



CATHOLIC BISHOPS'
CONFERENCE

PATRIMONY COMMITTEE and PATRIMONY SUB-COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Meetings: Four Committee meetings have been held during the year, in February, June, September and November. The Patrimony Committee and Patrimony Sub-Committee continued to be run in tandem.

Membership:

The membership of the Committee remains almost the same: Bishop Thomas McMahon (Chairman); Sophie Andreae (Vice-Chairman and Chairman Sub-Committee); Emma Bassett; Fergus Brotherton; John Cowdall; Andrew Derrick; Martin Goalen; Canon Alan Griffiths; Fr Peter Harris; William Salvin; Mike State; Abbot Geoffrey Scott and Tricia Brooking (Hon. Secretary). Michael Fitzgerald QC - Secular Planning Lawyer and Mgr Richard Moth - Canon Lawyer, give legal advice as necessary. Since the departure of Fr Allen Morris there has been no representative from the Department of Christian Life and Worship at meetings although Martin Foster has given advice and support upon request. Fr Allen Morris made a major contribution to the work of the Committee and is sorely missed.

Help and Advice:

This is given on request to HCCs. Where necessary additional advice is sought from other professionals with regard to problems or issues relating to specific churches. HCCs are circulated with any relevant information that comes to the Committee from outside bodies such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), English Heritage and the like. English Heritage has been keen to encourage more applications for repair grants from Catholic cathedrals and churches and the Committee alerted HCCs accordingly.

The Patrimony Committee was consulted on an excellent draft document prepared by Birmingham HCC on the Care of Church Organs. This has now been circulated to other HCCs. The Committee welcomes initiatives like this from individual HCCs and is always willing to offer advice.

Publications:

The illustrated book *A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales* was launched on 30th November 2006 and has proved a great success. A second edition was printed very shortly after the launch due to the enormous strength of demand. The book was a collaboration between the Patrimony Committee and English Heritage (which published and distributed the book). There have been numerous favourable reviews both in the national press and in specialist publications. The Rt Rev. Bishop Thomas McMahon was also interviewed about the book by Mark Lawson on Radio 4's Front Row. The author, Christopher Martin, was commissioned to write a series of extended articles on a number of individual churches illustrated in the book for *Catholic Life magazine*. He is also now working on a DVD based on the book which will make use of many more of Alex Ramsay's

outstanding photographs for which there was insufficient room in the book. With support from the Catholic publisher, Gracewing, Christopher Martin has also been undertaking a number of lectures on the subject of historic Catholic churches. The Patrimony Committee remains hopeful that English Heritage will publish a paperback version of the book. Given the demand for the hardback, there seems every likelihood that a paperback version would sell very well. However, a decision on this is on hold whilst an internal review of EH's publications department is underway.

Patrimony Committee member, Andrew Derrick, guest-edited an issue of *Ecclesiology Today*, the magazine of the Ecclesiology Society. This came out in the Spring and was the first time that the Society had devoted an entire volume to the subject of Catholic church architecture. The edition, which comprised essays written by a number of acknowledged experts, was very well received. The volume was particularly well illustrated, again mainly using photographs taken by Alex Ramsay for *Glimpse of Heaven*.

HCC Conference:

This year's Conference was held in May in St Wilfrid's Hall at the Brompton Oratory. There were 66 delegates, the majority representing HCCs. A number of Diocesan Archivists, Art & Architecture Committee Members, Property Managers/Surveyors and Trustees also attended. Other organisations represented were:- the Churches Conservation Trust, Department of Culture Media and Sport, Department of Heritage and Local Government (Eire), English Heritage, Historic Chapels Trust, the Historic Churches Preservation Trust (now called National Churches Trust), the United Reformed Church, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Victorian Society and the World Monuments Fund.

Presentations on Diocesan Pastoral Reviews were given and the essential role that HCCs can and should play in giving advice was discussed. It was emphasised that HCCs should be consulted at the earliest opportunity if there are proposals to close a church of historic interest and that the advice an HCC can offer can be of immense help and value to individual dioceses. In the afternoon, Dr. Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass at the V&A gave an illustrated talk on Recusant Silver. At the end of the Conference, Dr Murdoch and her museum associates gave delegates a tour of the Sacred Silver Gallery at the V&A.

Taking Stock Projects:

Following the success of the projects in the Dioceses of Arundel & Brighton and in Lancaster, similar audits of diocesan church buildings are being carried out. The review of Portsmouth is complete and those for Middlesbrough, Leeds and Liverpool are currently underway. Initial discussions have been held with Clifton, Southwark and Westminster with a view to English Heritage supporting similar initiatives in those dioceses. It is understood that Shrewsbury, Salford and Birmingham have also expressed interest. The initial audits (now called Taking Stock Projects) were very generously fully funded by English Heritage. Funding is now on a 50/50 basis between EH and respective dioceses. This still represents good value for dioceses. The great advantage of having a Taking Stock review undertaken is that dioceses can become fully informed and conversant with the heritage value of their buildings. Having this information in a readily accessible form provides diocesan trustees and parishes alike with an invaluable tool for future planning and pastoral review. Unexpected spot-listings should no longer take those responsible for church buildings by surprise and upset long term pastoral planning. The Patrimony Committee urges all dioceses to participate in the EH scheme before the funding stream runs out or before it is spoken for by other denominations who are now increasingly applying for this particular funding.

Archives: Abbot Geoffrey Scott continued to keep the Committee informed of the work of the Catholic Records and Archives Societies and other issues relating to archives. The CAS sent a draft copy of their document 'The Care and Administration of Parish Records' which the Patrimony Committee commented on and which has since been published. There was concern that a number of Catholic libraries, either wholly or in part, have been sold.

Committee member, Fr Peter Harris, (in his role as archivist at the English College, Valladolid) attended a meeting of the Society of Archivists "Special Collections" Conference at the British Library together with the archivists of Westminster and the Bishops' Conference. In an informal meeting all agreed to work together. Valladolid has agreed to make the initial investment to purchase 'CALM' (an archive computer programme). The others, and possibly the English College in Rome, can then purchase licences and become licensed users. This would enable the catalogues of their collections to be put on the internet and be accessible to all.

Vatican Documents:

The Vatican Information Service continues to be monitored for relevant information.

Endangered Churches and related patrimony matters:

The future of the Grade II* listed church at Amlwch on Anglesey looks more promising now that a Cadw grant has been offered for repairs. A group of local people has come together to help take the project forward. The Patrimony Committee has offered advice on Our Lady of the Assumption in Tavistock and on Quarr Abbey. It remains concerned about the implications of the probable church closures that might result from the pastoral review currently being undertaken in the Diocese of Lancaster.

On other patrimony matters, the Committee has also been actively involved in supporting efforts to secure the future of Walpole's Strawberry Hill in Twickenham, and in ensuring that, rather than being sold through the salerooms with every probability of going abroad, a highly important recusant reliquary belonging to the Poor Clares' (from their former Convent in Darlington) was instead lent on long term loan to the V&A Museum. In addition to libraries and archives, the early identification and safeguarding of significant objects, particularly those with important historical associations (of which those responsible for them are sometimes unaware) is increasingly an area in which the Committee is being asked for help.

Central Register for Contents of Closed Churches:

There was no longer the personnel available in the Department to action this initiative. However, Committee member, Martin Goalen, had made enquires about the storage of redundant artefacts and would talk about the matter at the next HCC Conference.

Heritage Protection Bill:

Members of the Committee attended a meeting at the Department of Media and Sport about the proposals contained in the White Paper to discuss how these might affect the current operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption. It was noted that the Heritage Protection Bill involved two government departments. DCMS was in the lead in close consultation with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DPLG). There were likely to be some changes before any legislation was enacted and the Committee would continue to play an active part in the ongoing consultation process.

Other Denominations:

Sophie Andreae continued to be the Catholic representative on English Heritage's Places of Worship Forum. This committee advises EH on policy matters relating to the heritage of both Christian and non Christian places of worship.

Planned Work:

HCC Conference. The 2008 Conference will be held in Leeds on 24th April.

Other matters will continue to be dealt with as they arise and when requests are received from HCCs and other bodies. As noted above the Committee will be involved in the on-going consultation about the Government Bill on Heritage Protection.