



## Member's Newsletter October 2011

### Welcome

It's been a busy summer with various initiatives to report upon. We are now less than a month away from CTA's SYMPOSIUM AND AGM in Manchester at Gorton Monastery 11am –3.30 Thursday 3rd November and there is still time to enrol. It promises to be a very informative and inspirational day as we consider the recently published Cathedrals and Parish Churches report, learn about interfaith activities within the North-West, and argue as to whether church buildings need to be independently accredited if they are to present to the public all the essentials which contribute to their identity. CTA's AGM will also form part of the programme and time will be given to take in some of the wonders of the Monastery building. Booking forms can be downloaded from the CTA website or are available direct from Canon John D. Brown at 556 Galleywood Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8BX. Delegate fee is £25 and includes refreshments. Further details of the event and directions for travel will be forwarded to applicants from the middle of October.

### CTA membership update

Since our last edition, the dioceses of Canterbury, Guildford and Lincoln have signed up as members of CTA. Canon John continues to hope that by Easter of next year all 43 dioceses of the Church of England will have signed up, in public affirmation of their support of CTA's main principle of daily openness of church buildings to visitors and tourists.

### A tale of a Nottingham church, some army cadets and a St George's flag....

One of our trustees, Roy Thompson, reports an interesting example of collaboration. Earlier in the summer Sheriff Hutton Church ( with its toilet and hospitality tray ) was used as a lunchtime stop by groups of Nottinghamshire army cadets in camp at Strensall Barracks, who were on a training exercise around the Howardian Hills. A total of 500 cadets attached to the Mercian Regiment were involved in a variety of training activities. On their final day, the Churchwardens gave the cadets a tour of the church and graveyard, visiting the grave of one of the First World War soldiers from the Sherwood Regiment – predecessors of the Mercian, who had died in 1919. As a token of their gratitude for the church's hospitality, the cadets installed a replacement St George's flag on the tower and were visited by their Colonel and Senior Staff from the camp. This was greatly appreciated by the church's Tower Captain who has had a hip replacement!

### Networking in East Yorkshire

Our operations manager, John Irving, who retired earlier this year, recently reported having been to Hull where he met David and Susan Neave, who have achieved great things in East Yorkshire facilitating community self help approaches to saving local churches. We will try to find out a bit more about them for the next newsletter. The following item follows a similar theme.

## Heritage Angels Competition

In June this year, Lord Lloyd-Webber launched the *Heritage Angels Awards* in conjunction with English Heritage. Well known for his love and support of sacred buildings and the heritage of the built environment generally, Lord Lloyd-Webber intends that Heritage Angels will recognise the 'unsung men and women who provide the support and goodwill that bolsters historic buildings and monuments'.

Applications were invited in 4 different categories, including Best rescue/ repair of a place of worship.

Across all categories some 200 schemes were entered; now the shortlist of 16 - 4 schemes in each category – has been created. The winner in each category will be announced in a grand Awards ceremony in Lord Lloyd-Webber's own Palace Theatre, in London, on 31st October.

All of the entrants and their stories can be read online at [www.english-heritage.org.uk/angelawards](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/angelawards) along with details of the rigorous panel of judges. Each entry involves huge local and volunteer commitment, vast amounts of money being raised, a desire to save a local and much loved community building – and an over riding belief that “we knew it was us who had to take action”

## Dean of Brecon goes the extra mile...

Last month, the Dean of Brecon, the Very Revd Geoffrey Marshall, 63 – a CTA trustee – set off on a sponsored bike ride from Brecon Cathedral to Swansea ( 41 miles in 2 days ) and then from Cardiff's Millenium Stadium to the Eiffel Tower, Paris ( 213 more miles in 4 days ). Yes, you did just read that!

The Dean is undertaking this huge challenge to raise money for Shelter Cymru for whom he has recently completed nearly 9 years as a Trustee. His connection with Shelter started back in 1966 when he made coffee for the Press at the charity's launch.

Every pound over £1500 will be given to the Friends of Brecon Cathedral for their Choir Endowment Appeal and that will be

generously match funded by the Charles Shorto Trust.

If you would like to contribute something you can do so via <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Dean-of-Brecon> or send cash/cheque direct to the Deanery or Cathedral Office.

## Developments from the Cotswold Churches Festival

From time to time through the pages of this Newsletter we are able to disseminate really good stories about dioceses taking seriously the need for church buildings to be open to visitors and tourists. So I invite you to read what follows very carefully, in the hope that you will be stimulated by it to reproduce it even if in a smaller scale within your diocese or equivalent ecclesiastical area. The article has been produced by David Gambier who is doing a major piece of work within Oxford Diocese. For further information he can be contacted at [david-g@greatexperiencetravel.co.uk](mailto:david-g@greatexperiencetravel.co.uk) Further information about the Cotswold Churches Festival can be found at <http://www.costswoldchurchesfestival.org>

*The first ever Cotswold Churches Festival took place in May this year. We regarded the event as a great success. We had 110 churches that registered to participate and from the calculations that we were able to make from the reports we received back from the churches, the events staged attracted in excess of 20,000 visitors. Naturally, many of these churches came from the immediate area, but on my travels around nearly 30 of the participating churches, I met up with many people who were clearly travelling to different events in different churches.*

*We had a number of visitors who came from well outside the Cotswold region – especially to those churches which opened up their old records for perusal. It may be anecdotal, but I can tell from the Visitors Book at Stonesfield church where I am one of the church wardens that the number of entries in the book has risen considerably since the Festival. We would like to take this as an indication that the Festival has an important legacy that we can build on.*

*And build on the Festival we are certainly doing. For 2012, we have taken the opportunity to broaden the scope of the event so that we can coincide the Festival concept with the plans that we know are developing across many communities to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Again, whereas the Cotswold Churches Festival only involved a small proportion of the 811 churches within the Oxford Diocese, we have deliberately expanded the area to be involved so that it covers the whole of the Diocese – which includes Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. We are seeking to encourage our neighbouring Dioceses to link in with our plans, along with making the Festival infrastructure available to churches across the denominations – over 30% of the churches which participated were non CofE which made for a truly ecumenical event.*

If you have any news or information about any comparable event within your diocese or ecclesiastical area– and there are a number of Open Church events each year - please email the Editor at [vivienfinch@sky.com](mailto:vivienfinch@sky.com) In the above article David makes reference to planning for celebrations for the Queens Diamond Jubilee. Again, if you have information from which you think other churches could benefit, please e-mail Vivien. We are hoping to publish a programme of such events and so provide a national overview for 2012

## **Cathedrals Plus**

At a recent Cathedrals Plus Conference held in St. Edmundsbury Cathedral, Canon John Brown gave a presentation about a recent survey by Cathedrals Plus and CTA, provocatively entitled '*Cathedrals need Parish Churches more than Parish Churches need Cathedrals. Discuss*'

The main focus of this work has been to assess the big picture of how our Cathedrals engage with the Parish Churches in their Dioceses and vice versa. Of the questionnaires sent out to every Anglican Cathedral, 34 responded. The emerging picture is variable with some good practice regarding communication and collaboration. The implications of this research will be more fully reported in our December issue.

## **A thank-you to Colin Shearer**

It must be back in the year 2000 or if not then very near to this date, that I recall a meeting in the Arthur Rank Centre when Colin Shearer offered to take on the role of Honorary Secretary of the CTA. He did so with some trepidation, not knowing quite what the expectation would be, but Rosemary Watts the then Honorary Secretary made it clear that she would not be able to continue in the role. Colin assured the trustees that since he was employed by the Churches Conservation Trust he was sure that he would receive support from his colleagues in whatever tasks were required of him. I am thankful to say that Colin is still employed by the Churches Conservation Trust although his responsibilities within the organisation have recently changed and indeed enlarged. Colin has given CTA enormous support over the past 10 years or so, but he is now of the view that he must relinquish his responsibilities. Words are totally insufficient to express the gratitude of all of the trustees to Colin, and we shall be gratified that since CTA's link with CCT will continue, we shall not lose contact with Colin altogether. So, Colin, as very BIG THANK-YOU.

## **Next newsletter**

The next edition will be issued in early December with November 30 copy deadline. As this will be pre Christmas, please let the Editor have information of any seasonal events which can be promoted in this edition [vivienfinch@sky.com](mailto:vivienfinch@sky.com)

## **Last word ...**

*I recently visited a town on the south coast of England, where there was a possibility over 40 years ago that I would have served my first curacy. I walked up to the shut doors of the church, which stands in the centre of a bustling small urban community, and was delighted to find that the church was open every weekday, but only from 9.30-12.30pm Turning away from the shut church doors I looked at my watch – 12.35pm. You can imagine my reaction! JB*