



## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2016

### Visits during the year

June 2016 saw us visiting St Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, Earl's Court, a magnificent example of grand Victorian ambition. Built in the 1880s to the design of architect Hugh Roumieu Gough its proportions are said to be modelled on Tintern Abbey. The fittings and decoration can be described as at the least lavish, and in some cases extraordinary. Unusually much of the interior decoration was undertaken by parishioners formed into crafts guilds. The tour was led by Fr Paul Baggot, the parish priest, who provided us with a fascinating insight into the story of the church and its history.

Our Autumn visit took us to St Augustine, Kilburn, considered to be J. L. Pearson's finest creation and built in the 1870s for a strongly Anglo-Catholic parish. The wonderfully rich interior contains works by Giles Gilbert Scott, Clayton & Bell, Alfred Weatherstone and S. J. Nicholl. Our thanks go to Mr Glyn Williams and Fr Colin Amos who led our tour and gave us the background to Pearson's thinking behind his spectacular design.

As ever, at both St Cuthbert's and St Augustine's, we were reminded of the challenges and cost of maintaining buildings of this age and quality and both parishes should be commended for their ongoing work in this respect.

### Annual conference

The nineteenth Annual Conference, which was attended by approximately one hundred people, was held at the St Alban's Centre, Holborn on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016. Its title was *Medieval churches in East Anglia: new insights*.

During a very successful day, the following people spoke (listed in alphabetical order): Matthew Champion: *Medieval graffiti: the lost voices of England's churches*; David King: *Tracery-light glazing in Norfolk*; Helen Lunnon: *Church porch architecture in late medieval East Anglia*; Michael Rimmer: *The angel roofs of East Anglia*; Robert Walker: *The Virgin Mary roof at March, Cambridgeshire*; Lucy Wrapson: *Workshop identities and East Anglian rood screens*.

A common thread linking the talks was the use of a mass survey of the subject matter in the discussion of individual cases, so that it was possible for speakers to talk authoritatively about how frequently we came across certain features and what were the patterns of survival over space and time and, given that thorough background, how should we understand the individual objects. In addition there were unexpected resonances across the talks - can we identify particular craftsmen? what was the spatial arrangement of the object or the relevance

of its position in the church? who decided and who was paying and was money an issue? can we create a chronology for the objects? is East Anglia unique? did being high indicate something? how much attention was paid to the orders of angels? and the popularity of the Virgin Mary and the conflation of her Assumption and Coronation.

## **Lectures**

**The Annual Lecture** immediately before the Society's AGM was held at the St Alban's Centre, Holborn on the evening of Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016. It was given by C.B. Newham and Ellie Pridgeon on *Post-Reformation Wall Paintings in English Parish Churches*, and was well received, with lively questioning and discussion. About fifty people attended.

The Post-Reformation Wall Painting Project was launched in 2014 by the speakers. The project focuses on murals in English churches between 1559 and 1836, and came about because of the lack of comprehensive catalogues or academic literature on the painting corpus. The project uses C.B. Newham's extensive photographic collection collated for The Digital Atlas of England to identify examples of murals.

**The nineteenth Annual Dykes Bower Memorial Lecture** was held at the premises of the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square, Bloomsbury on the evening of Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 – attended by some forty members of the Society and their guests. Our lecturer was one of the Society's Vice-Presidents, Mr Frank Field, the Member of Parliament for Birkenhead since 1979, a former Minister for Welfare Reform, the Chair of the House of Commons' Work and Pensions Select Committee since 2015, and, most relevant to the Society's interests, the immediate past Chairman of the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England.

Having stepped down earlier in the year from two, successive five-year terms as Chairman of the CFCE, Mr Field was well placed to speak to members about the extent, diversity and significance of the works in English cathedrals planned, considered and carried out over that period – ten years in which a series of highly significant conservation, re-ordering and cultural projects were undertaken in many cathedrals across the land.

With support from Ms Jennie Page, the former Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Ms Becky Clark, the newly appointed Director of the Church of England's Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, Mr Field provided those attending with some fascinating insights into the role and operation of the Commission into some specific cases, and into the challenges involved in the funding of the repair and enhancement of England's cathedrals today.

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

## **Publications**

A number of **e-newsletters** were issued by the Society during the course of the year. These, which 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. 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.

Two editions of *Ecclesiology Today* were published, in February 2016, No 52 for Summer 2015, and in September 2016, No 53 for Winter 2016. These were the first two editions of the journal to be printed in colour and contained a good range of original articles and reviews.

Two editions of *Church Crawler* were published in this year, continuing with a mix of news and features from members. The Spring edition featured a tour of Wiltshire churches using the *Keyholder* App for Android phones, and what can be recorded in this virtual 'Visitors book' for other users. The Autumn feature gave members an insight into the world of Diocesan Advisory Committees and their annual conference courtesy of Dr David Knight. Members continue to send items of news to the editor which are gratefully received if not always used.

### **Website**

The Society's website, which was overhauled in 2015, continued to operate without any loss of availability in 2016. Mark Kirby took over responsibility for maintaining the website from Ruth Knight this year. The Council is grateful to Ruth Knight for her splendid work in setting up the website and ensuring that it is in such good shape.

### **Finances**

The draft accounts for 2016 are attached to 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 2016 or earlier: Miss Muriel I. Bryant (Life Member), Mr. Richard Coutts, Mr. John Etherton, Dr. Thomas Faulkner (Life Member), Mr. Brian T. Frear, Mrs Anne Marshall, Mr. Ian Pettman, Mr. D. A. Power, Dr Christopher Rawll, Mr. B. A. Salmon, Mr. Theodore Saunders, Mr. B. R. Wilson.

At the close of 2016, there were 829 active individual members in the UK (either Life or Honorary members, or with up to date annual subscriptions), at 786 different postal addresses (2015: 795 at 748 addresses). Of these, 9 were overseas members, and 94 were Life Members. A little under half of subscriptions are at the retired rate. About 580 members give a title which allows us to determine whether they are male or female, and of these there are almost exactly three times as many male titles as female. There are 72 members who use a religious title (e.g. 'Reverend').

During the year there were 9 resignations, and we removed 16 members for failing to pay their subscription. From the period April onwards we kept data about enquiries: there were 80 enquiries, all but one via the internet, of which 30 resulted in new members.

### **Stephen Humphrey**

At the end of the year we heard with sadness of the death of Stephen Humphrey, previous Secretary of the Society, who played a large part in its revival in the 1980s. It is intended to carry an obituary of Stephen in one of the Society's publications.

### **Changes to Council members**

During the course of the year, Dr Valerie Hitchman resigned from the Council. She had been Membership Secretary since 2008, and conference administrator for a little longer. The Society is very grateful to Valerie for her energy and efficient management throughout this

time and tribute was paid to this work at the 2016 AGM. Clive Chapman has picked up the membership baton, and Christopher Moore the conference administration.

At the end of the year, Sarah Perons changed her role from Visits Co-ordinator to e-newsletter editor, which she will begin in May 2017, taking over from Trevor Cooper. Also at the end of the year Ruth Knight returned from maternity leave and at the January 2017 Council meeting agreed to take on the role of marketing the Society.

### **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 Brigid Ockelton for distributing publications. It is grateful, too, to Mark Ockelton for his willingness to inspect the Society's accounts.

*The Council of the Ecclesiological Society 27 April 2017*

### **Details of the Society**

The Ecclesiological Society is a registered charity, number 210501.

Address: c/o the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V OHS. General correspondence should be sent to: 68 Scholars Road, Balham, SW12 0PG. Email: [admin@ecclsoc.org](mailto:admin@ecclsoc.org)

Website: [www.ecclsoc.org](http://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 2016 they were as follows: 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.