



Discover DeCrypt Project 2018/19

During the course of 2018 the Delivery phase of the project got underway in January with the Capital Works commencing in the hands of the main contractor Croft and the design team approved by HLF. These included no less than the Architect, Structural Engineer, Quantity Surveyor, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers, Archaeologist, Principal and Lighting designer, Approved Inspector all with their specific expertise.

The surroundings of St Mary de Crypt Church and the Old Crypt School Classroom soon resembled a builder's yard following the erection of scaffolding for external masonry repairs and use of space for storage accessed through the Marylone passage.

Through the following period large sections of the Victorian Pews were removed from the church nave. One small pew is now located in The Crypt School Crush hall underneath the portrait of founders John and Joan Cooke. Existing flooring was taken up in preparation for the new underfloor heating system complete with radiators, and the lift to the 1st floor Old Schoolroom. Later stages saw the completion of the new South and West doors, installation of main drainage and new toilets, a refitted kitchen and additional lighting throughout, including the bell tower.

During all the ongoing changes the only public presence since the closure of the building have been the conducted 'hard hat' tours each Saturday morning of the months April-Nov. These have been well attended as testimony to the interest shown in these developments. During the change around, the Senior Project Manager Nicola Dyer assisted by Jenine de Vries and Jessica Gordon have kept the Trustees informed of progress through eNews reports and bimonthly meetings.

As September approached for Gloucester Historical Fortnight the closed Church entrance on Southgate St was surrounded by attractive colourful panels in the form of a collage depicting noteworthy events throughout past centuries.

In retrospect the complete installation has proceeded well without significant delays. Two exceptions caused initially some concern which have since been overcome. Resulting from the height of a cellar arch under the nave flooring, it was necessary to re-route successfully a small

part of the tubular underfloor heating. Secondly an unexpected vault carrying utilities required some construction modifications to ensure long term stability.

Completion of the Delivery phase involving Capital works in February signalled a new beginning. To mark this, best endeavours were needed to both clean and tidy up in time for a dry run held on March 9th. On the chosen day Trustees and members of the design team with others including volunteers and numbering about 50 attended. With what they saw everyone was enthusiastic at the achievement. The space provided and underfloor heating was a revelation as was the Lift, Lighting and Interpretation panels. Very little remained to be finished. On March 23rd the commencement of the Operating phase will be celebrated by an open invitation to the launch throughout the day. In the evening the first major event of a fitting nature features the AGM and Reunion dinner of the Old Cryptians' Club.

Nicola Dyer and Jenine de Vries will bid farewell on March 28th when we will have the opportunity to wish them well and thank them for their dedication in helping revitalise the facilities embraced in Discover DeCrypt. At the same time a sincere welcome is tendered to Hellen O'Connor as Operations Project Manager and Jessica Gordon as Community Project Manager wishing them every success.

For the Operating phase about to begin it has been agreed to engage a new board of CIO Trustees to exercise governance. The period of tenure from May 2019 will be 3 years. A Trustee acting in the interests of the School and the Old Cryptians' Club would be highly desirable and a considerable advantage. For the function of Trustee, a skills set has been established to determine the needs to be achieved. Selection of one strength from the following is suggested.

*Best practice at other churches secular organisations; Social value in terms of differences made in the community; Project Management; Accountancy/Financial Management; IT expertise; Human Resources; Market Research; Retail Knowledge; Visitors Interpretation; Planning Policy (beyond 2020); Local Architectural History.

Richard Browning (CIO Trustee)

