



The Gatekeeper

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Church as Sanctuary



At the Churches Tourism Association conference in November I met an inspiring man who made me think again about the notion of church buildings as places of sanctuary. Churches have been perceived as safe places from the very earliest of times. Back in 431 ecclesiastical sanctuary existed within the curtilage of every church and many church doors had a sanctuary knocker – you can see an impressive one on the north door of Durham Cathedral and an equally interesting example in our Diocese at Holy Trinity in Stratford. By grasping the handle of the knocker the fugitive could claim sanctuary from his pursuers.

These days we deal with visitors to our places slightly differently, but the notion of sanctuary is a strong part of our heritage and can be interpreted in contemporary ways.

We can be creative about the ways in which we offer sanctuary and Inderjit Bhogal, who heads up the first ever City of Sanctuary initiative, in Sheffield, had plenty of ideas to share with us at the conference in question. The very simplest way of offering a modern kind of sanctuary is to make friends with those who feel isolated and insecure in a community they may have found themselves in. This happens to many asylum seekers and those with refugee status in all kinds of places across our country but particularly in urban areas. A warm smile and a reassuring handshake can move mountains.

In Sheffield one of their success stories is a 'Conversation Club'. As well as being an opportunity to learn about each other's cultures, it's about fellowship and sharing stories, eating food together and – as a by product – a chance for those who come to improve their English. A different topic for conversation every time.

Exploring and celebrating our similarities can be as rewarding – if not more so – than trying to work through our differences. So perhaps there is something you can do if your church is in a place where there are those who are looking for friendship in a foreign land. Knitting, gardening, food, dance – the possibilities are endless!

You will be cheered to know that Coventry has become a City of Sanctuary – and even more cheered to know that Inderjit Bhogal is a Coventry City football fan! You can find more ideas from <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/sheffield/inspiration>

Tackling Lead Theft

Wednesday 16 February - 6pm to 8pm
Claverdon Church Centre, Claverdon, CV35 8PD

Smith of Derby in association with the Dioceses of Coventry and Leicester, would like to invite you and members of your congregation to a Lead Theft Reduction Seminar at Claverdon Church Centre.

Do come and join us for an informal chat over refreshments followed by practical guidance from Warwickshire Police, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, SmartWater and the British Recycling Association, who are all committed to combating church crime in Warwickshire.

We do apologise for the late notice of this event, but feel that it is important that someone from your parish attend. Please respond to gary.henshaw@smithofderby.com or telephone 01332 345569



CLAIRE'S COLUMN



You may or may not be aware that in my previous life I was an archaeologist, and spent many a happy day up to my ears in mud, digging through to find lots of interesting features and artefacts to help our understanding of the past.

However, archaeology does not just refer to things below ground – our churches are archaeological monuments too. And, as you are probably already aware, alterations to the fabric or excavation into the churchyard can destroy or impair archaeological evidence, which is why the DAC will always advise you whether archaeological works will be required for any proposals you bring to them for advice.

CAN YOU DIG IT?!

Well, the answer is, probably – as long as there is sufficient justification for the work (this is where your Statement of Need is very important), and there is the necessary level of archaeological assessment or investigation included in the proposals.

However, it is worth being aware from the start that archaeological investigation carries an additional expense that would need to be considered in the project budget. There are various levels of archaeological assessment that range from a simple site appraisal to full scale excavation so it is good to get advice at an early stage so you are aware of what might be necessary. We have an Archaeological Adviser on the DAC who will be able to provide advice on this.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS?

It is important to remember that for complex schemes such as extensions to churches, the local authority may wish to see the results of an archaeological assessment prior to making their decision as to whether to grant Planning Permission. The types of work that may require archaeological assessment at some stage include:-

- 1) Alterations/repairs that might disturb the fabric
- 2) Removal/alteration of fixtures or fittings
- 3) Extensions
- 4) Excavation of drainage, service or foundation trenches in the church or churchyard
- 5) Works to monuments and boundary walls.

HUMAN REMAINS

In undertaking any excavation in churchyards, there is always the chance of coming across unmarked graves, and this is clearly a sensitive issue. The premise is that all human remains, however old, must be treated with dignity and respect and should not be disturbed without good reason. If unknown graves or disarticulated bones are encountered during the project work, the DAC will always recommend a condition that “[any] human remains that are unearthed must be treated with respect and put aside for appropriate re-interment”.

Full exhumation of a body where the grave is known may require a license from the Home Office as well as Faculty Consent, alongside evidence that there has been a reasonable attempt to gain permission from the descendents of the deceased, even if this attempt does not prove to be successful.



Archaeology at St Nicolas, Nuneaton, prior to the construction of the extension

For more details go to the DAC website and have a look at our Guidance Note on the subject at <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/admin/dac/advisory/> Council for British Archaeology (CBA) <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/> Or contact us in the DAC office!

NEXT DAC MEETING

The next DAC meeting is on 24th March 2011, and the cut off date for submitting information is 24th February. For those of you who have items on the agenda for the meeting on 9th February, we aim to be in touch with you in the following days with the DAC's advice.

If you have any DAC queries in the meantime, or just want to say hello, contact me in the DAC office on Claire.Strachan@CovLec.org or 02476 521327. The website for the Coventry DAC is <http://www.coventry.anglican.org/admin/dac/>

Re-marking the Remarkable

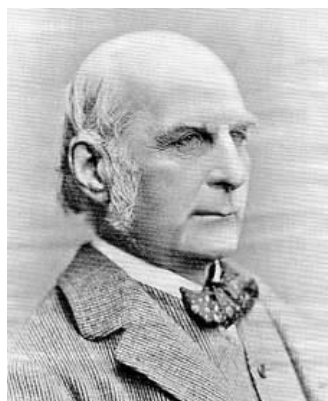
Having a 'notable' associated with your church or churchyard can be a real opportunity. It can also be difficult to handle, especially if the 'notable' is remembered for uncomfortable reasons. Here at Divine Inspiration we encourage parishes to identify people from the past who may have had an interesting life that made an impact on the community. It is often the stories of very ordinary people that are the most engaging.



St Michael & All Angels, Claverdon

At St Michael's at Claverdon they have undertaken a journey, to explore and uncover difficult facts about a notorious late Victorian scientist. Jonathan Evans, Churchwarden at Claverdon, takes us through the process.

"PCCs aren't responsible for the renovation of tombs and gravestones in their churchyards – otherwise the bill would be limitless! But what if the grave is that of a famous scientist, the centenary of whose death is approaching and the grave is in poor condition, with no obvious family members left to pay for repairs? And what if the scientist was an agnostic, and a controversial figure, someone who developed eugenics – the science of "human betterment" through selective breeding – which was taken to extremes, well after his death, in the third Reich?



Sir Francis Galton FRS

"This was the problem facing Claverdon PCC in the lead up to the centenary of the death of Sir Francis Galton FRS on 17 January 2011. The Galtons were landowners in Claverdon for years and the Galton family grave was a crumbling eyesore, its iron railings rusting and broken. The PCC felt that Galton deserved

better than this – for, as well as eugenics, he was also famous for producing the first weather maps, pioneering the use of fingerprints in forensic work, developing the statistical methods of regression and correlation, and lots more besides. So the PCC decided to attempt to renovate the grave in time for the centenary – but with one proviso....no PCC funds were to be used.



Descendants of Galton at the newly restored grave

"This was a challenge. Substantial work was needed to stonework and ironwork, with initial estimates well into five figures. Early searches for funders proved difficult, with English Heritage and the usual suspects all finding that our project did not quite fit their funding criteria. So a different approach was needed.

"We researched possible Galton connections. We approached the Galton Institute in London, who promote the public understanding of human heredity and the ethical issues raised by advances in reproductive technology. They readily backed our project, and became major donors. Trusts with connections with the Birmingham Lunar Society came to our aid as did the Parish Council, and the resident of the house where the Galtons used to live. And to our great delight, the great-great-grandsons of Galton's sister became great supporters – not just financially but also with a fund of stories and family material which shed fascinating light on the man himself.

"We luckily found a contractor prepared to complete the whole job – the Hornton Stone Company Ltd and, with only a few months to spare, the £12,000 cost was miraculously matched by the funds we had raised. A faculty was obtained (thanks Claire!), the contract was let, and the work finished last October in time to mark the centenary in January. Result – the tomb and an ugly part of our churchyard had been transformed!

"The lesson from this: funds are undoubtedly tight at the moment, but with ingenuity, determination, some lateral thinking and a dose of good luck, you can succeed."

You can read more about Sir Francis Galton on the Divine Inspiration Holy Histories page <http://www.divine-inspiration.org.uk/holy-histories/9-sir-francis-galton>

The Night Shelter Pack



There are churches all over the country using their church buildings as winter night shelters for the homeless. For those of us who have a roof over our heads' being homeless in the depths of a winter like the one we have just experienced is unthinkable.

All kinds of churches are responding in ever increasing numbers to this need and Housing Justice, in conjunction with the Church Urban Fund, have put together a Night Shelter Pack aimed specifically at churches who have basic facilities that they feel they can share with those who need - warmth, sustaining food and a bed for the night. Isaiah 58: 7 urges us to "provide the poor wanderer with shelter". Urban churches who have good church halls are well placed to develop a project like this.

'The Night Shelter Pack' is a one-stop shop to help you to explore this as part of your outreach. Churches usually do this kind of thing in partnership with other churches on a rotational basis and the pack contains plenty of information about running a project, the needs of the 'guests' and practical advice and support. Housing Justice have lots of experience to share. You can download the pack from this link to [Housing Justice website](#).

Funding News

The Heart of England Community Fund has announced that it still has a fund of over £43,000 for applicants, which will be awarded in sums of up to £2,000 to each application received and considered. Potential applicants are advised that they can submit applications, until the end of March, that is until the end of the present financial year.



For further information, please contact the Heart of England Community Fund Grants Team on 024 7688 4435 or email info@heartofenglandcf.co.uk

A Date for your Diary

'An Ecclesiastical Adventure'
at St. Gregory, Tredington
Monday, 23rd May
at 6pm



The Warwickshire and Coventry Historic Churches Trust invite you to share in an evening of discovery at one of the most fascinating churches in our Diocese. Clive Fewins, prolific journalist and author of 'The Church Explorers Handbook', will lead us around St Gregory's+, telling the story of how our parish churches have evolved over the centuries. Be prepared to be entertained, delighted and amazed! Tickets are £7.50, including wine and light refreshments. All proceeds to the Warwickshire and Coventry Historic Churches Trust. Please e-mail helen.mcgowan@divine-inspiration.org.uk to pre-order tickets

A Serious Appeal



The Warwickshire and Coventry Historic Churches Trust need a Secretary! This would suit a volunteer with sound administration skills including minute taking and sharing documents electronically with confidence. The Trustees currently meet four times a year. The Secretary also receives applications for grants and forwards these to the decision making committee. The role is not complicated or time consuming but is interesting and very purposeful. If you, or someone you know, might be interested please call Kevin Bond on 07767 616 616 or e-mail him at kbond@m2training.co.uk

Divine Inspiration is funded by English Heritage, through the Inspired! initiative, and the Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance and our services are free of charge to all parishes in the Diocese of Coventry.



Our website www.divine-inspiration.org.uk offers every church a page on the web to market themselves effectively as places of interest for heritage, learning, tourism, culture and leisure.

You can contact us at any time to arrange a visit, to discuss any issues or to explore ways in which you might develop your welcome and research your church heritage in more detail.



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