

UK CLUNIAC CONFERENCE 2015

Minutes of the meeting held in Experience Barnsley Learning Lab., 2pm-4.30pm Friday 6th November 2015

Present:

J Murfitt (Castle Acre); M Hawkins (Delapre); C Voros, S Delarue (FESC); L Allt (Dudley); H Chaisson, A Freeman, A Franklin, K Hickmott, Sy Morse-Brown, A Norris, (Lewes); S Button, L Fox, P Durie, @~GT(0y...P Griffiths, J Hislop, J Kilroy I Stevenson, F Thompson, J Thornton, (Monk Bretton Priory); J McNaught, R McNaught (Pontefract)

Apologies: S Humphrey (Bermondsey); H Redmond (Castle Acre); V Pearson (Delapre); A Birss (Paisley Abbey)

I Stevenson (Chr MBP) welcomed delegates, gave a summary of the successful 2014 inaugural meeting and said its outcomes had formed some items for the present agenda.

Christophe Voros, (Director of Federation Européenne des Sites Clunisiens, FESC), addressed the meeting on the following topics:

FESC: The Council of Europe has recognised the federation and its work for ten years. FESC makes links between all Cluniac sites, undertaking research involving new technology, which enables more understanding and explains how sites work. FESC is interested in coming to the UK to help draw on local expertise, to promote international travel and to undertake research, using new technology, for Clunypedia.

Clunypedia: The goal of Clunypedia is to bring together and to publicize all that is known about the Cluniacs and their sites. It is available to all Cluniac sites, who can become members automatically, and enables them to be recognised in European tourist publicity and recorded in Clunypedia, the database of European Cluniac sites. Using 3D imaging technology whole sites can be digitally reconstructed. 3D apps have been introduced at Cluny Abbey in France, for tablets and digital media and targeted at different audiences. A powerpoint presentation was presented of this app and those present were informed that this expertise can be made available to members of the Cluniac network. There is a plan to bring groups from France to the UK using tablets at certain sites.

Kate Hickmott and Helen Chaisson (Lewes Priory Trust) reported on:

Clunykids: this educational project for children aims to interpret the lives of Cluniac monks by drawing on federation knowledge. Clunykids website carries a game, *Top Monks* that teaches youngsters about monastic life as they play. Christophe obtained Council of Europe funding to finance this project and if the success of its initial phase continues, there will be an application for further funding.

Moissac conference: Helen and Kate represented UK Cluniac sites at the Cluniac Tourist Conference in Moissac, France.

Banner Project: Helen presented a tapestry banner representing sites across the UK. Her idea for this came from the Moissac conference. The banner is still to be completed, but any site can book it from Helen for display at events.

Janet McNaught (Pontefract Priory) donated books about St John's Priory, Pontefract, to Christophe to be digitally recorded for the On-Line Archive.

Janet said certain remains from St John's Priory would be available for examination for a strictly limited time, before being sealed away, and asked whether FESC researchers could visit Britain and record these digitally within this time slot. To make such a project more cost effective, Ian suggested fMBP could seek permission for FESC researchers to record stones from Monk Bretton Priory that are now in English Heritage storage. This suggestion is to be followed up.

Site activities: delegates shared the following news.

- ★ Delapre – Margaret reported on the £6.3 million Phase 1 project to secure the historic fabric and structure of Delapre Abbey.
- ★ Monk Bretton – Fred reported on a project researching creating an authentic Cluniac monk's habit.
- ★ Pontefract – a potter has been leading workshops on pottery tile making which has proved popular.

UK Newsletter: Jo-Ann (Castle Acre) suggested the creation of a Facebook page to facilitate promotion and support of site projects and events, but there was a need for an editor to collate information and to be 'a reference point'. In response, Sy Morse-Brown (Lewes) offered to organise this. Lydia (Dudley) offered her Facebook page as a platform for other sites groups, and asked delegates to send their email addresses.

UK Cluniac Sites Forum: A UK Cluniac forum representative at FESC events would be very welcome as the federation is delighted with UK interest. Membership would be an effective means of linking UK sites with European sites. FESC would also provide access to Council of Europe funding and support site group applications.

A UK Cluniac sites forum would have access to 'pump-priming' money to facilitate group travel, archive and artefact digitising, research, promotion and other events.

In the current climate of austerity funding for local projects can be difficult to acquire. A 'UK Cluniac sites forum' would be a stronger political body to facilitate this. Lewes Priory Trust delegates would be very willing to share their successful experience with funding bids. After discussion, it was resolved to apply for statements of support from *English Heritage* and *Historic Scotland* senior staff for a 'UK Cluniac sites forum' to give weight to such funding applications, which would produce all round benefits. Lewes Priory Trust would also be willing to act as co-ordinators, or as a 'reference point' in the first instance, for the formation of a 'UK Cluniac sites forum'.

UK Cluniac Conference 2016: Castle Acre offered to host the conference.