



Pathways

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Workshops In Your Area

If you would like one of the following Day Workshops to be held in your area, please get in touch. The cost varies, but we require a suitable venue, with refreshments provided (for which you will be reimbursed). A minimum of 12 people is required. Is this something your district, deanery or Churches Together group might do?

Welcome to the Church

Conducting Guided Tours

Developing Materials & Visits for Children

Please inform me if the person to whom this newsletter is addressed is no longer my contact person, or if address details have changed. JH

Congratulations to Winchelsea on becoming a Hidden Britain Centre. The church, St Thomas, has played a leading role and is well worth a visit. They have many plans afoot to make visits to this historic village more interesting. Check out the website, www.hidden-britain.co.uk.

Interreg IIIA News

At a meeting of the Steering Committee in Rouen in October, three new churches were approved for funding in the cross-border Interreg IIIA project, "The Heritage is Yours". They include, St Mary, Northiam, for disabled access, St John the Baptist, Sedlescombe, for re-ordering of the interior and provision of a kitchen and toilet for the disabled and St Dunstan, Mayfield, for treatment for death watch beetle and re-ordering of the west end of the church and the vestry.

The work at Sedlescombe has now been completed, as has the repair to a wall at St Pancras, Arlington. The Peel Crypt has been restored at St George's, Kemp Town in Brighton and was formally opened by the Mayor on November 4th. This was one event at their second Open Day as part of the local history project. Illustrated talks, followed by a coach tour around the parish, a very fine Regency lunch, music by a string quartet as well as their own choir, and exhibitions were part of a most interesting day, with costumed characters from the past in attendance. Funding was also received for display cabinets, both in the Peel Crypt and the church, so that some of their treasures, including Queen Adelaide's silver, can now be displayed.

During the same week-end, visitors from villages from our partner area of Ponthieu-Marquenterre in northern France visited Beckley, Arlington, Berwick and Kemp Town.

The project finishes at the end of September, 2007. This year we hope will see the publication of bi-lingual leaflets highlighting some churches in Sussex and France as well as a brochure in French.

Open Churches Trust Closes

The Open Church Trust was founded 12 years ago by composer and musician Andrew Lloyd Webber to encourage churches to remain open for visitors at a time when the majority remained locked except for services.

During that time, immense progress has been made and certainly in Sussex, the majority of rural churches are open daily and even in urban areas, where problems of remaining open are greater, large numbers are open for at least part of the week.

The Trust developed at Road Show (one of which was held in Haywards Heath in 2003) which brought the message of the advantages of keeping church open around the country.

The Open Churches Trust has been a generous donor to the Sacred Sussex initiative and their administrator, Brigadier Adam Gurdon (Lord Lloyd Webber's father-in-law), has been one of our biggest supporters.

Feeling that their mission of bringing the problem of locked churches to the attention of the public was accomplished, combined with the emergence of other organisations with the same aims, the trustees decided to close the Trust, which happened earlier this month. The following letter was received in response to a letter sent to Lord Lloyd Webber, thanking him for their support.

8th December, 2006

Dear Mrs Hald,

As the Open Churches Trust closes down active operations I wanted to write to say how pleased I am that organisations like yours have taken on what I set in motion nearly twelve years ago.

I always said that I could only be the catalyst for attempting to be able to return to the days when all places of worship were open. I am glad that some financial support from the Trust helped your organisation to become so effective.

Best wishes for the future.

***Yours sincerely,
The Lord Lloyd Webber***

SACRED SUSSEX

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I will be away from March 9—24th. JH

Destination Management

Most people, when deciding on a place to go on holiday, don't think first of all (sadly for us!) about which places of worship they plan to visit. They look at a whole range of things to satisfy the various demands and interests of those who are travelling. Distance and method of travel, accommodation, places to eat, and then the list of things they like to do—gardens, stately homes, music and arts festivals, museums, activities for children, walks and other sporting activities, scenery, shopping, - all play a part in the decision-making process.

This is what Destination Management is about—having a variety of places to visit and events in a location, which, together, form an interesting holiday experience. Often, places of worship can be a part of this, linking in with local activities and giving them a special flavour. Themed events are particularly popular and can often lead to extensive coverage in the media.

Without question, interest in our heritage is growing. If your town or village has a variety of things to offer the visitor, and you would like to promote more visits to your place of worship, please get in touch.

Part-time Study

A treasure in our midst is the University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education. They offer lectures, day courses and short courses on a variety of subjects of interest. Many begin in January. What about "Early Sussex Churches in their Context", "Sussex Landscapes", "The Recording and Interpretation of Churchyards", and excavation training courses? They are stimulating, accessible and designed for people with busy lifestyles.

Landscape Consultant interested in Churchyard Conservation By Yvonne McDermott

I am a local freelance landscape consultant, trading as "Landscapes for Life" and am interested in hearing from church communities that are interested in the management of their churchyards for biodiversity and their historical value.

I used to work for a local authority and was involved in giving grant aid and advice to some of the churchyards in the district and remember a pleasant interval surrounded by a sea of ox-eye daisies in the company of a thrush smashing snails against the gravestones—I think I had the better lunch! Churchyards can be local oases for wildlife, sometimes with grassland of botanical interest, hedgerows and mature tress that support a variety of butterflies, birds and other creatures. They also provide special spaces for peace and reflection for the local community and the social history of ancestors buried there often contains many tales worth telling. Mature shrubs and trees often provide horticultural interest too.

I am an unusual consultant in that I have an appreciation of wildlife and ecology as well as more formal horticultural landscapes so can do a good balancing act! My services could help in many ways:

- Initial environmental audit of churchyard with survey of plants and wildlife present
- Management plan for churchyard that provides integration of biodiversity and ornamental landscape
- Ongoing advice about individual plants
- Planting plans for small areas of the churchyard, for example around the entrance or posing places for wedding photographs
- Interpretive material such as interpretation boards or leaflets that explain the key features of the churchyard
- Advice on grant aid as there are grant schemes available that will cover professional fees plus the cost of any project arising, if these are included in the initial bid (I generally charge £40 per hour).
- Liaison with the church community to ensure that plans suit their requirements.

These ideas could cover any scale from minor planting alongside the church walls to a complete renovation. If you think this sounds of interest, please contact Yvonne McDermott for an informal chat on 01273 495927 or e-mail: yjmcd@tiscali.co.uk.

Sacred Britain: Places of Worship and the Tourism Destination Experience

This 18-page report was launched at the Churches Tourism Association's conference in November. It's vision is making churches and places of worship a "must see" part of exploring Britain's destinations. It aims to increase the number of people who visit the cultural heritage of Britain's places of worship, to achieve an inclusive approach, including more visitors from socially excluded backgrounds and multi-faith co-operation, and to attract increased support for maintaining the cultural heritage amongst visitors and tourism and heritage organisations.

The report can be found by searching UK websites under "Sacred Britain" or a copy can be obtained by telephoning The Churches Conservation Trust on 020 7213 0660.