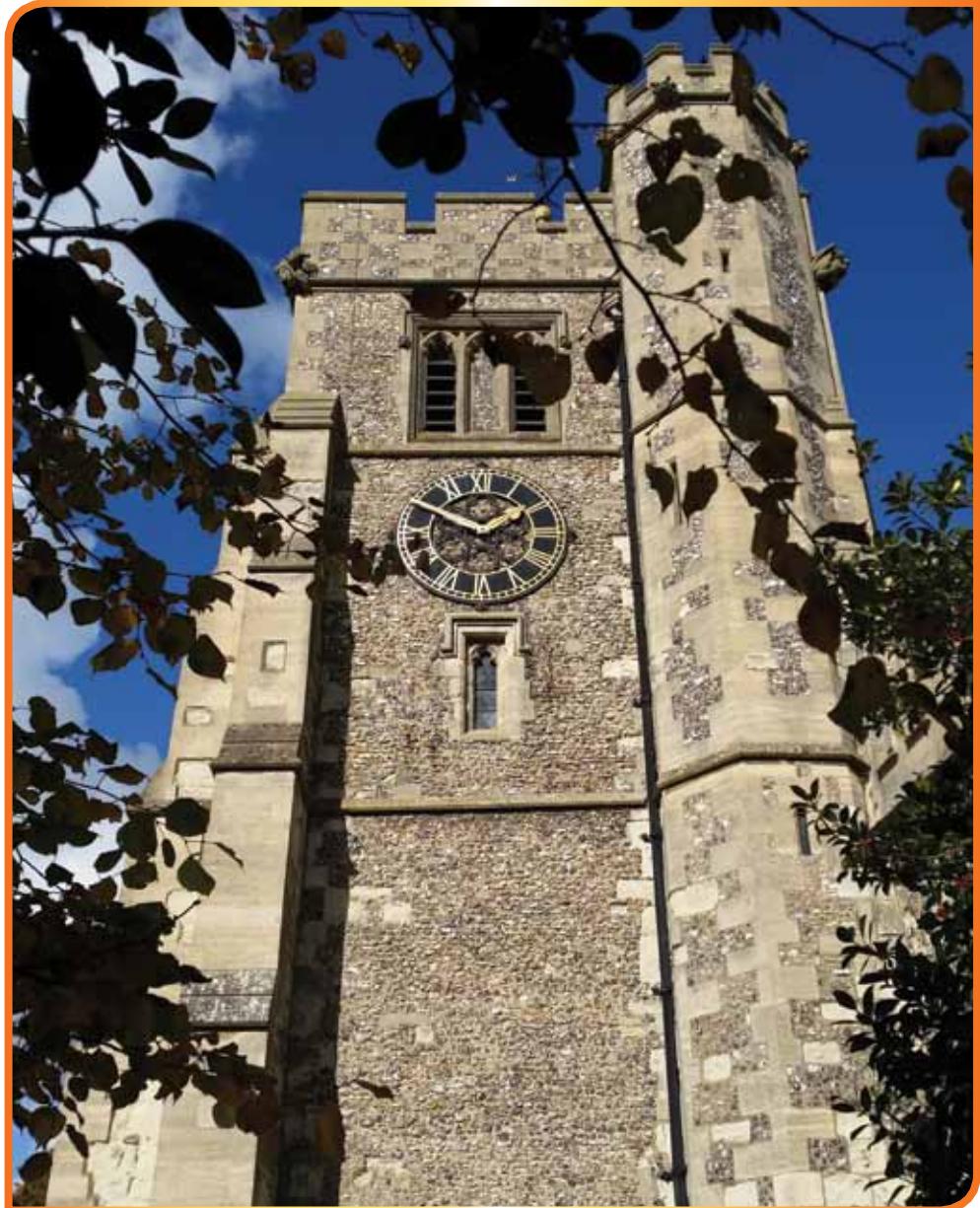




# FRIENDS OF TRING CHURCH HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER  
AUTUMN 2019



# Change is good for us!

I am a creature of habit and don't really like change. I love the predictability of the seasons (well, in the UK I guess that's the predictable unpredictability!) and I like a routine. In my work over the last thirty-plus years, there has been a pattern, a rhythm that I am comfortable with. This time of the year always brings for me the Frankfurt Bookfair, and although there are always subtle differences to the method of travel or where I stay or the exact location of the stand in the huge Messe, once I am there setting up the exhibition or meeting clients I see only once or twice a year, each event joins the past and present and feels like My Life.



Being part of FOTCH is rather like that too: setting up the Plant Stall for the Family Fun Day has a familiar ring as the team of 'Gardening Ladies' (now friends who also meet regularly for lunch) set about the familiar tasks we have been doing for years. This year one of those ladies, Alison Bickerton, decided to leave us for a different role in the Family Fun Day but we welcomed Sookey Lum in her place. This changed the dynamic and energized us – and we got to know Sooky better as lunch next time meant we had both Alison AND Sooky. Change WAS good for us.

Church is a familiar and comforting routine too, a pattern that stays the same and yet is constantly refreshed

by new faces and ways of doing things. Whatever changes there are, God remains the same.

This year has brought a lot of change in my life. As some of you will already know, Jon and I were approved as Foster Carers in March, a step which many have thought only showed we were even more crazy than they had realized. The last few months have brought a new-born baby into our family for a period of time growing ever more elastic as weeks become months with no fixed end-date. This is a significant change in our lives but we are loving it (and, in particular, the tiny addition to our family).

It is partly for this reason that I am standing down from FOTCH as a Trustee, as the practicalities make the role rather more challenging. I will also be handing on the baton to someone else to produce the newsletter for future editions. But this creates new opportunities for others to come forward to bring their gifts into play – change will be good for FOTCH. A new Trustee has already joined the team and I am sure he will bring new energy and change the dynamic and we will all benefit from it. Welcome Paul.

Thank you for having me for the last eight and bit years – I am sure there will be other things for me to do in FOTCH in the future.

*The Editor*

*With thanks to Mike Bass for many of the Family Fun Day photos in the magazine*

## Welcome

Since the last edition of the FOTCH newsletter, as you will read, we've had an exciting and productive time with a successful Family Fun Day and other activities.



On the governance front, we have had some changes to the Trustees. We welcome Paul Elley as the new Tring Town Council Representative. Annette Reynolds, after more than eight years as a Trustee, has been given some time off for good behaviour and is standing down slightly ahead of her nine-year limit as a Trustee to give her some more time for other responsibilities. We are immensely grateful for all Annette has done as a Trustee as well as an



John Bly



Helen Dunford

activist. I'm very pleased to say she will still be an active participant, even if no longer a Trustee. I'm also delighted that Stephen Hearn has agreed to continue to serve as a Trustee (in a personal capacity rather than as the Council Representative) in Annette's place.

We are also really pleased to welcome Malcolm Rogers as Treasurer. I handed over the responsibilities to Malcolm following the AGM, and FOTCH is going to benefit greatly from Malcolm's immense experience in charity finances as well as his wider skills. We are lucky to have Malcolm and we welcome him warmly. He has written in this edition of the newsletter so you can read on and find out more!

*Richard Abel,  
FOTCH Chair of Trustee*



Paul Elley



Stephen Hearn

## Fresh-air keep-fit opportunity!

We are always looking for additional volunteers to distribute by hand locally some FOTCH newsletters: a perfect opportunity six-monthly for a pleasant

walk with a purpose in our charming town. We promise to keep the numbers of newsletters manageable so it's not a big individual burden.

If you would be willing to help, please email or call Helena Cook or Richard Abel (see contact details on page 31).

# Service: good for you and good for the community!

One of the great things about FOTCH and its various events and activities is that it presents lots of opportunities for people to join in, get involved and make new friends doing so. In her observation in her article in the last edition of the newsletter, Helen Dunford testified to how valuable she has personally found that aspect of FOTCH.



Mother and Daughter Helen and Hannah Dunford won the FOTCH Heritage Award for all they have done to get people – particularly the younger generation – involved

In last year's friendship service Eliza Bellis also confirmed how fulfilling she found the relationships with the community that came through FOTCH activities; activities that cross all age and generation boundaries and are inclusive



Eyes down for bargain-hunters!

for all members of the community.

Serving people and service to the community are both very much part of the essence of church-related and FOTCH activities in so many ways.

In a world where alienation and isolation are almost unavoidable products of the social media revolution, real human contact becomes ever more important and valuable. The activities that FOTCH organises promote real community engagement for everyone who wants to be a part of the action.

Over the past thirty years, I have had so many comments from people who have dipped a tentative toe in the water and ended up diving straight in with great glee. It's good to get involved and wonderful to find out you are needed.



Getting ready for the crowds!



The Plant Stall is always a real centre of interest at the Family Fun Day



Sweet Service with a smile on the tombola



You can't beat home-made and home-baked!

# Who am I?

Hi, my name is Malcolm Rogers, and I was elected Treasurer of FOTCH at this year's AGM in May. I am also a Baby-Boomer (born when Clement Attlee was Prime Minister, of which a little more later.) Born and brought up in Oxfordshire, after I left school I was amongst the first in the UK to embark on a degree in Computer Science. The computer (note singular pronoun carefully) at my college was called DEUCE: it was made in 1954, and operated on hundreds of valves, dozens of tubes of mercury and quite a lot of faith.

After graduating, I first worked for Unilever as a computer programmer, and gradually specialised in pensions, then finance.

My Dad came from a Methodist family, and my Mum from a Salvation Army family, both of which strongly supported the Temperance movement. It therefore seemed obvious that my next job was with Diageo, the largest alcoholic drinks company in the world.

Here I successfully sat on the fence between the IT and finance worlds, making multiple business visits to breweries, distilleries, off-licenses and a few trips to the Far East (a tough job, but someone's got to do it!). Finally, I moved to Hewlett Packard in the UK Defence Division, leading and working on project design, planning, forecasting, risk, operational and financial benefits, etc.; essentially my role was that of a military economist.



## So why Tring?

It was in the highly romantic surroundings of Unilever Pensions Department that I met my wife-to-be. Rita managed the pensions payroll, and I supported all of Pensions' computer systems. With a bit of unsubtle match-making from Rita's work colleagues, we got married over forty years ago. Tring was roughly midway between Rita's family and mine, was very commutable and had affordable housing (those were the days!), so we have lived in Tring (with a few years in Sussex) since the late 1970s. We have three grown-up sons, all of whom attended Tring schools, and who now live in Tring, Hampshire and Cambridge.

## Why FOTCH?

I first became involved in voluntary roles in the early 1990s, as finance Governor and then Chair of Goldfield School Governors, and a series of roles in Tring Scouts and then West Herts Scouts (mostly as Treasurer – none of the cold, wet, falling-off-mountains opportunities).

After I retired from full-time work, I sought a few extra voluntary treasurer roles in local charities (Community Learning, Volunteering and a self-help group for adults deafened in later life). I am also now a qualified independent examiner of Charity Accounts, mostly local churches.

These roles are fascinating, enjoyable, worthwhile, teach me new things and also provide several valuable personal benefits such as keeping me active and socially engaged, exercising my brain, and saving me from the worst excesses of daytime TV. More seriously

(and returning to Clement Attlee), many of those born in the immediate post-war years have gained hugely from secure employment, excellent pensions, affordable housing and a range of other benefits which are not available to new generations. I believe that where possible we baby-boomers should seek to contribute to society with our time, skills, resources and in other ways as best we can.

Here endeth the sermon.

My roles with the Scouts and Volunteer Centre have now finished, so I was looking for a new local opportunity. I believe in the critical importance of a strong central hub to help preserve and develop a community, all the positive benefits of strong, active churches, and the historic and cultural value that venerable and attractive buildings bring to a locality; as I can see the Parish Church Tower from my garden, FOTCH seems an ideal way to seek to support and promote all of these aims.

## A brief look backwards

At this point, I must recognise the efforts of my predecessor, Richard Abel, who continues as FOTCH Chairman, having been Chair and Treasurer for some time past. Richard has been very helpful,

informative and efficient in handing over the Treasurer's job to me, and I am looking forward to deploying my skills and experience to fulfil this important role. Logically, Richard's term of office ended with filing the 2018/19 Report and Accounts with the Charity Commission, for which the headlines are:-

## Income and Expenditure

2018/2019	INCOME	2017/2018
£2,561	Membership & Gift Aid	£2,303
£1,400	Donations, Legacies & Bequests	£10,778
£11,291	Income from Events	£10,524
£8,404	Interest & Dividends (incl Tax)	£8,798
£17,391	Unrealised Gains on Investments	£6,649
<b>£41,047</b>	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£39,052</b>

	EXPENDITURE	
£2,727	Cost of Events	£1,375
£1,641	Administration	£1,429
£18,316	Grants Awarded	£230
<b>£22,684</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£3,034</b>
<b>£18,363</b>	<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>£36,018</b>

	BALANCE SHEET	
£1,002	Bank + Cash	£225
£73,055	Savings	£80,608
£470,457	Investments	£444,897
£580	Debtors & Creditors	£1,001
<b>£545,094</b>	<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>£526,731</b>

The accounts are in line with those for recent years.

## So what does the Treasurer do?

In my view, the roles of the Treasurer are in three categories: Servant, Husband and Mentor.

The Servant ensures that tasks that are mandatory (e.g. for legal reasons or because the Trustees have given specific directions) are carried out. These tasks include: Keeping the accounts; Managing the Bank Accounts and Investments; Preparing the Annual Accounts and contributing to the Annual Report; Ensuring the Charity's finance procedures are followed; Making returns to the Charity Commission and HMRC; Preparing and submitting and chasing Gift Aid claims.

The Husband (using the word in the sense of husbandry, that is protecting the value of the Charity's resources and assets), tends to comprise ongoing responsibilities rather than specific tasks, such as: Ensuring FOTCH buys goods and services wisely, economically and compliantly; Making sure there are procedures to protect FOTCH's assets from misuse or loss, e.g. banking and cash controls; Monitoring the mixture and performance of FOTCH's investments against the agreed policy and highlighting any significant divergence and proposing changes if appropriate.

The Mentor takes a lead in advising and guiding the Trustees on strategic financial matters such as: Long term FOTCH strategy; Investment Strategy; Reserves Policy; Ensuring FOTCH's continuing compliance with our legal responsibilities to deliver the charitable objectives described in the Constitution; Identifying any alternative futures that we should consider to ensure we remain compliant in a changing world.

The chart [below] shows how FOTCH's Reserves have grown from zero when the Charity was founded to over £500,000 now. This is an outstanding achievement, particularly when you recognise that these reserves



have been created after paying out very nearly £200,000 in Grants to the Parish Church over the same period. Managing Reserves is a key responsibility of Charities, and I can bore for England on the Reserves Policy. I feel that this is (or could be / should be) an effective and concise way of expressing the strategy of the Charity in words and figures. It should define and explain the target reserves required for the various risks, charitable aims and alternative futures. Regular monitoring should show how near or far we are away from achieving the target reserves and the plans made to bridge any gap.

I recognise that I am the new boy on the block, and look forward to working with the Trustees and other leaders of FOTCH to fulfil my new role of Treasurer and becoming an effective steward of our finances to ensure the long-term preservation of the medieval Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul in the heart of Tring town centre.

Malcolm Rogers, FOTCH Treasurer

## What can the church do for young people?



Churches are often concerned about numbers; the challenge of making new disciples is seemingly becoming harder as society becomes more secular. Furthermore, it seems to be harder to attract young people to Church.

Although I am a member of the church (the worshipping community), I am probably here by special circumstances (my mum and dad are both priests in the Tring Team)! But I still think there are ways that the church community can expand, including the younger generation.

Young children are naturally curious and there are many people who suggest bringing younger children to Church is indoctrinating them into something they haven't agreed to. However, as part of their natural curiosity, trying to understand the world and concepts of God seems to be obvious to them and they often have Big Questions. By attending Church they are able to explore these Big Questions about the world in an environment designed for these questions. Most churches have services and community events that

are designed for young children and successfully give them an experience of the church community.

However, there is an age group which tends to challenge: teenagers. In my opinion, lots of teenagers care about the big issues, and they want to have a voice in social and political issues and they want to be heard. Social media and technology have given teenagers access to a range of sources of news, both reliable and unreliable. I think this is a benefit to society, when used well; it can create a teenage generation that are more politically aware and able to understand the issues that will face them and the world. But caring about the big social issues can often mean teenagers are more hostile to churches.

Lots of people I know consider churches austere and old fashioned or backwards on certain issues. However, the debates that take place in society rarely take place in your general Sunday service.

In my opinion churches need to make it clear that these issues are not a major part of Christian life. The purpose of church is to have an all-encompassing, welcoming community who, regardless of background, are able to join with one common aim. In order to bring young people into our Churches, the church does not need to rebrand itself but make clear what it is and what it always has been.

Eliza Bellis

# Five ways to well-being



Friendship is about connections, not only to people, but to places and events.

Making connections as a young person, or indeed anyone, is vital for good mental health. It has been included as one of the Take Five goals described in the five ways to well-being currently being promoted by local schools. Making connections certainly brings me happiness.

When I first became involved with FOTCH about ten years ago, I didn't really know anyone and certainly couldn't class any FOTCH member as a friend. However, over the past years, I have most certainly made many connections and now consider many of the activists with whom I work to be friends. We connect over a shared goal – creating events to enable other people to enjoy their friendships and connections to each other, our town and our Church, whilst raising funds for FOTCH. It all seems like a win-win.



The power of connections was truly evident at the Friendship Service. It was evident in the warm welcome Hannah received from members of FOTCH – and the interest shown in her current uni life. Watching her hug John and Sandra Luddington among others made me realise how strong and important these connections are.



It was evident in the kindness of new activists, Emma and Shena and others, giving up their day for us. These newly hatched connections that started with the smallest thing – a short email, text or phone call. I know that as I too was nurtured ten years ago, these willing souls will also be cherished and the connections will become stronger.

It was evident in the continued support we receive from those in our organisation and those in our community: The Scouts, The Sixth formers, The Youth Café, The Primary Schools, local businesses and, of course, The RAF Halton team.

It was evident from the presence of regular visitors to the event. Connecting to an event year after year is good for happiness. Hannah recalled to someone yesterday that she danced round the

Maypole at the Family Fun Day as a Bishop Wood school girl. She recalled the excitement of bringing her teddy for the teddy tower year after year.



Like Hannah, Georgia will remember this event; she will remember making that connection to us, to FOTCH, to Church and to Tring. Like Hannah, she is one of many who will pick up the baton and keep the connections going into the future.

I would like to finish by saying how touched Hannah and I are to have received the Heritage award this year: a very unexpected honour. Although we will both be away from Tring for the next few years, we will certainly maintain our connection to all our friends at FOTCH – something that we both see as one of our five ways to well-being.

*Helen Dunford,  
FOTCH Trustee*



# It's a Tring thing!

When my husband and I moved to Tring seven years ago our family was already grown up and had left home, so the annual 'Tring Family Fun Day' was not a date I thought we needed to keep. This year I realised I was wrong! And happily so.

At the end of last year I became aware of 'The Friends of Tring Church Heritage' (aka'

FOTCH'). I read a leaflet that had been posted through our front door and realised there was this group of people working to ensure that the physical building of the church of St Peter & St Paul is retained and improved. This local landmark that we often take for granted may not survive in its current condition or be improved and updated, without the support of not



only its congregation but also of FOTCH.

FOTCH is made up of people who attend the Church as well as those who don't but value the building itself and its place at the heart of our town. I decided to become a member myself and to explore if there was anything (not too demanding!) that I could do to help out.

I was introduced to Helen Dunford who runs events for FOTCH and was busy organising this year's 'Family Fun Day'. I don't know what preconceived ideas I had about what the people behind FOTCH were like – but Helen (and others like her) wasn't one of them!

She is a 'force of nature' with energy and enthusiasm as well as a friendly and welcoming personality that instantly put me at ease.

I had never been to a Family Fun Day before so was happy to put my hand up for anything! Luckily Helen thought I would be useful on the Teddy Tombola stand. Helen did all the hard work sourcing enough teddy bears for the stand (and



this meant having at least 75 furry friends to attract visitors to the stall).

We spent an evening at the beginning of May labelling up the soft toys and folding tombola tickets! The evening was good fun and was made all the more enjoyable for a large glass of wine and a good natter along the way.

The morning of the event arrived and despite a few nice days in the run up, Saturday's weather forecast was not good. So, I donned my comfy shoes and plastic mac and headed down to the Church. I am not sure what time the other helpers got out of bed but by 10.30am the whole area was looking great: colourful and festive with lots of stands offering an array of things to attract custom! And foot-tapping music to get us 'in the mood'. The plant stand, face painting, 'beat the goalie', the food and beer tents and the ever important 'Teddy Zip Line' rubbed shoulders with several other stalls – including the Teddy Tombola!

I was introduced to Shena – another 'newbie' who was there to help on the Tombola stall too. We quickly got to grips with what we needed to prepare and then spent the next few hours enjoying talking to families, selling tickets, watching little faces light up when they won a teddy and generally thoroughly enjoying ourselves (as well as dodging the odd rain/hail storm!).

It was really nice to see local families attend and have fun all together – without spending a fortune! I was reminded of a quote

I heard (but can't attribute), 'If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them and half as much money'. The Tring Family Fun Day is not about costing a family a fortune for a fleeting thrill ride. It is about supporting a good cause (with as little as 25p if you just want a tombola ticket!) whilst enjoying the company of your family and other families from the area.

There is something quite 'quaint' about the Family Fun Day because it plays to the values of a fast receding era, when time and company were more important than things and 'buying power'. I loved it. I wished I had been before. I will definitely be there again next year. And I will definitely make sure my own grandchildren get along to experience this special event.

*Emma Heaney  
FOTCH Member*

## Tombola – come hail or shine

In advance of the Family Fun Day, we appealed for prizes for the Tombola stall in the FOTCH newsletter.



As a result we received a number of donations, and along with those we accumulated from our own families, friends and colleagues, we had a wonderful selection of items and a lot of very happy Tombola winners on the day.

In light of the terrible weather forecast for the day of the Fete, we unearthed our old gazebo and took it into town along with armfuls of bunting, boxes and bags of prizes and signs to decorate our stall. After having scrounged every table we could to accommodate the piles of prizes, we were jolly pleased that our gazebo was rather on the large size, just slightly smaller than the bus shelter.

With the help of some young blood, we laid out all our prizes and were ready for business an hour before kick-off. We



tempted our very first customers as they got off the bus – as it happens, first time visitors to Tring – how lucky they were to have timed their visit to our town on such a merry day.

All was going well until the heavens opened and it was 'white out' as hailstones the size of grapes fell from the sky. The old gazebo stood firm and protected the prizes as well as Team Tombola and anyone not fast enough to dash to cover in the Church. Luckily it did not last long and the old Nora Grace tombola was soon plying its trade once again with everything just a little damp around the edges.

Thank goodness, spirits were not dampened and we thoroughly enjoyed the day and the small part we played in the success of the Family Fun Day.

Thank you to those kind FOTCH members who responded to our appeal by leaving items for us in the Church, on our doorsteps or who called us up to arrange collection. We are very grateful for all your contributions.

See you next year!

Enid, Julia and Lindsay, FOTCH Members

## Pictures from the past

This is the first in a new occasional series in the FOTCH Newsletter of older photographs of Tring Parish Church.

These two photographs remind us that there was not always a clear view of the Church from the High Street. The Market House, until it was demolished in 1901, had stood since 1680, providing a range of commercial and community services including a jail. The Rothschilds funded a replacement building (still there



on the corner of the High Street and Akeman Street). They also donated the land where the old Market House stood to the town. It has been used for car parking in past decades but was revitalised in 1991 with the zebra-patterned blockwork that we know today.



So now we have a clear view of the Church building and the churchyard, and a clear area that regularly accommodates market stalls (and, once a year, stalls raising funds at FOTCH Family Fun Day!).

*Pictures reproduced by kind permission of Henry and Jane Grace*

# Something to look forward to as summer fades!

As you know, we have changed the focus of our winter lunches from 'planning lunches' where we deal with ongoing business to 'members' lunches' where we celebrate the pleasures of friendship and hospitality. The two lunches we held last year were very well attended and proved enjoyable for all.

This year we are planning two lunches, the first on 13 October, a return of the 'fun quiz' which has an unchallenging and relaxing format that all can enjoy. Even members who don't



particularly like Quizzes said the last one was very enjoyable!

The second lunch will take place on 29 March (the customary earlier date in March 2020 is being used for a wedding event) and this will feature a new format introduced by Stephen Hearn. This is a fun version of 'Call my bluff' and will give everybody the chance to spot whether Stephen is



talking sense or 'pulling your leg'.

As usual the lunches will be catered for by the inimitable Barry Child and will have a relaxed format culminating in the 100 Club draw. Watch this space for further details and do make sure that you let Trish have your bookings as soon as possible.

If you would like any further information or have any suggestions or ideas about these events do let me know.

Grahame Senior,  
FOTCH Honorary President

The Trustees of the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage announce a different kind of half yearly lunch  
**12.30PM 13TH OCTOBER 2019**  
**ST PETER AND ST PAUL CHURCH HALL**

All members and friends are invited to join us for a social lunch where the aim is not planning and business but enjoyment and good company.

**FOTCH INVITES YOUR BRILLIANT BRAINS FOR A QUIZ LUNCH**

We are having a light-hearted fun quiz for all along with the usual excellent spread from Barry and some refreshing and reviving wines. Please do come along and enjoy the occasion. There is no formal charge for the lunch (donations only) but you do need to book a place so we can make the catering arrangements work.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting Trish at [fo@fotch.co.uk](mailto:fo@fotch.co.uk), or ringing on 0772 083 6930, or by filling in the access form in the newsletter.

**25 YEARS 1990 - 2015**

The Trustees of the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage invite you to the Spring 2019 half-yearly Lunch

**12.30PM 29TH MARCH 2020**  
**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 reviving 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 (donations only) but you do 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](mailto:info@fotch.co.uk), or ringing on 0772 083 6930, or by responding to the notice in the Spring Newsletter.

**25 YEARS 1990 - 2015**



# A developing strategy

FOTCH has now moved from its early days as an enthusiastic and energetic event-based fundraising organisation into a slightly more considered enterprise. Over the best part of 30 years the original members have also matured!



What has been particularly gratifying for me to observe has been the growth in the breadth and quality of our support base. Our membership numbers remain strong and stable (genuinely!) and our events are very popular with the broad community, not just a narrow group of members. The Family Fun Day in May in particular is something of an 'At-home' for the whole church community to welcome everyone in Tring to a jolly family celebration. It has become something of a fixture in the annual community calendar.

Events like the Jazz Evening at Tring Park School, the Barn Dance at Bishop Wood and the Safari Garden day have all attracted significant audiences and provide significant revenues.

As we move towards our formal strategic review meeting for the Trustees and officers this coming autumn we shall be considering how our strategy needs to develop so that in the longer term our revenue streams are less dependent on fundraising events alone. There will, of course, always remain an important role

for such events when we all get together and have a good time in a good cause.

## 'Where there's a will there's a way'

This old traditional saying indicates a very significant truth for charities in that legacy revenues are essential for long term financial development.

Several years ago FOTCH launched a campaign using the rather challenging headline 'What kind of friend will you be when you're dead?' and we have been fortunate in receiving a number of legacy commitments.

It is now time to revisit that approach and make sure we put our arguments in this regard wisely and sensitively in order to engage with the long-(and deeply)-held views of our members and supporters. Under the leadership of Chairman Richard Abel and our newly-installed treasurer Malcolm Rogers we shall be reviewing this whole area of legacy communication to make sure that we are comfortably in tune with the wishes of our members. Watch this space!

## A terrific team

Over the years FOTCH has been blessed by some superb activists and organisers. A wide range of generous individuals have brought their considerable talents to the development of the organisation, ranging from Trustees to Officers from activists to hospitality experts; they have all brought their particular gifts to bear in making FOTCH the organisation it is today.

We have had a particularly well balanced team of Trustees with John Bly

and Stephen Hearn bringing their wide range of constituents from 'Old Tring'; Annette Reynolds working to connect the church and fabric group with FOTCH as well as providing a peerless platform of communication that presents FOTCH as the vibrant and socially engaged enterprise that it is. We also have Richard Abel as Chairman guiding and motivating the group and focusing more on future strategy now that he has the support of an extremely well experienced treasurer to take on that aspect of his original role.

Our fifth trustee is of course Helen Dunford who has done a magnificent job of connecting us with the schools and young people's groups over recent years and leading the teams in event organisation with superb administration. Sadly for us – and very happily for Helen – she left Tring for a two-year stint working in an educational establishment in Bangkok from early August this year – a very exciting development for her and Hugh. After much discussion Helen has agreed to remain connected to FOTCH during her absence and then to return to us when she and Hugh come back to Tring. They are not selling their house or moving their base for good – simply taking a well-earned season in the sun! We owe Helen and all our Trustees our heartfelt thanks for all that they do to move FOTCH forward but remain true to its roots.



In addition to the Trustees, of course, the officers who support FOTCH in such a professional manner make a huge contribution to our success. After many years as our secretary, Kate Stratford has now stepped back, but continues in her role in helping in hospitality and event administration. We are very fortunate to have welcomed Trish Dowden, who has become something of a central organising power-house in Tring activities over the recent years as secretary and she is now dealing with all matters of central administration.

Helena Cook remains firmly in charge of the membership secretarial role and the organising of that database is of vital importance in informing and communicating with our supporter base effectively.

In attracting the support of Malcolm Rogers as our new treasurer we are again strengthening our team with people of real experience in community affairs.

Now that Hannah Dunford is away at University we need a new Youth Ambassador to take up the baton and carry on the vital work of connecting FOTCH with future generations.

### New members, new supporters, new ideas

We continue also to attract a steady stream of new members and supporters who like what we do and want to get involved joining in with FOTCH. Some are relative newcomers to the town whilst others have been in Tring for some time and are just noticing FOTCH on their radar as an organisation which takes a truly long-term view for the benefit of all future generations in Tring.

Their ideas and energy – YOUR ideas and energies - are always welcome. If you have some thoughts about any aspect of our activities or a burning passion to organise something brilliant or new, please do get in contact with any of the Trustees or me. We need your input... we try hard to make things work but we ALWAYS need new supporters to get involved. Please don't hang back!

The future lies in the hands of the young. This brings me to my final strategic point: how do we ‘future-proof’ FOTCH? Obviously some of the sensible steps and prudent actions outlined above will be helpful in keeping us strong and effective as a supporter of our magnificent heritage in the heart of this town.

However, who can have failed to notice the recent high-profile actions of Greta Thunberg and her impact on a legislative structure apparently tied-up in knots of its own making (sound familiar?).

Of course, young and passionate visionaries like Greta on Climate Change – and Malala Yousoufzai before her on Educational equality – don’t have all the answers and don’t know all the solutions. However, they do have a way of asking the questions with a freshness and directness that helps us all approach things with new energy and sometimes a greater appetite for co-operation.

FOTCH needs to be connected with young people and their view of the future in order to be an effective part of that future for the benefit of all in our town. Some time ago we started one of our schools’ initiatives with the phrase ‘Heritage is about the Future...’

We need to engage more positively and confidently with our Young Citizens and help them help us all. Finding those connections is surely a challenge and a responsibility for every one of us to embrace.

Grahame Senior  
FOTCH Honorary President

## A lesson from Europe



No, don’t stop reading. This isn’t another article about BREXIT. It’s about the lessons we can draw from Notre Dame Cathedral’s dreadful recent fire. We have an important historic asset too. Not nearly as big or as famous as Notre Dame. But precious to us and important for our town.

Of course, accidents can happen. But without knowing exactly what the chain of events that caused the fire at Notre Dame, it does appear to be the case that the scope and scale of maintenance work had been mounting up at the Cathedral. Small issues became bigger issues over time, and the size of the repair bill mounts exponentially over time without prompt action. Bigger and more complex jobs bring increased execution risk and certainly more cost.

We have seen a similar phenomenon over the years in the Houses of Parliament, where delaying timely refurbishment over years and decades has now led to a massive and costly job to get right. Or on a more prosaic

level, leaving a pothole or crack in a road unrepaired over a couple of winters means it will generally cost materially more to repair ultimately than if fixed promptly.

Avoiding such a situation arising at our own medieval building in Tring is a key purpose of FOTCH’s long-term approach to building capital reserves and to ongoing funding. We work closely with the Fabric Committee of the Church who oversee the programme and funding (by the Parish) of day-to-day maintenance. We target FOTCH’s additional resources to big jobs that might otherwise not get done in a timely way for lack of funds, and to enhancements to the usability of the building for Tring community groups which would be unaffordable, besides more pressing near-term cost pressures.

*Richard Abel,  
FOTCH Chair of Trustees*



# Forty plus years of Tring memories

In 1970 my husband, Godfrey, was advised to move from his Nottingham Office to London, necessitating a move from a small Derbyshire village, and I was told by several well meaning villagers who had known me and my family all my life that we would find it hard to settle near London.

Age 20 something I was determined to prove that I would make a new life with two young daughters. Godfrey first took me to Hemel Hempstead. I stood on The Marlowes and said 'This is the most godless place on earth' and so we moved further along the Euston line to find Tring; I have never looked back.

The house we chose had sadly been neglected as the previous owners concentrated on caring for their disabled son, but we were lucky in that my father was an architect and gave us ideas as to how we could improve it. With the help of the Scales brothers, who 'lived' with us for nearly ten months, we made a home that I loved for over forty years.

Monica Smith lived next door and was the ideal neighbour, making us welcome and introducing us to several useful contacts. Many may remember her as she worked as parish secretary for Revd Donald Howells. After showing me the way around the locality, she drove me to playgroup at Drayton Beauchamp and arranged a coffee morning to introduce me to about twelve young mothers and their offspring. Monica then stepped

back politely and left us to find our own way, which we did not find difficult in a town as friendly as Tring. When I had a tummy bug, she came in, told me to sleep it off and she took the two girls to play with her two boys until Daddy returned from work. I soon recovered knowing that the girls were in her good care.

Following the premature death of my sister aged 29 in 1969, I had lost my faith as I could not understand why my loving parents should be so punished. Visits from Donald Howells and curate Michael Webb helped considerably and I was encouraged to attend Church services at St Peter & St Paul, take the children to Sunday School and join Young Wives, which in the 1970s, under the leadership of Maggie Wareham, was very active.

Our elder daughter, who is now over 50, remembers Sue Tarbox very well and finds it amazing that she has only recently retired. I wonder how many Sunday Schools have the long service record given by Mary Haywood, Sandra Luddington and Sue Tarbox.

When we left Derbyshire, we had to leave behind chickens, ducks and four geese as we could not afford a field near Tring. I was very pleased to discover Dunsley Farm so conveniently close across Pound Meadow and would push Katy in the pushchair to watch the chickens and ducks. Over the years I enjoyed many chats with Mrs Marks and still buy my eggs from Dunsley whenever possible. I have not found any better eggs anywhere and have used them to make hundreds of cakes for church

events, the Children's Society and elderly friends. In later years it was very quick to cycle on my faithful steed, previously used by Godfrey's mother to buy eggs and all greengrocery. Sad to say I hardly use my bike now as the lanes here are too narrow.

Working at Graces from 1980 I became friendly with the retail manager, John Cockerill, and he and his wife Pam invited me to join them for Sunday lunch

doing another good deed and during the summer we would chat and put the world to right while both picking our fresh garden produce. Oh, for those happy days. David, Godfrey and David Banyard, neighbour to David and Margaret on the western side, retired about the same time, so I decided to invite them, including Jane, for a meal to celebrate their 'new' lives. Several years later we continued to share meals together and



when Godfrey was away for Territorial Army duties. In the evening we would attend Evensong at St Cross.

Neighbours make such a huge difference to one's enjoyment of life and one could not wish for kinder neighbours than David and Margaret Gittins. David gave me assistance trying to start the lawn mower and I received many cheery waves from Margaret as she dashed off

always had a good evening with lots of laughter.

How my life has changed! A friend from our French group frequently said to me 'Aren't you going to miss all your friends?' I thought it would be easy, but at our age it is not so easy to make new friends. Margaret Wilson said to me, unfortunately too late, that 'one should not move after 70'. How right she is – but

I am learning the hard way. A friend from Tring visited one day and said, 'You have a lovely view from the kitchen window'. I retorted 'But my friends are not in that view.'

I gave up too much in one go, leaving a lovely home that we had developed as we wished and as funds allowed. Godfrey rebuilt the patio; we (well, I passed the appropriate screw) built the fitted wardrobes and he replaced the outdated tiled fireplace in the lounge with a stone one. I left regular employment, working with people whom I respected, and moved to a new area four days later, and am now bored with mundane household duties.

So many good memories: the course at Aldbury led by Jo Wetherall and Didier when I first met Alison Bickerton, to whom I am grateful for taking on delivery to my Comment subscribers; all the friends at FOTCH – who but Grahame Senior could have established such a successful group, and his genuine belief that everything will work out well if we all contribute and keep smiling, just as Kate Stratford has done for many years with all her duties.

I miss Beavers (swimming exercises for those who have a need) on Tuesday lunchtimes, assisting people less able than myself, and made many good friends there.

Gilbert's mother, Mrs Marjorie Grace, suggested that I could become a School governor. I did not know very much about the duties but in thirty years on the governing body of Dundale School I improved my knowledge and hope I

contributed for the benefit to the pupils. I certainly found the duty very rewarding.

Memories include Mrs Reader who made superb shortbread, Kay Rodwell and all her schooling advice. Who can forget Janet Ridgway with her enthusiastic welcome, sometimes at the Church door but equally enthusiastic in Waitrose. Now when shopping I am told that 'We don't stock that at this branch'.

I could not have written this without years of friendly and efficient computer assistance from Barry Child. If only he could still pop in when passing on his way to Tring School. Godfrey was always full of praise for Vivianne who worked efficiently for FOTCH while he was treasurer. He also enjoyed Monday morning with Phillip Lawrence, counting the donations from Sunday, and equally enjoyed Friday morning with John Luddington gardening in the churchyard.

On Sunday mornings I can see Huw Bellis or Jane Banister in front of the altar. You are never far from my thoughts.

Moving to be close to grandchildren comes at a heavy cost, fortunately we have two thoughtful daughters who offer help and keep us cheerful in spirit and assist with all the changing I.T. demands of the 21st century.

*Judith Orrell  
FOTCH Member*

## Taking care of a historic building



As I write this update, I am preparing for a Fabric Meeting and looking at the agenda for discussion. Thankfully it is not as frightening a list as it could be with such an historical building.

Our main focus is to finish off the external lighting outside St Peter & St Paul's Church and this will hopefully be complete before the evenings close in. Most of the items are just being upgraded and replaced with more modern LED units. There are a couple of items which are additional and these require a faculty which is all under way. This has only been possible by the very generous support we have received from FOTCH and will finish the overall project



that was started last year when we changed all the internal lighting.

We have a few items left on the Quinquennial and, after discussion with Mark Battram, these are being left until our next inspection in 2020 as they are not urgent. It also allows us to use the allocated funds for the lighting as required.

Another item for discussion is the heating pipes. We had a health and safety issue a little while ago when a young lad burnt his leg badly when it became trapped on one of the pipes. This was not due to bad design. When installed the pipes were the equivalent to our radiators now and follow the walls around the Church. We are currently looking at how to lag these to ensure it can't happen again but also allow the pipes still to act as effective heating for the Church.

During the summer holiday we had some vandalism to electrical items (a Hoover to be exact) and minor theft (biscuits!). Although frustrating (and why a Hoover we'll never know), we are very lucky that we are still able to operate an Open Church policy unlike some.

Day-to-day items such as loose flag stones and pavers are again kindly taken care of often before we were even aware of the issue. I would like to say a big thank you to the team of people who get these and many other issues sorted without any prompting.

If you have any concerns or would like to bring something to our attention, then please do not hesitate to make contact. Fingers crossed for no rain as there is bound to be a small leak somewhere! Until next time...

*Ian Matthews, Fabric Committee Chair*

## Making the visit even more worthwhile

Over the past few years FOTCH has been diligent in working at making the wonderful building in the heart of our town rewarding for every visitor.

Anybody who spends time during quiet hours in the Church will have noticed that we seem to get more and more casual visitors. Tring is clearly quite an active attraction for tourists and the magnificent building at the heart of our town is bound to draw attention. The fact that we are always open in daylight hours is a wonderful testimony to our belief in community relationships. The fact that we have a very informative and attractive range of leaflets and displays is clearly helpful. In recent years I have conducted an increasing number of 'Church tours' and the leaflets are always greatly appreciated, particularly by those who themselves try to make their own Churches more welcoming.

We recently had a visit from a group which included the archivist and graphic designer for Christie's and Sotheby's and he was particularly complimentary about the quality of information we deliver.

Of course, we do have a world-class attraction in our wonderful building – the Gore Memorial – which has been hugely enhanced by FOTCH's investment in cleaning and lighting.

We currently have a very positive enterprise in view which is to make sure



that the Gore bequest material (currently hidden away in a vault) is brought out of the darkness into the light and placed on permanent display in a secure unit within the Church. Not only that but we are also investigating the production of a companion display showing replicas of the Tring Tiles (sometimes described as the most significant example of early medieval English art) with full interpretative material.

More and more Church heritage buildings like ours have to serve the needs not only of the worshipping community but also wider society. I am certain that it is in all our best interests to make the use of the assets that we possess in this regard. John Bly, Ian Matthews and myself are currently working on practical proposals to bring this initiative to fruition and I am sure that we will all eventually be proud of the outcome.

Watch this space!

Grahame Senior,  
FOTCH Honorary President



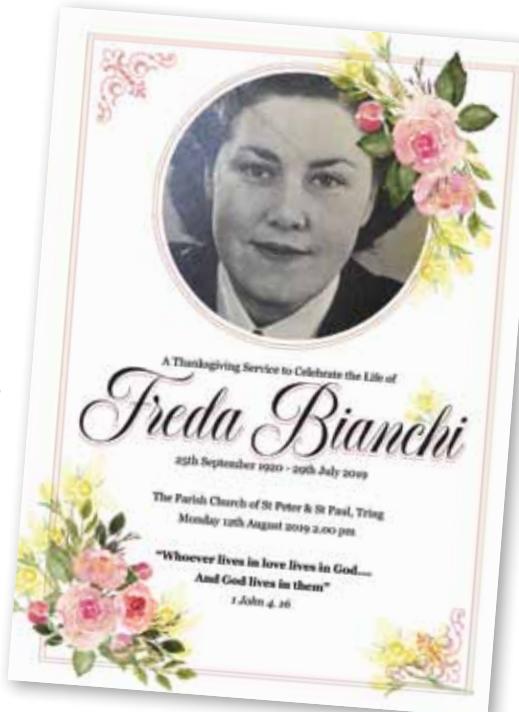
# In memory of Freda Bianchi

## A life lived fully at the heart of a loving family

Freda Williams was born on 25 September 1920, the youngest of three children in a devout Baptist and thoroughly musical family in Brymbo, North Wales. She had deep Welsh roots and a part of her heart would always remain in Wales. With two brothers, Trevor and Ivor, and father Ezra who was famed for his magnificent tenor voice and was a frequent performer at concerts and in chapel, the family lived close to the steel works at Brymbo and Ezra worked there all his life.

Freda left the village school at 14 – as was then the normal age – and started work as a hairdresser. In 1938 she joined the British Red Cross and became a nurse. Throughout World War Two she served as a senior VAD in the Navy and then spent a considerable amount of time nursing injured soldiers in hospital. She met her future husband Raymond Ford through her work there.

After the war they married and went to live in West Hampstead where their first child Melanie Jane was born. They then moved to a flat in Belsize Park in North London where Robert was born before they moved to their first house back in West Hampstead. As the children grew older Freda worked as a dinner lady in the local school for a while. She then went to work at the celebrated St Mary's Hospital in Paddington before



joining the Tavistock Clinic in Swiss Cottage where she remained until her retirement at the age of 62.

In 1983, having both retired, Freda and Ray moved to Tring. Quite unexpectedly Ray died just four days later leaving Freda suddenly alone. Freda did not return to her London roots but stayed in Tring. Like so many people who move here in later life, she soon fell in love with its charm and its friendly people. At the age of 70 she married her second husband (Eric Bianchi) whom she had met at St Peter & St Paul where he was a Church Warden for many years. Their circle of family and friends grew ever wider and Freda's Sunday Lunches were greatly celebrated and enjoyed.

The time that Freda first got to know

Eric was a seminal period for FOTCH; a time when the first idea changed from a hope into a reality. It was the time of the 'Two Eric's'; when both Eric Bianchi and Eric Hollingsworth were Church Wardens. It was also a time when there was great anxiety about the church finances. It was from our deliberations about how to underpin the finances of the Church in the very long-term that the independent Friends of Tring Church Heritage Charity was founded.

During that first decade FOTCH developed rapidly from an idea into a powerful support for the Church, not only in financial terms with grants for many much-needed restoration projects but also in terms of the social and community engagement events. The two Eric's and their wives Joan Hollingsworth and Freda Bianchi became great supporters of all our activities; and their families and friends were also heavily involved in all our fundraising and events. Freda and Eric were central figures in our development and made sure that their enormous circle of friends got fully involved with 'The Friends'. FOTCH is very much indebted to their energy and enterprise.

Having lived for a time in a bungalow in Grove Park Freda and Eric moved together to a new house in Dunsley Place where quite a number of older church people had settled. They enjoyed several happy years in that flourishing and friendly community. Sadly Eric fell victim to Parkinson's disease and Freda's long career in nursing was a great boon to them during this difficult time. She was

always a natural at caring for others. Eric died in 2010 and Freda remained in their house in Dunsley Place until, three years ago, she moved to a nursing home in Shrublands Road in Berkhamsted.

Freda has always remained close to her Welsh roots and family life in all its fullness has always been at the centre of her world. Her extended family from both marriages has been a huge joy to her and her role as the matriarch has allowed her to fulfil her destiny of care and kindness to all generations.

In recent years she struggled with the challenges of memory loss and hearing but throughout her love of smart fashion and good grooming meant that she was never less than perfectly turned out.

Above all else Freda was interested in people in all their variety and different persuasions. She had a strong sense of right and wrong (that chapel upbringing never leaves you) and she was fearless in her insistence on fair-play and correct and kind behaviour at all times. For me she was very much the embodiment of John Wesley's mantra for the best way to live life: 'do all the good that you can... in all the ways that you can... to all the people you can... in all the places you can... as long as ever you can'.

At 98 years old she was as deeply kind and fiercely Welsh as the day she was born and she remained engaged and thankful for every moment of her long rich life until her death on 29 July 2019. She was truly a joy to know.

Grahame Senior  
FOTCH Honorary President



## What year is this?

So, FOTCH members, how well do you know St Peter & St Paul's Church? In the picture you will see not only a beautiful bride and her husband (once in the Choir of the Parish Church and still living and worshipping in Tring) but a feature of the Church that you haven't seen for years.

Write to me to tell me what the feature is and when the change was made?

*The Editor*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Autumn Lunch

### Brilliant Brains Quiz

Sunday 13 October 2019

12.30pm in Tring Parish Hall

Contact Trish Dowden to book a place  
[info@fotch.co.uk](mailto:info@fotch.co.uk) or tel 0772 083 6930

### Spring Lunch

### Antique Call My Bluff

With Stephen Hearn of Tring Auctions

Sunday 29 March 2020

12.30pm in Tring Parish Hall

Contact Trish Dowden to book a place  
[info@fotch.co.uk](mailto:info@fotch.co.uk) or tel 0772 083 6930

### Spring Barn Dance

Date to be confirmed

7.30pm in Bishop Wood School

Featuring Pickled Tink & Tring Brewery Beer

Tickets available from

Richard Abel tel 01442 825723

### Family Fun Day

Saturday 9 May 2020

St Peter & St Paul's Church

### FOTCH Friendship Service

Sunday 10 May 2020

6.00pm in St Peter & St Paul's Church

### FOTCH AGM

Monday 18 May 2020

6.00pm in St Peter & St Paul's Church

### The Big Picnic Party

Summer 2020

Tring Park

### Garden Safari Day

Summer 2020

10 gardens in Tring

For more details, visit the website

[www.fotch.co.uk](http://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 is designed by Kev Holt  
Ginger Promo, Tring

The Friends of Tring Church Heritage  
Registered Charity 1005442

The Trustees of the Friends Of Tring Church Heritage  
announce a different kind of half yearly lunch

**12.30PM 13TH OCTOBER 2019**  
**ST PETER AND ST PAUL CHURCH HALL**

All members and friends are invited to join us for a social lunch  
where the aim is not planning and business but enjoyment and  
good company.

**FOTCH INVITES YOUR**



We are having a light-hearted fun quiz for all along with the usual excellent spread from Barry and some refreshing and revivifying wines.

Please do come along and enjoy the occasion. There is no formal charge for the lunch (donations only) but you do 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](mailto:info@fotch.co.uk), or ringing on 0772 083 6930, or by filling in the access form in the newsletter.

