



REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2023

Introduction

2023 was the first “normal” year we have had for some while, uninterrupted by either Covid or rail strikes. In common with other voluntary organisations, there remains a sense that many people are still hesitant to venture out, but numbers attending our events were up on the previous year, and it was a great pleasure to be able to socialise with like-minded enthusiasts.

Visits

During 2023, two visits took place and were attended by Society members and their guests.

On 26th April, twenty-two people joined a visit to **St Barnabas, Pimlico and St Mary’s Bourne Street, Belgravia**, led by the architectural historian, critic and consultant, Kenneth Powell.

St Barnabas, Pimlico, was a pioneering church, built, in what was then a slum area, to proclaim the principles of the Oxford Movement and, in its early days, a centre of ‘ritualism’. It was one element in a cluster of buildings, clergy house and school. The interior was much enriched by Bodley and Ninian Comper.

St Mary’s, Belgravia, was built as a mission church from St Paul, Knightsbridge, but was much extended by HS Goodhart-Rendel after it had become a fashionable place of Anglo-Catholic worship. The high altar is a classic example of the ‘back to Baroque’ movement, the focus of a richly furnished interior. The church has an outstanding collection of vestments, an extensive selection of which was on display.

On Saturday 13th May, Rob Andrews, expert of York’s extraordinarily rich heritage of medieval churches, led a **walking tour of medieval churches in York**. Despite the train strikes scheduled for that day, twenty-one people took part in the tour which visited Holy Trinity, Goodramgate; All Saints, Pavement; St Mary Bishophill Jnr and the former churchyard of St Mary Bishophill Snr. In each case, Rob explained the site’s history and key features of interest, paying special attention to their place in the medieval city, their architectural history and evolution.

Despite promotion around Scottish church networks, only three people signed up for a walking tour of churches in Edinburgh in June. This was extremely disappointing and the decision was taken to cancel the tour at end of May and three refunds were issued.

Annual Conference

The 2023 conference was held at St John’s, Waterloo on 7 October, on the subject of stained-

glass revivals. It was good to be able to gather in person, after three years disrupted by Covid and rail strikes. 52 attended in person and 21 online. The content of the day was a great success, with informative and thought-provoking papers arranged in pairs to cover the three main periods of stained-glass revival:

Mark Kirby spoke on the origins of the seventeenth-century revival and looked at some case studies in Oxford and London (most of them at the Reformed end of the theological spectrum). **Robert Walker** addressed some Laudian examples from Abbey Dore, Sellack, and Much Marcle, and commented on the fascinating phenomenon of one aristocratic amateur glass-painter. **Jim Cheshire** (Lincoln University), emphasised the importance of understanding the theological content of nineteenth-century glass and identifying the role of the patron in setting meaning and iconography. **Jasmine Allen** (Stained Glass Museum) continued the nineteenth-century theme and in particular guided us through the emergence of Arts & Crafts glass. **Martin Crampin** (University of Wales) introduced the twentieth century and examined some of the reactions against “staid” Victorian glass, as well as many magnificent examples from Wales. **Diana Coulter** (independent scholar) examined the remarkable series of new windows installed in Manchester Cathedral over many years after the damage of the Second World War, and other war-related work, much of which was supported by the War Damage Commission. She also looked at a wide range of new windows commissioned for new church buildings. All the presentations were accompanied by superb images on the screen.

Lectures

The Annual Lecture took place immediately after the Society’s AGM on 15th May 2023 and was held in person at St Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane, City of London and ‘live-streamed’ via Zoom. The speaker was Professor Anthony Geraghty of the University of York who has spent a lifetime studying Wren and his churches and spoke on the subject, ‘*The place of God in the design philosophies of Wren and Hawksmoor.*’ His learned presentation contrasted Wren’s ‘geometrical reasoning and ocular experiment’ with Hawksmoor’s delight in ‘fancy’, or creative imagination. Attendance numbers were c.48 in the room; 39 online which went down to 25 because of IT problems.

The inaugural **Geoff Brandwood Memorial Lecture** was held in the Monk Hall of G.E. Street’s church of St James-the-Less, Pimlico on Wednesday 22 November. Our speaker was Peter Howell, joint author of a forthcoming monograph on Street (a task initiated and almost completed by Geoff Brandwood before his untimely death in 2021). The event was held in-person only, livestreaming not being available at the venue. Jean, Geoff’s partner, was our guest of honour. The event ushered in celebrations for the 2024 bicentenary of Street’s birth, and informatively and entertainingly covered the full range of Street’s extraordinary career in church, parsonage, school and college building. 57 people attended and enjoyed a glass of wine and mince pies afterwards.

Publications

The Society sends out four **e-newsletters** during the course of the year, which are free to anyone who wishes to sign up. These newsletters advertise the Society’s events, and draw attention to 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.

In August 2023, we published volume 3 of the Society’s conference proceedings, ***Lay Experience of the Medieval Cathedral***, comprising the papers from the annual conference

held in London in October 2021. The papers were as follows: ‘A ‘Matter’ of Popular Piety or Divine Discipline? Reflections on Lay Devotion and the Cathedral in Medieval England’ by Emma J. Wells; ‘Saints’ Shrines and Pilgrimage – an Introduction’ by John Crook; ‘Time, Space and Mass: The Lay Experience of Medieval Cathedrals’ by John Jenkins; ‘Near the public path where many persons pass by and go out’: Imagery Framing the Lay Experience of Pilgrimage’ by Miriam Gill; and ‘Spiritual Cues for the Senses and the Construction of Lay Pilgrim Experience: Some Medieval Accounts’ by Dee Dyas.

Issue 62 of *Ecclesiology Today* was published in August 2023. It contained articles on a variety of topics: ‘Financing Late-Georgian Church-Building, 1790–1840’ by Christopher Webster; ‘It’s the Cathedral that Killed Him: Bishop Rowley Hill’s Isle of Man Cathedral of 1884’ by Peter Litman; ‘Arts & Crafts Churches – Addenda, Corrigenda and Bones of Contention’ by Alec Hamilton; ‘Cathedral Treasures of England and Wales’ by Janet Gough, and ‘The Stephen Dykes Bower Memorial Lectures, 1998–2022’ by Paul Velluet. The book review section comprised reviews of twelve new books on ecclesiological and related subjects, and short notices of three further books.

Two editions of Church Crawler were published in 2023. As well as the usual news items in both, the Spring edition had an article looking at Church Crawling in India, written by Martin Jones. The Autumn edition took us to two churches in Covent Garden London, St Paul’s and Corpus Christi, with Nicky Charlish and there was a write-up on the Society’s visit to York. Any members who have ideas for a feature or article that they would like to see in a future Church Crawler should contact the editor, Phil Draper. Consideration is still being given to making Church Crawler available in electronic form to the membership and Phil would be grateful to receive any further comments on this proposal to inform discussion at Council meetings.

Social media and the website

Since assuming responsibility in 2022 for website content, updating and maintenance, and for the social media channels Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, Paul Gray tracks the quarterly statistics including “top” stories.

- Twitter: 1,622 followers (since 2013)
- Facebook: 699 followers (since 2019)
- LinkedIn: 137 followers (since 2022)

Now he has also set up a Google Analytics account to chart progress on the website. Over the last 12 months the website has attracted 7,586 unique visitors. The top pages visited were:

- [Home page] - for those who love churches: 4,069
- Downloads: 1,599
- Events: 1,002
- Publications: 862
- Latest news from Ecclesiological Society: 703
- Annual Conference 2023: Stained Glass Revivals: 505
- Become a member: 494
- Join us: 494
- Find out about us: 453
- The Ecclesiological Society contact details: 432
- Geoff Brandwood Memorial Lecture: George Edmund Street: 406

Finances

The draft accounts for 2023 will be posted on the Society's website in due course here:
<http://ecclsoc.org/annual-reports-etc/>

Membership Report 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023.

In 2022, the Ecclesiological Society wrote to its members asking them to switch their annual subscription payment method to direct debit. At that time, most of our members paid their subscriptions by standing order or by cheque.

The Society adopted GoCardless.com to manage direct debit payments and members have been encouraged to visit the bespoke GoCardless page online and set up a direct debit mandate, which is then administrated by the Society's membership secretary.

By the end of 2023, 376 members had set up an online direct-debit mandate. This represents approximately 57 per cent of the 654 members eligible for direct-debit subscriptions.

On 1st January 2024, the first automatic scheduled payment run via the GoCardless system successfully collected over £8,000 of member subscriptions.

Members are strongly encouraged to switch to direct debit because this method of payment significantly reduces the time the Society needs to spend on administration, keeps payment dates consistent and enables all of our members to keep up to date with their subscriptions at the correct rate.

New joiners – 47

Leavers – 52

Individual/Standard - I	367
Retired/Concessions - R	291
Life - L	85
Organisational -O	13
Overseas - F	12
Honorary - H	8
Total:	776

Those who joined in 2023 (47):

Mr Graham Prosser

Mr David Stazicker

Mr Peter O'Neill

Mr Keith Dowen

Revd. Can. Dr. Stephen Evans

Dr Denis Pepper

Mr Richard Hood

Mr A. C. Turner

Mr Julian Hardstone

Mr Andy Matthews

Mr Morris Felton

Ms Mya Steele

Dr Diana Tyson

Dr Peter Bury

Mr Paul Moynihan

Mr Robin Larsen
Dr Axel Palmer
Mr Luka Pajovic
Miss Zoe McMillan
Dr Peter Forsaith
Mr David Bellamy
Mr Leslie Carrick-Smith
Mr Darren Perks
Mr John Williams
Mr Howard Lee
Mr Robert Fish
Mr Kevin Rogers
Can. Adrian Daffern
Revd. Mark Ainsworth
Mr Eric Cartwright & Ms Louise Milne
Miss Chloe Chambers
Mr Tim Richardson
Mr Kelvin White
Mr Mark Taylor
Ms Sian Iles
Mr Stephen Hogarth
Catherine Davis
Prof. Matthew Wright
Revd. Richard Smith
Mr Tristan Denton
Dr Victoria Hopgood
Mrs Suzi Pendlebury
Ms Leigh Stanford
Ms Zornitsa Rangelova
And three new members who asked for their names not to be published

Those who left us in 2023 (52):

Deceased (14):

Mr Peter C. W. Taylor
Ms Jenny Dereham
Dr W.C. Lettington
Mr Peter B. Hodson
Mr Derek R. Folkard
Mr R.O. Welton
Mrs Chloe Cockerill
Mr Allan Holdsworth
Mr R Gorley
Mr A.B. Champniss
Mr Dan Maini
Dr Nicholas Groves
Prof Christopher Wakeling
Mr R. D. Sharrock

Twenty-six members resigned. The Society lost contact with one member. And eleven were removed for non-payment of subscription.

Volunteers and Council members

During 2023, we welcomed Sam Hill as our new Publishing Administrator, taking over from Trevor Cooper. This essential role oversees all aspects of the production and posting of *Ecclesiology Today*, *Church Crawler*, and the conference proceedings.

Council has said a final goodbye to two former Chairmen and longstanding members of Council, Trevor Cooper and Paul Velluet, both of whom have retired. Between them, they have served the Society for nearly 75 years. We owe them a considerable debt of gratitude for all that they have done to bring the Society to the good health in which it now stands, and for maintaining the flame of ecclesiology during that time. We are delighted that members elected Paul Velluet to be a Vice President of the Society at last year's AGM.

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 Mark Ockelton for inspecting the Society's accounts.

Details of the Society

The Ecclesiological Society is a registered charity, number 210501.

Registered address: c/o the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0HS. General correspondence should be sent to: 68 Scholars Road, Balham, SW12 0PG. Email: admin@eccelsoc.org

Website: www.eccelsoc.org

Twitter user name: @Eccelsoc

The Laws of the Society describe its aims and how it is governed. They were last modified and approved by the AGM of 15 May 2023. 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.

Meeting four times a year (either in central London or on Zoom), 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. In the last year we have met at the Chapter House of St Paul's Cathedral, and the Society is grateful to the Cathedral 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 2023 they were as follows: Dr Paul Barnwell, Nick Chapple, Frances Cook, Andrew Derrick, Phil Draper, Anthony Gilmour, Dr Mark Kirby, Becky Payne, Fiona Rosen, Dr Christopher Webster, and Graham White.