



*Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester
Joint Books and Documents Committee*



From the Secretary:
Nigel Yates, MA, PhD, FRHistS
Archivist to the Dioceses of Canterbury
and Rochester

47 Meadow Walk
Maidstone
Kent, ME15 7RY

Tel: (0622) 688712
Fax: (0622) 682510

The Reverend Canon J W Everett
The College
The Church Yard
Ashford
Kent
TN23 1QE

CKS/P10
27 March 1995

Dear Canon Everett

PAROCHIAL REGISERS AND RECORDS MEASURE

My apologies for the delay in writing formally following my visit on 8 March. I have now re-read the file and, in particular, the report on storage made by Mrs Brook in December 1990. It would appear that some of our discussions on 8 March were at cross-purposes. In her report Mrs Brook makes it perfectly clear that whilst cupboards are acceptable for the storage of records, chests are not. It would appear that at the time of her visit at least one, possibly both, of your chests were stored elsewhere in the church. The assumption in Mrs Brook's report is that the parish would purchase an additional cupboard of the type you already had and move the records from the chests to the cupboards, whereas what you seem to have done is move the chests from elsewhere in the church to your document room. I have to say that I agree entirely with the position taken by Mrs Brook. Even if your chests were wood-lined and raised off the floor on plinths to ensure proper circulation of air around them I would still be very unhappy about recommending that they be considered suitable storage under the terms of the measure. The measure specifies very clearly, as amended in 1992, either (1) a wood-lined rust-proofed, vented steel cabinet, the door of which is fitted with a multi-lever lock, or (2) a fire-proofed muniment room conforming so far as practicable to British Standard Specification Number 5454. As you know I have taken the view in recommendations I have made in the Diocese of Canterbury that a wood-lined safe is equivalent to the first of these specifications and exemptions have been granted at both All Saints, Maidstone and St Giles, Wormshill on this basis. I do not consider that chests are equivalent for two reasons: (1) they are more amenable to theft and (2) the necessity for records in them to be piled one on top of the other will mean that over a period of time damage will be caused to the contents by the sheer weight of records pressing on each other.

In other respects I am very happy with what has been achieved at Ashford. In particular you have created a room which is very suitable for the storage and consultation of records. I am therefore prepared to make the following recommendations to the Joint Diocesan Books and Documents Committee when it meets next month. If these recommendations are accepted the Archdeacon of Maidstone will advise the Bishop of Dover accordingly and he will issue an exemption provided the parish complies with all the requirements made by the Committee within a specified period of time. The recommendation I shall make to the Committee is that the parish of St Mary, Ashford should be granted an exemption for the storage of records in parochial custody under the following conditions:-

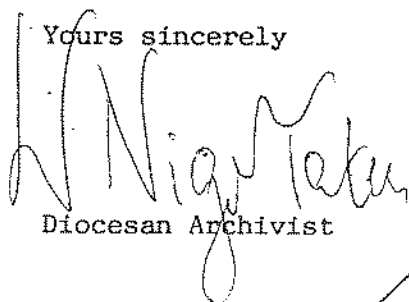
- (1) All records must be stored in locked cupboards in the Archive room which I have approved. One or more additional cupboards must be purchased to replace the chests currently in use. All the cupboards in use must be wood-lined around the whole of the interior except for the doors. The advice of a qualified locksmith must be sought to ensure that the locks of each cupboard are secure against theft and, if necessary, changed to ensure this. Each cupboard must be fitted with a maximum-minimum thermometer and a hygrometer conforming to British Standard Specification Number 3292. Each cupboard must be opened at least once a week and the readings of temperature and relative humidity checked and the details recorded in a ledger or other appropriate document which can be made available for inspection when required. All this work shall be completed not later than 31 December 1995.
- (2) The parish shall appoint a person to make a list of all the records in parochial custody. A typescript list of all these records, individually numbered, should be supplied to the Archdeacon of Maidstone and to the Diocesan Record Office at County Hall, Maidstone. Each document shall also be marked in pencil with the same number that it has been given in the list and, so far as possible, records should be stored in numerical order. The parish should also supply at the same time to the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Record Office a statement of the arrangements it has made to ensure that members of the public may have access to the records at reasonable times. All this work shall be completed not later than 31 December 1995.
- (3) The parish shall arrange for Mr Wayre, the Conservation Officer at Canterbury Cathedral Library - telephone (0227) 463510 - to visit the parish and to advise it on the implementation of a conservation programme for its records. Whilst the parish is not obliged to use the conservation facilities at Canterbury Cathedral Library it must agree to carry out the conservation of records to a standard specified by Mr Wayre and using suitably qualified people approved by Mr Wayre. The parish must also undertake to accept the advice given by Mr Wayre on the use of materials for the storage of documents and in particular the storage of loose papers in folders and protective envelopes. The initial stage of this work should be carried out and a report by Mr Wayre completed not later than 31 December 1995. On the basis of Mr Wayre's report the parish shall supply both the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Record Office with its proposals for a rolling programme of conservation by 31 December 1996.

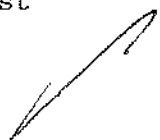
If you have any observations on these proposals perhaps you will let me know and I will ensure that they are reported to the Joint Diocesan Books and Documents Committee at its next meeting.

I realise that you will be a little disappointed that I am not prepared to sanction the use of chests for the storage of records, but I am sure you will appreciate that I have to be consistent, and that it was as a result of my unwillingness to permit the use of chests elsewhere that some parishes have deposited records in the Diocesan Record Office or purchased alternative equipment. I do not think my recommendations will involve the parish in unreasonable costs and it may be possible to apply for grants to offset some of this expenditure. In particular the overall good state of your records should ensure that conservation costs are not high and can be spread over a reasonable period when you have agreed a programme for this. I hope you will find these recommendations acceptable and that the parish will be happy with an exemption on this basis. Should you feel, on reflection, that the measure places too great a financial burden on the parish to meet its requirements then obviously you can reconsider your position and opt to deposit your records in the Diocesan Record Office.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Archdeacon of Maidstone.

Yours sincerely


Diocesan Archivist



Archivist's Report: St Mary the Virgin, Ashford.

It was a great honour at the end of last year to be asked by the late Mr Tom Hall whether I would be prepared to take over the role of Church Archivist. I have spent some time familiarising myself with our archive collection. Quite apart from the ancient Church Registers, Rate Books and other such, we also have a fine collection of Parish Magazines dating back to the 1880's, and so far as I can ascertain, complete to the present day. Mr Hall's excellent indexing of other interesting loose items means that they are well preserved, and can be easily obtained. Mr Hall mentioned that he had got together photographs of all the Incumbents dating back to Canon Tindall, and I shall be seeking to continue this project, and hopefully to give a short lecture upon their incumbencies in the parish.

I have added a box full of old Sunday School orientated books for children which I discovered in one of the galleries to the archive collection; a good collection which will be of great interest to a future generation.

Although not in the archive room, we must also not forget the large collection of music situated behind the organ. Parish Churches with a strong choral tradition tend to accumulate large amounts of music, particularly settings for 1662 Holy Communion, and Choral Mattins, much of which is out of fashion at the present time. We must not forget the intrinsic value of all this, however. Future generations will cherish this music, and find great pleasure in performing the same. It is our duty to preserve and cherish this music until such time as it is found to be acceptable once more.

Finally the collection of interesting artefacts in the bell-ringing room is not inconsiderable. Quite apart from the large boards on the wall recording bell ringing feats back as far as 1762, there are also a number of framed photographs which hang on the walls, and a cupboard containing the St Mary's Society Captain's Report, AGM reports, Steeple-keepers report, and a book recording peals and other achievements by Henry C. Castle in the early 1900's. All this too is of great interest now and in the future, and is well preserved in the tower.

It is to be hoped that a number of pictures presently stored in the archive room following their removal from the Vestry wall for cleaning a couple of years ago will also be reinstated there in the foreseeable future.

I hope to spend the ensuing year in further familiarising myself with the wealth of historical documentation which this Church holds, and would be pleased to receive any artefacts for the archives, and also to answer any queries. I hope to be in attendance at some of the Saturday Coffee mornings when they restart in order to answer queries and show any documentation which may be requested. I shall endeavour to continue Mr Hall's good works, and to try to maintain the standards which he set.

Christopher J. Cooper; 2004.

SENIOR CHURCH APPOINTMENTS

During the last year a review has been underway of senior church appointments. This followed a Private Members' Resolution passed at the General Synod. The review does not cover Diocesan Bishops, for whose appointment changes have only recently been made, but Suffragan Bishops, Archdeacons, Cathedral Deans and Residentiary Canons. The following is based on a submission to the review group. I was subsequently asked to give evidence to the group in person.

Introduction – on roles

The most important issue to be addressed in relation to senior appointments is the nature of the work to which people are being appointed. This is probably beyond the scope of the review, but unless it is resolved changes in process will be largely irrelevant. The nature of the roles clearly affects the appointments process since it ought to determine the qualities being sought in applicants which will in turn affect how the process is conducted.

The perception of many is that there is a centralising tendency within the Church and that the roles of Bishops and others are being increasingly dominated by administration. There has been a quip that 'Bishops are only Deacons' which, whilst unfair, has summed up the perception. For example in the Diocese of St. Albans a recent initiative on mission included the following statement in relation to clergy employment issues:

'Proposals currently under consideration are likely to have a significant impact on the work of bishops and senior staff in terms of ensuring procedures relating to appointment, review and capability are properly handled.'

This sort of pressure is turning senior staff into line-managers rather than ministers of the gospel. Likewise, during the last decade, a number of changes have gone through General Synod which burden Bishops and Archdeacons with more and more administration and management.

In this regard the general perception that Archdeacon is a stepping-stone to Bishops should be challenged. The role of Bishop should primarily be that of a pastor-teacher, and the role of an Archdeacon more that of administration and organisation. This being the case, the two roles require different and distinct gifts and in general a person is more likely to be suited for one role rather than the other. If we treat one as a stepping-

stone to the other, this can and does shape the nature of both roles in an unhelpful way. I should say that I do not see why Archdeacons need to be ordained, but that is perhaps well beyond our scope.

Confidence

Perhaps the greatest problem we face is a lack of confidence in many of those appointed to senior posts. There are a variety of reasons for this but amongst 'classical evangelicals' part of the reason is that during the last 20 years there appears to have been only one appointment of a 'classical evangelical' Diocesan or Suffragan Bishop (ie. Wallace Benn). We can therefore fairly claim that the appointments process discriminates against us. This all contributes to the lack of confidence in those appointed to senior posts.

Doctrine & Life

Another contributory factor to the lack of confidence is that Bishops, in particular, are not felt by many to uphold the doctrines of the Church. This is nothing new, but it has been brought into sharp focus by some recent appointments. Therefore, it is essential that there is built into the appointments process the explicit requirement that those considered for senior appointments conform to the life and faith laid down in Scripture and in the formularies of the Church of England. This does not mean a need to conduct a public enquiry into the teaching and lifestyle of individuals. But there must be widespread confidence that those involved in appointments are taking these requirements seriously, are asking the right questions and are prepared to say no when someone falls short.

God teaches us in His Word the requirements on those to be ministers in His Church which necessarily, and perhaps to a greater extent, includes those who occupy 'senior' roles. 1Tim. 3:2-7 *Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way—for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil. (NRSV)*

The words *episcopos* (1 Tim 3.2) and *presbuteros* (Tit 1.5) appear to describe the same office in Scripture. In the polity of the Church of England this includes priests and bishops, whether they are

presbyters over a local church or Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans and Residentiary Canons. It is not sufficient to assume that someone who is ordained already matches these requirements. People and circumstances change and therefore the appointments process must ensure that a person for senior office is measured against these standards. As stated above this need not be done publicly but there must be confidence that it is done properly.

The instructions of Paul to Titus add a significant new dimension. *Titus 1:5-9 I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town ... He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

Here is added the requirement that the presbyter upholds sound doctrine, teaches it, and refutes error. This requirement is clearly echoed in The Ordinal and is especially important for those who are to be Bishops. Our appointment process must ensure that those considered for senior posts do *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3)*. They must be apt to teach (1 Tim 3.2), able to *preach with sound doctrine* (Tit 1.9) and also be competent to refute those who teach error (Tit 1.9). Great harm is done to the Church of Christ when appointments are made of those who appear more intent on undermining the historic faith of the Church than in upholding it.

Proven ability

As a consequence of the previous point, we should expect that in general those appointed to senior office should have proven ability in pastoral ministry. An exception to this might be some who have followed an academic career path since we recognise that the Church has always had some scholar-Bishops, though they must clearly have a pastoral heart and be able both to teach and stir ordinary church members. Therefore, the appointments process should favour those who have made a good work of ordinary ministry (this doesn't necessarily mean they have grown a substantial suburban church – but that genuine fruit can be seen bearing in mind the situations in which they have laboured – rural or urban for example).

This also raises the issue that many of those who are best qualified for senior office are the least willing to take it. One side of this is that they look at the offices and do not see them as being what they should be, this has to be addressed and I have

referred to it above. The other side is the reluctance of good people to leave parochial ministry. One way to approach this would be to follow the example of Empress Euodoxia who kidnapped John Chrysostom in order to make him Patriarch of Constantinople! A more workable suggestion is that the appointments process should actively seek out those who are doing a good work, and ensure that their reluctance is not a bar to them being considered, and cajoled.

Process

The process of appointments is secondary and unless we are clear as to the role and qualities required in senior appointments no amount of tinkering with the process will do any good. Nevertheless the following are important.

1. The process must not be bureaucratically complex. In particular, it must not burden Bishops and Archdeacons with more paperwork and committees.
2. Transparency is desirable but unless all appointments are to be made by open election there must be some degree of discretion, secrecy and trust.
3. Whilst democracy is a good thing there is nothing sacred about it. A small body appointed for the purpose is therefore desirable in making appointments. However, there must be a feeling that those making such appointments are accountable. The sense that Bishops and the Prime Minister's office are largely unaccountable has been the source of some recent controversy.
4. There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the involvement of the Crown in the process of appointments. The danger for episcopal churches is that power becomes focussed on the Bishops. At its best establishment is a safeguard against episcopal tyranny. Nevertheless there needs to be confidence that appointments are not being made or blocked for political reasons and the role of the Crown and Prime Minister must be more transparent and accountable.

The failings of the appointment process were brought into sharp focus when Jeffrey John was appointed first Bishop of Reading and then Dean of St. Albans.

