



## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2004

### Anniversary events

This year was the 125th anniversary of the founding of the current Society.

#### *Anniversary publication*

At the very beginning of the year, members received as an anniversary gift a copy of “*Temples . . . worthy of His presence*”: *the early publications of the Cambridge Camden Society*. The book was a reprint of some extremely scarce pamphlets of our predecessor Society, well illustrated, and with helpful introductory material by Christopher Webster, our Hon. Director of Visits.

This and the other anniversary activities were partially funded by the Goodger Special Purposes Fund, initiated a few years ago by a legacy received by the Society.

#### *Essay competition*

To further mark the anniversary, the Society launched its first ever essay competition. No precise title for the essay was specified, but essays were to reflect the particular interests of the Ecclesiological Society – that is, ecclesiology as the study of the nature and use of church buildings and their furnishings. The assessors gave particular consideration to essays, which look forward to the future, whilst relating it to the past.

The winner was Timothy Engelman’s *Between deconsecration and desecration*. Timothy Engelman is based in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania. His essay is a challenging examination of the cultural and theological implications of the conversion and secular reuse of a redundant Romanesque Revival Catholic church in the United States. The following essay was specially commended: *Redundant churches: an Antipodean perspective on the present and the future* by Christopher Akehurst of Windsor, Victoria, Australia

The winner of the under-25 prize was Philip Corbett, with his essay *We will go into the house of the Lord*. Philip Corbett’s essay deals with the way in which church buildings can express their purpose, especially through the way they are ordered. He is currently a post-graduate student at Keble College Oxford. The following essays were specially commended: *Sidney Sussex College Chapel, Cambridge: pastoral challenge and solution in design and liturgy* by Megan Duffern of Coventry, and *Do the environment and symbolism of the Eucharist in Durham Cathedral successfully promote a sense of community? By what criteria should such ecclesiological dimensions be analysed* by Katherine Emma Southwood of the University of Durham.

The Society is grateful to the assessors, who were: Dr Thomas Cocke, FSA, Chief Executive, NADFAS, formerly Secretary, Council for the Care of Churches; the Venerable Dr William Jacob, Archdeacon of Charing Cross; Professor Kenneth Murta, Dip.Arch. (Dunelm.), BArch., FRIBA, Professor Emeritus, School of Architecture, Sheffield University, past Secretary of the Society and member of Council. The chair was Paul Velluet, BA, BArch, MLitt, RIBA, IHBC, past Chairman of the Council of the Society, and member of Council.

#### *Anniversary event*

In October we held our anniversary celebration, at the London Charterhouse, by kind permission of the Master. The afternoon began with a guided tour of the historic buildings, led by three of our resident members, and was followed by an organ recital by the distinguished organist, Graham Matthews. Following this was choral evensong, with Canon Martin Warner preaching. A reception followed, where our guest speaker was Canon Dr Donald Gray, CBE, retired Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons. About 100 members attended this special event, and it was a particular pleasure that a number of our Vice-Presidents were with us on this special occasion.

#### **Other activities during the year**

##### *Events*

As is customary, a varied selection of church visits and tours was offered.

The programme, which took place largely in the summer, began with a walking tour of Bury St. Edmunds. This included a specially-arranged visit to the cathedral and an opportunity to climb the tower, then under construction using medieval techniques, and to have the work explained to us by its architect, Warwick Pethers. This event was followed by tours of central Ipswich and of Norwich city churches. In addition one of our members, John Vigar, organised four visits to churches in Kent open to members of the Society and others, and there were two overseas trips organised by our member Jonathan Fryer.

Three regular annual events took place in central London. The Annual General Meeting was held on 27 July 2004 at the St Anne's Church Centre, Soho, in conjunction with an illustrated talk by the present Chairman of Council, Trevor Cooper, on 'The destruction of East Anglian church interiors by the puritan William Dowsing and his colleagues during the English Civil War'. This was well attended, with upward of fifty members and guests, many of whom stayed for an informal reception afterwards.

The Annual Conference, which was attended by some 160 people, the largest number to date, was held at the Royal Institution of British Architects in October. It had as its theme 'The late-medieval parish church: a place for the Mass', and was presented by a team of distinguished speakers specialising in the history, liturgy, architecture and church furnishings of the period. In December we held the annual Dykes Bower lecture and reception at Christ Church, Spitalfields, in conjunction with the Friends of the church. The lecture was by Red Mason, who has been project architect for the restoration of for more than twenty-five years. His talk was entitled 'Hawksmoor's intentions: the evidence for restoring the interior of Christ Church', and was followed by a reception in the church itself.

## *Publications*

The Society's Journal, *Ecclesiology Today*, again formed the backbone of its publishing programme. Two issues were distributed to members during the year. As well as the familiar mix of news, book reviews and correspondence, its coverage included a numerous selection of short articles and reports on a wide diversity of subjects in the field of ecclesiology. The September issue of the Journal was once again held over, but in its place members received an expanded separate copy of 'Churchcrawler', the news section of the Journal.

An extended paper by Trevor Cooper on the subject of the upkeep of parish churches was published in April 2004 and distributed free to members. Entitled *How do we keep our parish churches?*, it received positive mention in a House of Lords debate towards the end of the year (thought to be a first for the Society!).

The Society's website continues to attract a good number of visitors, with some two to three thousand hits per month. About 15% of these visitors look at the 'site of the month', and about 5% visit the programme of events. The website now contains a growing body of material related to the future of parish churches.

## **Membership and Administration**

Some 72 new members were welcomed into the society during the year, increasing the roll to 872 as at 31 December 2004, a net gain of 21.

With great regret, the Council has to record the deaths of the following members: Brian Blackwood, the Revd P E Blagden-Gamlen, the Revd L W Cowie, Roger Fawkner-Corbett, the Revd H S Horobin, James D Young, Miss S Young and the Revd G R O'Coughlin.

In November the Society arranged a meeting of about 35 representatives of kindred Societies, to network and talk about matters of common concern. The evening included informative summaries of church building strategy from English Heritage, the Church Heritage Forum and the Churches Conservation Trust.

The Council continues to meet formally at about two-monthly intervals, to administer the Society, and discuss the development of its activities.

As always, the Council are very grateful to members who provide active support to the Society in so many ways: organising and attending events of various kinds, contributing to the Journal, putting forward suggestions, and so on. In particular the Council acknowledges the assistance of Doreen Spurr, Brigid Ockleton and Ruth Cooke for maintaining the list of members, distributing publications, and looking after Gift Aid respectively; and of Mark Ockelton for inspecting the Society's accounts.