

NEWSLETTER

Issue 52 December 2014



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH

DIARY

❖ Next Branch Meeting - Thursday 4th December 2014, at the Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent. See meeting agenda for details.

NOT THE CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Because we still do not have a Branch Chairman – with an appointment being on the Agenda for 4th December Branch meeting. Candidates please step forward!

EDITORIAL

As you can see from the 'magazine' items on later pages, I have been on my travels, both in UK and to an obscure part of Bosnia – albeit with insufficient leisure to examine historic or traditional architecture in the latter. I was also in the USA this October, but had something of a disaster as a camera memory card proved to be defective, preventing me from recovering half my photos. Watch this space, though, for an article or two on the USA scene.

The Editor

VIEW OUT OF THE WINDOW

25th June 2014

The venue for the Worcester Branch meeting was the so-called Abbot's Hall, a large medieval vaulted chamber within the Old Palace, a complex multi-period building with a Carolean Baroque façade wrapped round substantial portions of the medieval Bishop's Palace. 'Abbot's Kitchen' may be an inaccurate description, as Worcester was until the Reformation a Cathedral Priory served by a community of Benedictine monks, whose executive head was the Prior. The Bishop was usually a nominal rather than an actual Abbot, though it could be said that he did occupy the 'Abbot's Lodging'. The vaulted hall was probably not a 'kitchen' at all, but a very substantial undercroft to a Great Hall above. There were no signs of the massive fireplaces and

flues required of medieval kitchens. I suspect that this portion of the Palace is more or less contemporary with the major C13 building programme to be seen in the fabric of the Cathedral.



Abbot's Hall, Bishop's Palace, Worcester – Branch Meeting in session

The Old Palace stands on a low sandstone cliff by the riverside. The slope of the ground is such that, on the west side towards the river, the Abbot's Kitchen is on the first floor; whilst on the east (town side) the room is indeed in the basement. Today, the building is occupied by the Diocesan Board of Finance and other Worcester Diocesan agencies. The Bishop today lives in a rather smaller C17/C18 house next door to the west end of the Cathedral. Parts of the Old Palace had a very institutional threadbare look and feel. Recently, renewal of the services had led to the discovery of structural problems, which then needed to be put right. Exterior stonework to the rear and on the returns was a jumble of various ashlar sandstone blocks with a large patch of C21 replacement adjoining some small C13 traceried windows. A C18 rear extension had cut one of these windows in half!

The view from the west window of the Abbot's Kitchen gave a view of the River Severn beyond a well-maintained garden open to the public.

Historically, Andrew Mottram explained, the River Severn was the cause of Worcester's prosperity, being both a crossing point and the limit of (tidal!) navigation. The Bishop and the Cathedral

Priory were able to exact tolls and lading dues, which were re-invested in the Cathedral, Monastery and Palace.



Abbot's Hall, looking out to gardens & River Severn



Bishop's Palace, Worcester. C18 to left, medieval to right.



Bishop's Palace. Baroque main frontage

CONSERVATION & THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Talk by Andrew Mottram

His powerpoint notes reproduced here with kind permission

25th June 2014

Church of England structure

No executive authority
43 Dioceses in England

Independence at every level; right of veto and freedom to be different make for slow & protracted decision making
Cathedrals are a completely separate foundation and are independent.

Church of England property

Post Henry VIII land holding still extensive but proportion of current income from land and property much reduced – approx 25%

16,000+ church buildings – responsible for 75% of Grade 1 buildings and 50% of all listed buildings
Each church building responsibility of a Parochial Church Council – volunteers

Diocese of Worcester

The Diocese is a geographical area, not a corporate body but the Bishop of the Diocese is.

Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) is a company limited by guarantee and has custodian trusteeship of most property

Makes for a big balance sheet, looks as if the DBF Ltd is very rich

DBF is asset rich and cash poor

Monthly turnover of £500,000 most of which comes from voluntary giving.

Parishes

Each PCC ("Parochial Church Council") is a separate legal entity

Most of the churches, churchyards and associated buildings are not registered at The Land Registry
Churches are morally owned by the residents of the parish but vested with the vicar with each PCC having managing trustee responsibility for the property

Vicarages used to be vested with the vicar while he/she was the parish priest but now they are vested with the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd
Church halls and curate's houses may be vested with the PCC

PCCs often neglect their buildings in order to balance their books and avoid insolvency.

Church of England

Confused – welcome to the Church of England.

Corporate property management a bit of an impossibility

Assets or liabilities?

Outstanding church building repairs in England estimated at £925million over the next 5 years – i.e. £185million per year

Current repairs spend is £112million = £73million shortfall

Consecrated buildings do not have a 'book value'

Most Church property is 'inalienable'

Diocese of Worcester

Worcestershire, Dudley Metropolitan District, small areas of Sandwell,

Gloucestershire & Herefordshire

280 church buildings, 227 listed

About 40% with lavatory and simple kitchen facilities
5 church buildings on English Heritage 'Place of Worship At Risk' register

Churches 'at risk?'

EH 'at risk' = roof off, walls falling in, not weather-tight, building near to collapse

The issue is more 'churches that are moving towards becoming at risk'

Early intervention to prevent a problem from moving out of control

Needs of Diocese of Worcester

Identify those 'moving to at risk'

Grade the urgency and scale of problem

Formulate strategy to bring problem under control

Identify churches with potential for increased visitors and/or revenue generation
 Develop support strategies, friends groups, training etc
 Church buildings moving towards becoming at risk
 “No problem buildings, just problem owners”
 A combination of factors
 Money
 Personnel & Governance
 Construction & Materials
 Identifying the right churches to put on the ‘moving towards’ list
 Difficult to quantify
 Local Church politics
 Pastoral and deployment factors

Indicators of Health

Desk Based Research
 Parish Share payments and % spent on building
 Regular Preventative Maintenance
 Key Personnel and Governance
 QIR & Log Book
 Outstanding QIR repairs at year 5
 Other indicators and factors that will put them on the list
 Special status or size
 Poor quality build and/or inherent defects
 Direct Referral

Sustainable future

Moving towards proactive management
 Asset Management/Maintenance Plan
 Revenue generation, community use
 Friends group
 Succession planning
 Churches are different
 LBC is not required but a faculty is

Faculties

Faculty = permission to do something that normally would not be permitted
 “Ecclesiastical exemption” 1955 and 1991 Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure takes Anglican church buildings, churchyards and other buildings out of LBC

Faculty Jurisdiction

Faculty permission/consent to
 protect primary function as place of worship
 guard the inheritance
 ensure conservation of heritage assets
 Parallel system to LBC
 Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) appointed by Bishop; volunteers; mix of conservation professionals, interest parties, statutory bodies and senior staff
 Faculty Jurisdiction
 Parallel to process to LBC
 BUT IT IS NOT a substitute for, or in anyway in place of, Planning Permission or Building Regulations

Process

Encourage pre-application meetings (free)
 Make formal application with proposals to DAC/Archdeacon
 DAC consult, visit site, discuss, consider alternatives prior to advising the chancellor of the diocese who makes the decision
 Chancellor is senior barrister experienced in planning law
 Public consultation period including residents and amenity societies with rights of objection and representation
 HLF & EH approval required if church has been in receipt of grant funding
 Funds to be in place
 5 year completion period

Problems

Desire of Church/PCC to avoid ‘going for a faculty’
 Perceived to take too long
 usually turned round 4 months with 85% recommended when first tabled
 Black holes of legislative process
 Ignorance
 See-saw of opinions to retain exemption or come within LBC

Faculty Simplification

Properly known as the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction (Amendment) Measure
 Five years in the preparation
 To be presented to the General Synod in July 2014 to get through Parliament before the general election in 2015

Faculty Simplification objectives

To keep what is best
 retain independence i.e. exemption from LBC
 Professionalism – recruitment of qualified and experienced staff & volunteers
 Attention to detail which demonstrates the Church system is as good as, if not better, than LBC
 Make the system more user friendly, less bureaucratic and speedier

Three layers or distinctions of works or matters

FS -

List A

Matters which may be implemented without the need for consultation. It is a nationally agreed list of minor matters which may be implemented without a faculty subject to any specified conditions.

FS -

List B

Matters which may be implemented without a faculty subject to consultation. It is a nationally agreed list of matters which may, subject to any specific conditions, be implemented without a faculty if the archdeacon has been consulted and has given notice in writing that the matter may be implemented without a faculty. The decision is delegated to archdeacon to authorise but the archdeacon may go to DAC for advice when necessary, prior to deciding whether or not to issue the letter of authorisation.

FS -

List C

All other works or matters will require the full faculty procedure to be followed and the faculty will be issued by the diocesan chancellor.

Going Digital

The faculty application procedure will go ‘on-line’ in February 2015
 The applications, reports, consultations objections will be processed and stored electronically in a manner similar to the national Planning Portal
 Church Building Council (CBC) developing national version of HER for all churches and church sites

DAC Partnership Working

Liaison with EH
 Faculty Process includes notice to relevant LA and Amenity Society
 LA(s) representative is nominated by the LGA – contact DAC secretary if you want to know who is your representative • With chair’s consent, CO may attend DAC meetings if they request to do so

HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AT WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

Chris Guy, Cathedral Archaeologist
25th June 2014

The Cathedral precinct is defined by the land surrounding the Cathedral which is owned by the Dean and Chapter. It therefore excludes 10 College Yard (the bishop's house, owned by the Church Commissioners) and 7 College Yard (privately owned). This morning's presentation concentrates on the area within the precinct and its management. The precinct falls within *Worcester City Conservation Area 1* (the Historic City).

Almost, but not quite, the same as the precinct is the boundary of Scheduled Ancient Monument 343a, the extent of which is not affected by land ownership. Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 As Amended, any works within this area need approval from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, as advised by English Heritage. 'Works' are defined as: demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or tipping material onto the monument. In the case of Worcester, the scheduled area includes the ground underneath the Cathedral itself – which is unusual, if not unique.

Scheduling is not limited just to below ground deposits. Four buildings or areas within the general area are separately scheduled. These are the remains of the dormitory (263), the Edgar Tower (264), the Guesten Wall (265) and College Hall, formerly the monastic refectory (266).

Within the precinct practically all the buildings are listed. Therefore consent is needed to demolish, extend or alter the buildings, internally or externally. In some cases, for example the Edgar Tower, buildings are both Scheduled and listed but Scheduling takes precedence. Repairs to the Edgar Tower will start later this year and these have been approved under Scheduled Monument consent rather than Listed Building consent.

The Cathedral itself, together with the Chapter House, Cloister and College Hall, comes within what is termed the 'red' line and has Listed Building Exemption. Instead, works have to be approved by the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England under the *Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990*. The Commission has to give approval for any work which involves any *permanent alteration* to the fabric of the building, any work which involves the *demolition of any part* of the building and any work which involves the *disturbance or destruction of any archaeological remains* within the precinct.

As well as the CFCE, based in London, each cathedral has its own Fabric Advisory Committee. In the case of Worcester this has eight members, four appointed by the CFCE and four by the cathedral Chapter. Its duties are:

- ❖ to give advice to the cathedral Chapter on the care, conservation, repair and development of the cathedral church, and
- ❖ to consider and determine any applications made to the committee under the *Care of Cathedrals Measure*.

Under the *Care of Cathedrals Measure*, it is the duty of the Dean and Chapter to appoint an archaeological consultant. Although I am a full-time employee of the Dean and Chapter, I fulfil this role which requires me to "advise the Chapter on all matters of archaeological policy or otherwise of archaeological significance or involving archaeological considerations which arise in

connection with Worcester Cathedral or its precinct". I am also to be party to all works recommended by the Cathedral Architect.

To assist in the management of the Cathedral and its precinct, a Conservation Plan was produced in 2006, revised in 2007 and revised again in 2011. This assesses the significance of the site and analyses its vulnerability. It provides a framework within which there can be developed future policies for the development, conservation and care of the Cathedral fabric, of the precinct and of the properties. A Conservation Plan has also been prepared for the Old Palace and its grounds, again to provide a framework for future use and developments.

Some example projects:

❖ *Stables before conversion* – The only building within the precinct which is not listed is this former stable block adjacent to the Water Gate, although its west wall does rest on the listed (grade II*) riverside wall (which forms the boundary of the scheduled area). In its current form the building is basically 19th century in date, although there is evidence of earlier buildings on the site. In 2011-12 the building was extended and converted to residential use as three apartments.

❖ *Stables after conversion* – Although not a listed building, the work (which included the demolition of a double garage and a scaffold store and construction of two single-storey extensions) required planning permission, FAC approval and Scheduled Monument consent.

❖ *Song School* – Refurbishment of 14 College Green, the Cathedral Song School, will start in August. A grade II building, it lies just outside the red line so does not have Ecclesiastical Exemption. Listed Building Consent has been granted for the works, which include installing an acoustic ceiling in the practice room, re-arrangement of the toilet facilities, provision of a servery in the downstairs room and installation of a rolling stack in the music library. As well as Listed Building Consent, Scheduled Monument Consent has been obtained for a new drain to connect the sink in the new servery to the existing drains. A separate application for Scheduled Monument Consent had to be made to remove and replace some of the plaster in the entrance lobby and hallway because it abuts or forms part of the separately scheduled College Hall.

❖ *Undercroft plan* – Another project that has been applied for is a scheme to convert the undercroft of College Hall into an education centre. This is a complex structure and has been the subject of a full archaeological and architectural analysis and the preparation of a Statement of Significance. The works involve inserting a modular floor to create a consistent floor-level throughout. This will also allow all cables and pipes to be run below the new floor. Some existing doorways will be blocked and others created. Toilets will be provided and a lift and staircase installed. The lift will provide disabled access from the cloister not only to the undercroft but also to College Hall above. Because this is a major project within the red line it will need to be approved by the CFCE.

Although works to buildings within the red line do not require Listed Building Consent, English Heritage, the City Council and the amenity societies such as SPAB are statutory consultees and their comments are considered by the CFCE or FAC as appropriate. So Ecclesiastical Exemption does not mean that the cathedral Chapter can do what it likes. For example:

❖ *Radar Survey* – As part of the management of the archaeological resource geophysical surveys

are sometimes carried out. These are non-intrusive, give an indication of what is present below the ground and thus help to locate any subsequent excavation. However, these surveys require a licence to be obtained from English Heritage because they are classed as metal detecting, which is illegal on scheduled sites.

❖ *Excavation – Chapter House* – Although the majority of excavations within the precinct are small-scale, in some cases, as here in the Chapter House, the excavations can be much bigger and involve bringing in additional staff and specialist support. The excavation of human remains within the precinct requires a licence from the Ministry of Justice under Section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. The licence is only for a specific excavation, so a separate licence is needed for each excavation where human remains are found. The licence contains various conditions, which have to be adhered to, regarding care and decency of treatment of the remains during excavation, the screening of the work from the public gaze and the reburial of the remains. All of the skeletons found during this excavation (about 180 men, women and children) have been studied at UCL and are now in the Cathedral's Charnel Crypt. However, the plastic bags containing the bones need to be removed from the cardboard boxes they are currently in and stored in vented plastic crates. All of the disarticulated human bones (i.e. those where the skeletons cannot be identified because of disturbance) have also been studied but have yet to be put into the Charnel Crypt. The Chapter has agreed that the bones can be made available for study by researchers if they can give a good justification for doing so.

❖ *Emergencies*. Under amendments to the Care of Cathedrals Measure that came into force on 1st July 2010 the Cathedrals Fabric Commission has to be consulted about and approve any works which affect human remains. The only exception to the need for prior approval for an excavation is if there is an emergency – such as a burst water main – although the works still have to be notified to English Heritage and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission.

I work closely with the cathedral's stonemasons in order to record any information that might be revealed in the course of their work. In the case of *openings in Quire triforium* in connection with a new organ, there are recycled stones in the arched openings and some of the capitals were reworked. Both sides of the walls were hand-drawn before the start of work so that there is a full record of the intervention.

In addition to working closely with the masons, I also work closely with the Cathedral Architect, other staff and outside contractors to record timbers, paint, glass and documents. Although the main focus is on the Cathedral and the other buildings within the red line, I also work with the architects and surveyors dealing with buildings leased out by the Dean and Chapter, for example to the King's School (buildings around College Green) and the Diocesan Board of Finance (the Old Palace).

Almost all excavations within the precinct are reactive - i.e. they are undertaken because there is a need to erect a new building or install a new service supply. However, a series of research excavations was carried out in conjunction with the University of Birmingham in the 1990s. These followed the discovery of a curving wall concentric with the Chapter House during the excavation of a trench for a new gas main. The aims of the excavation were to date the wall and to identify its function. Research excavations need to be approved in the same way as other excavations and need to be backed up by a

comprehensive project design. The site now occupied by the Cathedral and its precinct has been the scene of activity since Roman times, if not before, and there are still many unanswered questions. For example:

❖ What was the nature of Roman occupation in this area?

❖ Where were the two Saxon Cathedrals that pre-date the present structure?

❖ Is there any evidence of activity associated with the English Civil War which started with a skirmish at Powick (just outside Worcester) in 1642 and ended with the Battle of Worcester on 3rd September 1651?

The Cathedral and its precinct should not be seen in isolation. The precinct boundary has changed over time, the castle which lay to the south had a significant impact and the relationship of the Cathedral to the High Street needs to be carefully considered and, hopefully, enhanced. The shopping centre at the south end of the High Street was recently bought by a new company and they have published proposals that include removing the roundabout and re-aligning the roadway. The Chapter will want to work closely with the company to make sure that any changes are beneficial to the setting of the Cathedral.

It must always be remembered that the Cathedral is primarily a place of worship. It is the seat of the bishop. However, the cathedral is also used for exhibitions, concerts and other events, such as graduation ceremonies. It is *not* a museum. However, signs are necessary and need to be of good quality and provide just the right amount of information. The Cathedral is currently working with the Centre for Christianity and Culture at the University of York and a new exhibition has been installed in the Crypt. This has replaced an exhibition down there since the 1990s that had become very dated. In addition to the new display, touchscreens have been installed in various locations. These will allow visitors to find out in more detail about aspects of the Cathedral such as its Anglo-Saxon history, Pilgrimage and musical heritage. Over the next two years further aspects will be added, including later this year a focus on Conflict and Resolution, with reference to Magna Carta, the English Civil War and WW1. An app has also been launched for visitors to download and use as they go round the Cathedral.

© CHRIS GUY, 2014

Chris very kindly supplied a copy of his talk script for publication in the Branch Newsletter.

CITY CENTRE WALKABOUT

With Andrew Mottram

25th June 2014

After the Reformation, Andrew said, the strategic siting of the city had led to the commercial prosperity of secular Worcester, with most economic activity close to the river. However, the creation of the Deansgate partial Inner Ring Road in the third quarter of the C20 had destroyed a large part of the riverside townscape and severed the Cathedral and two churches – St Alban's and All Saints - from the rest of the city.

St Albans

Very small red sandstone building without a tower. Possibly Worcester's earliest surviving church. Not in ecclesiastical use. Used as a Day Care Centre for the needy. Recently improved by the installation of an eaves guttering system, which it lacked before.

There has been some discussion about an extension to create more usable space, perhaps with 'glass box' technology.

All Saints

Large late C17 early C18 English Baroque structure with west tower, incorporating some medieval masonry on the east side of the tower. Now in the hands of a large Evangelical charismatic congregation for whom the building is simply a 'worship centre'. Preoccupations are 'Gospel' worship with extensive instrumental accompaniment and practical care for the poor and needy. The building is not seen as an asset in its own right and its potential for attracting visitors is not on the congregation's radar. The building is kept locked outside worship times. A prime objective is to convince the PCC of the necessity of spending money to create a wind- and water-tight envelope. And then to open to the public as a means of improving security (yes, Ecclesiastical Insurance Company believes that a Church open regularly is far less likely to suffer damage than one kept locked). A current issue is the existing fit of Victorian pews which complement the interior without contributing much of historic interest. As is often the case with congregations of this kind of churchmanship there is a wish for the creation of flexible space involving their removal.



All Saints, Worcester. West tower and end of south aisle.

Recent history includes a period as one of four town centre churches run by a single incumbent, during which time the then congregation ran down before being reinvigorated by the new regime.

Architecturally, the present interior is poorly maintained and shabby, but full of interest. There are clear signs of a 'High Church' regime c1900 with pre-Raphaelite style wall paintings around the east window and a rich east window, along with an elaborate – but now almost derelict – altar at the end of the north aisle. Organisationally the interior is a 'hall church' with full height side aisles demarcated from the nave by rows of full height Tuscan columns supporting an entablature, from which rises a plaster barrel vault. The side aisles have flat ceilings. Furnishings include an attractive array of early C18 wall monuments and what looks like a Baroque sword stand of a kind seen in London City churches. Sympathetically reinstated and conserved, this notable interior could be made very attractive to visitors and increase Worcester's cultural 'critical mass'.

Disconcertingly the tower arch is medieval. Externally, the stonework and rainwater goods are in need of attention. There are ominous signs of

cracking and distortion in the plaster entablature internally, suggesting rot at work.



All Saints. Interior looking east.



All Saints – detail of late C19 pre-Raphaelite style wall painting

St Helens

A late medieval hall church with a west tower, the east gable fronting the main street. Substantial Victorian intervention, including the timber roofing. St Helens was abandoned by its congregation after World War II and taken over the Diocesan Board of Finance, who leased it as the Worcestershire County Archives office with temporary vertical and horizontal sub-division to create the necessary space. The Record Office has now moved out and the uncluttered carpeted space is now used by the All Saints congregation for 'messy church' activities requiring flexible space. Again, this a building kept locked outside worship times but All Saints are now starting to recognise the benefits of the main street frontage and are starting to think about providing 'drop in' public access by re-opening a door in the east gable. Encroachment by neighbours on the north side has prevented adequate access for repairs, with the consequence that the north wall is suffering a damp penetration problem. On the south side British Telecom have recently installed a Broadband box on the public paved area overlying the original churchyard. Being part of the churchyard this area is subject to CofE faculty jurisdiction, and, despite detailed briefing by the City authorities, BT installed the box without a faculty, with consequent likely damage to the known burials through excavation and laying of conduits. This is the sort of thing that happens when a church building is not

visited and used every day. The PCC only realized it happened after the installation had taken place.



St Helen's, Worcester; east front



St Helen's. Controversial BT Broadband box

Internally, St Helens has a few attractive period monuments, including a massive early C17 wall tomb with effigy. The Victorian reredos, a chunky Gothic affair with 'muscular' patterning, survives.

Slug and Lettuce

Another of Worcester's English Baroque churches, this time with a spire. Fronts on to the main street. Converted into a pub following redundancy. Remains in the ownership of the Diocesan Board of Finance and is leased out for its current Public House purpose. Features and fittings survive 'in situ' including the original side galleries and their Victorian Gothic frills. Conversion designed to be reversible as and when needed. Tower and spire are now growing a lot of vegetation and need weeding. Perhaps the opportunity to place a contract with a specialist firm obtaining access by abseiling?



Deansway, Worcester. Bow-ended Neo-Georgian Office block



1938 Neo-Georgian office block with roof turret

Neo Georgian

One of the sights of Deansway opposite St Alban's and All Saints is two very large and substantial Neo-Georgian institutional buildings dated 1938(?) on their hopper heads. The simpler and bolder of the two rises to three stories with a steep pitched roof on top and is apsidal at both ends – a striking composition. The other is two stories and more conventional with a central copper turret on the roof ridge and a matching central porch with balcony and flanking copper lanterns. With a full complement of original double-hung sash windows both make a very positive contribution to the street scene.

CATHEDRAL PRECINCT WALKABOUT

With Chris Guy

25th June 2014

The continuation of Deansgate still separates the Cathedral from the main street. Contemporary with Deansgate is a shopping redevelopment on the other side of the road opposite the Cathedral, now coming to the end of its economic life. The current owners are thinking of replacement, but a sketch scheme available at the time of the walkabout was unpromising, being a re-hash of the existing. What the Cathedral would like to happen would be a re-integration with the city, perhaps through the re-creation of the former 'Lych Gate' entry into the precinct, and the reduction of the massive London Plane trees obscuring the view of the Cathedral from the main street.



West Front of Worcester Cathedral overlooking Gardens and River Severn.

Public gardens fronting the River Severn can be accessed through the Cathedral west door. These have recently been re-landscaped, with the removal of a lot of growth, with a view to enhancing the public amenity of the Precinct. The work included the exposure to view of the surviving portions of the Cathedral Priory garderobes. Open vaults adjoin these, being the northern-most known European habitat of the lesser horse-shoe bat. Bat status as a protected species means that care has to be taken over removal of the adjoining foliage in the interests of safeguarding flight-lines. This conflicts with the need to secure the vaults against local undesirables and drug-users, who have the habit of climbing in over the top.

The gardens open into the south portion of the precinct, passing the former stables now converted into residential units [see the script of Chris Guy's talk]. Apparently the Planning Permission was for short term lets, but the units now seem to be in permanent occupation.

Entering the east walk of the cloister from the east entry, we had the opportunity to explore the basement vaults proposed for conversion into a visitor centre. Probably of early C12 provenance, these were vaulted in rubble stonework, both barrel and groined. One section was in contrasting sandstone ashlar. The south walk of the cloister gave access to the other section of the vaults, in which groined vaulting rose from stumpy circular pillars. As part of the conversion the vaulting will be preserved as is, perhaps with patches of replastering and maybe with a lime-wash coating to increase light levels.



*College Hall Undercroft, Worcester Cathedral
[Unfortunately, I had to leave the walkabout at this point to catch my train.]*

The Cathedral forecourt includes a bronze Boer War memorial, a complex composition involved a kneeling soldier with a wreath-bearing angel above and behind.]

VIEW OUT OF THE WINDOW

18th September 2014

Special thanks to Robert Walker, who, with Sarah Lowe made the arrangements for the West Midlands IHBC Branch Meeting in Leominster on 18th September. They also ensured good weather!

The venue for the Meeting was the Forbury Chapel in Church Street, Leominster. This is in outline, and perhaps some of its masonry, a medieval building of probably C13 date. However, the heavy hand of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries had been laid upon it. Purpose-built as a place of worship, perhaps as some kind of

gate chapel to the Benedictine Leominster Priory, it is now operated by the modern Church of England Parish as Hall, shop and offices. At an angle to the present street line, it clearly predates the urban growth of central Leominster.



Forbury Chapel, Leominster - exterior

Much of the exterior stonework, of rubble or roughly-dressed blocks, had been patched with unsuitable Twentieth Century mortar, and the window architraves were very largely of the C19. The most recent set of interventions, of the late C20, had created a shop and office, with a mezzanine balcony and gallery above. A kitchen and toilets had been added to the side. The gallery, in the main hall area, was accessed by a light steel spiral stair. The screen between office and hall seemed to be of genuine C16 or C17 timber panelling.

The canted plaster ceiling of the hall boxed in most of the Hall roof structure, but did not conceal the feet of a set of hammer-beam trusses, with carved finials and masks. Somehow, I felt that they were a workmanlike effort of the late C18 or early C19 rather than the real thing. But I stand to be corrected wrong.



Forbury Chapel. Hammer beam pendant

The heavily leaded three-light east window gave glimpses of the imposing early C18 town house next door – brick, with stone dressings.



Forbury Chapel – view from window

REGENERATION IN SMALL MARKET TOWNS

18th September 2014

The above title was the theme of the day, which included a visit to the newly-reinstated Priory Grange, a walkabout through the historic core of Leominster, and a visit to the remarkable Lion Ballroom.

A take-away sandwich shop provided for a working lunch discussing arrangements for the 2016 Annual School in the Forbury Chapel.

PRIORY GRANGE

18th September 2014

The 'Grange' started life in 1633 as Leominster's purpose-built market hall. The building was created by John Abel, a master-carpenter who described himself as an 'architector'. He is also known as undertaking the spectacular Carolean woodwork at Abbey Dore. The building originally had an open ground floor supporting a courtroom above.

In 1859 it proved to be too much of an obstruction to traffic in the opinion of the authorities of an expanding and prosperous town, and was removed. The timber-framed structure was taken down and put into store, to be rescued by a member of the Arkwright family (of 'spinning jenny' fame) who re-erected it on an open site adjoining the Priory. This site had originally accommodated the Priory's grange barn, so the market hall, rebuilt and extended as a large private house, became known as the 'Priory Grange'.

The Grange ceased to be a house when it was taken over by the then Leominster Council as offices. Piecemeal alterations and extensions were made over the years. Finally, with the creation of the present Herefordshire Council, the offices were declared redundant.

Enter *LARC Development Trust*. This organisation was created in the 1990s to administer a £7m 'Single Regeneration Budget'. It is a joint venture amalgamating public, business and voluntary sector interests, and has the appropriate company and charitable status to enable it to bid competitively for external funding.

LARC concluded a contract with Herefordshire Council to the effect that they would acquire the Grange for £1 on completion of a conversion, repair and extension scheme.

Unfortunately, Herefordshire chose a contractor from their 'approved list', who did not have the ability to complete the work. What was intended as a nine-month contract stretched to two years with no completion in sight. Unusually, Herefordshire deliberately broke the contract and appointed a local contractor who possessed the necessary skills to achieve a satisfactory completion.

LARC's objective was to acquire and operate the Priory Grange as a public building which local residents could use, informally or formally, for recreation. Knowing that event lets, by themselves, would not meet running costs, LARC ensured that the scheme included a large but unobtrusive extension containing offices that could be let at commercial rents. The stable block was also repaired and converted for rent.

Altering the building for public use presented many difficulties. As vacated by Leominster Council, the upper floors had many different levels. The main stair was narrow and steep, and could in no way be adapted to give disabled access to the upper floors. At the same time the Victorian load-bearing walls on the ground floor needed to be retained to support the upper floors. The design solution, after much debate with Herefordshire and English Heritage, was to remove the Victorian stair, and insert a new stair and a lift shaft into the rear Victorian extension. This expedient created a new, level, first floor permitting easy disabled access. The first floor space within the original market hall was converted back into the one room it had been originally in 1633 to give enough space for events and functions. Details included pull-down blinds above the windows, and countersunk light fittings. A carefully-textured new ceiling was installed to give good acoustics. Columns within the room, bearing on the ground floor walling, gave additional support to the timber structure in the roof and attics.

Because of the retention of the ground floor compartmentation, it was not possible to create an adequate entry or reception area within the original structure. Accordingly, a contemporary-style entrance/reception/café area was added to one side of the Victorian back wing. The top-lit stairwell and liftshaft opened out of this foyer.

The foyer also gave access to the single-storey office wings, which took advantage of the dropping site levels to give a low profile when seen from the front, the design detailing including a screen of vertical oak slats to break up the mass. At the rear, the two office wings formed a quadrangle with the two brick boundary walls, creating an amenity space for both the office users and members of the public.

Apparently, all the offices were let, providing the planned income stream to keep the historic building operational as a public amenity. Further work was necessary to give a clear public entry to the site from the large green open space of the Grange. Activities included weddings and wedding receptions, craft sessions, art exhibitions, meetings and concerts. A small coffee shop was operating in the foyer, which had a manned information desk.

Comment

This was a very interesting example of a self-supporting operation, with a high quality of contemporary design for the new-build foyer and offices. Perhaps the justification for propping up the re-erected timber structure of the original with loadbearing walls and first floor columns might be considered more debateable.



Priory Grange, Leominster – main frontage



Priory Grange – bracket detail



Priory Grange new build – main entrance to left, commercial wing with rentable offices to right



View of Priory Grange complex from sunken garden

LION BALL ROOM

18th September 2014

We had the opportunity to inspect another of Leominster's 'public rooms', the Lion Ball Room, during the walkabout.

Access is through a coach arch into a back yard opening out of Broad Street. A low ground floor foyer and a nondescript stair give access. A doorway gives access to a spectacular Neo-Classical room. It has nothing of the lightness of the Eighteenth Century, but is, its way, rather heavy and ponderous. Dating from 1840-43, it was created as a grand ballroom for the Lion Hotel, the leading coaching inn at that time. Leominster was then the hub of a busy local stage-coach network. However, the railway arrived in Leominster in 1853, and had a deadly impact on the coaching trade. The Lion closed down in 1854 and the Ballroom became an ironmonger's showroom and then just goods storage.

It was rescued and repaired in 1997, with grant aid, broken plasterwork being repaired and modern facilities installed. Until recently it was operated by a charitable trust as tenants, but now has reverted to the building owners, who are continuing to operate it as an activity and event venue.

Future thoughts concern heating and insulation, as the present fit of electric storage heaters has long lead-in times if effective heating is to be available. Insulation possibilities include in the ceiling void and in double glazing or insulating curtains. Since two fireplaces exist, it might be possible to re-activate them.



Lion Ballroom, Leominster

Comment

There were fears that the opening of Priory Grange would cause difficulties for the other public spaces in Leominster, but this does not appear to be the case for the Ballroom at the moment.

LEOMINSTER WALKABOUT

18th September 2014

Essentially, Leominster is laid out to an irregular cross plan, with the arms of the 'cross' not opposite each other. The town plan is complicated by the effects of the Benedictine priory precinct. Now, as previously, it is a 'service centre' for the locality, with all the necessary banks, shops and offices. A large edge-of-town supermarket adds to the town's attractions. Speciality shops are conspicuous, as are antique shops, indicating that the town both attracts visitors and looks to the needs of wealthy incomers.

Designed around horse and cart, central Leominster is ill-suited to motor traffic, some of which is diverted through a modest 'inner ring' road. Parking is in demand, and even small parking areas are slotted in where the streetscape permits. The streetscape itself received much attention in the 1970s and '80s, with block paving on both footways and roadways, not always surviving well. A recurrent problem is crude work by utilities, who often seem unable to reinstate blocks but go for tarmac patching.

In a time of recession, traditional pubs have not survived well, though one such has been successfully converted into a thriving café. Footfall rapidly decreases towards the edges of the centre, so shops and outlets related on the fringes are less viable. A number of premises are currently empty.

Leominster Museum, joint Curator being our own Robert Walker are looking to moving out of their 'fringe' premises into empty former Council offices in the centre. This handsome building, formerly an Italianate Victorian private house, has a prominent central location.

There are substantial amounts of visible half-timbering, with much more being concealed behind C18 and C19 brick frontages. Where gable ends are visible, they often display timber framing. Indications of C19 prosperity survive in fascinating details, which neither the C20 or C21 have had the money to spend on deletion.

There was one spectacular example of an enforcement case where a three-storey Listed half-timbered frontage with jetties had been improbably clad in naked close-boarding.



Unauthorized alteration. Close-boarded cladding added to jettied Listed Building

Unfortunately, a Victorian market hall had been replaced by a dire 1960s effort of no architectural value. A recent Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee clock face had been added to it without much improvement.

LEOMINSTER PRIORY

18th September 2014

The day concluded with an opportunity to inspect the Parish Church, formerly the Benedictine priory.

This is a very complex building, of half its medieval size. Of the Benedictine Priory Church survive the nave and north aisle. Two very large south aisles were added by the Parish early-mid C14. The south frontage tracery windows are coated with incredibly rich ballflower ornamentation. Clearly, the Priory chancel, transepts and central tower were lost at the Reformation, leaving a tall, wide but rather

short building with a north-west tower and a long, flat east wall.

The 'Parish' west window has early C15 Perpendicular tracery punctuated by a pair of buttresses – a detail picked up by one or two late C19 Gothic Revival architects, including J D Sedding. The Priory west door, under the tower, has wonderful grotesque Romanesque capitals.

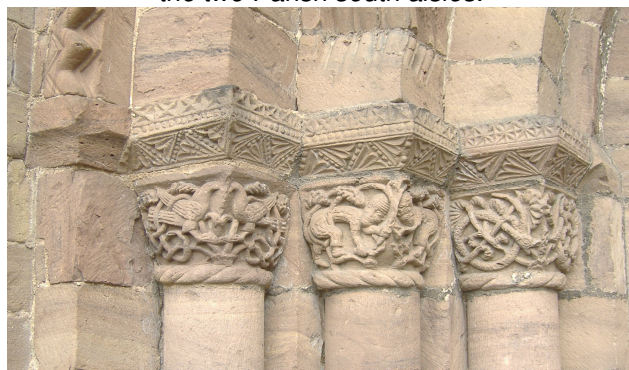
Inside, the building is complex and odd. The three-storey Benedictine nave is clearly recognisable, almost entirely early Romanesque of the very early C12. There are hints of a kind of 'westwork' under the tower. Sometime in the C14 the Parish removed the Romanesque south aisle and replaced it with a wide new aisle to the full height of the Priory nave. The Parish then seems to have erected their own south aisle, complete with 'Geometrical' windows with the tracery and all the exterior mouldings coated in ballflower.

In 1699, so the brief Church Guide says, the original timber roofing of the Parish aisles was destroyed in a fire. A new roof, supported on Tuscan columns, was provided in replacement. In the C19 Gilbert Scott replaced the columns with a slender Gothic arcade and a new panelled timber roof.

The modern parish uses the main aisle for worship, with the high altar set well forward, giving space for an 'in-the-round' worship area next to the east wall. The east end of the south aisle contains a small lady Chapel. The Benedictine nave is furnished as a chapel, but does not seem to be well-used.



Leominster Priory from SW. Original nave is in fact in line with the tower. The gable and parapet belong to the two Parish south aisles.



Leominster Priory.

Romanesque capitals of west door

The churchyard is closed and in the care of the local authority. Which fact is causing problems as the west boundary wall is suffering failure – the defective area being set within a security fence. It seems as though there is a kind of demarcation dispute as to who needs to see to the repairs –

necessary in health-and-safety interests, if nothing else.

A TRIBUTE TO PETER KING

Dave Burton-Pye

It's hard to encapsulate feelings in writing but the words that have been written about Peter King by his former colleagues at Dudley MBC speak volumes and, in an 'evidence based' planning system, the heart-felt emotions so openly displayed at his funeral have provided extensive "evidence" of the love and appreciation felt by so many people for a remarkably gifted and hugely talented individual. Having had the misfortune to attend a number this year I am very conscious that Pete's funeral was the most emotional I have ever been to.

Words like "consummate professional, true craftsman, perfect gentleman, likable chap, commitment, persistence and resilience, caring and good humoured, depth of knowledge, inspirational, thoughtful and generous" all feature in the tributes provided to me by people who were privileged to have worked with him. Several buildings have been mentioned and what shine through are the different approaches that Peter took depending on the nature of the people and the nature of the problems that he was working with. Whether by providing detailed drawings, practical "hands-on" and/or "how-to" advice to tradesmen or occasionally employing the provisions of Section 49 - 9 (c) of the Town and Country Planning (Bluff) Act to dissuade a recalcitrant owner from a certain course of action he got the right results.

My own experience of Pete's work was limited to Himley Hall and I think it is fair to say that this is arguably the project with which he is most memorably associated. It is an exemplar par excellence where his drawings and detailed specification provided a masterclass in building conservation. I still recall our IHBC visit to the Hall and the photos I took on slide film of the lead-work on the roofs are a useful reminder of how these things should be done. Come to think of it, I never saw another building where a board of 18 different samples was provided to determine the most appropriate mix to use to recreate the original "Atkinson's cement" for repairs to the render.

In Peter's case the wealth of personal experience and knowledge that he brought to his work has been lost. What is clear, however, is that one of guiding principles was to pass on what he knew to fellow professionals and tradesmen alike and the value of such mentoring will mean that people and buildings will continue to benefit from his thorough and exemplary approach to conservation for many years to come. This in itself will indeed provide a long lasting legacy to a very special man.

PORTMEIRION REVISITED

The Editor

Portmeirion – a private fantasy-speculation by architect and land-owner Clough Williams-Ellis, beginning in the 1920s and added-to right up to the 1960s, paying its way as a hotel, with separate rentable apartments and a visitor destination with an entrance charge. I last visited sometime in the 1990s. It was a rainy cool day, quite late in the afternoon, after most of the shops – including a second-hand bookshop – had closed. I don't

remember very much about the experience, except the nature of the weather.

Whilst on a short break in Porthmadog, North Wales, I took the opportunity to re-visit. This time by bicycle. There was long hill up from the Cob before I reached the signposted-turn-off. Then there was another hill running up the peninsula on which Portmeirion stands. I walked, as it was just too steep. At the top of the slope was the massive shape of Deudraeth Castle, built of slate blocks in the early C19 with battlements, turrets and Gothick twiddles. This is now an outlier hotel to the main village.

The approach road then ran downhill. A former farmstead had been converted into a sort of works compound, and, going past, I encountered my first piece of 'Cloughing up' – a sort of secular roadside shrine containing a shallow bas-relief carving.



Portmeirion – roadside 'shrine' on the approach

No functional kiosks for Clough. The public entrance to Portmeirion is flanked by a pair of tiny single-cell lodges, one of which is the ticket office, with slightly ogee hipped roofs, canopies supported on Roman Doric columns.



Portmeirion – entrance lodge.

Past carefully-styled public lavatories the entrance drive runs on to a ledge, with the vista ending in an archway.



Entrance gateway.

Beyond this archway, a view opens out. A picturesque villa stands on a rocky outcrop. Behind the villa, sheer open space.

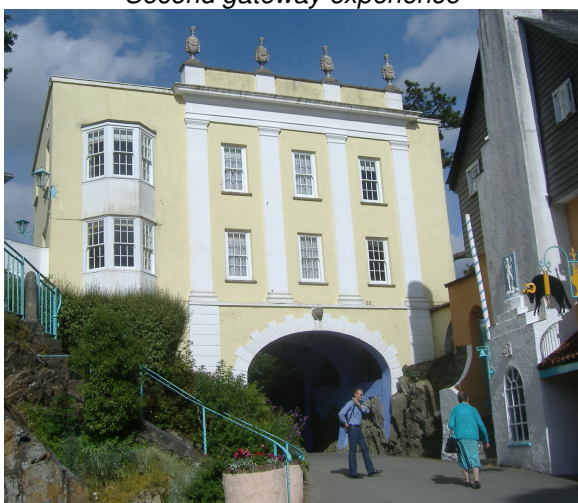


Picturesque siting.

Not content with just one gateway, Clough repeats the experience. The picturesque handling continues, with the natural rock rising high to the right. This time the twiddles are Gothick, set off by flat planes of colour. Passing under this second archway, it is time to look back. Scene change! The opposite building frontage is rather bland Neo-Georgian.



Second gateway experience



The building changes style on the other face

The landscape opens out and the picturesque runs riot! The roadway, descending all the time, moves in a curve around a craggy and

jumbled cliff face. What Clough does here is perch his buildings directly on top of the natural rock, or, in the case of another roadside shrine, tucks it into the rock-face. Within this shrine is a large image of the Buddha.



On top of a rock, the dome building, fronted by a recycled Norman Shaw fireplace acting as a porch.



The Chantry, and a residential terrace, accessed by a stair up the rock



Assorted alignments, shapes and colours



View from lower down looking across the central green space to the campanile

The main driveway continues turning and descending, into a street with buildings on both sides. Most of the buildings here are retail of one kind or another, and include some of the earliest 1920s constructions.



Retail buildings



Fraying at the edges, with cracking render and rust stains from old steel frames

From here the driveway drops down a seriously steep slope, passing a recycled C17 great hall, with mullion and transom windows. On the descent, Clough has created an amazing oriental-appearance 'lych gate' to an apartment block on the lower side of the slope.



The Town Hall



'Lych gate' on to a flight of entrance steps

Finally, at the bottom of the slope and by the sea, is the original early Victorian villa, converted by Clough into the main hotel. From here there is a superb view over the Dwryd estuary



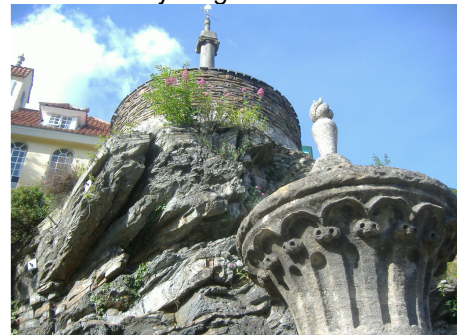
Hotel with a view!

The shoreline is decorated by a further series of monuments and buildings. Most give good – or framed – views over the estuary to the mountains beyond.



View from the 'Observatory' tower back towards the main settlement

After savouring the shoreline, it is time to go back, and view everything from the reverse direction.



Playing with the crags



The Dome in context

Comments

I recently acquired a delicious coffee-table book about Portmeirion, with copious pictures. In the pictures, the buildings all have a curious resemblance to Osbert Lancaster stage sets. That is, they are in plane pastel colours with modest architectural twiddles. In a way, this is not so surprising, as Lancaster was Clough's younger contemporary. But it is important to observe that this resemblance is closest in the pictures. Looking at the three-dimensional real thing, the stage set resemblance is far less obvious. What does strike home is what seems to be the sheer, contrived prettiness of it all. And compared to the pictures, the real thing is to a much smaller scale. The imposing 'Dome' building is actually quite modest in size.

Such planning as there is is purely organic, with buildings located by relationship to the shape of the ground and the alignment of the main driveway. Clough does not bother to level out plots. Instead, he perches his buildings on the pre-existing crags. The simple choice to 'go with' with this steep and very rocky site is perhaps the most exciting part of the whole development. One of the oldest buildings was showing signs of 'frayed edges' with cracked render and rust stains from the original 1920s steel casements. In one place a piece of soffit plastering had detached. So part of the management regime must, I suspect, be of the 'Forth Bridge' kind, with a continuous programme of out-of-season patching and repainting. All those colour-washed plane services must need regular refreshment!

PILGRIMAGE DESTINATION

The Editor

In May I spent a weekend on pilgrimage in Medjugorje, Bosnia. It was a very active time, so I did not have much opportunity to look around. However, what I did see was very instructive. It all began in 1981. That year, Our Lady Mary appeared six young people in a series of visionary experiences. And she continues to appear – and speak to – these same visionaries today. Almost immediately, Medjugorje became a pilgrimage destination. Students of medieval architecture have a clear idea of the impact of pilgrimage. It brought in money – both offerings and pilgrim expenditure on necessities. And that income was reinvested in the fabric of great Abbey and Cathedral churches. Unfortunately, the prospect of pilgrimage pickings led to monasteries and cathedral canons collecting – and sometimes stealing – the relics of saints in the interests of becoming a pilgrimage destination.

Twenty-first century pilgrimage is no different to medieval pilgrimage. Pilgrims need places to stay, and food to eat. They make offerings and buy religious goods of various kinds. They purchase what they need. So it is that Twenty-First Century Medjugorje is a very largely modern settlement. Unlike much of Bosnia, living a subsistence economy based on traditional agriculture and the odd surviving item of Communist-era industry, Medjugorje prospers because it has its own international Pilgrimage industry. Pilgrims come from all over Europe and North America – with some from farther afield too.

Not much now survives from before 1981, though, in the outer parts of the rather sprawling settlement, much-modified traditional buildings are to be seen. However, the architectural centrepiece and great landmark is the Parish Church of St James, built in 1969 on a large scale, with two tall towers and a big interior. It was an almost prophetic act by the devout Roman Catholic villagers in the days of Communist rule in former Yugoslavia.

What survives of the pre-1981 Medjugorje is largely the street layout of winding country lanes. But huge quantities of building have taken place – and are still taking place. There are half-built empty shells of new apartments and boarding houses everywhere. The streets are lined with shops and trading stalls, selling almost identical pilgrimage artefacts. What is equally obvious is that in Bosnia-Herzegovina there are no strict town planning controls of the Western European kind. Large building stands next door to small, and often at a different angle. Here and there a working vineyard occupies a street frontage plot. Large boarding houses are accessed through narrow alleys. Pavements are a mixture of surfaced and unsurfaced, and sometimes don't exist at all. Nobody has heard of zoning between retail, residential and agriculture. All seems to depend on the availability of land, and the money for building. The boarding house in which I stayed had about 14 rooms, but showed signs of having been designed to take one or more additional stories when the money became available.

To visit Medjugorje is to have a very real feel for the medieval pilgrimage experience and its economic impact.



St James Parish Church and Forecourt



Half-built apartments next to and overlooking occupied apartments

Material for inclusion in No 53 should, preferably, arrive not later than the end of December 2014. Please contact your *Newsletter Editor*: Peter Arnold, 16 Elmbank Road, Walsall WS5 4EL; 01922 644219; peterdearnold@yahoo.co.uk

PICTURE POSTSCRIPT



Traditional housing near the pilgrimage route up Mount Krisevac



Traditional farm building on a main pilgrimage route



Street frontage vineyard



Looking down the main street from St James forecourt



Boer War Memorial outside Worcester Cathedral. Elaborate bronze on Portland Stone plinth bearing bronze lettering.



War Memorial, Leominster. Symbolic female figure on Portland stone plinth



Forbury Chapel, Leominster. Mask on corbel

EDITOR'S SHOPPING LIST

Your Editor welcomes, for the next Edition of the Newsletter (No 53), to go out in New Year 2015, the following:

- ❖ Personal news of moves, retirements, arrivals;
- ❖ Copies of announcements and press releases;
- ❖ Case Studies;
- ❖ Letters;
- ❖ Articles on Law and Techniques;
- ❖ Book Reviews.