

Anglo-Catholic History Society



Newsletter

May 2024



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ANGLO-CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

May 2024

The Chairman's Notes

Our January meeting about Fr Basil Bouchier and the young Evelyn Waugh was informative, entertaining and in its way revisionist. So often portrayed as little more than a naive ultra-patriotic "war monger", Fr Walker's picture was more nuanced and sympathetic than the picture of him in Alan Wilkinson's "The Church and the First World War." It was especially good to have a lecture from one of our members; and our lecturer in June on John Mason Neale will also be from a long standing member of the Society, Professor Andrew Chandler.

Before he retired from St Jude's Hampstead Garden Suburb in 2021 I visited Fr Alan as I had never seen the inside of this very impressive church. It is certainly worth a visit as is the Suburb as a whole. I was also shown into the Vicar's study where the young Evelyn was prepared for confirmation by Fr B. My favourite story of Evelyn Waugh, who became of course a very conservative, if not reactionary, Roman Catholic, is of him being found by a friend slumped in an arm chair with a glass of whisky in his hand declaring, "this Pope John's Council has knocked the stuffing out of me!"

It is also good to have in this Newsletter the first of a series of pen-portraits of *Anglo-Catholics and the Theatre* contributed by Fr Barry Swain rector of the Church of the Resurrection, New York. I am delighted we are beginning with Sybil Thorndike. Her granddaughter Diana Devlin worshipped at St Stephen's Gloucester Road when I served there in the mid 80's. Diana, who sadly died in

2020, was not an actress but taught drama at Goldsmith's College, London, and later at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She was also a significant author. She published her PhD on her grandfather, the actor Lewis Casson and also, in 2019, a life of Sam Wannamaker. She was a key figure in making possible Wannamaker's desire to re-create Shakespeare's *Globe* on the South Bank and became its administrator in 1985. She had enormous drive and energy and I kept in touch with her until her death.

The Thorndike "clan" are close knit and on the weekend of the 20/21st May 2017 they put on a commemoration and celebration of Sybil in Rochester where she had grown up, her father having been a minor Canon of the Cathedral and later Vicar of St Margaret's nearby. Diana invited me to join her and the family at the special Evensong on the 21st where members of the family took part and at the end laid flowers on the memorial to Sybil's brother Frank who perished in the 1st World War. This was followed by a raucous jolly evening at a local pub!

Membership is now 259. A few people have died, very few declined to renew and we have a few new members. Do tell your friends though; at £20 we are still excellent value. Finances seem fine and once again you will be getting a "freebee" with the December Newsletter. Attendance at the January meeting was reasonable but if you are within striking distance I urge you to support our speakers. St Clement Dane's Crypt is the right size for our meetings and especially for audibility, which was something of a problem when we were peripatetic. And there is always a glass of wine to follow!

I look forward to David Hilliard's Occasional Paper on *Anglo-Catholicism in Australia and New Zealand*, which will be available soon. Next year we plan to publish another Occasional Paper, on Michael Yelton's researches into *Anglo-Catholicism in the Church of Ireland*. It will also our 25th year! A remarkable achievement for a small society. I think we have come a long way since those early days. Thanks to fellow members of the committee for their work! We plan a Silver Jubilee Compendium to be published towards the end of 2025. More of that anon.

With my best wishes, Perry Butler

ANGLO-CATHOLICS IN THE THEATRE:

1. Dame Sybil Thorndike (1882-1976)

Dame Sybil was a Lincolnshire lass, who trained in her youth as a concert pianist. She had tentatively begun her career in 1899, having been one of the first girls to have received tuition at the Guildhall School of Music, though she was not permitted to attend class with male students, receiving private tuition, which may well have been a great help. Between 1899 and 1902, she played in a number of well-known venues including the Wigmore Hall, Steinway and St James's Hall. This genteel position for a lady, that of gracious and accomplished musician in the most genteel of settings, was perfectly acceptable to her parents, for she had been born into a clerical family. Her father was for most of her girlhood a Canon Residentiary of Rochester Cathedral, and therefore, although born in Lincolnshire, she grew up entirely in Kent, crucial as things developed, close to London. Pianist's cramp began to dog her in 1902, and it becoming swiftly plain that there was nothing the medical world could offer, her musical career must come to an end.

Never unresourceful, the young Sibyl decided on the stage. This was most certainly *not* socially acceptable to her parents, and they did not hesitate to acquaint her with this fact. Showing astonishing independence for a girl of that age in that far-off Edwardian era, she determined to join the company of actor-manager Ben Greet, and made her debut in Cambridge in 1903 in a forgettable non-musical play by Sir W.S. Gilbert. Adventurous throughout her life, she then accepted an invitation to tour the United States for four years with Greet. Many of the classic plays which would have been offered in England were performed by his troupe, including Shakespeare, Restoration dramas, and Victorian standards. In 1908 she returned to London and made her debut in the West End, joining the Old Vic just after the beginning of the Great War. She married the actor and director Lewis Casson, having two daughters and two sons, all of whom were to be on the stage for all or part of their careers.



6 Carlyle Square, Kensington and Chelsea, London SW3.

She had privately opposed the War and her thinking and beliefs, like those of her husband, began to develop along pacifist lines. They made a point of touring provincial cities with their company, such as Oxford, Cambridge, South Coast locations in the summer like Brighton, Bournemouth and Torquay; in the North West in Manchester, Liverpool, Blackpool and Southport; in the North East in Leeds and Newcastle; and in Scotland in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This commitment to bringing theatre out of London continued for the rest of her life, though she remained a fixture of the West End.

In 1920 Sybil Thorndike essayed Euripides' *Medea* in the title role, and one night George Bernard Shaw happened to be in the audience for no reason other than he had never seen *Medea* offered in English to a non-specialist audience. It was a terrific success, and he then made a point of seeing her in Shelley's verse tragedy *I Cenci* and *Lady Windermere's Fan*. At this point, Shaw went back stage and said "I have found my Joan!" for his new play *Saint Joan* and Sibyl did indeed create the role to great acclaim.

This success continued in London throughout the 1920s, and in the 1930s she and her husband began even more ambitious tours, including one which lasted three years and took them to Egypt, Palestine, Ceylon, Australia and New Zealand. In 1938, she appeared on Broadway as Mrs Conway in Priestley's *Time and the Conways* and in London as Volumnia in the Old Vic production of *Coriolanus* with Olivier in the title role as her son. Both were well acquainted, not only through the theatre but through the church, as Lawrence Olivier's father was headmaster of the Choir School at All Saints', Margaret Street.

Dame Sibyl remained entirely loyal to the Catholic wing of the Church of England throughout her life, unlike Lord Olivier, who left it well behind. At the beginning of the Second World War, she had created and was playing the role of Miss Moffat in the very long-running *The Corn is Green*. Very surprisingly, for it was not common then that recognised actresses on the stage made films, she starred in three in the 1930s, and made her television debut as early as 1939 in a BBC melodrama, *Sun Up*, a private copy of which was shown for the King and Queen at Windsor Castle in 1940 (the film of it; not even the Royal Family possessed a television set at this point!).

As the war began, Sibyl and her husband, though abhorring the Fascist octopus whose tentacles reached across Europe and the Orient, remained pacifists, though they remained quiet about this feeling as it was a choice of lesser evils, and taking the theatre to provincial centres all over Britain, often to areas which had just undergone, or were still undergoing, severe bombing in enemy action. In 1944, she announced, together with Ralph Richardson and Lawrence Olivier, a "new, real season" of the Old Vic company at theatres in the West End which were less damaged than the Old Vic itself.

Post-war, she did become well known for some of her films, including *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), and *Uncle Vanya* (1963), both with Olivier. Her last appearance in theatre was in 1969.

In 1961 Thorndike played what she considered the greatest part of her career, the title role in Hugh Ross Williamson's *Teresa of*

Avila, about the eponymous saint. She thought it “quite the most thrilling part I’ve been offered since *Saint Joan*”. Reviews were enthusiastic in their praise of Thorndike’s performance, but neither the critics nor the public liked the play, which closed after six weeks. Sibyl went to her regular confessor, Father Gerard Irvine, who had himself been an actor for some time before ordination, and was a fixture at theatrical opening nights in the West End for many years. He told her that he could see no objection to her playing St Teresa “providing you do it well!”. One of her last great successes was a revival of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in which she was widely considered the greatest actress to play the lead.

Dame Sybil described herself as “an old-fashioned socialist, an Anglo-Catholic and a pacifist – a mixture of which Mr Marx might disapprove - Karl not Groucho...”. Colin Redgrave recalled: “Her shining spirit came through almost everything she did. She never wavered in her humanitarian Christian Socialist beliefs and they informed her whole life”. Redgrave was not a religious man, but he saw, as most did, that her fervent, committed, unwavering practice of the Catholic Faith as an Anglican was the basis of the rest of her life: her marriage, her children, her career, and her social beliefs and activities. She heard Mass every Sunday, no matter where she was, with her husband, and was a monthly penitent and particularly favoured attending Sunday Evensong and Benediction, as the theatre was of course always dark on Sundays. She was seen in most of the great Anglo-Catholic shrine churches of London, before the war and its near total destruction at St Alban’s, Holborn, and in the post-war period the Annunciation, Marble Arch. She was also a great supporter of the poorer East End Catholic parishes such as Holy Redeemer, Clerkenwell, Holy Trinity and also St Saviour’s, Hoxton, St Michael’s, Shoreditch, St Chad’s and also St Columba’s, Haggerston, and St Peter’s, London Docks, often supporting and even appearing at their amateur theatricals and, surprisingly, often at the Lads’ Clubs boxing matches! She was a very early supporter of the Shrine at Walsingham and was an active patron, not just a figurehead, of the

first general appeal of Father Hope Patten for the Shrine in 1927. Her support never wavered, and when Father Patten died in 1958, suddenly and dramatically during a Bishops’ Pilgrimage in August, Dame Sibyl appeared at his funeral days later, returning to London by train with just minutes to spare to get into costume; she was doing her make-up as the train drew into Liverpool Street Station. Every dressing room she used, in every production, always received the same small statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, which had been painted for her by her friend Enid Chadwick (1902-87), the gifted amateur painter who decorated much of the Shrine church, and was herself also the daughter of a priest.



When her great friend, the novelist Dame Rose Macaulay, also an Anglo-Catholic, died in 1957, a reporter, after her funeral, asked her what Dame Rose’s greatest inspiration and talent was. Dame Sibyl, without a moment’s thought, replied that it was her Faith. When the reporter expressed surprise, she asked: “Why? What else would it be?”

Revd Barry Swain, Church of the Resurrection, New York.

Forthcoming Lectures

Wednesday (note day) 5th June

Professor Andrew Chandler, University of Chichester
John Mason Neale.

Monday 30th September (note month)

Professor David Ormrod, University of Kent
Maurice Reckitt and Christendom Anglo- Catholic Sociology.

All lectures at St Clement Danes at 7 p.m.
(A.G.M. 6.30pm before September Meeting)

Anglo-Catholic Remains in the Far North of Scotland

In the summer of 2023, I travelled on an expeditionary cruise from Oban to Aberdeen via St Kilda, the Faroe Islands and Shetland. The casual observer might not think that such a journey would involve much of interest to a member of the ACHS, but that would not be correct and in fact there were a number of interesting sights, some of which related to the life of Bishop J.R.A. Chinnery-Haldane of Argyll & the Isles, who was the subject of an article by me in the Society's book *Twenty Priests for Twenty Years*, published in 2020, of which there are now only a very few copies left.



Interior of the Church of All Saints', Inveraray, 2023

The first site of interest was the church of All Saints' in the small town of Inveraray in Argyll, where our coach to Oban made a stop for tea, which I used to see a church I had wanted to explore for some years. All Saints' was constructed by the architects Wardrop & Anderson in 1885/6 and is small and brick-built, although with a tower. The Church of Scotland kirk is much larger. The importance of All Saints' is that the 10th Duke, Niall Diarmid Campbell (1872-1949), was a strong supporter of Anglo-Catholicism in the Episcopal Church and a Guardian of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

The 10th Duke succeeded to the title in 1914, on the death of his uncle: the direct line had ceased with the death of his grandfather in 1900. He never married, apparently because he did not wish to perpetuate a strain of mental illness from which his mother had suffered, and lived a bachelor life in the splendour of Inveraray Castle, devoting himself to history and plainsong.



He was regarded by some as eccentric, and he certainly strongly disliked cars and telephones, among other modern innovations, but he was thought to be a fair and conscientious landlord of the vast family estates. He treated All Saints' as something of a family chapel, although most of the Dukes had been Presbyterians.

Image of Our Lady in Inveraray Church

He never wrote a book himself, but, for example, he contributed a long preface to an underrated volume entitled *The Religious Communities of the Church of England* by the Revd A.T. Cameron, published by Faith Press in 1918. He participated in events at Walsingham, and was one of four men who carried the canopy over the monstrance held by Hope Patten in the Oxford Movement Centenary Procession in the village in 1933. The church now has only one service a week, on Thursdays, but it bears within it some of the marks of the 10th Duke's views, including a form of English altar with a very tall canopy, and a statue of Our Lady. There is also a picture of Bishop Chinnery-Haldane hanging on the wall.

When we got to Oban, I did not have time to explore the Episcopal Cathedral, which had many additions given by the Chinnery-Haldane family between 1906 and 1910 to commemorate the Bishop, but I saw its outline from the ship.



The Bishop's House, Iona

The next place of significance was Iona, where I had been before, but on that earlier occasion I had not appreciated the significance of Bishop's House on the island, which is dominated by the Church of Scotland Abbey. Bishop Chinnery-Haldane wished to establish an Episcopalian presence in this holy place, and in 1893 was granted a lease of some land near the Abbey through the intervention of the wife of the 8th Duke of Argyll (Niall Campbell's grandfather), who was English and the daughter of a Bishop. Initially there was strong opposition to an Episcopalian presence, but the Bishop calmed matters down and by 1894 the House was open. The original intention was that there should be rooms for 12 guests, with a chapel in the centre, but in recent times it has been much extended. The altar candlesticks were donated later by the 10th Duke of Argyll, and others made gifts to furnish the chapel.

Chinnery-Haldane wanted a religious community to live permanently in the House and a number of those under vows visited. The Bishop was particularly attracted to the Society of St John the Evangelist and in 1897 he transferred the House to that community. Over the next 12 years, the SSJE held retreats on Iona and for a time they provided a temporary refuge to Aelred Carlyle's then itinerant band of Benedictines. However, in 1909 the SSJE decided that they could no longer man this outpost and it reverted to the Bishop and other trustees. Since then, the Bishop's House has continued its work as a retreat centre and place of rest, and as set out above, has expanded its accommodation considerably.

Michael Yelton

The Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary

I recently obtained a pamphlet of 16 pages entitled *Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary – The First 75 Years*, that was produced in April 1975. I had no idea that this publication existed. Here is a summary.



On 3rd December 1898 a number of priests and laymen met at Church House, Westminster, to discuss the possibility of establishing an organisation, or Brotherhood, for servers. Fr E. Denny, vicar of St Peter's, Vauxhall, was elected as Warden, Fr A.G. Deeds, vicar of St John the Divine, Kennington, became Chaplain-General, Bro Jacobs was the first Secretary and Bro Hill the first Treasurer. There was a Council of 15 members. In January 1899 they held their first meeting, at which Fr Denny was asked to compose a Guild Collect, Guild Office and an

Office for the admission of members. A remarkable 188 members were admitted on 15th April 1899. At first the Guild Office was *said*, but very soon *sung* to a Plainchant setting prepared by Fr Frere, CR. The Chaplain accepted the task of designing a Guild Medal to be worn by members when on duty. [Colour image above from G.S.S. website – gratefully acknowledged].

The first Chapter to be formed was The Holy Cross, in the Streatham area. The Guild Office was sung on 7th June 1899 at St Mary Magdalene's Munster Square. The first A.G.M. was on 7th December 1899, followed by a Retreat. By the end of the year there were nine local chapters, with a total membership of 430. At the second Council meeting it was agreed that local Chapters could be formed wherever numbers allowed and so it gradually spread beyond London. Apparently some bishops disapproved of the Guild Office.

In 1901 the first priests-associate were admitted and the first Easter Festival was held, at St John the Divine, Kennington. In December the A.G.M. was held at St Saviour's Collegiate Church, Southwark, as it was then called. A Chapter of St Benet Biscop was formed in Newcastle in 1906. The gradual spread of the Guild

throughout the country is perhaps not well documented and should be researched. In 1906 there was a Jersey Chapter. The first Chapter abroad was that of St Barnabas', Ottawa, Canada. A Chapter was formed in Africa and the Bishop of Nyasaland became the first Prelate-Associate of the Guild. Might this be Bishop Gerard Trower? Someone will know. At some point a Chapter was formed at Brisbane, Australia and an American Guild of Servers was established, known as the Order of St Vincent.

The first mention of a Guild Banner occurs in 1901, to be made by the Sisters of Bethany. To commemorate the work of Fr Denny, who stepped down in 1906, two copes for cantors were purchased, for which members subscribed. The very useful, even today, Candidates for Ordination Fund, was begun in 1904. By 1912 there were 2,260 members and 160 Priests-Associate.

In 1917 it was recorded that 1,200 members were away on active service – and 85 of these never returned. Later, it is recorded that during the General Strike the Guild lost over 600 members, as, owing to their financial circumstances, they had fallen into arrears with their subscription; hard times and unfortunately a hard policy.

Revival came and in 1934 a Guild Festival was held at St Paul's Cathedral. A large venue was required. Also there was recognition of the Scottish Guild of Servers. Many new Chapters were formed in the inter-war years. The first mention that I have so far found of the Leeds, St Ninian Chapter is 1937, by which time, the Leeds Minute book tells us, there were 7,000 members nationally. Things were developing well. Then in 1939 the outbreak of War caused the temporary closure of some south coast Chapters. Also the blackout caused many evening events to be transferred to the weekend day-light hours. The call-up caused 26 Chapters to go "into abeyance". Reportedly 2,623 members served in the forces and, again, not all returned.

In 1948 a morale-boosting Jubilee Festival was held at St Augustine's, Kilburn. *The Server* magazine was begun. There was a "Declaration of Unity" of the G.S.S., the Scottish Guild of Servers and the Order of St Vincent, U.S.A. In September 1950 the Guild held its first Pilgrimage to Walsingham. The Chapel of *St Columba and the*

Celtic Saints in the Shrine Church was designated the Guild Chapel. In October 1962 the Autumn Festival was held in the new Coventry Cathedral, at the invitation of the Diocesan Bishop. In 1963 Guild lapel badges were designed and issued. In 1969 Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey agreed to become a Patron of the Guild, soon followed by the Archbishops of York and of Wales.

WARDENS		In 1975 the Guild celebrated its 75 th anniversary and the rare pamphlet from which I have obtained most of this information was produced. There were celebrations throughout the country.
1898-1906	Revd E. Denny	
1906-1911	Revd E. E. Giraud	
1911-1915	Revd Prebendary F. L. Boyd	
1915-1916	Revd Canon A. G. Deedes	
1916-1921	Revd Fr Paul Bull, C.R.	
1921-1933	Revd F. G. Croom	
1933-1949	Revd A. L. Poole	
1949-1969	Revd J. B. M. Fox (Warden Emeritus)	
1969-1972	Revd A. J. Whithead	
1972-	Revd J. D. Moore	

CHAPLAINS-GENERAL		The 1975 Easter Festival was held at St Augustine's, Kilburn, attended by over 800 members, some of whom may be reading this account.
1898-1915	Revd Canon A. G. Deedes	
1915-1922	Revd C. S. Gillett	
1922-1931	Revd E. A. Dawson	
1931-1946	Revd P. G. Bacon	
1946-1949	Revd W. J. Cole	
1949-1963	Revd S. H. Jartett	
1963-	Revd A. F. Treadwell	

That year included a Guild Pilgrimage to Walsingham and for the Autumn Festival a return was made to Coventry Cathedral. I was one of six new members admitted to membership on 16th September 1976 when the Leeds St Ninian Chapter celebrated its Patronal Festival at St Hilda's Church – its first visit to the church. The Guild continues its important liturgical, devotional, teaching, missional and social role in many Anglo-Catholic parishes. A more complete history is needed.

Stephen Savage

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BOOKS FROM THE SOCIETY

A new book is in an advanced state of preparation and you should have received an Order Form. We still have copies of the following four Occasional Papers available:

- (1) *An Anglo-Catholic Miscellany*. A varied selection of essays with a colourful account of life in Nashdom, by various authors;
- (2) *The Community of Reparation to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the Church of St Alphege, Southwark*, by Michael Yelton. An account of the growth and demise of a sisterhood, taken from its original papers.
- (3) *Father Briscoe of Bagborough*, by Keith Penny. The life of a well-known Anglo-Catholic priest who spent his entire ministry in Somerset.
- (4) *William Dodsworth*, by Stephen Young. A ground-breaking life of a Tractarian pioneer who brought the Oxford Movement to a parish in London.

Originally sold at £12 each, inclusive of postage, the Committee has decided to offer them as follows:

Any two for £15 inclusive of postage.

Any three for £22.50 inclusive of postage.

All four for £30 inclusive of postage.

Overseas please add £10 to any order for two, £15 to any order for three and £20 to any order for four.

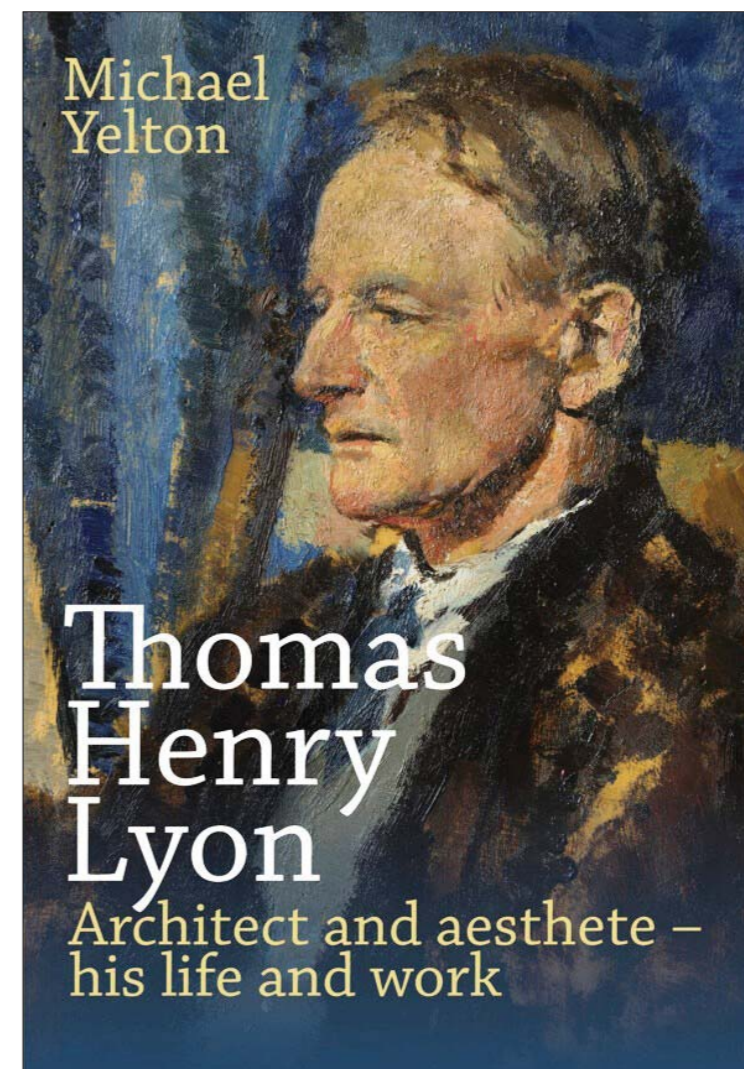
Orders should be sent to Michael Yelton at 211, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 8RN and cheques made out to the *Anglo-Catholic History Society*. Alternatively, you can pay by direct transfer to the Society's bank account (name of account is that of the Society: sort code is 09 01 55 and the account number is 06043088). If you

pay that way, you can order by email to
michaelyelton@achs.org.uk

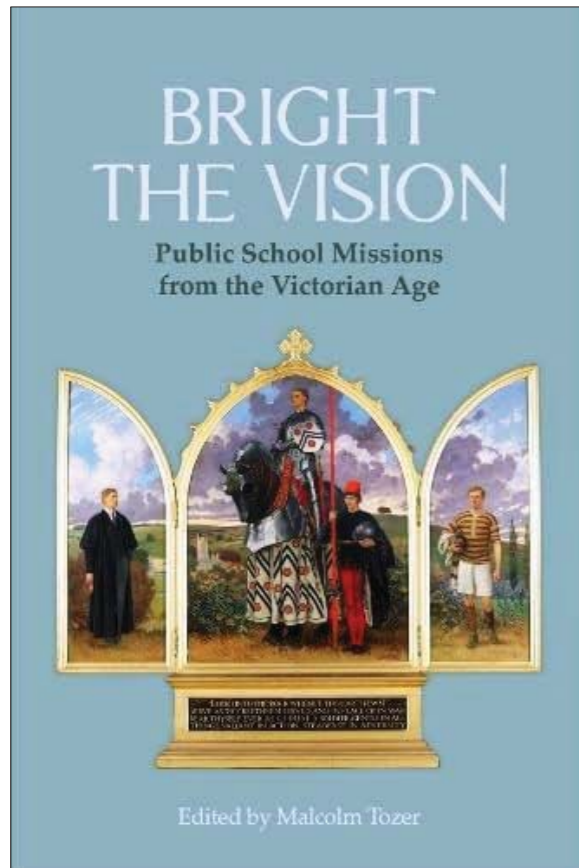
Thomas Henry Lyon - Architect

Also now available, from the publishers (www.sacristy.co.uk) *not* the ACHS, is Michael Yelton's new book on the life and work of **Thomas Henry Lyon**, a distinguished architect who was also an Anglo-Catholic, and designed a cathedral for the suburbs in St Augustine, Wembley Park, as well as the leading advanced church in Australia, St George, Goodwood. He also rebuilt the chapel of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which was designed to forward the ideas of the Anglo-Catholic Movement within that context. The book also covers his family and friendships and is based on original research and much travelling. It is lavishly illustrated.

ISBN: 978-1-78959-325-9 £60 Hardback: 367 pages



This book was well-reviewed in *New Directions* magazine, in March 2024.



Bright the Vision: Public School Missions from the Victorian Age

Hardback £35 - Paperback £25 -
583 pages.

This book is not specifically Anglo-Catholic. By no means all public school missions were inspired by the Anglo-Catholic tradition but some were and so this book will be of interest to many of our members.

By Malcolm Tozer

Independent Publishing Network

As always, we are grateful to contributors for their extremely interesting and varied articles. The next edition of the *Newsletter* will appear in December 2024. Any items need to be received by the end of October.

stephensavage@achs.org.uk

Front Cover Image - Interior of the chapel, Bishop's House, Iona.
Michael Yelton.