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English Cathedrals: events and spiritual capital

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This paper investigates the recent trend for cathedrals in England to develop a wider and more ambitious scope to their event and activity programmes. It sets out to explore the types of events now hosted at cathedrals, to consider barriers to such ambitions and the opportunities presented by event programming to develop new audiences and grow attendances. The research focuses on the 42 Anglican cathedrals of England and has involved a review of recent reports published by church and cathedral organisations, supported by an in-depth review of event activity and objectives at five selected cathedrals in southern England.

Despite declining general church attendance in England, cathedrals have enjoyed two decades of attendance growth both as places of worship and as tourist attractions, partly a reflection of a more complex contemporary search for multi-faceted types of spirituality. The paper explores how events can tap into the realm of individual spiritual capital and demonstrates the rich diversity of events now being hosted by cathedrals. The paper offers a new categorisation of ecclesiastical / liturgical events, cultural and community events and openly commercial event activity. Barriers remain but key facilitating factors have been new investment in event expertise and professionalism, encouragement to experiment by key funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the embracing of new forms of spirituality. The diversity of cathedral events reflects a new found growth in the nurturing of 'spiritual capital' amongst both worshippers and tourists.

Key Words: cathedrals, events, spirituality, festivals, cultural tourism, social capital, progressive, experience.

Introduction

Cathedrals are invariably amongst the most significant and highly visited places in their cities (Shackley, 2008). They have long been recognised as tourist attractions, even though such categorisation was initially seen by some within the clerical community as unbecoming and obtrusive. Such attitudes have now largely been replaced by a more rounded view that cathedral users and visitors of all types should be encouraged and nurtured. Cathedrals have generally become much more relaxed about their role as visitor attractions (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013).

From the visitor perspective, cathedrals are not solely perceived through a religious lens. They are sought out because of their aesthetic magnificence, their awe inspiring scale and their spiritual capacity to inspire wonder and to release emotion. It is this intrinsic power to galvanise deep rooted feelings, whether through

faith or emotional attachment, which has defined cathedrals' role on the tourism stage (Shackley, 2008). Similar attachments have indeed led to the 21st century's mightiest sports stadia, art galleries and concert halls being christened as 'cathedrals' of entertainment. Such referencing, albeit informal, suggests that our great cathedrals are as powerful a force today as ever, though now in a capacity which has moved beyond the confines of their purely religious origins.

Both as visitor attractions and iconic symbols, cathedrals can dominate their local tourist industries,

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especially in medieval cities which have remained relatively contained in urban density and expansion. However, their role within the tourism sector remains a challenging one, as they exploit tourism for its commercial benefits but manage it with care, so as to minimise its potential damaging impacts on the cathedrals' core missions and on the sensitive fabric of their built heritage.

As with so many visitor attractions, and indeed many tourist destinations, cathedrals have increasingly been developing and accentuating their portfolios of events and activities in recent years. There is now a well-established trend to move beyond the core activity schedule of daily religious services to embrace events which offer the possibility of much needed commercial income and the opportunity to engage with new audiences.

This paper explores this trend for event diversity and experimentation by looking at recent research conducted by and for the Anglican church and leading cathedral associations in England, supplemented by a detailed investigation of the activity and event practice at five medieval English cathedrals. The paper sets out to categorise the types of events hosted, and to understand the nature of the contribution which events are now making to English cathedrals. It will consider the barriers and the facilitating factors for cathedrals to follow a more ambitious and innovative event programme and reflect on the most significant aspects of achieving success with such activity.

Context

Core background research for this paper has involved gathering and analysing secondary data and industry reports, especially those commissioned by the Association of English Cathedrals and the Archbishops' Council over the last five years, which have had limited, if any, investigation within academia. This is combined here with a review of relevant academic literature to form the context for this paper.

The decline in regular attendance at Anglican churches has been a major cultural factor in England over the last century. In 2013, regular Sunday church attendance in England was estimated at 785,000 people, compared to 1.6 million in 1968 (Archbishops' Council, 2014a), a 50% decline in regular attendance over the last 45 years. The number of people on the electoral roll registered as 'Church of England' is just over 1 million people, representing just 2% of the adult

population of England. As recently as 1950, this figure was estimated at 3 million people, or nearly 8% of the then total adult population (Archbishop's Council, 2014a).

This startling decline in regular church attendance has of course created a myriad of challenges for the Church of England and led to closures and use changes of many hundreds of churches in recent decades. A number of factors have contributed to the decline in churchgoing such as the onset of Sunday retail trading, the move of many entertainment and sporting fixtures to Sunday and a general cultural shift away from religion to more secular pastimes and value systems (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013).

It is argued by Jackson (2015) that a numerical analysis overstates decline, as patterns of church attendance have had to fit into busier and more complex modern lives, but there is no doubt that many local churches struggle to exercise their traditional worship and community based roles.

Against this broader decline however, England's cathedrals have seen a recovery in attendance, which became especially marked from the mid 1990s and has continued to the present day. Increases in attendance have been driven both by burgeoning tourism and also by an increase in regular worship; the two trends are likely to be more connected than is generally supposed.

Attendance figures at English cathedrals are notoriously difficult to measure as there are rarely accurate means to count visitors, especially to religious services (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013). It is estimated however that there were over 8.25 million tourist and leisure visitors to the 42 Anglican English cathedrals in 2013 (Ecorys, 2014). With the inclusion of regular worshippers and educational visits, it is estimated that this figure rises beyond 11 million per year (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012).

It is important to emphasise that the buoyant visitor attendances are not shared equally amongst cathedrals by any means. The breakdown of visitor attendance (excluding regular worshippers and educational visits) across the 42 cathedrals in England, as estimated by economic analyst Ecorys, is shown in Table 1. This typology was created in 2004 by Ecotec Research and Consulting (which later became Ecorys), to facilitate analysis and recognise variations in impact and scale across the different types of cathedral. The visitor numbers demonstrate the dominant role of the 'classic' medieval cathedrals and especially those in the 'large

Table 1: Visitor Numbers to English Cathedrals, 2013 (Tourist / Leisure Visits)

Category	Number of Cathedrals	Characteristics	Total Visits in 2013
Large international	6	Large in scale; international reputation and significance	3,472,000
Medium sized historic	18	Medieval origins but more national in scale and significance	2,943,000
Medium sized modern	2	Twentieth century cathedrals	199,000
Urban cathedrals	5	Less historic; located in highly dense and large urbanised cities	824,000
Parish churches	11	Smaller cathedrals; converted parish churches.	812,000
Total	42		8,250,000

Source: Adapted from Ecorys (2014)

West Front of Canterbury Cathedral (2016)

Source: Author

international' category (St Paul's in London, Canterbury, Durham, Salisbury, Winchester and York).

The rise in attendance at English cathedrals over the last two decades is now reflected in an estimated net impact contribution of around £220 million to the national economy, supporting over 5,500 jobs and involving the time and skills of over 14,000 volunteers (Ecorys, 2014).

While the growth of tourist visitors is well documented, the growth of regular worshippers and attendance at core religious services is particularly interesting, given the general and dramatic decline in all church attendance in England over recent decades. The source of the increase is the rise in midweek attendance rather than Sunday attendance, with choral Eucharist and choral evensong services proving to be especially popular. In the decade between 2002 and 2012, attendance at midweek services across England's cathedrals was estimated to have increased by 35% (Archbishops' Council, 2014b).

The reasons for regular attendance growth reveal much about the changing role of cathedrals in society today; individuals' need for solace and the spiritual beyond the traditional confines of the Sunday service; the quality of music and service at cathedrals; the anonymity that they can offer; the deeper sense of the sacred that can be delivered by these majestic buildings (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013). Foucault (1986) referred to this sense of the sacred as a 'heterotopia', a timeless and comforting place and an antidote to the chaos of modern life.

The growth in attendance amongst worshippers has not been equally distributed either geographically or across the cathedral typologies. The two regions showing the strongest growth are London and the south-east while the large, international category of cathedral has also experienced the most marked growth in regular attendance at services. The trend is less dramatic amongst the smaller 'parish' cathedral category, but there has been recorded growth here also (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013).

In 2012, an influential report called 'Spiritual Capital - the Present and Future of English Cathedrals' was issued by the Association of English Cathedrals. The report aimed to investigate the changing role and impacts of English cathedrals and to help those running cathedrals to respond to the challenges of the 21st century. Through a national survey of 1,700 adults, a local survey of 1,933 adults and over 250 qualitative

interviews amongst cathedral visitors, it demonstrated that the significance of cathedrals lies beyond their dual role as leaders of their regional Anglican communities (the Diocese) and as tourist attractions. A key finding was that 59% of church non-attenders within the local survey sample agreed that 'the cathedral gives me a greater sense of the sacred than I get elsewhere' (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012:18). The research found that cathedrals have a broad reach and a real capacity to connect spiritually with those who are not part of the Christian community; and that they still had much untapped potential to connect with people, especially the younger generation, through changing and emerging types of spirituality (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012).

The research made reference to the growth and diversity of event activity at cathedrals but did not explore the trend in any depth. It reflected on the capacity for art, music and performance to help visitors connect with the spiritual and implied that cathedrals were increasingly discovering their capacity to generate social and cultural capital. Indeed, cathedrals are perceived as symbols of community identity and have the capacity to enrich social capital as they appeal to increasingly diverse and secular communities and have a unique ability to connect their visitors and audiences (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012); this represents the concept of spiritual capital.

Spiritual capital is an extension of Bourdieu's original work on the increasing role of social and cultural capital in determining individual value systems, taste and habitus (Bourdieu, 1986) It can be defined as the fulfilment that an individual obtains by acting from a deep sense of meaning and a sense of higher purpose. It has been applied beyond religiosity into the worlds of education and business (Zohar and Marshall, 2004). Verter (2003) explored various dimensions of spiritual capital, which can be derived from traditional or 'alternative' adherence to religion, but often manifests itself as esoteric and mystical experiences.

Much has been written about the differences between tourists and 'pilgrims' but there has been a recent shift towards exploring the convergence of the two, aligned together by common desires (Stausberg, 2011). There is considerable evidence that the religious spirituality of traditional pilgrims is at least partly reflected in the spiritual experiences being sought by the majority of tourist visitors to cathedrals (Shackley, 2002). The journey of a modern tourist pilgrim is less physical, less of an obligation and less devotional but can still be transformative in terms of well-being and self-

fulfilment. Religious and secular pilgrimage share the characteristic of a search for a mystical or magical experience (Collins-Kreiner, 2009). Spirituality and spiritual capital can manifest itself in meditation, contemplative walks or experiencing the aesthetic qualities of art and music (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009).

The growth in cathedral attendance in England and the blossoming of alternative and more secular forms of spirituality have been a feature of the last two decades. A similarly flourishing trend has been the growth of the UK events industry, as the commercial world has embraced events as part of the marketing mix and the public sector has increasingly nurtured events and festivals for civic boosterism, economic development and embedding community cohesion (Richards and Palmer, 2010). The event industry is an inherently creative one; businesses seek to maximise media impact through the use of unusual venues and technology driven event programming, while government bodies are keen to encourage local creative talent and embrace cultural capital through developing or sponsoring arts and community festivals (Foley *et al.*, 2012).

One of the most dynamic exponents of events activity over the last two decades has been the visitor attractions sector. Visitor attractions devote considerable resources and capital to staging events as a mechanism for maximising peak season revenues and for accentuating their low season visitor numbers, a trend which can be traced back to the early 1990s (Richards, 1992). Cultural attractions now seek to further develop and diversify their visitor market through event activity as part of a more sophisticated interest in audience development (Bladen *et al.*, 2012). Well managed attractions have additionally focused attention on wider collaboration in destination marketing initiatives and destination-wide festivals, in order to achieve their goals of audience growth and community engagement (Fyall *et al.*, 2008).

Many of the most successful and sustainable events at attractions rely on storytelling and interpretation to enhance their distinctiveness. Events have become an effective way for historic attractions and museums to interpret their heritage and collections and to act as 'animators' of their stories (Getz, 2012). Recent research has indicated that interpretational investment at visitor sites should enable visitors to achieve emotional experiences as well as learning ones and that events can be a successful method of achieving such experiential reactions (Poria, 2013).

Research into cathedral attendance has suggested that core visitors tend towards certain personality characteristics. Psychological profiling of visitors to St David's Cathedral in Wales in 2008 based on Jungian theory (Francis *et al.*, 2008) found that visitors tended to display preferences for introversion, for sensing (valuing facts and detail) and judging (valuing objectivity and integrity). It is perhaps not surprising that much of cathedral visitor interpretation and event activity has tended to provide for the traditional profile of visitor, those seeking solitary and contemplative experiences. The need to reach out to new audiences requires cathedrals to develop event and activity programmes for more intuitive and 'feeling' visitors, who are looking for more direct and imaginative forms of engagement (Francis *et al.*, 2008).

The primary objective for this paper is to explore the extent to which English cathedrals are both passive and active hosts of events but also to discover the extent to which they are developing new and more innovative types of event activity to boost attendance, contribute to their running costs, and to fulfil their objective of enhancing community spiritual capital.

Cultural events are a dynamic method of diversifying appeal and widening a visitor market, but, require both intuitive and seasoned expertise to deliver new audiences and to re-enforce the core mission of cathedrals. Is there enough evidence to suggest that English cathedrals have learnt to embrace the new energy of the events market and overcome barriers to programming new activities?

Research Approach and Methodology

The primary research here follows a case study approach to reveal details of current practice, and is thus enhanced but also limited by the specificity of such a study technique. There are more than 3,000 Christian cathedrals in the world, but this study is investigating only those in one country - England - and only those of the predominant Christian religion - the Anglican church, also known as the Church of England. There are 42 Anglican (Church of England) cathedrals and 21 Roman Catholic cathedrals in England.

A detailed review of the event activities and approach to events at five selected cathedrals has been conducted. Those chosen are all in the south of England and consist of three large cathedrals of international renown (Canterbury, Salisbury and Winchester) and two 'medium sized' cathedrals of

significance, if less well known internationally (Rochester and Chichester). The five were selected because they all fall into the category of cathedrals which dominate their cities and play an active role in their local tourism sector. As such, they have been at the forefront of innovation with event activity in recent years.

The review of activity and approach at each case study cathedral began by gathering information from their web sites in order to develop an understanding of the type and diversity of events and activities hosted over the last two years (from summer 2013 onwards), and in forthcoming months. Lists of activities at each cathedral were compiled to enable an overview, comparison and contrast between the five cases. Contact was then made with each cathedral in order to identify individuals best placed to undertake semi-structured interviews with the researcher, assisted by advice from the networking organisation, Cathedrals Plus. The interviewees included members of the Dean and Chapter and cathedral employees engaged in visitor services and event organisation at a senior level. A core list of questions was created in order to establish a structure for the interviews and facilitate consistency in the information gathered. These questions established the general approach and attitude to event activity at each cathedral, allowed an in-depth discussion of recent major and substantial events and encouraged discussion on barriers and facilitators to such activity. Four detailed telephone interviews and one face to face interview were conducted with these individuals in May and June 2015 in order to review practice and collect views and opinions on their changing roles and approaches to event activity. Detailed notes were made of each conversation and these notes were then categorised and sorted via the prevalent themes and issues.

The research approach is predominantly investigative and inductive, supported by case studies to seek to understand and explore the issues related to the research topic. The findings also draw upon secondary analysis of quantitative data related to cathedral attendance.

There are limitations with such a case study selection. The cathedrals chosen represent just 12% of the total number of Anglican cathedrals, and they are also geographically specific. However, they are drawn from the two main categories of English cathedral (large international and medium sized historic) and so are considered representative.

Findings

Extent of Event Activity

Examination of the ‘what’s on’ and online event calendars of the five case study cathedrals revealed the extent and diversity of event activity. Salisbury Cathedral claims to host in excess of 1,000 services and events each year, in addition to its core ecclesiastical services. Events of course vary immensely in scale, length and content; many events are quite low key, relating perhaps to an educational initiative or a gathering of Friends. Through the analysis of the data gathered for this paper, cathedral events have been broadly categorised into three types:

- ***Ecclesiastical*** - core events as part of the daily and weekly liturgy.
- ***Cultural and community*** - events held as part of wider city festival programmes; to celebrate a significant anniversary or moment in history; to enhance the visitor experience; to develop new audiences and / or contribute to community causes and initiatives.
- ***Commercial*** - events where the cathedral acts as a ‘venue for hire’ to a third party, often a commercial or corporate organisation (although charities can be included) and occasionally for a private event such as a wedding.

Cultural and Community Events

The cathedral interviewees were all keen to emphasise their cathedrals’ long traditions of artistic involvement. In contemporary times, this is especially evident through the visual arts. Cathedral walls, windows and spaces have been the canvases for exceptional and often provocative contemporary art and installation; Marc Chagall’s window at Chichester, the Barbara Hepworth sculpture in Winchester’s Inner Close, William Pye’s contemporary font in Salisbury’s nave, Sergei Fyodorov’s baptism fresco at Rochester and Antony Gormley’s floating sculpture in Canterbury’s crypt, are all amongst the highlights for visitors. The notion of the cathedral as a gallery is well established, as noted in Salisbury Cathedral’s visual arts policy:

Visual art is one of the great civilising and inspirational achievements of humankind which can speak to us of the transcendent and of eternal verities, as well as challenging our perceptions of ourselves and the way we live. In this sense, it is deeply spiritual (Salisbury Cathedral, 2009:1)

Small Community Event in Precincts of Winchester Cathedral (2015)



Source: Author

These installations often become permanent features but they invariably facilitate cultural events linked to visual art. But, more importantly, the tradition of experimentation in the contemporary visual arts has more recently inspired further innovation in event programming.

Examples of major cultural events at the case study cathedrals are their roles in major city festivals. Salisbury hosted a production of Shakespeare's 'King John' over four nights in the cathedral nave in May 2015, as part of the Salisbury International Arts Festival; Rochester hosted a service of tribute to the memory of Charles Dickens as part of the city's annual Dickens Festival in June 2015; Chichester hosted an outdoor concert of emerging performers from the local music academy on the precinct's green in June 2015; Winchester opened the city's annual festival by hosting a choral concert of Rachmaninov's Vespers in July 2015; Canterbury hosted a performance of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to open the Canterbury Festival in October 2015. These events

demonstrate a new willingness for cathedrals to be more outward looking and to collaborate with destination management organisations (DMOs) and cultural agencies in staging events as part of wider festival initiatives.

Cultural events staged as direct initiatives of the cathedrals include the Southern Cathedral Festival, a four day music festival held each year alternately at Winchester, Salisbury and Chichester which now incorporates a brief festival 'fringe' performance; Chichester's biennial Festival of Flowers; Rochester's music programme which recently featured a concert from the jazz-inspired James Taylor Quartet playing alongside the cathedral choir; Salisbury's series of talks, exhibitions and pageants to celebrate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta in 2015 (as owner of the best preserved of the four original Magna Carta documents); Canterbury's annual open day giving local people the opportunity to engage with craftsmen, archivists, scholars and musicians; and Winchester's annual and month-long Christmas market and ice rink, hosted since 2006.

This is just an indication of the breadth of cultural events now being held. The majority of the activity fits very comfortably into the cathedral environment and traditional ethos. But, all cathedrals interviewed have not been afraid to push the boundaries of orthodoxy when an opportunity has arisen. Rock concerts, comedy performances, wine fairs, film showings, and ‘son et lumieres’ have all been held at the case study cathedrals, without attracting controversy. Other cathedrals across England have hosted fashion shows (St Paul’s) and street art / hip hop music nights (York).

Cultural events in cathedrals are generally motivated by the desire to connect to a variety of audiences and engage with community cultural activity. There is occasional overlap between cultural and commercial events as some cultural events are developed with a commercial profit in mind. However, it is rarely the primary consideration.

Commercial Events

The category of commercial events, which includes gala dinners, awards ceremonies, meetings, conferences and networking events, are altogether different in the way they are managed and viewed by the cathedral chapters and senior officers. The interviewees all stated the importance of commercial events in contributing to cathedral revenues and that they are viewed in the same context as retail or catering income, i.e. as an essential method of generating income to cover at least some of the enormous costs of running a cathedral and especially the capital costs related to building conservation. All cathedrals explored in this study have created a separate commercial enterprise or organisation and have generally combined their catering service with the commercial event ‘venue for hire’ service. This has allowed a more commercial approach to seeking business through marketing channels and relationship building with local companies. The growth of corporate events has been an impetus for some cathedrals to convert or refurbish certain buildings within their precincts into multi-use event spaces. Indeed the level of success of individual cathedrals in this market owes much to the extent of their property portfolio. But, as one interviewee emphasised:

even corporate events are an expression of the core cathedral role of hospitality . . . cathedrals are generous places which do their utmost to accommodate requests.

One of the most important clients for commercial events over the last two decades has been the local universities who choose to use the cathedrals for their student graduation ceremonies. These can number ten days or more during an annual calendar and will include the use of the cathedral itself as well as outlying buildings and greenspaces for reception marquees. Their commercial contribution is important but graduation ceremonies are also a reflection of the cathedral fulfilling its community and partnership role.

Barriers to Event Activity

The interviewees noted that there are certain barriers to current and future event activity, which are physical, financial and philosophical. The key barrier is the ever crowded diary and the lack of capacity, at certain times, to stage events without interfering with daily ecclesiastical commitments. Some cathedrals, Rochester being a good example, do not have the advantage of generous precincts and large building portfolios in which to create event spaces. Financial constraints have restricted some cathedrals from investing in staffing resource in terms of tourism and event professionals, which would provide expertise and impetus to develop new event initiatives. Finally, there remain certain philosophical barriers to event development at some cathedrals as both the Bishop and the Dean and Chapter remain the ultimate arbiters of decisions around risk-taking and priorities. As one interviewee noted,

Chapter are the decision makers for events, and religious commitments will always take priority. The personalities and preferences of Chapter are very powerful.

These barriers occasionally mean that cathedrals will decline requests for events from third parties, but, all interviewees implied that they attempt to accommodate requests as best they can. One interviewee reflected that:

the main reasons for declining event requests are lack of capacity, concern over reputational risk if the third party event organiser has limited experience, and occasional concern over corporate dinners or an awards event which could be deemed as elitist and too overtly commercial in nature.

Another interviewee mentioned that events deemed as commercial would be turned down if the hirer was not willing to pay, demonstrating the commercial imperative for some event activity. However, according to another interviewee:

cathedrals are not generally clever at recognising the commercial potential of events and are not good at saying no to event requests, or at managing them strategically

Facilitating Factors

Interviewees were keen to highlight a number of factors which have facilitated the growth of event activity, besides the generic establishment of events in the corporate marketing and tourism sectors. These were: the fact that cathedrals are much more progressive than they are generally perceived to be; the investment now being made into developing and recruiting staff with expertise in events; and the impact of Heritage Lottery funded programmes which have encouraged the use of events to develop and seek new audiences. Each of these factors deserve more consideration.

Three of the interviewees reflected on the common perception of cathedrals as institutions defined by conservatism, piety and a tendency to be inward looking. This is perhaps re-enforced by the geography of some cathedrals as 'gated communities' surrounded by protective gates and walls. The perception is inaccurate as the reality is that cathedrals have constantly adapted and worked hard to reach out to an increasingly secular population. They have long embraced the more progressive route of breaking out of the confines of their strict Christian heritage to perform a variety of roles, incorporating tourist attraction, museum, educational institute and event venue. This has enabled them to embrace change and diversity such that the more recent era of event experimentation is not considered to be radical within the cathedral family.

As with any organisation involved in tourism and events, the need for staffing capacity and expertise, to mould the visitor product and to develop a programme of events and activities, is recognised as being hugely significant. Expertise can be imported and recruited or it can equally be nurtured from within, provided that individual empowerment is facilitated. Event management in particular has become more professional over the last decade and those cathedrals which have successfully managed to develop diverse and bold event programmes have clearly invested in their in-house talent and competence.

An important facilitating factor for event activity which was revealed through the case study interviews was the positive influence of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Fund was established in 1994 to distribute

a proportion of the revenue from UK national lottery ticket sales. It provides both capital and revenue grant funding for heritage buildings, for conservation and for ensuring the sustainability and resilience of heritage organisations. The HLF takes a strong role itself in the realisation of projects and is particularly keen to promote collaboration, local engagement in heritage and skills development. It also encourages all project bidders to develop learning and participatory agendas and events is a significant aspect of this. All the case study cathedrals had delivered or are involved in current HLF projects and these projects, while delivering urgent conservation works, have also created events, exhibitions, interpretation and outreach initiatives aimed at new ways of public engagement and audience development. Examples are Rochester's 'Hidden Treasures, Fresh Expressions' Winchester's 'Kings and Scribes - Birth of a Nation' and the 'Canterbury Journey' projects.

Spiritual Capital

An additional facilitating factor has been the post-modern evolution of religious spirituality into a web of more complex, varied and alternative spiritual experiences or 'spiritual capital'. This was a theme which all interviewees were keen to discuss. One interviewee spoke of:

the duty of the cathedral to open up the visitor to the spiritual - individuals need a variety of experiences to allow this to be achieved.

Another interviewee suggested:

there is a continuum of visitor from worshipper to tourist . . . visitors at events are a type of pilgrim but under the cover of a tourist. There are opportunities to 'sow seeds' of faith or persuade future regular visits through events.

All interviewees spoke of the further potential of events to help cathedrals realise their spiritual missions and the increasingly prevalent view that spirituality can be realised in multiple different realms beyond traditional religious services.

Two statistics from the Theos report (2012) indicate the power of cathedrals to appeal to the new and diverse spiritual seekers. Amongst the sample of nearly 2,000 adults in six cathedral cities, who were a mix of Christians, non-believers and followers of other religions, a remarkable 95% felt that their local cathedral 'provided a space where people can get in touch with the spiritual and sacred' (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012:25). Cathedrals have the aesthetic

magnificence and sacred qualities to satisfy so many different types of spiritual quests. For many visitors, the knowledge that a cathedral is capable of revealing sometimes dormant personal spirituality is enough to inspire a visit. But for others, a stimulation is needed and events can occasionally provide this stimulation as well as breaking down barriers of access for others. The Theos report (2012) reflects on how beautiful art and music help people to connect with the spiritual but also revealed that 23% of those surveyed nationally would only go to a cathedral for a cultural event (Theos and Grubb Institute, 2012), demonstrating the important role of events in reaching out to non-visitors and 'harder to reach' audiences.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper is a preliminary review of the work being undertaken at English cathedrals and illustrates a growing trend for event diversity and experimentation and a growing professionalism in the way that event activity is managed. Five cathedrals have been selected for special attention and the review is given added depth by the analysis of much recent data published by, and for, the Anglican church. There is no doubt that Anglican cathedrals are vibrant, thriving and progressive places (Holmes and Kautzer, 2013). This research has sought to review the growing role of events within cathedrals' core missions and has indicated that their contribution is significant and almost certainly under-estimated. There is some evidence of a more strategic commitment to the staging of commercial events and a more rounded, outward facing attitude to the hosting of cultural events both as stand-alone activities and as part of wider collaborative city wide festivals. Progress has been commendable but the paper concludes with some brief recommendations and suggestions for cathedral clergy and senior staff, both in England and beyond, as they look to cement and re-enforce their event ambitions.

- The assessment of barriers to progress revealed that cathedrals are still prone to an element of reactivism as regards events. There is merit in considering a more strategic approach to event planning rather than the project driven approach which most cathedrals appear to be following at present, as project funding is inevitably short term and not always sustainable.
- While cathedrals seem to be well connected with each-other and share best practice across a number of activities and disciplines such as conservation

and visitor facilities (English Heritage, 2009), there is more scope for sharing of ideas and issues in the realm of events and festivals.

- Those cathedrals which were actively seeking collaborative partnerships with other organisations, such as arts agencies, charities and local government bodies, were able to deliver the more progressive and exciting agendas (also acknowledged by Kirby, 2008). This also helped to ensure that cathedral events were complementing and not competing with other festival activity in their cities and that they were exploring ways of participating in national festivals such as The Big Draw and Heritage Open Days. Cathedrals are well placed to further encourage the participation of local people in festivals, an area of increasing interest for social and cultural researchers (Rogers and Anastasiadou, 2011).
- Evidence of core visitors to English cathedrals has indicated that the visitor 'product' can too often cater only for the established audience (Francis *et al.*, 2008). Events are inextricably linked to the development of the tourist product and, despite recent progress, can play a more pivotal role in interpretation, in developing improved methods of visitor management and in widening points of visitor access to the cathedral sites.

These suggestions will further help to address the barriers to continuing progress and in no way obscure the achievements made by cathedrals in recent years. A preliminary review by this researcher of cathedral activity on the European mainland indicates that, within an international context, English cathedrals are at the forefront of using events in a contemporary and progressive fashion and that events are an embedded part of their mission to spread spiritual capital to their local residents and visitors. Some visitors will be encouraged to visit a cathedral for the first time through an event and then become more regular users; others will develop a renewed spirituality through the experience or the splendour of the welcome. In an age of commoditised festivals and corporate monopolisation of traditional events, cathedrals are able to add a smattering of prestige, poise and spiritual gravitas to the cultural programmes and reputations of their cities. Events, at their core, are designed around the spirit of hospitality and sharing, a founding feature of the cathedral ethos and one to which they adhere very naturally.

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