



USEFUL BITS AND PIECES

Below is a selection of items that may well be of help to incumbents and churchwardens as they continue with their task of caring for the church, its furnishings and fittings and the churchyard.

❖ Fundraising

The Council for the Care of Churches – CCC – (Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ Tel. 020 7898 1000) produce a booklet on fundraising for your church building. It gives useful ideas of how to undertake any fundraising campaign and names and points of contact for charitable trusts that will look at applications from churches. The CCC also has some grants available for the conservation of church furnishings and fittings, for fabric repairs and for the conservation of churchyard monuments.

The Sussex Historic Churches Trust gives some grant aid towards the repair of church buildings in the diocese. Write to the Trust at Church House or telephone the Honorary Secretary, Mrs Pat Farmer on 01273 421021 for more details.

The Historic Churches Preservation Trust do much the same on a national basis. Contact the Director, HCPT, 31 Newbury Street, London EC1A 7HU (tel. 020 7600 6090)

The Directory of Grant Making Trusts is available in larger public libraries. It lists huge numbers of trusts that give funds for charitable causes.

The Register of Charities maintained by the Charity Commission is available via the internet at www.charity-commission.gov.uk

❖ English Heritage

English Heritage can be contacted at Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3EH (tel. 01483 252000, fax 01483 252001, website www.english-heritage.org.uk). They will be pleased to discuss projects affecting church buildings and to provide information on the Joint Scheme with the Heritage Lottery Fund for grant aiding church repairs.

❖ Conservators

The DAC Secretary has a list of conservators who can conserve all kinds of furnishings and fittings in churches. Should you need someone to undertake specialist work of this nature please feel free to call.

❖ Artists and Craftsmen

The DAC maintains a list of artists and craftsmen who have undertaken works in the diocese in the past. If you need names and addresses please feel free to call and discuss the matter. The

CCC also keeps a nationally based register of artists and craftsmen and is happy to make names and addresses available.

Memorials by Artists is an organisation that specialises in helping people who wish to commission individually designed handmade gravestones and memorials. They may be contacted at Snape Priory, Snape, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1SA.

❖ **Monumental Brasses**

Brasses are an important feature of many churches in Sussex and commemorate the great and good from the past. They therefore deserve to be cared for to the best of our ability. They should not be cleaned. If they are covered by carpet, it should have a natural backing, not manmade. It should be lifted regularly and any accumulated dust removed. A build-up of dust and dirt will eventually be as effective as scouring powder and will damage the brass. If the brass is loose or lifting seek the advice of a monumental brass conservator as soon as possible. To attend to problems quickly means that further damage is less likely to occur and that potential thieves do not have a head start in removing them. The DAC Secretary will be more than pleased to discuss any concerns you may have and give ideas of where funding for conservation may be found. **The Monumental Brass Society** (c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0HS) may also be able to give useful information and assistance. The DAC's Brass Adviser would also be pleased to give the benefit of his experience.

❖ **Tourism/visitors/pilgrims**

The Church's ministry to visitors is becoming more and more important. People have more time and more opportunity to visit historic buildings, by far the largest number of these being churches. While it may not make the sorts of money parishes are often led to believe (unless yours is one of the few 'honey pot' churches), it is an ideal opportunity for a gentle introduction to the Christian faith – that is why the historic building is there after all! DAC, Stewardship, and Social Responsibility departments at Diocesan Church House will be pleased to assist.

The Diocese's own initiative called 'Sacred Sussex' aims to promote the number and quality of visits to churches and other sacred sites in Sussex by tourists and others. A pilot project has been operating in 2002 which has formed a Churches' Tourism Network with over 200 contacts, has provided monthly training seminars for church members, and is developing publications such as guide books and church trails. The project is ecumenical and multi-faith. It is hoped that funding will be found to continue the project into 2003 and beyond. For more information please contact Jane Hald, 39, Priors Acre, Boxgrove, Chichester. Telephone: 01243 780044, e-mail: sacred sussex@virgin.net

❖ Textiles

Our churches are lucky to have many examples of fine embroidery, both early survivals and Victorian splendour. Here are a few hints on how to look after textile treasures.

Storage is the most important measure in care of textiles. Ideally, all textiles are best stored flat and unfolded. However, in most churches this is not possible. Large items or those with much embroidery or a pile should be rolled rather than folded, with the right side outside. Roll them on a well padded tube (like those found in the middle of carpets or for posters). Vestments without embroidery can be folded but should be done so in thirds: folding them in half (usually in exactly the same place each time) will eventually weaken the material at the point of the fold and it will split. If vestments are hung, they should be put on well padded hangers – never metal ones – and preferably one that is shaped specifically for the item to be hung on it.

Do not cover vestments in polythene. The sort of covers that come from the dry cleaner, when used in the usual church conditions, make ideal homes for mould of all sorts: they can act like little greenhouses. The best cover is a linen one; a simple pillow case-style cover is quite adequate.

Cleaning a vestment is always a difficult decision. Modern textiles can usually be dry cleaned. Older ones, those with embroidery, beading or in any sort of fragile condition should not. In these instances expert advice should be sought. The same goes for repair. If an item is fragile, or in need of repair and the funds are not available to undertake it at present, carefully pack it away in a good quality cardboard box that has been well padded with acid-free tissue paper (available from many stationers) until funds are in place. This will stop it deteriorating further.

❖ Books

There can hardly be a church in the diocese that doesn't have a number of ancient Books of Common Prayer or a King James Bible that is no longer used and is tucked away in a cupboard. Some churches may have the Book of Homilies or Erasmus's Paraphrasis. There are those churches that are lucky enough to have an old parochial library. Here are some simple steps for the care of old books:

Books kept in damp or over hot conditions will deteriorate rapidly. The ideal temperature to keep books in is 55-65°F or 13-18°C. It is recognised that many churches will be unable to provide such stable conditions but at best an attempt should be made to ensure that books are not subject to rapid fluctuations in temperature.

Good air circulation is essential. When they are on shelves, this should include space between the books and the wall or if they are in a bookcase or cupboard this should be at least three inches from the wall. It is important to have feet on the cupboard if at all possible to allow air circulation below and to avoid rising damp.

For books with metal attachments to the cover (clasps, chains or bosses) a piece of thin stiff card should be put between it and its neighbouring book on the shelf to prevent damage. The same can be done with decorative or gilt leather bindings.

From time to time, remove books from shelves, dust carefully and open pages. This disturbs any insects etc that may be lurking inside.

If a book is damp, put it in a dry, well-ventilated place (not direct heat) and stand it on its end, allowing the pages to separate and dry naturally. If it is sodden put it in a freezer bag and freeze it in the deep freeze where it can remain indefinitely. The Diocesan Record Office will be able to give advice on freeze drying and conserving.

Never use sticky tape to repair a book. If they need repairs, contact either the DAC or the Diocesan Record Office.

Keep old books in a secure place and ensure that you have an accurate record of what you have.

❖ VAT

The rules governing the levying of VAT have been changed. Since 2004 the VAT normally payable on the cost of buildings maintenance and repair work to listed places of worship can be recovered in full.

The builder or contractor undertaking the work invoices the parish in the normal way after the relevant architect's certificate has been issued. The invoice will include VAT at the standard rate of 17.5% and should be paid in full in accordance with the terms agreed with the contractor. A receipted invoice should be requested from the contractor to be sent by return of post.

Application should be made to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme at:

PO Box 609
Newport
NP10 8QD

Tel: 0845 601 5945 (calls charged at the local rate)

Web: <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk>

Once registered you will be sent the appropriate forms with which you can make the claim for your VAT paid to the contractor. **The original receipted invoice must accompany your application – photocopies will not suffice.** The payment refunding the VAT will usually come back promptly – if you have properly completed the paperwork!

It is very important that claims are made for this rebate. It appears that the scheme has not been taken up at nearly the rate that the government had hoped. Make sure you use it rather than lose it.