



REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2006

Activities during the year

Events

A number of church visits and tours were offered. Members were invited to join John Vigar's various tours to Kent churches, and one to Sussex churches owned by the Churches Conservation Trust. Also available to members were visits organised by Robin Millerchip to Dorset, Middlesex and the Low Countries.

Two regular annual events took place in central London. The Annual General Meeting was held on 29 June 2006 at the St Anne's Church Centre, Soho, in conjunction with an illustrated talk by our Hon. Treasurer, Dr Suzanna Branfoot, on 'Goth or vandal? – the church and cathedral restorations of Sir George Gilbert Scott'. The lecture was well received by upward of fifty members and guests. Some 34 remained for the AGM, and stayed for an informal reception afterwards.

On 28 November we held the annual Dykes Bower lecture and reception at St Martin's in the Fields, London. The speakers were Eric Parry, Robert Kennett and Patrick Crawford, the architects for the project now providing major new social and cultural facilities in the vast area below the churchyard. Some fifty members enjoyed an excellent tri-partite lecture, and a convivial reception afterwards.

There was no Annual Conference. It is hoped the sequence of conferences will restart in 2007.

Publications

The Society's Journal, *Ecclesiology Today* was published in July, and a second one for the year, for December 2006, appeared in February 2007.

The latter issue was notable for being the final one to be edited by Dr John Elliott. He took up the role of Hon. Editor in 1997, and over the last ten years has built it up to a periodical of which the Society can be proud. As a thank you for his work over the years, members of Council volunteered to write the articles for his final issue, much of which was devoted to his adopted city of Salisbury. Members of Council would like to record their thanks to John for his sterling work in developing and shaping the Journal over the years.

In September the Society published, and issued free to members, a book by Anthony Symondson and Stephen Bucknall entitled *Sir Ninian Comper: an Introduction to his Life and Work, with*

Complete Gazetteer. This was co-published with Spire Books, and copies are on sale to the general public. It has been well reviewed, and Spire Books report that sales have been good.

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

Membership and Administration

Some 47 new members were welcomed into the society during the year. At the end of the year, the roll stood at 1003, a net gain of 20. As always, the figure somewhat exaggerates the effective membership as some members were in arrears of subscriptions, and from experience it is likely that some of these will have to be removed from the roll. It is noteworthy that the Society has grown almost without interruption since the mid 1990s, when the membership was less than half the current number.

During the course of the year, the Society mailed all its Life Members, of whom there are approximately one hundred. The purpose was to ensure that the Society was not mailing the Journal to people who for one reason or another no longer wished to receive it. In the event, the vast majority indicated that they continued to value their membership, and the warmth of some of the responses was gratifying. Nevertheless, this was a useful tidying up exercise, and one which we will probably repeat from time to time. We are grateful to our member Anne Willis for organising the mailing and collating the responses.

On a much sadder note, as members will already know from Society mailings and from the 2006 AGM, our Hon. Secretary Dr James Johnston died in an accident in mid-March, at the age of 43. A number of Council members represented the Society at his memorial service, and the Memorial Address by Roger Evans was reprinted in *Ecclesiology Today* for June 2006. James is much missed.

With regret, the Council has also noted during 2006 the deaths (during the year or previously) of the following members: Revd Canon Ernest Abbott, Mrs L Ashford, Dr E Burgess, Harry Coles, Peter Fairweather, H. B. N. Martin-Quirk, Revd Tim Parry, Revd K G Pratt, Miss H M Pritchett, Miss G. Rowan, Rt Revd Richard Say, and Gerald Wood.

Your Council continued to meet at intervals through the year. During the course of the year, an advisory Publications Subcommittee was set up, and held its first meeting in September.

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. In particular the Council acknowledges the assistance of Brigid Ockelton for distributing publications and Ruth Cooke for looking after our Gift Aid administration. We are grateful, too, to Mark Ockelton for his willingness to inspect the Society's accounts.

Finally, after many years, Mrs Doreen Spurr retired from duty in the Autumn. For many years Mrs Spurr has maintained the Society's mailing list, moving it as circumstance demanded from one computer system to another, and, just before she retired, retyping it in its entirety into a new database. In addition, for a good number of those years she looked after the Society's mailings, arranging the photocopying of *Ecclesiology Today*, and then personally stuffing and labelling each of the many hundreds of envelopes. Throughout these years, her work has been fundamental to the smooth running of the Society. The Council is very grateful, and would like to offer her our special thanks.