



PATRIMONY COMMITTEE and PATRIMONY SUB-COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Meetings: Three Committee meetings have been held during the year, in March, June and October. A further meeting will be held later in November. The Patrimony Committee and Patrimony Sub-Committee continued to be run in tandem.

Membership:

The membership of the Committee remains the same: Bishop Thomas McMahon (Chairman); Sophie Andreae (Vice-Chairman and Chairman Sub-Committee); John Cowdall (Vice-Chairman of the Patrimony Sub-Committee); Emma Bassett; Fergus Brotherton; Andrew Derrick; Martin Goalen; Canon Alan Griffiths; Fr Allen Morris, 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. Martin Foster has given advice and support upon request and copies of the minutes are sent to him.

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 or other more general issues. 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. Mgr Gordon Read has given invaluable help with the document the Patrimony Committee is preparing on the closure of churches.

Publications:

English Heritage has just published a new, revised paperback edition of *A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales*. The Patrimony Committee is helping with the publicity and flyers are being sent to all parishes in England and Wales with additional copies being sent to churches featured in the book. The magazine, Catholic Life, is also sending out flyers with its December issue.

English Heritage will launch a booklet on new work in cathedrals, *English Cathedrals: Yesterday, Today and Forever*, at the beginning of December. Three Catholic cathedrals have been included, Liverpool, Leeds and Westminster and members of the Patrimony Committee have given advice on the text. The Archbishop of Westminster has jointly signed a foreword to the publication with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop Vincent is attending the launch on December 1st at St. Paul's Cathedral.

HCC Conference:

The Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral in London very generously hosted this year's Conference, waiving the hire fee and some other costs. There was the biggest attendance to date (94), with representatives of many other organisations with an interest in our work.

The speakers were all excellent: Diana Evans, Head of Places of Worship Policy, English Heritage, spoke on *The Bigger Picture: What English Heritage is Doing to Help*. Stephen Morgan, Financial Secretary, Portsmouth Diocese, and Chairman of the Conference of Financial Secretaries' gave a talk entitled *Squaring the Circle: Heritage, Community and Resources* and Paul Lewis, Pastoral and Closed Churches Secretary, Church Commissioners spoke about *Closing Churches: Procedures, Pitfalls and Possibilities*.

After lunch, Martin Stancliffe, Surveyor to the Fabric at St. Paul's Cathedral, gave an illustrated talk on *St Paul's: Enabling the Building to Speak*. There was then tours to look at recent new work in the Cathedral and also to see areas of the Cathedral that are not open to the public such the Library, the Dean's Stair and Wren's Great Model in the Trophy Room.

Taking Stock Projects:

These studies, which are being jointly funded by individual dioceses and English Heritage, provide a detailed assessment of the architectural and historic value of all churches and chapels in a particular diocese. Projects have now been carried out in Lancaster, Arundel and Brighton, Portsmouth, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Liverpool, Plymouth and Northampton. Further dioceses have applied to English Heritage: Westminster, Brentwood, Shrewsbury and Southwark. Linda Monckton is the new EH officer overseeing these projects (taking over from Sarah Brown). She is on a two year secondment and is keen to see all English dioceses covered. The survey of Middlesbrough Diocese has been edited and will be put up on the Bishops' Conference website. It is hoped that eventually all surveys will be put up to show the rich heritage of the Catholic Church and to make the historical information more generally available.

Support Officer:

English Heritage is making funds available for the employment of Historic Places of Worship Support Officers. The purpose of Support Officers is to build the capacity of congregations and dioceses to care for their historic buildings so that they have a sustainable future as places of worship. Partnership funding has been agreed this year by Board of the Bishops' Conference and an application will be made to English Heritage shortly.

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.

Vatican Documents:

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

Endangered Churches and related patrimony matters:

Bishop Thomas accompanied by Sophie Andreae, John Cowdall and Fr Peter Harris made a presentation to the Low Week meeting of the Bishops' Conference in Leeds. They covered a broad number of subjects relating to the Church heritage and emphasised that the Patrimony Committee was committed to helping Bishops with problem listed buildings. They

emphasised the importance of the Taking Stock surveys as a way of ensuring that dioceses had up to date and relevant information about their stock of church buildings. Most importantly, they explained that Taking Stock provided dioceses with a professional, expert and balanced assessment of the relative historic and architectural importance of churches which was of great value in relation to any discussions about pastoral review or possible closures.

Ecclesiastical Exemption

The Department of Culture Media and Sport is planning to consult publicly on the new Ecclesiastical Exemption Order and new draft Guidance shortly. The Patrimony Committee will liaise with HCCs and make representations accordingly.

Fr Alan Griffiths had discussions with the Estates of Jersey and obtained agreement that the Southern HCC would be consulted in any application relating to Catholic churches on the island.

Cathedral Fabric Survey:

The existing grant scheme for cathedrals has come to an end. English Heritage prepared a questionnaire which was sent to all CofE and Catholic cathedrals to up date the information obtained from previous fabric surveys and to make the case to government for further financial assistance for cathedrals. Bishop Thomas wrote to all Catholic Cathedral Deans at the beginning of the year encouraging them to respond fully to the questionnaire and the Patrimony Committee subsequently ensured that all responded. The results will be collated and initial findings announced in early December at the launch event at St. Paul's Cathedral in London (see under Publications above).

Other organisations and contacts:

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. She has also been invited to be the Catholic representative on Places of Worship at Heritage Link (POWLink).

Sophie gave a talk about the work of the Patrimony Committee to Parliamentary Historic Churches and Chapels Group in the House of Commons in April.

The Patrimony Committee meeting in February was attended by Oddbjørn Sormoen. He is on secondment to English Heritage from the Directorate of Cultural Heritage in Norway. He was interested to learn how Catholic churches are looked after in this country and the rest of Europe.

During the year she and Fr Peter Harris also had meetings with a Canadian and an Australian wishing to know how Ecclesiastic Exemption worked in England and Wales to enable them to develop appropriate systems in their own countries.

Planned Work:

HCC Conference. The 2010 Conference will be held at St John's Cathedral in Norwich on 13th May.

Other matters will continue to be dealt with as they arise and when requests are received from HCCs and other bodies.