

Building Faith 2010



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF
GLOUCESTER

Diocesan Advisory Committee for Faculties and the Care of Churches
Working with the parishes to care for our churches

New DAC faces: new skills

January 2010 marks the beginning of a new six-year term of office for the DAC, and we have welcomed a record intake of new members and consultants. The new members are:

Revd Dr Chris Collingwood, Rector of Minchinhampton, is a musician with a special interest in liturgy and worship.

Alan Strickland takes over Mary Bliss's role as bells adviser, and also brings engineering skills. He has recently retired from English Heritage and has enormous experience of historic buildings.

Robert Tolley is a recently retired church architect who formerly served on the Worcester DAC, and who now lives at Guiting Power. He is already busy reviewing technical specifications, and looks forward to getting to know more of our churches.

In addition to our three new members, we will soon be welcoming the **Ven Robert Springett** as our new Archdeacon of Cheltenham.

We also have five new consultant members. The **Revd Tom Clammer** will be advising on matters of liturgy and worship, **Matt Fulford** is our new sustainability adviser, while **Dr Sarah Staniforth** and **Julian Gibbs** both come to us with huge experience in the National Trust. Between them they have particular expertise in furnishings, landscape design, and conservation and environmental issues. **Sinclair Johnston** is our consultant structural engineer.

We are enormously fortunate to have such skilled and dedicated people prepared to put their time and experience at the disposal of the parishes. They can expect to be kept busy during their term of office.

For the purposes of the formal report, the full list of the former DAC as at 31 December 2009 is on the back page.

DAC Roadshows

This year's Roadshow programme is being finalised as we go to press. On 8th May 2010 at Moreton-in-Marsh we will run our introductory session, ideal for new churchwardens and fabric officers. The second Roadshow, on 12th June 2010 at Slimbridge, will focus on the fittings and contents in our churches — furnishings, textiles, parish records, etc. Do you know what the copper tub below is? Answers on a postcard to ...

These are an ideal opportunity to see how the DAC can help you, and to meet your Chancellor and members of the DAC. We hope to see you there. For further details contact Mary Coates at Church House.

Contact details are at the bottom of the back page.



New DAC members
(left to right) Alan
Strickland, Robert
Tolley and Chris
Collingwood at a site
meeting in January



Wisdom on re-ordering

At last autumn's training day at Churchdown, about 150 churchwardens heard the Dean of St Paul's, the Right Revd Graeme Knowles, give a lively address about that ever-controversial subject, the re-ordering of churches.

As Graeme remarked, there is nothing new in this subject. When he was first involved in the care of churches, one of the big issues was undoing those well-meant 'children's corners' which were set aside with miniature furnishings, usually in the darkest and most awkward corner of the church, in the decades before and after the last war. Most of those have long since disappeared, but a few survive as a tacit reminder of how fashions change.

In the 1970s the need was for 'fellowship areas', and Bishop Graeme was all too near the mark when he spoke of 'the gurgling of the Burco boiler during the prayer of consecration, followed by rapid adjustments by Mrs Goodbody as the west end of the church filled with steam!' Since those early days of kitchens and serveries, many of our

parishes have now acquired proper facilities, and meeting areas and loos are commonplace.

The important thing is to be clear on what is needed, and not just to want it because another church down the road has done it successfully! The outside world in the form of conservation bodies rightly expects clear evidence of the need. If there are already three village halls in a two-mile radius, you must expect to demonstrate how your planned facilities will be of value to local community groups.

Bishop Graeme also spoke of the need to be positive about the inevitable interest of outside bodies. Predicting the formation of a Twenty-First Century Society, intent on preserving redundant Tesco stores (will this happen during our lifetime?), he acknowledged that many people feel that they have a finger in our pie. The important thing is that the outside world is interested in our church buildings, and even more importantly, they take the trouble to come through our doors. If the outside world ceases to care what happens to our churches, that is bad news indeed.

Graeme Knowles was Bishop of Sodor and Man before his appointment as Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. He has a wide knowledge of church buildings and chaired the Church Buildings Council for many years.

DAC facts and figures 2009

A total of 120 faculty petitions (2008: 124) were forwarded to the Registrar during 2009, and of these 43 (2008: 38) were for projects over £10,000.

In addition there were about 350 *de minimis* items. These are small items of work for which no formal faculty is required, some of which were referred to the DAC for review by one or other of the specialist members.

Many items of business do not come under either of these headings — for example many parish projects do not ultimately result in a faculty petition or even a *de minimis* decision, and in fact a total of 348 minuted items were discussed at the ten meetings held during the year.

Among the many interesting items of casework, we must mention the proposed new heating and solar panels which it is hoped will make Withington the first fully carbon-neutral church in the country. Sustainable engineering is set to be the new growth area for DAC casework, as PCCs try to combine heating and lighting upgrades with a better carbon footprint. As always, the challenge is to keep ahead of the game, sorting out the hard facts from the 'greenwash'.



Right: Work in progress at St Mary the Virgin, Bromesberrow to re-shingle the spire with cleft oak shingles and re-roof the chancel in stone slate

Maintenance matters

The DAC spends a lot of its time reviewing schemes for improvements in churches. In the last issue we were describing a major scheme at Holy Apostles, Charlton Kings, but more often than not it is something much smaller — a loo, or perhaps replacing a makeshift kitchen sink with something better.

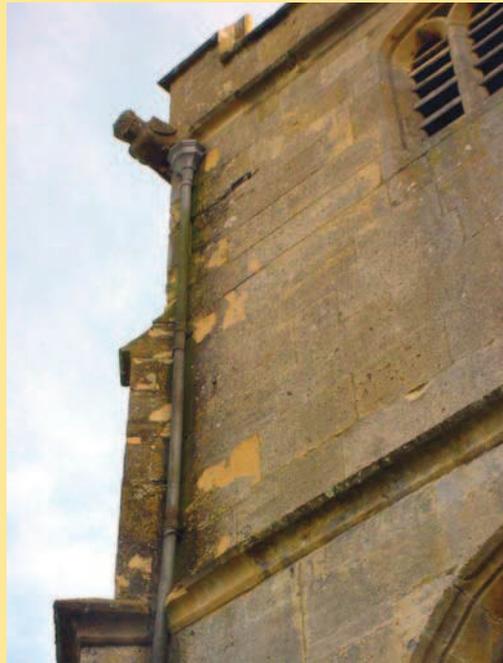
But there is no point in planning for improvements unless we have a methodical approach to maintenance. This is a gospel which the DAC has promoted for many decades, but there is a special reason for reinforcing the message in 2010.

The current recession has made it harder for our grant-making supporters to help with the costs of repairs when these are required. For many years, The Gloucestershire Environmental Trust has helped parishes, but its income has been reduced by a gradual shift to more recycling, and less landfill. The National Churches Trust finds itself swamped with applications and is having to turn many down. In a year's time

it is possible that we will lose the valuable VAT reclaim scheme for repairs — though you may be sure that the churches will fight hard to retain it. See the back page.

For all these reasons money is going to be much harder to find. More than ever it makes sense to look after our fabric, before small defects become major repair problems. The GutterClear scheme will ensure that your church rainwater goods do what they should be doing. Many of our churchwardens have now been on one of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings 'Faith in Maintenance' courses, and every parish has had a copy of the excellent DVD produced by the SPAB.

The DAC's picture library contains numerous examples of maintenance horrors and the costly repairs that can follow. It is essential that every parish budgets for regular attention to its place of worship, so that our successors have a roof over their heads.



Common maintenance problems (clockwise from far left) a leaking copper roof on a modern church in Cheltenham; a church tower with a blocked downpipe causes frost damage to stone masonry; algae as a result of intense damp conditions in a church wall; and the failure of a dry stone churchyard wall probably caused by the very wet conditions this winter.



Bells and a great deal more

It was hard to avoid using the words 'end of an era' when marking **Mary Bliss's** retirement as bells adviser for Gloucester DAC.

Mary was recruited in 1972 by the legendary Archdeacon Walter Wardle, and she served as a DAC member and as its first ever bells adviser for 37 years, including seven years as chairman (1998-2005). She has also served with great distinction on national bodies and commands the widest respect in the bell ringing world at large. She was appointed an MBE in 2001 for services to church heritage in Gloucestershire.

Her vast knowledge of the county's bells exists in tangible form in her *Church Bells of Gloucestershire* which she wrote with the late Fred Sharpe, completing the mammoth task after his death. There are few towers in or around Gloucestershire where she has not been closely involved over the years, but above all, Mary has always been a churchwoman to her fingertips, always busy in parish, deanery and diocese.

Many will remember her forthright style and her ability to talk on equal terms with ringers, craftsmen and professionals on any aspect of bells and bell frames, and always with an accurate ear for the complex argument and always with a sense of fairness and proper procedure.

The DAC marked her retirement in style with a special lunch at Glenfall House in Cheltenham, and she was duly presented with a fine campanological cartoon by DAC member David Ball. Mary is being succeeded by Alan Strickland from Cirencester, who brings to the role enormous experience of bells and bell frames, coupled with professional engineering skills.

We also said goodbye to **Ven Hedley Ringrose**, who retired as Archdeacon of Cheltenham at the end of the year; **Ken Bradbury** who has served as an engineer member of the DAC for many busy years; **Revd Royston Grosvenor**, whose expertise was in churchyards; and finally the vice-chairman, **Revd Canon Stephen Gregory**, who advised on liturgy. We miss them all and wish them well for the future.



Mary Bliss on her retirement as DAC chairman in 2005

Save VAT refund

The VAT refund on repairs enjoyed by places of worship comes to an end in 2011. Now is the time to lobby for its continuation, particularly at a time when fund-raising is difficult for congregations. Church organisations including the Church Buildings Council are campaigning to keep it. Log on to www.savetherefund.info, click on to the No 10 petition link and add your name to it. There are already 4000 signatures and every extra one will help.



A large number of historic church buildings are under threat because they will soon lose the right to a special refund.

The refund, which allows historic churches and other places of worship to claim back the VAT on the cost of repairs and maintenance, is due to end in March 2011.

Unless pressure is brought to bear on the government to continue the VAT refund, we might see some of our most important community buildings close.

DAC members (as at 31 December 2009)

Henry Russell OBE *chartered surveyor chairman*
David Ball *architect*
Dr Steven Blake *art historian, national amenity societies*
Mary Bliss MBE *bells and textiles*
Ken Bradbury *engineer*
Alan Brooks *architectural historian and stained glass*
Christopher Catling *diocesan archaeological adviser*
Peter Gilbert Scott *architect*
John Goom *architect*
Revd Canon Stephen Gregory *liturgy vice-chairman*
Revd Royston Grosvenor *churchyards*
David Haigh *archaeologist, local authorities*
David Harley *engineer*
Revd Canon Neil Heavisides *liturgy*
Michael Hill *architectural historian*
Ven Hedley Ringrose *Archdeacon of Cheltenham*
Ven Geoffrey Sidaway *Archdeacon of Gloucester*
Revd Pauline Smith *textiles and liturgy*

Consultants (as at 31 December 2009)

Nell Credland *facilities for the disabled*
Ursula Falconer *art conservation*
Ian Fox *organs*
Perry Jones *legal matters*
John Dorrington Ward *building conservation*
Sir George White *clocks*

DAC Secretary

Canon Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis
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