# THE HISTORIC CHURCHES PRESERVATION TRUST

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THE Historic Churches Preservation Trust has come into being as the result of a resolution passed by the Church Assembly on June 18, 1952. For some time there had been anxiety in informed circles about the condition of the fabrics of our parish churches, mainly as a result of the ten years from 1939 onwards in which, owing to the demands of the war and post-war conditions, only the most urgent and essential repairs could be undertaken. The Society of Antiquaries had made representations to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Pilgrim Trust, which had made grants of £87,846 to 175 parish churches in England during the 21 years of its existence, found the problem to be assuming such dimensions that in 1951 it suspended grants to parish churches pending the production of a national scheme. The Central Council for the Care of Churches raised the matter in its annual report to the Church Assembly in June 1951; and a suggestion that if other sources of financial help were not forthcoming the possibility of State aid should not be ruled out produced an animated debate. As a result of this debate the Church Assembly appointed a commission to go thoroughly into the whole matter. The commission began work in the autumn of 1951 and took evidence from a large number of bodies specially concerned with the problem, and also from individual architects. It decided that the first requirement was an assessment of the magnitude of the problem. It was commonly believed that the financial need must run into millions of pounds, but no authoritative estimate had previously been given. The commission sought evidence from all the archdeacons in the country, and in an interim report published in February 1952 it made known that a sum of £4,000,000 would be needed over the next ten years to supplement the efforts of parishes in putting their churches into good repair.

The final report of the commission was published in the summer of 1952, and focused public attention on the magnitude and urgency of the problem. Part I of the report was an analysis of the causes of the present position. The accumulation of repairs since 1939 was regarded as the

biggest contributory factor, but certain subsidiary factors that had been operating for a long time were noticed, such as the increasing age of our churches, the changing balance of town and country and the higher proportion of townbred clergymen.

The second part of the report gave a detailed analysis of the financial need. It was estimated that out of 15,779 parochial churches in England, 3,509 stood in need of repairs. In 1,496 cases it was thought that the financial problem could be met by the parishioners. There remained 2,013 cases where extra-parochial help would be needed. In 1,174 of these cases the total expenditure needed did not exceed £1,000; in 447 cases it lay between £1,000 and £2,000; in 269 cases it lay between £2,000 and £5,000; in 123 cases it exceeded £5,000, and by separate inquiry the commission found that in this last class of cases the total expenditure averaged almost £10,000. After all allowances had been made for what these parishes could reasonably be expected to provide themselves, and after further allowances had been made for undisclosed damage and for further deterioration in the course of the decade, the commission reached its figure of £4,000,000 as needed to supplement the efforts of the parishes over the next ten years. Subsequent experience has confirmed that this figure is not likely to be too large.

In the third part of its report the commission turned to the problem of raising the money. It showed that an Exchequer grant was only one of several ways in which the State could help, and it recommended that State aid should not be sought unless vigorous effort by the Church itself failed to produce the needed money. It made a number of recommendations to that end, but its main proposal was that there should be set up a Historic Churches Preservation Trust with associated county trusts.

In a final part the commission urged that it was not sufficient merely to put our churches back into good repair. They must be kept in good repair afterwards. The commission found that the most essential need for this purpose was regular inspection by qualified architects. Though it urged parochial church councils to make arrangements whereby an architect would look over their churches every six months, the commission did not feel that this could be made a legal requirement. It came to the conclusion, however, that legal machinery should be established to ensure that every church was inspected by a qualified architect at least once every five years, and it proposed that this should be done by giving the archdeacon power to have such an inspection carried out himself if the church had not been inspected within the previous five years. The commission also laid stress on the shortage of architects with experience in the care of ancient churches, and in order to ensure that repairs were carried out by qualified hands it proposed that there should be set up panels of specialist architects known

to have experience in this class of work, who should advise whether grants should be made for proposed repairs.

On June 18, 1952, the Church Assembly debated this report and accepted the principal recommendations. The subsequent months have seen the carrying out of these recommendations. The most important of the resolutions adopted by the Church Assembly invited the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to set up the Historic Churches Preservation Trust. Her Majesty The Queen was graciously pleased to give her patronage to the Trust, and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh accepted the presidency. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself assumed the chairmanship of the Trust and the Archbishop of York accepted membership. Invitations to become Trustees were sent to leading figures in our national life, and their ready acceptance shows the affection that is felt for our parish churches in all walks of life and in all classes of society. The acceptance of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition shows that this matter is appreciated in all parties. The Lord Chancellor and the Speaker have associated the two Houses of Parliament with the work. The presence of the Governor of the Bank of England among the Trustees is another indication of its national character, and the Bank of England has allowed an account for the Trust to be opened in its books. A leader of the trade union world, Mr. Arthur Deakin, and a leader in the world of commerce, Sir George Schuster, sit among the Trustees with the representatives of all the main bodies concerned with the preservation of ancient buildings. The presence among the Trustees of a distinguished member of the Society of Friends, such as Mr. Lawrence Cadbury, and a respected Nonconformist, such as Lord Ammon, emphasizes that although the great majority of the historic churches in the land belong to the Church of England, there are a few belonging to other bodies that have real architectural merit and historic interest.

The Trustees held their first meeting on October 2, 1952, and preparations were immediately made for the opening of the public appeal. This was done on December 1, 1952, in a memorable service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, perhaps the best-known of all the parish churches of England. The service was preceded by a relay in which Olympic runners and other famous athletes carried the Lord Mayor's gift from the Mansion House through the crowded streets of London to the steps of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. The relay stages were the famous churches along the route —St. Mary-le-Bow, St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Bride's, St. Dunstan in the West, St. Clement Dane's and St. Mary-le-Strand. The last runner was Mr. Roger Bannister, whose running along the Strand provoked as much interest in the press, the newsreels and on television as his more famous exploits on the track. The service that followed inside St. Martin's had

been specially composed for the occasion. Addresses were given by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor, and the lesson was read by Lord Scarbrough.

The financial appeal was made difficult by the fact that there were several compelling national appeals already in the field, such as the King George VI Memorial Fund and the Lynmouth fund. It was also known that Westminster Abbey intended to make an appeal for £1,000,000, and before long the East Anglian floods made another big call upon the generosity of the British public. In these circumstances there were some who argued that it might be better to postpone the appeal, but the Trustees came to the conclusion that they should not do so. The urgency of the problem had been strongly represented for several years and further delay would not only increase the eventual outlay needed, but might lead to irretrievable damage. In the outcome the decision of the Trustees to go ahead with the appeal has been justified. The amount of money available in the pockets of the well-disposed is, of course, limited, and no doubt far more would have been received by the Trust if it had not been for the other claims upon the public. The Trustees can, however, look back upon a year's work with gratitude, and can feel that some impression is beginning to be made upon this huge problem.

At the moment of writing gifts and promises over the ten years amounting to about £300,000 have been received. This total includes a very generous grant of £10,000 a year for ten years from the Pilgrim Trust, which will not during this period make any individual grants to churches that are eligible for help from the Historic Churches Preservation Trust. Other outstanding grants are £20,000 each by the Dulverton Trust and the Yapp Trust, and £10,000 by the Sir James Knott Trust. The Bank of England and the Clothworkers' Company are making grants of £5,000 each. While deeply appreciating such large gifts, the Trustees realize that in the present age, when wealth is being so much more widely distributed than formerly, it is necessary to appeal to other sections of the community, and thousands of smaller contributions ranging from sixpence upwards have been received. Many of these smaller contributions have come in response to letters in the leading newspapers, and the Trustees are grateful to the editors for their co-operation in this great cause. Smaller contributions have also come in response to the broadcast appeal by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which the B.B.C. kindly allowed in the Week's Good Cause series on July 26, 1953. It is hoped that a large number of small contributions may be raised in the rather attractive collecting boxes which the Trustees have had made in the form of a church; and the Trustees are always looking for new ways of getting such gifts without an undue expenditure. In soliciting

the larger contributions the Trustees have laid great stress upon the method of covenanted subscriptions, which practically doubles the value of the gift. At present about £5,000 a year net is being received by this method and it is hoped greatly to increase it. Though few individuals now have wealth on the old scale, there have still been some notable cases of personal generosity. It is interesting to observe that two donors have undertaken the cost of repairing churches as memorials to their wives, and one has made a generous covenant as a memorial to a son killed in action. This is something that others, when they hear about its possibility, may be glad to imitate. Donors of £10 and upwards are styled Friends; donors of £100 and upwards are styled Benefactors; and donors of £1,000 and upwards are styled Associates. The names of Friends, Benefactors and Associates are being inscribed in worthy books and each will receive an annual report.

In the summer of 1953 the Trustees decided that they could look sufficiently far ahead to be able to make a first allocation of grants amounting to £50,000. They shared the view expressed by the Commission on the Repair of Churches that they should not attempt, in London, to sort out the thousands of claims for assistance. They divided the £50,000 among the dioceses in sums ranging from £500 to £2,500 in a rough correspondence with the needs as shown by the archdeacons' returns. The Diocesan Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches in each diocese was then asked for its advice on the way the available sum could best be spent on individual churches. The Trustees emphasized that they preferred to make a few substantial grants to churches of great distinction in urgent need rather than to make small grants to many claimants. In this way it was thought that the Trustees would better be able to ensure a high standard of work, and to achieve some real good. They kept the ultimate decision in their own hands, but in practice the advice of the D.A.Cs. has nearly always been such that it could be accepted. The first grants amounting to over £23,000 were voted in July, 1953. They covered 43 churches in 17 dioceses, including such outstanding examples as Ludlow and Long Melford. In addition grants were made to five nonconformist churches and meeting-houses. Two interest-free loans were also voted to two churches. This is a policy that the Trustees would like to adopt more widely in suitable cases, as it enables them to use their resources over and over again. A second list of grants totalling £23,000 was voted in September, 1953. They covered 71 churches in 25 diocese and among the number were Earls Barton and Hexham Priory. The Trustees can now see sufficiently far ahead to commit themselves to giving another £100,000 in grants during the next year or so, and are proceeding to allocate this sum in order that repairs may be put in hand

without delay. Though their main grants must be for the fabrics the Trustees have not overlooked monuments within them ; in particular, they have undertaken to see that the Lumley Chancel at Cheam and its unique collection of memorials are put into good repair.

In order to ensure that the work done satisfies the highest standards, the Trustees have laid down the following conditions for their grants :

(*a*) That the work is done under the supervision of an architect whose specifications are approved by the Trustees; for this purpose the Trustees may seek the advice of their advisory panel of specialist architects for the region.

(*b*) That application is made, if it has not been done already, for a faculty or archdeacon's certificate, thus ensuring that the work is brought under the scrutiny of the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches.

(*c*) That arrangements will be made for the inspection of the church by an architect at least once every five years in accordance with the principle approved by the Church Assembly.

The Trustees are supplying to each grant-aided parish a log book in which it is asked that all the work done should be noted and that the plans should be kept with the book or an indication given where they may be found. This is another recommendation of the Church Assembly Commission. It could be of great help to architects at the present day, if only they knew precisely what work had been done in previous restorations.

The advisory panels of specialist atchitects mentioned in the first condition were set up in October, 1953. For this purpose England has been divided into 11 regions, each region covering a group of dioceses and having a separate panel. In forming these panels an effort has been made to select for each region a small group of senior architects, held in respect throughout the profession, who either live in the region or are specially connected with it by their practice. The Trustees are gratified to find that their invitations have all been accepted, and the panels include a great wealth of talent and experience in the field of church work.

The main purpose of this organization is to ensure that money granted by the Trust will be wisely spent. Long experience has shown the supreme importance of entrusting the repair of historic churches to men who have the aptitude and special knowledge needed for the work. The reproach of tasteless restoration and of vandalism which has attached to so much work in the past must be ended and this scheme of advisory panels is designed to ensure that all church repair aided by the Trust shall be carried out on principles that are generally approved by informed opinion.

These panels are not intended to provide lists of architects recommended for the carrying out of repairs. Each parochial church council will remain free, as now, to engage the architect of its choice. Lists of architects who have had experience in the care and restoration of churches have been compiled by the Royal Institute of British Architects in consultation with its allied societies, and the Trustees are considering with the Central Council for the Care of Churches the best use to which this material can be put. The Trust will make it a condition of a grant that a competent architect shall be employed to superintend and direct the work, but will not attempt to influence the choice. If the parochial church council's selection should happen to be a member of one of the panels no further inquiries will be necessary, and membership of a panel will not of course debar any architect from accepting a commission to repair a church in the normal course of his professional duties.

Where the architect is selected without the prior advice of the panel, the Trust will require that his name and particulars of his experience be submitted before a grant is made. These particulars will be submitted to one or more members of the panel, and in many cases will probably be sufficient to enable the choice of the architect to be approved. But if the selected architect is hitherto unknown, or if his experience has been in classes of work other than the repair of historical buildings, he will be asked to submit such reports, specifications and plans as the panel or member of the panel may require in order that his proposals and the methods which he intends to employ may be examined. The member of the panel will in this way be enabled to make such helpful suggestions as will ensure a satisfactory result, and the Trust is confident that this assistance of the panels and any consultations that may follow will be welcomed by all architects wishing to familiarise themselves with the principles that should govern sound reparations.

So much for the work done by the Historic Churches Preservation Trust from London. In the early stages the London organisation has naturally been the more prominent, but it is an essential part of the plan to set up a network of associated county trusts eventually covering the whole of England; and in the fullness of time these county trusts may come to be more important than the central body. With their local knowledge county trusts can hope to raise money from sources that the London organization cannot reach, and they are always aware, of course, of the places where the money is most needed.

Two such county bodies were already in existence when the Trust was formed and they have become affiliated to the Trust. They are the Association of Friends of Kent Village Churches and the Friends of Essex Churches. Since the national body was created there have been formed

the Lincolnshire Old Churches Trust, the Friends of Ancient Staffordshire-shire Churches, the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust and the Historic Cheshire Churches Preservation Trust. The general pattern has been for the Lord Lieutenant and Bishop or Bishops concerned to take the lead in forming the county trust. The success of such a trust depends in large measure upon finding the right people to be chairman and secretary, for upon them will devolve the greater part of the work. It is too early yet to make any detailed report upon the progress of the county trusts, but they have already given indications that this is a sound organisation having its roots in English history and appealing to the English temperament. So far they have raised in gifts and promises about £20,000 and some have made their first grants.

Outside the direct work of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the county trusts, but closely linked with it, are the plans to give effect to the recommendation of the Church Assembly Commission that all churches should be inspected by a qualified architect at least once every five years. After this recommendation had been approved by the Church Assembly in June, 1952, a committee was set up to prepare a measure. The measure it produced followed closely the lines recommended by the Church Assembly commission, that is to say, where an archdeacon found at his quinquennial survey or otherwise that a church had not been inspected within the previous five years it gave him power to have the inspection made on his own authority. The cost would be met in the first place out of diocesan funds with power of recovery from the parish. When the draft measure was presented to the Church Assembly in June, 1952, there was criticism of some details of the measure, especially of the power of recovery from parochial church councils, but the measure was given general approval with only a few dissentients and sent to a committee for revision. There was some misunderstanding behind the criticism, due to the instinctive dislike in the Church Assembly of anything that savours of compulsion. The authors of the measure, like the Church Assembly commission, felt that in the last resort there must be compulsory powers in reserve. The need for regular inspection of our churches by qualified architects is so obvious there must be machinery to ensure that it is done. But in the last resort the draft measure rests upon public opinion rather than upon compulsion. In all probability once the need is pointed out in the measure, most parochial church councils of their own volition will have their churches inspected by an architect at least every five years. In cases where through some oversight or obstinacy this is not done, when the archdeacon points out that it ought to be done, there will not be many parochial church councils that will refuse. Provision must, however, be made to ensure that in the ultimate few awkward

cases the measure is not allowed to become a dead letter. We cannot permit the quinquennial inspection of our churches to become a mere pious aspiration. The honour of the Church is engaged in this matter, for the double endorsement of the principle by the Church Assembly has undoubtedly been a factor in leading many subscribers to contribute so generously to the funds of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust.

Whether the principle is given effect through the archdeacons' surveys or through some other method, such as diocesan schemes of inspection, is not so important. Diocesan schemes would be one way of giving effect to the principle, but the Commission on the Repair of Churches preferred to leave each church free to make its own arrangements.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Prehistoric Chamber Tombs of England and Wales* by Glyn E. Daniel, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., 10 × 7. Pp. xiv + 256, with 16 additional plates and numerous text figures and maps. Cambridge University Press, 1950. 31/6.

This important work presents a detailed examination and analysis of what may be called the ancient monument *par excellence*, the chambered barrow or its survivor the "dolmen" (a term not used by the author), within the area stated. For the general reader, its value lies in the revelation of what has been accomplished by modern scientific excavation and research. The result is impressive, although many problems remain. These chamber tombs (which are to be distinguished from the many surviving *unchambered* long barrows) fall into five groups, each with distinguishing features, located in Anglesey, the Scilly Islands, the Irish Sea coast, the Severn-Cotswold region and the Medway area, respectively, pointing to five separate immigrations of culturally-related settlers. Precise dates are as yet unascertainable, but around 2000 B.C., with a possible margin of error of five hundred years each way, seems most likely.

No type of monument, save the megalithic circle (which is somewhat later, perhaps, but to some extent in the same tradition), has excited so much wonder and mystification in the past. Modern archaeology has enormously advanced our knowledge, without, however, lessening the interest or removing all the mystery. It is certain that these tombs were used for collective burial, but what ideas actuated their builders, what rites were performed, what caused so many of the bones to be broken into fragments or partially consumed by fire, and what meanings attached to the curious markings of cups, rings, spirals and meandering lines, are questions not easily to be answered. The value of Dr. Daniel's book is that it sets out lucidly the present state of expert knowledge upon this absorbing subject. It is copiously illustrated with maps, plans and photographs, and concludes with an inventory of all known conjectured chamber tombs in the area, containing descriptive notes, and arranged under counties.

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