



REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2009

Activities during the year

Events

The eleventh annual Stephen Dykes Bower Memorial lecture was held on 18 May 2009. It was given by the Rt Revd Graeme Knowles, Dean of St Paul's and the then Chairman of the Church of England Church Buildings Council. The title of his talk was 'The church must be forever building' (T. S. Eliot, *The Rock*), and looked at the principles of and pressures on the interior ordering of church buildings.

On 1 December 2009 the twelfth annual Dykes Bower lecture was held. The lecturer was the Very Revd John Hall, Dean of Westminster. He chose the title 'Westminster Abbey: for ever new', dealing both with the history of the Abbey, and current thinking about future changes. A reception was also held after this event. The Society is grateful to both the Dykes Bower lecturers for stimulating talks on matters of contemporary concern.

The twelfth Annual Conference, which was attended by some 80 people, was held at the St Alban's Centre, Holborn on 3 October 2009. It had as its title 'Church Towers, and looked at this element of church design from a number of angles. The Annual General Meeting was held immediately afterwards.

The Council is giving careful thought its future policy for tours and visits given low attendance at some previous outings. During 2009, no Society visits were organised, but, as in previous years, members were invited to join John Vigar's tours to churches in Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Surrey.

Publications

The Society's website continues to attract a good number of visitors.

An edition of the Society's Journal, *Ecclesiology Today* was published in March 2009 (no. 41). This was the delayed second issue of 2008.

During 2009 the Society was working to prepare an edition of *Ecclesiology Today* devoted to pews and church seating, looking both at questions of history and at matters of current debate. This is being edited by Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown. It became clear that the amount of material we were able to commission would be considerably more than would fill an issue of the Journal and the decision was taken to publish a book on the topic. This is expected to appear in late 2010, and will make up for the slippage in production of the Journal.

A major project was undertaken by Dr Brigid Ockelton, who manages our backstock of books and booklets. For many titles, particularly the booklets we published a decade or two back, we are greatly overstocked. Dr Ockelton therefore grouped the surplus titles into rather enticing special-offer packs, of which she sold a significant number. This not only put the titles where they are useful, on people's shelves, but also boosted our income for the year by nearly one thousand pounds. Managing the exercise, and packing and posting the parcels was not a trivial exercise, and we are grateful to Dr Ockelton for undertaking this.

Membership and Administration

With regret the Council noted during the course of the year the death of the following members, either in 2009 or earlier: Dr Benedikt Benedikz, Stephen Bucknall, Martin Fellows, H. E. Hutson, John King, P. G. Miller, Canon A. W. Penn, L. Powell, Dr M. V. J. Seaborne, Mrs E. J. Shaw, D. G. Steer. Members will recall that the late Stephen Bucknall was author of the gazetteer in the Society's book on Sir Ninian Comper published in 2006, a major enterprise which had occupied his spare time for many years.

At the close of 2009, there were 919 active individual members in the UK (either Life or Honorary members, or with up to date annual subscriptions), at 860 different postal addresses. This includes 18 Honorary members and 94 Life members. In addition there were something under 20 overseas members.

Your Council continued to meet four times per year in central London, and transacted a variety of business. As always, the Council are grateful to those members who provide active support to the Society in so many ways: organising and attending events of various kinds, contributing to the Journal, and carrying out administrative tasks of one sort or another. The Council would particularly like to thank Brigid Ockelton for distributing publications and Phil Draper for continuing to provide the 'Church Crawler' section of *Ecclesiology Today*. We are grateful, too, to Mark Ockelton for his willingness yet again to inspect the Society's accounts. Until this year Ruth Cooke handled the administration of Gift Aid forms, and we are grateful for her support in this area, undertaken more or less since Gift Aid was introduced.