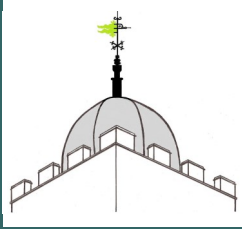




www.alburyoldsaxonchurch.org



*The Friends of
Albury Old Saxon
Church*

Newsletter

Registered Charity Number: 1168550

Special COVID-19 Edition, Summer 2020





The Chairman's Round-up

What does one write about when, probably for the first time in its 1,000 year history, the Old Church of St Peter and St Paul at Albury has been closed (other than for building work)? Surprisingly, I can tell you a few things, early in the year we were delighted to welcome Chris Hammond as a new Trustee and the fact that the Trustees are now more familiar with Zoom than they ever expected!

We've been very grateful to Michael Baxter, who, though the church is closed, has regularly checked to see that all is well and that dirt is not accumulating.

We've been concerned (as might some of you) by the 'grave' which appeared in the churchyard many weeks ago. This is not a sudden re-opening of the churchyard for burials, nor is it evidence of anyone having crossed the local Mafia bosses once too often, but it was part of the location set up for a film shoot. Despite promises, the film company have not yet been back to remove the soil, but the CCT are badgering them.

The CCT have, after much dialogue, trialed modified downpipe shoes for the roof drainage with apparently promising results. They will now install modified shoes all round and we hope this will solve the dampness problems caused by rainwater missing the gullies, evident ever since the drainage was altered four years ago.

The CCT recently changed arrangements for local liaison and Nick Watts, Local Community Officer for our area, has been very helpful. We look forward to our future relationship. Clearly, our summer events have been unable to take place and the situation is still a little unclear for the autumn. If it becomes possible once more to invite you to 'Friends' or Old Church-based productions, you will be the first to know!

Finally, I would like to record that your Editor, Roy Hogben, recently celebrated his 80th birthday under lockdown in South Africa (from where he is compiling this newsletter)! Many thanks Roy and many happy returns!

[Rev Andrew Pearson - Chairman, Friends Charity Trustees](#)



A Poem of Our Times!

**This lovely church
Of St Peter and Paul
Over the years has seen it all -
The Black Death, plagues
World wars and all.
Past parishioners here
Lived and died through it all.**

**A new germ now plagues us
That threatens us all
But whatever will happen -
This door, this tower, this wall
Will remain strong and tall
Even Pandemics
Press 'gainst this door?**

**It still will remain here
Forever more.**



Our Heritage and the Corona Virus

It is an unfortunate fact that in the times of straitened circumstances the very first things to suffer are the arts, culture and heritage side of our community structure.

Our heritage is a vital ingredient in the historic background of who we are and provides a sense of identity, together with that important and intangible link of well-being with the community that we live in. Most of our important national heritage sites and buildings are reasonably well supported by government grants and national charities, such as the National Trust or other professional charities that have a team of employed fund-raisers to augment their income.

However, contra to that, small local charities, usually manned by enthusiastic volunteers, are always the hardest hit. Normally, most local groups depend upon their own local community as the major source of income, and trying to compete with the larger well-known national charities is often a difficult and thankless task.

One of Albury's major heritage buildings, and perhaps its most important is, of course, the old **Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul**.

This ancient Saxon Church has stood in Albury Park for more than a thousand years and has seen countless generations of local people pass through its ever welcome door. It has a very interesting historical past and remains an integral part of our community. Although steeped



in an obvious religious context, the importance of this building to the community cannot be underestimated; it has and continues to provide a stoic and unchanging anchor for the residents of the Parish of Albury.

Since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic the church has been closed for the first time in its history and according to the visitors book there are normally between 300-500 generous visitors each month and consequently this local income source has totally dried up, together with any profits from cancelled events.



The Churches Conservation Trust



THE CHURCHES
CONSERVATION TRUST

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity formed in 1969 by Royal Assent as the **Redundant Churches Fund** to protect historic churches at risk.

The 1960's were challenging times for historic churches, together with many other historic buildings, as they were sometimes seen as an impediment to progress rather than a benefit to society, and many fell into disrepair and threatened with demolition. No formal mechanism existed for caring for churches where parishes felt that they could no longer afford to keep it going, and in 1974 the old parish church of St Peter & St Paul was one of 147 that were vested in the Redundant Churches Fund. In 1994 they renamed themselves **The Churches Conservation Trust**, and today they are responsible for more than 350 churches that are in their care!

The CCT is the third largest heritage estate operator in charitable ownership in the UK and has an international award-winning reputation in heritage conservation and regeneration. All churches in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust are listed, mostly Grade I and II*, and some are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

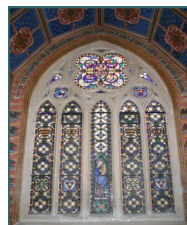
Nick Watts, CCT's Community Officer for the South-East says: *"Each church is saved because it represents something remarkable; early history, wonderful stained glass or stonework, wood carvings, or wall paintings. The social history is unearthed to become part of the visitor's appreciation, and we never lose sight of the faith of the people who used the building to mark important stages in their lives. We want to keep the doors open to young and old so that the building stays alive, appreciated and used. Living once again at the heart of the community."*

"Nationally the Trust receives slightly under £3m from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, just over £1.3m from the Church Commissioners and generates £2m of its own income. More than £400,000 comes from public donations, mainly through the strong relationship that we have with the local Friend's Groups."

The inaugural meeting of the **Albury Friends** was on 24 September 1974 under the guidance of Dr Maurice Burton, followed by John Foulsham 1991-2019 and today Rev Andrew Pearson.

For more information: <http://www.visitchurches.org.uk>

Editorial





THIS MY THEATRE



Many of you will already know ***This Is My Theatre Group***. It is a brilliant theatrical company that was formed in 2016 by **Sarah Slator**. Over the last four years they have performed many times in the old Saxon church to delighted audiences of friends and visitors.

They are a young, enthusiastic and totally professional group of actors that are an absolute pleasure to work with. Their aim is to produce classical plays and literature that are accessible to all, particularly to those living in more rural communities.

They work very closely with the CCT and the Friends groups at each individual church, to ensure that the shows suit the surroundings and take care of these very special venues during performances. The money raised by the CCT through the use of their buildings is allocated to those that they perform in, in order to renew and restore specific features or structural components.

Sarah commented: *"What a year 2020 has turned out to be so far for us as a company! Like so many, plans for the year had to change due to the pandemic. Although difficult at times we haven't let lockdown stop us and have kept busy throughout as we wait patiently for the day it is safe for us to continue doing what we so dearly love."*

*"We are now looking forward to the rest of the year, uncertain though it is. We are optimistic that gatherings outside will be allowed through August so are currently moving our planned tour of **The Three Musketeers** to open-air venues, including churchyards and gardens, offering socially distanced picnic spaces for our audiences. We are hopeful that come August people will want to have a bit of light relief from the past months and our adaptation of the Alexandre Dumas novel is certainly that. Performed by just three actors it is set to delight all with its fast-paced action and, of course, epic sword fights. Our revised schedule and tickets will be available from 10 July, all being well, and we keep fingers crossed in the meantime!"*



As you will see on the back page, the date that was originally set for this action-filled production is Saturday 22 August, and hopefully a picnic in the park will be possible!



Mark Jennings - Virtuoso Guitarist

For everyone that was looking forward to Mark's concert, do not be too disappointed as this enforced Covid-19 glitch only postpones your enjoyment until social distancing is sorted out. In the meantime, please look at his website: www.markjenningsmusic.com for a sneak preview and immerse yourself into some **video recordings** that he has made. You will see and hear that **Mark Jennings** is indeed a true virtuoso guitarist in every sense of the word!



He commented: *"Such strange times we live in! It has taken me a while to adapt to the world being turned upside down, so accustomed am I to getting out and about doing what I love to do, namely visiting lovely old churches and giving guitar recitals. And so I was looking forward to performing for you all at the wonderful old Saxon church at Albury and to meeting you all."*

"Disappointing though it is to have all or most of my recitals either postponed or cancelled for this year, I have managed at least to learn more repertoire and maintain the motivation to practise a great deal. So I'm ready and raring to go, awaiting the call, so to speak"

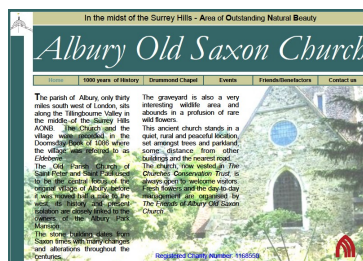
"As we emerge from our bunkers, the new normal will hopefully soon make room for live guitar recitals later this year, and at last I can visit you all in Albury".

Editorial

Website & Other Bits of Information...

In this strange new world of social distancing the internet has been an absolutely valuable way of communicating and staying in-touch with what is happening.

With your Editor 'locked-down' in South Africa, it has not been easy to keep the website totally up-to-date, but hopefully now with **Peter Chamberlain** on the case, everything will soon reflect accurately what is going on locally.



Lastly, but by no means least, there is also the thought that there is still room on the memorial board for those Friends who would like to make the commitment to become a **Life** or **Joint Life Member**, or perhaps even a **Benefactor** of the Friends Group!

Details are easily found on the website and payment through PayPal simplifies our administration!

Editorial



Diary of Services and Events

Friday, 10 April: Good Friday 'Quiet Reflection' 2:00pm. Saxon Church.

Friday 5 June: "*Jane Eyre*" by Charlotte Brontë (1847) in the Saxon Church at 7:00pm. Performed by 'This Is My Theatre Group' - [book online](#)

Sunday, 21 June: Summer Service at the Saxon Church 11:00am. Followed by wine and light refreshments.

Sunday 12 July: Virtuoso Guitarist Mark Jennings, in collaboration with the CCT will perform "The Spirit of Spain" 2:00pm. Come for a picnic-in-the-park and relax to world class virtuoso guitar. - [book online](#).

Sunday, 26 July: The Friday "Strawberry Tea Party" - The summer highlight! 3:00 - 5:00pm at Daphne Foulsham's Vale End Garden.

Saturday, 22 August: "*The Three Musketeers*", by Alexandre Dumas performed by 'This Is My Theatre Group' 2:00pm in the Saxon Church. Come and enjoy some action and a picnic-in-the-park - [book online](#).

Saturday/Sunday, 12/13 September: "Heritage Weekend" in the Saxon Church 11:00 - 5:00pm. The Chapel will be opened specially.

The Friends Charity Trustees

(Registered Charity Number: 1168550)

The Duke of Northumberland, Patron of the Friends Charity

Rev. Andrew Pearson (Chairman)	chairman@alburyoldsaxonchurch.org	07887 360061
Sally Godfrey (Hon. Secretary)	secretary@alburyoldsaxonchurch.org	01483 203452
Linda Floyd (Hon. Treasurer)	treasurer@alburyoldsaxonchurch.org	01483 302782
Daphne Foulsham (Minutes Sec.)	daphnefoulsham@gmail.com	01483 202594
Monica Cassels (Publications)	monicacassels@yahoo.co.uk	01483 202962
Stephanie Harley (Events)	stephanie.harley@btinternet.com	01483 229045
Michael Baxter (Albury Estate)	mbaxter@alburyestate.co.uk	01483 202323
Betty Adams (Events)	bettyadams0612@yahoo.co.uk	01483 229135
Chris Hammond (Fund Raising)	cj.hammond26@outlook.com	01483 202579
Roy Hogben (Ed./Fund Raising)	royhogben@alburypark.com	01483 202636