

A photograph of a church aisle. The floor is made of square tiles in a repeating diamond pattern of red, black, and tan. A light-colored carpet runner is laid down the center of the aisle. On either side of the aisle are rows of dark wooden pews. The lighting is warm and focused on the aisle.

News
for
Friends of Berkshire Churches

Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

March 2022

WELCOME to a new venture for the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust. We hope to send a newsletter or other mailing to our supporters four times a year, to keep you informed of Trust activities and other items of interest.

After two very difficult years, it now seems possible to return to normal activities, and we are planning several events in 2022 for our Friends and other interested parties. The first of these is the Englefield Lecture. We intend to hold the Trust Annual Meeting and church tour in September, and to add a second church tour in July, and a visit specially arranged for the Friends in August. Details will be in the next newsletter.

The Covid pandemic has created a very difficult situation for churches. With a significant loss of income, some planned work has been put on hold, and the Trust received only one grant application in 2021. Some existing projects have continued - a report on All Saints, Boyne Hill is included in this newsletter - and a number of churches have been developing future plans. We have started to see new applications, and expect there to be many more, especially as churches catch up with essential repairs and consider alterations to make their buildings more sustainable and energy-efficient.

The Trust has limited funds, and cannot unfortunately give as much in grants as we might wish, but we try to be flexible in responding to the needs of Berkshire churches and providing information and advice as well as money. We are very grateful to our Friends for their contributions.

ONE impact of Covid is that many grant-giving bodies are, quite naturally, focussing their attention on community projects to recover from the pandemic, so grants for church repairs have a lower priority. However, one piece of good news is that the Government is extending the 'Listed Places of Worship' scheme for 3 years, to March 2025; this scheme allows qualifying churches to reclaim the VAT paid on repairs etc.

THE National Churches Trust continues its campaign to draw attention to the enormous community and economic contribution made by churches. Using HM Treasury's formula, this is worth £55 billion a year.

THE Diocese of Oxford has organised a seminar at High Wycombe on Saturday 7 May, 'The A-Z of Church Fundraising', with presentations from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Churches Trust, and a panel discussion with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trusts. This is free to attend; for more details and tickets go to a-zfundraising.eventbrite.co.uk



The Duke of Wellington a life of service

by Brigadier Michael Aris CBE DL and Richard Bennett DL

Join us to hear the extraordinary life of His Grace the 1st Duke of Wellington, from his birth in 1769 to his state funeral in 1852. Inevitably the story includes conflict in India, the Peninsula War and of course at Waterloo. After what the Duke hoped "would be my last battle" we will follow his political life, his varied appointments and his role as an elder statesman, not forgetting his fondness for the company of beautiful women. Finally, we will hear Queen Victoria's reflections on the Great Duke in her diary.

in the **Long Gallery, Englefield House, Reading RG7 5EN**

(by kind permission of Lord Benyon)

at 7pm for 7:30pm on Monday 25 April, 2022

Tickets £15 including a glass of wine

Book online at www.TicketSource.co.uk/Berkshire-Churches-Trust
or phone Marion Elly (01628 482637)



THE CHURCH of All Saints Boyne Hill is not only a local landmark and a key part of the community, but a building of national architectural and historical significance, listed Grade I. It is a major work of a leading Victorian architect, G E Street, inspired by Tractarian principles, and preserves his original design largely intact. Street built a whole complex of church, parsonage, school, clergy house and almshouses in the 1850s, adding the tower and spire a decade later. The nave was extended by two bays at the West end by Street's son in 1910, in a consistent style and re-setting the original windows. The building is richly polychromatic, of red brick with stripes of black brick and Bath stone, with additional colour provided in the interior by Devonshire

membrane. The 17,600 tiles were then laid to reinstate Street's original pattern, with specially-manufactured matching replacements for those missing or broken. The plans required approval from Historic England, the Victorian Society and the DAC, before a Faculty could be issued.

A specialist contractor, Cliveden Conservation, was selected after

competitive tenders. The work was expected to take about 6 months, and the church decided to take advantage of the Covid lockdown to start in February 2021. Inevitably some unforeseen problems caused delays, but the work was completed and the church re-opened in November 2021.

Raising the expected cost of about £240,000 was a major undertaking,



Restoring the Victorian floor tiles at All Saints Boyne Hill

marble, Derbyshire alabaster, and green, yellow, red and buff vitreous tiles on the chancel walls; it also has some fine stained glass windows.

G E Street was noted for his insistence on designing every detail himself, and all contribute to the intended effect. The red, buff and black floor tiles form an integral part of Street's design and an important element in the overall colour and visual impact.

The floor was constructed with a base of rubble, well rammed, with a layer of lime mortar as a bed for the tiles, but unfortunately that mortar was not laid consistently, and is too thin and weak to withstand the wear on the floor. As a result, many areas of tile had become loose, cracked or broken. Some years ago, patches of missing tiles were filled with cement - as shown in the cover picture - and the situation had continued to deteriorate to the point of being unsafe and a danger to those entering the building.

After considering all the options, the church decided that a full-scale restoration of the floor was needed; all the tiles would be lifted, as many as possible (about 70%) cleaned for re-use, the substrata excavated and a new recycled foam glass sub-base and limecrete screed laid on a breathable



especially with the impact of Covid on fund-raising; substantial amounts were contributed by the congregation and by local Maidenhead organisations, and grants were obtained from some charitable trusts - the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust gave its maximum grant of £10,000.

Saints and their symbols

THE PARISH churches of Berkshire have many images of saints. In the middle ages, they would have been the subject of wall paintings - a few examples survive at Aldermaston, Enborne, Hampstead Norreys and Tidmarsh - and painted in a screen or reredos, but what can be seen today is mainly images in 19th or 20th century stained glass.



St Mary is most often shown in a scene of the Annunciation, with the angel Gabriel, or as a mother holding the Christ child; the traditional Rood has figures of St Mary and St John at the foot of the crucified Christ.

The four evangelists are frequently commemorated by their symbols - a winged man for Matthew, a winged lion for Mark, a winged bull for Luke, and an eagle for John. Where depicted as a human figure, St John is often shown holding a cup containing a snake, as a reference to the legend that he drank from a poisoned chalice without ill effect.

Another group is the Four Latin Doctors of

Mark | Luke
Matthew | John on the reredos at Brightwalton

the early church; Ambrose (often in episcopal robes with a beehive), Jerome (wearing a Cardinal's hat, with a lion), Augustine (a bishop, holding



SS Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory at All Saints, Boyne Hill

a heart pierced by an arrow) and Gregory (in papal robes with the triple tiara, and a dove on his shoulder).

St George, the patron saint of England, is usually shown in armour, killing a dragon, his red cross on a white background displayed on his surcoat or banner. He is



St Cecilia at Shefford Woodlands

often paired with St Michael the Archangel, Captain of the Hosts of Heaven; an angel in armour, sometimes shown striking the Devil or a dragon. The third "military" saint is St Martin, usually shown as a Roman soldier giving half of his cloak to a beggar at his feet.

A favourite subject is St Cecilia, the patron saint of music, who is usually shown playing an organ - often with an audience of angels who came down from Heaven to listen.

Other saints can be identified by the instruments of their

martyrdom - the spiked wheel of St Catherine, the flaying knife of St Bartholomew, the gridiron of St Lawrence, and the stones of St Stephen. St James the Less, who was beaten to death by a mob, is shown with a club, whereas St James the Great has a pilgrim's hat and a scallop shell.



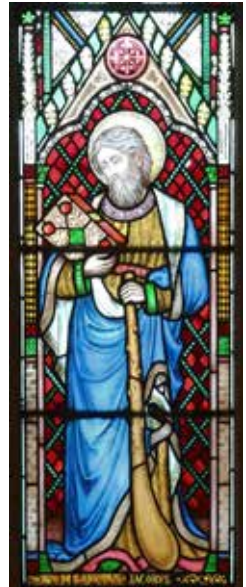
St Michael at West Woodhay



St Catherine at Bearwood



St Lawrence at Bisham



St James the Less at Stubbings

Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

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www.berkschurchestrust.org.uk

Joint Presidents: The Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading
James Puxley Esq., Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire

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Berkshire Historic Churches Trust was founded in 1983 to help with the costs of maintaining the historic churches, chapels and meeting houses, of all Christian denominations, in the Royal County, and to provide funds towards the provision of the facilities that churches need if they are to serve effectively as centres of their communities.

Since its inception it has given grants towards the costs of repairing or replacing roofs, towers, spires, stonework, windows, heating and lighting and installing toilets and kitchens.

All this costs money. To date we have given grants totalling over £650,000 – but this is only a fraction of the costs of keeping our churches in good order, and new requests for help come in every year.

We are most grateful to the Friends of Berkshire Churches who pay a regular subscription to support the Trust.

Recent Grants by Berkshire Historic Churches Trust

All Saints, Boyne Hill, Maidenhead : £10,000

for restoration of the Victorian floor tiles

St Mary, East Ilsley : £3,000

for the restoration of the stonework of windows and re-leading of glass

St Joseph (RC) Maidenhead : £5,000

for replacement of a boiler and improvements to heating

All Saints, Wokingham : £10,000

for a major development project, creating a flexible space in the nave with new flooring, underfloor heating, kitchen and toilets, and accessible entrance