

Pisa expert lends some weight to church's official ceremony

# Lean times are over for tower



**ON SHOW:** John Colbert and Delia Lockhart, of the Wybunbury Tower Preservation Trust, with visitors Terry and Marie Brooks and granddaughter Shani.

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by **Alan Jervis**

A MAN who was the driving force behind the straightening of the Leaning Tower of Pisa was guest-of-honour at an open weekend to mark the official reopening of Wybunbury's famous leaning church tower.

Professor John Burland, who was instrumental in persuading the authorities that the Pisa tower could be straightened using the same under-excavation method as first used at Wybunbury in 1832, attended the ceremony along with Professor Efrain Shelley, who carried out similar work on the Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City, and archaeological historian Glynis Johnston.

Professor Burland later gave a talk to an audience of 90 people at Crewe's Victoria Centre stressing the importance of the tower at Wybunbury.

He said that if he had not been able to convince the authorities at Pisa that the Wybunbury method was safe and successful the work at Pisa would never have been carried out.

The leaning tower at Wybunbury is all that remains of the original St Chad's Church, which was closed down in 1972 and demolished as unsafe in 1977. There is now a new church in the village.

Work to restore and preserve the tower has been carried out over a number of years, and during the opening weekend, attended by the Mayor and Mayoress of Crewe and Nantwich, Mick and Ann Roberts, hundreds of visitors were able to climb the 1,000-foot tower to see panoramic views over the countryside.

John Colbert, vice-chairman of the preservation trust, said: 'It was a highly successful weekend with three eminent visitors.'