



FRIENDS OF TRING CHURCH HERITAGE

MAGAZINE
SPRING 2023



Spring Concert

St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Tring
Saturday 29th April, 7.30pm 2023

The Ridgeway Chorale

*A concert of short choral pieces,
sacred and secular, including items by
Mendelssohn, Purcell, Tomkins,
modern classics and folk songs.*

Richard Grylls - Musical Director
Colin Stevens - Accompanist
Aidan McKechnie - Piano Soloist

Admission **free** (donations please)



Proceeds to

Interval refreshments



A word from the Editor



The theme for this edition is: **“What does FOTCH mean to you(th)”?**

FOTCH are looking to recruit new members, especially from the younger generation. I asked contributors what FOTCH means to them – and their ideas about what it can offer younger people.

I asked contributors to address the following questions: How can we communicate with the younger generation? What events and activities do you think FOTCH could organise that will interest young people? How can we more effectively reach out to the younger crowd? What advantages can youth provide for FOTCH?

Contributors responded and we see articles in this issue addressing why FOTCH is important and what would happen if FOTCH didn't exist. And identifying the benefits that FOTCH delivers and what's in it for the younger generation.

I am particularly delighted that we have some great articles in this magazine from some of the younger members of our community...

We hear from Lottie Lashley, our new 'Head of Social Media', about her experience growing up with the Church, what her new role entails and how there could be opportunities for other young people to get involved.

Zoey Child gives her entertaining

and philosophical take on why FOTCH gives us a purpose... and without it what would our fate be?

And Peter Child gives his clear views on what young people want in Tring and how it is a good thing that teenagers make use of open spaces in our town (including the Churchyard).

Also, in this edition...

In the centre pages, we have some vintage postcards of Tring Church – many thanks to Stewart Ivory for sourcing these. Stewart Ivory is our new FOTCH trustee, and we also hear from him about how his business (Lost Marble) is helping with important restoration work in the Church.

We have the usual regular contributions from our Honorary President (Grahame Senior) and Chair (Richard Abel) - as well as a report from the Fabric Committee (Andrew Kimsey), a biography of our Treasurer (Malcolm Rogers), and we also hear from our vicar (Huw Bellis).

Many thanks to all our contributors for their articles.

We hope you enjoy the magazine!

Phil Dowden
Editor



Meet our new Head of Social Media

I have attended Tring Church for over half my life. I have always been involved in Tring Church in some capacity and I was a Sunday school teacher at the Church as a teenager until I left the Tring area to attend university to study media. But since university, whenever I have visited my family in the area I have attended Tring Church's lovely Sunday services.

I took the role as Head of Social Media for FOTCH last year (just before the FOTCH Family Fun day 2022). I was asked by the FOTCH team to fulfil this much-needed role as we wanted to shout about everything that FOTCH does for our community online. The team asked me as my day job is within social media and I love the Church building so I am very honoured to use my skills to volunteer for the FOTCH team.

The team is so delightful to work with and in my role I create content from our events and spread the word about FOTCH fundraising events online. FOTCH is such an important part of the community as it preserves our amazing Tring history. Our Church is the centre of the Tring community and although



the old building has a few big cracks and is crumbling down in some places (the reason we need to raise money to help preserve the Church) it is a hub for many amazing events that grow and bond our community.

However, we cannot do this work alone and we need a lot of volunteers. The younger generation is pivotal to FOTCH's success. Volunteering with FOTCH is so great as it means you're helping the Church – but being really honest, social media volunteering is also excellent for a younger person's CV if they want to work in media in the future! Whether that's through filming, creating social media posts or taking photos, any volunteering with FOTCH is a wonderful way to build your CV.

If you are a young person who also loves the Church and wants to know more about helping out with FOTCH's social media, please feel free to reach out and email me (see my contact details at the back of the magazine) and I am sure I can find a way in which you too can help preserve Tring's unique history.

Lottie Lashley
Head of Social Media



What would happen if FOTCH didn't exist?

Why is FOTCH important? A straightforward question, on the face of it – and as such I'm sure you think you have a good idea of where this article is headed. You're a smart person, after all! You've read a hundred little articles about why this charity or that community action group is important to the people that run it, and you think this is going to be more of the same. You are wrong. I am not going to convince you with pretty words and empty platitudes that FOTCH matters to me. No, I am going to convince you with hard facts that without FOTCH the very fabric of civilised society as we know it would break down leaving us cold and alone in a lawless wasteland. Ahem.

I've never seen the 'Sound of Music', so let's start at the end and work backwards: FOTCH provides all of us with a purpose. "Ridiculous!" cry my numerous detractors in unnerving



unison, "All human beings choose for themselves a multitude of purposes!" Possibly. But nobody would argue that FOTCH hasn't given all its members and volunteers a unified cause. A Family Fun Day, a planning lunch... in service of what? Without the community of FOTCH it would all be pointless. My detractors recoil back to the safety of their shadows. They (and, likewise, you) have begun to realise the scope of my insane prophecy.

What is a person without a purpose? What would our planet look like without the guiding hand of FOTCH? Purpose gives us a reason to get up in the morning, a reason to take the world in our hands and shape it to our designs, a reason to live. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that without FOTCH, the human race would inevitably sink back below the rising tide of extinction. No community. No fun days. No FOTCH magazines. Why bother?

The smouldering ashes of our fallen Earth, not a mark recognisable as proof of our futile struggle. No evidence left, that is, besides a single, empty church. Roof still in desperate need of repairs.

Zoey Child



Why does FOTCH exist?

Let's go back to the beginning...

FOTCH was founded in the late 1980s at a time of great need. The Church in Tring was in a very perilous financial position, with outgoings far exceeding its annual income and some considerable challenges in terms of urgent fabric repair.

This was the era of 'The Two Erics' (Eric Bianchi and Eric Hollingsworth) who were the joint wardens of the day and were trying to get to grips with challenges on every front. At that stage, I was called in as treasurer. Over a period of months of discussion, we came up with a strategy which involved a tripartite model of financial support; if you like, a financial tripod with three strong legs.

Leg 1 - Ensure that annual income exceeds annual outgoings (Mr Micawber's rule)

Leg 2 - Create a capital fund of sufficient size to deal with any sudden emergencies (say £50,000)

Leg 3 - Create an external source of support and funding for serious emergencies and pre-emptive improvements

From this concept it became clear that we needed support more widely than the worshipping Church community. Whilst good planning and housekeeping could deal with Leg 1 and the careful



management of certain funding pots from within the church community could deal with Leg 2, there was no obvious resource for Leg 3. The eureka moment was the realisation that whilst the Church community itself was active and inclined to be generous this was obviously much smaller than the community of Tring as a whole. It was also pretty clear that Tring church – the marvellous building at the heart of Tring in its open green space – was valued far more widely than just by those who used the Church for worship.

Some study of this idea led to the realisation that whilst not everybody was a big supporter of the Church of England (in those days viewed with some suspicion as one of the largest and richest landlords in the country) almost everybody questioned was very positive about the value that St Peter and St Paul and its green Churchyard added to life in Tring.

Nobody wanted to see it knocked down and replaced with a supermarket and a car park (this was all before Tring had Tesco on the outskirts – or any supermarket). What would happen if Tring lost its heart?"

Out of this realisation came the concept of Tring's green heart – the Church at the heart of Tring.

Thus, the idea of creating the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage as a charity was born, carefully separate from the church hierarchy and with an independent constitution. The launch concept was "What would happen if your town lost its heart?", and this theme became part of a series of launch events and house-to-

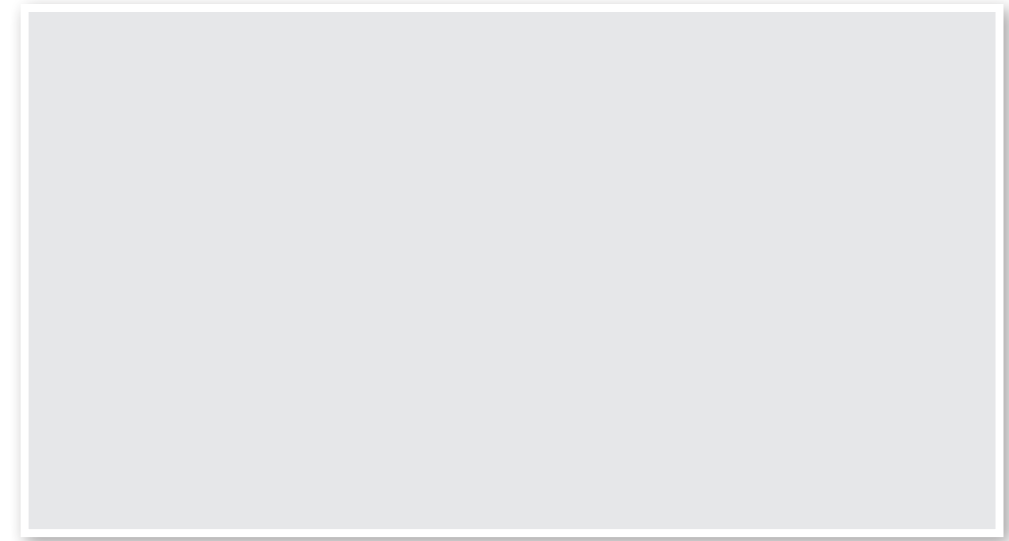
house distributions (this was long before social media and the internet). It was warmly embraced by the community.

During the 1990s, FOTCH became established and operated not only as a supporter of major reconstruction projects but also as the organiser of fundraising events. It was described by the then rector John Payne-Cook as "not only a financial lifeline but the social / entertainment centre for the church". In the first 10 years or so there were regular events ranging from parish-wide parties to concerts and an early form of the Family Fun Day, all of which were designed to raise funds but also raise the profile of 'the Friends' within the town. We were greatly helped by Roland and Colin Stevens, with great musical performances by Tring Choral Society. They helped us with a wide range of events but also sponsored awards for young people which led to a strong engagement with local schools. This

eventually led to FOTCH becoming the sponsoring charity for Tring Learning Centre, that was established in Tring School when that organisation had embraced a strategy of community involvement and use of its assets. That was a joint venture between FOTCH and Tring School and brought us wide engagement with young families.

During the early 2000s, Tring's entertainment and activity programme operated at a very high level and in 2005 and 2008 we put on major pageants in the church which ran for two days and presented the history of Tring, with the involvement of a number of musical organisations as well as all of Tring schools.

Throughout this period, FOTCH regularly arranged dedicated fundraising events (many of them at Tring Park School) and acquired sponsorship from many of our local philanthropists and entrepreneurs.



Investing in the core asset

Perhaps most importantly, FOTCH supported the improvements and updating of the fabric of the Church building with a series of initiatives which helped to keep it in good order but also made it more accessible and useful to the whole community. These included: securing the stained-glass windows from the occasional vandal attack; reconstructing the tower stairs; providing lighting, sound and projection systems; developing a whole series of 'Open Church' leaflets and displays which are greatly valued by visitors; supporting the fundraising for the North Wall project (a considerable reconstruction in our most vulnerable fabric area).

Over this period of time, FOTCH donated over a third of a million pounds and at the same time continued to increase its capital resource for long term security. This met the twin strategic aims of supporting the asset in the current time and building a bulwark for the future.



What is FOTCH for today?

That's the key question and the answer is very simple – FOTCH is really for the future. It is there to be the last bastion of support when all else runs out.

That brings us to the question of what would happen if FOTCH didn't exist. Things have changed over the last 33 years and not necessarily for the better. Perhaps the main thing that has changed

is that the need for an organisation like FOTCH has become not less but ever greater.

When FOTCH started out, the annual parish share or quota (the amount a local parish pays every year to the Diocese) was relatively small and affordable. Most parishes received a net benefit from central church funds.

Now the opposite is the case and the parishes contribute more to the centre than they receive in clergy provision and other benefits. Given the central costs of the Church of England and their continuing deficit situation of cost exceeding income this is unlikely to change anytime soon.

Despite the skill and work carried out at the centre, the fact is that our churches have a decreasing level of support and perceived relevance within the community as a whole. They must do everything that they can to maintain their finances on an even keel and it becomes increasingly difficult to do that from within the core faith community. That inevitably means less money available to fund big repairs or major modifications to enhance wider community use of the church building. Thus, the need for FOTCH is arguably greater today than when we started out.

“Stuff happens”

This much celebrated saying of another of our previous rectors, Frank Mercurio, is of course one of the fundamental truths of all existence. Stuff does happen – usually when you least want it. This firmly underlines the continuing need for FOTCH.



Major fundraisers involving a huge cast creating wide connections

Stuff does happen (and it will keep on happening) and no parish is likely to be able to stand alone on its own resources when really bad stuff happens. The fact that FOTCH is maintained as an independent charity with its own strategy for capital growth – drawing on support from the whole community of the town – remains vital for the wellbeing of the heart of Tring.

Getting out there – being relevant to the new people of Tring

That is really our current challenge and what we need to focus all our energies on. Tring has grown (and is continuing to grow) and most of the new people have never heard of FOTCH – yet they value the unique character of the town and the special heart of Tring. Getting our message across is vital that the heart needs their help to thrive and they can have an exciting and fun time helping that happen.

After 33 years FOTCH is alive and well but if it is to fulfil its purpose, it needs to get more energy and support from a new and younger demographic. I believe that they will respond to the importance of keeping Tring's green heart at the centre of our town in good health.

More and more people are isolated and lonely, and many do not feel they really belong or are valued. FOTCH is there for the whole community to enjoy. Offering events and activities that anyone can join in with and feel they are making a contribution, helps everyone share a good feeling about life in our town.

What is FOTCH for? Making the good stuff happen! Let's do it together!

Grahame Senior
FOTCH Honorary President

The Friends Of Tring Church Heritage proudly present

**OUR
BIGGEST & BEST AUTUMN EVENT**

Beat the Best!



AUCTION & VALUATION EVENING

EXTRAVAGANZA! WITH STEPHEN HEARN

FRIDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2023

7:30pm - 10.30pm, Tring Market Auctions

**Superb Buffet Supper • Tring Brewery Bar
Big Prize Raffle • Charity Prize Auction**

Be there or be square!

All inclusive ticket £20 per person

For further details please contact
Grahame Senior 01442 822770 or Trish Dowden 0772 083 6930



A young person's view of Tring

As a young person living in Tring, my friends and I have spent quite a lot of time in the parks and play areas in the town. This report is based on that experience...



Recommendations

Money should be spent repairing the facilities that are already in the town rather than thinking about what we could add.

Repairing the facilities in the town would help younger people because it would make them want to go to them more and, because of this, would make them want to spend more time outside.

Peter Child

Age-related provision

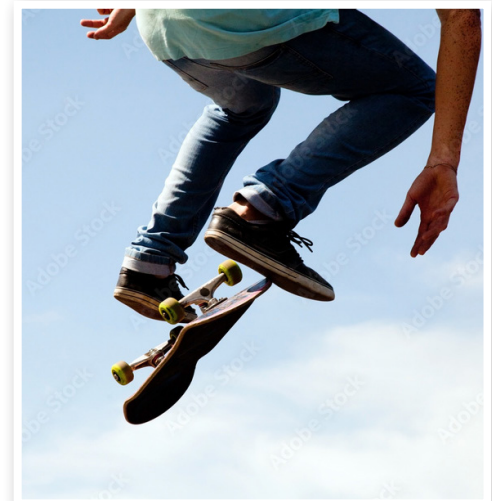
A lot of the parks and play areas have been aimed towards younger people like those in primary school: for example, the two main parks in Tring, Spider Park and the Rec. The only areas designed with teenagers in mind are the basketball court at the top of the Rec and the skate park in Pound Meadow.

What teenagers want

More could be done for teenagers living in the town. For example, more benches around the town for everyone to use or even another marked basketball court at the other end of the town with the skate park and tennis courts.

Facilities in need of repair

As a child, I remember going to Pound Meadow to play tennis with my dad and sister. This was always a great activity for me because it meant I could spend time with my family that I wouldn't normally spend time with. It's sad to now see these are not cared for in the way that they should be; this is the same for basketball court as well. The benches in Pound Meadow, nearest the town, have fallen apart.



Why our Church matters so much and why we need FOTCH

During the last months of 2022 leading up to Christmas, I had the task (and pleasure) to receive many hundreds of people at St Peter & St Paul. I was acting as duty warden – a rather opaque description of a role that encompasses welcoming, safety, caretaking, counting money and locking up. This gave me the opportunity to witness the myriad ways in which our Church building is used by so many groups and individuals far beyond the smaller, regular congregation of worshippers. I was entranced by the Bishop Wood Carol Service, more than 200 young children and a similar number of parents and relations sharing in a retelling of the nativity story. The previous afternoon, the Church was full of joyful singing in a candle-lit family carol service. Earlier, at the end of November, St Peter and St Paul was heaving with young people celebrating Tring Together's Christmas Festival with loud and lively music.

It is clear to me that the Church building plays a crucial role in our town, in at least three ways. Firstly, as home to Christian worshippers, both regular and occasional. Secondly, as a venue for a



wide variety of community events, whether with an overtly religious flavour or a more secular theme. Thirdly, by just being present as a symbol of continuity and stability for many who pass by but rarely if ever have occasion to come inside.

The building that we see – inside and out – is not a medieval fossil. It is the result of centuries of development, each époque amending the structure or layout to meet the needs and desires of those caring for it and using it at the time. What we see at the moment is mostly the result of substantial rejigging in the Victorian era, plus improvement works late in the 20th century (installing kitchen and toilet facilities, both invaluable additions). It is a grander and larger building than the regular worshippers would need, or could afford; its size, location, and heritage make it an asset for the local community as much as for local Christians. That has probably always been the case; we receive no funding from the Church of England or from the government (and nor should we, to my mind).

That is why the role of FOTCH is vital, in presenting to all the people of Tring the case for sustaining the central community asset of the town, and appealing to them for support.

John Whiteman
Tring Team Parish Co-ordinator



Friends who needs friends

Why is Friends of Tring Church Heritage important? Most of us who attend the Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul's appreciate having the Friends.



Events are organised, and more and more their funds are needed to help with the maintenance of the building.

Friends are always needed – of course they are for a 15th century Grade 1 listed building. We see reported that churches such as this are closing due to lack of funds, and more people are needed to be ordained.

Do we want our Parish Church? I know, sadly people who really are not 'bothered' whether there is a church there or not. Many people have not been in a place of worship of any denomination. Yet baptisms, weddings, blessings and funerals are regularly held in St Peter and St. Paul's. So yes, there are many people who do care. Then there are those who want a 15th Century listed building in Tring, even if the religious occasions are not important to them.

Therefore, we need able people to continue spreading the history of the Church in an interesting and fun way to suit all ages. I am not sure I like the idea of a skating rink in the nave, but I understand why some churches have done that kind of event.

There are many who have worked very hard to organise events to raise

funds for FOTCH. An excellent job they have done (and continue to do) but more members are needed, especially younger people to back up and support what has been achieved.

There is an impression that FOTCH is for the 'elite'. Some long-standing Church members will not join. I do not know why. I have not found a barrier to anyone, all are welcome. FOTCH does need to move forward.

The advertising has to reach all ages. That is very hard. Are we on Facebook? Do we use local radio to tell Tring we are here? I am not conversant with very much of 'social media' opportunities but it is the way to reach younger people. I do not only mean 'youth', but also 30s, 40s, 50s and even 60-year-olds would be nice.

There is nothing wrong with FOTCH, it has been a huge success and expertly run. But maybe it is a little 'cosy'. I like cosy, but we need to move forward - to go upward and outward to reach those who do not know we exist.

Today the in-word is 'review'. Are you an advertising or marketing person, or know someone who is and could give time to this project? This is possibly someone who thinks FOTCH is elite. A review is then followed by a 'summit', where thoughts and ideas are discussed – by old, not so old and young residents of Tring. Does the Local History Society, in their museum, and the Tourist Office have booklets advertising the Church and FOTCH?

Pam Russell
FOTCH member

How little I know

During the summer, towards the end of a long evening we were sitting in the rectory garden by a firepit drinking a Tring beer or two when one of our friends started telling us about finding numerous Roman coins. It sounded like the typical 'bloke in pub said' conversation. Nigel, however, is one of those country folks with a wide range of knowledge and interests. He has far more knowledge about animal husbandry than I will ever have, which is why he helps out with our sheep, and he knows more about local history than I am ever likely to as well. Growing up in Cow Roast, Nigel had a metal detector and would find simple Roman coins in his back garden. What I didn't know was that Cow Roast was the site of a huge Roman settlement. Some of you might remember the archaeological digs in Cow Roast or know that the whole area is a designated ancient monument. It was news to me. Apparently, it was a huge iron working settlement, using local wood for fuel, and the site contains many wells. I suspect the only unsurprising thing was how little I knew.

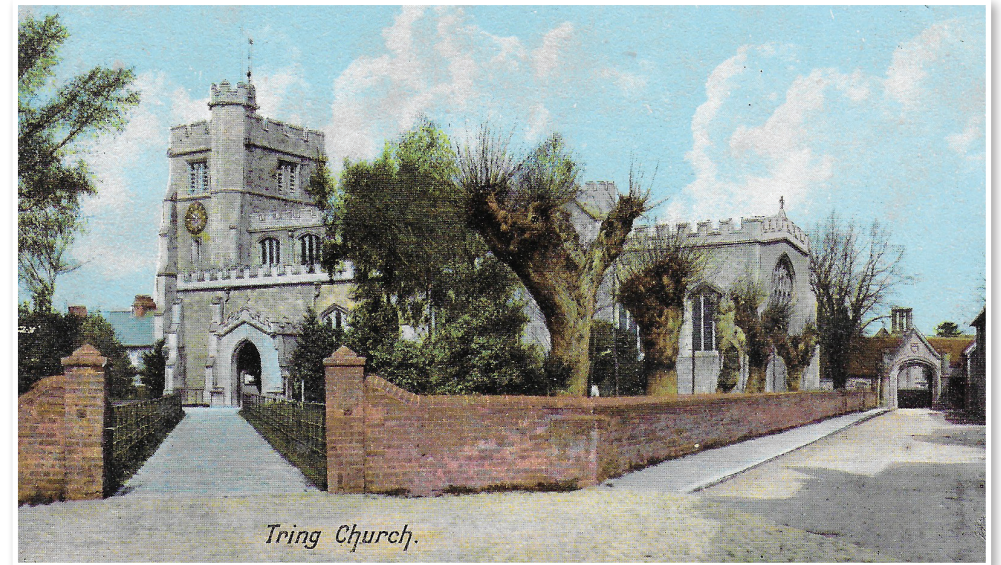
I look at Tring Church and am constantly amazed at how little I know of the history of Christianity in this place. Ancient myth tells us that Alban was the first Christian martyr in Britain and that priests such as Amphibalus were spreading Christianity just down the road from us in the Roman period. With



our Roman roads running through Tring, were there early missionaries trying to tell Jesus' story to Celtic tribes and Roman settlers? If not when did Christianity first find its foothold in the area? To the best of my knowledge, we have no idea at all and the best we can do is to extrapolate from the little knowledge we have elsewhere in the country.

The Doomsday book records that there was a stone church in Tring by 1089. Again, I don't know but I presume this was a Saxon church rather than an early Norman Church. And I don't know about you, but my GCSE history (and theology degree) were rather silent on the role of the parish church in the civic and spiritual life of the community in late Saxon Britain. How was Jesus' story told in Tring before the Norman conquest? Tring School GCSE history has a module on the Normans and it touches on church administration and the formation of the Diocesan system. There was obviously a great church building programme as well. Once more though, beyond the great sweep of history, it seems as though we know little about those who were inspired to build the current building of which we are the custodians. The first incumbent is recorded in 1214. I suspect dedicated historians could go back and research each of them, but I suspect there will be very little about their parishioners. We have inherited the clunch blocks and lime mortar but we don't know what impact Jesus' story had on the everyday lives of those who lived and worked in Tring as the building was put up.

As we move through history, our



Tring Church.

records become more detailed. We have stories of vicars with grand ambitions who painted the pillars to look like Italian marble. We have a footnote in the story of Ruth Osborne (the woman, not the witch) who sought sanctuary in Tring Church, and come the Victorian times we have really quite detailed history, if we can only be bothered to read it.

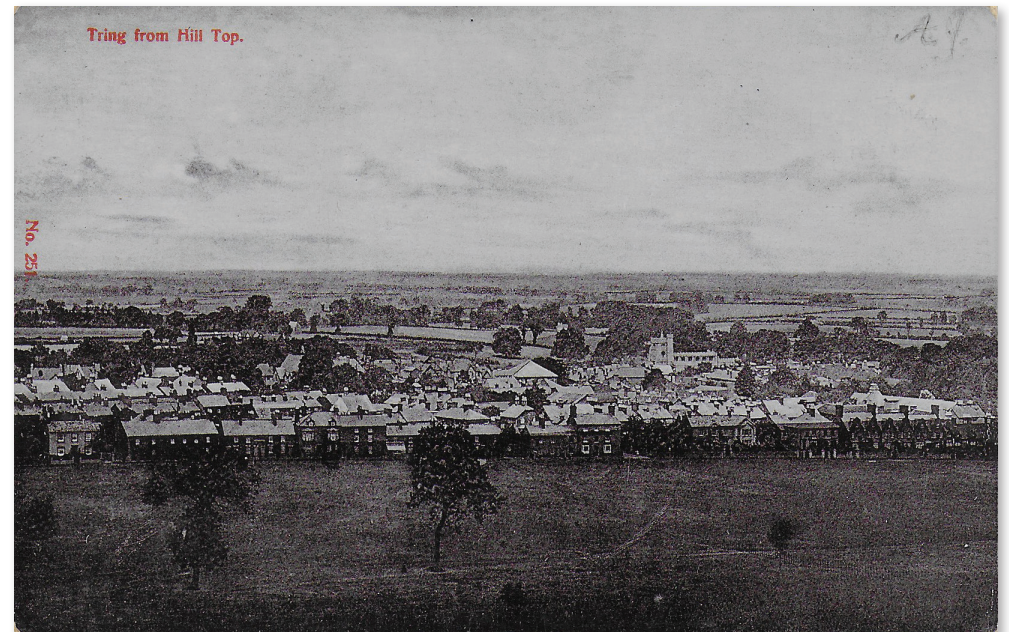
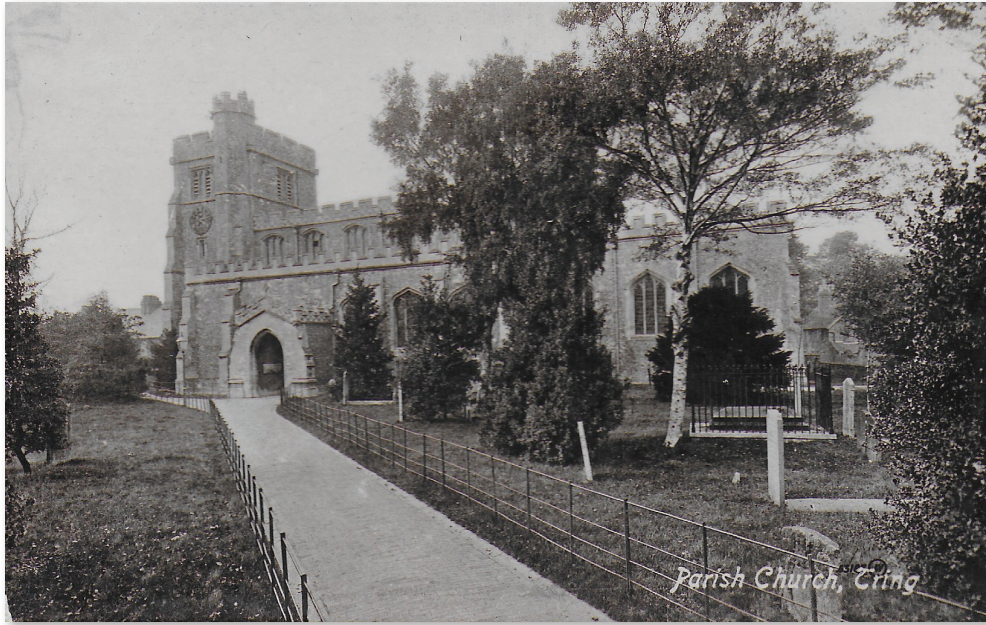
What is abundantly clear is that the site on which our church stands has witnessed so much. Our past always matters as we look to the future. It is why I hold two contradictory positions. Firstly, I secretly hope that as we begin the drainage works, which FOTCH are so kindly funding, that we find some interesting archaeology which helps shed light on our past. It is only a secret wish as it would mean big expenses and huge time delays but... it would be amazing! Secondly, I do not think we have to preserve everything just because it is old. The Diocese currently say that our

decrepit organ cannot be removed from the church. I disagree, we know all that there is to be known about it. It is big but it isn't historically significant. It tells us little about the spiritual life and history of our town, and it represents but the tiniest fraction of those things anyway.

We must celebrate our history and heritage. We must take seriously how Jesus' story has been told in this place for so many generations, and how that impacted (or let's be honest had little impact) on the lives of the people who lived here. And we must allow this clunch and lime mortar to be the shell which tells the story of the people of Tring into the future as well, and not be frozen in its passing Victorian age.

Huw Bellis
Rector, Tring Church

Images of Tring Church from the past



Why lime is so important

Heritage properties are all around us - especially living in Tring. Approximately a quarter of all UK housing stock was built before 1919. That means there's about 5 million 'traditionally built' houses in England, so the chances are you will live in one, are next door to one or walk past one every day without even noticing.

A 'traditionally built' building is defined as being of solid wall construction (no cavity) from a range of materials including stone, earth, brick, wood and lime. Generally, this means that they will have been built before 1919. Walter Rothschild did experiment with a 1-inch cavity in some of his workers' cottages around Tring, but this was to aid breathability of the walls rather than to provide a space for insulation or to keep the weather out.

The use of lime mortar plays a vital role in the process of keeping a building dry. It is produced by burning limestone (CaCO₃) in lime kilns at about 900 deg C to produce Calcium Oxide (CaO), or quicklime. Its use goes back many thousands of years - predating the Romans and even the Ancient Egyptians. Lime was traditionally used for mortar, render, paint and plaster, and enabled the walls to breathe as it is vapour permeable. It cures by absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere in a process known as carbonation, whereupon it turns back into limestone (CaCO₃).



Traditionally built buildings were designed to behave in a totally different way to current 'modern construction'. Whereas modern houses are designed to keep the elements out - in effect creating hermetically sealed boxes (but don't forget those pointless 'trickle vents') - traditional dwellings were built to allow moisture to flow through the very fabric of the building keeping it dry, even when built near a river or canal.

Traditional buildings built in or near water such as mills, bridges and docks are usually bone dry. Even though water rises up the walls through capillary action, by the time it has reached 12-18 inches above water level it will have evaporated through the lime mortar joints and the building will be dry. It is the use of modern materials like cement that create a damp environment in these situations.

There are many benefits of lime mortar in traditional buildings irrespective of historical period or indeed the social status of the building itself. Hampton Court Palace was constructed in similar materials to any modest estate workers' cottage and therefore they should both be maintained in the same way - both need to breathe!

Lost in time

Historically, the events of WW1 decimated the male population, and the valuable skills and experience using traditional materials handed down from generation to generation was lost.

Rebuilding bomb-damaged towns and cities, and housing an expanding population, meant housing needed to be built quickly. Ordinary Portland Cement

(OPC) became the 'go to' material for post-war building and working with lime became obsolete - its magical properties, benefits and characteristics fading into history. Cement is hard, impermeable, quick setting, easy to use and cheap, which inadvertently created a one-size-fits-all maxim - cement ruled!

But here's the thing - many, if not most, traditionally built properties have now been subjected to inappropriate and damaging repairs using OPC, from the 1920s onwards. No one, it seems, gave the original materials a second thought - modern was best and that meant using cement for everything. Even in ancient Grade 1 listed churches and castles, cement has been used to the detriment of the original materials, causing all sorts of damp, decay and deterioration.

What the blanket-use of cement did was to negate all the manifold benefits of lime, thus creating problems that did not exist before; typically, these problems include damp walls, rotting timbers, rapidly decaying stone, collapsing cob walls (in Devon and Cornwall) and disintegrating bricks. In a timber framed dwelling, cement against an ancient timber beam or post will cause more rot in 40 years than in the previous 400 years, and may lead to it being replaced, or collapse.... now tell me cement is cheap!

Perhaps the most commonplace and most noticeable use of cement is in the re-pointing of brickwork, where the joints between bricks are filled with hard cement on top of the original soft lime. Traditionally, the lime mortar allowed evaporation, but now the hard cement acts like a bung, forcing the moisture

into any crevices around the brickwork or back into the internal surfaces of the house. In cold weather this will change to ice crystals, blowing off the face of the brickwork as it expands and tries to escape. Cement render will fair no better - being brittle, cement will crack allowing water ingress but not allowing it to evaporate out again. Modern plastic paint causes much the same problems. The good news is these issues can be remedied, with care, but only if the original materials are reinstated.

Interestingly, Tring has only a handful of Victorian houses that have not been damaged by modern materials - repointed in cement, cement rendered or been painted with impervious plastic paint. As a result, many have damp issues as the houses can't breathe. Thankfully, owners are slowly becoming aware of the importance of the original materials and taking the responsibility to correct past errors. Lost Marble Conservation is very active in this remedial process and has recently transformed a very damp cottage opposite the Kings Arms pub in Tring. By removing the many layers of plastic masonry paint, removing the cement pointing and repointing with lime this once damp house is now bone dry!

Why use lime?

- Lime is breathable - it is porous and vapour permeable and 'wicks' moisture away from buildings more efficiently than simple exposure to air.
- Lime mortar is traditionally softer than the bricks it adheres to, so that moisture evaporates through the

sacrificial bed of mortar rather than saturating the bricks or stone.

- Lime is flexible and will accommodate some movement and settling of a building
- Lime wash is antibacterial and breathable and was used in cellars, wash-houses and dairies as well as to protect the exterior of buildings
- Timber frames were often lime washed to protect and preserve, whilst allowing the oak to breathe

Traditional buildings do not need 'damp proofing' as this will prevent them breathing as they were intended to do and causes more harm than good. Injected so-called 'damp proofing' fills soft bricks with silicone, which suffocates it and simply pushes the damp into another area.

Lost Marble Building Conservation

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

What benefits does FOTCH bring?



It's great to see new homes being built in and around Tring and the rejuvenation of our living, breathing town with new people. My wife and I recently bumped into a former work colleague of mine in the High Street who, with her husband, was thinking about moving from London to Tring (or nearby) to be closer to family. It was great to catch up after several years in any case. Of course, we were quickly enthusing about the merits of Tring as a place to live for all sorts of reasons.

One of those reasons is the thriving High Street which seems to be going from strength to strength. And along with fine Rothschild-era buildings like the Market House, principal among the amenities is, of course, the fantastic Grade 1 listed parish Church building and the attractive green space around it.

Whether old, young or middle-aged in Tring, you probably can't fail to be aware of this fantastic asset. You may not be aware of what it takes to keep it going in good shape and not just not falling down but improved in usability, for the town community now and in the future. It is a living historic asset for us now and for future generations in Tring.

If you have an interest in getting involved as a friend of this great community asset, we'd love to hear from

you. There are plenty of ways to help – with ideas, events, administration, media. Whatever you feel able to contribute and to whatever capacity you have. New energy and ideas are what we need to continue to achieve FOTCH's mission.

We are delighted to recently welcome a new Trustee, Stewart Ivory, who we hear from elsewhere in this magazine. A massive thank you to Helen Dunford who has made a huge contribution to FOTCH events and other activity over the years and has stood down as she continues working abroad. You will also find details of how to join FOTCH as a member. A big thank you to all our other office holders, volunteers and members and to our corporate supporters – The Akeman, Nash Partnerships and Tring School for the Performing Arts.

Richard Abel
Chair of Trustees

WHAT DOES FOTCH MEAN TO YOU(TH)?



NEW YEAR • NEW FOTCH

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



A brief history of Malcolm

(and how and why I became the Treasurer of FOTCH)



Pre-history:

My Mum's side of the family

My maternal grandmother Emily Saxton (nee Jenkins) was born in 1885 in Kent. In 1908/09 she attended and qualified from the Salvation Army (SA) Officers' Training Course, and continued close connections with the SA until eventually passing away in 1976 at the ripe old age of 91. During WWI, she ran the Salvation Army Hut at Frimley Army Camp, where she met and married Sergeant John Saxton, and the Hut at that camp is the address shown on her Marriage Certificate. They had three children – Nelson, Victor and my mother, Myrtle. Emily received a medal from the SA **General at the end of ??**

Between the wars, John and Emily ran SA hostels in Westminster and Canning Town. She spent WWII in Dover (not very safe or comfortable) and then came to live with us in Banbury in the early 1950s. There is a gap in our knowledge about John for 19 years, but he reappeared in 1954, and passed away shortly afterwards – I never met him.

Grandma Saxton continued in the SA in Banbury for around 20 years, visiting SA corps around the country, providing



John & Emily Saxton with Nelson (1918)

SA support for hop-pickers in Kent and spending her last two years fairly active and alert in care homes near Banbury. I recently contacted the Banbury Corps, and was amazed to be told there were still SA members who remembered her from 1976.

My mother Myrtle was born in 1922 in Halifax, attended Folkestone Commercial College and in about 1940 was evacuated to Bodicote, near Banbury. She was billeted in the Manor House, and from her bedroom could see the house where my father-to-be lived, of whom more later. An Irish family moved to Bodicote during WWII, and formed strong connections with our family by means of dual weddings. The family was strongly Catholic and one of my cousins has for many years served as a very active catholic nun in South Africa.

With Dad's able assistance, Mum followed her parents' practice of producing three children once the war had finished, of whom I was the youngest (and cutest, I am assured). When I started school, Mum became a trainee teacher and then started to drive 40 miles to Birmingham (before any

Motorways) in an elderly Austin one day a week to gain her qualifications. She progressed to become Senior Mistress (equivalent to Deputy Head) at a large rural comprehensive near Banbury. Mum passed away in 1992.

My Dad's side of the family

My paternal grandfather Cecil Rogers was born in 1882 and his father was Estate Bailiff at another local mill. He qualified as an engineering draughtsman for the Great Central Railway and this job took him to live in Sheffield. Shortly after WWI, he applied to become a Methodist minister but failed the medical exam. So, he applied (successfully) to become a Methodist lay preacher. Sadly, the Methodist doctor was prescient because Grandad Cecil passed away in 1924 when my Dad was 4 – he died of an illness that was known to run in families, so his four sisters all swore never to marry so they would have no



Cecil Rogers c1920

descendants to suffer the same fate Cecil's widow (Rose Temperance Rogers 1883-1978) was left to bring up five children between about 1 and 14. She also was a teacher (in Banbury) and fully honoured her middle name. Rose came from another large Methodist



Rose Rogers (on left) with three sisters c1970

family (the Cherrys), many of whom lived in the Bloxham area (near Banbury). In particular several of my aunts lived in a mill cottage located in the middle of a field about a mile from Bodicote – I used to go with my Dad to the Mill so he could tend their garden and other farm jobs, whilst I conducted comprehensive tasting tests on the plum trees!

Dad's (and my elder brother's) whole working life concerned agriculture – firstly on the family farm, then as foreman of an agricultural mill near Bodicote. He also looked after the gardens at our house, his mother's house and the Mill, and cut all the firewood for the family's five fires by handsaw and axe. Dad passed away in 1991.

My family and I: The Daily Crust

After attending Banbury Grammar School, in 1966 I enrolled on a B.Sc. course in Computer Science at what is now Staffordshire University. In the UK this subject started at degree level in 1965 (initially at just five colleges), so I was not quite a pioneer but a very early adopter.

My first job was at Unilever head office (Blackfriars) – Unilever then had one computer which was operated from punched cards and produced only printed reports. Later on, I helped a bit on decimalisation, then their first online system, then designing and implementing and supporting Pensions and Accounting Systems for head office and Birds Eye and other subsidiaries. Romance blossomed in the unlikely surroundings of the pensions department, where I met my wife-to-be, Rita.

After Unilever, I worked for Grand Metropolitan, spending most of my time in breweries, distilleries and cake factories in the UK, Europe and East Asia, doing anything you can envisage with finance software. A tough job, but someone's got to do it!

Both the Salvation Army and the Methodists were / are strongly temperance. I have long enjoyed the products of Diageo and its competitors, so it has to be said that my grandparents' combined temperance genes really didn't survive at all well!

My final employer was the defence division of EDS, an American IT services company (later owned by Hewlett Packard). This job was because of a government decision to apply normal commercial methods to their accounting, not because of my (derisory) military knowledge and experience. I led the design team for commercial accounting of army stocks of everything. Later, I became the defence expert on programme benefits and heavy-duty financial modelling.

Life after Retirement

After college, I joined and lived at the YMCA in Enfield and Hornsey, becoming active in supporting the hostel management and in national conferences. I still see friends I met at the YMCA 55 years ago. Also, I attended various parish churches and considered confirmation into the church.

I retired in 2009 and considered how to spend what seemed to be limitless free time. I wished to contribute in some way to 'society' as a recognition of being blessed with 41 years of full, varied (and occasionally terrifying) employment, good health, a good pension and an amazing wife and family. Such thoughts are common on retirement; I wasn't ever a member of the various churches with which I had been connected (including the Baptists and Catholics), but they all support 'giving back' so maybe I was influenced by some form of ecumenical osmosis.

Having spent nearly 40 years in the world of finance that seemed a sensible way to contribute. I became a serial treasurer of five local charities (most recently FOTCH) and so have presented the annual accounts at nearly 40 AGMs.

Rather unexpectedly, I was asked to audit the accounts of a local Baptist church and then a second one (now all three). By 2014 I was independently examining four charities. As I'm not legally qualified to audit I felt I ought to gain some professional credence so joined ACIE, the professional body for charity examiners. I now have nine regular clients, a few free, most at 'mates' rates'. I've also been a school governor /

chairman, and warden of Tring Park.

By 2019, I was treasurer of just one charity so I sought to volunteer for a new one. FOTCH appealed to me partly because it was very local (I can see the Church from my garden), but more importantly it is clearly a busy Church with lots of things going on, in a wonderful position in the centre of Tring and in many ways a hub for the whole community.

I believe successful communities sustain in large part because there is a successful and highly-regarded central focal point – this could be a pub or local shop or post office, but in Tring it is the Church, which does so much more than its mission and ministry. The Church and FOTCH together have worked for nearly 30 years to sustain the building, both for necessary repairs (of which some are underway at present) but also for ways of making the Church more accessible and more appealing for everybody – lighting,

sound system, toilets, refreshment area and many more.

Let's do all we can to make the Church even more appealing than it already is to anybody for any purpose that the Church considers consistent with its ethos and objectives.

Malcolm Rogers
FOTCH Treasurer and Charity Examiner





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 Nat West) 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.

Fabric Committee update

The Fabric Committee met on 17th January, 2023 to review progress on various actions and activities relating to maintaining the fabric of the Church.



Getting water out and away from the building seems to be the main concern at the moment. You could say it's a draining issue!

There is a leak in the roof that remains a persistent problem, causing rainwater ingress and leaks over the Lady Chapel and Nave during periods of very heavy rain. The aluminium roof installed in the 1960s is perhaps getting towards the end of its serviceable life. However, to identify the cause the plan is to investigate further and identify the necessary remedial actions to stop water getting into the building.

Drainage work that has been supported by FOTCH is now progressing to the next stage. We received recommendations from the surveyor and obtained several quotes to progress the work in the

next few months. Since the work will be reasonably disruptive and involve temporary closure of paths, the work is being arranged so that it avoids the FOTCH Family Fun Day and several weddings that will be taking place over the next few months.

Maintaining trees and vegetation outside the Church has also been an area of focus. Pollarding of several lime trees and holly bushes will be undertaken in late February as well as removing some dead wood and hanging limbs which pose a safety risk. Several photos



Planned maintenance of trees and vegetation

are attached that illustrate the work to be undertaken.

Improvements to provide lighting in the bell tower have now been planned and will be undertaken at the end of February. Further electrical sockets will also be installed at the same time near the Lady Chapel to improve the facilities in the Church.

Improving the sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of using the building is being considered. Following on from achieving an Ecochurch Bronze rating last year, we are now investigating the potential for installing solar panels to help provide power to the building. As an initial

estimate approximately £9,000 would be needed for photovoltaic panels, however we are researching further to look into battery storage and energy usage.

Andrew Kimsey
Fabric Committee Chair



Proposed reduction line T2



Removing dead wood and hanging limbs'



Pollarding of lime trees and holly bushes'

Plans for the Coronation

I think the Coronation will become a very special memory for many people. Witness the number of people who clearly remember the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and can conjure up stories of the day; travelling up to London to stand in the rain, being given a medal at school, getting their first TV to watch the proceeding. I'm sure every family have their own legends of the day. The same will happen on Saturday, May 6th 2023. Many people will play it cool and not make plans, but come the start of May there won't be a Union Flag tablecloth to be had in Tring, and bunting will be changing hands on the black market!

Do you have plans?

- More details will follow, but the bare bones are as follows:
- The Coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort will take place at Westminster Abbey on the morning of Saturday, 6th May 2023. The Service will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
 - Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion. On Sunday, 7th May 2023, a special Coronation



Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle. The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country on the same date.

- On Monday, 8th May 2023 members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. See <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-weekend-plans-announced> for more details.



Does Tring have plans?

It is early days, but please put Monday afternoon in your diary for a Church/Churchyard extravaganza. Starting with a Church service at 2pm followed by live music, Tring Brewery bar, hot food, gallons of tea and cake, a royal fancy dress competition, a royal quiz and maypole dancing. The festivities will finish around 6pm with a mass rendition of the national anthem. Jane Banister will lead the event from the Church and, together with Tring Together, we aim for an afternoon that's for everyone, free to attend and where everyone is made to feel welcome. Let's demonstrate Tring's great community spirit, inclusivity and diversity!

Will you come and help?

Email vivianne@tringtogether.org.uk to offer.

*Vivianne Child
Tring Together*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Coronation Celebration Spring Lunch

Monday 8th March 2023

2.00pm to 6.00pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church and Churchyard

FOTCH Spring Lunch

Sunday 12th March 2023

Parish Hall

2023 FOTCH Family Fun Day

Saturday 20th May 2023

11.00am to 3.00pm

St Peter & St Paul's Church and Churchyard

Autumn Event (TBC)

Friday 29th September 2023

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.



FOTCH CONTACTS

We would be pleased to hear from you!

Trustees

Richard Abel, Chair
richard.hayley@btinternet.com

Helen Dunford
helen@dunford.uk.com

Stephen Hearn
sjhearn31@gmail.com

Paul Elley
paul.elley@tring.gov.uk

Tony MacKinder
tony.mackinder@virginmedia.com

Secretary

Trish Dowden
info@fotch.co.uk
0772 083 6930

Treasurer

Malcolm Rogers
malcrogers@aol.com

Membership Secretary

Helena Cook
info@fotch.co.uk

Head of Social Media

Lottie Lashley
lottie.a.lashley@gmail.com

Editor

Phil Dowden
p4edit@btinternet.com

Honorary President

Grahame Senior
gseior@seniorpartners.co.uk

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Ginger Promo

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BACK AND BIGGER THAN EVER!

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The 2023 Family Fun Day

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For further information telephone Grahame Senior on 01442 822770
or Trish Dowden on 07720 836930

