

# PROJECT BLACKJACK

## NEWSLETTER July 19

An exciting project is underway to commission two statues for Cirencester Parish Church. These will be placed in the niches on the western side of the tower which are currently vacant. The north-west niche formerly housed a statue of St John the Baptist and is thought to have given its name to the street directly facing the statue, Black Jack Street. The statue was taken down in 1963, very blackened and in poor condition and was subsequently lost. It has been missing from the niche for more than 50 years. The south west niche is believed to have held a statue of the Virgin Mary and child; this too will be replaced.

The current project is holding a design competition to help choose forward looking designs for both statues which reflects both the church's view and the town's view of how these should be presented. A call for Expressions of Interest in the project resulted in nationwide responses and following a sift, five artists reflecting a broad range of experience have been chosen. Amanda Hart, chair of the project group said "We were impressed by the range of people who put ideas forward; all of those chosen have been involved in major sculpture projects nationally and will no doubt come up with imaginative designs which fit both the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the current fabric of the church".

During the summer these artists will visit Cirencester and there will be an opportunity for local people to talk to them and to share their ideas. A special event will be held over the Heritage Open Weekend (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September) when there will be a display in the church.

Canon Graham Morris, the incumbent vicar said "It's fantastic that we have this exciting project helping to re-establish what was a key feature in Cirencester. It's important that both the church and the general community have an input into what we hope will be in place for many hundreds of years".



*"Black Jack" in situ in the northwest niche prior to being removed for safety reasons in 1963*

**For further information about this project please visit our website**

[www.projectblackjack.org.uk](http://www.projectblackjack.org.uk)

**If you would like to help volunteer with this project please contact**

[info@projectblackjack.org.uk](mailto:info@projectblackjack.org.uk) or ring 01285 657696

**If you would like a speaker for your organisation then please contact**

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