

# A LITTLE HISTORY OF SOUTHCHURCH

By Mike Penry

## Episode 28: YEARS OF TOIL

Alfred Goodale's history of Holy Trinity noted that "many of the congregation who now enjoy the beauty and comfort of the "new" church may be surprised to know that, until a few decades ago, it was an unattractive, indeed to some, an ugly building". This was not the fault of our eminent architect but reflected a lack of funds (and also, possibly, a loss of nerve in implementing Comper's designs).

An earlier church history published in 1924 provided the following summary of progress in the early twentieth century:

*"The fabric of the church remained unchanged till 1906, when the greater part of the north wall was taken down and a new nave and part of a north aisle were added; the Norman door was removed, stone by stone, and rebuilt into the new west wall, and three ancient windows were taken out and inserted in the new north wall; the new chancel is still to be built and the aisle completed".*

Some further progress was made after 1906. The choir vestry was added in 1910, and, in the same year, an organ from the Swedenborgian church in Sidney Street in east London was installed. Prior to Sydney Street it is said to have graced a stately home. The organ cost £70, plus £20 for re-assembling it - Rector Philpott said a new organ would have cost £550.



The pipe organ at Holy Trinity Southchurch – over 115 years old.

Lack of funds was by now the big problem, illustrated by the following appeal:

“An Appeal to the Congregation of the Parish Church of Southchurch to complete the building begun in 1906

Why is the completion necessary?

- Because the Church is becoming uncomfortably crowded. The proposed addition will give us at least 150 more sittings.
- Because the district is still being rapidly developed and more room will be required, especially in summer.
- Because this Church should be finished before the work of church building begins on the Thorpe Bay estate (*St Augustine’s, we assume*).
- Because we who use it are trustees for others, and we cannot but wish to see its ugly east wall replaced by a dignified Chancel.

How is the completion possible?

- By the prayers and work of a united people.
- By help from outside given to those who are obviously helping themselves.
- By each member of the Congregation taking a proper share in the work, contributing according to their means.”

In September 1912 Holy Trinity received a faculty which permitted the work begun in 1906 “to be completed by the addition of a Chancel, part of the North Aisle and the North Porch”. The estimated cost of the proposed work amounted to £3,000 “which will be provided for by donations”. In the event work on the Chancel did not begin for another twenty years, and the rest of the North Aisle and the North Porch have of course never been built (yet!).

**Come back in a couple of weeks’ time for Episode 29: “CELEBRATING THE GLORY YEARS” .**

- Looking back to the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 1924.
- Where would you go these days to get a Sixpenny Twister?
  - How about a Spoof Wireless?

**See all Episodes of ‘A Little History of Southchurch’ [here](#)**