



FRIENDS OF TRING CHURCH HERITAGE

MAGAZINE
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What is FOTCH?

Tring's ancient Parish Church building and its surrounding grounds right on the High Street look great and are an important part of the character of the town.

All old historic buildings need regular maintenance and in a large medieval Church building that doesn't come cheap! The building also needs to be updated from time to time, so that it doesn't just look beautiful but continues to be a great place for schools, community groups and the Church congregation to use and hold events.

The Friends of Tring Church Heritage (FOTCH) is a local heritage charity dedicated to maintaining Tring's historic Parish Church in its splendid green setting for future generations.

Over the past 30 years or so, FOTCH has made grants of over £300,000 for projects ranging from repair of 600-year-old walls to a new sound system and modern lighting to make the building more usable for schools and other groups.

No one is too young or too old to take part and we welcome volunteers to join in and be part of the FOTCH community.

For more details, visit the website www.fotch.co.uk



Word from the Editor

This year we have been celebrating the Queen's platinum jubilee to mark her 70 years on the throne.



The theme for this edition is about marking anniversaries. I asked contributors about the important events that have been celebrated in Tring this year – it may have been a wedding anniversary, so many years in a public role, a business landmark, an important birthday, maybe a retirement after a long career in a certain job or perhaps so

many years living in Tring.

Contributors wrote about the changes that they have seen during this time, and the role that the Church plays in their life – both as a central landmark within the town but also as a place where people come together for significant occasions and important activities.

The article below encapsulates this idea rather well!

The theme also has a forward-looking and expansionist flavour rather than just dwelling on what has happened in the past – the logo (on the opposite page) expresses this theme as ‘the past as the springboard for the future’.

Phil Dowden
Editor

Where is the bicycle bell?

Covid stopped a very important occasion for Clive and I. February was our 60th wedding anniversary but two days before we were to have our family and friends celebrating with us, there was that line creeping up the test equipment telling me that that sniffly nose was not an ordinary cold!

This is a year when our immediate family celebrated several special days. A 60th birthday, a 50th birthday, two 30th birthdays and a wedding. It is only in recent years that each decade has been marked. Does that contribute to the feeling that life seems to be going quicker? We expect deliveries to arrive a couple of days after ordering goods (the arrangement used to be ‘delivered within 28 days’!)



The internet provides us with instant information. Some people look at their phones immediately a message comes through – this often interrupts a conversation they are having with the person next to them. I heard a child say “please speak to me mummy” while her mother was tapping on her phone (oh dear, that did make me feel sad).

Where has the bicycle bell gone? That is something I miss. When pedestrians and cyclists are sharing an area such as Station Road, I do like a warning that the cyclist wants to pass. This is friendlier than zooming past. Whoops that is something else – using Zoom makes it possible to see who you are contacting, or being able to join in a meeting.

FOTCH seems to hold us together, organising events for people to meet and of course raising funds to help our Parish Church maintenance. Long may it continue!

Pam Russell
FOTCH member

‘Running Up That Hill’ – again!

Let’s keep on doing what we did – only better!

I am sure most of us will have noticed the remarkable achievement of Kate Bush in having a blockbuster hit with ‘Running Up That Hill’ when it went to number three in the charts more than 35 years after she first released it. It seems to me that it offers a pretty significant clue as to what we in FOTCH have to do to make the most of the future we face: run up that hill again!



The other big strategic imperative was that we sought support and involvement not just from within the Church community but from the wider community of Tring itself.

There is little doubt that that has been a successful two-fisted approach. However, times change, the town has changed and we need to keep up with those times and those changes.

It’s a long road – and a steep hill

From the very beginning the whole strategy of FOTCH was to create a capital fund that would ‘future proof’ the irreplaceable Church resource, not for the short-term but for the long-term – no matter what challenges lay ahead. That aim remains in place and we can all see that the challenges have become pretty formidable and we clearly have to step up.

The logo/design motif for this edition of FOTCH magazine seeks to embody what we need to do. We must use all the good things and wonderful supporters we have enjoyed thus far as a springboard for what we need to do in the future. This was never going to be a short or easy journey.

In almost every sense the future seems uncertain and there is little doubt the Church of England as a corporate body will have to change and develop if it is to survive and prosper. Indeed there are many who are quite pessimistic about that.

We should not be daunted nor should we feel that we will have to fight alone.

All of us who know Tring know that the town has a strong sense of identity

Keep on telling our story – the same story – ever more relevant

FOTCH first came into being in the late 1980s a few years after ‘Running Up That Hill’ was first released and we’re now approaching our 35th anniversary. In response to severe financial pressures, what we did was set up an organisation which would be there to support the Church long into the future – but also available for short-to-medium term emergencies when parish funds simply could not cope. That was the main *raison d’etre* but a significant part of our mandate along with fundraising was to make sure everybody involved had plenty of fun along the way. With FOTCH, fun is just as important as fundraising!

That still remains an essential part of our character despite the hiatus created by Covid.

and a considerable appetite for positive community initiatives. In every sense it is a town with a big heart!

What would happen if Tring lost its heart?

That was our initial proposition based on the concept that Tring Parish Church in its splendid green setting is indeed the heart of Tring. It is a very credible metaphor and recent events with the Jubilee, the Carnival, the Family Fun Day and everything that surrounds it have emphasised the credibility of that description.

The Covid years have created a fairly significant interruption in our normal schedule of activities and events. The return of Family Fun Day in May 2022 demonstrated quite clearly the appetite of the community for such an enterprise. It was our biggest and best FFD in every dimension, but we cannot rest on our laurels.

It is possible that many of the 'normal' events that we have held have now become less relevant as our demographic has changed. What we now have to do is build a programme of high-profile communication with the whole community backed up by a schedule of opportunities to enjoy community life and support the long-term aim of the society; a programme that really appeals to today's generation.

We started out as a membership organisation and still have a very lively and active group of members; however arguably what we need more than membership growth is a radical increase

in our **supporter** base. Throughout the voluntary/charity sector the appeal of membership has diminished but the appeal of significant and relevant causes to generate proactive support has grown and strengthened. We must get in sync with that.

It seems to me that the challenge of 'Running Up that Hill' involves a fairly dynamic relaunch through relevant contemporary communication channels to generate awareness, engagement with new residents as well as the long term 'Tringers' and putting forward an exciting programme of 'good stuff' happening.

That's going to take quite a lot of energy and we undoubtedly need some new resources to supply that. That's where you and I and every one of us needs to get stuck in and bounce off that springboard to the future.

All Together Now...

Watch this space for the next stage – the only way we will really run up that hill and build a better future is by working together. And that's something that we've always been good at in the past and will give us a flying start into the future. We all know people who we ought to be involving in FOTCH. We all have an enjoyable job to do in making that happen. It's sure to be fun!

The first thing to do if you are not yet signed up as a member/supporter – or if you know someone you think ought to join us – is use the form on page 24/25 to join us for the journey up that hill! Please do consider it.

Grahame Senior, President, FOTCH

FOTCH needs you!

A warm welcome to regular and new readers of the Friends of Tring Church Heritage magazine.

It was great to see so many people at FOTCH's Family Fun Day which was back with a bang in May after two years of enforced absence. We had some familiar and some new stalls and activities – and Maria Lashley and Andy Hall, who stepped up magnificently to organise and coordinate the day, have got ideas for further enhancements for next year. This will be on Saturday 6 May, 2023 – get it in your diary now.

I moved to Tring over 20 years ago and joined FOTCH mainly because of an interest in local history wherever I have lived. For most of that time, all I did was pay my membership fee annually, read the magazines with interest, and take our kids each year to spend money at the tombola and send one of their teddies down the zip-wire. Which was all fine. When the opportunity came up a few years ago to become Treasurer, I worked out that I had just about time to do that in between work and family commitments, and after that I became a Trustee.

It's absolutely fine – in fact it's great – to be a member and do nothing else except maybe attend some FOTCH fundraising events. The membership fees are an important source of income for the charity – you are showing you care by being a member. You get this magazine



automatically and you are well informed about what is going on. There is a membership form conveniently located in this magazine, so if you know somebody who would like to be a member go for it now and post it in or just email your details to info@fotch.co.uk.

But maybe you have a little more interest and time that you could give on a regular or one-off basis to help take FOTCH into the future with new ideas of events and activities, helping with our communications or other kinds of support? Maybe even with a view to becoming a Trustee at some point as vacancies arise.

Some of the areas that it would be great if we had more volunteers include the following:

- Organising an activity or event for fundraising
- Enhance and manage content on our website
- Other promotional activities
- Developing deeper partnerships with other local organisations with overlapping interests
- Membership outreach including increasing the number of corporate/business members
- Management of our membership database, membership renewals process and creation of an enhanced volunteer database (this is a defined Membership Secretary vacancy, coming up in May 2023 as after many years of sterling work Helena Cook has decided to hand on the baton)
- Delivering magazines twice a year

We need a few more volunteers for next year's Family Fun Day, so if you can sign up to a two hour morning or afternoon shift to either help set up or be on one of the stalls that would be brilliant! Please let us know at info@fotch.co.uk or call me on **07823 535267**.

If you are put off volunteering because you worry about it becoming an open-ended commitment, please don't be. You can do as little or as much as you want and are able, in a defined role. With more volunteers we will be able to do more things as a charity; equally without refreshing our pool of volunteers over the new few months, we won't be able to run the same number of events we have

done in past years and will find it harder to keep evolving our activities to meet the needs of our Tring communities in the maintenance, development and use of our fantastic medieval building and its beautiful grounds.

So whether you are a member or not, been in Tring a long time or not, if you have got a bit of capacity and want to organise or help then FOTCH needs YOU! This could be helping with a fundraising, social or other kind of event or activity, or some communications or organisational role. I would love to hear from you for at least an initial discussion. Thank you.

Richard Abel, Chair of Trustees



Tring's Platinum Collection in Jubilee Year

The Jubilee Memories Project emerged from a Tring History Society discussion about the Queen's long reign and how many changes have occurred during the last 70 years.



We were sure that every significant moment of the Queen's life would be documented and speculated about what our descendants, in say 200 years, might say: "What about ordinary people? What were their lives like during that time?" The next action was: "Let's ask the residents of Tring".

The response has been amazing. We are collecting the writings in the Tring Local History Museum and are looking forward to many more. There is no deadline and everyone is welcome to add to what will become our archive. As an Accredited Museum we anticipate that our contents and documents will be kept for the long term.

Here are examples of the contributions so far. Do come and read the full scripts (access details are below).

[As a student] I went to Zambia for almost three months and did voluntary work on a diet-related medical project. This involved spending time at a fairly remote mission hospital, from where I visited rural villages – sometimes by bicycle – and

collected samples of their staple foodstuff, maize. Then, every other week, I would travel around 500km on the back of a supply lorry to the capital, Lusaka, where I stayed with a British doctor. She was based at the university and I spent time in the laboratories there, analysing the food samples for a chemical thought to be a factor in the development of liver cancer. An unforgettable summer.

[From a very early computer programmer] There was so little computer memory that we would estimate the size of the program by adding up the number of bytes each line of code would take, and if it exceeded 12k we would need to go back to the drawing board to make our code more efficient. The program would then be put through rigorous testing. For example, we would allow for misspelt names, invalid dates, text where a number should be and vice versa, etc. It was possible to print out the contents of the computer's memory (a core dump), which could help pinpoint a problem (a 'bug'), a process called debugging. Only when that was completed would the program go 'live'. Needless to say, there was always something that cropped up that we hadn't considered, and the program would crash.

We would operate the computer ourselves, loading up the tape drives and disk packs, as operators were not employed until after our machine was up and running. The computer was rented rather than purchased as computers were too expensive for even large companies to purchase, each individual unit having a meter to record its usage. As a point of interest, computing is often thought of

as a male occupation, but most of the early programmers at Kent's were female, and we enjoyed the same salary and conditions as the men.

[From a new resident]

Our house was in one of the first cul-de-sacs to be built in the estate and was soon populated by young families like ourselves. Everyone was of a similar age, with young children, excited about our new homes. There was a real community spirit with a genuine willingness to make friends and to support one another with chores, car pools, baby-sitting groups etc; a very happy street.

And so it would be no surprise that the residents got together to organise a street party to celebrate the wedding of Charles and Diana. The weather was perfect, the street decorated with Union Jacks, tables and chairs borrowed from all over and party food prepared by every household. Races and games were organised for the children and in between these we ran inside to watch the wedding in St Paul's Cathedral unfold along with Diana's famous veil. The day eventually turned into evening when we were able to put the children to bed and continued with our own party with barbecue, music and dancing. It was a brilliant day and one of my happiest.

By 1976 I spent most of my time in Tring. The High Street was full of



shops, but wheeling a pram along the pavements when the traffic thundered through was a bit hazardous. We were quite pleased to learn that there would be a bypass built. I could go to the Co-op on the corner by the Robin Hood, a greengrocer, several butchers, and even a small Tesco on the High Street as well as a fish shop where the Cog cafe is, and a baker's down Frogmore Street. With the doctors' surgery and the chemist also in the town centre, I had no need for a car. I liked going to the Friday market in the market car park each week for fruit and veg, clothes, household items, dress material and fish. There was often a charity stall as well, which I helped on, when it was in aid of Shelter.

To contribute, send your document to: jubileememories@tringlocalhistorymuseum.org.uk, or drop it in to Tring Local History Museum, Brook Street, Tring HP23 5ED, open Fridays and Saturdays, 10am to 4pm.

Shelley Savage, Tring History Society

The Still Do Do (Take 2)!

What possesses two people who have been happily married for over 30 years to renew their wedding vows? A good question that we couldn't answer at the time, but in 2019 we decided to do it all the same. In no time the wheels were put in motion, Reverend Jane had been consulted, the invitations printed and sent out. Then from the East came the bug that stopped the world in its tracks. We were upset that we couldn't get 're-spiced' but even more concerned for all those couples who were planning to do it for the first time, many of whom we met in the Parish Hall just before Covid hit.

Roll on 2022, when it finally felt safe to venture out from virtual church to the real thing and golly it was good. We felt it was safe enough to try again. This is why our 'Still Do Do' became 'The Still Do Do (Take 2)'.

Our faith is very strong, we just don't



go to church every weekend, so there was never any doubt that we still wanted a church service and the now Reverend Canon Jane was more than happy to meet with us again to go through the details.

Then we revisited our invitation list and realised that many of our friends were not 'churchy types', which got us thinking that maybe not many would come to the service and would simply meet us at the pub afterwards. How wrong we were! Almost everyone we invited came to the service. Through a great combination of spiritual intervention and Reverend Jane's ability to make



the service both formal and fun, we were able to both appreciate being in God's presence and ensure it appealed to all ages and beliefs. Many of our 'non-churchy' friends remarked that St. Peter and St. Paul Church is much friendlier than they thought it would be. Some even found it rather risqué (but no less enjoyable) that they could have a glass of beer or wine around the font at the end of the service with the vicar's blessing!

So, back to why renew our marriage vows? Words taken from 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' by Louis de Bernières, sum it up nicely:

Love is a temporary madness; it erupts like a volcano and then subsides.

And when it subsides you have to make a decision.

You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is.

Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.

That is just 'being in love' which any fool can do.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

Those that truly love, have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom has fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.



In short, we simply wanted to say to each other, under the ever-watchful

eye of God, "we are one tree and we still love each other". Yes, we are well beyond our sell-by dates and certainly many bits don't work too well but the very core of our love has never ever been in doubt.

Our faith has been heavily tested during our marriage; cancer and multiple sclerosis being two nasties we had to ask, "Why us Lord?" This, however, has been offset many times over by the love of our family, our friends and that of the Church. Long may it continue!

Bruce and Lynne Sherring-Lucas
FOTCH members

“We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams!”

The immortal words from Edward Elgar’s fabulous choral work ‘The Music Makers’ sums up a lot of what Tring Choral Society



stands for! Okay, so dreamers of dreams might be a bit strong – but we are certainly music makers. We are a group of local amateur singers from Tring and surrounding villages, meeting once a week in term-time to rehearse and performing three concerts a year at Easter, in the summer and at Christmas.

The earliest records we have of Tring Choral Society date back to 1894 and the first known concert took place in Victoria Hall, Akeman Street that year. After the Second World War, the choir continued to go from strength to strength and was directed by both John Lowdell and Roland Stevens. Since 1974, Roland’s son Colin Stevens took over the choir, having previously been the choir’s piano rehearsal accompanist for many years, and Colin has been our Musical Director ever since.

Singing in a choir is an experience unlike any other. There is something innately magical and other-worldly about singing with a large group of people, either in several part-harmony or, arguably more powerfully, all in unison. You’ve only got to watch the emotion

coming from a large crowd of people all singing together, for example at a football match, the Formula 1 Grand Prix, African tribes, the New Zealand Maori people to name but a few; it’s instinctive and emotive, it unites people from all walks of life in that particular moment, and humans have been doing it for ever.

The journey we choir members go on at the beginning of each term follows the same format, although each experience is unique and interesting. Singers turn up at the Akeman Street Baptist Church at 8pm on a Monday night, eagerly anticipating collecting their music and experiencing the thrill of starting something new. Colin, who is, thank goodness, a man of great optimism and enthusiasm, guides us through rehearsals, pinpointing areas of difficulty requiring extra effort and concentration and breaking down complex musical theory into easy-to-understand rhythms, for those (like me!) whose musical mathematical ability is somewhat limited.

As the weeks progress and notes are learned we shape the music by adding dynamics; that is to say loud bits and soft bits and everything in between. It is this expression that puts the passion into the music, in much the same way that a person speaking in a monotone is less interesting than someone speaking with animation and inflection. Often the words are not in English – we more often than not sing classical, sacred pieces in Latin, but we have also sung in Russian, German, French, Italian and Swedish. We are lucky to have amongst our choir members some talented linguists, who can usually be persuaded to help with pronunciation.

The weeks of rehearsal, listening to YouTube at home, singing in the car/bath/shower etc. culminates in PERFORMANCE DAY! Our concerts are always on a Saturday evening in our beloved venue St Peter and St Paul's Church and start early in the day for some, with the putting up of our concert staging, removing a few of the pews at the front of the Church to make way for the orchestra and setting out music stands, chairs etc. The choir arrives for rehearsal on the day at 2pm and make their way up onto the stage. Soloists arrive, the orchestra gathers and start to tune up and we are under way with our afternoon final rehearsal. Some of us (and I have to confess I am one) might even admit to enjoying the full rehearsal even more than the concert itself. A large orchestra of professional musicians is a powerful beast and surely has the ability to stir emotion in even the most hardened souls. There simply is nothing like it! The depths of sound which come from the different sections of the orchestra weave together perfectly like ribbons round a maypole, the flutes taking up the tune here, the violins there, then interacting with the sonorous hum of the cellos and violas, the deep vibration of the double bass sounding underneath, the brightness of the brass and the beating heart of it all the percussion section with its mighty timpani drums and crashing cymbals.

Colin leads us all through the rehearsal, we practice starting and stopping and creating seamless links between the movements, some of which require the choir to pitch their notes without instrumental assistance (always a slightly anxious moment!) When we have

finished we depart the Church for tea at home, the orchestra and soloists (some of whom travel great distances to be with us) staying for teas in the Church Hall very generously catered for by Colin's wife, Jane.

We reassemble at the Church Hall between 7.00pm and 7.15pm, and file into the Church in our black concert finery for a prompt start at 7.30pm. The smiling expectant faces of our wonderful audience together with the adrenaline coursing through our veins, the solid dependability of our fabulous orchestra and professional soloists, and, of course, Colin's expressive face urging us on with commitment and passion, is just the best experience ever. The choir can't wait to be allowed to applaud at the end and a fair proportion of us congregate in the Robin Hood pub afterwards to relax, mull over the performance and release some of the excitement built up over the evening!

If anyone is inspired to sing with us, please contact our Membership Secretary Margaret Collier, whose details can be found on our website www.tringchoral.org.uk and come along to a rehearsal and see what it's all about. An ability to read music would be a distinct advantage but not essential. We look forward to seeing some of you and welcoming you on board!

First rehearsal: Monday 5th September at 8.00pm in the Akeman Street Baptist Church, Tring

Next concert: Saturday 17th December 2022 at 7.30pm. For programme details, please see website.

Katie Hughes
Tring Choral Society

The Ridgeway Chorale

A small friendly choir of just under twenty singers has been singing in the Tring area for just over twenty years now. It took us some time to decide what to call ourselves, and we were for three years 'The No-Name Singers'. When the name 'Ridgeway Chorale' was proposed (to those choir members who had not been present at our usual after-rehearsal pub gathering at which the new name had been suggested), one slightly deaf member asked, "Did you say the OK Corral?" Despite the tempting alternative of the 'OK Chorale' we have stuck with our present brand-name, though the membership of the choir has changed quite a lot over the years. Four members – Jean Bygate, Richard Onslow, Tony and Hattie Mackinder, plus the director, Richard Grylls – were there at the start, and several others (including the late



Jane Legg) have been or were members for a decade or more. Furthermore, our loyal accompanist at concerts for many of our twenty one years has been Colin Stevens.

We rarely sing long pieces of music, preferring in our concerts to offer a range of short items. Our posters usually say "pieces sacred and secular, serious and light-hearted – something for everyone". Our last concert in Tring included music by Victoria, Purcell, Mendelssohn, Billy Joel and an Irish folksong "Chattanooga Choo-Choo, Can't help falling in love" plus, as always, a piece the audience could join in with as our finale. In addition we invited two teenage solo instrumentalists to join us, helping to add variety to the concert. This is something we like to do wherever we are giving a concert. Since 2001 we have raised just over £40,000 for sundry charities from our concerts.

Compared to some choirs we are, by choice, only moderately busy. Occasionally we get asked to sing at weddings, funerals, fund-raising gatherings and special concerts, but



our normal yearly routine is an early December concert of Christmas music (this year it will be on Wednesday 7th December, in St. Cross, Wilstone), a carol service at St. Mary in Puttenham, madrigals at 6.00 am every 1st May from the top of Puttenham church tower, and two concerts in the spring (one local and the other 'away'). Local venues have included the churches (and chapels) at Long Marston, Buckland, Wilstone, Drayton Beauchamp, The Lee, New Mill, and St. Peter and St. Paul, Tring.

Looking back at the list of our 'away' venues – we find a friend who lives near the venue to help promote our concert and the concert provides an excuse to spend a happy weekend well away from Tring – we have indeed travelled amazingly far and wide, since our first 'away' trip in 2003. We have been to Wombourne (Staffs), Westleton (Suffolk), Llanidloes (Powys), Buxton (Derbyshire), Wiveliscombe (Somerset), Malvern (Worcestershire), Beaminster (Dorset), Breadsall (Derbyshire), Minchinhampton (Gloucestershire), Farley (Wiltshire), Worfield (Shropshire), Hoarwithy (Herefordshire), Bosham (Sussex) and Whissendine (Rutland), not forgetting three trips abroad to Vevey (Switzerland), Montreal (Burgundy) and St. Helier (Jersey).

We have sung in some churches with exceptionally delightful acoustics, perhaps the most memorable being Farley, Hoarwithy and Montreal. Finding churches where there is a real 'ping' to the sound we produce, and also in which all the members of the choir can hear each other well, provides quite

a challenge. You might think that all churches are good to sing in but that is simply not the case. Carpeted churches, those with wide side aisles, those with a lot of ornamental woodwork and those without good sound-reflecting walls and ceilings are often difficult and unrewarding to sing in. Lighting, so that the choir can easily see the music they are singing from, is often an issue too. Surprisingly St. Peter and St. Paul in Tring is more pleasant to sing in than one might imagine from its shape and design features, and, of course, it now has splendid lighting!

We are a pretty sociable group of people and do get together every now and then for a party. Like many organisations we have an AGM, only ours is called an 'AGB' (Annual General Bash)! Many kind choir members have hosted these gatherings. Membership of the choir is by 'invitation', but that doesn't mean that we don't like to hear from potential new members who sing to a fairly high standard, particularly if they sing tenor! We have a website which gives a little more information about us: **www.ridgewaychorale.org.uk**

The Ridgeway Chorale hopes to be giving a concert in St. Peter and St. Paul in April or May 2023, the exact date still to be determined. Also, though hopefully the singers of the Ridgeway Chorale will be augmented by many others, there will be a special Candlemas Choral Evensong on February 5th 2023, with lots of gorgeous music. Please be there, at both!

Richard Grylls
Ridgeway Chorale

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee



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Creating some new Tring memories

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee was a great example of Tring working together. I hope you like the photographs which were chosen to show the Churchyard crowded with people, the Church full for the Thanksgiving service and some of the fun that was had. As Huw said in the vox pox video of the day "what's not to like?"



I've had lots and lots of lovely comments and thanks from people around town since the celebration. Thank you to everyone that helped, whether it be for an hour in the tea-tent or putting away the chairs at the end. But especially thank you to Rev Huw Bellis for encouraging everything that was suggested. Thank you to Rev Sarah Marshall for choreographing a massive service, but keeping God at the centre. Thank you to Ben Cartwright for hours and hours of physical labour plus caring for our safety. Thank you to Trish Dowden for doing a double role of Church Super-Admin plus Catering Super-Tea-Tent organiser. Thank you to Richard and Jane Shardlow from Tring Brewery for their generosity of time and money.

And thank YOU for coming and for telling us how much you appreciated the Jubilee 'Tring thing'!

A video of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4UBIYRkJPQ>

*Vivianne Child
Tring Together*



Tring Together is back to busyness

“Full steam ahead” is what Tring Together do best and so far 2022 has been exactly that!

Tring Together are a local charity that organises over 100 events every year (pandemics allowing) to benefit residents, community groups, independent businesses and visitors alike; it’s their proud mission to keep Tring thriving.

The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee is an example. How brilliant were the celebrations at St. Peter & St. Paul Church? A truly special day, from afternoon tea to the Thanksgiving service, ending with the beacon lighting and the amazing piper on the Church roof!

After two years of running virtually, the annual Spring Fayre returned in April for an activity-packed fortnight, with a fantastic Launch Day on Church Square (the pop-up zoo undoubtedly being the highlight).



BusinessMart finally returned to face-to-face meetings at some amazing local venues including the all-new and superb P.E. Mead & Sons Farmhouse Kitchen.

A splendid Golf Day fundraiser was organised by the trustees at the Stocks Golf Course in Aldbury. Thanks are due to many local businesses for their support.

Tring Together have also joined forces with Tring Music Partnership, founded in July 2021, to support local music groups post-pandemic and provide the best opportunities so that everyone in Tring can benefit from live music. This partnership have organised several workshops, evening concerts, live music at local events, entertainment in local care homes and for Ukrainian families, and have-a-go instrument sessions at local primary schools.

So watch out – there is lots more to come. The Christmas Festival will be on Saturday, 26th November!

Phil Dowden,
Editor

Tring
enjoying life **Together**



A Plan for the Future of the Church

Sitting in Tring Church, one looks up at the massive height of the nave and all of the timber which is above you and one wonders at the skill of the medieval craftsmen who built the Church without modern scaffolding or cranes. Tring Church really is an awe-inspiring building. We don't know when the first stone church was built in Tring, presumably in Saxon times as the Domesday book records a stone church. Our current building dates from the 1400s, and over the centuries it has been adapted and its usage has evolved.



Originally there would have been no pews. As by far the largest building in the area, it would have served the whole community and there is every chance that animals and everyone would come inside. At one point, one of the vicars had ideas of grandeur and had all of the internal stonework painted to resemble Italian marble – apparently this caused a riot. The Church as it is now is largely the way in which the Victorians laid it out (there was a massive restoration in the 1880s). Even some of the most solid parts of the Church were replaced – some of the original pillars are now found in All Saints, Long Marston! It is also at this point that our current pews were installed, the Gore Memorial was moved from close to the high altar to its current location and the small choir organ was also moved to Long Marston, to be replaced by the first version of the organ

which is currently in Tring Church.

In the 1990s, there was a big push to have a parish hall built on the north side of the Church. This would have been a free-standing structure but joined to the Church by a passageway. I believe these plans were rejected by English Heritage. Instead, it was decided that a more modest plan should be adopted. Toilets were put into the tower and the current coffee area was made – these have both transformed the usability of the Church. However, as usage has grown, we have also realised their limitations. There really isn't enough room to gather for coffee after a service and there certainly isn't enough room for community usage. Since well before lockdown, successive AGMs have advocated that we need to create more space at the back of the Church.

We have come to the conclusion that rather than tinkering with the Church we should have a bold plan to try and enable the building to evolve for the next phase of its life. The current thinking of English Heritage and the Diocesan Advisory Committee is that one should do as much as possible inside the footprint of historic buildings to use them and maintain them as much as possible. We have therefore asked our Church surveyor to come up with a plan for the future of the Church. The idea is to have an overall vision of what it may become and to work towards this in stages.

The organ

Tring's organ is a fine instrument but it is nothing special. The original instrument has had various bits added to it over the years. A pipe organ needs to be rebuilt every 30 years or so – the last rebuild of the organ was in 1985 by

Saxon Aldred. It is now well overdue for a major overhaul. The work needed will cost at least £360,000 and would need doing every 30 years (that is £12,000 per annum). Both Cliff Brown and Colin Stevens, our organists, agree that we cannot justify this expenditure and it is therefore proposed that we move to a digital organ. This would also have a life expectancy of 30 years but would cost no more than £90,000 including installation costs (that is £3,000 per annum). Cliff has written a much longer article on this in the current issue of Comment magazine. The other great advantage of moving to a digital organ would be the realised space which it affords. The first phase of any plans for our Church would be to remove the existing organ. This would create a large storage space at ground floor level. We would build a first floor room which would house the speakers and be an additional space for the Church. As we use the Church for Sunday Club rather than the hall, and as our community function for things such as the Food Bank increases, then there is more and more demand on storage space.

The font

Traditionally, fonts were found by the door of the Church. The font is the place where a Christian journey begins and there is good symbolism of having it by the door. Originally in Tring Church it was by the West Door – in the tower. In more recent times, it was towards the back of the current coffee area and has been moved forwards to its current location. It is in a pretty rubbish place liturgically because it is hidden by pillars, and in practical terms it gets in the way of a gathering place in the Church. For

baptisms we are far better served by using a portable font on the nave altar, as this gives space for godparents to gather round and for everyone to see and to be involved. However, it still feels important to keep the stone font as part of the historical fabric of the building. The best conclusion is to reunite it to a position close to the Church door and link it to its symbolism as the ‘entry point of the Church’. As the main door is now the South Door, we will move the font out of the coffee area to be close to the South door.

The sound desk

Some decades ago, FOTCH provided the wonderful sound system in Church and more recently added the projectors. To this we have now added capabilities to live stream services, which was essential in lockdown and is here to stay. We need to draw these three elements together. We need to have fixed cameras which can be operated from the rear of Church and the sound desk maybe needs to be simplified a little using the best modern technology. The existing decades old wiring may be able to be replaced with a Wi-Fi system. We will also need to create a proper sound desk area.

The coffee area

Everyone is in agreement we need more space. Both our surveyor and the DAC advisory committee have recommended a bold approach, and that we should remove all the pews at the west end of the Church. As the DAC noted in a very balanced way: “the removal of a proportion of the pews would have a significant visual impact and could be argued to erode the high quality 19th century seating. On the other

hand, the Church was currently very fully pewed and the area to the east of the cross-aisle would still provide a good seating arrangement, particularly in conjunction with the other 19th century furnishings and chancel layout". The survey sent to the congregation and the comments at the last few Church AGMs strongly show that the local view is in favour of removing the pews at the west end. This would give us the flexibility to use the Church building in a variety of ways whilst still having significant pew-bound seating. A small but vocal group advocate removing all of the pews in the Church. Whilst there is some merit in this, it isn't being considered in our current phases but would be an option for future generations. Our surveyor will give careful consideration to maintain processional routes for weddings funerals and major services. We will also explore the opportunity of having environmentally friendly (for example Air Source Heat Pump) underfloor heating. The proposal would be to include in the plans a proper kitchen and an additional toilet. Flexible seating would be stored in the existing organ area.

The chancel and nave steps

The DAC also challenged us to think about the chancel. They asked us to think about removing the choir stalls. This, in effect, would turn the chancel into a smaller chapel within the main body of the Church. The above phases are already quite significant, but it does seem at least important to incorporate this into an overall vision of the Church. This may not be undertaken in the near future (or possibly at all) but if it is planned we can make sure that the end result is one cohesive plan and not a

mishmash of changes. A significant driver for this might be the need for a smaller worship space within a massive building. As we become more aware of the impending climate crisis, thinking about how to reduce our energy usage is vitally important.

We are also aware that when, for liturgical reasons, we moved the altar to below the nave steps rather than using the eastward facing high altar, the unintended consequence was for the altar to be lower than the pews. One suggestion is to bring the chancel floor level forwards beyond the chancel arch into the front of the nave. This would mean that the nave altar could be raised.

Conclusion

It is hard to plan for an uncertain future but if Tring Church is to thrive as the centre of our community, offering a place of hospitality and welcome and serving all in the town, then it needs to adapt. Worship is what we do and all the plans will have worship at the centre. The eternal debate about churches is are they *Domus Dei* or *Domus Ecclesia* – are they shrines (the home of God) or are they as the name church (ecclesia) implies the home of the people of God. In the new testament, church is always the people of God and as the needs of the people of God adapt and change in every age so should the building be adapted to meet those needs. The people of God are not the few Anglicans who meet on a Sunday, it is the whole people of Tring – and the changes planned are so the building can serve the whole community.

Huw Bellis
Rector, Tring Church

Lost Marble, Renovations in Lime

The Grade 1 listed Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul in the centre of Tring has been subjected to various repairs in the past using cement and perhaps more recently using hydraulic lime – a hard lime mortar that sets under water and gets harder year on year. Where the soft Totternhoe chalk stone, known as clunch, has deteriorated it has been framed with cement or a hard hydraulic lime mortar. This has prevented the clunch from drying out and as a consequence once the ‘freeze/thaw’ action gets hold in the winter time the stone starts to crumble as water expands by 9% when it freezes. We all know what happens when you forget to remove that bottle of water/wine/champagne from the freezer, don’t we? Lost Marble Conservation is very proud to have been engaged to remedy this and help prevent further decay to this beautiful building.



What has been done?

- Removal of hard cement surrounding soft clunch stone.
- Filling voids with bespoke hot-mixed lime composed of quicklime, aggregates and water (when water is mixed with quicklime it gets very hot).
- Repointing stones with a finer lime mortar using the same ingredients.

- Applying two coats of a sheltercoat to the soft, eroded clunch – a lime wash containing the same proportions and same ingredients as the other mortars used. It is sacrificial (this is conservation work, not restoration).
- Some repointing works to flint panels using the same mortar.
- Two stones have had to be replaced due to severe cracking at high level.
- As the lime mortars and lime sheltercoats carbonate over time they revert back to their original state which is calcium carbonate (CaCO₃). Calcium carbonate is the chemical name and formula for limestone. And so it is for chalk and clunch – we are protecting and conserving the original materials of the Church with the original materials!

Lost Marble Building Conservation are based in Tring, Herts and are specialists in the repair and care of traditional buildings using traditional materials. We make all our own products and can match lime mortars to original mortars as required. We do not use cement or NHL mortars. Paint removal and cleaning of traditional buildings is done using a DOFF machine – super heated water at a low pressure. Please follow Lost Marble Building Conservation on social media to see before/after images of our work.

Stewart Ivory
Lost Marble Building Conservation



FOTCH NEEDS



YOU

For almost 35 years the Friends of Tring Church Heritage have focused on fundraising and fun events to secure the heart of Tring for all future generations.

It's a long game and we need new friends, new ideas and energy to keep that focus fresh. If you haven't joined the Friends yet – or are new to Tring's unique environment – please consider joining us. We are a very friendly bunch that likes to have fun as well as doing some effective fundraising and providing some serious grants to keep our heart in good condition.

Please use the form opposite to join us, or call Chair Richard Abel, President Grahame Senior or any of our trustees for a chat about how you can get involved.



APPLICATION FORM

Please complete this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS**

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

If you wish your membership to include other family members, please include the name(s) of all other adults, and the number of children (under 18 as at 1st April, 2022).

Names of other adults in your family group

Number of children (under 18) in your family group:

Please tick the box for the membership category of your choice.

Annual Memberships – I enclose my membership renewal for 2022 - 2023

Individual: £12 Family Group: £20 Junior: £5 (under 16s)
 Corporate: £100 Voluntary donation _____

Life Memberships - I should like to change my/our membership to Life

Individual Life: £100 Joint Life: £150 for couples

To set up a standing order or pay by bank transfer the FOTCH bank account details (now Metro Bank, previously NatWest) are as follows:

Account Name: "The Friends of Tring Church Heritage" Sort Code: 23-05-80, Account number: 40555293.
Please add your name in the 'Reference' field. Cheques can be made payable to: The Friends of Tring Church Heritage

Gift Aid

I want to Gift Aid my subscription (and any voluntary donations) I make this year, or have made in the past four years or make in the future to Friends of Tring Church Heritage.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax (other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not apply) than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR REMITTANCE TO:

Helena Cook, 20 Mortimer Rise, Tring, Herts, HP23 5NE or leave in the "C" pigeon hole at the back of the Church.

I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every pound I give. If you pay Income Tax at more than the standard rate, you can claim extra tax relief through your HMRC tax return. I will notify FOTCH if I wish to cancel this declaration; OR change my name or home address; OR no longer pay sufficient tax for Gift Aid to apply.

Tring Fabric Committee Update



Unfortunately, earlier in the year there was some damage caused by vandalism on the roof. A temporary repair was effected to prevent ingress of rainwater, and now quotes have been obtained to repair the damage on a more permanent basis.

More recently there has been some further minor vandalism with graffiti on the West Door (see photo), which will need to be carefully cleaned to prevent damage and deter any further occurrences.



Graffiti on west door

On a more positive note, having completed the initial phases of the drainage investigation and soakaway improvement earlier in the year, planned work has now started on repairing the walls.

Scaffolding has been erected to enable inspection of the uppermost inner faces of the north buttress.

The Tottenhoe Clunch stonework was found to have been badly eroded and is in poor condition, and needs attention

as otherwise water may easily enter the voids and cause more issues when winter arrives.

A company called Lost Marble is undertaking this work which involves conversation of the walls, including lime reputting and two applications of shelter coat to protect the stones.

One of the stones was found to be extremely badly eroded and in need of replacement. Work to renew the hollow and insecure stone section is ongoing.

For improved safety and security, two watchman bollard lights will be installed on the pathway to the east of the Church. This will provide low-level lighting at night helping navigate safely around the Church, whilst avoiding disturbance to neighbouring properties.



Tottenhoe Clunch stone is friable and in poor condition in several areas inspected

Inside the Church, another quote to repair the organ has been received for comparison with an earlier quotation. Significant costs running into hundreds of thousands of pounds would be required to repair the current organ. As another option, replacement with an electronic version is under consideration. This would retain the look and feel of the existing organ as the show pipes would be retained, but replace the current analogue instrument with a more modern electronic equivalent.

The replacement or repair of the organ is part of a wider consultation to find out what the people of Tring Team Parish think about proposals for reorganising Tring Church following discussions at the Tring Annual Church meeting, please see: <https://forms.office.com/r/zw9CQp3gt5>

Andrew Kinsey
Fabric Committee Chair



Scaffolding erected to facilitate inspections and repairs of stonework



Hollow and insecure stones section found during inspection

Treasurer's Report

How did COVID impact FOTCH's Financial Position?

The table below shows the headline figures for the financial year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. The full accounts are currently with our Independent Examiner and the finalised document will be available at this year's AGM.



As we are celebrating the Queen's 70th Jubilee, the author's picture to the left was taken on Coronation Day, 1953 (instead of the usual recent(ish) photo).

SUMMARY OF FOTCH ACCOUNTS			
Financial Year 01Apr21 to 31Mar22			
OPENING BALANCE	616,550	EXPENDITURE	
		Expenditure on Charitable Activities	(500)
INCOME		Administration	(1,299)
Donations	245	Grants Paid	(11,321)
Compensation, etc.	1,250	Total Cash Expenditure	(13,120)
Membership Subscriptions	1,397	Investment Returns	49,786
Gift Aid	197		
Income from Charitable Activities	1,181	NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	41,251
Interest from Savings, etc.	315		
Total Income	4,585	CLOSING BALANCE	657,801

[Opening Balance plus Income minus Cash Expenditure plus Investment Returns = Closing Balance.]

As you can see the return on investments in 2021/22 was by far the largest contributor of (unrealised) income. This has been true in the past for most (but not all) years.

The trend graphs right show how the various elements of income and expenditure have varied over the past six financial years.

The two key messages are that although Investment returns are the largest component of income in most years, there was a small loss in 2019/20 (COVID-related) followed by a rapid recovery in the next two years, and that all normal income streams reduced to a relative trickle from 2019/20 to 2021/22.

A simpler but equally volatile picture

applies to expenditure – grants for major church projects are usually substantial sums once every few years; the regular expense streams are low and gradually declining from 2019/20.

One consequence of these trends is that although reasonable and usable patterns can be determined and described for some low-value categories, it requires a series of ten or maybe even twenty years annual values to extract trends for high-value categories (for example, investment performance and grants to the Church).

So how are we recovering from COVID?

The most significant evidence of our

recovery is shown by this year's FOTCH Family Fun Day in May. The summary below shows headline figures for income and expenditure:

	---£---
Day's Takings	£5,297
Stall Expenses	(£653)
Tring Together Advert	(£200)
Surplus on Event	£4,444

The surplus of £4,444 is the highest since (my) records began in 2002!

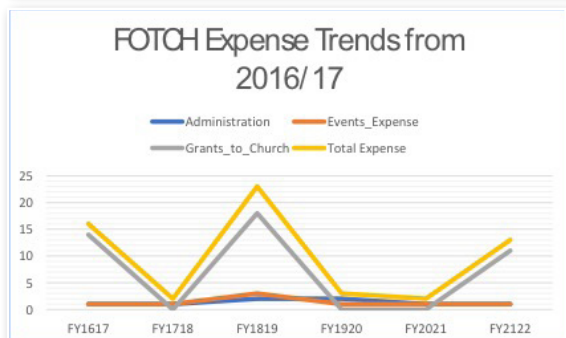
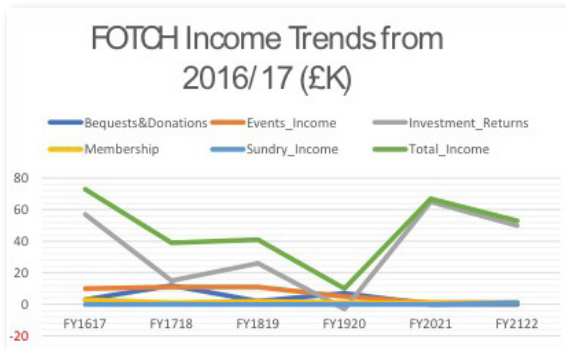
For the first time this year, we used SumUp machines for receiving payments by debit and credit card. FOTCH has three machines and we were able to borrow two or three each from the Church and from Tring Together.

The barbecue was by far the biggest user of these machines.

Creating a Springboard to revitalise FOTCH

The ways by which FOTCH's finances are managed strategically have been developing over recent year. In Olympic terms, we now have a nearly complete diving tower, and are just about to finish the springboard itself! The key stages so far have been:

1. Collect and analyse FOTCH's financial outcomes since its formation in 1991.
2. Formalise annual budgets and budget-monitoring – apart from the obvious benefits, this gives Trustees and Officers increasing understanding of the cost and income behaviours and drivers.



3. Brainstorm, discuss and produce a Risk Register for FOTCH – covering elements such as what might go wrong, how likely would each 'going wrong' be and how much would each 'going wrong' cost in extra cost/lessened income?
4. Reserves are created and maintained for a variety of reasons – covering crystallizing risks, covering cash-flow volatility, reserves for particular projects, reserve for statutory obligations (e.g. redundancy reserve if we had any staff), sustainable charitable objective reserve, strategic development reserve etc.
5. Discuss and agree what financial reserves FOTCH needs, and how large these financial reserves should be.

6. Discuss and agree the investment objectives for each reserve (e.g. a cashflow volatility reserve needs to be immediately accessible and with no capital risk; a long-term strategic development reserve would be very different).
7. Select an authorised Investment Manager to analyse our requirements and recommend funds suitable for each reserve.
8. Discuss, possibly modify and then formally commission the Investment Manager to construct actively-managed funds to meet our requirements.

At the time of this edition of FOTCH Magazine, we have completed steps 1

to 6 and part of step 7. After navigating a lot of bureaucracy, our selected Investment Manager has now completed the due diligence procedures on all of our current portfolio, are refreshing the valuations of each holding and will then be in a position to make specific fund recommendations.

The most exciting and potentially creative opportunity to arise from all this financial management activity is the creation of a strategic development reserve. This allows us to envisage new longer-term ways of meeting FOTCH's charitable objectives – to supplement the long-standing support for major repairs and developments to the Church and grounds.

Malcolm Rogers
Treasurer, FOTCH

The Autumn Lunch – Back with a Bang!

**Sunday October
16th, 12.30pm**

After the frustrating years of interruption with Covid and lockdown restrictions, we are happy to confirm that the traditional half-yearly lunch is back in the calendar for 2022.

The date is October 16th at 12:30pm in the Church Hall. During lockdown we have twice had to postpone the proposed entertainment feature of this particular lunch and we feel very privileged that Stephen Hearn has again agreed to be the host and convenor of 'Antiques Call My Bluff with Stephen Hearn'. Third time lucky!



The poster advertising the details is on the back page. As usual there is no charge for the lunch itself but donations to FOTCH are always welcome. What is essential is that you do book in your places as these are limited and we need to make sure that all the catering arrangements are of the usual high standard.

I am also happy to say that we shall be holding (for the first time live in several years) the half-yearly Hundred Club draw and hopefully the winners can be in the audience to collect their prizes!

If you need any information at all please contact Grahame Senior, Richard Abel or Trish Dowden – see opposite page for contact details.

Grahame Senior
President, FOTCH

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Antique Call My Bluff

Sunday, 16th October 2022,

12.30pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church Hall

Tring Choral Society Concert

Saturday, 17th December 2022,

7.30pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church

Candlemas Choral Evensong

Sunday, 5th February 2023

St Peter & St Paul's Church

A special service with a large choir,
gorgeous music and rousing hymns

For further details, contact

richard.grylls@btinternet.com

Family Fun Day

Saturday, 6th May 2023

St Peter & St Paul's Church

If you have any ideas for things we
could do better or differently, or that you
would like to have a go at, please get in
touch with Richard Abel (Chair) or
Grahame Senior (President).

For more details, visit the website

www.fotch.co.uk

If you have any photos of FOTCH
events as they occur, please send
them to the Editor.



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We would be pleased to hear from you!

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FOTCH newsletter is designed by Kev Holt
Ginger Promo

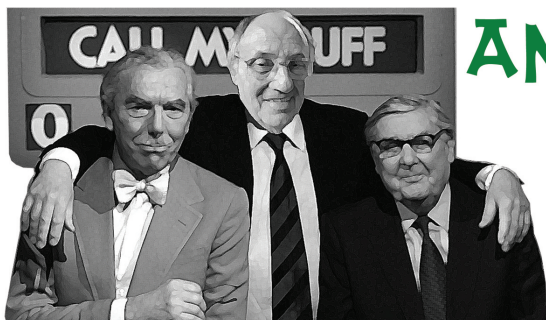
The Friends of Tring Church Heritage
Registered Charity 1005442

The Trustees of the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage
invite you to the Autumn 2022 half-yearly Lunch

12.30PM 16TH OCTOBER 2022
ST PETER AND ST PAUL CHURCH HALL

All members and friends are invited to join us for a social lunch
where the aim is enjoyment and good company.

FOTCH INVITES YOU TO PLAY



**ANTIQUE
CALL MY
BLUFF!**

OVER LUNCH WITH STEPHEN HEARN

Join us for a jolly lunch for all with the usual excellent spread from
Barry and some refreshing and revivifying wines

Bring your best poker face and join our Quiz Master
Stephen Hearn, FOTCH Trustee and renowned Auctioneer.

Please do come along and enjoy the occasion. There is no formal
charge for lunch but donations to FOTCH are appreciated. You will
need to book a place so we can make the catering arrangements work.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Trish at
info@fotch.co.uk, or ringing on 0772 083 6930, or by responding
to the notice in the Newsletter.

