

[*Cambridge Daily News*, 16 June 1938]

**CEMETERY CHAPEL
"LIKE A BARN"**

**Bishop's Plan to
Beautify It**

CAMBRIDGE BURIAL BOARD

MILL-ROAD Cemetery Chapel was described as "a barn" at the annual meeting of the Cambridge Parochial Burial Board, held yesterday, when a suggestion by the Bishop of Ely that the building should be beautified was put forward and discussed.

The Board met in Great St. Mary's Consistory Court. The Chairman (Rev. E. C. Essex) presided, and he was supported by Mr. G. H. Spooncer (hon. secretary), Mr. A. B. Chandler (hon. treasurer), and representatives of a number of the parishes having burial plots at the cemetery.

MONEY AVAILABLE.

The question of the chapel was raised by the Chairman, who said that as Rural Dean he had been approached by the Bishop to ask the clergy interested in Mill-road Cemetery if they would like him (the Bishop) to do what he could to help financially in making the chapel more dignified and more beautiful. The Bishop had at his disposal some money he was willing to offer for the purpose, if the Board was willing to find the money for a relatively small portion of the work.

But it was generally the feeling of the clergy at the Chapter at which the speaker raised the matter that as so few burials took place at the cemetery, and people rarely used the chapel, it was not advisable that the money should be spent on the purpose suggested.

BISHOP "DISAPPOINTED."

The speaker wrote to the Bishop telling him of this, and in reply received a letter from him in which he wrote that he felt rather disappointed at the view the clergy had taken. "I feel so keen about this matter—that the Cemetery Chapel should not be left in a condition we would not leave our churches in—that I should be glad if you will put it before the Cemetery Board," Dr. Heywood wrote. He added that he would ask the artist who drew the plans at Ely to prepare some for the Cambridge Cemetery Chapel. He repeated his offer of a contribution towards the cost, and went on to say that he had been told by the caretaker that it was not at all likely that the cemetery would be closed for a good many years. In any case, the chapel was used from time to time, and ought to be appropriate to its purpose. Their experience at Ely was that, since the alterations at the

chapel there, there had been many more funerals at which the first part of the service had been held at the chapel.

SHOULD THE CHAPEL BE CLOSED?

Mr. Essex stressed that the Bishop was quite prepared to find a very considerable amount towards the cost. He suggested that friends might try to get a certain amount of money from people who might be encouraged to be interested, such as those who had relatives or friends buried in the cemetery.

The Bishop, he mentioned, had examined the Chapel.

The Rev. J. Plowden-Wardlaw suggested to the Board that the chapel might be closed altogether. He was certain that cemetery chapels were "de trop."

The Rev. A. E. N. Hitchcock pointed out that one objection was the chapel's extreme dampness, while Mr. Chandler declared that the chapel never could be made beautiful; it was such an ugly building. Further, there was no heating apparatus.

People had got into the habit now of going to a church for the first part of a funeral service.

"GYMNASTIC PERFORMANCE" TO RING BELL.

While agreeing that the chapel was in a deplorable state, Mr. A. A. Spalding thought it rather drastic to suggest it be closed altogether. He later referred to "the gymnastic performance that has to be gone through in ringing the bell," and also criticised the position of places for the mourners.

He suggested that it might be advisable to have an architect in to see if a scheme of alteration was possible.

Mr. Spooncer expressed the view that even if efforts were made to beautify the building they would soon be spoilt by the damp, unless heating was installed.

Speaking again in the discussion, Mr. Spalding remarked that it would be rather scandalous if, in a cemetery run for the Church, there was no chapel available.

"LIKE A BARN."

The Chairman said that if the Board decided to keep the chapel open they ought, somehow or other, to do something to make it look like a place of worship instead of like a barn, even if they thought it would be extravagant for the money offered by the Bishop to be used for a more extensive scheme of alteration.

It was agreed that further inquiry should be made into the possibility of beautifying the chapel to the extent suggested by the Bishop.

The Rev. J. Thompson said that he would like the Bishop to know that the reason the Board members were not enthusiastic was because of the difficulties presented by the building, and it was agreed that a letter be sent to Dr. Heywood pointing this out and expressing gratitude to him for his offer.

SUGGESTION TO CLOSE THE CEMETERY.

Earlier in the meeting the Rev. J. Thompson had recalled that some years ago there was a discussion among Cambridge clergy about the advisability of closing the whole of the cemetery and handing it over to the local authorities.

He spoke of the difficulty of keeping it tidy with only the present staff and funds.

The Chairman did not think it would be wise to hand the cemetery over yet. He did not think the Town Council would be very anxious to take over the burden of keeping it tidy were there no fees to be paid. None would be if the cemetery were closed.

The Rev. J. Plowden-Wardlaw suggested that consideration of the question of closing the cemetery should be deferred until the cemetery was full. Though some of the parish pieces of ground had no empty grave spaces, there were others which were not full.

No formal proposition was put and the matter was dropped.

FINANCES SATISFACTORY.

Presenting the accounts, Mr. A. B. Chandler said that the Board started the year with a balance at the bank of £55 3s. 11d. and ended it with a balance of £67 7s. 10d. On the trustee account there was a balance of £27 2s.

The Chairman mentioned that there was a very heavy liability to come. The Board had to have a great deal of repair work done to the caretaker's house and a good deal to the chapel. The estimate accepted was one for about £30.

The Chairman congratulated Mr. Chandler on the accounts and expressed the meeting's thanks to him.

Thanks were also expressed to Mr. H. Royston, the auditor.

ELECTIONS.

Officers were elected as follows: Chairman, Rev. E. C. Essex; hon. secretary, Mr. G. H. Spooner; hon. treasurer, Mr. A. B. Chandler.
