

Churches Conservation Trust - Wiltshire Wards

The Churches Conservation Trust was established by the 1968 Pastoral Measure: Ecclesiastical, Church of England law which is also approved by Parliament, and they celebrated their 40th birthday in 2009.

For over 40 years, they have played a unique role in national life. Without us, over 340 irreplaceable historic buildings might have disappeared entirely. Instead many have once again become the focus of active community life.

The organisation started life as the Redundant Churches Fund, a unique partnership between Church, State and the Charity sector, which came about because of the tireless campaigning of passionate church enthusiasts in the 1960s.

Most notable amongst these was Ivor Bulmer-Thomas who not only founded the Trust but also set up its sister charity '[Friends of Friendless Churches](#)', which to this day continues to save churches outside the remit of CCT such as those in Wales.

The 1960s were difficult days for historic churches. Many were falling into disrepair and some were threatened with demolition at a time when historic buildings were sometimes seen as an impediment to progress.

No mechanism or organisation existed for caring for churches where parishes felt they could no longer afford to keep going. If it hadn't been for the commitment of local communities and national campaigners such as Ivor, many of the historic churches we know and love today might have been lost.

The first church saved by CCT was [St Peter's, Edlington](#) in the coalfields of South Yorkshire. The church had had its roof and windows removed in an attempt to turn it into a ruin. It was a Grade I Medieval church in a disadvantaged area with few other historic or community buildings. It is now a highly valued community and arts building, regularly used by local schools and colleges.

For more information about the [Churches Trust](#) and what they do please visit their website.

Currently there are 21 Churches in the county of Wiltshire that are in the care of the Church Trust.

The information in this document is mainly sourced for the website of the Churches Conservation Trust above.

Old Dilton - St. Mary



The 14th-century St Mary's lies down a pretty wooded lane near the river Biss, on one of the many walking paths to the Westbury White Horse.

This delightful little church is approached through a railway arch that opens out onto a simple churchyard, revealing an unusual church – squat yet pretty, with a tiny stone spire like an inverted ice-cream cone. Inside, little has changed since the 18th century and is crowded with plain, bleached box pews, some built on the original Medieval benches, a three-decker pulpit, family pews and two small galleries. The gallery north of the chancel was once used as a schoolroom and contains a fireplace.

St Mary's Church is a Grade I listed building. It was declared redundant on 26 April, 1973 and was vested in the Trust on 6 September, 1974.