobbing St Michael	Masonry Repairs to walls	£10,000
Greenstead St Andrew	Roof and Gutter Repairs	£8,000
Kelvedon Hatch St Nicholas	Replacement of Tower Shingles	£5,000
Lamarsh Holy Innocents	Replacement of Render to Tower	£5,000
Layer de la Haye St John the Baptist	South Aisle Floor Renewal	£15,000
Outwood Common St John the Divine	Roof Repairs	£4,000
Pebmarsh St John the Baptist	Tower Repairs	£5,000
South Benfleet St Mary the Virgin	South Aisle Roof Repairs	£10,000
South Hanningfield St Peter	Tower Repairs	£3,000
Willingale St Christopher	Roof Repairs	£15,000
	TOTAL	£106,500

Improvements

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Debden St Mary the Virgin	New Kitchen	£3,000
Steeple St Lawrence and All Saints	New Lavatory	£3,250
TOTAL		£6,250

2016 Ride+Stride

Fiona Nelmes stepped down as County Organiser at the start of 2016 after nine successful years and we owe her a considerable debt for her work over that period. I took over the organisation, so these are my first observations of what has become an enjoyable annual ritual for many people, as well as a significant fundraiser for the Friends of Essex Churches Trust.

Readers will appreciate how fortunate Essex is to have so many wonderful and diverse churches, and it seems to me that Ride+Stride day should be the one when Essex and East London show off their richness by opening as many as possible for visitors. I was very struck by the warm welcome I received in many of the churches that we visited.

Despite two weeks of golden late-summer sunshine beforehand, the BBC weather forecast for 10 September 2016 was not encouraging, and the predictions of



SongCycle – the ‘all cycling, all singing’ male voice quartet celebrated their 20th anniversary by singing all 150 psalms at the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury in Brentwood. They raised more than £4,200. Watch their video at <http://ow.ly/6XwG309fTBN>.

monsoon-like conditions over East Anglia resulted in a number of participants amending their routes, or, in a couple of cases that I am aware of, cancelling altogether. In the event, the rain was not as torrential as we had been led to expect, and for a few minutes in the afternoon, some even spotted blue skies. But by then, the damage had

been done – one cannot reasonably expect people who do not get in to the saddle every day to relish the dangerous conditions that motorists had been warned about.

However, I have been extremely impressed to learn of the different interpretations of 'Ride+Stride', including people at one church singing all of the Psalms. Although cyclists predominate, the event is by no means exclusively for those on two wheels. £62,361 has so far been received for the Friends of Essex Churches Trust, slightly down on previous years but this is still a magnificent effort.

I must also record my sincere thanks to Ray and Beryl Clements, for many years custodians of the not-insignificant amounts of correspondence (and payments) that Ride+Stride inevitably generates.

For the record, Sunday 11 September 2016,



The rain did not dampen the spirits of this team from St Barnabas' church in Walthamstow

the day after the Ride+Stride, was another glorious sunny day. Let's hope this year's date, Saturday 9 September 2017, will be too. Look out for more information on our website, www.foect.org.uk/rideandstride.

John Pickthorn

Organiser – Ride & Stride

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tel 01799 523311



Peter Mockett and Robin Thurgood, outside St Margaret's Church in Stanford Rivers, said: "We had a really nice morning walking nearly nine miles in just over four hours."



Peter Cooper, churchwarden of St Mary and St Clement's in Clavering, pictured outside St Swithin's in Great Chishill. Peter cycled 56 miles in three counties, and clocked up more than 30 churches.

Study Days *by Christopher Starr*

The Friends enjoyed two splendid Study Days in 2016, the Spring Day in North-West Essex and the Autumn Day in central Essex.

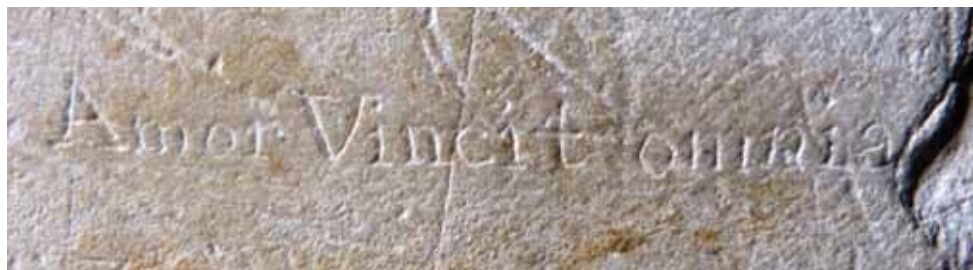
On the Spring Study Day in May we began at picturesque St Mary the Virgin church in Arkesden where the glebe land was once farmed as a manor, and the rectory was a manor house. From the church, where we examined the monumental brass commemorating Richard Fox who died in 1439, we went on to visit St Mary and St Clement's in Clavering, a beautiful church of great interest, including the enigmatic graffito, 'Amor vincit omnia' (love conquers all), carefully incised on the wall some 600 years ago.

After a picnic lunch and a quick look at the remains of Clavering castle, we moved on to All Saints' church in Rickling, a somewhat lonely church which always seems to have a large selection of wild flowers growing in the churchyard. The chancel contains a number of monuments to the gentry families who inhabited Rickling Hall during the Middle Ages.

Our October Study Day took us to the Walthams and the Leighs. At St Mary's and

St Lawrence's church in Great Waltham, a large church built to impress by a Norman Earl of Essex, we looked at the monuments to successive owners of nearby Langleys. It was here at Great Waltham that as a young curate, the historian Philip Morant gained his first acquaintance with Essex history. Then, at St Martin's church in Little Waltham, we saw some fine medieval brasses and an ancient dug-out wooden chest for valuables.

After the lunch break we met at St John the Evangelist church in Little Leighs, where we took the opportunity to look at a rare and hauntingly beautiful wooden effigy of a priest. His name has been lost in the passage of time, but 700 years have not lessened the visual impact of this extraordinary monument. The last church of the day was St Mary's in Great Leighs, a delightful building, with one of the six surviving round church towers in Essex. It was here that the twentieth-century ecclesiologist and scholar, the well-loved rector Andrew Clark, wrote copiously and brilliantly, about his adopted county. During the sixteenth century, members of the Kellogg family of Great Leighs emigrated to New England,



600 years ago an unknown hand cut the above words, 'Amor vincit omnia' (love conquers all), onto the stone: Left jamb of the rood door at St Mary and St Clement's church in Clavering

where their descendants later opened a food factory which still produces Cornflakes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped us make the Study Days a success, including the clergy, churchwardens and everyone who assisted us with parking arrangements and refreshments. It is pleasant to record that many of the Friends (and their friends) who attend the Study Days have regularly attended for many years and have themselves become friends of the organisers.

We aim to raise £1,000 for the Trust on each Study Day as well as providing historical and



Resting in peace since about 1320 AD: Effigy of a priest at St John's church in Little Leighs

architectural guidance on our wonderful churches. My thanks also to Susan, who has kept the administration of our Study Days running so smoothly.

Save the date!

Wednesday 3 May – Spring Study Day

Visits to churches at Bardfield Saling, Stebbing, Great Sampford and Little Sampford. More information will be available at www.foect.org.uk/events.php

Wednesday 17 May – AGM and 2017 Gepp Lecture

Our speaker in 2017 will be Dr John Goodall, Architectural Editor of *Country Life* and author of *Parish Church Treasures*. St Mary's church, Saffron Walden at 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 7 June – Garden visit

By kind permission of Mr Phil Torr, an exclusive visit to Peacocks, Margaretting CM4 9HY, a five-acre garden with mature native and specimen trees surrounding a Regency house. Details will be announced nearer the time; tickets must be purchased in advance. More information will be available at www.foect.org.uk/events.php

Saturday 9 September – Annual Ride+Stride

To raise funds for the Trust and participating churches. 10.00 am to 6 pm. Everyone can ride, stride, steward or sponsor! More information will be available at www.foect.org.uk/rideandstride

Saturday 7 October – Autumn Study Day

We will visit North Ockendon, Fobbing, Horndon-on-the-Hill and Corringham. More information will be available at www.foect.org.uk/events.php

Thursday 12 October – Christmas Gift Fair

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

No news is good news - or so they say reports our Membership Secretary

'That's about it,' is all I can say. Our income from members' subs, church congregations, one-off donations and Gift Aid goes on at a very steady level from year to year. Treasurers find this very pleasing. In 2016 almost £38,000 went through my hands; marginally up on 2015.

But what of the dynamic? What is the trend over the past 13 years? Much as in 2016, the yearly average was just over £38,000 (leaving out some occasional very large donations). There's 'no news' in that, so it must be 'good news'. I would like to see it rise, that would be news; indeed 'very good news'.

And how do our four sources of income vary? Church congregations at 30% of the total and Gift Aid at 10% vary very little. The same cannot be said for subs and donations. Subs have averaged 50% of total income but were down to 45% in 2016. Not a good trend. News and, therefore, not 'good news'. Compensating for this 'bad news', donations have risen from a 13 year average of 9% to 15% in 2016 but many are one-offs.

What does this say? Something we knew already, membership is steadily falling. So, anything you can do to spread the word would please me a lot. If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining us, let me know and I will send them post-haste an application form. And would your church like some to display? I can oblige.

Life Membership took off in 2016. We now have 20 Life Members, mostly by transfer from annual membership. This is very heartening, because it confirms a long-standing commitment to the work of The Friends but it does mean subs income tends to peak. Life Membership is not for everyone but, if it appeals to you, I can let you have details and an application form. The Life Membership subscription is a one-off £200 for individuals and £300 for couples, being a factor of ten 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 newsletter to make the task easy. If you would like to set up a Standing Order or you 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

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016

Statement of financial activities

Total 2015 £'000		Total 2016 £'000
35.8	Donations and subscriptions	37.6
0.5	Legacies	0.0
76.7	Fundraising - Ride & Stride	70.4
19.9	- other events	17.4
15.9	Dividends and interest	16.4
148.8	Total Income	141.8
(2.1)	Governance and support costs	(2.1)
(2.9)	Ride and Stride - fundraising expenses	(2.2)
(33.2)	- returned to Churches	(29.5)
(7.4)	Other events – fundraising expenses	(6.4)
(2.7)	Promotion of public interest in churches	(1.8)
(159.0)	Grants for work payable to Churches	(111.8)
(207.3)	Total Expenditure	(153.8)
(58.5)	Net expenditure	(12.0)
(0.8)	Unrealised (loss) / gain on investment	20.0
(59.3)	Net expenditure / net improvement in funds	8.0

Summary balance sheet

2015 £'000		2016 £'000
282.0	Investment - market value	301.9
313.0	Cash and deposits	263.0
0.7	Sundry debtors	1.5
595.7	Total assets	566.4
(117.0)	Undrawn grants	(79.8)
(5.7)	Creditors - Gutter Clearance	(5.5)
(1.3)	Accruals	(1.4)
471.7	Net assets	479.7
	Represented by	
471.7	General Fund (unrestricted)	479.7
471.7	Total funds	479.7

Treasurer's Report

The summarised accounts on page 14 show that there was a surprising increase in the value of our 2014 investment in Charifund units. This was sufficient to cover our net expenditure in 2016.

Sadly the amount which we offered for building work was much lower than in 2015, simply because there not a greater demand from local Churches. Do encourage any Church which you know is planning qualifying

work to consider applying to the Friends.

Thanks are again due to all our supporters via subscriptions, gifts and our fund-raising activities.

Harry Marsh
Treasurer

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

Legacies

We are always saddened to learn of the death of members, but sometimes the news is accompanied by donations taken at the funeral, a thought that is greatly appreciated. We have also, over the years, received some very generous bequests. We urge all our members to consider remembering us in their wills;

bequests to charity can 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, email harry.marsh@talktalk.net

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2016 – 17

Patrons:

The Bishop of Brentwood
The Bishop of Chelmsford
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex

President:

Peter Martin MBE DL

Executive Committee and Trustees:

James Bettley DL (Chairman)
Jeremy Beale (Vice-Chairman)
Canon Harry Marsh (Treasurer)

Martin Stuchfield MBE DL (Secretary)
Keith Gardner (Membership Secretary)
Jill Cole
Rachel Grainger
David Lodge MBE
Sandra Markham
Ralph Meloy
John Pickthorn
Christopher Starr

We are grateful to all our supporters and members.



St Peter and St Paul's Church in Bardfield Saling, one of six round tower churches in Essex



The Church of St Mary the Virgin in Stebbing. The stone rood screen is very rare.

Our next Study Day, on 3 May, will be visiting St Peter and St Paul's Church in Bardfield Saling and St Mary's Church in Stebbing. You are very welcome to join us. The Study Day will be led by Dr Christopher Starr. Find more details and book your place at www.foect.org.uk/events.php. Photographs by Tim Goodbody.



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