

# Heritage & Buildings Newsletter

No. 3 - Summer 2014



From **Ian Simpson**

Heritage Support Officer for the Diocese of Liverpool



**Cover photograph:** St. Michael's, Aughton (near Ormskirk). There is evidence of Christian worship having taken place on this site since the 9<sup>th</sup> Century. The current building isn't quite that old, being Norman in origin, and was likely constructed in the early 12<sup>th</sup> Century. It was extended in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and again in the 16<sup>th</sup>, and the Chancel was rebuilt in 1866. A major restoration was carried out under Sir Giles Gilbert Scott in 1913-14. All these periods are represented within the church today; for instance you can see the remains of a Saxon cross from the late 800s and a blocked-up Norman doorway. All in all, a fascinating church for the student of church architecture and history, and well worth a visit. **Above:** The Ascension Window at St. Michael's, Aughton. Dating from 1900, this window was designed by Thomas Benyon Medcalf, a Churchwarden at St. Michael's, in memory of Catherine Bland.

**Rear Cover:** St. John the Evangelist, Abram (1937, by Paley & Austin, unlisted). Above, a view of the church. Below, the excellent WWI exhibition which ran from 30<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

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If you would like any news items from your church, or an event you are organising, including in future issues of my [Heritage & Buildings Newsletter](#), please let me know. The deadline for inclusion in Issue #4 (Autumn 2014) is Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.

Author's Note: this Newsletter consists entirely of my own personal thoughts, reflections and opinions from my work as Heritage Support Officer. It is NOT an official publication of either the Diocese of Liverpool or English Heritage and is not to be taken as such. References to third party publications or websites are for information only and no liability is accepted for the content of these or for the results of any action taken in reliance upon them.

Ian Simpson MBA CBIFM, August 2014



## Welcome!

I'm breaking with tradition slightly in this issue. Instead of making you look at my photograph - you all know what I look like anyway! - I'd like to introduce you to a distant relative of mine. Meet Richard Dunbavin, my great-grandmother's nephew. Born in Garston, he emigrated to America in 1913 and served in World War I as a Private in the U.S. Army, 81<sup>st</sup> Transportation Corps.

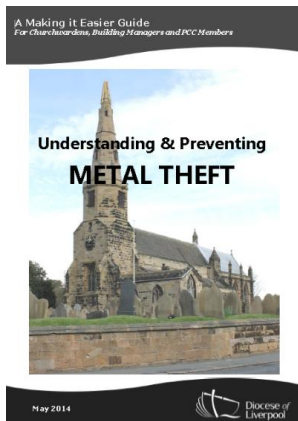
Richard survived the hostilities but died in France of influenza on the first day of 1919, aged 28. He is buried in the American Cemetery at Suresnes, and commemorated on the War Memorial at St. Michael's Church, Garston.

St. Michael's is one of several churches in our Diocese which are working hard to mark the centenary of World War I with commemorative projects, honouring the fallen from their communities, keeping their memory alive and educating the current generation who - we pray - will never have to endure the sort of horrors faced by our brave soldiers a century ago.

In the face of the most appalling conditions, many men acted with great bravery and selflessness and this was brought home to me in the well-researched, beautifully presented exhibition at St. John The Evangelist, Abram, honouring their local hero John Elisha Grimshaw, one of six Lancashire Fusiliers who were honoured with the Victoria Cross in a single action at Gallipoli in April 1915, the legendary "Six VCs before breakfast". The commemorations at Abram culminated on Sunday August 3<sup>rd</sup> with the unveiling of a memorial to the great man in the Centenary Garden opposite the church, which I understand was – quite rightly – very well attended by all sections of the community.

The World War I commemorations are a great opportunity for churches to engage with the communities they serve. If I can help you with this - or any other Heritage-related matter - do not hesitate to contact me by phone on 0151 705 2127 or by email [ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org). The postal address is St. James House, 20 St. James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY.

# Understanding and Preventing Metal Theft



At the DAC meeting in May my new booklet "Understanding and Preventing Metal Theft" was approved and this is now available on the Diocesan Website and at <http://www.tigerconnect.eu/MetalTheft-Lpool.pdf> or, if you want a printed copy, send an A5 SAE (Large Letter stamp) to me at St. James' House.

Following the advice in the booklet could save you a fortune – lead theft has cost churches in the Diocese of Liverpool the thick end of a **quarter of a million pounds** already this year.

The huge cost of metal theft reflects the fact that it is not just a case of replacing the stolen metal but also of making good damaged caused in the process of removing it and of providing scaffolding to allow the repair work to be carried out.

Please do not assume that if your church is targeted the insurance will pay out: the chances are your policy has a maximum claim limit of £5,000 for metal theft and even then you will not get the money if the church's failure to follow basic security advice contributed to the theft, for instance by helping the thieves gain access to the roof.

The fact is that metal theft – it doesn't only affect churches by any means – is a lucrative crime carried out by organised criminal gangs who export the lead to China and other Asian countries where there is a huge demand for it. It is heartbreaking to think of our priceless Christian heritage being pillaged for such a purpose and by reading this booklet and putting into practice the advice given you will be reducing the risk of it happening to your church.

Remember if you are targeted by metal thieves you should report it to the Police as "Heritage Crime". You should also let your Archdeacon know what has happened. For Grade I and II\* Listed churches the crime should also be reported to English Heritage (Manchester Office: 0161 242 1400).

## Heritage Open Days – September 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 2014



For twenty years now, and right across Europe, Heritage Open Days have been an established feature of the cultural calendar. This year's HODs will be held from Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September until the following Sunday and a range of buildings will be open to the public, free of charge.

Something like 40,000 volunteers will be involved in the UK, opening buildings, welcoming visitors and giving talks and tours. I am doing a stint at St. Agnes, Toxteth Park on the Saturday; this glorious Grade I Listed church by John Loughborough Pearson (left) is well worth a visit, as are all the churches in our Diocese which are opening their doors.

Why is this important? Too often I have heard people say "I've been past this church every day for years but I never knew it was like this inside!" – if people don't know what treasures are on their own doorstep, how can they be expected to care for them and contribute to their upkeep and preservation for future generations? There is also an educational aspect: people (of all ages) can learn so much by visiting heritage buildings, especially churches. Art, architecture, history and religion are all obvious subjects, but what about engineering (why Gothic arches are stronger than Norman ones) or chemistry (why rusty ironwork damages stone)? Come along and find out!



In our Diocese, Heritage Open Day Events are being held at:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Th</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Sa</b>	<b>Su</b>
Abram	St. John			X	
Allerton	All Hallows	X	X	X	X
Billinge	St. Aidan		X	X	X
Crossens	St. John		X	X	
Everton	St. George			X	
Farnworth	St. Luke			X	
Gateacre	St. Stephen			X	
Hindley	All Saints			X	
Knowsley	St. Mary			X	
Liverpool	St. James-in-the-City			X	
Prescot	Parish Church		X	X	X
Southport	St. Cuthbert	X	X	X	X
St. Helens	Parish Church			X	
Toxteth	St. Clement			X	X
Toxteth	St. Margaret of Antioch			X	X
Toxteth Park	Christ Church			X	X
Toxteth Park	St. Agnes & St. Pancras	X	X	X	
Toxteth Park	St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet			X	X
Warrington	St. Barnabas			X	X
Wavertree	St. Mary				X

This, as far as I know, is a comprehensive list of the Anglican Churches in our Diocese which are holding Heritage Open Day events. Opening times vary, so please check the website <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk> for full details BEFORE you travel – I take no responsibility for the outcome of any decision made based on the above information! There are some notable omissions from the list and I would encourage any church which hasn't been part of Heritage Open Days before but would like to get involved in 2015 to get in touch with me – I will be happy to advise and assist in any way I can.

## Maintenance Training Day – October 18<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Following the success of the first [Historic Churches Maintenance Day](#) at St. Margaret of Antioch, Toxteth, I am pleased to announce that there will be another Maintenance Day on Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>, followed by a further five in 2015 at venues throughout the Diocese.**

I will lead the day, which will focus on:

- Simple steps which anyone can take to keep their church building in good condition;
- Spotting trouble BEFORE it gets serious;
- Staying safe whilst working in church;
- Legal requirements – what you **MUST** do to stay on the right side of the law.

The venue is St. Giles with St. Peter, Aintree, and we will be discussing maintenance and inspection techniques which are appropriate both to modern and historic church buildings. The event will run from 10.00am until 4.00pm and lunch will be provided.

A small charge of £15.00 is made for the day - this is to cover high quality printed training materials and lunch with any surplus going to support the work of the host church.

**NUMBERS ARE STRICTLY LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS** so please book now! To reserve a place send a cheque for £15.00 per participant, payable to "BOSTON FACILITIES MANAGEMENT" to Ian Simpson, Heritage Support Officer, Diocese of Liverpool, St. James House, 20 St. James Road, Liverpool L1 7BY. Please include a contact telephone number or email address, and details of any dietary requirements you may have.

If you have any queries about this or any other Training Day please email [ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org](mailto:ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org).

## **GUTTER MAINTENANCE - neglect this at your peril!**

It seems churlish to mention it in the middle of the summer holiday period when there are still – hopefully – weeks of sunshine and pleasant weather ahead, but it will soon be Autumn. The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness brings with it the fall of leaves from the trees... and some of those leaves could well be destined to end up in your church's gutters.

Gutters are a critical component of your church building. They are designed to carry rainwater off the roof, transporting it via the downspouts to ground level without it touching the fabric of the building. In a torrential downpour, the gutters could be handling several gallons of water every minute. It is therefore very important that your church's gutters are free of obstruction. Fallen leaves are not the only potential blockage your gutters might face. From tennis balls to dead birds, there are any number of items which can stop the flow of water.

Water always takes the path of least resistance, which may mean it overflows the blocked gutter, under the flashings and in to the roof timbers. If left unchecked, over time, this will lead to rot in the roof structure. Often by the time this is discovered it will be too late and extensive (and expensive) repairs will be required – one church I know is facing a £600,000 repair bill as a result of the exact scenario I have just described. Remember that old poem about how for want of a nail to hold a horse's shoe in place a whole war was lost? Gutter maintenance is the nail which could save you losing the battle to keep your building.

A gutter inspection and maintenance programme (I shall resist the temptation to refer to it as a GIMP) is the most important investment of time and money you can make in the care of your church.

Once a month, the gutters should be visually inspected, preferably by the same person or small group. This doesn't require any special training or equipment although a notepad to record any damage and maybe a camera will be useful, as will binoculars if your gutters are a long way up.

The best time to inspect your gutters is whilst it is raining, so you can spot any leaks. Dry, sunny weather is not such a good time as leaks are harder to spot and you may be looking up against the sun. NEVER look up against the sun through a camera or binoculars as you risk serious eye damage by doing so!





***Inspect gutters and downspouts when it's raining!*** Yes, you will get wet, but you will be able to see clearly where any damaged and leaking sections are.

The first thing to check is, are the gutters intact? It should be fairly obvious where sections of guttering are missing; small cracks and gaps between sections can be harder to spot, especially in dry conditions.

Also look at the brackets holding the guttering in place. They should be intact and free from damage.

Are the gutters clear? Unless you can safely get to a high level, it might not be easy to spot blockages from the ground but the behaviour of water in wet conditions will give you an indication of where any blockages might be. One certain sign of a blockage is plant growth in the gutter which indicates not only that the gutter is blocked but that it has been blocked for some considerable time.



***Gutters:*** this plant growth is a clear sign that the gutters have gone some time since they were cleared out. Skipping on gutter maintenance is a false economy!

You should also check the hopper heads which act as a funnel to prevent overflows of water between the gutters and downspouts. Again plant growth is a clear sign of a blockage which has been left unattended for too long.

**Downspouts:** *The brackets holding them to the wall should be intact and in good condition. This example has failed and should be replaced ASAP.*



Finally you should inspect the downspouts. Check that they are intact, securely affixed to the wall and that the holding brackets are in good condition. You should check that they are running clear; again this is easier achieved in wet weather in dry. A tip for inspecting cast-iron downspouts is to **gently** tap them with a small hammer or similar objects. If a clear bell-like ringing sound is heard then that suggests the downpipe is clear at that point. On the other hand a dull “muffled” sound indicates a blockage.

Any missing sections of gutters or downspout should be replaced as soon as possible. It is better to make a temporary repair using plastic than to leave the building unprotected whilst cast iron replacements are sought.

In addition to regular inspections of the gutters, hopper heads and downspouts (which are collectively referred to as the “rainwater goods”), maintenance should be carried out at least once a year but preferably twice, in November and May, if possible. Your contractor should clear all debris out of the gutters and hopper heads and jet through each downspout to clear them out. If your church is surrounded by high deciduous trees the gutters may need to be cleared three or even four times a year.

You can learn more about gutter maintenance by attending one of my Maintenance Days. Alternatively do feel free to contact me with any specific queries about this or any other church maintenance matter.

## Vienna's Glorious Votiv Kirche



As we remember the Great War which was precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand a hundred years ago, it is worth bearing in mind that attempts to end the lives of Central European politicians and leaders had been a regular feature of the history of that region down the centuries. In 1853 a Hungarian nationalist named János Libényi stabbed Franz Ferdinand's uncle, the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, in the neck. Fortunately the blow was not fatal, largely because of the stiff collar of the Imperial uniform. To give thanks for his survival, Franz Joseph solicited donations from the royal houses of Europe for a church to be erected upon the site of the attempt on his life, on the Ringstraße in Vienna. The result is the spectacular Votive Church.

The competition to design the church was won by the 26 year old Heinrich von Ferstel and the church coincidentally took 26 years to build, being dedicated on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1879. It is a colossal building - the maximum spire height is 324ft (99m) - but it is still quite a bit smaller than Vienna's Cathedral, the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Stephansdom.



Von Ferstel's masterpiece was inspired by the great Gothic churches of France, albeit with several innovations. The white sandstone of which it is built is relatively soft and has suffered badly from the ravages of air pollution over the years; when I visited in June 2014 the west end was shrouded in scaffolding and (unfortunately) giant advertising hoardings behind which Phase I of a €32 million programme of restoration works was taking place.

Inside the church the impression is of space and light. One cannot help but look up towards the vaulted ceiling. To the west is the huge rose window which looks almost as though it is "setting" behind the organ.

The organ was installed under Anton Bruckner in 1878. It is a three-manual instrument by Walcker and has 3,762 pipes. Electrified in 1915 and repaired following War damage in 1952, the organ underwent a complete conservation programme in 1995-6 during which it was stripped down and rebuilt using its original componentry where possible.

The church's original stained glass was largely lost during World War II and replaced - largely at the City of Vienna's expense - between 1960 and 1972. No attempt was made to match the original, largely because the designs had been destroyed.





Other notable features of the Votiv Kirche are the elaborate ciborium (altar canopy) and the hexagonal pulpit with its depictions of Christ and the Church Fathers. The pulpit is topped by a richly-decorated sounding board, the closest thing to a PA system in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Austria!

As well as functioning as a church (with services for German, English and Spanish-speaking congregations), the Votiv Kirche is used as an exhibition space and for concerts. It needs every Euro it can raise towards the restoration programme as only around €10m of the €32m total has so far been secured.

Libényi was executed for his attempt on the Emperor's life, but Franz Joseph showed some mercy towards him by paying his mother a pension for the rest of her life to preserve her from falling into penury. Franz Joseph went on to rule Austria for 68 years. He died in 1916, by which time he had taken his country into the Great War which would result in the loss of both Empire and international prestige.

## The End of an Era for St. Stephen's

On Sunday, July 13<sup>th</sup>, St. Stephen with St. Catherine's church on Crown Street held its final service. I had been church organist there from 1998 to 2013, a role I reprised for the farewell service, and as a parting gift to the church I researched and wrote a short history booklet<sup>1</sup> to mark the occasion.

In the 164 years since the foundation stone of St. Stephen-the-Martyr, Edge Hill was laid in 1850, the church occupied four buildings. The first, by all accounts magnificent although no photographs survive, was a Gothic church by Sir George Gilbert Scott. This lasted only until 1881 when the London & North Western Railway knocked it down to allow the extension of its tracks into Liverpool City Centre. The LNWR funded a replacement church nearby on Grove Street. This was by T.D. Barry & Son and reused some of the stone from Scott's building. Built to a budget, it was plagued by water ingress in later years and in 1991 it was abandoned as unsafe and pulled down.

1991 saw the congregation move into the former St. Saviour's School on Crown Street. This move brought the church closer to the centre of population for its parish and meant it was in the right place to develop close links with Liverpool Women's Hospital when it opened in 1995. In 2002 the former school was itself demolished and a new church erected on the site. This was functional rather than aesthetic, designed for security and efficiency.

A number of items moved from the 1881 church in to the 1991 and then the 2003 buildings, including the Reredos, holy water stoop and a number of statues, giving a sense of continuity throughout the church's ministry.

Further depopulation of the parish and a change in its demographic make-up ultimately made St. Stephen's unviable. The church and its ministry had touched the lives of many thousands of people, however, not least through its work with the Women's Hospital, many of whose patients were far from home and appreciated the church's friendship and support. That is the legacy which will outlast the buildings: interesting though they were, they were simply the structures in which the church's worship took place.

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Stephen's Church – A History in Four Acts*. Copies available – send an A5 SAE (large letter stamp) to me at St. James' House if you want one.

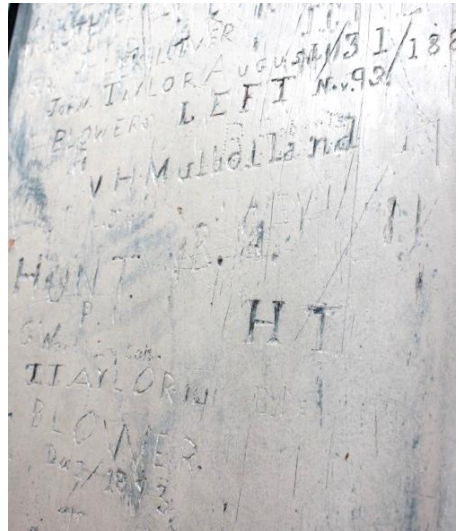


## Just For Fun!

We don't normally encourage graffiti in churches (and if you suffer from it the best defence is to clean it away as soon as possible as this will deter repeat offences) but historic graffiti is a different matter as it provides a record of people whose memory might otherwise have been lost to us: choirboys, bell-ringers, organ builders and stonemasons.

In this example some names from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century can be seen. John Taylor was evidently a Blower, responsible for pumping the organ in the days before electric air pumps. It seems he left this post in November 1893 after starting sometime in the 1880s. V.H. Mulholland doesn't tell us what he did – maybe he was a chorister or perhaps he was involved in the maintenance of the organ.

The location is St. Bridget with St. Thomas, Wavertree, a superb Grade II\* Listed church by E.A. Heffer (1872).



And finally: no dragons were harmed in the production of this Newsletter.



