

The Gatekeeper

The monthly newsletter from

Issue 16 June 2008

www.divine-inspiration.org.uk



DIVINE INSPIRATION

unlocking
churches
in coventry
& warwickshire

Sign up to...

If you are a Sunday Telegraph reader you may already know about this important campaign launched at the end of May by the Editor, Ian McGregor. This is a call to the Government to do much more to help to preserve our church buildings. Along with increased funding for conservation they are asking that grants should be introduced to prevent disused listed places of worship from being turned into night clubs or pubs, and that Government grants should be made available to help listed places of worship become focal points for community life and activity. They also ask that our listed churches should remain exempt from paying VAT on repair work into the future. Ian McGregor says.

“We believe that not only are churches at the heart of practising religion, but they are also crucial in sustaining communities and are an invaluable part of our heritage.

“Specifically we believe that the Government needs to provide more funding and also to change planning rules to help protect the buildings.

“We are relying upon congregations to lend their support if we are to be successful in convincing the Government to do more. Grass roots backing is vital and we hope you will play a key role in galvanising the people in your area – whether from the pulpit or over coffee at the back of church.”

Sir Roy Strong, a regular campaigner for the future of our parish churches, added that “just as the twentieth century in heritage terms was about our great historic houses, the twenty-first will be about our churches.”

Many more of the great and good are lending their names to this campaign including Dr Rowan Williams, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor, Churches Conservation Trust, Joanna Lumley and Griff Rhys Jones.

All Anglican clergy have been sent a letter detailing the campaign along with a poster to be displayed in church, so your vicar should know all about this!

There is also a great opportunity to add your name to a petition by going to www.telegraph.co.uk and typing ‘Save our Churches

petition’ into the search box. Or, if you read the Sunday Telegraph, you can send in the coupon and add your name by post. Do highlight this important campaign. The poster is also available to download and this could be put on your notice-board for all visitors to your building to see, as well as those in your church community.



Photography Competition

Entry forms and Terms and Conditions are available from the Divine Inspiration website Ambassadors pages. It is open to all photographers of all abilities. James took the image below in Alderminster churchyard just this week. The prizes total £800 of camera vouchers. More details in July edition of The Gatekeeper.



Website of the Month

www.ringingroadshow2008.org.uk

The 2008 Ringing Roadshow will be held on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th September 2008 at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

The Roadshow will be the largest ever gathering of ringers and all other bell enthusiasts, and promises to be an excellent day out for all the family.

It encompasses a trade show, a range of learning opportunities, ringing-related entertainment, hands-on activities, shopping, and the chance to meet hundreds of other people with the same passion for bells and bellringing.



This website contains information about all aspects of the show including how to buy tickets.

Statements of Significance

The training event held on the 15th of May was well attended and as a result the 'Writing Better Statements of Significance' pack is now available. You can request it in hard copy from the office or by going to the Ambassadors pages of the Divine Inspiration website where you can download it in the comfort of your own home!

This is the fifth element of our Toolkit and it contains Ten Tips for what needs to be included, a check list so you can share research or writing tasks between you, and a resources sheet with ideas of where to access information relevant to your church.

Many of you have asked for good practice examples of Statements to help you to write your own and we now have a selection of these that can be sent on request. Do call us and we can send them in the post.

Thanks are due to Ray Anderton for answering the many and varied questions, and to Stan Green, from Berkswell church who helped to set up the room and break down at the end of the evening. Everyone who attended commented that St. John Baptist was possibly the best heated church they have ever been in!

Are your Bills bringing you to your knees?

The Conservation Foundation's Parish Pump News magazine, Spring Issue 17, reveals rather concerning details of a new study for the 'Shrinking the Footprint' campaign:

"The Church of England's estimated carbon footprint **is on a par with major supermarket chains.**

"The energy use of its offices, places of worship, clergy houses, schools and halls is measured at around 1.3 million tonnes."



If you felt that now was the time to do something about this you might think about drafting in a Utility Broker to help you assess where you might make changes

and save much needed cash into the bargain. The good news is that we have found one for you! Her name is Sue Hearne and this is what she has to say about her services:

"Is your church struggling to cope with rising fuel bills? Do you lack the time or expertise to negotiate a better deal on your utilities? Are you dismayed by poor customer service?"

"Well if you answered YES to any of these questions I may be able to help. I have had great success in saving churches many hundreds of pounds each year in their expenditure. One rather spectacular saving is over £2,000 saving on a gas bill!"

"As a Christian and regular church-goer myself I understand the need to save money so that it can be more usefully channelled into areas such as repairs and improvements.

"How does it work? Quite simply I visit the person responsible for the bills within the parish and with their permission take copies of the bills. I can look at telephone, broadband, mobiles, gas and electricity. I then highlight areas where savings can be made.

"This is a FREE service and there is NO obligation to go ahead. If they wish to proceed with changes I help make the transfer smooth by keeping in touch

throughout. Afterwards they are assured of my continued support and personal customer service. My growing portfolio of happy clients is testimony to the importance of my personal approach.”

Sue can be contacted on sue@bills-4-less.co.uk
Free phone 0800 093 5088 or Mobile 07962 532241

www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org/news-item.php?id=20



While we are thinking about saving the planet you may also need reminding about the Eco-Congregation project, based at the Arthur Rank Centre. Eco-Congregation developed from a partnership between the Government funded environmental charity ENCAMS (which runs the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign and the Going for Green brand) and the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

It aims to encourage churches to consider environmental issues within a Christian context and enable local churches to make positive contributions in their life and mission. There are lots of great resources to help you to carry out a check-up of your building and some radical ideas for positive change. See their excellent website for further details:

www.ecocongregation.org

Website Updates Please!

As the days get warmer and longer our churches get busier and busier. Do let us know about any events or concerts you have planned over the next few months. If you have a page on our website – and fifty of our churches do! – you can send the information to me and I can add it from the office.

Also, if your opening arrangements have changed for 2008 do update me. It is very important that the information on the site is accurate. Many thanks!

NOTE: Alderminster church has now committed to being open everyday from Easter to the end of September. Their churchyard is managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and the porch has a new display detailing wildlife species that have been identified.

Ride and Stride 2008

Will Hawkes, a Trustee of the Warwickshire and Coventry Historic Churches Trust, is about to embark on the mailing to churches who usually take part in this annual event. This mailing that includes packs for riders and walkers are to be sent out within the next few weeks so if you were wondering where they had got to, never fear, they are on their way. Last year the Trust raised £11,000 on one weekend and it would be wonderful if we could increase this amount in 2008. As Janet is not currently available to take calls about the Bike Ride you need to ring Helen's number 024 7652 1346 for enquiries.

Recommended Signwriter

Several of you have made enquiries recently about having bespoke signs made, either as main noticeboards or A-boards for putting outside your church to let visitors know you are open from a distance. Berkswell have used Philip Parnell recently and their signage is a credit to them so he is highly recommended.

Hallmark Graphics, Bridge House, Brookside
Stretton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire
CV23 9LY Tel/Fax: 024 7654 4421
Email: hallmarkgraphics@tiscali.co.uk

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The three-year project has been designed to enable all parishes in the Diocese to have the opportunity to develop their welcome, explore their churches history and share that story with all who make a visit to their building.

We have planned and delivered a website which will give all churches a portal on the web to market themselves effectively as places of interest for heritage, learning, tourism, culture and leisure.

A volunteer network of Ambassadors has been established to enable representatives of all churches to share good practice, creative ideas and resources. A toolkit is available to give those volunteers a set of resources to compliment the development work they undertake over the next few years.

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 find out about your churches heritage in more detail.



[The N C Bellefontaine Charitable Trust](http://www.ncbellefontaine.org)



**You can contact Divine Inspiration at
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