




FREELY GIVEN



A STUDY OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT IN CATHEDRALS
AND NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTIES IN ENGLAND.
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WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOW 2008

A REPORT TO THE CHRISTCHURCH CATHEDRAL CHAPTER AND THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST



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Acknowledgements:

In Sept / Oct 2008 I was given the opportunity to visit English cathedrals and National Trust properties. This would not have been possible without the support of Dean Peter Beck of Christchurch Cathedral, who, some years back, suggested this might be a helpful thing for me to do. My work colleague Chris Oldham, ChristChurch Cathedral Administrator and a Churchill Fellow, encouraged and supported this idea, well knowing he would be the one to pick up much of my work while I was away in the UK. This trip became a reality when I was granted the financial support of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship.

Mary Woods QSM, who has always been a mentor for me in the field of volunteer management and is herself a Churchill Fellow, had no time for my excuses when she suggested I apply for a Churchill Fellowship for this purpose in 2007 and supported me in the application process. Dean Peter then followed up his original idea with his characteristic enthusiasm and encouragement and allowed me to approach the Cathedral Chapter of ChristChurch Cathedral for financial support for this project. I was also encouraged in this project by Ruth Gardner, Manager of Volunteering Canterbury, who was always able to point me in the right direction to find the advice I needed.

To the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, the Dean, Chapter and staff of ChristChurch Cathedral, and to Mary Woods and Ruth Gardner, I owe my sincere thanks for the wonderful learning experience that followed.

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I would like to thank Judy Davies and members of the Pilgrims' Association who made me welcome at their annual conference in October 2008 held at York Minster, generously sharing their skills and their ideas with me. I would welcome the opportunity to return the hospitality I received if they venture as far as New Zealand.

Nicky Lee
Volunteer Manager
ChristChurch Cathedral
June 2009



Background:

ChristChurch Cathedral, New Zealand

Christchurch Cathedral is in the centre of the city of Christchurch, New Zealand and attracts about 700,000 visitors each year. Many of these visitors are tourists; some are local people; others are from other parts of New Zealand. I manage a workforce of approximately 350 volunteers who support the Cathedral and help to keep its doors open every day of the year for these visitors. Some of these volunteers work to support the worship services but many are involved with heritage tourism, the endless drift of visitors exploring the building and all it offers them. These volunteers welcome visitors at the doors, offer information and answer questions, give guided tours, encourage the spending of the tourist dollar, and watch for the wellbeing of the building itself. They also serve in the shop situated in the Cathedral's Visitors' Centre and work as Receptionists. Most share an ongoing passion for the Cathedral and its life in the city of Christchurch.

ChristChurch Cathedral relies heavily on a small paid staff and many positions are voluntary ones. Unlike most of the English cathedrals, there are no paid vergers or clergy on duty during the day in the Nave of ChristChurch Cathedral. It relies entirely on volunteers as the Cathedral's representatives for the purpose of welcoming and supporting visitors, with back-up support from clergy and lay staff. As such, I am aware this workforce deserves a good standard of training and support to enable it to meet the responsibilities placed upon it. Hence my interest in visiting English cathedrals and other large English properties attracting heritage tourism visitors.

As the Volunteer Manager in a cathedral my position is unique in New Zealand. I receive support from other co-ordinators of volunteers in the city of Christchurch, often through Volunteering Canterbury, an incorporated charitable trust that promotes volunteering in Canterbury and is more than generous in its support for those of us in the co-ordinating role. However, there was always a vague sense of longing, of curiosity, to see how others managed the same type of work as myself. I found myself having an increasing interest in the English cathedrals and the properties administered by the National Trust.

Learning:

I wanted to know more about:

- Volunteer management in heritage tourism - recruitment, selection, training, support, rewards, recognition
- The nature of volunteering particular to a church environment
- Education programmes in Cathedrals
- Migrant volunteers and their experience in Cathedrals



*Interior view from the high altar,
ChristChurch Cathedral, New Zealand*

I planned to visit English cathedrals and abbeys and talk with those managing the volunteers there to discuss issues they had to do with recruiting and selecting volunteers, the training offered, the structures in place to support volunteers and the recognition given to them. I also wanted to speak with other staff in the cathedrals I visited regarding overall staff structures and where volunteers and their contribution fitted into that.

I wanted to spend time with volunteers themselves - making my study known to some in order to discover the rewards they received from their involvement and to listen to their opinions on the way their involvement was managed. I also wanted to be with volunteers who did not know of my study so I could experience being a visitor, a consumer, a wide eyed tourist wanting to join in with a guided tour, to ask where I could buy a postcard. This anonymity would give me an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the many visitors to ChristChurch Cathedral - what they hoped for out of their visit; their relationship with the volunteers who greeted them. For a while I would be free of my role as a manager of volunteers and see the visitor experience in a new light.

Travel Diary - Visits:

Wells Cathedral

Here I spoke to the Volunteer Co-ordinator and to a senior volunteer guide. My day included a discussion on the preparation of volunteer rosters, taking a “high places tour” of the cathedral (in the upper levels and clerestory), led by a volunteer guide, time in the Cathedral shop and a tour of the new Education Centre.



A guide at Wells Cathedral takes a “high tour” for visitors. In the ceiling space of the cathedral she explains the workings of a clock.

Dyrham Park

A visit to a National Trust country mansion near Bath where I met with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Here I spoke with volunteers working as room guides and as gardeners, offering their time during a “season” when the property is open to visitors, and was introduced to the National Trust process of recruitment and management of a large population of volunteers throughout the UK.



Prior Park Garden, Somerset, where volunteers give time as guides and gardeners

Prior Park Garden

A visit to a National Trust property near Bath involving a small number of volunteers working in an 18th century landscape garden featuring one of only four remaining Palladian Bridges in the world.

The Priory at Great Malvern, Worcestershire

An informal visit where I spoke to volunteers supporting the shop there and offering tours.

The Commandery

An informal visit to this historic building in Worcester where I observed the particularly successful implementation of an audio tour.

Worcester Cathedral

Meeting with the Education Officer and the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Here I heard about the initial planning and setting up process of a cathedral education programme (on a low budget) and various activities now offered each year to both primary and secondary level students.

Salisbury Cathedral

A well planned and comprehensive visit which offered me time with the Volunteer Co-ordinator, volunteer Head Guide, Education Officer, Canon Chancellor, Shop Manager, Human Resources Man-



ager, and Director of Marketing and Communications. This was a time to observe a larger cathedral and the changes taking place in staff structuring, fundraising, policy development, and marketing as well as looking at the interaction volunteers have with visitors and how that is managed.

Volunteers prepare for a day at Salisbury Cathedral

Mompesson House

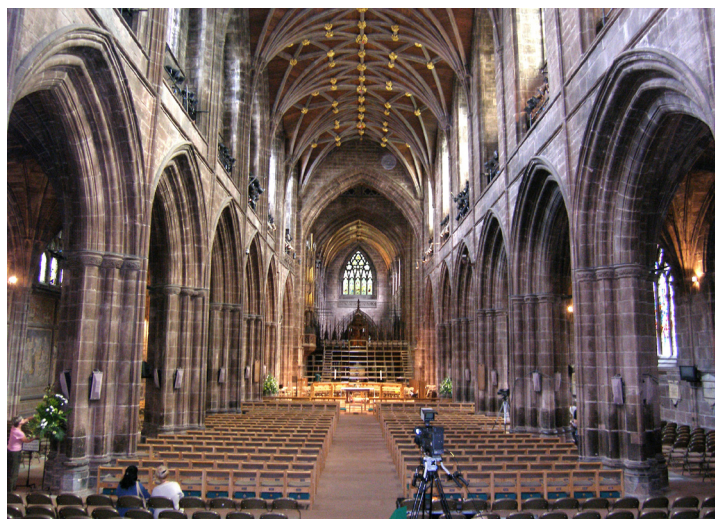
A visit to a National Trust mansion visited by many heritage tourism visitors and situated in the Close of Salisbury Cathedral. Here I talked with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and some of the eighty five volunteers who give their time to welcome visitors and respond to their questions about this historic mansion.



Mompesson House, Salisbury Close, where volunteers welcome visitors and watch over the rooms

Winchester Cathedral

Meeting with the volunteer Head Guide. Here I looked at ways volunteers are managed in an environment where there is no paid Volunteer Manager. I observed the successful involvement of parish volunteers in the café, took a tour with a volunteer guide and spoke to volunteer calligraphers and holy dusters.



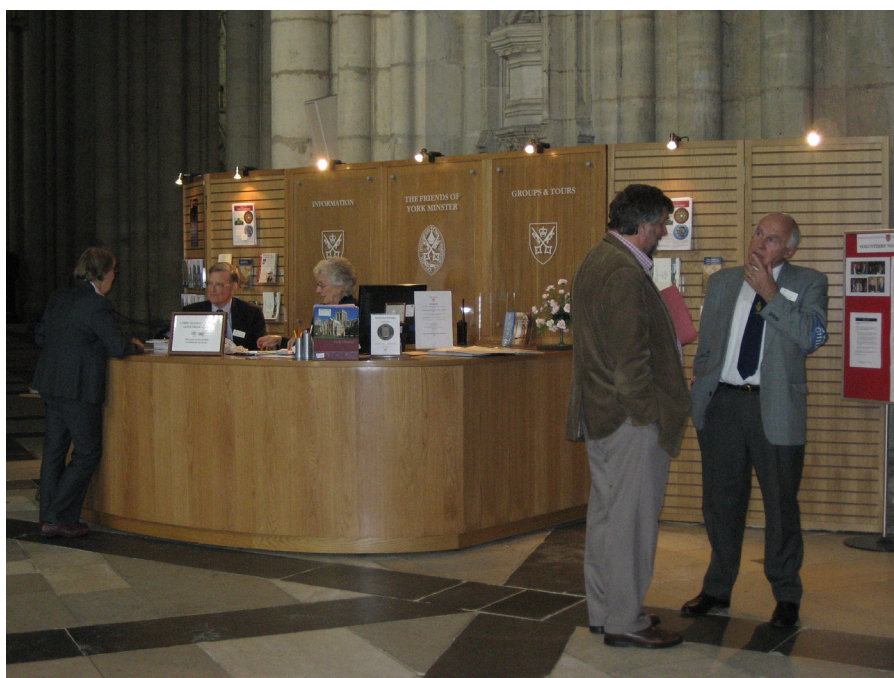
The Nave of Chester Cathedral

Chester Cathedral

Attending the annual Chester Cathedral Pilgrim Days planned for large numbers of primary school children. Here I spent time with the Education Officer and observed volunteers with specialised skills taking part in the education programme, offering a variety of craft, music and creative writing activities to groups of visiting children. This was an opportunity to take part in a worship service for children that was part of an education visit from state schools, something not so likely to happen in New Zealand.

York Minster

Meeting with the Minster's Volunteer Manager, discussing their Volunteer Policy and meeting some of the volunteers who work in York Minster. I attended the annual conference of the Pilgrims' Association: "Sacred Perspectives: Interpreting Christianity." This was held at St William's College at the Minster and at the University of York. Those attending were Visitors' Officers and Education Officers who interpret Christianity



Volunteers gather at the Information Desk at York Minster

from a range of different perspectives for Cathedral visitors. This was a particularly valuable part of my study time. There was discussion on management processes, as well as workshops offering some creativity in the planning of education programmes for children visiting cathedrals as part of the requirements of the school curriculum in the UK.

Norwich Cathedral

Meeting with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and hearing about structures in place to assist with the management of the volunteers. Here I talked with volunteers welcoming visitors and those working in the cathedral shop.

Ely Cathedral

A spiritual ending to my time away. I was able to spend time with the Volunteer Co-ordinator as well as the Canon Missioner. Here was an opportunity to reflect on not just Ely's volunteer community, but cathedrals as sacred space. Time at Ely gave another perspective on the involvement of volunteers who give their time and gifts in a unique way within a spiritual space, giving to visitors and receiving from their involvement by doing so.

Volunteer Management

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers:

In many of the Cathedrals visited there was no shortage of volunteers and recruitment was a natural and ongoing process. This was somewhat in contrast to ChristChurch Cathedral which exists in a climate of competition within its city for those who have voluntary time to give.

The English process was often enabled by the organisation's existing volunteers compelling their friends to become cathedral or National Trust volunteers, as though volunteering in the nearest cathedral was part of one's rite of passage of retirement from paid work. As it is recognised that in the paid workforce many secure work through contacts with others it would appear that this way of attracting volunteers is not very different.

Some recruitment and selection processes appeared more rigorous than others. Most involved an initial contact with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. For some Co-ordinators, a recommendation from an existing volunteer would be enough to move the new recruit into training and active involvement as a volunteer. Most places asked for a police clearance as part of the selection process, especially if volunteers were likely to work with young people and children.

Co-ordinators looked for particular qualities in potential volunteers:

- previous experience in heritage tourism
- communication skills - a natural interest in talking with visitors / travellers and an ability to work alongside other volunteers
- a degree of interest (passion) for cathedrals or local history that could be conveyed to visitors
- previous teaching skills - retired teachers who could work with visiting education groups or become tour guides
- a second language for a volunteer greeting or guiding visitors
- an indication of ongoing commitment to the voluntary role
- a clearance from police records (especially for contact with visiting children)

In several cathedrals there were volunteers waiting to be involved in particular roles (e.g. to be guides at Salisbury or Winchester Cathedrals). To be a guide in one of the larger and well visited English cathedrals had a degree of prestige - helpful in attracting new volunteers.

Some cathedrals (York Minster, Chester, Salisbury, Norwich), and all of the National Trust properties, required a new volunteer to sign a Volunteer Agreement which related to a Volunteer Policy. This policy document varied considerably in length between the cathedrals (from two pages to thirty pages) and related to conditions of employment and expectations of both the volunteer and the cathedral or National Trust property involved. A policy provided a framework for the relationship between a cathedral or the National Trust and their volunteers. While binding in honour only, a Volunteer Agreement also offered a volunteer the opportunity to understand and agree to the values and mission of the place before signing up.

Training:

All volunteers were offered training for their roles. Initially this would involve induction information given to new volunteers and it was common for more experienced volunteers to be available to mentor beginners. The National Trust had well developed training material which was clearly presented. Each new volunteer received an induction pack relating to the National Trust itself as well as the property where the volunteer would give their time.

Volunteer Training Components of Heritage Tourism properties:

- Induction training
- History and significance of the heritage tourism property - verbal, written, lecture series
- Local history - utilising expertise of local historians through winter lecture series
- Services available to visitors
- Health and Safety
- Curriculum based information for education programme volunteers

A difference in the English heritage tourism properties was the seasonal nature of training. In England a more clearly defined tourist season of nine to ten months was recognised. Numbers visiting cathedrals eased off markedly at the end of the season, before Christmas. During the “off season” training courses of lectures would be planned, both to develop the knowledge and skills of volunteers and to maintain interest at a time of year when their regular involvement declined.

Those wanting to be guides in cathedrals were required to attend special training to do so and for some there was a more formal assessment process before a guide could begin duty. At Winchester Cathedral this training was offered yearly to a limited number so some volunteers wanting to become guides waited for some months for the training to be available. There were benefits to early involvement for these



A guide in the nave of Winchester Cathedral shows a tour group the tomb of Jane Austen

meantime, to avoid the risk

of them losing their initial enthusiasm and going elsewhere during the time of waiting for a training course. At Salisbury Cathedral all stewards on duty in the Nave during the day were required to guide visitors on request and this was a challenging expectation for some of the older volunteers.

With the National Trust the end of the visitor season was marked by the closure of the mansions to the public to allow a time of minimum light inside the houses and to give a period when more intense conservation work could be carried out. This was a time for a winter lecture series to be offered to volunteers. “Focus on Customer” training was also expected of each volunteer. Pre-season training would be offered each year in March to re-enforce security, evacuation procedures and statutory health and safety information, prior to the house being re-opened to visitors.

Volunteer Roles:

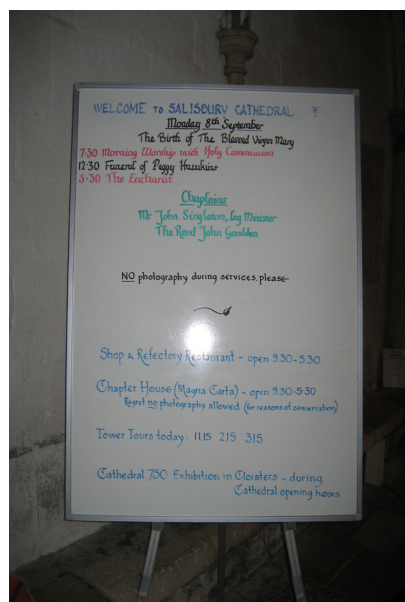
In the cathedrals I visited there was a strong presence of the older generation known for their longterm commitment and loyalty. However, the energy and skills they offered, as well as the passion they felt for their work, was of more interest than their age as I spoke with volunteers. Younger volunteers with particular skills were recruited for specific projects e.g. school teachers supporting the annual Pilgrim Days at Chester Cathedral, and Generation X who gave their time to family activities and open days.

Roles of heritage tourism volunteers relating to visitors:

- Welcomers
- Information Desk volunteers
- Tour Guides
- Event Stewards
- Sidesmen
- Room Guides (in National Trust mansions)
- Gardeners (in National Trust gardens)



A holy duster in Winchester Cathedral at work in the Chancel



- Education Programme Volunteers
- Shop Assistants
- Café Assistants
- Holy Dusters and Tomb Cleaners
- Calligraphers

Daily noticeboard written by a volunteer calligrapher at Salisbury Cathedral

Money Handling by Volunteers:

It was interesting to note areas of work in which volunteers were not involved. In cathedrals expecting an entry charge (whether it be voluntary or compulsory) cathedral volunteers were not involved with obtaining this payment from visitors. This was seen at Salisbury, Winchester, Chester and York Minster. It was clearly seen as a role for paid staff and in each of cathedrals visited volunteers as welcomers was the accepted norm. Volunteers were also not asked to seek donations in their conversations with visitors even though the cathedrals relied on these donations either partly or totally for their funding.

Volunteers were usually not required to handle money. Some cathedral shops were managed entirely by paid staff (Wells, York Minster), while others took support from volunteers to supplement the work of paid staff (Salisbury, Ely, Norwich). At Wells Cathedral volunteers generally were not required to handle money except for the sale of guide books and photo permits to visitors in the Nave. Other smaller shops entirely relied on the services of volunteers (the Priory at Great Malvern) and fully involved volunteers in the handling of money.



Donor point - donations by credit card, Ely Cathedral

The Organisation of Volunteer Rosters:

The seasonal nature of heritage tourism volunteers influenced the methods used to roster volunteers. In most cathedrals there was a planned drop in volunteer involvement in the visitor low season during the winter. In the National Trust property Dyrham House in Gloucestershire, the mansion closes for the winter months as part of the conservation plan for the building and its treasures.

Examples of Volunteer Rosters:

- Two main rosters for the year were prepared by the co-ordinator - one for the high season summer months and the other for the low season involving fewer volunteers (Wells Cathedral)
- A book was available for volunteers to sign up for the days they want to give time. If numbers did not reach the required number for a particular day the co-ordinator contacted volunteers to check their availability to fill the roster. (Dyrham House)

- A Co-ordinator (volunteer) was assigned a day of the week and was responsible for the group of volunteers who worked that day and for checking the number required would attend. (Salisbury Cathedral)
- Volunteers were managed and rostered from within their separate groups and did not rely on a central Co-ordinator. (Winchester Cathedral)

Wells Cathedral had a high season and a low season roster prepared for some months ahead. Before the tourist season got underway a form would be sent to volunteers asking them which roles they would like to be involved with and the information received back was used to roster the volunteer work available. This method depended on the suitability of volunteers for several roles being offered. In some places volunteers were required to replace themselves if they were unavailable for a rostered time while in others this task was seen as the Co-ordinator's role.



Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire

Travelling a distance to get there, volunteers give their time all day

The daily organisation of volunteers also varied. In general, volunteers in welcoming and guide roles gave longer periods of time during one day than in ChristChurch Cathedral in New Zealand. Commitment of time appeared to relate to the location of the cathedrals and National Trust properties and the time it took volunteers to reach their place of work. Many travelled some distance to give their time and because of this stayed for the main part of the day. The National Trust offers a travel allowance to volunteers up to a maximum of forty miles a day. At both Dyrham House,

set in beautiful countryside near Bath, and in Mompesson House at Salisbury, the day's volunteers arrived mid morning and left late afternoon. This was also the case in several of the cathedrals, some of which attracted volunteers from villages and towns at some distance from the cathedral itself. In ChristChurch Cathedral most of the volunteers welcoming visitors work for shifts of two to three hours and, in contrast, have a short travel time to their work, most living within the city boundaries.

On their arrival National Trust volunteers gathered as a group for a briefing on the work of the day and were allocated rooms in the mansions where they would be on duty. Most volunteers favoured particular rooms and to work in a part of the house they found of particular interest was one of the pleasures they enjoyed.

In allocating the work, particularly in the cathedrals, it was noted that some roles were regarded to be not as challenging as others and were often given to volunteers just starting in the job or to older volunteers who were finding it harder to manage the more physical demands of the buildings. Working in the relatively smaller space of a cathedral's Chapter House was sometimes an example of this.

Volunteer Support:

All volunteers were offered support in their roles. The nature and availability of this support varied but it was seen as an integral part of volunteer involvement. In cathedrals with a Volunteer Policy support was specified as one of the responsibilities of the organisation in its relationship with its volunteers.

The nature of volunteer support included:

- A Volunteer Policy giving clarity to the role of a volunteer within a cathedral community
- A commitment to a good standard of practice supported by training
- Support from co-ordinators of volunteer groups
- Friendship and support offered by individual volunteers to each other
- A designated member of a Cathedral Chapter responsible for volunteers within the Cathedral community
- A cathedral's commitment to offer pastoral care to volunteers
- Access to a forum where volunteer concerns would be heard
- A framework for a complaints procedure
- Attention to health and safety issues relating to volunteers
- The offer of a reference to a volunteer for work applications

In ChristChurch Cathedral volunteers of Asian cultures (particularly from China, Japan and Korea) sometimes become volunteers in the Cathedral. They come seeking work experience in heritage tourism, to establish friendships as new migrants and to get some practice in the English language as part of the experience. Some have come to New Zealand as students at Language Schools in Christchurch and these young people have language skills that are particularly valuable to the Cathedral with its many Asian visitors. This group of volunteers differs in its need for support from those who are longterm volunteers familiar with the Cathedral's culture. This appeared to be a point of difference in the English Cathedrals where younger volunteers of other cultures, there to gain work experience and establish friendships, were not as visible in the volunteer population.

Rewards and Recognition

Talking to volunteers in cathedrals and National Trust properties it was clear many of them were immensely proud to be associated with the workplace they chose to support. Their conversation reflected the interest and passion they brought to their work; their length of service reflected their loyalty. For many, especially the older volunteers, rewards were entwined in the experience of volunteering itself. This is not to say that because a volunteer gives time to a church there is no need to recognise that service. Almost all of us respond to an expression of thanks for a gift of our time and even the hardest volunteer who turns out in bad weather to honour a commitment to be a steward or guide in a draughty cathedral is pleased to know that someone noticed they turned up as they promised and that their efforts made a difference that day.

Recognition of Volunteers was offered in several ways:

- **The relationship between the Co-ordinator and the volunteer** - time taken by a Co-ordinator to talk with a volunteer, offering a friendly “thank you” and acknowledging time given. Goodwill existed when this relationship was firmly established and volunteers responded to requests for their help if they had a positive relationship with their Co-ordinator.
- **Passing on thanks and positive feedback** - comments received from visitors who had been in contact with particular volunteers - a letter of thanks from a visiting group who received the services of a tour guide, or comments from a schoolteacher following an educational visit by school students - were well received by volunteers.
- **The provision of pleasant facilities** - a room for volunteers during a break, refreshment facilities, a place to store coats and belongings. The provision of good quality biscuits in the volunteers’ room was a small but significant sign that the organisation valued their volunteers and were prepared to nurture them. This simple touch seemed to feature in the National Trust properties. Volunteers obviously noticed these provisions because they commented on them. For some volunteers the quality of the biscuits indicated recognition.
- **Celebrations** - marking birthdays, remembering special events in a volunteer’s life, gatherings of volunteers to mark the completion of a project, social get togethers of volunteers, outings and Christmas parties. Some cathedrals held a service of worship annually to mark their volunteer involvement. Celebrations came in different shapes and sizes and this recognition was an integral part of the relationship of the organisation with its volunteers.

- **Financial investment in volunteers** - particularly costs associated with training. Some volunteers were recognised by being given the opportunity to receive further training, enabling them to advance to another and more skilled volunteer position from their present role. The reimbursement of costs, such as the payment of a travel allowance, was another way the goodwill of volunteers was recognised.
- **A Volunteer Forum** - an opportunity for volunteers to have an input into the management of the organisation recognised their skills and the value of their feedback regarding visitor experience.
- **Event tickets** - providing volunteers with tickets to attend concerts, events and celebrations was a means of thanking them for their contribution.
- **Pastoral care** - making available pastoral care and support to volunteers was part of the ministry of the cathedrals. Pastoral support was offered by cathedral clergy or lay staff for a variety of reasons (family concerns, grief issues etc).
- **A Cathedral's Worship Community** - the easy availability of a community of faith which welcomed the Cathedral's volunteers, some of whom initially volunteered because they expressed an interest in historic buildings or enjoyed talking to tourists, but found a greater awareness of their own spirituality became part of that experience and sought to explore this further.

Retirement Issues:

Cathedral management staff spoke of their concern that the “face” of their cathedral was an ageing one - the volunteers meeting and greeting visitors at the door. Was this the vibrant and lively image of their worship community they had in mind for visitors? Volunteer Co-ordinators expressed a consistent concern about a retirement process for older volunteers. I decided this was an ongoing and serious concern when the story I heard at one cathedral of a volunteer reluctant to select the retirement option - the volunteer's unwanted tenacity and the dilemma of the cathedral's Volunteer Co-ordinator trying to manage the situation - followed me through three other cathedrals. Retirement issues were a consistent topic of conversation and raised more questions than answers.

Issues included:

- Volunteers who did not retire voluntarily despite diminishing abilities to carry out their role.
- Difficulty initiating a conversation with a volunteer about retirement and working through the issues.
- Pressure from staff and other volunteers on the Co-ordinator regarding a volunteer who, in the opinion of others, “needed to retire.”
- Health and Safety concerns when a cathedral's insurance cover for a volunteer ended at 80 years.
- The ripple effect amongst a group of volunteers when a longstanding volunteer was seen to be “forced” to retire.

Approaches to managing the retirement issue:

I believe retirement issues respond to an approach that is: Pastoral, Planned and Patient.

A Volunteer Policy and Agreement that provides a framework to the volunteer's participation from the start of their involvement can be helpful at this time of change but needs to be only part of the approach.

- **Planning** - a change of role may be the start of a volunteer agreeing to a process of lessening involvement. This may preserve the dignity of the person finding it difficult to carry out the tasks they have performed for many years, while recognising they remain part of the life of the cathedral. Involving the retiring volunteer in social gatherings without the expectation of voluntary work itself may also be helpful. There may need to be a more hasty departure from service if health and safety is compromised by the volunteer continuing in their role. Pastoral support needs to be available in this situation if the volunteer is not to feel their service has not been valued.
- **Pastoral** - An awareness of the rewards and benefits that a volunteer is receiving from the experience of being involved needs to be considered by the Co-ordinator in an approach to a volunteer reluctant to retire. What support can be put in place to replace some of these benefits?
- **Patience** - Like any of us, elderly volunteers need time to adjust to the prospect of retirement. While retirement from the paid workforce may have opened up a work life of voluntary experience for them, the older and infirm volunteer may no longer be able to continue offering voluntary time in any capacity once they retire. For some this may be a relief but for others it may be a significant loss. Having a planned retirement process in place for a volunteer may encourage patience from those who are restless for the volunteer's retirement.

Education Programmes

Worcester Cathedral Education Programme

Background:

Previously schools came regularly to the Cathedral but there was little structure to these visits. The education programme, co-ordinated by a teacher employed for the purpose, has moved these visits from being a “tour of the Cathedral” for students to a visit designed to meet the requirements of the school curriculum.



Worcester Cathedral

Planning:

In planning the education programme, training is offered to teachers supporting visiting classes. A scheme with the

Chamber of commerce funds relief teachers for a half day to enable permanent teaching staff to attend a session of discussion and training. This provides an opportunity to find out what the teachers want from the cathedral to meet the requirements of the curriculum, rather than relying on an interpretation of the curriculum by cathedral staff. Teachers have to believe a visit for their students to the cathedral is worthwhile if they are to follow up with a booking and their involvement at this planning stage helps to ensure this.

Primary Schools

Learning based on:

- Discovery by children - starts from a point children already know or understand (not relying on church based vocabulary)
- Focus on doing things
- Drawing rather than writing
- Something to take away with them

Activities:

Searching for images and objects relating to the Cathedral, with a focus on doing rather than being told
Maths trails - looking for shapes, calculating distance and height, numbers of people

(See Appendix for details of Worcester Cathedral's primary school level education programme activities)

Secondary Schools

Citizenship:

- The school curriculum requires students to look at the rights and responsibilities involved with citizenship.
- Each year senior high school students are invited to a half day seminar in the Cathedral (about 300 students)
- The chairperson for the seminar is a student.
- Theme of the seminar - ethics, leadership, war/peace issues, prison system, democracy etc
- A panel of 3 - 4 speakers are introduced by the chairperson and then address the group - local community leaders, politicians, church leaders (who give their time unpaid) and a student.
- Students then move into smaller groups of 10 -15 to discuss the issue.
- Each group is supported by a volunteer.
- The smaller groups are asked to produce a comment on the issue and a question for the panel of speakers.
- The seminar concludes with panel members responding to discussion points.

Salisbury Cathedral Education Programme

Background:

The education programme employs two paid staff and relies on about ninety volunteers to support it. Several of these volunteers are retired teachers and offer tours to meet the requirements of the school curriculum. Both primary and secondary school groups visit the cathedral, as well as tertiary level students and adult groups.

*Wren Hall, Salisbury Cathedral
Close houses the Education
Department of Salisbury Cathedral*



Features of Salisbury Cathedral Education Programme:

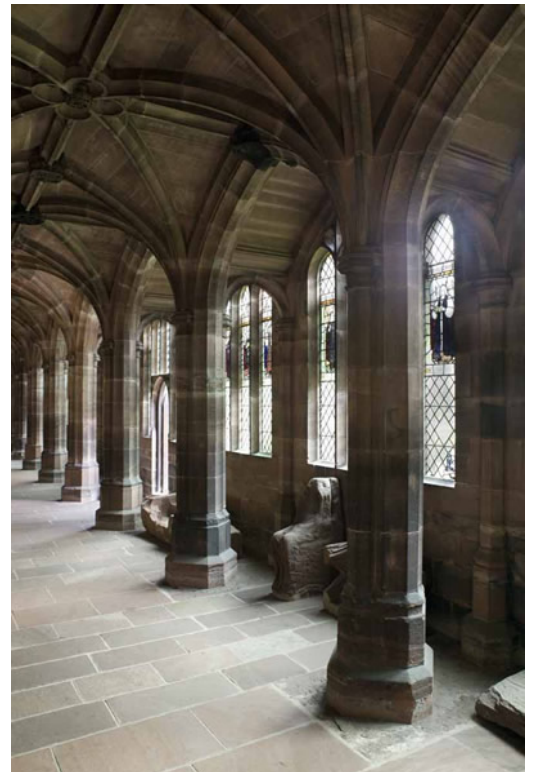
- Ninety volunteers are involved, working mid morning to late afternoon with groups of children.
- Volunteers are often recruited through those already involved.
- There is annual training of six sessions for twelve participants and this is assisted by new volunteers working alongside experienced volunteers.
- The education programme attempts to be self funding through a charge to participating schools.
- The programme planned to relate to the school curriculum.
- Short session holiday programmes are available. Health and safety issues change when children attending a programme in the Cathedral do not come under the responsibility of a school.
- Victorian Christmas events are held for children at Wren Hall - a time when the Cathedral is particularly busy.

Chester Cathedral Education Programme

Background:

Chester Cathedral welcomes over seven thousand children to take part in educational interactive tours and activities each year. The Education Department offers a programme for secondary school students and a feature of this is a Sixth Form Conference giving young people a forum on current issues. The Cathedral also holds annual Pilgrim Days when nine hundred primary school children visit over a week. This programme is co-ordinated by the Education Officer with the support of a team of volunteers, several being trained teachers who choose to give their voluntary time to this particular annual project. Following the initial setting up, planning time is needed to maintain the Pilgrim Days programme each year.

The South Cloisters of Chester Cathedral where visiting schoolchildren, dressed as monks for Pilgrim Days, process under a strict order of silence (if they can keep quiet!)



Chester Cathedral Pilgrim Days involve:

Each year primary school children visit during a week of organised activities. This is an opportunity for children to become “pilgrims” in the Cathedral and some of the activities reflect the monastic lifestyle that is part of this cathedral’s history. Several school groups visit together each day and combine for activities. Volunteers with special skills support activities relating to the life of the Cathedral. Activities are offered that encourage learning about worship alongside activities about the history of the building. A service of worship at the conclusion of the day brings together the day’s music and activities.



Creating a stained glass window design - children take part in Chester Cathedral’s Pilgrim Days



A volunteer teacher works with children on a mosaic craft activity

Activities offered during Pilgrim Days:

- A mosaic craft activity as mosaics are a feature in the Cathedral
- Storytelling using puppetry about the saints whose images are featured in the Cathedral
- Writing stories and prayer writing
- Designing a stained glass window using transparent acetate sheets
- Calligraphy - illuminated scripts
- Heraldry - designing a coat of arms
- Screen printing T shirts with Christian symbols seen in the Cathedral
- Dressing as a chorister and learning some music to sing as a group
- Dressing as a monk, learning about the daily routine of a monk, processing and eating a monastic meal in the refectory
- Learning about the Cathedral organ and its music



Pilgrim Day visitors dressed as monks spend time outdoors at Chester Cathedral



A volunteer shows children how to process as choristers as part of a Pilgrim Day activity

Outcomes:

The purpose of my visits was to gain an understanding of the role volunteers take in selected major centres of heritage tourism in England and to observe how these volunteers were managed. To do this, I took tours led by volunteer guides, observed education programmes involving volunteers, spoke to schoolteachers as cathedral education programme consumers, and bought goods from volunteers serving in cathedral shops and cafés. I also talked, sometimes at length, with those managing volunteers, some of them in a climate of changing staff structures within some of the larger cathedrals. I spoke also with other staff whose roles connected to the volunteer community of a cathedral but did not involve their management directly.

In doing this I have been able to reflect on a wide staffing structure. In many of the properties and Cathedrals I visited volunteers offered their services at several staffing levels - from offering advisory services as part of a planning committee and therefore not being in the public eye, to interacting with visitors and being fully visible in the daily operation of a Cathedral. This has made me mindful that management, support and recognition needs to extend beyond roles that are visible and traditionally held by volunteers - the greeting and welcoming positions, roles relating to the sharing of information - guiding and information desk positions, the education group supporters. Support and recognition also needs to be offered to volunteers the public do not see. Their roles also involve a gift of time for no payment to support a Cathedral or National Trust Property and can be substantial over a number of years.

In some bigger Cathedrals, such as Salisbury, a member of the governing body of the Cathedral, the Chapter, is given the responsibility to oversee the management of the volunteer community. This is an indication of the value the Chapter places on volunteer involvement and a structure worth considering for ChristChurch as well as other cathedrals. A Volunteer Policy also demonstrates a commitment to the volunteer culture of a cathedral and I have worked on developing a policy for ChristChurch Cathedral since my study trip. This policy connecting with a Volunteer Agreement for each volunteer will bring greater transparency to the new volunteer who wants to become involved and therefore needs information about the culture of the cathedral, the expectations they will be required to meet and the training and support they can expect from the cathedral. For existing volunteers it will place a structure around what they do and create a more holistic approach to their management. It has been particularly valuable for me to learn more about these management structures that need to be in place in order to attract, train and support volunteers and to recognise the integrity of their involvement.

I have also gained a wealth of resources for the management process and am undertaking a review of the way volunteer information is managed at ChristChurch Cathedral and am currently developing a more comprehensive database to assist the intake process of new volunteers and to ease the generation of volunteer rosters. I have canvassed existing volunteers to get feedback from them in order to explore ways to simplify the generation of some rosters. By doing this I hope to be able to spread my workload more evenly and ease the pressure of my work at particularly demanding times of the year when both volunteer involvement and visitor numbers are high.

Conclusion:

One reason I applied for a Churchill Fellowship was the solitary nature of my position managing volunteers in a cathedral in New Zealand. While I could communicate with others involved in this work by email the Fellowship gave me a time of making real connections with others, the opportunity to sit and talk with those with more experience in heritage tourism and to offer ideas to those finding their way into this area of work. I was able to compare difficulties I find in my role with others who experience similar problems and then together explore ideas to find some answers. Friendships have developed through this process and I am grateful for this.

The Fellowship required me to search out opportunities to learn, to think beyond Cathedral Square in the city of Christchurch in the South Island of New Zealand, to think about opportunities to make changes, and to develop resources others could find useful in New Zealand. I have also returned reassured that ChristChurch Cathedral, a small cathedral relying heavily on volunteers to support its large visitor numbers, can command a respected position in the greater community of cathedrals in the way it works with its community of volunteers.

The value for me was in the experience of becoming a consumer. I became a visitor, there to take in all that cathedrals offer. I could do this without any responsibility for the volunteers I met or the programmes being offered. This gave me the opportunity to step back from the entanglements of my daily position in ChristChurch Cathedral, to notice what appeared to work in the places I visited and to reflect on where the difficulties lay. It was also a time to think about our own cathedral's life and its relationship with visitors, volunteers and worshippers.

In each place I visited I was greeted and made welcome by volunteers. My respect for a culture of volunteers in heritage tourism has broadened - in each place I visited their time and goodwill was freely given. For the experience of truly being a visitor, both at the front of house and also behind the scenes in the various offices hidden in a maze of cathedral or National Trust buildings, I will always be grateful. It freshened the air I breathe.

Nicky Lee

Autumn colours at Ely Cathedral



Appendix

Worcester Cathedral

Primary School Activities

Acknowledgement: These activities are part of a programme put together by Mrs Sue Adeney, Education Officer at Worcester Cathedral, a gifted teacher with considerable creativity and a passion for her work.

Discovering Images:

Children look for particular Christian images in the cathedral:

- Cross
- Dove
- Shell (for pilgrimage)
- Eagle (lectern)
- Candle
- Angel

Using a sheet of paper, the children are asked to draw an image. They are then given a very simple explanation about the significance and use of the image in the cathedral.

Prayer Stones:

Children choose from a collection of stones offered. Each goes to a quiet place and draws on their stone their chosen cathedral image from previous activity. The group comes together to sit, each child holding their stone to look at it. The group quietens and the guide talks about the stone as a focus for a quiet time, a way people have prayed over the centuries. Children are encouraged to take their prayer stone home with them.

Images and their part in cathedral life:

This activity has a focus on “doing” rather than being told. The guide has a cloth bag with a cathedral image on the outside of it. In the bag are objects relating to the cathedral:

- Candle
- Book
- Palm Sunday cross
- Surplice
- Chalice
- Bread
- Black cowl of a monk and a feather (quill) - these objects relate to the monastic era of Worcester Cathedral

Children use the objects and talk about them as they walk around the building.

Places in the cathedral are not named but children are encouraged to guess what happens in various parts of the cathedral:

- At the lectern the book is brought from the bag and a child reads from it at the lectern.
- A child lights the candle to leave behind on a candle stand.
- The chalice is brought out of the bag and discussion follows about its use and a child holds it.
- Children find different styles of crosses in the cathedral.
- The **surplice** can be used in different ways
 - a child speaks from the pulpit wearing it
 - a child dresses in it as a chorister
 - dressing as an angel with the surplice sleeves being the wings
 - bundled up as a baby which a child pretends to baptise

The font - a child is chosen to climb up and then describe how it looks to the other children.

Discussion follows about its possible use:

- what is its shape?
- what is it made of?
- what does it hold?
- does it have a plug?
- why would it be here?

Emphasis is on doing (a bundled up surplice as a baby for baptism)

rather than the naming of the font (a word which relates to computers for most children).

Worcester Cathedral - Maths Trails

Planned to meet the requirements of the school curriculum

Children look for shapes of different sizes - squares, triangles, rectangles.

Counting objects - images, carvings etc

Calculating - distances and heights, numbers

- height of a tower by measuring the height of one step and multiplying it by the number of steps
- judging approximate height by arches, celestory windows as a proportion of the total height of the ceiling
- the size of a rose window calculated by lining up the width of the window with floor slabs beneath it to get the diameter and working out the circumference from this
- calculating numbers of chairs by the numbers of rows - estimating numbers of people who can sit in them

With younger children it is the process of calculating that matters more than the accuracy.

Calculations can be very simple or can be at the level of architectural calculation.

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Westcott Conference September 2007



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