

# *The History of the Church*

In September 1927, the military authorities suggested to the Governor, Sir Ronald Storrs K.C.M.G., and to the Bishop of the Diocese (Jerusalem), Dr MacInnes, that the provision of a church on Mount Troodos was much to be desired, since the recreation room of the military detachment, which had done duty as a place of worship for so long, was no less inconvenient as unsuitable. A simple building of wood or corrugated iron was first proposed; but later, after much deliberation, the plans for such a structure was rejected as not being worthy for the purpose.

Of course, there were a great many difficulties to be faced; but the Governor and Lady Storrs were in favour of the larger scheme, and the Ven. H.J. Buxton was able (early in 1928) to inform the Bishop that sufficient interest had been aroused to justify a further step. A local Committee was nominated, and Mr George Jeffrey F.S.A, was invited to draw plans for a stone church. Mr. Jeffrey, however, did not feel able to accept the invitation as he was not allowed to visit or to stay in the mountains at such an altitude. In May 1928, an invitation was therefore sent to Mr. W.D. Caroe, of Westminster, the Architect of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who had been visiting Cyprus during the winter. Mr. Caroe responded by saying that he would design the church - but would accept no remuneration.

The question of a site had then to be considered. For various reasons, the church could not be built upon military land; yet the site needed to be central for Troodos residents and also near to the troops. Dr A.H. Unwin, Principal Forest Officer, most kindly took up the matter and put forward a plan whereby, ultimately, the present excellent site was handed over for the church from Forest Department land and for a nominal sum.

The ceremony at the dedication of the foundation stone was performed by H.E. Sir Ronald Storrs, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1928, in the presence of Major Lanyon, with a detachment of the Green Howards, and a large congregation.

In January 1929, the admirable plans drawn by Mr. Caroe were received. Mr H. Llewelyn Jones, of the Ottoman Bank, as Hon. Treasurer, had already begun to collect subscriptions, and his untiring efforts had been wonderfully successful – both in the Island and outside it.

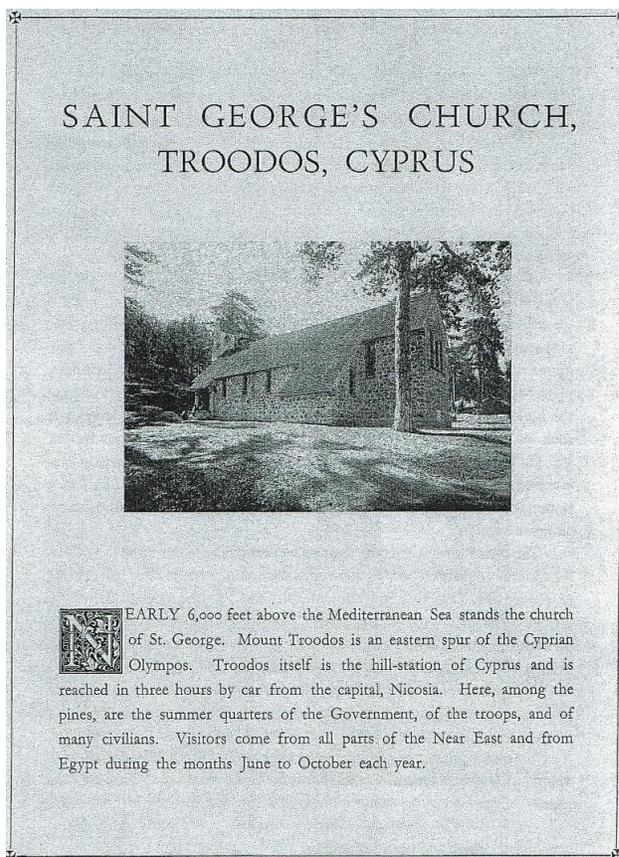
The question of a contractor gave a good deal of anxiety, for the style and quality of the building required was vastly above the average to be found in those days in Cyprus. Finally, it was agreed that the Public Works Department was the only body competent to tackle the work and, by permission of the Government, the undertaking was confided to the hands of the Director and of his staff.

Special mention should be made of the assistance rendered by Mr A.P.W. Stone, Director, Messrs. Gaffiero & Holland, of Mr. Phylactou, and of the foreman, Mr Christo.

The building had been under construction during three seasons. In 1928 the foundations were laid. In 1930 the walls and roof were put up. In 1931 the floor, the plastering of the interior walls and the gallery were completed.

The altar of Cyprus cedar wood, designed by Mr. Caroe, was given by H.M.S. "Eagle", and drawings were also prepared by the architect for the pulpit, desk, riddles, etc..., which were provided by generous donors. Chairs and a piano were brought up from Nicosia, and a beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> Century icon of St. George beautifies the building.

The Opening and Consecration by the Lord Bishop of Jerusalem took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1931. On that morning, after the official King's Birthday Service and the Review of the troops and police at Nicosia, a whole fleet of cars might have been seen moving across the plains towards Troodos, fifty miles away. His Excellency Sir Ronald Storrs and the Bishop and many others arrived during the afternoon.



The original cover of the Church's first information pamphlet published in 1931.