

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2007

Activities during the year

Events

A number of church visits and tours were offered. Members were invited to join John Vigar's tours to a large variety of Kent churches. Also available to members were visits organised by Robin Millerchip to Essex, Huntingdonshire, Middlesex, Surrey, Wiltshire, Wales and Scotland. The Society's second Focus Day was held in October, and consisted of an in-depth look at a group of churches in the royal forest of Whittlewood.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 30 May 2007 at the St Anne's Church Centre, Soho, in conjunction with an illustrated talk 'A theatre of the soul: the building of St George's, Jesmond', given by Neil Moat. The lecture was very well received by upward of fifty members and guests, of whom some thirty-two remained for the AGM, and stayed for an informal reception afterwards.

The annual Dykes Bower memorial lecture was postponed until April 2008 (and was held at St George's Bloomsbury).

The tenth Annual Conference, which was attended by some 100 people, was held at the Royal Institution of British Architects in October. It had as its title 'The rural church in its place', and dealt with the factors which led to the positioning of rural church buildings in medieval times. In addition there were two brief talks on more recent concerns, and an exhibition of photographs by C B Newham.

Publications

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

An edition of the Society's Journal, *Ecclesiology Today* was published in May. The guest editor was Andrew Derrick, and the edition concentrated on Catholic churches. This was the first time that an entire issue of the Journal has been devoted to a particular subject. It was very well received, and its success and the level of interest aroused mean that the Council are encouraged to look for other opportunities to focus on particular topics.

The second issue of the Journal for the year, dated December 2007 (but issued in early 2008), included essays from our 125th anniversary competition, including the two prize winning essays.

In early 2007 a questionnaire was sent to a stratified sample of one hundred of our members asking for their views on *Ecclesiology Today*. We were gratified that 62% of those contacted responded, a very high response rate. The results were reported in Issue 39 of the Journal, dated December 2007 (published early in 2008). They have been helpful to your Council in understanding what a sample of the membership think about the Journal, and how it might develop in future. The Council is grateful to Anne Willis for seeing this project through.

Membership and Administration

Some 54 new members were welcomed into the society during the year. At the end of the year, the roll stood at 1020, a net gain of 17.

With regret, the Council has noted the deaths (during the year or previously) of the following members: Mrs L Ashford, John Bennett, D R Kenrick, W J Mitchell, R S Moore, Miss G Rowan, W J Smith, G H B Tregear, Lt Col. J E Wright.

Your Council continued to meet at intervals through the year. 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 addition to Anne Willis mentioned above, the Council would like to thank Brigid Ockelton for distributing publications, Valerie Hitchman for taking the new role of conference administrator, and Ruth Cooke for looking after our Gift Aid administration. We are grateful, too, to Mark Ockelton for his willingness yet again to inspect the Society's accounts.