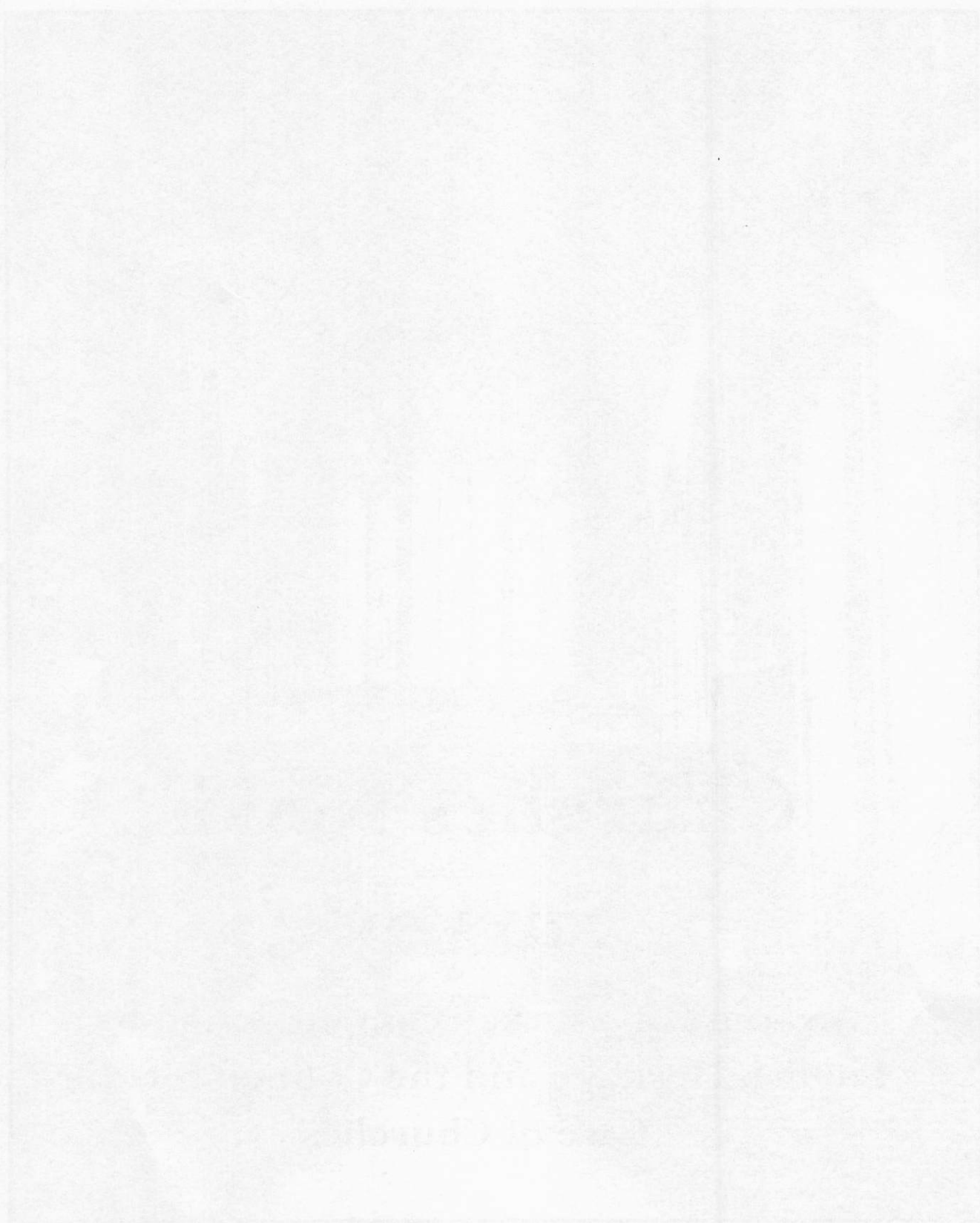


Churches Needs Survey

A report of a survey commissioned by
English Heritage and the Council for the
Care of Churches

August 1998



The front cover shows St Augustine, Pendlebury, Manchester

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Background	2
3. Aims of Survey	3
4. Methodology	4
Selection of sample areas	
Survey questionnaire	
Validation of results	
Fabric report	
5. Results	5
Parochial income and expenditure of the Church of England 1993	
Expenditure on major repairs and new works 1984-94	
Predicted cost of church repairs 1994-2004	
Sources of funding for church repairs 1984-94	
Minimum annual grant requirement 1994-9	
Maintenance standards	
6. Summary of Conclusions	11
Acknowledgements	12
Endnotes	12
Annex A - Why the need?	13
Annex B - Review of listing grades - a summary	16

1 Introduction

- 1.1 *The Churches Needs Survey was commissioned by English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches in 1994. Its aim was to establish the future funding requirement for English Heritage Church Grants by identifying the repairs faced by churches in a representative selection of deaneries, and assessing their capacity to meet the cost. This report outlines the background to the Survey, its aims, methodology, and results.*
- 1.2 In 1996 the Survey was overtaken - and the grant constituency enlarged - by the launch of the Joint Grant Scheme, managed by English Heritage on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Unlike Church Grants, which were, and are, confined to buildings of 'outstanding historic or architectural interest', the Joint Scheme may offer help towards the repair of any church of 'heritage merit'. Heritage Lottery Fund Grants may also be made towards the cost of new facilities where these are essential to secure the continued use of a church for worship by extending access to it to the wider community.
- 1.3 The introduction of the Joint Scheme, with its promise of enhanced funding, fostered a new sense of optimism in church repair. At the same time, it reinforced the need for a strategic review of repair priorities to ensure grants are directed towards those buildings and congregations which need them most, and budgets determined in the light of the likely repair requirement. In this process it is hoped that the methodology developed in the course of the 1994 Survey will have a constructive role to play.

2. Background

- 2.1 *England's historic churches have been described as 'the jewel' in its heritage crown. Nearly 15,000 listed buildings are in religious use with 80% of these in the ownership of the Church of England. Parish churches, alone, represent over 30% of all Grade I buildings in England. Since 1977, the care of these and other outstanding churches has been seen as a shared responsibility, a partnership between Church and State that has helped to repair over 3,000 Grade I and II* churches with grants totalling £96 million. The extension of grant aid to Grade II churches by Lottery funds has brought this total to £120 million.*
- 2.2 The case for grant aid was established in 1973 in a Memorandum to the General Synod by the Working Party on State Aid for Churches in Use. Following a survey of the 'needs and resources' of 700+ 'listed and listable' churches in the mainly rural dioceses of Lincoln and Norwich, the Working Party estimated that £1 million would be needed, annually, to meet the shortfall between the national repair requirement and the ability of parishes to meet the necessary costs. This figure was confirmed in 1974 by a supplementary report on two urban deaneries in the dioceses of Gloucester and

Newcastle. Although the Memorandum was principally concerned with the needs of the Church of England, the figure of £1 million included an element (£0.15 million) for listed churches 'in Wales and other denominations', and an equivalent sum for 'technical assistance to Grade A listed churches of all denominations'.

- 2.3 The Memorandum provided the framework for the State Aid Scheme introduced by the Government in 1977, and administered by English Heritage as Church Grants from 1984. The Scheme proved so successful that architects were encouraged to set more ambitious targets in their Quinquennial Inspection Reports (QIR) as congregations redoubled their fund-raising efforts. In their turn, charitable trusts, such as the Historic Churches Preservation Trust, responded to the Government's initiative by enhancing their own grants to parishes. The increased cost of 'historic' building materials led to inflated grant totals and it was not long before the demand for grant aid regularly exceeded the annual budget. As Church Grants entered their second decade it was clear that a fresh appraisal of need was required and discussions began with the Church of England on the form this might take. After an initial desk study, the Churches Needs Survey was launched, jointly, by English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches in 1994.

3 Aims of Survey

3.1 *The Survey sought to establish:*

- *whether the cost of repairing church buildings had increased in real terms since 1973-4;*
- *the level of annual financial support required to meet the cost of repairs to Grade I and II* churches, with comparable figures for Grade II buildings, and*
- *the efficacy of grant aid in meeting the demand foreseen in 1973-4 in two of the areas surveyed.*

- 3.2 In addition, it was hoped that the Survey would indicate the annual level of funds needed for routine maintenance, as distinct from structural repair, and whether standards of repair and maintenance for listed, and grant-aided churches differed from those for other churches in the same geographical area.

- 3.3 The listing grades of the churches included in the Survey would also be re-assessed to ensure that each met current criteria. The listing grade had important financial consequences as only those churches which were listed Grade I or II* were normally eligible for English Heritage Church Grants.

4 Methodology

Selection of sample areas

- 4.1 As constraints of time and cost ruled out a full national survey, five deanery (or deanery-sized) areas were selected from the dioceses of Gloucester, Newcastle, Manchester, Portsmouth, and St Edmundsbury & Ipswich. The areas were chosen to reflect the range of parishes found in the country as a whole: inner city, suburb, market town, satellite village, and depopulated rural area, and included the deaneries of Cheltenham and Newcastle surveyed in 1974.
- 4.2 In all, 137 places of worship were assessed. These included every Anglican church within each sample area, apart from one highly-specialised and richly-endowed building, and 18 other places of worship which had volunteered to take part. Grants to non-Anglican churches represent only a small percentage of those offered, but their share of the budget is likely to increase as the buildings become more widely appreciated, and their fabric deteriorates with age. The non-Anglican buildings were drawn mainly from the Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches, but also included one Congregational Church, one Independent Chapel and one Synagogue.

Survey questionnaire

- 4.3 Individual letters enclosing the Survey questionnaire were sent to the appropriate churchwarden, or officer of the parochial church council, in each Church of England parish, and to their counterparts elsewhere. Information was sought on the size of the congregation, its annual income and expenditure, the major repairs and new work undertaken in the last ten years, and the future repair requirement identified in the latest Quinquennial Inspection Report (or its equivalent).

Validation of results

- 4.4 After collation, the summary data were examined by the Statistics Unit of the Central Board of Finance, and the Church of England figures compared, where feasible, with the annual diocesan survey returns for the equivalent period.

Fabric report

- 4.5 To provide a consistent assessment of the cost of the major repairs needed over the next five years, and a 'snapshot' of current maintenance standards, each church was visited by an independent consulting architect highly experienced in church repair (Geoffrey Claridge RIBA FRSA). Each church was inspected afresh without reference, initially, to its most recent QIR. The fabric was examined as a whole, and then in terms of its individual elements to discover where the stresses lay, and where there were clear signs of failure. A note was then made of immediate, and likely, wear and decay. To ensure a uniform reporting standard for churches of varied size, quality, age, and style, a format was devised which dealt with each element of the

building in turn and allowed space for a general comment in the form of a summary. Separate sections dealt with maintenance standards, the efficacy of previous repairs, the likely repair need, and its cost. An overview of the fabric survey is contained in Annex A.

5 Results

- 5.1 The 1973 report on the dioceses of Lincoln and Norwich had noted that ‘no statistics, certainly no church statistics, are ever 100% complete. Parish clergy are poor business correspondents, and not always adept with figures. Inspecting architects are busy men, dealing with concrete situations who can ill spare the time for fine-spun analysis and comparisons...’. Churchwardens and other voluntary officials may experience similar difficulties! Notwithstanding these, the 1994 Survey achieved an impressive average ‘deanery’ response of 87%. The discovery from the Survey returns that the mean electoral roll figure (120) was consistent with that held by the Central Board of Finance (128), and not too far removed from the 1993 Church of England average (113), provided reassurance that the sample was not unrepresentative of the Church as a whole.
- 5.2 To ease the burden for the Church of England parishes the questionnaire had been aligned, where practicable, with information sought in the annual diocesan survey return. Even so, it was clear that problems of interpretation had arisen, particularly in relation to those sections dealing with ‘regular giving’, ‘maintenance’ and ‘major repair’. It is likely that this was due, in part, to the variable quality of the archive material.
- 5.3 The character of the work undertaken was also influenced by local factors. The size and age of churches, varying architectural styles and materials, income levels within the parish, the commitment and energy of the incumbent and the worshipping community may each affect the ability of a congregation to care for the building, or buildings, in its charge. *Yet, overall, the Survey demonstrated how much can be achieved in the most unpromising circumstances where there is a will to succeed and the knowledge to support it.*

Parochial income and expenditure of the Church of England 1993

- 5.4 In 1993, the ordinary parochial income of the Church of England totalled £287,421,000 of which £246,050,000 was generated as voluntary income, that is, income from regular giving schemes, tax recovered on covenants, collections at services, sundry donations, and fund raising. The remainder was derived from dividends, hall lettings, recurring diocesan and other grants, income from trust funds, and profits from trading ventures. The total extraordinary parochial income for the same period, generated by special appeals, legacies, and one-off grants, amounted to £80,573,000 (Table 1).

Table 1: Parochial income 1993

<i>income by category</i>	<i>amount</i>	<i>% of total</i>
<i>ordinary income</i>		
(a) all voluntary income	246,050,000	67
(b) other ordinary income	41,371,000	11
<i>extraordinary income</i>	80,573,000	22

- 5.5 In the same year, ordinary parochial expenditure totalled £289,447,000. This included expenditure on the upkeep of services, clergy expenses, day-to-day maintenance of church buildings, administration, and the diocesan quota. Detailed expenditure figures are not collected from parishes on a regular basis, but in 1993 the Central Board of Finance carried out a sample survey of 1,000 parish accounts from which it was possible to make reliable estimates of ordinary expenditure for the Church as a whole (Table 2). No comparable estimates can be devised for extraordinary expenditure as this does not conform to a national pattern. However, the sample figures indicated that 63% (£54 million) of the 1993 total (£85 million) had been devoted to churches and 12% (£10 million) to church halls.

Table 2: Estimate of ordinary parochial expenditure 1993

<i>ordinary expenditure by category</i>	<i>% of total</i>
<i>heating/lighting/cleaning/insurance of church/upkeep of churchyard</i>	14
<i>minor repairs</i>	4
<i>upkeep of services</i>	2
<i>quota payments</i>	44
<i>charitable giving</i>	7
<i>clergy housing and other expenses</i>	11
<i>administration/salaries/upkeep of church hall</i>	18

Expenditure on major repairs and new works 1984-94

- 5.6 As the diocesan return required only a global figure for capital projects, the Survey questionnaire asked churches to divide their 1984-94 spend into three categories: major church repairs, new church works (including extension and re-ordering), and works to other buildings. The responses varied greatly, both in detail and interpretation, with some congregations handicapped by gaps and contradictions in older records. The sensitivity of the area totals (Table 3) to a small number of large repair or 'one-off' building projects was evident, as was the occasional difficulty of apportioning expenditure where several churches used a single parish account. Some returns offered expenditure figures net of grant aid.

Table 3: Capital expenditure 1984-94 (£)¹

<i>sample area</i>	<i>major church repairs</i>	<i>new church works</i>	<i>works to other buildings</i>
<i>Cheltenham</i>	<i>737,610</i>	<i>1,516,420</i>	<i>497,360</i>
<i>Eccles & Salford</i>	<i>2,699,490</i>	<i>205,390</i>	<i>176,600</i>
<i>Newcastle</i>	<i>975,590</i>	<i>94,500</i>	<i>224,470</i>
<i>Petersfield</i>	<i>417,510</i>	<i>272,410</i>	<i>35,510</i>
<i>Halesworth</i>	<i>1,119,700</i>	<i>131,410</i>	<i>88,270</i>

Predicted cost of church repairs 1994-2004

- 5.7 For the sampled churches the average cost of QIR-predicted repairs for the period 1994-2004 was £50,599 (exclusive of fees and VAT) against an average QIR prediction of £38,630 for 1984-94. The consulting architect's prediction of the total sum to be spent on the same churches between 1994-2004 averaged £59,673. Some 98% of the work was assessed as 'major repair' and 52% of this either 'urgent' or 'medium term', that is, work to be completed within five years. Multiplying the average figure for urgent and medium-term work (£30,409) by the number of Church of England parishes (13,083), and assuming one church per parish, indicated an estimated expenditure of £398 million for the Church of England as a whole over five years - an average of £80 million per year (exclusive of fees and VAT).
- 5.8 Direct comparison of the 1994 estimates with those for the 'listed and listable' churches surveyed in 1973 was not possible. Indeed, the 1973 report had warned that its 'repair figures must...be treated with reserve...in view of the changing standards' of professional care. For the sample dioceses of Lincoln and Norwich the average (1968) figure for outstanding repairs to historic churches within the quinquennium (the degree of urgency was only specified consistently for the Norwich churches) was £2,430. If this figure is extrapolated for the Church of England as a whole over the same period, assuming one church per parish and a similar quinquennial commitment for all churches regardless of their 'listed or listable' status, it suggests a total repair requirement of £32 million (or £182 million at 1994 prices), an average of £6 million per year (or £36 million at 1994 prices).
- 5.9 Relating the 1994 figure for annual expenditure on urgent/medium term repairs for the Church as a whole (£80 million) to the proportion of listed churches in the Survey indicated a potential Grade I/II* repair requirement of £38 million (47% of the sample) and a Grade II requirement of £20 million (25% of the sample), an annual listed church total of £58 million (exclusive of fees and VAT). Adding professional fees (at a notional 10%) and VAT (at the standard rate of 17.5%) to the annual estimate for the Church of England brought this total to £103 million, with a potential requirement of £49 million for Grade I/II* churches and £26 million for Grade II churches, an annual listed church total of £75 million (all at 1994 prices).

If these figures are adjusted to 1998 prices the total requirement rises to £124 million, with a Grade I/II* requirement of £59 million, and a Grade II requirement of £31 million, an annual listed church total of £90 million (Table 4).

Table 4: Predicted cost of major repairs 1994-9 (£m)

<i>urgent/medium term repairs</i>	<i>annual cost less fees & VAT at 1994 prices</i>	<i>annual cost with fees & VAT at 1994 prices</i>	<i>annual cost with fees & VAT at 1998 prices</i>
<i>all churches</i>	80	103	124
<i>Grade I/II* churches</i>	38	49	59
<i>Grade II churches</i>	20	26	31

- 5.10 As these figures are calculated on a parish basis they largely exclude the non-Anglican requirement, although the consulting architect's analysis of quinquennial costs, and the listing statistics, reflected the needs and status of those non-Anglican churches included in the sample. The figures do not take into account any future adjustments in the number, or grading of listed churches across the denominations.

Sources of funding for church repairs 1984-94

- 5.11 The Survey questionnaire asked parishes to identify the sources of funding for major church repairs between 1984-94, and to quantify the amount received. Table 5 shows how the total received was distributed across the various sources with the parish, contributing 65% of the total, as the main source of funding.

Table 5: Sources of funding for church repairs 1984-94

<i>source of funding</i>	<i>% of total</i>
<i>parish</i>	65
<i>diocese</i>	4
<i>other church bodies</i>	1
<i>local trusts</i>	4
<i>national trusts (eg Historic Churches Preservation Trust)</i>	5
<i>local authorities</i>	13
<i>other government agencies (including English Heritage)</i>	8

- 5.12 If the total repair sum for the average church in each surveyed area is related to the income and expenditure figures from the 1993 CBF sample, an indication is given of the extent of localised difficulty in meeting the estimated repair requirement (Table 6).

Table 6: Estimate of years required to complete all repairs ²

<i>average parish figure</i>	<i>ordinary income</i>	<i>extraordinary income</i>	<i>ordinary expenditure</i>	<i>surplus</i>	<i>all repairs</i>	<i>years to complete</i>
<i>Cheltenham</i>	<i>46,660</i>	<i>6,280</i>	<i>47,930</i>	<i>5,010</i>	<i>51,350</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Eccles & Salford</i>	<i>23,480</i>	<i>3,280</i>	<i>23,380</i>	<i>3,380</i>	<i>82,900</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Newcastle</i>	<i>27,150</i>	<i>8,680</i>	<i>27,770</i>	<i>8,060</i>	<i>44,230</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Petersfield</i>	<i>23,550</i>	<i>4,000</i>	<i>22,430</i>	<i>5,120</i>	<i>44,710</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Halesworth</i>	<i>10,950</i>	<i>3,600</i>	<i>9,350</i>	<i>5,200</i>	<i>63,280</i>	<i>12</i>

Minimum annual grant requirement 1994-9

- 5.13 *If the 1994 'standard grant rate' of 40% of eligible costs is applied, the minimum annual grant needed to assist the repair of Grade I/II* Church of England churches would be approximately £20 million, with £10 million for Grade II churches (£24 million and £12 million respectively at 1998 prices).* These figures relate solely to major quinquennial repairs and do not reflect the higher rates of grant frequently awarded to ensure completion of work within a reasonable timescale. The non-Anglican requirement remains largely unassessed.

Maintenance standards

- 5.14 Although it proved impossible from the Survey returns to identify a reliable expenditure figure for routine maintenance, work was certainly being done. *The consulting architect's fabric report indicated that most of the churches surveyed were basically in good condition with 78% of those inspected being adequately or very well maintained (Table 7).* Of those judged inadequate, relatively few were considered to be seriously neglected and these tended to lie in small, remote, communities with several churches in their care, or in areas of urban deprivation. In some cases, neglect was a consequence of the redirection of parish effort towards the provision of new buildings and/or facilities, or of a lack of regular professional advice.

Table 7: Maintenance standards by listing grade³

<i>listing grade</i>	<i>very well maintained</i>	<i>adequately maintained</i>	<i>inadequately maintained</i>
<i>Grade I</i>	8	22	4
<i>Grade II*</i>	3	17	9
<i>Grade II</i>	3	23	8
<i>Unlisted</i>	3	25	9

- 5.15 *Of the churches which had received grants from English Heritage (25% of the sample or just over half of those eligible in principle for grant aid), 80% were maintained to a satisfactory standard or higher, with 23% achieving the highest standard.* A projected comparison of the impact of grant aid on the two deaneries surveyed in 1974 was abandoned due to insufficient data.

Review of listing grades

- 5.16 The review of the listing grades of the sampled churches against current listing criteria indicated that a 14% shift into Grades I and II* would be justified with a 5% increase in listing overall. Four buildings were considered to be over-graded at Grade I and recommended for regrading to Grade II*. However, these findings are unlikely to represent the full national requirement for the non-Anglican churches whose sampled buildings were largely self-selected. A summary of the listing review is contained in Annex B.

6 Summary of conclusions

6.1 The Survey indicated that:

- the annual cost of the major repairs needed to Church of England churches between 1994-9 was approximately £80 million (excluding fees and VAT), over twice the 1973 quinquennial estimate in real terms. Adding fees and VAT brought the total to £103 million (£124 million at 1998 prices);
- the annual cost of the major repairs needed to listed Church of England churches between 1994-9 was approximately £58 million (excluding fees and VAT), of which £38 million related to Grade I/II* churches and £20 million to Grade II churches. Adding fees and VAT brought the total for listed churches to £75 million, with requirements of £49 million for Grade I/II* churches and £26 million for Grade II churches (£90 million, £59 million and £31 million respectively at 1998 prices);
- the minimum annual level of grant-aid required to assist the repair of listed Church of England churches between 1994-9 (at the 1994 'standard rate' of 40% of eligible costs) was approximately £30 million, £20 million for Grade I/II* churches and £10 million for Grade II churches (£36 million, £24 million and £12 million respectively at 1998 prices).

6.2 The Survey demonstrated that:

- most congregations are now committed to the maintenance of the historic building in their charge, making whatever provision they can within limited budgets to undertake the most urgent works;
- this commitment undoubtedly reflected the success of the State Aid and the Church Grants programmes in focusing attention on the needs of the ecclesiastical heritage, so encouraging congregations and existing trusts. This message was reinforced by the introduction of the Joint Grant Scheme in October 1996. However, access to enticing new sources of funding should not disguise the fact that the key to the conservation of historic buildings is continuous care. If parishes are to continue to plan ahead with confidence they need the reassurance of a firm partnership between Church and State.

6.4 The Church of England has already declared that adequate funding for English Heritage is the most effective way for the State to protect the ecclesiastical heritage, not least because it offers hope to those denominations and individual congregations with moral objections to Lottery funding. The uncertainties of the latter also suggest it would be prudent to retain a separately sourced method of Government funding to ensure an appropriate degree of continuity and control.

6.3 It is well known that the VAT burden on repairs is a particularly heavy one for congregations. While new building work to churches and alterations to listed churches are zero-rated, all repairs to church buildings are taxed at the standard rate of 17.5%. This has a significant impact on the money to be found by parochial church councils for quinquennial repairs and should, therefore, be considered in any assessment of church financial need. It follows that the introduction of a uniform reduced rate for repairs and alterations would bring major financial and conservation benefits.

Acknowledgements

The Council for the Care of Churches and English Heritage wish to thank the following for their help in the preparation of this report: Elizabeth Pearcey (Survey Co-ordinator), Geoffrey Claridge (Consulting Architect), Teresa Sladen (Regrading Inspector), Raymond Tongue (Head of Statistics, Central Board of Finance) and Judy Hawkins (English Heritage). They are also grateful to all those in the sampled churches who took the time and trouble to respond to what, at times, must have seemed impossible questions.

Endnotes

1. **Cheltenham:** The figures represent 28 returns from 31 churches in and around Cheltenham. The sample included one Roman Catholic church, one United Reformed church, one Congregational church, and one Synagogue. Five churches were combined in a team ministry within a single urban parish, and four united in two benefices. Twenty-two of the buildings were listed, two at Grade I, 11 at Grade II*. Thirty per cent of the major repair total was devoted to one project. Seven churches, including two within the team ministry and two in a united benefice, contributed nearly 90% of the new works figure. This included the conversion of an office building into a church, a major church extension/social centre funded by the sale of the church hall, the construction of an upper vestry and staircase, and the creation of an archive centre linked to major internal reorganisation in the second church in the benefice. Nearly 70% of the other buildings total was devoted to the construction of one new church centre, funded by the sale of the mission hall, and major alterations to another.

Eccles and Salford: The figures represent 27 returns from 32 churches within the urban areas of Eccles and Salford. The sample included one Roman Catholic church, and three United Reformed churches. Two churches were united in one benefice. Sixteen of the buildings were listed, one at Grade I, six at Grade II*. Over 80% of the major repair total was spent by ten churches. This included the rebuilding of one church (with insurance) following an arson attack, and two substantial projects supported by local authority grants under the Government's urban renewal scheme. Over 90% of the new works figure was spent by three churches on two new parish rooms (in the nave and at the west end), and a major re-ordering scheme. Over 60% of the other buildings total was devoted to the conversion/renovation of three parish halls, and the refurbishment of one mission church.

Newcastle: The figures represent 21 returns from 24 churches in central and suburban Newcastle. The sample included two Roman Catholic churches, and two United Reformed churches. Four churches were united in two benefices. Thirteen of the buildings were listed, four at Grade I, two at Grade II*. Seventy per cent of the major repair total was spent by four churches. Over 90% of the new works figure was devoted to re-ordering/heating schemes at two churches, and the construction of a drive/car park at a third. Over 80% of the other buildings total was attributed to two parish hall repair/refurbishment schemes, one of which followed an arson attack and was largely met by insurance.

Petersfield: The figures represent 14 returns from 19 churches in Petersfield and the surrounding rural area. The sample included one Roman Catholic church, and one United Reformed church. Two churches were united in one benefice. Eighteen of the buildings were listed, four at Grade I, seven at Grade II*. Seventy per cent of the major repair total was spent by three churches, one of which was also responsible for 40% of the new works figure (including a new organ) and over 60% of the other buildings total (the repair/refurbishment of the church hall). The remainder of the new works figure was chiefly devoted to the construction of a single-storey church extension, funded by the sale of the parish hall.

Halesworth: The figures represent 30 returns from 31 churches in Southwold, Halesworth and neighbouring villages. The sample included one Roman Catholic church, two (jointly-administered) United Reformed churches, and one Independent chapel. Sixteen churches were united in three rural benefices. Twenty-nine of the buildings were listed, 22 at Grade I, five at Grade II*. Three churches contributed over 40% of the major repair total with the repair/extension of the parish hall of one of these contributing more than 70% of the other buildings figure. The construction of a church room represented over 70% of the new works total.

2. The calculation assumes that all extraordinary income can be used for repairs, and that income and expenditure figures stay at 1993 levels. No account is taken of the way in which a parish uses its reserve funds.

3. Three churches were unsurveyed due to site difficulties

At the beginning of my work, I was just a little puzzled as to why the Survey itself was necessary. At first sight, it seemed a study of each church's Quinquennial Report would surely reveal the likely need of repair during the forthcoming five year period. After all, the whole essence of the Inspection of Churches Measure, at least for the Anglican churches, is to provide such a forecast. By the time the inspections were coming toward the end, I had come to appreciate why the CCC/EH Needs Survey was required.

The style, content, format and, dare it be said, the comprehensiveness and general quality of Inspection Reports vary considerably. They range from the long, and sometimes verbose, almost philosophical document to the terse, uncommunicative and frankly unhelpful resumé. Between these two extremes are those that indulge in architectural and constructional jargon which must be difficult for the layman to understand, as well as those that were frankly boring. It came as something of a breath of fresh air to read a Report that, within a reasonably concise format, was illuminating, comprehensible and gave the impression that the author had a grip on the building. These reports one could imagine to be stimulating to the Parish readers.

Furthermore, individual Inspector's Reports differed enormously in how they tackled the problems of forecasting likely expenditure. Some, and possibly a majority, were silent on the topic; others, no doubt defensively, gave but the broadest of outlines. A few, one had the impression, forecast doom and gloom possibly with an eye to further commissions for specifications and repair work. The most useful, however, clearly set out possible costings, suggested time scales, and outlined the chances of grant assistance.

If all this sounds like a rather harsh criticism of professionals' work, it certainly is not meant to be. By and large, it is clear that Architects and Surveyors carry out their work conscientiously, and there was little, if any, evidence of carelessness or misinterpretation. Since the Needs Survey was conducted, the CCC has published its new guide to church repair, and this includes a commentary upon an ideal format for a QI Report. Not everyone will agree with those recommendations, but at least they provide a basis or common denominator for all reports.

The Needs Survey inspection had been requested to be undertaken not so as to replicate a QI Report, but rather to give a broad and general overview. The phrase that sticks in the mind is that the inspector was instructed to be 'the eye of a camera', and to conduct a 'snapshot' survey. On the face of it, this may seem to have been a superficial approach, but it is surprising how much information can be gleaned from such an inspection. 137 churches were chosen for the inspection, ranging from inner city Manchester and Newcastle sites to rural Hampshire and Suffolk and parts of Gloucestershire.

As to the method by which the Survey was undertaken, each church was inspected before reading the most recent QI report. The approach adopted was firstly to look at the whole of the fabric and then the individual elements of the building and to see how they interacted together; in other words, to read the building so as to try and see where the stresses lay, and where there were evident signs of distress. Thereafter, notes were taken of where there was immediate and likely wear and decay. The inspection did not concern itself with the minutiae of detailed matters, it couldn't, because after all the time allocated to each church was limited.

There needed to be an element of consistency when reporting, particularly as the churches varied greatly in size, quality, age and style. So as to get some sort of continuity and balance, a reporting form was devised which dealt with each element of the building in turn and allowed space for a general comment in the form of a summary. A separate section dealt with the possible and likely costs of repair within the period with which the Survey was concerned.

An important element of the Survey was to provide a comment upon the regime of routine maintenance and care that churchwardens and others responsible for the fabric of the building had followed. There was probably only a minority of cases where it could be said in all honesty that gutters were clean, gulley traps were free and ground drainage worked satisfactorily. Vegetation was all too often seen to be growing up to and close to walls and into mortar joints. On occasions, when the inspection was carried out in company with the churchwarden or other official, it was something of a surprise to hear people say that they didn't know of the necessity to attend to these matters, or at least did not appreciate the importance of routine maintenance. It was also surprising to find that quite obvious needs of repair, some of which had clearly occurred since the date of the last QI remained unnoticed. It is difficult to understand how a churchwarden had not seen green water staining over the wall face caused by a blocked valley gutter, or a patch of slipped tiles over a chancel roof.

Of course, the picture is not all gloomy by any means. It could be seen that there is a great deal of good work done in caring for and maintaining churches and large parts of it are done, properly and encouragingly, on a DIY basis. On balance, despite the problems, some of which are highlighted in this comment, and others which have been revealed in the details of the Survey, the churches themselves are basically in good condition. This opinion must be taken against the background of the complexity and size of some of the churches maintained by only a small and dedicated community, and also because (by and large) they are ancient buildings that inevitably require a higher degree of maintenance repair work than modern buildings of a similar quality of original construction and material.

What was also revealed by the Survey was that where repair works have been conscientiously carried out by good quality craftsmen and contractors, properly specified, and overseen by suitably skilled professionals, the standards are good. On the other hand, short term repairs, that is say using bitumen where lead would have been preferable, cement where lime should have been used, plastic in place of cast iron and so on, are not proving to have been the saving in cost and effort that those who organised the work supposed at the time.

The care of traditional buildings has rightly been described as a sensitive and specialist business, but in this lies a danger that what should ordinarily be considered as traditional, common sense, normal building repair and maintenance has in some cases been elevated almost to the state of mysticism requiring the combined skills of conservators, consultants, art historians, archaeologists, with all their attendant involvement and costs. This is not to say that those people are not useful and often have a valuable and essential role to play. The fact remains that much of the routine care and maintenance of traditional buildings can be in the hands of traditional craftsmen led by experienced, traditionally trained, and traditionally minded professionals. To insist otherwise can sometimes give rise to parishes having a fear that if they get involved with specialists and experts, to say nothing of grants and faculties, they will be driven out of their depth and will therefore prefer to leave matters as they are. If this view, expressed by a number of church communities during the course of my travels, gains credence, it will become counter-productive.

If the total Survey reveals the need for substantial repair within the next few years, then it might be necessary to give encouragement and emphasis to the need for better communication with and training of the Inspecting Architect or Surveyor, as well as finding ways to encourage church communities to think of the grant-giving organisations as friends rather than, as some churches openly said, 'pedantic bureaucrats'! In fairness, where there had been good, open and friendly relationships between all parties, the grant-giving bodies were seen as friends and supporters - which is, after all, what they are!

Geoffrey R Claridge RIBA FRSA

Review of listing grades: a summary

ANNEX B

Sample Area	Number of churches visited	Number of churches currently graded I or II*	Number of churches proposed for upgrading to I or II*	Percentage increase in Grade I and II* (as proportion of existing) ¹	Number of churches currently graded I, II* or II	Number of unlisted churches proposed for listing at Grade II
Cheltenham	31	13	4	30.8%	22	1
Eccles and Salford	32 (3 not seen)	7	1	14.3%	16	3
Newcastle	24 (1 not seen)	6	2	33.3%	13	0
Petersfield	19	11	1	9.1%	18	0
Halesworth	31	27	1	3.7%	29	1
	Total: 137	Total: 64	Total: 9	Percentage increase for all 5 areas: 14.1%	Total: 98	Total: 5

¹The review of listing grades indicated a 5% increase in listing overall would be justified

The Council for the Care of Churches
Fielden House
13 Little College Street
London
SW1P 2SH

Tel: 0171 222 3793

English Heritage
23 Savile Row
London
W1X 1AB

Tel: 0171 973 3000