

ERIC KEMP: A LIFE REMEMBERED

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The President, a co-founder of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, died peacefully in Chichester – his See from 1974 to 2001 – on Saturday 28 November 2009, the eve of Advent Sunday. He had borne increasing blindness in recent years, but on considering relinquishing the Presidency two years ago was delighted to be told of the Society's extreme reluctance to accept his resignation.

I first worked with Eric Kemp at his consecration in Southwark Cathedral as Bishop of Chichester in 1974, where as a Lambeth *apparatchik* I was organising the protocols for his Old Catholic co-consecrator; then for many years under his chairmanship of the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England, following a distinguished but ultimately unsuccessful championing of Anglican Methodist reconciliation as the Anglican Co-Chairman of the Anglican-Methodist Unity Commission.

But for the Society, Eric Kemp's contribution to the revival of the study and practice of Canon Law within the Church of England must be his greatest achievement: as Tutor and Chaplain at Exeter College, Oxford, as Dean of Worcester, and as Chief Pastor of the Diocese of Chichester. In 1948 he published *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church*, followed by *An Introduction to Canon Law in the Church of England* in 1957. His Bampton Lectures of 1960, *Counsel and Consent*, which helped him to gain an Oxford DD on publication the following year, traced the elusive history of Convocation.

Many will also remember the first gathering of what was to become the Society at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in March 1987, and Eric as its champion. There are also the glorious stories of canon law revision, told by and of himself, of drafts of the revised canon law being presented to Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, only to be told to re-write them by the headmaster! There were also stories he told about the creation of Synodical Government. As one of its principal architects he recently doubted whether what had emerged was truly synodal in the ecclesiological sense.

The Society celebrated the life and achievement of its President with the publication of a *festschrift* in his honour in 1998. It now grieves his death and concedes with Pat, his partner in marriage for 56 years.