

THE CARE OF ENGLISH CHURCHES

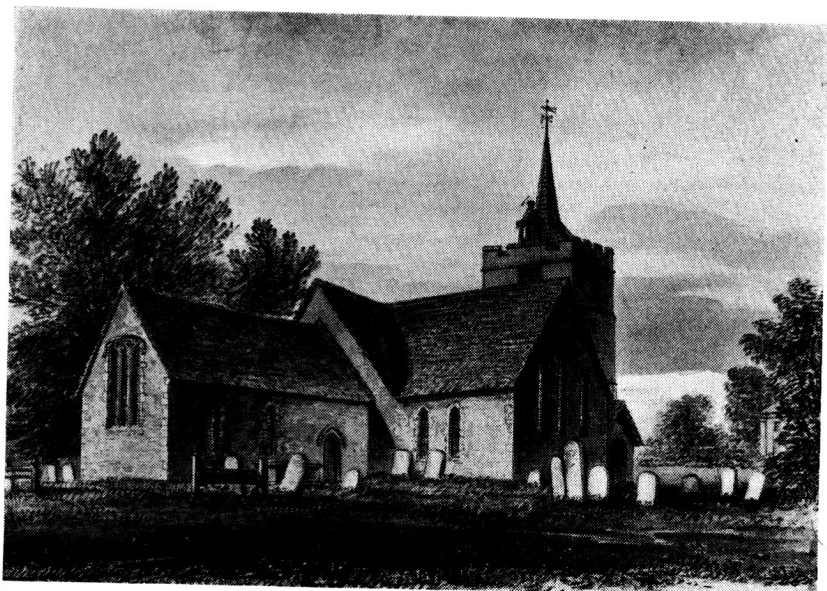
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THIS is a matter which is the responsibility of the Church herself and not of one of the departments of State, as in Continental practice. Because that is so, it is claimed that better results are obtained. Roughly the Church herself might be said to have her own Ministry of Works, in the very large organisation of Central and Diocesan Advisory Committees for the Care of Churches, which now spreads over the whole of England.

This extensive system for the protection of ancient buildings and the treasures they contain makes use of some five hundred people, unpaid, in various parts of the country, whose activities are stimulated and assisted by the Central Council, which is a department of the Church Assembly. Its somewhat slow growth and development and its present widely different sections of work are here described, showing the history and formation of the system, the conditions which brought it into being, the way it grew up, and the place it now occupies in Church and State.

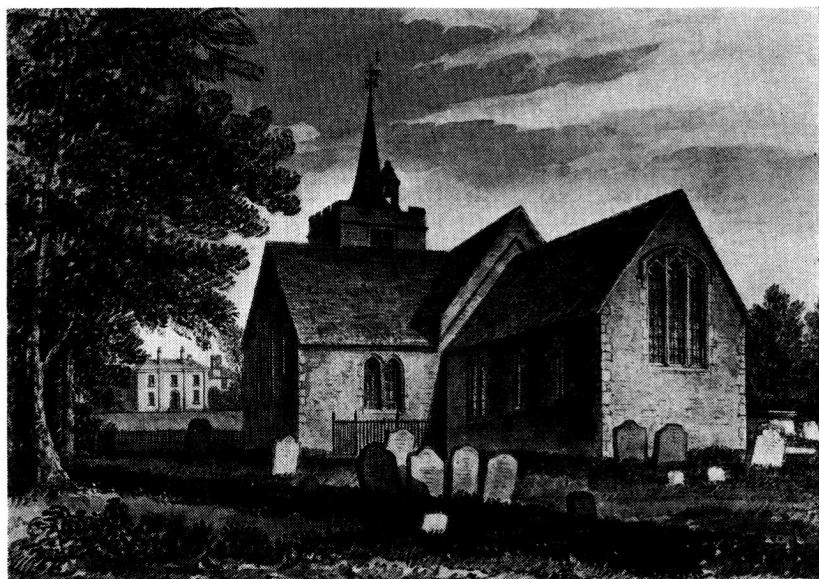
Many of us were brought up with the idea that vandalism towards churches, or the destruction of things of historic value and artistic beauty in them had long been a thing of the past in this country. In our young days we were taught to associate it with the more extreme forms of Puritanism in religion, or with the anti-Gothic destructiveness of the later Renaissance or with the carelessness and neglect of ancient work which were characteristic of the "taste" of a little more than a hundred years ago. We were taught to believe that the Gothic revival put all that right.

As we grew up we gradually learned that that is not the case, and that not only did the bad old state of things overlap the Gothic revival, but the revival itself was largely on wrong lines. It had undoubted enthusiasm, but it was appallingly narrow: worse still, it was full of conceit—the second generation of revivalists were more self-satisfied than the first and less ready to learn. The great revival was accompanied by a little-realised amount of destruction of ancient work of many and varied kinds. To take a few examples. There was a theory that Gothic art reached a



EASTWICK, HERTFORDSHIRE.

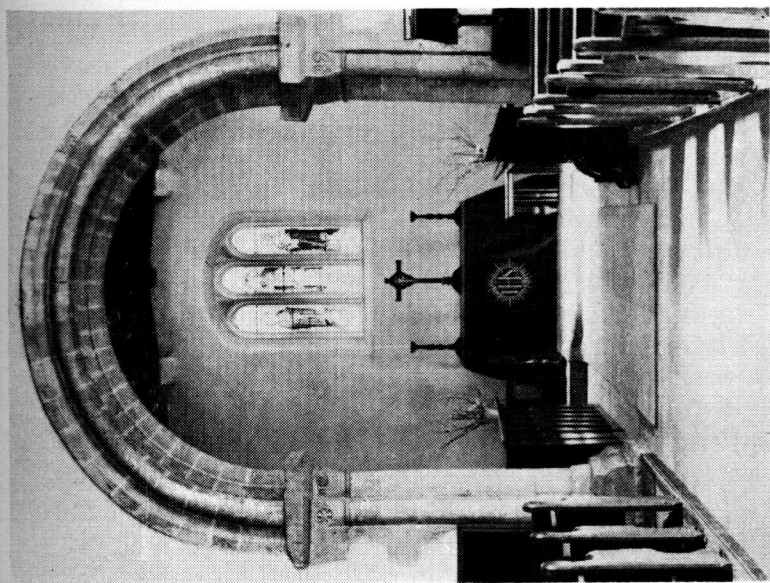
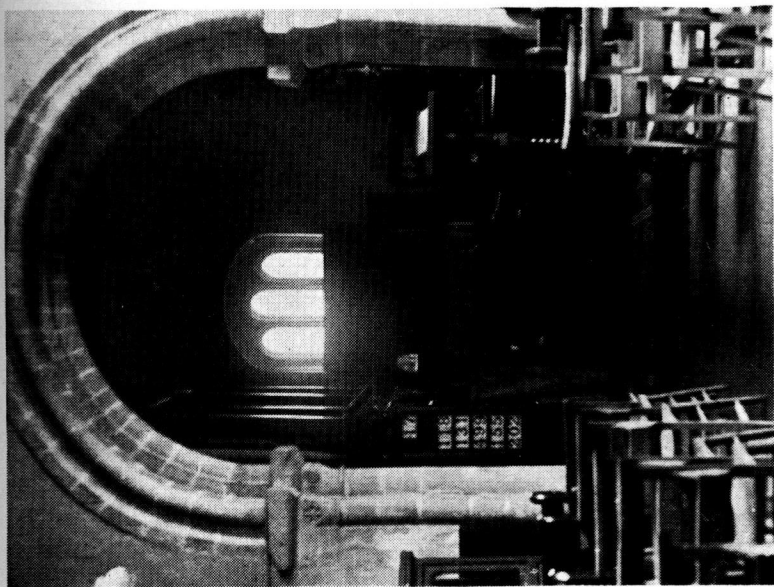
An old Hertfordshire church, Eastwick, showing the treatment to which it was subject in a Victorian restoration. Here is an old drawing of 1827 showing the church as retaining most of its original features and a simple tiled roof, while the second picture shows the walls refaced, conjectural restoration of 13th century lancet windows, and elaboration of gable ends, in the worst Victorian manner.



The third picture shows Buckler's drawing of the other side of the church, almost entirely old, picturesque and attractive. The fourth picture shows the same side but the church almost rebuilt.

kind of climax in the fourteenth century and that its latest phases were "debased". So in a thirteenth or fourteenth century church "restorers" thought it right to destroy fifteenth century additions and alterations in the supposed interests of architectural purity. Churches of many periods were "restored" to what they were supposed to have been in the time of their original construction. Any quantity of purely conjectural restoration work is now to be seen up and down the land. Many Gothic churches have features which are grossly misleading: they appear as if they might be old, or reproduced from old work, whereas they are the imaginations of nineteenth century architects. Seldom is documentary evidence there to tell us what is ancient, what is an authentic reproduction, and what is conjecture. As for Renaissance work, it was ruthlessly cleared out as a mere incongruity. Only those monuments were left which might have been difficult to destroy without the infringement of family or personal rights, and these—among them some of the most splendid pieces of Renaissance work in the country—were severely left alone to become dirty and neglected in the hope of helping on their ultimate removal. Further, there were drastic methods of repair, and cut and dried ideas of the necessity of regularity and smoothness. So mediaeval works of art, if mutilated or broken, had to be either completely "restored" or else discarded and removed. To take one or two examples. A window with mediaeval glass in the tracery lights had to be filled with modern glass; the design had to be complete, therefore the old tracery glass was thrown out, or taken by the stained glass maker. A screen required repair; not merely were missing parts made good, but any carving or members in the least bruised or broken were cut away and their places taken by new work, not always even an accurate reproduction of the old.

Then there were the mistakes which brought with them some of the worst and most glaring incongruities. People actually thought that mediaeval churches had rough stone walls exposed inside. The earliest revivalists knew the truth about this and they seldom removed ancient plaster; but the later ones did, and we know only too well how this particular form of mischief spread all over England and also to Scotland. In case after case the removal of eighteenth and nineteenth century internal plaster has carried with it mediaeval plaster and even mediaeval wall paintings. Even where such removal was necessary the walls should have been replastered in the ancient way. Then there were the mistakes about steps. The Gothic revivalists imported the notion from the Continental Renaissance, that altars must stand on many steps. In inserting steps into chancels which never had had them, the revivalists often moved piscinas and sedilia. Similarly, from the same Continental sources thinking they reproduced pre-Reformation English Gothic forms they adopted late



CLOWNE, DERBYSHIRE.

Before and after proper treatment. Note the difference in light distribution caused by improper and proper decorative treatment of the walls, the effect of the removal of the organ from the chancel where there was no room for it, the unblocking of the 13th century East window and the excellent re-arrangement of the altar in a manner entirely suitable to this early chancel.

Renaissance arrangements of altars with high reredoses, coarse in detail, with shelves behind to hold large ornaments—all utterly incongruous with the average Gothic east end, however they might trick them out with Gothic detail. People in the 60's and 70's of last century did not know how an ancient Gothic church was arranged: they knew something about its architecture, and they detested Renaissance architecture: therefore, in the name of "restoration" they destroyed ancient genuine Gothic work little by little, and they disfigured it, and frequently disguised it when they did not actually destroy.

On the other side it must of course be admitted that a large proportion of churches were in an appalling condition. Uneven and dangerous floors, undermined with graves, insanitary to a degree, leaky and dangerous roofs, glass ready to fall out, chancels and chapels half shut-off and disused, walls and even roofs, overgrown with ivy—these could be found all over the country. Drastic action was inevitable, and even those who wished to preserve ancient work, knew nothing of the more scientific methods evolved later.

Scandalised at subsequent needless destruction, people are sometimes apt to compare some over-restored church with a picture of it as it was about a hundred years ago, and to wish that it had not been taken in hand. Whereas in actual fact the picturesque building in the old picture would have collapsed in whole or in part had nothing been done.

Yet the growth of sound knowledge and of a wider artistic taste during the last fifty years made it inevitable that sooner or later there would come a demand that the destructive methods of the nineteenth century Gothic revival architects must cease. These men were far too anxious to impress their own individuality on every piece of work they touched. Even Bodley is recorded to have said of one most interesting fifteenth century chancel that "it would need a lot of handling to make it look right". And he proceeded to cover a fifteenth century English window with an imitation German reredos disguised with a little English detail.

The big architects were entrenched behind their names. The Church authorities employed them and appointed them. Further a whole trade in Gothic revival church furniture had been growing up for half a century or more. The works produced by it lacked the ability often to be found in those of the trained architects, but the public had come to think that a particular type of sham Gothic furniture, or sentimental, ill-drawn and over-painted stained glass, had a kind of sacred connection with the Church, and they liked to be able to go into a shop and order these things like a loaf of bread or a pound of sugar, and then place them in ancient churches wherever and whenever they liked.

As more scientific methods in archaeology began to prevail towards

the end of last century, it became increasingly manifest that this state of affairs would not satisfy a more enlightened public. Early in the present century an agitation grew up which culminated in the passing of the Ancient Monuments Act in 1913, giving the State certain well defined powers—though not nearly enough—in the direction of the rescue and preservation of ancient buildings and remains not in actual use. Churches were exempted because the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Randall Davidson, gave the Government a pledge that the Church herself would take the necessary action. Thus a serious religious and political crisis was averted, to which the Church had largely contributed by long-continued neglect (shared equally with lay owners of old buildings) to safeguard her buildings and their treasures in a sufficiently enlightened manner.

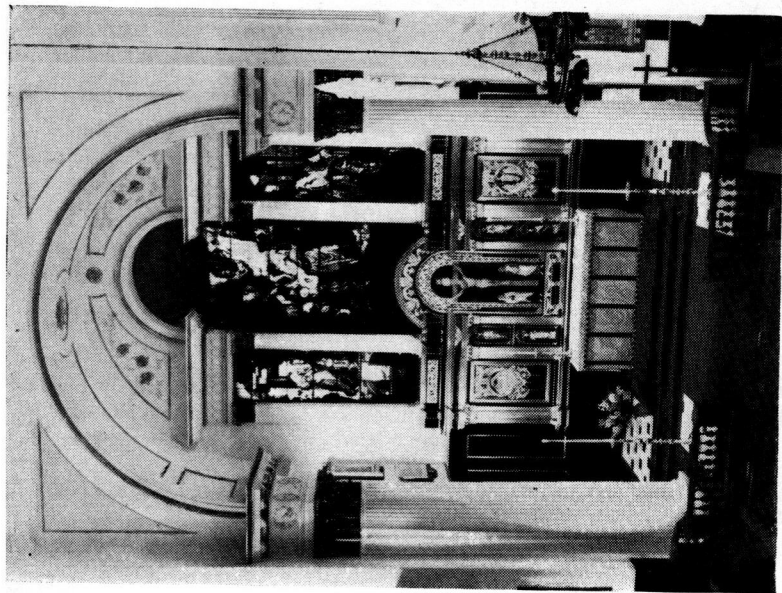
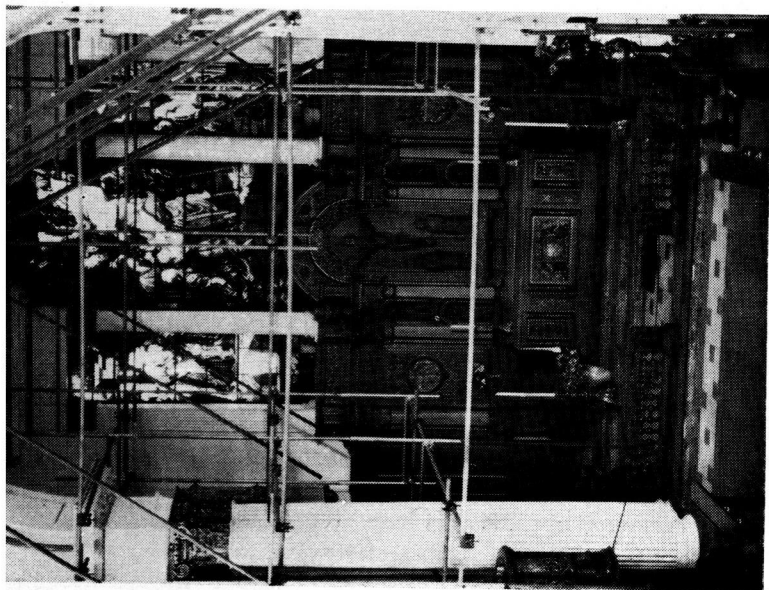
The Archbishop then called a committee of three of the leading ecclesiastical judges, whose courts formed the only protection church buildings had hitherto possessed, inadequate in actual working, but theoretically capable of being used to the greatest advantage. This Committee, consisting of the Dean of the Arches and two leading diocesan Chancellors, advised that the courts be strengthened by a system of voluntary advisory committees of technical experts in the various branches of ecclesiology. They suggested that expert advisory bodies should be formed in every diocese—

“for the assistance of the Court in architectural, archaeological, historical and artistic matters, relating to churches as to which faculties are sought”, which should assist the Chancellor “if and when asked to do so by him, during and not before the pendency of the application.”

A more important and far-seeing recommendation emanated from the northern province. Before the end of 1915 some private discussions in the diocese of Carlisle were followed, on the motion of the late Canon Rawnsley, a founder of the National Trust, by the appointment of a Committee of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of York to consider the Chancellors' Report already referred to. This Committee considered that the suggested expert advisory committees should be consulted *before* and not after a case had gone to the Consistory Court, and in this gave expression to a very widespread opinion, which ultimately took effect.

In 1917 the Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury resolved:—
“That it is desirable that in every diocese the Bishop should appoint an honorary advisory body to which either the Bishop himself or the Chancellor may apply for advice.”

But the conversations in Carlisle diocese already referred to, had meanwhile borne fruit in another direction, through a chain of circumstances



ST. CHAD'S, SHREWSBURY.

A very fine classical church, with a late 19th century reredos of unusually good design and craftsmanship, but dingy. Redecoration of the church and cleaning is in progress.

The next picture shows the same east end with the reredos fully gilt and coloured on an ebonised background and more space secured before the altar.

The 19th century restorers had little appreciation of fine renaissance work, but we are slowly overcoming the strong prejudice they created and getting these churches better treated.

unnecessary to go into here, for in May 1916, the then Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, set up an Advisory Committee to deal with war memorials in that diocese. War memorials had even then begun to be considered; there was much more money about after the first war than after the last, and wild schemes were talked of in some places—preparation began to be made to do all kinds of things which might easily have wrought irreparable disfigurement and injury to ancient churches. The strong emotions of the time were such that interference without official authority would most certainly have been resented as pedantic and unpatriotic. People who realised the possibilities at once saw the need for control. Dr. Gore's action was far-seeing, courageous and timely: it also proved to be the beginning of the setting up of the whole of this great new system.

The Oxford Committee was quickly followed by others. The fuller and more permanent development was not long in coming, for in a year or two the War Memorials Committee of the diocese of Truro had its reference extended to cover other additions and alterations in churches; Southwark, Winchester and Gloucester soon followed. Then people began to remember the report of the three judges and there came the setting up of permanent advisory committees with the full scope of reference, in dioceses which had never had War Memorial Committees, e.g., Canterbury and Bath and Wells. Little by little the system was extended, till, in 1921, some twenty-three dioceses possessed these Committees.

In that year a large and representative meeting at Westminster under the presidency of the Dean, asked these Diocesan Committees to send delegates to a subsequent meeting to discuss the formation of a Central Advisory Committee to supplement local deficiencies and to co-ordinate the whole system in the country, to strengthen and complete it, and to form a body of reference in cases of difficulty.

Meanwhile a good deal more had been going on centrally. Sir Alfred Mond, when at the Office of Works, just after the War, was widely believed to have inspired a fresh movement for State Control of Churches, and this undoubtedly stimulated the formation of the Diocesan Committees and their acceptance by church people.

From an entirely different direction, the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, as the central educative body for British Industrial Art, both ancient and modern, had done enormous service in helping to educate public taste in War Memorials and encourage the new movement. The then Director, Sir Cecil Harcourt Smith, happened to live in the Diocese of Oxford, and was asked to join the first Advisory Committee. An exhibition of War Memorials was held at the Museum,

which quickly became the national centre for enquiries as to the working of the new system, because the Church had no central office where such information could be obtained. And thus in course of time it came about that when a central office came into existence for the Central Committee, it had gradually developed, almost insensibly, as an item in the Museum Secretariat. The work indeed was indistinguishable in kind from that done every day by the rest of the staff in advising and helping enquirers on artistic matters, very widely interpreted in those days, before the appearance of the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Arts Council of Britain, and so forth.

To understand the work of the Diocesan Advisory Committees aright, it is necessary to explain the position of the Consistory Court. This is the law court of the bishop of the diocese, presided over by the ecclesiastical judge who represents the bishop and administers his legal powers. (Until not so very long ago these courts dealt with all probate and matrimonial business). There is one in each diocese, presided over by a judge commonly known as the Chancellor, who is, to use his strict and full technical description, the bishop's Vicar General in spirituals and the Official Principal of his consistory court. It is the old system which has come down, in many respects little changed from the Middle Ages.

During the nineteenth century these courts had become somewhat discredited on account of manifest unfairness in certain ritual and ceremonial disciplinary cases; such cases are now comparatively rare. The effect of the appointment of the advisory committees had certainly been to strengthen the position of the ecclesiastical courts in public estimation over matters concerning church property, and they made it manifest that the court would not in practice decide anything without the best technical help available.

The Chancellor then, in the consistory court, administers diocesan jurisdiction in regard to the fabrics and furniture of churches: whenever any change is made, he has to see that it is legal and desirable, and to safeguard all possible interests involved.

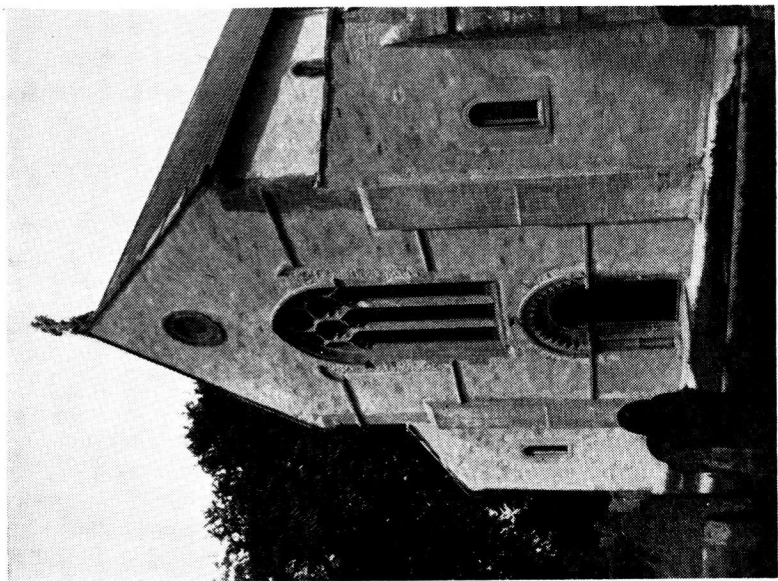
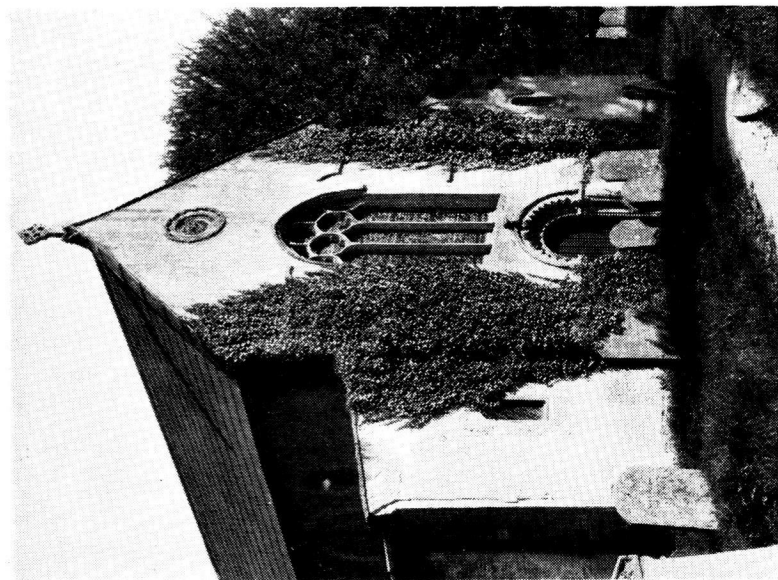
According to the law of the Church of England, no addition or alteration whatsoever may be made in the church building, or its fittings or ornaments, by addition, removal, or even replacement, without the sanction of the Bishop, embodied in a legal form called a *faculty*. Applicants must not do any work or give any order until this is obtained. (There is a certain amount of variation in small details as to practice in each diocese). The applicant files a petition with the Diocesan Registrar, who generally sees that it is in order: then what is called a "citation" is issued, if the Chancellor approves: this means that possible objectors are given a chance of appearing in opposition within a certain time. If

objectors appear, or if the case is specially important on other grounds, the Chancellor may decide to hear it in court : otherwise the licence of faculty is decreed as a matter of course.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee is usually appointed by the Bishop with the full concurrence of the Chancellor, and the Committee supplies the court with a range of technical knowledge which the Chancellor is not expected to possess. Without this knowledge mistakes have been frequent, and would still be possible. For example, as recently as 1917, at Hullavington (pronounced "Hullington") in North Wiltshire, the Consistory Court of Bristol actually granted a faculty for the removal of some exceedingly important screenwork, which dated from the fourteenth century, and which was burnt in the churchyard, its place being taken by the commonplace production of a church furnishing firm, which no one would cross the road to look at. Had the present Diocesan Advisory Committee been in existence at that time, this grave scandal could never have occurred. Later still, in 1922, at Buxhall, in Suffolk, there was destroyed, under a faculty, a fine though rather plain and late oak roof, to make way for a cheap pitch pine substitute. Here an architect was largely to blame: probably incompetent to repair such a roof, he condemned it. The Diocesan Committee, since appointed, would unquestionably have advised another opinion from a man of different training.

That such things would still go on, if it were not for the Committees, is shown by some proposals which have actually been made and have been stopped. The lady of the manor of a parish in Oxfordshire promoted a scheme for destroying the ancient arrangement of choir stalls in that interesting church, and it is common knowledge that this only forestalled an attack on the fine fifteenth century screen. Elsewhere there was, quite recently, an agitation to destroy an interesting eighteenth century screen, by people who still have the Victorian lack of understanding of Renaissance work. The Diocesan Committee have saved the situation in both cases.

But experience has shown that it is not enough to bring formal petitions before the Committee as they are submitted to the Court. Long before this stage is reached, the schemes in question have become crystallised; architects, artists and craftsmen have been selected (only too often the wrong man for the job!), plans prepared, and even (though improperly) the order given for the work. What is required is to secure that the parish or the donor should consult the Committee at a much earlier stage, when schemes are only in contemplation. Then the Committee can get the church visited, can discuss possibilities with those concerned, and ensure that everything goes right from the beginning.



LAMBOURNE, BERKS.

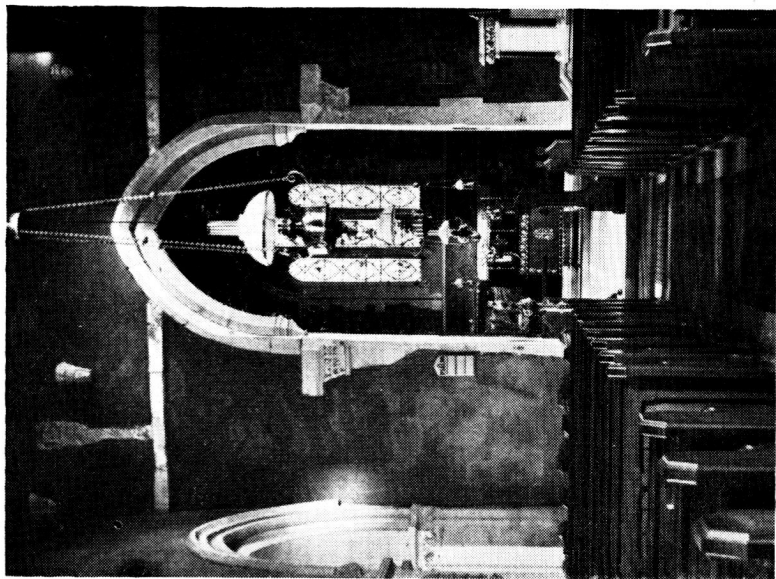
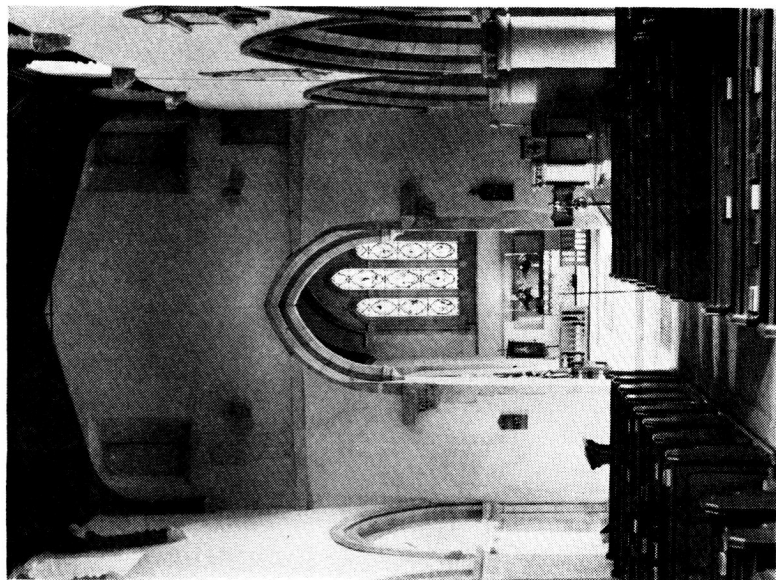
The west end of a large church, as it was at the end of the 1939-45 war, with a bad growth of ivy, stone repairs needed and a decaying surface of coarse rough-cast. The architect, Mr. King, has covered the wall thinly in lime plaster, not too even. He has got rid of the ivy, and carried out the necessary repairs with scarcely any new material, revealing the outline of the 13th century windows blocked by the Perpendicular window, instead of substituting conjectural restoration of the 13th century work as the Victorians would have done.

These conservative methods favoured by the diocesan advisory committees, not only preserve the old appearance of the church but are far less costly than the old drastic ways.

Visits to churches and talks with the local people are nearly always of great value. Again and again, even when some minor matter is concerned, if a Diocesan Committee can only send a member to the church, an opportunity may be found to indicate other things which require attention, or to prepare a report on the church that can be read to the Church Council and published in the parish magazine, in which necessary repairs can be urged, and activities diverted from the unessential and less desirable to the essential and the more desirable. Committees are constantly able to assist (nearly always with the support of the Chancellor if need be) on the employment of architects in cases where the fabric is involved, and where hitherto only the local builder or perhaps a bell-hanger, clockmaker, heating engineer or organ builder would be employed. And the Committee are getting to know the best architects for the various kinds of work; which men can be trusted with an old building, and who are still inclined to adhere to the discredited methods of the past.

Beside the need of protecting ancient work, there is that of raising the standard of modern work. This is what forms the bulk of the activities of such a Committee as that of Southwark, which serves the South London suburbs and has but few old churches. Obviously the same standard cannot be arrived at in some poverty-stricken district with a featureless church, as in places where ancient or fine modern work has to be safeguarded, or where there is money to do something bold or rich or original. In matters of style the Committees are fortunately taking a wide view. They steadily refuse to be partisans of Gothic work as such, or of the current Renaissance reaction from it. Nor will they be made the instruments for pushing "non-stylism" or "new-art". They welcome what is experimental in its proper place, while they steadily refuse to allow too much eccentricity in ancient churches. On the other hand they are striving hard to induce people to rise above the common-place and ill-designed work, vulgarly known to architects and artists as "shop stuff" or "commercial productions".

Another aspect of the work needs some reference. There is a part of the bishop's jurisdiction which is administered, not by the Chancellor, but by the Archdeacon, and his assistants the Rural Deans. The Chancellor is concerned with *changes*: the Archdeacon with keeping *existing things* in repair. Here again the Committees assist the Archdeacons and Rural Deans in technical matters and are helping them to secure the adequate drainage of roofs and of surface water, the cleaning of walls from ivy, the cutting down of objectionable trees, the removal of coal sheds and middens from the sides of churches, and the carrying out of essential minor repairs on right lines.



BIBURY, GLOS.

An interesting church largely 13th century. The first picture shows the walls painted red in the 19th century manner, the dressed stonework arbitrarily outlined without regard for structural or aesthetic meaning. The second view shows the walls recently whitened with limewash in the ancient traditional manner.

In all this the standard had risen very greatly before the war. In case after case ivy was removed or killed, gutters cleaned and churchyards better kept. But the war was a serious set-back to the maintenance side of the work. In other directions a sustained improvement may be seen. New altars are generally on the older lines, congruous with the typical English east ends, larger and simpler, without shelves, with only two candlesticks on or behind them, with reredoses of proper proportions, not blocking windows. There is a strong movement to check the number and size of memorial tablets, to regulate their position and to get really good lettering. (In this matter of lettering the improvement is most striking.) Stained glass, too, has improved, and on several different lines, nearly always with the tendency to get lighter again. Above all, in spite of much ignorance and prejudice, there is a growing return to whitened walls, the fundamental usage of nearly all our great artistic periods up to the nineteenth century, when reaction from the Puritan misuse of whitewash led to impossible tinted walls which killed all other colour work in the church. We know now—it is proved beyond all question—that the mediaeval builders used whitened walls as the groundwork of all their colour schemes, and these whitened walls are now rendered all the more necessary by the dark glass with which the nineteenth century filled our churches. This use of a white groundwork is an essential and vital part of Gothic architecture and Gothic art in this part of Europe. It only looks cold when improperly toned and attempts are made to substitute stone colour for the traditional white. One can now go to Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral, Southwold, Taunton, Selworthy, Thaxted, Furneaux, Pelham, Blisland, St. Dunstan's Canterbury, Rainham, and many other places, to see very much what a mediaeval church looked like within when it was built.

We must now return to the system itself.

In 1938 a change of great importance took place, vitally affecting the whole system. What is called the Faculties Jurisdiction Measure was passed and became the law of the land under which the whole system was fully legalised. By it the Diocesan Advisory Committee system became a part of the machinery of Church and State, and important alterations were made. Henceforth the appointment of D.A.C.s became compulsory, and the Chancellor was given the right to appeal to the Central Council, and the Archdeacon the right to representation in Court, in all cases. The Archdeacon can also now by granting a *certificate* spare a parish the expense of a *faculty* for minor repairs and for lesser things, but in all certificate cases the approval of the D.A.C. was made a condition.

In this way the whole system was clarified and made permanent. The war brought new activities to the Central Council. A.R.P. directions

specially evolved for churches had to be issued. Elaborate arrangements were devised for the safe storage of valuables from churches in the danger areas. The crypt of a Regency period church in a remote place in the West country was put at the Council's disposal and specially strengthened, and the basement of a large school building gave shelter to much of the finest woodwork of the Wren city churches in London, including screen-work, fonts and bells, and goods from many other Cathedrals and churches. Hospitality was also given to historic plate from some of the London Synagogues and the library of the old French Protestant emigré church in London.

The war stimulated the creation and increase of a large collection of photographs and records of churches throughout the country, carried out by the generosity of nearly 700 amateur photographers. With the addition of plans, drawings, and other information this ever-increasing collection now exceeds 185,000 items. Side by side with this, largely through gifts and legacies, there has developed a large and valuable library of contemporary books on all branches of ecclesiology. (Gifts and bequests to this are most welcome). With this equipment the Central Office is generally able to obtain information about important churches with very little delay.

On somewhat the same lines, files are made containing information about architects, artists and craftsmen who are doing work in churches; this enables questions to be answered as to the suitability of the worker for some particular job.

To-day the work of the Council includes far more than the reference of individual cases of difficulty whether by a diocesan committee or a chancellor. The Central Council is in the position of being the connecting link between the Church and outside bodies when they become involved in something to do with a church. These may be Government Departments, for example, in connection with licensing or scarce materials, or the "Amenity Societies", such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, a body which has done and is doing most valuable work, and with whom the Central Council maintains very cordial relations. All sorts of enquiries have to be dealt with as there are many people interested in church fabrics and their contents who are unconnected with the Church as an organisation; with the Press, authors, students, foreign correspondents, organisers of exhibitions, and the like. There are many things that only a central organisation can deal with effectively.

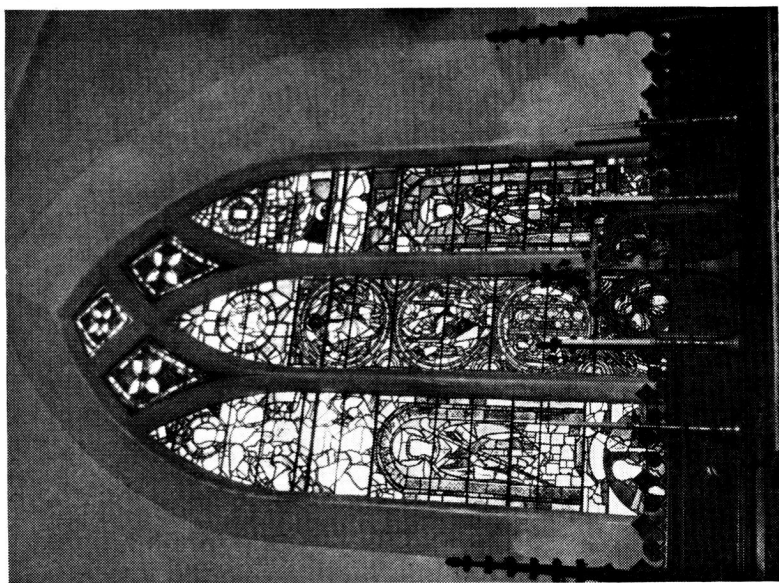
Much propaganda work is being organised at great expenditure of time. Series of educative lectures illustrated by lantern slides or film strips have been made and are regularly given to Theological Colleges

and all kinds of gatherings. Some architectural history is included, but the lectures are mainly for practical purposes, for example, to warn all concerned of the dangers accruing from neglect of ordinary maintenance, or to show right and wrong ways of repair, as well as to illustrate the way in which churches of various periods should be arranged and equipped, especially regarding the arrangement of chancels. For lectures such as these, the slides must be first class and they must definitely illustrate the points intended to be brought home to the audience, and be not merely "pretty pictures". The cost of seeking and making up suitable material severely taxes the Council's limited income.

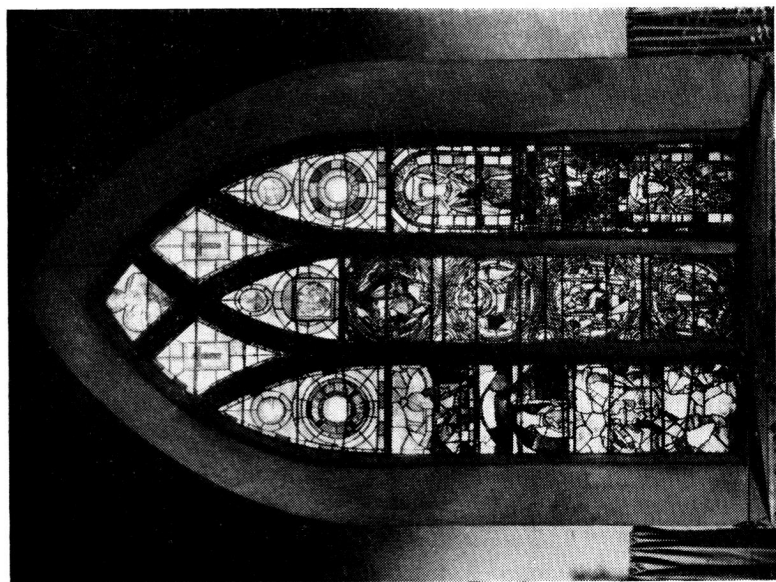
For many years now the Council has published a series of comprehensive illustrated handbooks which give much information needed about the problems that arise with regard to churches and churchyards, and the proper treatment of the monuments they contain, which are often of great interest. The Council has indeed published a great deal of literature of vital interest to all who are engaged on the treatment of ancient churches and their contents. An illustrated report issued about every other year forms a record of the principal works of repair or preservation carried out all over the country. A book on the material and treatment of church roofs, covering questions like the use of modern substitutes for lead, and fully illustrated, has been issued at the extremely low price of 2s. 3d. There are also publications on wall surfaces, their history and treatment, two more such codes of standard practice on the heating and lighting of churches are to be revised and enlarged, and matters like the sale of church plate or the treatment of bells and organs are covered by other pamphlets.

In 1951, in connection with the Festival of Britain, the Council organised an exhibition of modern work for churches, including plate and stained glass.

The Council is also working on a survey of disused and derelict churches, of which there are many in various states of repair and in different local circumstances. This will supplement the short report about them made in 1949 by a committee of the Church Assembly of which the Bishop of Norwich was chairman, and for which the Council supplied the statistics. The *Union of Benefices (Disused Churches) Measure*, which has just received the Royal Assent, makes provision for the use of certain church buildings for non-ecclesiastical purposes, and would enable a transfer to be made to the Ministry of Works for safe custody under conditions which would allow the Church to resume control if local conditions made this desirable. There have been friendly discussions between the Church Commissioners and the Ministry of Works with regard to some of these questions, but any effectual outcome is acutely



RIVENHALL, ESSEX.
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hampered by the inadequacy of the Ministry's grant for maintenance of ancient (secular) buildings already in its charge.

Two conferences of architects in charge of cathedrals have been arranged in recent years, and one has just been held for officials of Diocesan Advisory Committees, which was the third of its kind.

A very strong committee has just been appointed to go into the question of the proper treatment of wall paintings, to discover why some of them are in a bad state, and find out what scientific analysis can teach us about methods which should now be adopted.

It will be seen from what has been outlined above that a better-informed common mind is developing on many of these questions and that authority in the Church is gradually exerting itself, in the right direction. Further developments may be looked for in the future, especially following the appointment by the Church Assembly in 1951 of a commission to consider afresh the whole question of the structural care of churches, arising from the widespread feeling that the problem was getting beyond what the parishes could tackle themselves. The Commission prepared, largely on evidence supplied by the Central Council, an admirable report, *Preservation of our Churches* (ss., Church Information Board), which after a full survey of the subject, recommended among other things the regular quinquennial inspection of all churches by an experienced architect. The means to enforce this, where parishes are neglectful, will be provided by a Measure now being prepared for the Assembly.

The report underlined the grave severity of the financial burthen of the upkeep of a large and valuable ancient church upon small parishes, and recommended the launching of a public appeal for four million pounds. A trust for this purpose—the Historic Churches Preservation Trust—has been set up under Royal patronage, the Trustees including the Prime Minister, the Speaker and a representative body of leaders of all branches of political and public life.

The Central Council is normally concerned only with parish churches, but in 1949 a Cathedrals Advisory Committee, a small but weighty body, was appointed at the request of the Deans and Provosts, by the Standing Committee of the Central Council, to advise them upon all matters they wished voluntarily to refer. Many important matters have already been dealt with.