

The background of the cover is a highly detailed, repeating pattern. It features large, stylized letters 'D' and 'P' in a dark green color, set within a grid of red and gold circular medallions. The letters are surrounded by intricate floral and foliate designs in gold, green, and red. A semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the right side of the cover, containing the title and the organization's name.

# Annual Review 2023-2024

Churches  
Conservation  
Trust







# Saving historic churches together

## Annual Review 2023-2024

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Wall Stencilling at St Peter & St Paul's Church, Albury (© CCT)  
Main Image: St John the Baptist, Inglesham (© Diana Neale LRPS)  
Inset Image: St John's Church, Maddermarket (© Joseph Casey)

Welcome from Liz Peace, CCT Chair & Greg Pickup, Chief Executive

It is with pleasure that we introduce the 2023-24 Annual Review of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). Our charity is charged with the care of one of the most important and largest collections of historic buildings in the country, comprising 357 beautiful old churches across England. 2023-24 marks the penultimate year of our current strategy, which has focused on supporting communities to love and care for these buildings as well as helping raise funds for their all-important upkeep.



Keeping these precious buildings in good repair, but also alive and thriving, is a momentous task. We remain incredibly grateful for the support of core funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Church Commissioners, though this represents only part of our total income.

We are proud that year on year we multiply this core funding, thanks to the support of our members, communities, donors and funders: notably the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is only thanks to this broader support that we can continue to fulfil our mission to not only preserve these buildings as the irreplaceable gems of our nation's heritage that they are, but as spaces that can continue to tell the story of our nation for this generation and beyond as places of community, solace and beauty.

Even with this support, there is still more work to do. In 2023-24 we undertook an estate-wide review of our buildings. Hearteningly, their condition has improved in recent years, however, we require many millions more to continue this trajectory, against a sobering backdrop of core funding that hasn't increased in line with inflation and increasing capital costs. This, combined with the threats facing our heritage due to climate change and continued skills shortages, means that we require the support of all those who care about our historic places of worship more than ever.



We firmly believe that with a little more funding we could achieve a significant amount more. A perennial issue for us is considering how we might be able to repay the investment both church and state have made in CCT over more than half a century to help keep churches beyond our own portfolio alive and thriving as a vital part of our nation's heritage. We believe that with more funding we could share the skills we've acquired in doing so to help keep many more churches open. We look forward to continuing conversations with all our friends and partners in the sector about how we might do this.



Despite the continued pressures, we've celebrated some real successes this year; the generosity of our supporters who gave to our "Roofs at Risk" Appeal has allowed us to continue to do exactly that. We also celebrated the re-opening of one of the jewels in CCT's crown, the Grade I St Peter's in Sudbury in Suffolk which reopened as Sudbury Arts Centre. We're proud of an innovative partnership with the brilliant local charity the Bridge Project, thanks to whom the site is once again a thriving community hub at the heart of this market town and contributing to its wider regeneration.

Liz Peace

Churches Conservation Trust Chair

Greg Pickup

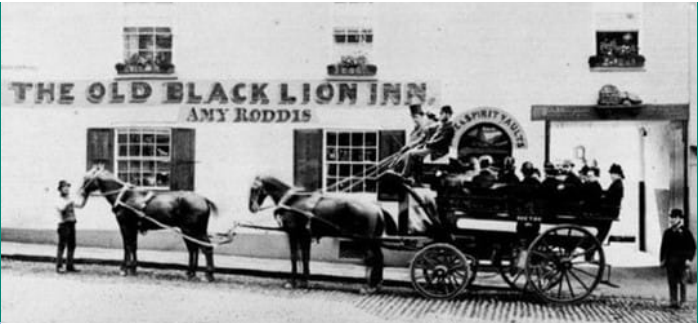
Churches Conservation Trust Chief Executive



April 2023

Building work begins on a project to rescue the Old Black Lion public house on Marefair, Northampton. The historic pub, which sits next to the Grade I listed St Peter's Church, forms part of an ambitious project to regenerate this historic area of Northampton as a 'Heritage Gateway' into the town.

Historic photo of the Old Black Lion



May 2023

Seventeen Nineteen is announced as the recipient of three prestigious RIBA Awards (Royal Institute of British Architects). These include the RIBA North East Award 2023, RIBA North East Building of the Year Award 2023 and RIBA North East Conservation Award 2023. Holy Trinity Church is one of the North East's most historically significant buildings.

Seventeen Nineteen © Andy Marshall



June 2023

St Mary's Church, Stonham Parva, Suffolk, wins the RIBA Suffolk Craftsmanship annual award. The project, which saw repairs and conservation of the striking medieval double hammerbeam roof, was made possible thanks to the Culture Recovery Fund, part of the Heritage Stimulus Fund grant programme.

Stonham Parva © Ian Lambert, Freeland Rees Roberts Architects



July 2023

CCT takes its first steps into the world of podcasting by recording a series whilst sleeping over in churches. Titled Nights in the Nave, the series explores the concept of Champing (church camping) and interviews special guests such as historian Dr Maddy Pelling and author Dr Matthew Green.

Aldwinckle Champing Podcast Recording © CCT



August 2023

St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, joins forces with the Shrewsbury Arts Trail to launch their first Stained Glass Festival. The festival is part of a National Lottery Heritage Fund project and forms part of a 12-month programme of community craft events, exhibitions and tours.

Example of painted glass at St Marys © CCT



September 2023

Every year CCT celebrates Heritage Open Days, the national festival of local history, and this year is no exception. Taking place over 10 days in September, the theme of this year's festival is Creativity Unwrapped. Our churches host dozens of events including calligraphy workshops, tower tours and bell-ringing demonstrations.

Worcester HODs Activities © CCT





October 2023

31 October sees the end of the delivery phase of the five-year £5m Bats in Churches project, a partnership between the Church of England, Natural England, Bat Conservation Trust, the Churches Conservation Trust and Historic England. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to explore ways that bats and humans can live in harmony.

Grey long eared bat © Andrei Sakhno. Bats In Churches Project

BATS  
IN  
CHURCHES



November 2023

St Peter's Church, Sudbury, unveils a new name and identity, ahead of its long-awaited reopening following a multi-million-pound regeneration project. The church was formally rebranded as Sudbury Arts Centre, to match ambitions to re-establish the site as a venue for events, workshops and heritage interpretation.

Sudbury Arts Centre © CCT



December 2023

Historic England announces the award of a Heritage at Risk grant of £496,000 for a project at the Church of St John the Evangelist in Lancaster. The funding will be used towards a programme of urgent repairs.

The Church of St John the Evangelist © CCT/Andy Marshall



January 2024

St Peter's Church and the Old Black Lion pub in Northampton feature on the BBC's *Digging for Britain* archaeology programme. Presenter Professor Alice Roberts explores the dig site in the pub's courtyard where Anglo Saxon pottery and evidence of a 17th-century fire were discovered.

Filming the BBC's *Digging for Britain* © Stu Vincent



February 2024

We celebrate National Apprenticeship Week by marking the success of past apprentices across our major projects at Worcester and Sunderland. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of such apprentices, we are saving these special buildings as well as training the next generation in heritage craft skills.

Apprentices at work at Seventeen Nineteen © Mike Veitch



March 2024

CCT marks International Women's Day by telling the stories of remarkable women connected to our churches, such as that of Lady Anne Clifford who left an indelible mark on the north Westmoreland landscape. Hers is a story of endeavour, strength and breaking down barriers. In her lifetime she rebuilt six castles, seven churches, two almshouses and four dwellings.

The Great Picture by Jan van Belcamp





112 <sup>over</sup> £49,000

members have elected to designate a portion of their membership subscription to their favourite church through the Church-Based Membership Scheme

was raised by CCT's 2023-2024 Annual Appeal Roofs at Risk (excluding Gift Aid)

64,936 £748,067

accounts follow CCT across our social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram and X

was raised in church-based funding

1.79m 9,491

visitors walked through the doors of the 357 churches in our care

supporters, including members, volunteers and those who donated over £5, have contributed to caring for the 357 churches in the care of CCT



# £1,222,000    £703,000

was raised through legacies income  
and 68 known members of the  
Legacy Giving Group who have  
pledged a gift in their will to CCT

was donated to support our  
work

## 15

communities at churches outside  
of those in the care of CCT were  
supported by the trust

## £3m

was spent on supporting  
volunteers and communities,  
keeping churches open

## 1,723

Champing guests were  
welcomed into 19 different  
churches over the 2023 season  
(8 of these being partner  
churches)





## Volunteers and Community Supporters

Every year CCT recognises the incredible support and outstanding contributions of the community supporters and volunteers who help to care for our churches at the Community Supporter and Volunteer Evening. This culminates in the Community Supporter and Volunteer of the Year Awards, which is generously supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust.

# MARSH

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## Charitable Trust

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Once everyone had settled in behind their screens and Judith Patrick, Director of Operations, had covered all the necessary technological housekeeping, the evening began with a welcome speech by our Chair of the Board of Trustees, Liz Peace CBE. Attendees then heard from Greg Pickup, CCT Chief Executive. This was followed by the announcements of the Marsh Charitable Trust Community Supporter and Volunteer of the Year Awards 2023 winners for each of the seven categories.

### Supporter of the Year – North

Adrian Argent-Cook

St Peter's, Gamston, Nottinghamshire

Since St Peter's, Gamston, was vested into the care of CCT in 2018, Adrian has been one of the main points of contact for the trust.

As church warden, he has an extensive knowledge of the history of the church and the area as well as the people associated with St Peter's, past and present. He has put together an interesting history of the church in the form of a booklet.

During a lengthy period when conservation works were ongoing, Adrian kept an eye on the church, unlocking the doors for contractors and keeping the Gamston residents up to date with what was happening. Whilst conservation work was taking place on the church interior, Adrian got together a group of villagers who now meet monthly to keep the churchyard in good order and improve it for visitors and wildlife. Some of the group have since gone on to be involved with the group looking after the church.

After the initial opening in December 2021, the church couldn't be fully opened to visitors because of ongoing work to the memorials. During this period, Adrian and his wife Sarah organised events that could be supervised, such as guided walks and talks as well as Foodie Fridays, where the villagers would congregate in the church, bringing their own food and getting to know each other better. When temperatures reached 40°C during the summer, Adrian opened up the church as a sanctuary for residents to escape from the heat – an initiative which was well received by many!

Adrian Argent-Cook © CCT



### Digital Initiative

All Stars Volunteers © CCT

#### The All Stars Volunteers

All Saints', Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

The volunteers at All Saints' (aka the All Saints' All Stars) launched their project to welcome more visitors to Cambridge's Painted Church in autumn 2021. As a small team they didn't have the resources to open the church every day so decided to organise events that would appeal to the widest possible audience.

Penny Robson undertook to find musicians and so, on 3 October, 2021, Music @All Saints' was born. With no website, social media or mailing list, the volunteers advertised through posters and word of mouth. Despite this, over 50 music lovers came to that first concert, and the All Stars realised how much more they could achieve if they had a presence on social media. And so, inspired by this initial success, the volunteers quickly upped their game, developing a website and setting up accounts on X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Facebook. An account was also set up with Mailchimp and regular email campaigns are sent to the growing mailing list (now nearly 400), while advance sales are booked through Eventbrite. Recent diagnostics from Mailchimp show that the mailing list is of a very high quality 'with over 57% highly likely to purchase again'.

Since that first recital in October 2021, audience numbers have continued to grow as recent events demonstrate; the Christmas concert with Granta Chorale was oversubscribed and it was wonderful to see over 200 people participating in the Ceremony of Carols.



Supporter of the Year – West  
Rupert Hardy  
St Andrew's, Winterborne Tomson, Dorset



Rupert Hardy is an active supporter of his local church, St Andrew's in Winterborne Tomson, as well as the wider network of CCT churches in Dorset.

Rupert organises an annual concert at St Andrew's and hosts a post-concert reception at his home, the Manor, which is opposite the church. The last concert raised an impressive £747, which is remarkable given the capacity of this tiny Norman church. Rupert and his family also host drinks and mince pies after the annual Advent Service. During lockdown, Rupert produced a delightful video about the history of St Andrew's to reach a wider audience and encourage visitors. He has also worked with the Local Community Officer, suggesting new ways to promote text and online donations inside CCT churches. Rupert helps to coordinate annual lunches where volunteers from all the Dorset CCT churches share news and best practice and receive updates from CCT staff. During the last lunch in January, seven Dorset churches were represented and a healthy discussion was generated about fundraising ideas.

The altar at St Andrew's Church, Winterborne Tomson © Ian Sumner





# Volunteers and Community Supporters

Team of the Year

Volunteer Team at St George's

St George's, Portland, Dorset

The St George's team recently held their first Flower Festival and Coronation Celebration event, partnered with Dorset Wildlife Trust and local botanists. This wonderful event ensured that their volunteer-led churchyard maintenance project was as beneficial to the biodiversity of the vast graveyard as it was pleasing to the 20,000 visitors St George's has each year. The team held yet another very successful Summer Celebration and their second annual Light-up event this Christmas. They provide guided tours of the church and regular guided tours of the churchyard.

The team have also expanded their range of merchandise to optimise fundraising opportunities for the church and have successfully taken on the challenge of piloting a contactless payment machine. The volunteers have a remarkable wealth of skills and knowledge that they give generously to maintain the church and welcome visitors, showing them all the delights of St George's.

Volunteer Team at St George's. Portland © CCT



## Fundraising Achievement

Ivor Walker , Elston Chapel, Elston, Nottinghamshire

In October 2022, Elston Chapel was subject to vandalism, which caused damage to the windows and the interior wall fabric of the church. The church warden, Ivor Walker, subsequently decided to host a bonfire night event on his land to help raise funds towards the costs of the repairs. This was a remarkable turnaround, as within a month of the vandalism taking place, Ivor had organised and held the event, which raised £500 towards the chapel repairs. A truly remarkable achievement in a small village! Ivor and his family have been church wardens for generations, including his father, himself and his daughter.

Internal shot of Elston Chapel © Peter Mason



Paul Unwin © CCT

## Supporter of the Year – South East

Paul Unwin, St John the Baptist, Parson Drove, Cambridgeshire

Paul has gathered members of the neighbourhood to turn an unloved church into a community hub, hosting many unusual and creative events to raise money for the church and CCT. From a black tie dinner, to farmer's markets, Christmas buffets and sales to afternoon teas, Paul and his team have attracted many visitors to the church who now appreciate the beauty of the building, and the work of CCT. He has contributed to other projects in the LCO area which helps the volunteers and supporters of other churches as well.



Lychgate at St Mary Magdalene © Tom Jones

## Achieving Impact

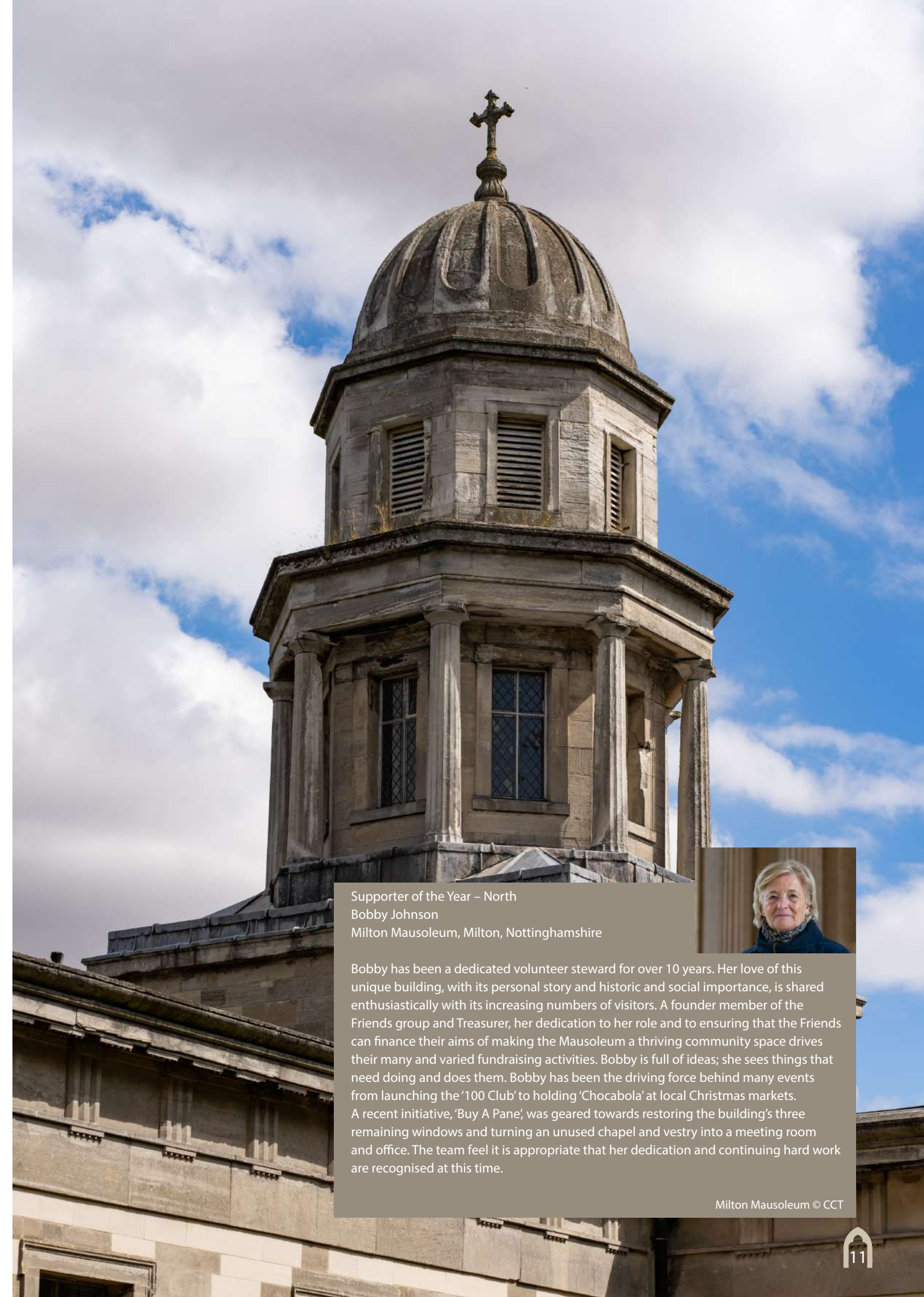
Judith Hall, St Mary Magdalene, Battlefield, Shropshire

Judith has long family links to the Battlefield church. Her father was one of our former longstanding volunteers who would open and close the church on a daily basis and meet and greet our many visitors. Sadly, after Judith's father passed away, the church went through a period of key access only, which saw a decline in visitor numbers and donations.

Judith took up the mantle her father left, opening and closing the church on a daily basis, which has seen a significant increase in visitors and donations. She was also instrumental in supporting a rewilding project of the churchyard, through identifying all of the current wild flowers that exist within the area, along with their locations. Alongside support from the local Parochial Church Council (PCC) this has enabled the churchyard to have a cutting regime, allowing both flowers and grasses to flourish, identifying locations of orchids and reducing the maintenance costs for the PCC.

Without Judith's daily commitment to the church, the building would still only be available through key access, leading to reduced visitor numbers and donations in turn.





Supporter of the Year – North  
Bobby Johnson  
Milton Mausoleum, Milton, Nottinghamshire



Bobby has been a dedicated volunteer steward for over 10 years. Her love of this unique building, with its personal story and historic and social importance, is shared enthusiastically with its increasing numbers of visitors. A founder member of the Friends group and Treasurer, her dedication to her role and to ensuring that the Friends can finance their aims of making the Mausoleum a thriving community space drives their many and varied fundraising activities. Bobby is full of ideas; she sees things that need doing and does them. Bobby has been the driving force behind many events from launching the '100 Club' to holding 'Chocabola' at local Christmas markets. A recent initiative, 'Buy A Pane', was geared towards restoring the building's three remaining windows and turning an unused chapel and vestry into a meeting room and office. The team feel it is appropriate that her dedication and continuing hard work are recognised at this time.

Milton Mausoleum © CCT



# Regeneration Update

## The Old Black Lion pub

It was a busy year for activity at the Old Black Lion and in February the project received a much-needed boost with the news that Phipps Northampton Brewery Company had signed an agreement to run the Grade II listed former coaching inn. The Old Black Lion is currently undergoing a £3.9m renovation programme which, when finished, will become the centrepiece of the ‘Marefair Heritage Gateway’ close to Northampton Station.

The works are part of CCT’s ambitious plans to sustain the historic pub and create a new community resource, generate more income for St Peter’s, contribute to wider development activity and demonstrate the value of heritage led regeneration. Helping sustain and save both church and pub heritage, the Old Black Lion will offer a traditional welcome with refurbished bars, a restaurant and sunny courtyard seating. The new facilities will also support more events in the neighbouring St Peter’s Church which is in the care of CCT and has been kept open by local volunteers for nearly 30 years.

The Phipps brand has been a central part of the site’s rich past as the pub was part of its estate 100 years ago. Real ale fans will also be excited to hear that the brewery will install equipment at the pub to brew one-off, or seasonal beers to accompany its popular range of ales that are produced nearby at the Albion Brewery on Bridge Street.

As part of the building works, archaeological investigations were carried out in the courtyard of the pub. The finds uncovered showed that the site of the Old Black Lion was in use for centuries before the devastating fire of 1675 that destroyed the original pub. Some of these examples include Saxon pottery and a well.



Courtyard of the Old Black Lion © Stu Vincent

## Sudbury Arts Centre

In November 2023, Sudbury’s central cultural landmark unveiled a new name and identity, ahead of its long-awaited reopening following a multi-million-pound regeneration.

St Peter’s on Market Hill was formally rebranded as Sudbury Arts Centre, to match ambitions to re-establish the site as ‘the go-to venue for events, workshops, heritage and trying new things’.

The venue opened to the public following the completion of a major project financed by a £1.67m grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), in addition to other funding sources.

The church was vested into the care of CCT in 1976 and the new brand of Sudbury Arts Centre was chosen after a six-month consultation process, led by Sudbury-based business consultancy Mackman. The exercise included input from CCT, the Friends of St Peter’s, and the Bridge Project charity, as well as feedback from community groups. A new operational partnership was also announced which will see the Bridge Project operate under a formal lease within Sudbury Arts Centre from January 2024, with a small, but dedicated site team supported by staff from the Bridge Project. The varied activity programme focuses on community engagement with new and existing audiences, a full events programme, school learning, volunteering, work experience, walks, talks and tours and expanding the hire capability for future sustainability.

Key contributors hope that the centre’s relaunch – along with the recent expansion of Gainsborough’s House – will play a significant role in boosting the Sudbury visitor economy.

With thanks to National Lottery players, these projects are being funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Find out more about the project and events at: [sudburyartscentre.com](http://sudburyartscentre.com)



Exterior of St Peter’s Church showing the statue of Thomas Gainsborough © CCT



## Conservation: Layers of History

### How a Community Initiative Project helped with the conservation of wall paintings in the Drummond Chapel at St Peter & St Paul's Church, Albury, Surrey.



© Joseph Casey

The Drummond Chapel is located within St Peter & St Paul's Church, which dates from Saxon times and is set amongst the trees of Albury Park in Surrey. In 1280, the south transept was added, and in 1843 it was transformed into a mortuary chapel for the Drummond family by the renowned architect A. W. N. Pugin. Pugin used his rich and colourful style to create a dazzling chapel, lavishly decorated with stained glass, a magnificent tiled floor, and painted walls and ceilings.

The stencilled wall paintings in the chapel are central to the decorative scheme created by Pugin. They include quatrefoil and flower elements in rich reds and golds and incorporate the letter D and eagles from the Drummond family crest.

The Friends of Albury Old Saxon Church was formed in 1974 when the building was vested into the care of CCT. Over the years, the Friends group has been successful in fundraising for the church, putting on events and opening the building for visitors.

In 2007, whilst taking photographs for a new version of the Drummond Chapel brochure, it was discovered that a serious amount of remedial work was needed to conserve and restore the wall paintings of the chapel.

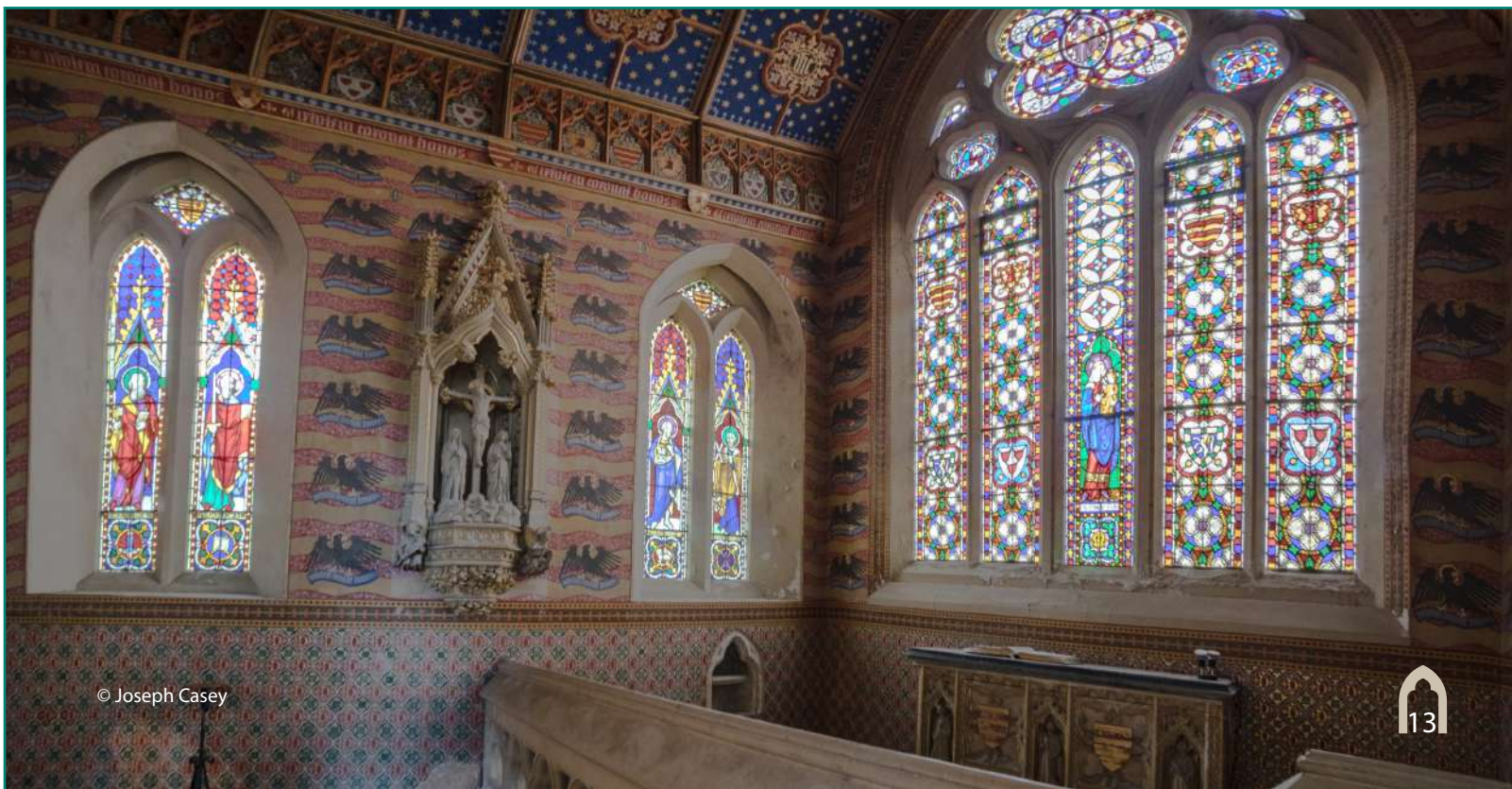
Roy Hogben of the Friends of Albury Church says: 'The funding that we had managed to raise to start this work was totally consumed in making sure that the outside fabric of the church was watertight, the land drainage fit for purpose and the micro-climate within the church dealt with. The normal practice with any project is to start at the top and work your way down, but with our financial resources now somewhat depleted, it took some serious fundraising between 2016 and 2023 to even look at the way forward.'

After conserving the exterior of the chapel to ensure no further water ingress, the Friends decided to undertake the most critical work first. This was to stabilise the painted plasterwork and all the delaminated surfaces from the floor level up to the dado line.

The Friends were able to work with CCT to carry out the conservation as part of a Community Initiative Project (CIP). These projects have clear aims and objectives and defined start and endpoints. The aim is for CIPs to be undertaken with a high level of autonomy, and light involvement from CCT.

Roy continues: 'We have been very fortunate to have been able to raise a good deal of funding from local residents, business donors, benefactors and international patrons to enable some serious conservation/restoration projects to be undertaken on an autonomous basis, based on the mutual trust and respect of CCT's CIP programme.'

During the work, CCT conservation staff were able to provide expert advice on how to follow processes in line with their own policies.



© Joseph Casey



## Conservation: Layers of History



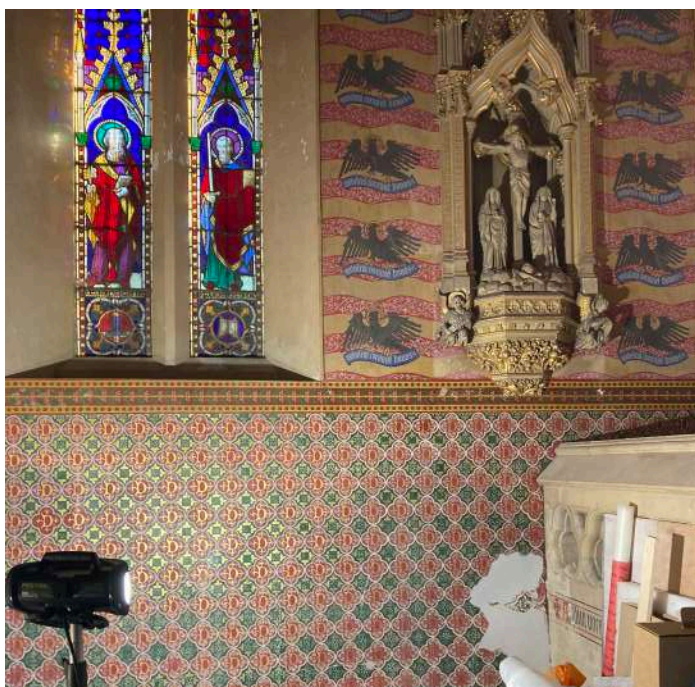
© CCT

### Assessment and conservation

The project began with a detailed condition assessment of the walls from the floor level to the base of the windows. The survey aimed to reveal the mechanisms of deterioration and the degree of damage. It also aimed to gain a better understanding of the original techniques and materials used in Pugin's scheme as well as during subsequent interventions.

During the survey, the main issues that were identified included plaster detachment and disintegration, cracks, deformation, and flaking paint layers. The altar showed signs of stone deterioration, blisters, delamination, and missing paint or gilding layers. Insects, soiling and candle wax splashes were also noted as contributing factors to the deterioration.

The assessment, followed by on-site tests and laboratory analyses, highlighted and confirmed that significant conservation work was needed to preserve the historical and aesthetic significance of the chapel.



© CCT

### Walls

All surface dirt, such as dust and cobwebs, was removed with soft brushes and gentle vacuuming. Wet cleaning was carried out without any mechanical force using damp sponges, swabs and deionised water, to avoid any type of abrasion.



© CCT

Sections of detached plaster, often with cracks and areas of movement, required grouting. Before this could take place, layers of Japanese tissue were applied to prevent the loss of any loose fragments and to protect against possible stains from the liquid grout. This is a process known as 'facing up'.



© CCT

The grouting was carried out using lime-based mortar, either more or less dense depending on the area to be worked on and according to the size of the voids. Micro balloons were added to fill more space without increasing the weight on the plaster. Cracks and missing plaster were repaired in thin layers to ensure the correct setting of the mortar.



© CCT

Delaminated and flaking paint layers were gently re-adhered to the plaster by pre-moistening and applying tissue, using gentle pressure with cotton wool.





© CCT

The areas with a loss of paint were carefully retouched. For the larger areas, new stencils were produced by tracing the contours of the missing areas and then drawing the design of the painting. The new stencils needed to consider variations in the pattern caused by surface deformations, particularly around significant mortar repairs. At least three different stencils were needed to reproduce the entire design.

The reconstruction of the pattern in the large areas of loss, as well as the reintegration in the smaller areas, ensured a unified reading of the design. This made it easier to appreciate the decoration as a whole.

#### Altar

All areas were dusted with soft brushes and were gently vacuumed, avoiding areas with stone disintegration or paint delamination and flaking.

'Facing up' with Japanese tissue was applied to areas with paint delamination and around areas with stone deterioration. The aim was to protect the paint in the most damaged areas during the consolidation of the stone.



© Cliveden Conservation

Consolidating the stone on the altar was a slow process, which took several weeks. The treatment was applied with syringes to avoid further loss to the stone, paint or gilding.

The delamination on the altar top was addressed by grouting. Pre-wetting was carried out first to facilitate the penetration of the grout. The process was repeated several times until there was no movement between the layers of stone, and the grout could be seen near the edges of the surface.

Mortar repairs were needed where stone had been lost and missing elements were evident. Stone losses had occurred in varying levels of severity – some affecting only the stone's surface but others involving entire carvings. For the areas of most significant loss, ceramic armatures were used to provide additional support for larger mortar repairs.

All the areas with flaking paint or gilding were treated. This enabled them to be re-secured to the stone substrate in stages of protection and consolidation.

Areas where paint or gilding detail had been lost were retouched, helping to create a unified appearance. The painted and gilded areas were gently wet-cleaned, revealing the overall colour scheme of the altar, and visually unifying the entire piece.



© CCT

#### Next steps

The next stage in the conservation programme for the chapel will focus on the upper section of the walls, ceilings, floors and monument. The Friends have already commissioned Cliveden Conservation to assess the condition of the ceilings, frieze, walls and monument, and are currently fundraising for the next phase of recommended conservation works.

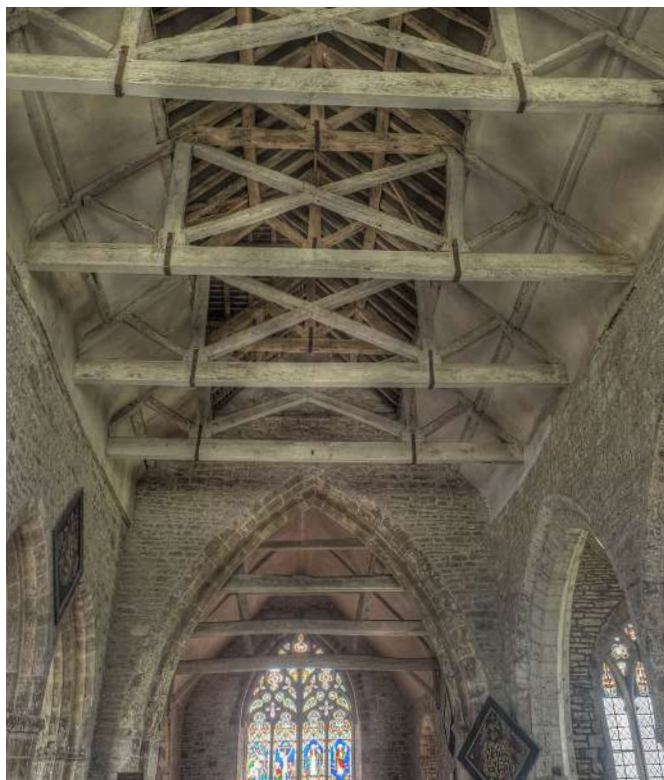
Roy concludes that although the CIP process is a staunch success, there is still much more work to do. 'Like all things that are worthwhile undertaking, it is the team that helps to keep an optimistic and resolute way forward,' he says. 'Now we have the self-confidence of organising and managing an autonomous project under the auspices of CCT, together with a clear condition survey of what lies ahead and the financial implications. Furthermore, we have recently learned that the Friends of Albury Old Saxon Church has been nominated for the accolade of the King's Award for Voluntary Service. It will certainly help with future fundraising!'



## Annual Appeal Update: Roofs at Risk

The Fundraising Team review the impact our supporters have on our work through generous donations for the last Annual Appeal, Roofs at Risk.

In June 2023, we launched our latest Annual Appeal, Roofs at Risk. This appeal aimed to increase the profile of the specialist and unique approaches required to conserve our nation's historic church roofs and, importantly, raise funds to enable CCT to carry out emergency and planned roof repair and intervention projects.



St Bartholomew's Church, Richard's Castle, Herefordshire © CCT

We are grateful for the support of our members, donors, volunteers and community supporters who fund our work.

The appeal raised over £49,000 (plus additional funds claimed through Gift Aid), which has enabled us to harness the expertise of skilled craftspeople, secure several sites following unforeseen natural occurrences, and undertake the essential repairs required following the devastating consequences of heritage crimes.

One of the many churches that this appeal impacted was St Mary's Church, Thornton-le-Moors, in Cheshire. In June 2018, St Mary's had a significant amount of lead stolen from its roof. In the process, the slate tiles that protected the lead were severely damaged, creating gaps in the roof, which could have led to water ingress. Since this incident, the roof has had a temporary cover, but this was not a permanent solution. Last summer, thanks to this appeal and an individual generous donor, we were able to lay new weatherproofing on the roof, replace the damaged slates and install new painted cast-iron rainwater goods. This has helped to secure this 14th-century church for many years to come.



St Swithun's Church, Worcester © CCT

The appeal also showcased the major conservation needs of St Bartholomew's Church, Lower Basildon, in Berkshire. Due to natural decay, the roof battens of St Bartholomew's have rotted, and the clay plain roof tiles have started to slip, therefore opening the building fabric to wind and water and leaving it vulnerable to significant damage. In 2023, CCT invested £18,000 from emergency funds to make the church weathertight with a corrugated roof. However, the estimated cost to permanently replace the nave roof is currently over £183,000. Over £79,000 has been raised towards this vital project due to great support from the Friends of St Bartholomew's, grant pledges, fundraising events and individual donations. Donate to this project and find out more at [visitchurches.org.uk](https://visitchurches.org.uk)



St Swithun's Church, Worcester © CCT





Thatching at St Margaret's Church, Hales © CCT

Throughout 2023–24, we undertook an estate-wide review of our buildings. Hearteningly, their condition has improved over recent years.

This is in direct correlation to the increase in support we have received from individuals, as well as the expertise developed from over half a century as a charity caring for these special buildings.



The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Little Hormead © CCT

However, our core funding has not increased in line with inflation and increasing capital costs. This, combined with the threats facing our heritage due to climate change and continued skills shortages, means that we require the support of all those who care about our historic places of worship more than ever. To support this, in June 2024, CCT launched a new Annual Appeal entitled Windows: Framing England's History.

From ecclesiastical building specialists to church crawlers and passersby, windows offer something for everyone to appreciate. However, much like church roofs, they are far too often the subject of opportunistic crime, which results in costly repair bills and devastated communities. To learn more about this appeal and recent related case studies, please go to [visitchurches.org.uk/windowappeal](https://visitchurches.org.uk/windowappeal).



All Saints' Church, Alton Priors © CCT

Thank you once again to all those who supported our 2023–24 Annual Appeal. With our help and with your support, the 357 churches in our care remain safely open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities.



St Gregory's Church, Heckingham. Norfolk © CCT



## Learning and Participation

CCT's Learning Team works with a wide range of audiences, from schools and children to families and adults. Each regional Heritage Learning Officer (HLO) delivers inspirational, creative learning activities and resources for all. We believe in the importance of using our churches and working with their communities to raise a better understanding of what makes them special and unique. The HLOs design and deliver learning workshops and activities in the communities where our historic churches sit.

Since 2012, CCT has been the national partner organisation of the Heritage Schools Programme, working with Historic England and receiving funding from the Department for Education. We create learning opportunities, experiences and resources for schools, using local historic places of worship as classrooms whilst becoming an integral part of the curriculum.

Between the beginning of April 2023 and the end of April 2024, over 3,700 children and 1,400 adults had a learning experience inside, or as outreach, at one of our historic churches. Here are some of the highlights from the three regional teams.

### My highlights: Steve Tarling, Heritage Learning Officer, North

St Leonard's Church, Bridgnorth, has become the busiest CCT church in the North region for school bookings, having lain dormant for several years. Between April 2023 and April 2024, the church hosted a whopping 14 school sessions from three local schools: St John's RC Primary, St Leonard's C of E Primary and Bridgnorth Endowed Secondary. The HLO also visited St John's RC Primary to deliver an assembly for National Storytelling Week.

An example of an activity that took place here in January is a session on stained-glass windows and their role within the church for a Year 8 Key Stage Three Group. The pupils were given a guided tour and then a chance to explore the church with 'Map My Visit' sheets. The learners selected a stained-glass window and then drew it, which helped them to learn about some of the figures depicted, including King Charles I, Moses and St Patrick among others. The pupils then created their own stained-glass windows using acrylic pens and OHP transfer sheets, which they took home with them. Finally, the children enjoyed a dramatic performance of the life of local saint Oswald the Martyr, King of Northumbria, who was killed in battle nearby and served as the inspiration for Aragorn from *The Lord of the Rings*.

In April 2024, Stokes Wood Primary School in Leicester had a day to celebrate and commemorate the life and times of Richard III. This ethnically diverse, inclusive primary school is in an area of social and economic deprivation situated near the site where Richard III's remains were discovered. As the CCT church in Leicester is currently closed, the session took place at the school itself in the assembly hall. Obviously, Richard III is a controversial monarch who led a colourful life and was the last English king to die in battle. Presenting this to an audience of infant school children was to prove an enjoyable challenge. The session was divided into three parts.

The first involved the HLO being dressed in costume as King Richard III and acting out his life story. There was much audience participation, with children from the audience taking on roles such as Henry Tudor, the Duke of Buckingham and the excavators discovering the skeleton. They were able to do this with props such as a wooden horse, toy swords, crowns and high-vis jackets.

The second part of the session was a sing-along where the HLO led the audience in a vocal warm-up and then sang the nursery rhyme *Sing a Song of Sixpence*, complete with actions.

The third part of the session was a more hands-on 'show and tell' activity, whereby the students were able to try on and handle artefacts including replica medieval helmets, weapons and armour. Every child was able to engage and participate, and the whole hall echoed with laughter.



Steve takes on the role of Richard III for a performance at Stokes Wood Primary School © CCT



My highlights: Gabrielle Dryden, Heritage Learning Officer, South East

November saw the beginning of a collaboration between Preston Manor and St Peter's Church in Preston Park, Brighton. A workshop was organised for KS2 children about the church's influence on Victorian life to complement the Victorian school trips that take place next door at the manor. The children explored how the Bible stories depicted on the church walls and in the stained-glass windows influenced the lives of Victorian churchgoers. Four schools have already participated in these workshops and have given excellent feedback. When asked to give three words to describe their trip, one child wrote: 'excellent, historic and engaging' and another wrote 'old, cold and interesting!'

Year 4 pupils from a local school visited the Church of St Thomas à Becket in Capel, Kent to explore the famous wall paintings. In pairs, the children were given a Bible story and had to hunt to find the corresponding painting. The school and volunteers loved the workshop and it led to some wonderful sketches from the children.

In December, the local nursery children came in to St Peter's Church, Northampton, to learn about St Nicholas. They decorated some shoes to leave out for him, before searching for golden coins hidden around the church.

Year 5 children from the nearby primary school visited St Mary's Church in Chilton to take part in a discussion session on the truth of the Christmas story. They started by placing the different parts of the story in the correct order, with help from some Nativity figures. We talked about how reliable the sources are within the Bible, how Luke and Matthew disagree on the specific events of the Nativity, and what this means for Christians.



Footsteps Nursery Workshops at St Peter's Church, Northampton © CCT

A small group of children from a secondary school with additional needs visited St Mary's Church in Bungay to tour the building and learn about Christmas and Hanukkah. We placed two large hula-hoops on the floor to create a Venn diagram, so that the children could compare the similarities and differences between the two holidays.

My highlights: Marie Sellars, Heritage Learning Officer, West

The tower of St Thomas à Becket Church is one of the most prominent landmarks in the Somerset village of Pensford. It can be clearly seen from the busy A37 to and from Bristol. Unusually, CCT only cares for the 650-year-old Grade II\* listed tower. The Victorian nave and chancel are under private ownership. Pensford was an important part of the Somerset medieval wool trade, and the medieval street plan, which was designated a Conservation Area in 1988, is still seen today.



St Thomas à Becket Church, Pensford © CCT

The Learning Team has had a long relationship with the nearby school, delivering learning activities at regular points. The aim of the school workshop was for pupils to learn about their historic church and village, medieval life and the importance of the textile trade in the area. To help further their learning, they handled replica everyday medieval objects including toys and games. They learned about the processes used to create wool and textiles and discovered places of pilgrimage, both locally, nationally and internationally. The children explored how important pockets and pouches were to people in the past and also learned about heraldry in medieval everyday life. Inspired by their area, the pupils designed their own coat of arms, and created their own pockets and pilgrim badges.



Medieval Pensford School Workshops © CCT



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The Churches Conservation Trust wishes to record its thanks for the continuing help and support it receives, which enables it to undertake its work across its 357 churches. The list below notes CCT's sponsors (who provide Grant-in-Aid), Trusts, Foundations, Friends of Churches, other organisations and individuals who in the year gave generously to CCT. We do our best to acknowledge all of those who have supported us, but we are also grateful to those who we have not been able to list and those who would like their support to remain anonymous.

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Gifts in wills play an important and much valued part in supporting the work of the trust. We would like to thank the following named donors and those who wish to remain anonymous for pledging a gift for the trust in their wills, including members of our Legacy Giving Group.

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The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk. Since 1969, we have played a unique role in national life. Without our work, 357 historic churches might have disappeared entirely and, with them irreplaceable architecture, art and archaeology spanning over 1,000 years of history.

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