



## UK CLUNIAC FORUM CONFERENCE

### **3rd Annual Forum Conference on 17 October 2016**

The conference was opened by the Deputy Mayor of Dudley Councillor Dave Tyler.

Liz Stuffsins, Green Spaces, Team Leader, Dudley MBC, gave an overview of Dudley's Green Spaces, where they have been working with friends groups, volunteers and public health. Liz explained about the restoration project at Priory Park. The visitor figures for 2015 were 400,000.

#### **Education around the ruins**

Everyone became involved in supporting a round robin of activities around the ruins with some students from Priory School. This was led by Helen Chiasson and Kate Hickmott from Lewes Priory, who were demonstrating how to use their Education Resource Pack. The activities involved smelling and tasting the herbs, becoming a monk, measuring the ruins and finding the monk.

#### **Guided Tour**

Adrian Durkin, Museums officer with Dudley MBC then gave us a guided tour of the Priory of St James, with props and vestments on show. John Hemingway (retired conservation officer Dudley MBC) also explained some of the historical facts.

After lunch Karen Slade from Company of Artisans, gave a talk about Dudley encaustic tiles. She showed her collection of tile books, and demonstrated various stages of tile making. She explained that there were links with other Abbeys and felt therefore she could make accurate copies, with those tiles and the original ones found at the Priory held at Dudley museum.

She also explained how the children took ownership by being involved in the tile making. The original tiles were displayed in school and Karen made copies.

Karen also explained her theory about Hugh De Spencer who owned the Abbey for 6 years but was not liked within the community. He had his own tiles made and Karen felt that the tilers disguised their tile making with a hidden degrading message. We are hoping Karen will write up her findings up in the next edition of Dudley History by John Hemingway.

In addition Karen had many frustrations with the project and feels that the borders surrounding the tiles are not flexible causing the tiles to crack and break in the winter months. She will hopefully be funded to replace the borders and restore the broken tiles.

**Christophe Voros**, Director of the Fédération Européenne des Sites Clunisiens.  
FESC explained the importance of being part of the Federation and what it can do for each Cluniac site. (please see appendix 1 for more information)

Currently there are 190 sites belonging to the Federation, based in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, UK and Poland. Spain and France have regional groupings.

There are many resources on the Clunypedia site. Key features are 3D representation and creations, interpretation.

Artifacts can go on the site that cannot be displayed to the public for example Lewes Priory has artifacts stored in a basement.

This is a good promotional tool which the federation is funding.

In the future there will be a UK site and a Cluny kids site.

There will also be a multinational site for the wider History of the Cluniac order, supported by UNESCO. This will involve an international committee which will include English Heritage.

The UK sites will be able to pay in British pounds. The process is being set up and all sites will be contacted. The cost is greatly reduced and will be 50 Euros.

The Federation will visit U.K. in 2017 for 4/5 days and will visit as many sites as possible.

## **Update on Cluniac Sites**

### **Pontefract Update**

<http://pontefractyorkshire.co.uk/the-cluniac-priory-of-stjohn.html>

Teachers pack completed

Site has been grassed

Museum will be updated by lottery fund.

### **Monk Bretton Priory**

<http://www.monkbrettonpriory.org.uk/>

Researching into herbs and a herb garden. Site is already identified and pegged out.

### **Delapré Abbey**

<http://www.delapreabbey.org/>

Opening in 3 weeks but there are issues with gas and electric companies.

Interpretation and medieval panels are complete.

Education space is ready and is open 7 days a week for community and learning activities.

Burials have been excavated.

### **Crossraguel**

<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/maybole/crossraguel/>

Free educational visits.

Renewing Interpretation panels.

Success in liaising with local people.

Conservation of 14/15 century grave slabs.

### **Reading Abbey**

<http://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/collections/archaeology/reading-abbey/>

Heritage Lottery bid of £3.1million – for conservation, improved signage. Open to the public in 2018.

Below ground Abbey is owned by 3 different groups.

Ground penetrating radar has found 3 grave pits.

### **Lewes Priory Trust**

<http://www.lewespriory.org.uk/>

Development of medieval kitchen and garden, funded by Tesco's bags (at least £8000). To support mental health, autism, physical disabilities, and community groups.

Lewes has developed a monks board game.

Priory raises money by having a candle light evening, with high quality produce for sale and a bar. Charges are £3 per head.

Lewes would like to host next year 2017.

Ponefract would like to host 2018.

**Dudley Priory of St James Education Resource Pack** formal launch by Kate and Helen to 5 local schools.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Aims and Objectives of the European Federation of Cluniac Sites**

The European Federation of Cluniac Sites currently brings together 189 locations in eight European countries (cultural & national heritage institutions, local authorities and private owners), sixty cultural & tourist associations and hundreds of committed individuals.

The Federation aims to promote the heritage and history of Cluniac Sites - in Europe numbering about 1,400 – for the benefit of all its members and national & regional institutions,.

The Federation gives priority to sites that become members of its network by paying an annual fee.

The work is funded wholly or in part by the Federation to budgets produced with the help of the member sites.

#### **I. Cluniac Sites: Council of Europe Cultural Routes**

Since 2005 the Council of Europe has designated Cluniac sites as being “on a cultural route” similar to the Camino de Santiago and 31 other cultural itineraries (<http://www.culture-routes.net>) This recognizes the role played by Cluny in the historical development of Europe, as well as the high standard of the projects initiated by the Federation.

#### **Advantages**

1. An FESC member site is an official stage on the Council of Europe Cultural Route. As such, it can use the FESC rosette together with the Council of Europe logo on its highway and other signs and in all paper and electronic communication.
2. An FESC member site can take part in European programs initiated, or given formal support, by the Federation.

#### **II. Cluniac Sites communication network**

A member site is an integral part of the FESC communication network at no extra cost.

1. Entries in all printed publications: such as the Guide to Cluniac Sites in Europe (project cost €70,000 paid in full by FESC).
2. Pages on FESC websites ([sitesclunisiens.org](http://sitesclunisiens.org) and [clunypedia.com](http://clunypedia.com)) and access to social media (annual operating cost €5,000 paid in full by FESC).
3. Communication media (Newsletters, Contact bulletins, flyers etc), distributed to all members of the Federation throughout Europe are fully funded by FESC (up to €5,000 per year).

#### **III. Federation Structure**

1. The Federation employs a team consisting of a director and two project managers who work for the network of Cluniac sites which they organize. The total annual cost, fully funded by FESC, is €70,000.
2. Every year the Federation organizes two Europe-wide meetings and some twenty other gatherings in different countries and regions at a cost of about €12,000.
3. The Federation makes available to member sites documentary resources and its scientific and technical network.

#### **IV. Clunypedia scientific and digital project**

1. An FESC member site has direct access to the [clunypedia.com](http://clunypedia.com) platform, which has been developed since 2012; this European project, costing around €140,000, is funded entirely by the Federation.
2. Each member site or each region or country can have its own presence within Clunypedia (as is the case for Cluny or the French department of Saône-et-Loire); FESC then prepares a special budget for the site concerned.
3. Clunypedia, being a research and development project, provides FESC site members with exceptional services not found in the commercial sector.

#### **V. The FESC tourism component**

1. A member site can be linked to the Cluniac Footways project, which will connect European Cluniac sites by hiking routes. There are already routes from Switzerland, Guyenne-Gascogne, Cantal Aveyron and Jura to Cluny ([www.clunypedia.com](http://www.clunypedia.com) <http://vps206397.ovh.net/ffice-map>).
2. Since 2014 FESC has organized the Cluny Conference which aims to bring together site representatives to work on projects and common objectives; the cost is between €15,000 and €20,000 per event.
3. Member sites are promoted as tourist destinations by automatic inclusion in the European catalogue of the Federation.

#### **VI. Cluny Kids, the Cluniac project for the younger generation!**

1. A member site can get involved in the Cluny Kids European initiative and take part in the overall development of the project;
2. Once the project has been launched, all member sites will benefit from access to a unique range of teaching tools.

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