



Walpole Old Chapel - September 2023

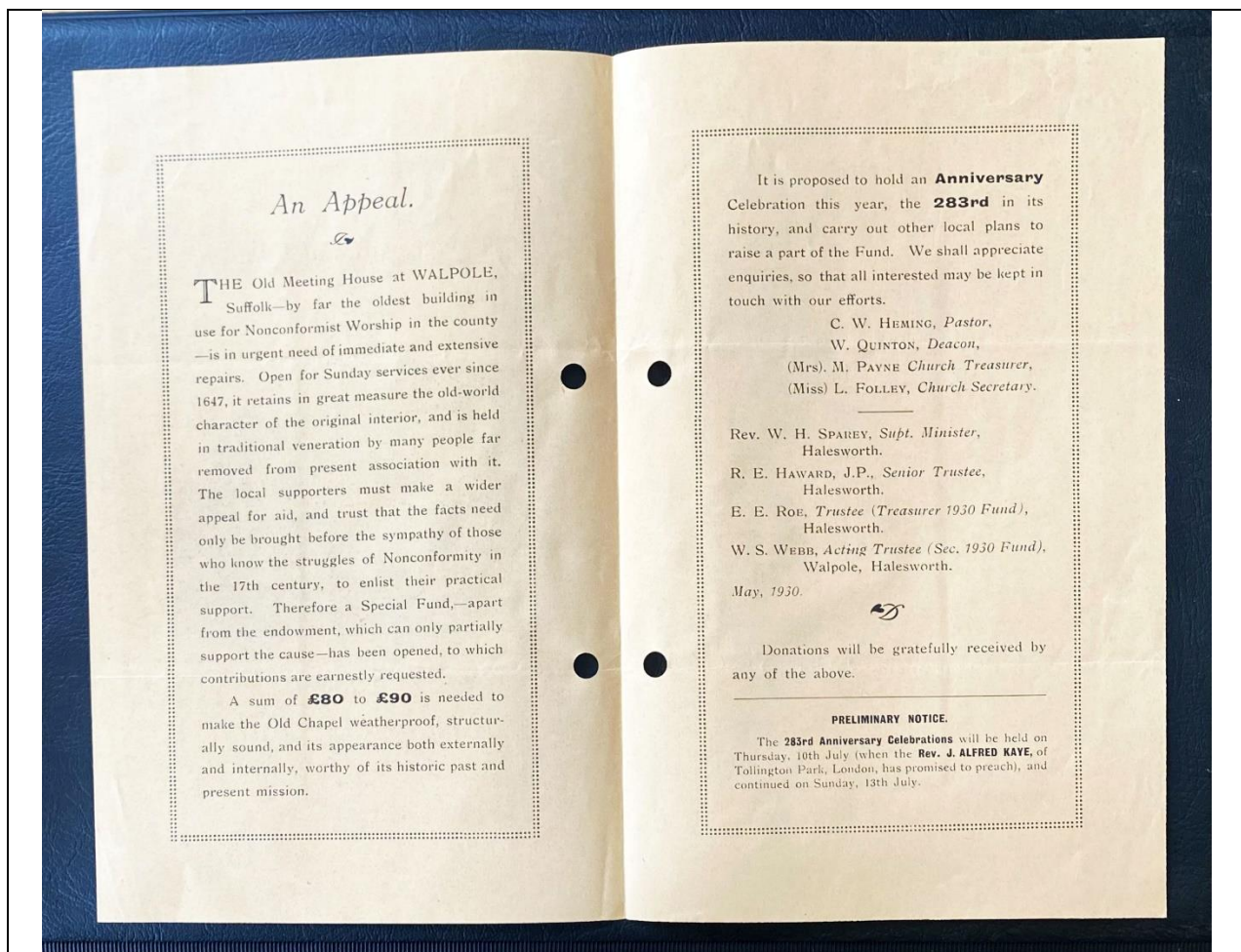


SPAB Archives

Regular readers will know that the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has been quite involved in developing the repair and conservation proposals at The Chapel. The SPAB Fellows and Scholars spent several days at The Chapel in March this year, trying out various types of infill and render to help inform the final specifications for the works. SPAB has also acted as an expert adviser to East Suffolk Council in pre-application discussions relating to Listed Buildings Consent for the works.

So, it was fascinating to find out recently that SPAB was also involved in two earlier phases of repairs to The Chapel – one in 1930, the other in 1950. We are grateful to SPAB for allowing us to use images from their archive to illustrate this story.

In 1930 the Chapel trustees faced a need to fund “*immediate and extensive*” repairs. They put out an appeal for £80 to £90 to “*make the Old Chapel weatherproof, structurally sound, and its appearance both externally and internally, worthy of its historic past and present mission*”. That is not so different to what we are aiming to do today, almost a century later. Would that the sums required were also similar!

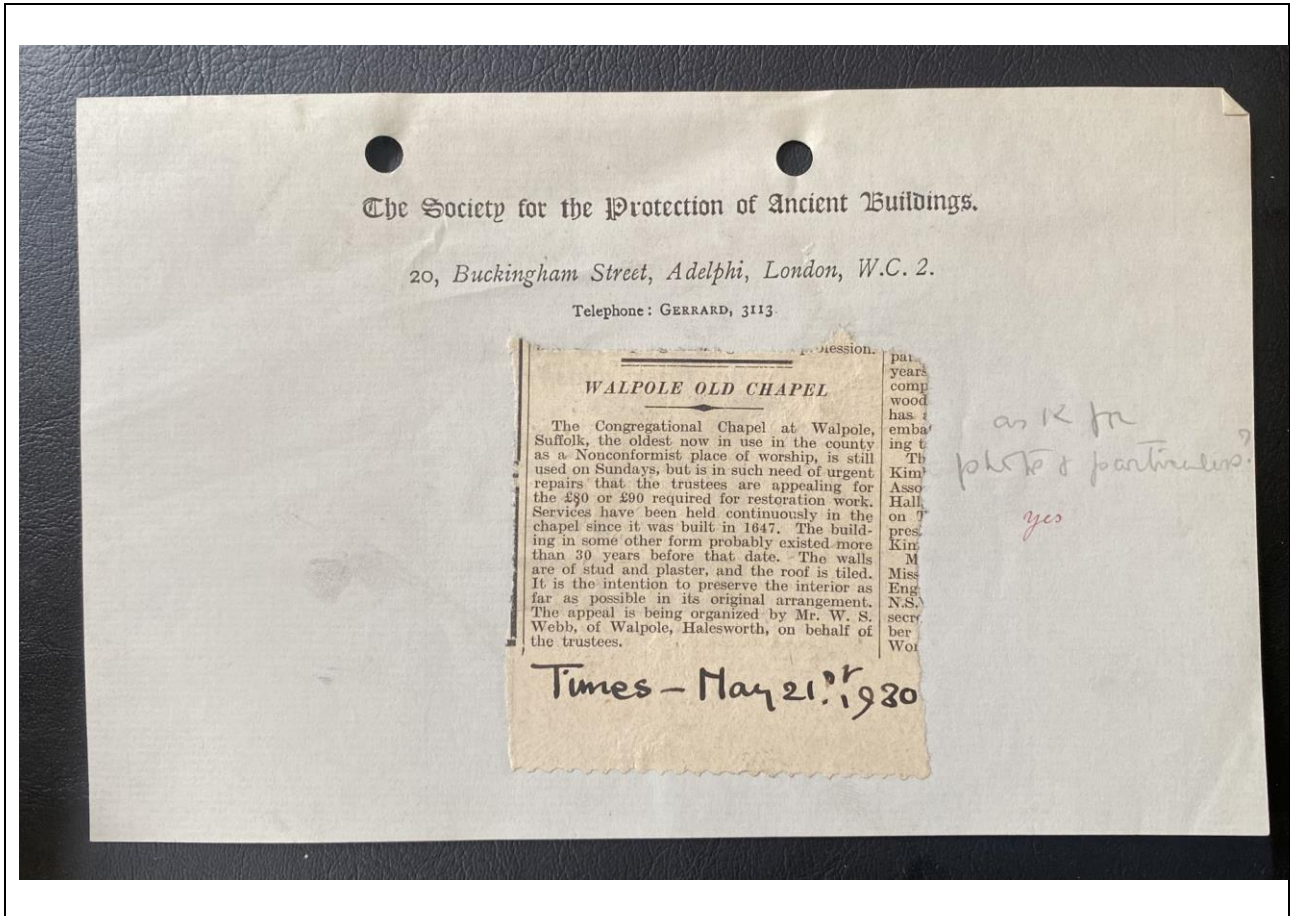




Walpole Old Chapel - September 2023



I love it that 1930 style fundraising involved placing an appeal notice in The Times – presumably in the hope and expectation that this would reach a decent proportion of those people who were willing and able to help. We'll pass this tip on to the fundraising consultants who are working with us now!



SPAB became involved in these earlier repair works as an expert adviser to the County Council, from whom the trustees of The Chapel had sought support.



Walpole Old Chapel - September 2023



Heritage Open Days

We are very sorry to report that we will not be going ahead with our planned event - 'Inspired by Walpole Old Chapel' - for Heritage Open Days on the 9th and 10th September. The Chapel will, however, be open all day on the 9th for Suffolk Historic Churches Trust's 'Ride and Stride' event (see below), so you are welcome to visit at any time then.

'Ride and Stride' - Paul Simmons

The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust is 50 years old this year- formed to support all churches and chapels in Suffolk, regardless of their denomination. Walpole Old Chapel has benefitted in the past and we hope to in the future.

It was the Suffolk Trust that initiated the annual Bike Ride to raise money for the Trust and the local churches. It was a simple formula - the Trust provided the publicity, organisation, paperwork, and for that, any money raised was divided equally between The Trust and the local church/chapel. Some parishes have been participating every year since its launch, sometimes arranging formal tours of churches/chapels with bikes being taken to a starting point by van; a route followed with a lunch at a suitable hostelry and then bikes [and riders!] returned by van to the base village. That got around some people's tiredness of going round the half dozen or so churches/chapels in their immediately vicinity.

Sponsorship was by church/chapel visited [each having a rota of people to book in and sign riders' forms and offer refreshments] or as a 'lump sum'. That proved necessary when some stalwart riders covered 30 or more churches in a day!

The date is generally on the second Saturday of September and latterly has become tied to the Heritage Open days, although the two organisations are not linked formally in any way.

It is quite a mammoth undertaking as a list has to be made of all the churches/chapels that are willing to take part, whether they have toilets [!] and whether there are special arrangements needed if there is a wedding for example at some point during the day. That normally is merely a matter of moving the sign-in in desk to a confetti-free area of the churchyard. The great bugbear of course is the weather- rain is bad but high winds are worse. And anyone who has cycled around Suffolk knows that whatever those outside say, Suffolk is NOT flat, and the wind is ALWAYS in your face it seems...



Walpole Old Chapel - September 2023



It's not just cycling either- you can walk [good for the country towns], ride a horse, or now even drive in a vintage or classic car, hence the new title 'ride and Stride'.

This year the Bike Ride is on Saturday 9th September. Would you like to join Paul Simmons, one of our Trustees, on the Bike Ride? Forms are available from Simon Weeks or from the website <https://shct.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Sponsor-form-2023.pdf> and a list of participating churches/chapels is at <https://shct.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SHCT-Church-List-2023.pdf>. You don't have to start or indeed finish at the Chapel and you can stray into Norfolk, Essex or Cambridgeshire as many Trusts in other counties also join in the fun on the Saturday. Just make sure you put 'Walpole Old Chapel' as the nominated place to receive donations.

Paul normally cycles gently around Halesworth, Walpole, Blyford, Wenhaston and Blythburgh, mostly on local lanes and avoids the worst of the main roads. If you prefer to stay at home, what about supporting Paul by donating on his Just giving website:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/paul-simmons-1693158941337?utm_term=QPXEnxZK7

Conservation and Repair Project

Following the meticulous investigatory work carried out in the spring and pre-application discussions with East Suffolk Council, we are now planning to submit our formal application for Listed Buildings Consent for the re-rendering work this autumn. We hope that Consent will be granted by the end of the year.

Our fundraising consultants have advised that we can make a start on funding applications in parallel with the Listed Buildings Consent process, though we need to carry out further research and consultation before actually submitting any applications (see below for further details).

If all goes smoothly, that means we may be able to carry out the work during 2024, which would be a huge step towards securing the future of The Chapel. The likelihood is that The Chapel will not be open to the public during the work, but don't worry, we are planning to put on a variety of different events. This will certainly include opportunities for people to visit The Chapel to see the work in progress and to meet the crafts people. We are also planning to co-host, jointly with the University of East Anglia History Department, a day symposium on marginal communities in East Anglia. This will be partly informed by the research findings of our own 'Discovery Project'. Please do let us know if there is anything you'd like to see happening while we are 'dark'.



Walpole Old Chapel - September 2023



Research and Consultation

The one area of preparatory work we've been advised we need to strengthen before we put in major funding applications is what we can say about the potential for future growth in visitor numbers and activities.

We would be very grateful if you would complete the online survey (link below). The more responses we get, the stronger the evidence will be, and the greater will be our chances of raising the funds we need for the repair and conservation work. Thank you in advance.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/G2UC37/>

Contact information

Simon Weeks, Secretary: 01986 784348 or info@walpoleoldchapel.org

To become a Friend of the Chapel: friends@walpoleoldchapel.org

To donate on line: <http://easydonate.org/HCTE2>

To contact the Discovery Project team: discovery@walpoleoldchapel.org