

St Paul's Cathedral completes £40m restoration project and celebrates 300th anniversary

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LONDON (16th June 2011)

In June 2011, one of the largest and most impressive restoration projects ever undertaken in the UK is formally completed. The St Paul's Cathedral programme of cleaning and repair has cost £40m, taken 15 years, and is the first time in its history that the building has been comprehensively restored inside and out.

****PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITY – 11am Thursday 16th June 2011****

16th June marks the first time in fifteen years that St Paul's Cathedral is free from scaffolding. On this day there will be an opportunity for exterior and interior filming/photography as well as the chance to interview The Reverend Canon Mark Oakley, Treasurer of St Paul's, about the project.

The culmination of the cleaning project coincides with the 300th anniversary of St Paul's Cathedral being declared complete by Parliament. A service will be held to celebrate the 300th anniversary on 21st June.

Since the project of cleaning and repair commenced, the exterior and interior of the cathedral have been beautifully restored. Once blackened and damaged, the west front now rises majestically at the top of Ludgate Hill. The interior of the cathedral has been transformed by state of the art conservation techniques and the light that now floods the space highlights the Portland stone used in the cathedral's construction and brings mosaics, carvings and sculpture to life.

The Right Reverend Graeme Knowles, Dean of St Paul's said:

"We are thrilled that in the year that we celebrate the 300th anniversary of Wren's masterpiece, we can also mark the successful completion of this extraordinary restoration project. The two million worshippers, pilgrims and visitors who come to St Paul's each year can now witness Wren's original vision and see the cathedral as fresh as the day it was completed."

Martin Stancliffe, Surveyor to the Fabric, who has overseen the restoration project, said:

"It has been a privilege – and an extraordinary experience - to have led the team of professionals, craftsmen and conservators who have contributed so much to this transforming project. This great building is now in a sound state, and probably looks better than at any time since its completion in 1711."

To celebrate the fact that the cathedral is free from scaffolding for the first time in 15 years, St Paul's is launching the 300th Anniversary Photography Competition. Photographers are invited to submit their best exterior shots of the building. The ten winning images will be displayed in the cathedral crypt as part of the timeline outside the film experience *Oculus: an eye into St Paul's*. The overall winner will also win one of an exclusive edition of 25 glass vases specially made by the Venice-based firm of Salviati & C to celebrate the 300th anniversary.

The 300th anniversary photography competition runs from 16th June – 16th July 2011. To enter photographers simply need to upload their photography to the 'St Paul's 300th anniversary competition' Flickr group www.flickr.com/stpaulslondon More information, including terms and conditions, can be found at www.stpauls.co.uk/photocomp. The competition winners will be announced on 25th July.

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For more information please contact Hannah Talbot, Press & Communications Officer, on 020 7246 8321 or email hannah@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

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If you wish to attend and/or interview The Reverend Canon Oakley please contact Hannah Talbot, Press & Communications Officer on 0207 246 8321 or hannah@stpaulscathedral.org.uk

Note to editors:

St Paul's Cathedral is the cathedral church of the diocese of London, which it has served for over 1,400 years. The current building has become a potent symbol of the life of a nation and is one of the world's most beautiful buildings. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the late seventeenth century, its stones have absorbed the hopes, fears, sorrows and joys of generations and stand as an enduring symbol of our communion with those gone before and those still to come. Each year nearly two million people flock to the cathedral for services, concerts, debates, educational events, performing arts and sightseeing. All are most welcome.

The St. Paul's Cathedral Foundation was established in 2000, with HRH The Prince of Wales as its Patron, primarily to raise the funds to clean and restore the cathedral, both inside and out.

The £40 million raised by the Foundation has funded:

- Repairs to the peristyle
- Cleaning and repair of the interior
- Repair and cleaning of the stonework of all the external elevations
- Redesign and landscaping of the South Churchyard gardens included the re-erection of the original Wren railings.
- Reconstruction of the west steps
- A new lift and disabled access facilities enabling wheelchair users to access the crypt, Whispering and South Triforium Galleries
- Levelling of crypt routes to provide universal access (for wheelchair users in particular)
- Installation of film exhibition 'Oculus: an eye into St Paul's' in the former Treasury. A series of short films explores the history and daily life of the cathedral, and two virtual access films open up areas that visitors with mobility issues may not otherwise reach.
- Creation of a new Education Centre catering for more than 25,000 visiting schoolchildren each year
- Creation of new Choir Practice rooms
- New setting for the font at the west end of the nave
- Cleaning, repair and relighting of the Nelson and Wellington Chambers
- Analysis, repair and cleaning of the Geometric Staircase
- Initial conservation of books in the Library and a Library environmental monitoring project, the results of which will determine the nature of the work required to conserve the
- Library fabric and its collections
- Cleaning and restoration of the American Memorial Chapel
- Digitisation of the American Roll of Honour with on-line access and search facility
- Installation of new sound and lighting systems
- Restoration of the Grand Organ and the creation of a second mobile console
- School and adult education projects including the work of St Paul's Institute
- Creation of a new set of liturgical vestments