

# Heritage & Buildings Newsletter

No. 1 – January 2014



From **Ian Simpson**

**Heritage Support Officer for the Diocese of Liverpool**

Cover photograph: St. Michael's, Garston (1877, by T.D. Barry & Son, Listed Grade II). This is the third church on this site – the first was built by the monks from Stanlow in 1215 and lasted until the time of King Henry VIII.

Rear Cover Photographs: Holy Trinity, Parr Mount (1857, by W. & J. Hay, Listed Grade II). Holy Trinity is unique in being built almost entirely of copper slag (recycled waste from the local chemical industry). Inside it features the second oldest surviving use of glued laminated timber in construction in the UK.

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Author's Note: this Newsletter consists entirely of my own personal thoughts, reflections and opinions from my work as Heritage Support Officer. It is NOT an official publication of either the Diocese of Liverpool or English Heritage and is not to be taken as such.

Ian Simpson MBA CBIFM, January 2014



## Welcome!

I'm Ian Simpson, Heritage Support Officer for the Diocese of Liverpool and this is the first issue of my **Heritage & Buildings Newsletter**. I'm hoping this will be a quarterly publication through which I can share various aspects of my work which will be of interest or inspiration (or both!) to everyone involved with caring for historic churches.

My role is to ensure that Liverpool's historic Anglican Churches are open, sustainable, well-maintained and as widely used as possible, to the glory of God in whose name they were built and to the benefit of the communities they serve. I can advise on creative adaptations, cost-reduction strategies, maintenance, health & safety, grant applications and welcoming tourists and visitors and my position is 75% funded by English Heritage.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at St. James' House either by email ([ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org)) or telephone (0151 705 2127). I look forward to hearing from you!

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## News Round-Up



**St. Dunstan's Edge Hill** (1889, by Aldridge & Deacon, Grade II\*) celebrates its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. The church is currently having an underfloor heating system installed which will help protect the building for the future as well as keeping the congregation comfortable. St. Dunstan's is also awaiting Faculty permission for a proposed re-ordering including the installation of a specially-designed Altar and Ambo.

Other notable anniversaries coming up in 2014: **St. Stephen's Hightown** will be 100, **Christ Church, Ince-in-Makerfield** will be 150 and **St. George's Everton** will celebrate its bicentenary having been consecrated in 1814. Congratulations to all these churches on reaching notable landmarks and thanks to all – living and departed – who have helped care for them during that time.

If you would like any news items from your church, or an event you are organising, including in future issues of my **Heritage & Buildings Newsletter**, please let me know. The deadline for inclusion in Issue #2 (April 2014) is Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Hosting a Credit Union in Church

Back in July, the Archbishop of Canterbury's expression of support for credit unions was reported by the media primarily as a declaration of war on the "payday lenders" which are now found on every high street. Maybe it was, but to the Church His Grace's words should be seen more as an invitation to participate in promoting the Kingdom values of justice and mercy: justice, in that the lower interest rates offered by credit unions (CUs) benefit those in need of the loan rather than the already-wealthy shareholders in impersonal venture capital companies; and mercy, as CU borrowers who get into difficulties with repayments are not forced into the punitive downward spiral of ever-increasing debt which is the lot of the loan shark's victim.

If, as has been reported, 60% of the population would benefit from a CU's services but only 13% are aware of them and 2% are members this suggests a huge potential for CU expansion. Even if your local CU already has premises near your church, it may well need an additional collection point to cope with future demand.

This article will look at what needs to be done to make your church building suitable for use by a CU, explore a case study from the Liverpool Diocese, and look at some of the complementary activities which could work alongside a CU in a church setting.

You might imagine – I did! – that hosting a CU would involve quite a bit of computer equipment and require an Internet connection. Well it ain't necessarily so. If your church were to be the CU's head office then it probably would require hundreds of pounds worth of IT gadgetry, but for a collection point the requirements are much simpler. As the name suggests, this is a local facility for members who may live some distance from the head office to come in and make regular payments or for prospective members to enquire about membership and hopefully join. The transactions are recorded on paper and transferred to the computer system later at head office.

A room, or partitioned area, preferably as accessible as possible and containing a table and some chairs, is all that is required. There is a need to balance the privacy of those making a transaction with the safety of the CU volunteers and the security of the members' cash so the area used should be neither too public nor too isolated. Ideally the Credit Union will not be the only activity taking place in the church, so that there are other people around while it is in operation.

A very good example of this in practice within our Diocese is at St. Barnabas' Church, Penny Lane, where the Lodge Lane & District CU operates a collection point on Tuesday mornings at the same time as the church holds its successful coffee morning. The CU uses the Parish Rooms, which are accessed via the main body of the church. There is a confidential space for transactions to be carried out, and there is visibility of those coming and going.

The Lodge Lane & District CU moved into St. Barnabas' in February 2013 following an expansion of its "common bond" area to include the L18 postal district. This is some distance from the CU's head office, and the CU pays a small monthly rental to the church for use of the premises. The coffee morning is of course open to CU members, several of whom do stop for a drink and a chat after their business is complete.

It is interesting to note that two clergymen were instrumental in the founding of the Lodge Lane & District Credit Union in 1989: Rev. Simon Starkey, then of St. Bede's Toxteth, and his Roman Catholic counterpart Fr. Peter Morgan. Today it has over 4,400 members and over £1m in savings. It has two "shop front" premises – in Lodge Lane and Lawrence Road – and collection points at St. Barnabas' Church and Sefton Park Community Centre.

Credit Unions are but one piece of the jigsaw when it comes to the provision of financial justice. Churches with a heart for this kind of ministry might consider offering a debt counselling service. St. Andrew's Church in Clubmoor offers churches a franchise-type approach to doing this and – for an annual fee – provides software, insurance and training for the volunteers who will run the service.

In addition to a supply of willing volunteers, any church considering offering this service will require computers with internet access. Please note that if there is not already a telephone landline in your church to which a broadband router can be connected, you will need to obtain a Faculty to install one. 3G or 4G Broadband "dongles" are acceptable as a temporary fix – provided you can receive the signal in your church – but are not cost-effective in the long run. If you are introducing computers in church, please let your insurers know!

Another use to which internet-connected computers in church might be put is to run a Job Club. These generally run weekly sessions for unemployed people, offering motivation, peer support and practical help (such as free internet access, printing / copying and newspapers), often with a high success rate. Churches wanting to run a Job Club might like to contact Christians Against Poverty which is looking for local partners to expand its network of Job Clubs: it doesn't have any in the Liverpool, Southport, St. Helens or Widnes areas.

Christians Against Poverty also organises Financial Literacy courses, helping people who have had no training in the use of money to budget and manage their finances so as to avoid falling into the trap of borrowing from payday lenders and loan sharks.

Whether it is hosting a Credit Union, running a debt counselling service or a Job Club, or presenting a financial literacy course, there is potentially a role your church can play in bringing Gospel values into the financial life of your community, and I hope this article will inspire you to get involved. Do contact me if I can advise or assist you in taking this further.

[Author's Note: Many thanks for assistance with this article are due to Rev. John Davis of Together Liverpool and to the Lodge Lane & District Credit Union.](#)

## Ten Top Tips for Welcoming Visitors & Tourists

One aspect of my role – and it is something I greatly enjoy – is encouraging churches to be open to and welcoming towards visitors and tourists. In this context the difference between a “visitor” and a “tourist” is that the former lives locally to the church and the latter has travelled to the area served by the church from further afield. Visitors and tourists may come for slightly different reasons but they have some needs in common and this article looks at how best these can be met.

Why bother? Research by the Church Visitor & Tourism Association (CVTA) shows that 40 million visits are made to churches each year and that on average a parish church can expect between 700 and 4,000 visits a year. These are figures most churches can only dream of in terms of their congregations, and represent a massive opportunity for mission. Most church visitors are happy to make a donation to church funds if approached in the correct manner.

But what about insurance? Surely having people wandering around the church puts it at risk of damage, vandalism or theft? The official position from Ecclesiastical Insurance which insures 97% of Anglican churches is that churches should be open as often as possible: if they are obviously open, cared for, and – where possible – attended, this actually deters crime. There are some obvious precautions to observe, such as locking away valuables and cash and preventing access to dangerous areas such as boiler rooms and vertical ladders, and Ecclesiastical’s website gives full details of these.

2014 is the hundredth anniversary of the start of World War I and the interest generated by this will bring additional visitors to those churches which have war memorials, but even if your church does not have a war memorial now is the time to start looking at how well your church welcomes visitors and tourists. Here are my Ten Top Tips to get you started!



**1. Decide on opening times and stick to them.** We all accept that occasionally there will be a funeral or similar which prevents the church from being open to the public, but generally sticking to set times allows the church to plan for volunteer attendants to be available and visitors to plan their visit.

**2. Publicise the fact the church is open.** There are so many low-cost and no-cost ways of doing this nowadays that there is no excuse for not doing so! Place a sign outside the Church, advertise it on Facebook, Twitter and / or the church website. The more people know your church is open, the more people will come and visit it.

**3. Offer visitors a warm and genuine welcome.** Hospitality and welcome are at the heart of our faith and opening up our churches gives us the opportunity to practice them. It is obviously best to have someone there to greet visitors, talk to them and offer to show them around, but if this is not possible then some attractive welcome signs with contact details and basic information about the church should be provided.

**4. Give visitors accurate and up-to-date information.** It is better to offer no information at all than to leave out-of-date information on display. Nobody wants to come to a church and read a poster advertising last year's Christingle service or a flower festival which finished a week ago. It is even worse if details such as service times, contact details, etc., are out of date.

**5. Make votive candles available.** Many people who visit churches aren't interested in "joining" or attending regular religion, but they are happy to sit, pray and light a candle – perhaps in memory of a loved one or as a prayer for someone who is ill. They are generally happy to make a donation in return for the candle. One church paid for new toilet facilities entirely out of the profits from its votive candle stand!

**6. Write – and sell – a quality guidebook.** Guidebooks can be lucrative as a lot of people collect them as souvenirs of their visit. Make it as attractive and as accurate as possible. I am producing some guidelines on writing and selling church guidebooks which will be available shortly.

**7. Make Gift Aid envelopes available.** Gift Aid increases the value of any donations received by 25% at no extra cost to the giver provided s/he is a UK taxpayer.

**8. Leave a Guestbook out and encourage visitors to sign it.** The Guestbook is a very useful source of information which builds up over time: how many visitors came, where they came from, what they liked and – perhaps more importantly what they didn't like – about it. It is also a means of communication as visitors can leave prayer requests, personal memories of the church and other messages.

**9. Consider partnerships with other local churches, businesses or attractions.** If there are other churches nearby, why not consider co-ordinating visiting times and forming a "tourist trail"? A local cafe or tea-room might offer church visitors a small discount in return for some publicity on the church noticeboard or in the church magazine / guidebook? The possibilities are endless.

**10. Join the CVTA.** The CVTA (Churches Tourism Association until October 2013) is the UK's premier association for those involved in church tourism and offers a website with loads of useful resources, a regular email Newsletter and an excellent annual Symposium. You will get lots of useful ideas and support, all for £18 per annum. Visit <http://www.churchestourism.info> or send me an SAE for an application form.

One of my projects for 2014 is to increase the number of Liverpool Diocese churches which are open to visitors and tourists and to support those which already are and which seek to improve the experience they offer to their visitors or to attract more of them. Please do get in touch, let me know what YOUR church is doing and how I can be of assistance.

## Lost Churches: 1. All Saints, Princes Park

Whilst the main focus of my work is keeping churches open, in use and well-maintained, I do have a fascination with the ones we've lost. Partly this is because knowing what beautiful buildings have already gone gives us an impetus to cherish and appreciate those which are still among us; the other reason is that these churches all gave years of service to their communities and that so many people sanctified their joys, their sorrows and their day-to-day lives within their walls. Buildings and people alike, they deserve to be remembered.



All Saints' Church was built on Bentley Road in the then well-to-do suburb of Princes Park between 1882 and 1884. The architect was Gordon M. Hills and – as was the case with several other Liverpool churches of the time, such as St. Dunstan, Edge Hill – it replaced a temporary iron church.



All Saints was built in brick, with stone dressings. The photographs (taken in 1970 and 1971) show that it was quite an impressive building with a four-bay Nave, high clerestory and a bellcote or fleche flanked by turrets at the meeting of Nave and Chancel.



At the East end of the church the Chancel was separated from the Nave by a wrought iron screen. Unfortunately this photograph does not show much detail of either the reredos or the three east windows; what we can see though is that the church must have seated several hundred people.



At the West end of the church was what appears to have been a lean-to structure where the main public entrances were also situated. The two plain glass windows of this were mirrored at high level by the unusual pair of West windows, also glazed in plain glass.

Princes Park's fortunes waned over the years as wealthier families moved further out of the city and the housing stock deteriorated, and a number of its churches were closed in the 1970s. All Saints' Church was closed in 1972 and demolished in 1974. The photographs reproduced here were taken in the run-up to its closure and are stamped on the rear "Diocese of Liverpool Pastoral Committee". All Saints' parish was absorbed by St. Bede's which is now part of the United Benefice of St. Clement with St. Bede, Toxteth.

## “Making It Easier Guides”: Health & Safety

“Making It Easier” is an initiative of the Diocese of Liverpool. Recognising that an ever-increasing tide of bureaucracy threatens to overwhelm those who run and care for churches – usually volunteers with other calls on their time – the Diocese and its staff are committing to do what they can to, literally, “make it easier” for them.

This extra work for church volunteers comes from many sources: HMRC and the new Real Time Payroll system, changes to safeguarding rules and DBS procedures, changes to the Gift Aid system to name but a few. My personal commitment in respect of the Making It Easier agenda is to Make It Easier for parishes to meet their obligations under Health & Safety Law.

In November 2013 I delivered two hour-long training sessions introducing the basics of Health & Safety Law as it applies to churches. These sessions were well-attended and if they caused even one person to abandon an unsafe practice for a safer way of working then they were worth the effort.



Why am I so determined to help make churches safer? In 2011/12 I carried out some research as part of my MBA into risk management in Anglican Churches and I discovered a very low level of safety-awareness, including a widely-held but wrong belief that "all that health and safety stuff doesn't affect us, you know, we are volunteers!". Well, a dodgy ladder doesn't know whether or not the person who is about to fall off it is getting paid...

I have also written the first three of a series of "Making It Easier Guides" on Health & Safety. These are A5-sized printed guides each taking a particular topic as its subject and making it relevant in a church setting.

So far available are:

- Electrical Safety in Your Church
- Working Safely At Height In Churches
- Personal Safety In And Around Churches

These are available as FREE PDF-format downloads from the Diocese of Liverpool's website (<http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/Health---Safety>) or, if you want a printed copy of any or all of them, send me a stamped, self-addressed A5 envelope (Large Letter / 90p stamp) and I will get them to you ASAP. The address is: Ian Simpson, Diocese of Liverpool, St. James' House, 20 St. James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY.

More Guides are in the pipeline. These will be announced on the Diocesan website and in the next issue of **Heritage & Buildings Newsletter** once they are available.

If you need specific advice about a Health & Safety issue affecting your church, I will be pleased to discuss this with you so please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Matka: Lakeside Treasure of the Orthodox Church



In May 2012 I visited Macedonia where I was delighted to find a number of ancient Orthodox churches open, attended and generally in a reasonable state of repair. Sv. Andreja (St. Andrew's Monastery Church) sits by the shore of Lake Matka, a 35-minute taxi ride from the capital, Skopje.



Sv. Andreja was built in 1389 although the Narthex is a 16<sup>th</sup>-Century addition. Built to a cruciform plan with an octagonal tower, the church sits on a narrow strip of flat land between the hills and Lake Matka. The church's small windows are typical of Orthodox churches of the period.

Upon entering Sv. Andreja, as with any Macedonian Orthodox church, the accepted tradition is to cross oneself three times and immediately light a candle. It takes a few minutes for the eyes to become accustomed to the low light level in order to appreciate the wonderful frescoes here.



The frescoes are the work of Metropolitan Jovan, an illustrious religious artist of the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century, and a monk called Grigorije. Grigorije appears to have been Jovan's assistant or apprentice but nothing else is known of him and no other artwork bears his name.

The powerful and lifelike depictions of the Holy Warriors are quite unique: all other Macedonian Orthodox churches of the period bear depictions of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Family, saints and hermits.



Almost every surface in Sv. Andreja is decorated and the quality of both the materials and craftsmanship is evident from the fact that the colours are still vivid and the figures still lifelike over 600 years after they were created.

Macedonia is a poor country so historic churches are maintained on a very limited budget and heavily reliant on generous donations from visitors. Little work has been done to make them "visitor-friendly" and some of what has been done seems makeshift – for instance the bare fluorescent lighting tube visible in the photograph (above, left) – but they are kept open and they are attended. Generally the attendants are elderly and speak little if any English; at Matka the attendant when I visited was a delightful man in his 80s with whom I managed to converse by cobbling together some phrases in a mixture of Russian and Croatian! He very kindly gave me permission to take a few photographs inside the church on condition that I used no flash. Normally photography is not permitted at all inside Macedonian Orthodox churches and indeed this was the only church where I was allowed to take pictures.

## Just For Fun....

WHAT is this structure, and WHERE is it? A clue: it belongs to an Anglican Church somewhere in the Diocese of Liverpool. Answer in [Heritage & Building News #2, April 2014](#),



## In [Heritage & Building Newsletter](#) next time...

- Japanese Knotweed – recognising it and dealing with it
- Asbestos in Churches – what you need to know
- Lost Churches of Liverpool: 2. St. Catherine Edge Hill
- And more – watch this space!

