

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



England needs its Church. In an age of forgetting, it's our parish churches which remind us of all that the Church has given and has still to give – not just for baptisms, weddings and funerals, but for comfort and hope to those seeking spiritual sanctuary in an increasingly materialistic world. As Canon Angela Tilby reminds us in her latest book, *Good Faith: Why England Needs its Church*, there is a deep sadness in the decline of what once was, that spurs us all on to do our bit to keep our beautiful, historic churches alive.

This can be a struggle. The Countryside Alliance commissioned a sobering report in April 2025 examining crimes relating to churches/church property during 2022 to 2024 across the UK. Northamptonshire Police recorded 142 thefts (with five lead thefts), sixty-four physical/violent assaults and seventy-three cases of criminal damage/vandalism. Meanwhile the recent ending of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has left hundreds of churches facing increased costs, as the Chairman relates in his report.

The future of our churches is currently our country's greatest heritage challenge. As Dame Fiona Reynolds warns us, parish churches now urgently need the same campaigning energy that saved the great country houses fifty years ago. The county Historic Churches Trusts are more important than ever and, through advice and financial aid, we continue to protect our beloved Northamptonshire churches and chapels as best we can. Luckily, our Ride & Stride sponsorship money is up from last year – hurrah! Let's keep going!

Eleanor Townsend and Alice Magnay (Editors)



Supporting the Trust

Become a Friend – Leave a legacy – Give practical help

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

President: James Saunders Watson, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire

Vice-Presidents: The Rt Revd. Debbie Sellin, The Bishop of Peterborough
The Rt Revd. John Holbrook, The Bishop of Brixworth

Trustees: James Saunders Watson, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire;
The Rt Revd. Debbie Sellin, The Bishop of Peterborough

Hilary Aslett	Bruce Bailey
John Barker	Edwin Byland
Liz Doherty	Dr Martin Gaskell
Val Hartley	Virginia Henley
Gareth Lugar-Mawson	Alice Magnay
James Miller	Michael Moore
The Ven. Richard Ormston	†Susan Parkinson
Canon Andrew Presland	Eleanor Townsend
Rosalind Willatts	

His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and the Bishop of Peterborough are trustees of the charity by virtue of their offices, and they appoint the remaining trustees. The number cannot exceed sixty, but cannot be less than four, and every trustee has one vote. These trustees administer the management of the charity.

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust was constituted by a Trust Deed
dated 10th March 1955
Registered Charity Number: 1021632

Registered Address:

The Diocesan Offices, Bouverie Court,
6 The Lakes, Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7YD

Trust Officers:

Chairman:	Gareth Lugar-Mawson
Vice-Chairman:	John Barker
Treasurer and Grants Secretary:	Michael Moore
Secretary and Friends Secretary:	Nuala Salter
County Ride and Stride Organisers:	Val Hartley, Liz Doherty and Anne Sauntson

www.nhct.org.uk

Front cover: St Mary the Virgin, Titchmarsh (NHCT Grant Recipient, 2025)
Previous page: St Peter's, Greatworth

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am very pleased to report that, once again, 2025 was a successful year for the Trust.

In 2025, the Trust:

- Paid £64,030 in grants
- Raised £41,030 (gross) in the Ride & Stride
- Received £20,028 in donations and subscriptions

The details are in the Accounts in this Report.

I express my thanks, and those of all the Trustees, to:

- Our President, James Saunders Watson, HM Lord Lieutenant for Northamptonshire, and our Vice-Presidents Bishop Debbie Sellin, and Bishop John Holbrook for their strong continuing friendship, support and encouragement. Bishop John has now laid down his crozier and retired as Suffragan Bishop of Brixworth. All of us in the Trust wish him a long and happy retirement.
- Michael Moore, our Grants Secretary, and to John Barker and Rosalind Willatts for visiting the applicant churches and chapels and reporting on their circumstances. Our congratulations go to Rosalind on being awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to the local community in and around Wilbarston.
- Michael Moore (again) for taking on the onerous job of being the Trust's treasurer.
- Val Hartley and Liz Doherty, the Ride & Stride County Organisers, for their enthusiasm and the many hours they spent in planning and coordinating the event. Unfortunately, due to ill health from which she is making a good recovery, Liz had to step down from this role in mid-2025. Her place has been taken by Anne Sauntson, to whom we are very grateful for taking over this important role. The Ride and Stride event is the main funding source for our grants, and in making grants the Trustees give priority to those churches and chapels which have a history of participation in Ride and Stride, particularly those that have raised sponsorship money.
- All our enthusiastic Riders and Striders, Area Organisers, Local Church and Chapel Organisers and Church and Chapel sitters.
- Nuala Salter at the Diocesan Office, who is doing a wonderful job as the Trust's Secretary and Friends' Secretary.
- David and Pat Rowden for hosting the 2025 Celebration Evening in the beautiful surrounds of Eastcote House on a beautiful English summer evening in July. Eastcote House is a charming mid Georgian property, believed to have been

built as a hunting box for the Dukes of Grafton. The evening provides our annual opportunity to meet the representatives from churches and chapels which the Trust has been able to help over the past year and the stalwart Ride and Stride fundraisers, and to thank them for all their efforts. The summer evening sun shone, and David Rowden, an accomplished pianist, led those present in spirited renditions of well-loved hymns; all had a very enjoyable and memorable time.

- Bruce Bailey for organising the 2025 Church Study Day on Saturday, 30th August in which we visited the churches at Dodford, Norton, Ashby St Ledgers, Winwick and Stanford on Avon (see the article later in this Report).
- Dr Martin Gaskell for updating and arranging for the printing of the new information leaflet for the Trust.
- Andrew Presland for organising and manning the Trust's stand at the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum's Heritage Fair at Chester House on Saturday, 27th April, with other trustees. The Trust's banners, stall and display generated much interest, and the display was enhanced by a range of artefacts that vice-chair John Barker has gathered during his time as a church architect, including the template used for reconstructing the top of Walgrave Church spire, and a selection of photos taken over the years.
- The estate of the late William Nicholas Walford for a very generous bequest of £10,000; the George Cadbury Fund for a very generous donation of £5,000, as well as all who made donations to the Trust.
- All the Trust's Friends for their continuing support.
- Eleanor Townsend and Alice Magnay for preparing this Report.

It is with very great sadness that I report the death in 2025 of Sue Parkinson who was one of our trustees for many years. An obituary of Sue appears later in this Report. She will be greatly missed, and our thoughts and prayers are with her family.



St Mary's, Stoke Bruerne (NHCT grant recipient, 2025)



The NHCT stand at the NHF Heritage Fair, Chester House, April 2025

There is a real need for the Trust

In previous Reports, I have stressed that, contrary to what many people believe, the Church of England spends next to nothing on maintaining its parish buildings and that, except in very exceptional circumstances, no funds for this come from central government. It is, and always has been, the local people who care and pay for the upkeep of their historic churches. Church maintenance, except in extreme circumstances, comes in the form of hard-won grants, some from the National Churches Trust and the Heritage Fund (until recently, the Heritage Lottery Fund), and from county trusts such as ours, which are matched by fundraising. It is therefore very disappointing that the Government has ended the Listed Places of Worship VAT Grant Refund Scheme (LPWGS) with effect from 31st March 2026. Churches must now budget for VAT as an unavoidable cost, which will strain their financial resources and increase their fundraising requirements.

The LPWGS was set up in 2001, as a response to changes to VAT. The idea was that any listed building used as a place of worship by those of any faith could be refunded the VAT it paid on repairs and alterations costing more than £1,000. Since its inception, well over 13,000 places of worship have taken advantage of the scheme, but all that is to end, leaving potentially hundreds of churches having to bear the cost of paying VAT on repairs. Almost 1,000 churches are on Historic England's *Heritage at Risk* register and 1 in 20 UK churches need a new roof or gutters. Many of them will be unable to meet this additional VAT cost, meaning that essential repair schemes could be abandoned altogether and their historic structures left to crumble.

The Government has announced that there will be a Listed Places of Worship Renewal Fund in place of the LPWGS and has allocated £92 million over four years to fund it.

At £23 million a year this is identical to the £23 million allocated to the LPWGS in 2024/2025 but only just over half of the £42 million a year allocated in previous years.

At the time of writing this report (March 2026), the details of the new Renewal Fund have yet to be published, but it is clear that it will only apply to listed places of worship in England and that, even if they obtain a grant from the Renewal Fund, they will no longer be able to claim VAT on repairs, meaning that all maintenance costs must include the full 20% VAT.

Unlike the LPWGS, which reimbursed VAT based on receipts, the Renewal Fund is a competitive capital grant, requiring formal applications and prioritisation by Historic England who will manage the fund. As yet, there are no indications what the eligibility criteria, application timetables and assessment procedures will be, but you can be sure that they will be far more onerous than the requirements of the LPWGS. All this means that churches, without knowing what the requirements will be, must prepare detailed project documentation cost estimates (including VAT) and community impact statements to strengthen future applications. This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs.

All affected are encouraged to engage with their MP, Historic England, and other heritage organisations, to ensure that the Renewal Fund is fair, accessible and effective.

Clearly, the need for Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust has never been greater. Please consider making a donation to the Trust, or leaving us a legacy in your will, or becoming a Friend of the Trust - the application form is in this Report.



Gareth Lugar-Mawson
Chairman, Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust
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Mobile: 07452930801
Email: lugarmawson@msn.com

GRANT COMMITTEE REPORT 2025

2025 began slowly, which meant we were able to grant higher amounts to those that applied, but as the year progressed more applications came in, including some on or just after the deadline. As a result, the grant resources became a little lower than planned and smaller grants were offered. One reason seems to be that the pandemic is over and churches are returning to their normal schedule and carrying out maintenance. As a result we had several very full days visiting some interesting churches in the county.

We do publicise our application closing date for each cycle, to give me time to arrange a series of round trips around the county or several, if need be, which can take a little time to organise. However, several churches have contacted me after the closing date, and while I try to adjust the trips to fit them in, this can be embarrassing, so if you are thinking of applying for a grant and may be late, please let me know in advance. The NHCT welcomes applications, so if you have a project coming up that requires funding, do feel free to fill in an application form as soon as you are able.



St Lawrence's, Long Buckby

Over the year we allocated grants to the value of £75,500 to nineteen churches of several denominations. That is the amount that is allocated to these churches, which is valid for three years. In reality we only paid out £52,850 during the year in grants to those churches who have completed their projects.

We all know the cost of maintaining old buildings and restoring them to their glory for future generations to come, particularly as collection plates seem lighter and congregations are getting older, so it's vital that we encourage the younger members to discover the ancient buildings in our own county.

I would like to thank John Barker for his expertise and assistance with the trips, and Gareth Lugar-Mawson for chairing the meetings.

You can see from the schedules below the Grants and pledges made during the year but in summary the Trust contributed as follows: -

Town / Church	Works	Grant Given
Alderton St Margaret's	Installation of modern, fully accessible WC facilities	£10,000
Arthingworth St Andrew's	Churchyard wall repairs	£1,500
Astcote Methodist Church	Installation of stairlift to upper room and heating work	£1,000
Clipston All Saints'	Refurbishment of servery and WC in Orbell room	£5,000
Corby St John the Baptist	Replacement of south roof	£3,000
Corby St Columba's	Provision of servery and WC and structural works	£3,000
East Farndon St John the Baptist	Repairs to plaster, gully work, repairs to gutters, stonework	£1,500
Finedon St Mary the Virgin	Replacement of cast iron heating pipes and radiators	£5,000

Kingsthorpe Baptist Church	Renovation of existing windows and doors	£1,000
Long Buckby St Lawrence's	Replacement of south roof; repointing of masonry and replacement of blocks on tower and clerestory	£10,000
Luddington in the Brook St Margaret of Antioch	Repair of crack; internal and external repairs to tower stonework	£5,000
Moulton St Peter's and St Paul's	Urgent repairs to stone and leadwork	£2,000
Far Cotton St Mary the Virgin	Installation of new servery	£10,000
Northampton St Peter's	Repairs to stained glass window	£1,000
Stoke Bruerne St Mary the Virgin	Replacement of louvre windows	£2,000
Upper Stowe St James's	Conservation work on chancel walls	£1,000
Welton St Martin's	Replacement of electrical wiring and some light fittings	£2,500
Wicken St John the Evangelist	Assistance in repairs to rare <i>papier-mâché</i> ceiling	£5,000
Wilbarston All Saints'	Installation of new gas boiler, pipework and radiators	£2,000
		£71,500

Heating System	2
Building Work	2
Electrical	1
Conservation	2
Lift	1
Churchyard	1

Church Walls	2
Roof Repairs	3
Servery / WC	3
Tower Repairs	1
Window Repairs	1

Until 2018 the Trustees were able to also recommend churches to the National Churches Trust (NCT) under the partnership agreement between the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust and NCT, however this scheme has unfortunately changed, and we are no longer able to do this. The Trust continues to welcome applications and tries hard to publicise the availability of funds to make grants.

M J Moore
Grant Secretary

NHCT Makes a Difference

ST LAWRENCE'S, LONG BUCKBY

The Quinquennial survey carried out by Stimpson Walton Bond (SWB) Architects in November 2021 identified that the lead roof on the south aisle of the church had degraded beyond repair and there was no other option but to replace it entirely.

The PCC started the 'Roof Restoration' project in 2022 and was tasked with raising £100,000 to cover the cost of the works. The church holds a Grade II* listing and the roof had to be replaced on a like for like basis to comply with Church Faculty and Local Authority Planning requirements. In 2023 the architects at SWB drew up a scheme, which enabled the PCC to issue tenders for the replacement of the roof to a list of approved contractors with the specialist skills. Such skills are in scarce supply. Upon receipt of the quotations, we selected The Leadworks who are based in Leicestershire.

Throughout this period the roof was leaking in several places and strategically placed buckets in the aisles were a regular feature during periods of heavy rain. Chris Banks became the 'Warden of the Buckets' in addition to being the Warden of the Church.

In autumn 2024, we were blessed by an answer to our prayers. Following many fund-raising initiatives by the church community, the generosity of local people and national grant bodies, the PCC had raised sufficient funds to proceed. The Leadworks commenced work on September 15th, in line with time constraints in the calendar year set by Natural England, when the impact on any potential resident bats would be minimised.

The Leadworks team completed the job on November 18th and mounted their plaque marking the replacement of the previous roof laid in 1954 by Norman & Underwood. A plaque commemorating this earlier roof is being retained in the church for historical purposes.

The roof consists of approximately 110 lead sheets each weighing 84kg. The sheets are heated and 'stitched' together using the wood roll technique whereby one sheet is rolled underneath the adjacent one around a wood former. Provision has even been made to enable any resident bats to access the roof void below the lead skin via a specialised bat entry lobby. The finished roof will be there in 75 years' time, standing as a testimony to the traditional skills of the lead workers of today. It's worth pondering who will be removing The Leadworks' plaque in the future and placing it alongside that of Norman & Underwood.

We wish to thank the following key people/organisations deployed on the project:

- Adrian Ringrose and Russell Christison (architects at SWB) for their support and guidance in designing the roof and producing the appropriate documentation that was essential for securing faculties/building consents and applications to grant bodies.
- The Leadworks led by Darren Guess for their excellent craftsmanship constructing the roof and ensuring minimum disruption to the day-to-day life of the church.

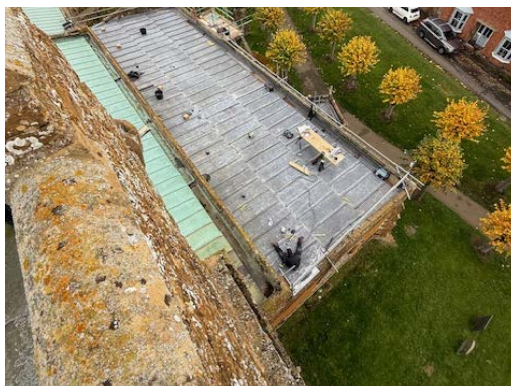
We are deeply grateful to the following grant bodies whose financial support has enabled the roof to be refurbished this autumn in advance of another potentially damaging period of winter weather:

- The Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust (£10,000)
- The Wolfson Foundation (via the National Churches Trust) (£5,000)
- The Long Buckby Feast Committee (£1,000)

We are also deeply grateful to all those individuals both named and others who wish to remain anonymous that have given generously, including those who sponsored lead sheets for the roof at a fund-raising venture at the Long Buckby Feast in 2023.

Finally, we also wish to thank the individuals and bodies who since 2022 have given their time, skills and knowledge to raise funds for the project, notably the St Lawrence Singers; the Long Buckby Art Exhibition Committee; the Artists who donated proceeds from the sale of their art; the Long Buckby Community Band.

Chris Banks, Churchwarden



Aerial view of the new south aisle roof at Long Buckby

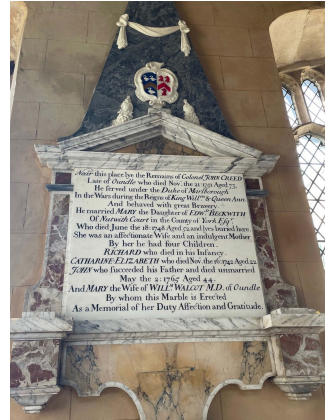
ST MARY THE VIRGIN, TITCHMARSH

Titchmarsh St Mary the Virgin has been endowed with an unusual number of fine seventeenth- and eighteenth-century monuments mostly celebrating members of the Pickering and Creed families.

In 2024 the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust supported the restoration of the marble monument to Colonel John and Mrs Mary Creed (née Beckwith) in the south aisle. This memorial records the distinguished military career of the second son of John and Elizabeth Creed of Oundle, who fought at the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. Another memorial in the church records that he valiantly rescued the dead body of his elder brother, Richard, from the battlefield.

Colonel Creed subsequently played a leading role in Oundle as a Justice of the Peace during the first half of the eighteenth century and was involved in negotiating the surrender of the Black Watch Mutineers in the woods at Lyveden in 1743.

The richness of the memorial contrasts with the rather plain, austere monument to his mother, the philanthropist and amateur artist Elizabeth Creed, on the windowsill next to it. She celebrated the lives of her relations through several memorials in the church. These include the affectionate epitaphs that she composed and painted on wooden panezls to the Poet Laureate John Dryden's parents, and to her brother, Revd Dr Theophilus Pickering – both designed in her iconic Baroque style.



**Memorial to
Colonel and Mrs John Creed,
Titchmarsh**

The monument that the NHCT helped restore is an expensive combination of contrasting coloured Carrara, Siena Brocatello and Sicilian Jasper marble, which Pevsner has identified as being from the workshop of Edward Bingham of Peterborough. The obelisk at the top is in Verde Antico marble mounted with carved white statuary garlands above the Creed and Beckwith coat of arms. The black lettering of the epitaph has been repainted so that it can be read more easily.

Thanks to the NHCT, the monument now stands proud again as a worthy memorial to a brave soldier who served under the Duke of Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession.

Carew Treffgarne, Project Coordinator, Titchmarsh Monuments Restoration Programme

CHURCH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, MOULTON

The church of St Peter and St Paul, Moulton, began as an aisleless Norman nave and around the late twelfth century, a north aisle was added. The church was substantially enlarged around 1300. The twelve-bell tower is a four-stage structure, mainly Decorated in style but with a later Perpendicular ashlar-faced top storey.

The parties involved in this restoration project were the Moulton Parochial Church Council (PCC) who commissioned and funded the work, William Asseton RIBA of GSS Architecture, who provided expert advice on these repairs and Lawmans Stonework and Masonry, Rothwell, who carried out the stonework and sub-contracted the leadwork to H.A.B Leadwork.

Two contractors were invited to provide estimates in early 2025 and these suggested a budget of around £60 to £70,000.

A fund-raising campaign began with advice from the Peterborough Diocese Support Officer, who suggested a number of grant making organisations. The Archdeacon and the Deanery Advisory Committee (DAC) were consulted and an Archdeacon's Licence was issued and a Faculty obtained for the specific work to the clerestory windows. The Project Cost Plan was £67,700, excluding VAT, and based on the tenders received allowed for a build cost of £59,000, a 10% contingency allowance of £5,900 and architect fees of £2,800. The final cost of the Project was £56,231.24 excluding VAT.



**Work underway
at Moulton**

The works were funded by the PCC (using the Restoration Account) and fund-raising and donations from the church family who organised events, gave donations and left money in their wills. These included Neil Whyte's post cards of Old Northampton, two legacies of £5,000 each and events including Northampton Male Voice Choir Lite; a Midsummer Musical and a Gift Day in November 2025. We also received donations from an anonymous Trust, the Benefact Trust, the Garfield Weston Trust, the National Churches Trust / Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants, the John Warren Foundation as well as the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust.

The church's Northamptonshire ironstone corner merlons (parapets) and two intermediary ones, along with copings which were eroded, were replaced with new stone, cut to match as best they could be and open joints between copings were repointed throughout. On the south clerestory, three and a half window mullions had split. New mullions were cut from Stoke Ground Base Bed Bath Stone, dowelled and glued, to match the existing. It made a very close and sympathetic match. Extensive leadwork was carried out, with new flashings installed around the gutters, chimney and at nave/south aisle stonework. A new one-piece flashing was installed along the whole length of the south wall of the nave. Splits in the hollow roll joints were repaired by welding "shoes" over the splits. In other locations, new lead panels were installed where splits could not be economically repaired.

The contractor was appointed in September 2025, commenced work on 29th October and completed on 11th December.

Roger Smart

ALL SAINTS', CLIPSTON

Clipston is a small village to the south of Market Harborough and is about four miles south of the Leicestershire boundary. The beautiful thirteenth-century All Saints' church in the village is an important part of the community and is part of the seven-parish benefice, Naseby Group of churches. The village of Naseby, famous for its association

with the English Civil War battle in 1645, is just a few miles from Clipston.

A major feature of the church in Clipston is what is known as the Orbell Room. This is a hexagonal building attached to the north aisle of the church as a church hall in 1980. The building was funded from a gift from a past rector in the village after whom it was named. For many years, the Orbell room was used only occasionally and was mainly useful as it housed a WC and over time the building became a bit shabby.

About eight years ago two of the congregation thought that it would be a good thing to run a regular café in the Orbell room, particularly for mothers from the local primary school just a few yards from the church. Although the mothers didn't materialise it quickly became obvious that there was a real need for such a facility in the village and we quickly built a clientele comprising mainly older people from the village. Food and drinks are kept simple and people are asked to make donations for whatever they have.



Orbell Café, Clipston

Over time this has become a very successful café with up to thirty people coming and staying. It has also become a valuable financial asset for the historic church despite it never having set out to make a profit. A victim of its own success, the kitchen and WC were in need of refurbishment and we sought grant aid from several sources, one of which was the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust. We are very grateful for the grant which enabled us to undertake the work providing a completely new kitchen and WC area, together with an excellent air conditioning system.

The Orbell room is used much more frequently now and is the centre for benefice meetings, small local group meetings, as well as the Orbell café which goes from strength to strength.

Steve Carpenter

John Barker receives the Canterbury Cross for services to the Church of England

On 29th January 2025, a service was held in the Apse Chapel in Peterborough Cathedral to present our trustee and Vice-Chairman, John Barker, with the Canterbury Cross; an award given by the Archbishop of Canterbury for outstanding

services to the Church of England. John was chosen to receive this award for his outstanding contribution in leading and promoting the care of church buildings as centres of mission and worship. Early in his career at an architectural practice John began to specialise in church buildings and over time, operating from his own practice, he has specialised in ecclesiastical work.

Becoming one of the first surveyors to be approved for doing quinquennial surveys, John has worked with some nationally significant churches in the Diocese. He has also overseen repairs to church buildings, advised on maintenance, undertaken carefully considered re-ordering schemes to better serve the mission of the church, and wider conservation work to over 160 chapels and church buildings.

Until his recent retirement, John was an Inspecting Surveyor, for both the Diocese of Peterborough and the Diocese of St Albans, as well as being, since 2017, a member of the Peterborough Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches. As well as being one of our trustees, John is also a trustee of the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation.

The Canterbury Cross was presented by the Archdeacon of Oakham, the Venerable Alison Booker, and the Archdeacon of Northampton, the Venerable Richard Ormston. Thanks for his extraordinary contribution were also given by Diocesan Secretary Andrew Roberts, DAC Secretary Emily Elliott, and Canon Rowan Williams on behalf of the Cathedral.

On receiving the award John said, "I am honoured to receive the Canterbury Cross and I thank God for the opportunities I have had throughout my career".



	2025	2024
	£	£
INCOME .		
Ride and Stride :		
Year ended December 31st 2023		280.00
Year ended December 31st 2024	2045.00	
Year ended December 31st 2025	41029.98	35535.26
		<u>35815.26</u>
Income Tax Recovered see note 1	11653.26	278.90
Friends' Subscriptions	1560.00	1410.00
friends - Subscriptions individuals	2115.60	1705.60
other	0.00	9695.81
transfers from building soc a/c	35000.00	2500.00
misc	36.00	155.00
Donations	16,353.00	3,425.00
Investment Income : Charinco	2395.94	2439.55
: Bank & Building Society Interest	36.25	1813.77
	<u>69150.05</u>	<u>23423.63</u>
Note 1. gift aid claim awaited expected value £5587	<u>112225.03</u>	<u>59738.89</u>
EXPENDITURE .		
Grants Paid (Note 1 A)		67300
at the Year end are shown in Note 1 B)	64030.00	0
Less Part Grant Returned	2000.00	
	<u>62030.00</u>	<u>67300.00</u>
Ride & Stride - Refunds to participating churches	20319.58	18305.62
Administrative expenses printing .	1162.60	875.54
Administrative expenses postage	196.02	319.60
Administrative expenses - other/stationary	806.63	487.53
Subscription	145.00	774.94
Upgrading Website	328.31	0.00
other		9695.81
	<u>84988.14</u>	<u>97759.04</u>
(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR .	<u>27236.89</u>	<u>-38520.15</u>

ACCUMULATED FUND

Balance brought forward January 1st 2025
(Deficit) for the year
Increase/(decrease) in Market Value of Investments

295235	326999
27236.89	-38520.15
27098	6836
349570	295315

Balance carried forward December 31st 2025

REPRESENTED BY :

Investments (NOTE 4)

Bank : Current account
: Deposit account
Building Society account

34716.01	3012	206410
3283.07	3247	
49329.42	82565	
87328.5	88824	
320836.92	295234	

NOTES TO THE INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED

DECEMBER 31st 2025

1. GRANTS : ACCUMULATED FUND.

A) PAID : YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31st 2025 .

	£
Raunds Methodist	2500
St.James the Great, Syresham	6000
All Saints, Pitsford	2500
St .Mary, Titchmarsh	2000
St.Katherine, Irchester	3000
St. Leodagarius, Ashby St Ledgers	2530
All Saints, Haddon	10000
St.Peter, Weston Favell	2000
St Lawrence,Towcester	7500
St Lawrence, Long Buckby	10000
All Saints, Clipston	5000
Wicken	5000

B) PLEDGED AND NOT YET PAID AS AT

DECEMBER 31st 2025.

Year of Pledge	£
April. 2021	Ss. Peter & Paul, Harrington 10000
April. 2021	St.Mary, East Haddon 2500
Nov. 2022	St Leonards, Glaphorn 5000
Nov. 2022	St Mary's Badby 2000
April. 2023	St Peters/Pauls, Rothersthorpe 4500
Nov. 2023	St Gunthlac's, Passenham 10000
Apr. 2024	St Mary the Virgin, Far cotton 10000
Nov. 2024	St Margarets, Alderton 10000
Nov. 2024	St mary the virgin, Stoke Bruerne 2000
Nov. 2024	St Peter and St Paul, Moulton 2000
Apr. 2025	Corby, St Columba 3000
Apr. 2025	Finedon, St Mary the Virgin 7000

Ascote Methodist St.Peter, Brackley	1000	Apr. 2025	Upper Stowe	St. James	1000
	5000	Nov. 2025	Welton, St Martins		2500
		Nov. 2025	Luddington in the Brook,	St Margaret of Antioch	7000
		Nov. 2025	Corby, St Johns the Baptist		3000
		Nov. 2025	Northampton, St Peters		1000
		Nov. 2025	Arthingworth, St Andrews		1500
		Nov. 2025	Kingsthorpe Baptist		1000
		Nov. 2025	East Farndon, St John the Baptist		1500
		Nov. 2025	Wilbarston, All Saints		2000

Note : Pledged grants lapse if unclaimed
after three years of being made available.

64030

88500

3.INVESTMENTS

	Cost at 31/12/22 & 31/12/23 £	Market Value @ 31/12/24 £	Market Value @ 31/12/25 £	Change in Mkt.value y/e 31/12/24 £	Interest y/e 31/12/23 £

BLK Charities UK Equity Fund Accumulation

5896.125 Units 14970 152187.95 186683 34495.05 0

BLK Charities UK Bond Fund Income :

32527.563 Units 60000 47386.32 46825.44 -560.88 2395.94

74970 199574.27 233508.44 33934.17 2395.94

4. GENERAL NOTE RE: DONATIONS .

Under Solicitors` Accounts rules, client funds held by a solicitor which cannot be allocated or returned, may be distributed as charitable donations . The Trust received such a donation from Hewitsons (Solicitors) in the sum of £ 3,545 in year ended December 31st 2024, and has given an indemnity to the effect that , if this sum is requested, it will be repaid . The Trust is obliged to maintain its resources at a sum in excess of the above amount .

IN MEMORIAM

Sue Parkinson



It is with great sadness that we record the death of Sue Parkinson, one of our longest serving trustees.

After qualifying as a teacher Sue taught for over thirty years at various schools in the UK and the Channel Islands, including several schools in the Peterborough Diocese.

She was a governor at six different schools, including vice chair of governors at Little Houghton Church of England Primary School and a governor at Wilby CE Primary School, until its relocation and relaunch as the Glenvale CE Primary School, as well as being a member of the Weston Favell CE Primary School and St Mary's CE Primary School Academy Trusts.

Since retirement, Sue served as a Bishop's Visitor to schools, as a SIAMS Inspector and as a member of the High Needs Funding Panel for Northamptonshire County Council.

She served on the Diocesan Board of Education for twenty-three years and was Chair of the Board's Education Strategy & Leadership Committee for over a decade, and served as a School Appeals Panel Member for West and North Northants and the Diocesan Appeals Service. Sue was the Lay Chair of the Northampton Deanery for nine years and a volunteer safeguarding trainer for the Diocese.

Sue was an active member of Christ Church, Northampton and before that St Matthew's, Northampton. At both churches, she gave unstintingly of her experience and time.

We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to Sue's family on their loss.

RIDE AND STRIDE

A great day out discovering England's churches
The next event will be held on Saturday 12th September, 2026

Ride and Stride was 'born' in Suffolk in 1982 as a sponsored cycle ride or walk and is held annually, in virtually every county in England. It is the main fund-raising event for the county churches trusts and is held on the second Saturday in September. It is now a sponsored event for cyclists, joggers, walkers and horse riders but any mode of transport can be used as long as sponsors are happy; both vintage and modern cars have joined in! For this reason, from 2026 the event in Northamptonshire will be known as *Ride, Drive and Stride*. It is also possible to sponsor the people welcoming visitors to the church, or gain sponsorship in other imaginative ways as congregations get older.

St George's Church, Evenley (the ones who wore the hats last year) had another novel way of raising money this year. This year's theme was "Get yourself sponsored for Ride and Stride or else please give a donation for a breakfast fried." Twenty-five had a cooked breakfast in church, which went down very well. Anyone not happy asking other people for money can make a donation themselves instead.

In Northamptonshire, 50% of the money raised and any Gift Aid is retained by the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust and a cheque for 50% of the money raised is sent to the church chosen by each of the participants. The money raised, along with other funds, is used to give grants for preserving, restoring and improving the churches, chapels and meeting houses in Northamptonshire which take part, whether they are historic or not.

Some cyclists are in the saddle all day and visit a large number of churches. Others take a more leisurely approach and spend more time in each church, travelling fewer miles. Churches which are more inaccessible by cycle-friendly roads, some on busy main roads, would be good targets for visiting by car, as long as your sponsors are happy or you are prepared to make a reasonable donation yourself. Dingley, Brampton Ash, Stoke Albany and Rockingham received no visitors this year. Please remember that adjacent counties also have churches taking part in the event (except Rutland's next event is in 2027). Please try to visit churches near the county boundary if possible. We were hoping to plan a route round a group of churches on the Northants/Oxfordshire border near Banbury, including four churches which did not receive any visitors for the 2025 Ride and Stride; (Aston le Walls, Upper Boddington, Thorpe Mandeville and Chacombe), but HS2 means this will now have to be for 2027.

Churches are usually open from 10am to 6pm and a list of participating churches is produced and made available on our website at www.nhct.org.uk, as are links to churches in neighbouring counties as well as sponsor forms, posters and other paperwork. An open church or chapel attracts visitors and with refreshments it really makes a difference; many Local Organisers take pride in drawing attention to their special features, or put on events. All this information is available on the Open Churches download on the website, available from July.



A refreshing sight in Farthinghoe church porch

RIDE AND STRIDE 2025

Thank you to all Local Organisers, and especially those who had their churches open with a warm welcome and persuaded Riders and Striders to take part. Of the 324 churches taking part, 174 were manned for at least part of the time, 127 were open with a register available and 23 with just a register outside. As in 2024, the Open Churches list included churches which were not taking part so that participants could visit the outside of these if they wished.

Ride and Stride Day dawned with bright spells and showers. Number of visits to churches was slightly down on last year but more churches are trying unusual ways of raising money which doesn't show on most registers. This has resulted in sponsorship slightly up from last year's figure at £41,030 (gross) to date. Six churches raised £1,000 or over, a wonderful achievement: East Haddon St Mary; Hinton-in-the-Hedges Holy Trinity; Walgrave St Peter; Wellingborough All Hallows; Welton St Martin; Weston Favell St Peter. We are extremely grateful to all the church communities which have raised money and of course, a special thank you to these six.

We are grateful to all our Area Organisers whose help is particularly useful when checking how churches will take part in the event each year and updating new contact details.

We gained two new Area Organisers in 2025. First, Bob Smith, who as well as looking after some Brixworth Deanery churches has kindly said he will take over half the Northampton Deanery churches which Jonathan Stuart will be relinquishing as he is moving from the area. We thank Jonathan for his efforts over the past few years.



Isabella Masters took to her exercise pedals at Weedon!

Secondly, Alice Magnay, who now supervises half the Brackley Deanery churches. Liz Doherty, who is taking a back seat regarding County Organiser at the moment, will look after the central Northampton churches in 2026. Thank you to Area Organiser Judy Stroud, who has moved to Scotland but is still willing to look after churches in parts of Corby, Oundle and Kettering Deaneries.

Thank you also to Viv and Andy Hartley, who have moved to Shropshire but have kindly said they will continue to look after ten Daventry churches. And grateful thanks to Rosalind Willatts who has continued to contact Corby churches despite her illness. As we had not managed to get a new AO to look after Methodist churches, they have been moved back into the appropriate deanery so adding slightly to the workload of the existing AOs. We welcomed Anne Sauntson as a Joint County Organiser part way through 2025, relieving Liz Doherty.

We would still like to recruit more Area Organisers for as well as trying to reduce the number of churches each one looks after, there are two areas without an Area Organiser which the County Organisers are covering. Please contact us if you would like more information. You don't need to live in the area you cover but internet accessibility is essential. **Thank you** to everyone else who helped to make the day such a success: the numerous **Riders and Striders** and **Church Sitters** and their generous **Sponsors**, and of course Michael Moore, our **Treasurer**, who coordinates the sponsorship money and writes the return cheques to the churches.

Val Hartley and Anne Sauntson, Joint County Organisers

NEWS FROM RIDERS AND STRIDERS

ALL HALLOWS

There was much excitement from the All Hallows team regarding their sponsored Ride & Stride. Besides a team of three riders, covering a distance of twenty-six miles and visiting nine churches on their route through the Northamptonshire countryside, a further member strode around Nottingham on a twelve-mile walk!

The reason for the excitement was the £1,300 raised! A record figure for the Wellingborough church, which drew loud applause from the congregation the Sunday after. We are very proud of Justin, Mark and Matt for riding, and Michael, a churchwarden at All Hallows, for walking such a long distance and visiting churches in the Nottinghamshire area. Every church revealed interesting historical features and one in particular caught their eyes - a plaque on the wall of St Mary's Church, Wollaston. It's a memorial to two local boys lost on the Titanic.

A big thank you to our sponsors who backed the four participants with enthusiasm. We know £1,300 will be hard to beat but are determined to try and go beyond this sum next September! Thanks too to Steve and his family for their continuing support

as active participants on the move as well as encouraging friends to be generous.

Christine Thompson, local organiser



Ride, stride or drive! This enticing Triumph Roadster drew attention to the church at Towcester

FROM WEEDON TO TOWCESTER

I had a really enjoyable day with only a brief rain shower mid-afternoon. I divided church visits into four separate walks so I could visit ten churches without having to walk a vast distance and started by parking at Weedon and walking to Flore. On the way I met eighteen people with twelve dogs! I was welcomed by a friendly young man at Flore, then retraced my steps back across the fields and the infant Nene to Weedon church where I had a chat with Isabella Masters. She was being sponsored to sit in the church all day and had her exercise pedals with her, raising over £200! I then drove to Church Stowe and walked to Upper Stowe, where I met Angela Brodie, who was on her bike and is the Local Organiser for both Church and Upper Stowe.

Next, I parked in Astcote and walked to the Methodist church where there was a coffee morning and friendly welcome from two ladies applying to NHCT for a grant towards a stair lift. They are going to use an upstairs room for worship in the winter to save on heating costs. I then set off across fields, including one where the sheep thought I was the farmer bringing food and looked somewhat disappointed when I continued walking. This brought me to Cold Higham church, where there is always a good selection of refreshments. It was quite busy as there was a group of cyclists raising money for Silverstone church; then my husband Richard and friend arrived in his 1966 Triumph Vitesse. They had visited the four churches in Towcester and Easton Neston in his 1947 Triumph Roadster, before transferring to the Vitesse which would be better in rain, visiting a further thirteen churches.

I finished my day at St Lawrence church, relieving Judith Edwards who had been there since 10am. I stayed until 6pm. There were no more participants but quite a few visitors just popping in, including a group who had been invited to a party at the dog track but had found that it didn't open until 6.45pm. In all, we raised £500.

Val Hartley, NHCT county organiser and trustee

ST MATTHEW'S, NORTHAMPTON

Roger, Tony and Dorrie manned St Matthew's over the four hours we were open. Our first visitors were as usual hot off the mark, from Kingsley Park Methodist Church across the road. People normally turn up in groups of two or three, and tend to be in, get registered, and out - there is a desire to get to as many churches as possible! They all stop for a quick chat though, and many say how much they always enjoy the day.

Some are quite colourful characters; we had one man in his 70s who had started off at Moulton Church to enjoy their 8am Men's Breakfast (he had walked from his house in The Headlands), then walked back into Northampton and was still going strong when he came to us at 12.10pm. He stayed chatting until 12.30pm (not even sitting down) before moving on to reach yet more churches! Visitors tend to thin out in the afternoon but at 2pm, Dorrie approached the front door, keys in hand to lock up, and another four people arrived! So of course they came in, apologetic for being so late, and had a look around. They had travelled from Bedfordshire and specially wanted to see St Matthew's.

This year we had twenty-five visitors and raised over £300. Disappointingly, no-one had volunteered to ride or stride for us though. Before arthritic knees etc called time on us, we had a little band who enjoyed the social aspect of going for a walk on a Saturday with church friends and raising money at the same time, seeing inside churches that aren't always open. From that happy band, just Roger and Dorrie are still going strong, but now in a sitting-down role. There is the NHCT Annual Report in the bookstall area, highlighting various churches/chapels and why they have received their grants over the past year. Do have a look and maybe be inspired to give it a go next year?

Dorrie Parker, St Matthew's, Northampton



Three of eight participants (plus dog!) who raised £1,000 for Hinton-in-the-Hedges, and NHCT

(l-r) Sam Mainds, Clive Bairstow and Anthony Byrne, King's Sutton Church

SHORT REPORTS



Linda Noble
at St Botolph's,
Barton Seagrave

Linda Noble visited an impressive twenty-nine churches, most with her friend Jo. Her daughter Mairi joined for some of the closer churches, along with another friend's son, Thomas. Linda started before 10am at Thorpe Malsor and signed in at the last church, Kettering Christ the King, at 5.45pm. She raised over £700.



Sue Wager
at St Peter's,
Newton Bromswold

Sue Wager cycled round most of Higham Deanery, about seventeen churches, on Sunday 14th, as she was busy on the Saturday. Unfortunately, the weather was not as good as on the actual Ride and Stride day. She covered over thirty miles and was really grateful to her husband who brought her a hot drink when he collected her and the bike in the car as she was cold and wet! Sue raised over £700 in sponsorship.



Sue Gale at St
Lawrence's, Marston
St Lawrence

Despite a dubious forecast, the steadfast sun shone brighter and clearer than ever imagined on the morn of September 13th - hurrah! The bikes were going to come out whatever the weather but this was an absolute joy. The Brackley deanery hedgerows were bursting with apples and blackberries and the parish churches alive with early autumn's glory. We started at Marston St Lawrence, where local organiser Sue Gale manned the beautiful church, dating from the twelfth century with notable Decorated Gothic features, all day. An idyllic route included Greatworth, Thenford, Middleton Cheney, King's Sutton, Newbottle and Farthinghoe (with thanks for the crisp apples in the church porch!). We had to vie with wedding guests at Brackley church, wide-brimmed hats and bike helmets mingling amicably! All in all, a heavenly day - and a decent £500 was raised too.

Alice Magnay, NHCT trustee

CHURCH BUILDINGS: FLEXIBLE SPACES

Church interiors are becoming increasingly flexible. In some cases, they are rediscovering their original medieval purpose as being a space for the whole community. Victorians enjoyed filling every inch of a church nave with their version of MFI pews. Acres of slot-together pine prevented anything other than sitting uncomfortably in orderly, formal rows.

Historic England is alert to the fact that, unless there is a vibrant worshipping community, the likelihood is that the church building will gently decay. Consequently, there is a degree of flexibility that may not have been present twenty years ago. Changes are often needed if our wonderful parish church buildings are to house communities that now have very different expectations to our pew-loving ancestors.



**St James's,
Northampton**

Kitchens, WCs and a good heating system are no longer seen as luxuries. How many community halls would now be built without them? It is unthinkable. People travel many miles to baptisms, weddings and funerals and often need facilities on arrival. That is not unreasonable. When most of our parish churches were built, the congregation lived a matter of yards away.

There is a need for flexible space to run midweek toddler groups, after-school clubs, lunch clubs for the elderly, foodbanks, credit unions, warm spaces, and so many other activities. In a building that covers every inch of floor-space with pews, it is more difficult (but not impossible) to grow a church.

- In Spratton, the wonderfully named Café Doris draws a buzzing crowd into church a couple of times every week.
- At St James's church, Northampton, around 150 people are given a hot meal twice a week at the converted west end of the church building.
- In Badby, the reordered church provides much needed flexible community space at the back of church.
- In All Saints', Clipston, the Orbell room (recently refurbished in part thanks to a grant from NHCT) provides a café facility for the local community.
- In Harlestone church, the flexible space (complete with kitchen and WC facilities) hosts 'Tea & Toast' every week.
- A wellbeing café meets every Wednesday at St Francis's church, Duston, filling the large open interior. The Youth Café welcomes young people into the wonderfully reordered building at Wollaston, while West Porch Café opens up for an after-school drop-in youth club in the flexibly designed church at Oundle.

- Sulgrave church hosts a beautiful community library at the back of church – a real benefit to the whole community.

On its own, the creation of a flexible building does not lead to a toddler group or a community café or a drop-in space. That also needs a missional mindset and a determination to reach out into the community. Some churches cannot create open, flexible spaces. Perhaps the pews hold too much historic significance, or perhaps it is impossible to create the facilities that are needed because the church is situated in the middle of a field without heating or lighting. In such situations, it is good to remember that (even in the twenty-first century) a warm welcome, lateral thinking and a missional mindset will still get you a long way.

The Ven. Richard Ormston, Archdeacon of Northampton

WHICH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCH IS THIS?

- Tower built by owner of Althorp
- Chancel rebuilt by owner of the largest Welsh slate quarry
- Nave rebuilt by the sister of one of the most influential Slavery Abolitionists

Answers to jamesmiller.art@gmail.com by 31/7/26.

Prize for the winner (drawn at random from all correct entries)!



THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HERITAGE FORUM

The Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust is one of nearly a hundred organisations and individuals across the county that make up the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum. The Forum celebrates the past of our county which is rich with history and heritage. It supports and promotes museums, galleries, historic houses, churches, heritage sites and history societies across Northamptonshire. Created in 2002, it provides a unified voice for its members, and aims to protect, preserve and promote that heritage in a variety of ways.

First, we want to celebrate the unrivalled history of Northamptonshire which deserves both national and international recognition. We celebrate the work of the county's heritage organisations in a variety of ways: by presenting Heritage Awards every other

year, and by producing Hindsight, an annual publication which enables members to present their historical interests and promote their heritage organisations.

Secondly, we encourage networking with a number of events which are wonderful opportunities for members to meet and share ideas. We hold at least three Forum meetings each year at different heritage locations across the county. Our annual History Day is an opportunity to highlight different places and different aspects of Northamptonshire's heritage. And, in addition, the Forum works to provide and to develop relations with other regional and national heritage organisations.

With respect to learning and development, we try to raise awareness of opportunities for funding, and provide access to advice, which can be particularly valuable for smaller organisations. We encourage accreditation and to that end help those of our members who are seeking to achieve museum accreditation, which can be important for accessing different kinds of support and funding. But perhaps, most importantly, we enable members to share their skills, knowledge and experience.

Finally, in terms of promotion, we represent our member organisations. The Handbook outlines all the attractions and organisations, and is distributed across the county and beyond. We publish a quarterly Newsletter with members' views, information, events and opportunities. And of course, there is the Website (www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk) which gives an online presence to members' attractions. In all these ways, we work as a voluntary organisation to support and promote our members' interests and to support and promote the heritage offering of our county.

At the present time, eight individual churches through their 'Friends' and associated organisations are members of the Forum. If you think this could be of interest and benefit to your church do get in touch (northamptonshireheritageforum@gmail.com) and we will be very happy to come and meet with you and tell you more about the



All Saints', Earls Barton (a member of the NHF)

work of the Forum. The wider and more varied our membership, the richer is the heritage experience that we have to share. Our membership ranges from the grandest stately home to the smallest of community heritage sites. All have something to offer; all are attractions in different ways; and all contribute to the rich heritage offering of our County.

Martin Gaskell, Chairman NHF and NHCT trustee



St Mary the Virgin, Dodford

LOOKING BACK AT THE 2025 CHURCH STUDY DAY

LED BY BRUCE BAILEY

Saturday 30th August, Dodford, Norton, Ashby St Ledgers, Winwick, Stanford on Avon

Travelling almost thirty miles through some of the most scenic countryside of western Northamptonshire, about thirty Friends of the NHCT visited five varied churches: summarised by our guide Bruce Bailey as ‘a sequence of churches all having monuments and stained glass’.

The first was in **Dodford**, a lovely village just off the A45. The church’s monuments include a brass to Sir John Cressy and his wife and a beautiful marble effigy of a cross-legged knight, Sir Robert de Keynes, about 1305. An alabaster monument is attributed to C.G. Cibber, who became an unexpected celebrity, with his name cropping up throughout the day.

Next, we went uphill to **Norton**, another lavish church for monuments, including an impressive marble monument to Nicholas Breton and wife (1658) – again attributed to Cibber. We also saw the huge and complex tomb of Jane Seymour’s niece, Lady Elizabeth Knightley (d.1602). William Behnes’s monument to a Mrs Botfield (1825) is very strange with her over life-size marble son mourning his loss. The nimbler visitors negotiated steps and a narrow entrance to the tower to see a large wooden board bearing Royal Arms.

We drove on to Catesby country, to the particularly impressive St Leodegarius’ Church at **Ashby St Ledgers**. The Vicar welcomed us and, alongside Bruce, showed us some of the fine furnishings, wall paintings and yet more splendid monuments, including several to members of the Catesby family and an



Alpacas at Ashby St Ledgers

alabaster memorial to John l'Abson, again attributed to Cibber. A rack of postcards for sale provided a reminder that – due to the Gunpowder Plot said to have been plotted in the gatehouse of the Hall next door – this is one of Northamptonshire's main tourist attractions. We headed past some resident alpacas to lunch at Ashby St Ledgers Village Hall, generously provided by local volunteers: baked potato and salad followed by fruit crumble.

Things got more remote after lunch when we moved on to **Winwick**: a tiny village with a small church containing some good things, including a bright, modern, west window by Jane Campbell; the elaborate tomb of Sir William Craven who died in 1797 and a simpler tablet to Mary Craven in 1736.



**St Michael and All Angels,
Winwick**

We only just kept within the county for our final visit of the day, to **Stanford on Avon**: although Stanford Hall is within Leicestershire, the nearby village is just this side of the border. This is regarded as one of the most important churches in Northamptonshire, with one of the finest assemblies of medieval glass in England. There are fifteen significant monuments in the church, ranging chronologically from the effigy of Sir Thomas Cave (died 1558) to a terracotta obelisk to an Edmund Verney in 1896. Thanks again to Bruce for another fascinating day.

Andrew Presland, NHCT trustee

Hazel Goodman (St Peter's and St Pauls' Church, Kettering) writes...

I always look forward to the Study Day, looking and listening to Bruce explaining the different features in the churches we visit. However, I do find my attention drawn to other things. The past. The thousands of souls who attended the services, each in their allotted pews which now show the patina of their presence. Children wriggling and secretly carving their names in the wood. Stained glass windows, not only beautifying the churches but also a source of Bible stories for those who cannot read.

This year in particular two things stood out:

- The beautiful mid-nineteenth century King James Bible open on a lectern – what a joy to read.
- The graveyards – often, we pass the headstones without really looking. I stopped and looked around at all those overgrown with ivy, names obscured. It came to me that they were protected by a warm, safe blanket of ivy and I was mindful of the mortal remains and souls now safe and protected. For me a powerful illustration of faith.

Friends of Northamptonshire Historic Churches

From: Name(s)

Address:

Postcode:

E-mail (PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS):.....

I/We would like to join the Friends of Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust.

I/We

- a. Have completed the Banker's Order below. (preferred option for NHCT)
- b. Enclose a cheque for £..... (payable to Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust)

Gift Aid Declaration

If you are a UK taxpayer and able to donate under the Gift Aid Scheme, it will cost you nothing and will increase the value of your donation to the Trust by 25%. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to offset any gift aid payment against your personal Income Tax.

I am a UK taxpayer and I will pay in the year an amount of Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax to be reclaimed by the Trust.

Signed: **Date:** 202....

The minimum donations requested are: £10 for individuals; £20 for Churches/PCCs
Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust is registered with the Charity Commission No. 1021632

Banker's Order

To (Bank/Building Society):

Bank Branch address:

Postcode:

Sort code:

--	--	--

Name:

Signed:

Date:..... 202....

Please pay to: Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

C/o NatWest Bank plc Sort code: 56-00-60; Acc No 05608961

On the day of (month) 202....

The sum of £..... (words)

And the same sum annually until further notice.

Please send the application form to:

Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, Friends' Secretary

E-mail: nuala.salter@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

c/o Bouverie Court, 6 The Lakes, Bedford Rd, Northampton, NN4 7YD

Dates for your diary:

CELEBRATION EVENING (by invitation):

Thursday 13th August 2026
at Ashby Manor House, Ashby St Ledgers
by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Henry Guest

CHURCH STUDY DAY (for Friends of NHCT):

A visit to the churches of Harrington, Arthingworth, Maidwell, Clipston, Haselbech
and Naseby, led by Bruce Bailey
Saturday 29th August 2026

RIDE, DRIVE & STRIDE:

Saturday 12th September 2026



All Saints', Brixworth

With thanks to all those who contributed to this Report
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