

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR 2018

INTRODUCTION

2018 was an active and successful year for the Society, as will be apparent from this report. The programme of summer visits was well-attended and provided a variety of churches of interest. Access to Eton College chapel was a particular privilege, and the number of people wanting to join the day-tour of Sussex churches was so large that the visit had to be repeated. Our annual conference – which examined Arts and Crafts churches – filled the venue to capacity and was very well-received. A double edition of *Ecclesiology Today* and two editions of *Church Crawler* maintained the quality of our publications, as did lectures by Trevor Cooper and Bishop Richard Chartres. This report sets out our activities in more detail.

VISITS

On 26 June, Professor Neil Jackson RIBA FSA led a guided visit to two churches either side of London's Vauxhall Bridge. St Peter's, Vauxhall, is John Loughborough Pearson's first major town church and a pioneering building, solving the Victorian problem of providing a grand church for a poor area using limited means. A strong contrast, St James-the-Less, Pimlico, is one of George Edmund Street's very finest churches. With forensic care Professor Jackson illustrated the influences Street had drawn upon from his early continental travels in designing elements of the church. The stunning interiors of the two churches – both architecturally and for their fittings – were seen to great advantage, bathed in warm evening light. Thirty-five members and their guests attended and thoroughly enjoyed the educational evening.

On 28 July we visited two churches, both designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and facing one another across Central Square, in Hampstead Garden Suburb, north London's *rus in urbe*. A bright summer morning with excellent light saw seventeen Society members visit Hampstead Free Church, led by Rev. Ian Tutton, and St Jude-on-the-Hill, led by Fr Alan Walker. While in terms of physical presence the two churches were originally much the same, social and theological purposes have resulted in very different outcomes. While the Free Church is relatively unadorned, this discloses the genius of Lutyens as a master of volume handled with great sensitivity, St Jude's church contains a cornucopia of major decorative art: murals by leading artists of the interwar period, including a depiction of heroic women associated with the First World War, and the campaign for women's suffrage. Fr Alan also gave us a fascinating discourse of the life and ministry of Rev. Basil Graham Bouchier, the first vicar.

Our West Sussex tour on 14 July proved to be so popular that we had to repeat it on 11 August to avoid disappointing Society members. Led by Trevor Cooper, our former Chairman, the tour concentrated upon post-Reformation furnishings and fittings. West Sussex has been poor and rural for much of its history. Quite a number of its more humble buildings were not subject to heavy Victorian restoration, thus preserving some of their post-Reformation furnishings. Exploring the minor roads and by-ways of the South Downs, each group visited a seventeenth-century Quaker Meeting house and five Anglican churches with significant pre-Victorian furnishings. The day finished with something completely different – an excursion to see the twelfth-century wall paintings at Hardham, a small twelfth-century building with original wall paintings, faded but very atmospheric. Feedback from the twenty-one members who took part was one of unanimous and unqualified praise.

On the 22 August we were able to offer a rare opportunity to make a morning visit to Eton College Chapel. The chapel was intended to become one of the great places of pilgrimage in Europe. Owing to the downfall of the founder Henry VI, it was never completed. The Flemish style wall paintings, dating from 1479 and revealed in 1923, are the most remarkable work of art in the College. The Chapel glass, replacing war-time damage, provides one of the masterpieces of modern stained-glass art including designs by John Piper. We were privileged to have the Choir verger, Mr Simon Shergold, as our guide. The day ended with an unanticipated extra as Mr Shergold led us around the earliest part of the College where the Foundation scholars live and study to the present day. Thirty-three Society members and their guests attended.

In summary we had a wonderful series of excursions, greatly enjoyed by our members. It was most encouraging to find our bookings much improved upon previous years and this gives us reason to be ambitious for the future.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The twenty-first Annual Conference which was attended by approximately 140 people was held at the St Alban's Centre, Holborn, on 6 October 2018.

Entitled *Arts and Crafts Churches*, this highly stimulating day set out to see if it is possible to identify churches which could be termed Arts and Crafts churches. Taking church-building in the four decades either side of 1900, the speakers explored examples of how these adventurous architects and their unorthodox clients approached church building and furnishing and assessed the different manifestations of Arts and Crafts. The conference discussed the artistic ideas, the cultural conflicts, the craftsmanship, furnishings, and fittings of Arts and Crafts churches in England, Wales and Scotland, many of them little-known and unstudied. The expert speakers were:

- * Alec Hamilton: Introduction – *What do people mean by “Arts & Crafts church”?*
- * Andrew Saint: *The idea of “Arts & Crafts” in church architecture – insight, or straitjacket?*
- * Kate Jordan: *A benign paterfamilias: John Dando Sedding, his family and followers*
- * Lynne Walker: *Designers, makers and clients: Arts & Crafts women in the late Victorian church*
- * Christopher Wakeling: *Free Churches, Free Architecture? Nonconformists and the Arts & Crafts*
- * Simon Green: *Church building in Scotland 1880-1929 – Arts & Crafts and the quest for national identity*
- * Alan Powers: *Sackcloth and Ashes – from Arts and Crafts to Modern*

LECTURES

The Annual Lecture immediately before the Society's AGM was held at the St Alban's Centre, Holborn on 12 April, and was very well attended. It was given by Trevor Cooper under the title “The Future of Rural Parish Churches in England: Should we be Concerned?” and set out his thoughts in response to the Taylor Review into the sustainability of churches and cathedrals, published in December 2017.

The twenty-first Annual Dykes Bower Memorial Lecture was held in the beautiful Lecture Hall of the recently refurbished premises of the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square, Bloomsbury on 5 December – attended by some sixty members of the Society and their guests. Our lecturer was the former Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon. Lord Chartres, D.D., K.C.V.O., F.S.A., who is also a Vice-President of the Society.

Bishop Richard spoke on “Befriending the City Churches”. After reviewing the several attempts over more than a century to rationalise the number of churches in the City of London, including the demolition of a significant number, he drew upon his time as Bishop of London between 1995 and 2017 – focusing on his challenging the controversial recommendations of the Templeman Report of 1994 - which would have resulted in the closure of some twenty-four of the City's thirty-six churches and their transfer to a ‘reserve list’ for potential re-use for other purposes; retaining but four as parish churches and eight as ancillary churches - and his implementing instead an alternative agenda, which has enabled many more of the City's churches to remain open and functioning as places of worship. Bishop Richard spoke too about his role in securing the successful rebuilding of St Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate after its destruction by an IRA bomb in April 1993 and its development as a Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, completed in 2002.

The evening was agreeably concluded with the customary pre-Christmas reception for members and their guests in The Master's Room.

PUBLICATIONS

The Society sends out four **e-newsletters** during the course of the year. These are free to anyone who wishes to sign up, advertise the Society's events, and draw attention to many other matters of ecclesiological interest, including events organised by other societies. Members are very welcome to suggest items for inclusion. There are about 1,500 recipients, of whom approximately 500 are members of the Society. The Society's policy is that those members of the Society who do not receive the emailing are at no disadvantage in respect of the Society's events.

In May 2018 we published a double issue of *Ecclesiology Today* (ET55 & 56). It contained an obituary of Gavin Stamp, one of the Society's Vice-Presidents, by Kenneth Powell, an article by Trevor Cooper on seventeenth-century twin pulpits in England, an article by Christopher Webster with photographs by Geoff Brandwood marking the bicentenary of the 1818 Church Building Act, an article by Philip Modiano on the Revd John Louis Petit illustrated with a selection of original watercolours from a private collection, an article by Sue Andrew on the artworker Harry Hems and an article by Alec Hamilton on the twentieth-century transformation of All Saints, North Cerney.

In 2018 members also received Volume 3 of the Chapels Society Journal, *All Chapels Great and Small*, which contained the papers from the conference, *From citadels to warehouses: some places of worship in Britain today*, held jointly by the Ecclesiological Society and the Chapels Society in 2017.

Two editions of *Church Crawler* were published in this year, continuing with a mix of news and features from members.

The Spring edition contained a tribute to the Society's outgoing Chairman of Council, Trevor Cooper, written by Paul Velluet, Trevor's predecessor as Chair. This issue also had not one but two features from readers, both about buildings which held a personal interest for their authors. The first was a lovely piece on The Pales Meeting House in Radnorshire written by Bridget Cherry who revised several Pevsner County Guides and was the series editor. The second feature on Scott's All Saints, Nocton, Lincolnshire, came from Carol Bennett. Both authors provided some delightful photographs to augment their words.

The Autumn edition carried a write-up of the tour of West Sussex churches organised and led by Trevor Cooper (mentioned above), with author Peter Hildebrand providing his experiences of the day as well as several excellent illustrations.

Members continue to send items of news to the editor, which are gratefully received if not always used.

FINANCES

The draft accounts for 2018 are circulated with this annual report, and Anthony Gilmour, the Hon. Treasurer will comment on them at the AGM.

MEMBERSHIP

With regret, the Council noted during the course of the year the death of the following members, either in 2018 or earlier:

Mr.	Robert D.	Barr
Canon	J. D.	Beckwith
Mr.	Geoffrey	Copus
Mr.	J. C.	Davie
Mr.	J. F.	Earle
Mr.	Patrick	Farman
Mr.	Brian L.	Harris
Mrs.	E. E.	Marper
Miss	E. M.	Middleton
Rev.	J. D.	Moore
Dr.	D. G.	Pattison
Mr.	B.	Watson

At the close of 2018, there were 840 active individual members in the UK (either Life or Honorary members, or with up-to-date annual subscriptions), at 790 different postal addresses (2016: 843 at 795 addresses). Of these, ten were overseas members, and 96 were Life Members.

During the year there were four resignations, and we lost contact with one member whose mailings were returned with no further information. We removed a further 25 members whose subscriptions had lapsed.

CHANGES TO COUNCIL MEMBERS

After eighteen years in that role, Trevor Cooper stepped down as Chairman of Council in April. His contribution to the Society has been outstanding, and it was entirely appropriate and deserved that the members of the Society present at last year's Annual General Meeting unanimously elected him as a Vice-President of the Society in recognition of his service. He remains a much-valued member of Council. Council elected Mark Kirby as its new Chairman.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

As always, the Council is grateful to those members of the Society who provide active support to the Society in so many ways: organising and attending events of various kinds, contributing to *Ecclesiology Today* and *Church Crawler*, and carrying out administrative tasks of one sort or another. The Council would particularly like to thank Alec Hamilton for organising the conference, Stuart Macbeth for managing the website, Jonathan McCafferty for organizing the events programme, and Mark Ockelton for inspecting the Society's accounts.

The Council of the Ecclesiological Society 30th April 2019

DETAILS OF THE SOCIETY

The Ecclesiological Society is a registered charity, number 210501.

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Website: www.ecclsoc.org

Twitter user name: Ecclsoc

The Laws of the Society describe its aims and how it is governed. They were last modified and approved by the AGM of 19 April 2012. The Society's affairs are administered by a Council, and the Laws describe how members are elected by the membership onto the Council or are co-opted onto that body.

Continuing to meet four times a year in central London, the Council has transacted a variety of business in pursuance of the aims of the Society. In exercising its duties, it has taken due regard of the guidance published by the Charity Commission, including guidance on public benefit. The Council normally meets at Church House, and the Society is grateful to the Church of England authorities for allowing use of their premises in this way.

The Council has reviewed the training received by new members of Council. As at present, it is intended that this training will draw as appropriate from the history of the Society, its Laws, its policies and the supporting evidence, its recent and planned activities, and general guidance on the responsibilities of a Trustee.

Members of Council are the Trustees of the charity, and at the end of 2018 they were as follows: Dr Paul Barnwell, Dr Geoff Brandwood, Clive Chapman, Nick Chapple, Trevor Cooper, Andrew Derrick, Phil Draper, Anthony Gilmour, Mark Kirby, Ruth Knight, Christopher Moore, Becky Payne, Sarah Perons, Paul Velluet, Dr Christopher Webster.