



Ecclesiastical
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NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

Here we go again: another year, another inevitable round of political and economic snakes and ladders. And whether you regard Brexit as an up or a down, 2019 is bound to be dominated by how it plays out in practice.

On matters of more immediate domestic concern to members of this Society, however, *Old Cranmer's Almanack* predicts that 2019 will likely see the first opposite sex civil partnerships in England and Wales (though not just yet, perhaps, in Scotland) and, possibly, the enactment of the [Registration of Marriage Bill \[Lords\]](#), which is currently before the Commons. The Bill will empower the Secretary of State to make regulations to replace the current system of hard-copy marriage register books held in register offices – and some 30,000 places of worship – with an electronic register maintained by the Registrar General. But the Law Commission will soon be starting a review of wedding law in England and Wales, so perhaps the Government may prefer not to bring in radical change to the registration system immediately, until it has seen the Commission's recommendations for wider reform. [FC]

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Wednesday 6 February 2019: Northern Province lecture – Bishop Colin Buchanan on *The transferable vote: a hundred years of Anglican experience*. Book [here](#).

Wednesday 20 & Thursday 21 February 2019: Robin Sharwood Lecture in Church Law – Mark Hill on *Anglican Canon Law: identity, ecclesiology and ecumenism*: Melbourne: Wednesday 7.30pm, Craig Auditorium, Gateway Building, Trinity College (book [here](#)): Sydney: Thursday 6.00pm, St James' Church, King Street (book [here](#)).

Thursday 14 March 2019: study day – to be held at Manchester Diocesan Office, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH: 'Foremost in Representing the Laity: Training of churchwardens in today's Church' – on churchwardens and the law, with Simon Baker, Stuart Beake, Norman Boakes, Stephen Borton, Mark Hill QC and Andrea Russell. Book [here](#).

5 to 7 April 2019: ELS Residential Conference – to be held at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor: *Church and State in the Twenty-first Century: Re-imagining Establishment for the post-Elizabethan age*. Speakers will include Prof Robert Blackburn QC, The Revd Canon Malcolm Brown, Prof Grace Davie, Prof Norman Doe, Sir William Fittall, The Revd Paul Goodliff, The Rt Revd Graham James, Dr Colin Podmore and Lord Singh of Wimbledon. Book [here](#).

Thursday 16 May 2019: Northern Province lecture – Caroline Mockford, Registrar of the Diocese and of the Province of York, on *Closed Churchyards*. Book [here](#).

Tuesday 16 July 2019: Northern Province lecture – Bishop Nick Baines on *The Function of Ecclesiastical Law in Effective Parochial Ministry*. Book [here](#).

Wednesday 6 November 2019: Northern Province lecture – Rt Worshipful Charles George QC, Auditor of the Chancery Court of York, on *Do we still need the Faculty System?* Book [here](#).

*Northern Province Lectures are held at the offices of the Diocese of Leeds, 17-19 York Place,
Leeds, LS1 2EX*

THE CHAIRMAN'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

In keeping with tradition, my New Year Message for 2019 comes from overseas – this time, from Cambodia.



The past year has witnessed renewed energy within the Society. The Committee has been refreshed through election and co-option and the Administrator informs me that the Society now has a greater number of active members than at any time in its forty-year history. This reflects an enhanced appreciation of the significance of ecclesiastical law in the witness and mission of the Church of England, as the Bishop of Newcastle's excellent article in the *Church Times* had emphasised.

In fact, there are currently two Ecclesiastical Law Societies in existence. Following the decision taken at the 2018 AGM, a new ELS Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was approved by the Charity Commission in December. It now sits alongside the original unincorporated Society. In the coming months, assets and liabilities will transfer and the membership will migrate, whereupon the unincorporated Society will be dissolved. Lizzie Wilson, Stephen Slack and the entire Governance Committee are to be congratulated on steering us through this complex process.

Incorporation reflects a sense of confidence within the Society that it is fully engaged in fulfilling its charitable objects. To its long-standing range of activities such as conferences, lectures, the Journal and the newsletter, the Education Committee under Simon Baker is now promoting the teaching of ecclesiastical law in the training of churchwardens. The Society's recent collaboration with OUP in making a paperback edition of my textbook available to members at an affordable cost is a further example of how the Society is promoting education in ecclesiastical law amongst the parochial clergy where it is most needed.

The work of the Society cannot be achieved without the sacrificial commitment of many too numerous to mention by name. This year, however, I want to express particular thanks to Frank Cranmer and Russell Dewhurst, whose skills in IT and communications allow the Society to further its work through its website and newsletters.

Whilst Brexit may pose uncertainties for the year ahead, the direction of travel for the Society is strong and stable. The London Lecture programme is yet to be finalised, but the Northern Province Lectures kick off in February with a critique of the single transferable vote in Synodical elections, followed later in the year by a stellar array of provincial registrar, diocesan bishop and Auditor. See the website for details. A few spaces remain for the

residential conference in April in Windsor, where Frances Godden has brought together a high-powered line up of experts to examine the nature of establishment in the twenty-first century. As ever, Andrew Male provides unstinting support as the Society's administrator, without whom little could be achieved.



So from the sun-kissed temples of Phnom Penh, I wish you and your families health and happiness in 2019.

And if you are looking for a New Year resolution, why not sign up a friend for the Society? If everyone does, we will double our membership!

With best wishes for the year ahead,

Chancellor Mark Hill QC
Chairman, Ecclesiastical Law Society

AND A GOOD NEW YEAR TO ALL...


