

Pontresina Switzerland - Holy Trinity Church 1882 - 1974

History

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1872 Committee formed to build a church. Architect Richard Poppenell Pullen F.R.I.B.S. offers design.
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1880 British visitor numbers had tripled. Pullen redesigns both building and interior for much larger church. Project sponsored by Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Land given by 2 local inhabitants. Builder Alfred Harman had already constructed St John's, St Martin (1877) and Immanuel, Samedan (1872); he was a craftsman from Valais for the woodwork.
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1882 Construction by Bishop of Bellinz. East window, bell and altar frontal ordered by well-known congregation members.
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1899 "Services during the winter. Library under care of church". "Banker's (Swissland)"
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1914 WWI Visitor numbers go down but recover.
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1939 WWII and aftermath lead to reduced congregation.
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1950 Occasional service for "Englishmen" (Kessenerstrasse) converts a local village catholic community but unsustainable (2011)
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1999 Local builder uses space under the "roof" church as storage, rents CHF 200 per year but long "visual and clear" (2014) to Canon Knight, author website
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1965 Last service in Holy Trinity, 100 yrs after Anglican began in Swiss Kantonval
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1968 Sale of church for CHF 40,000 (then ca. \$6,000) to Protestant town council whose initial offer in 1966 had been CHF 140,000 (ca. \$20,000) (2014)
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1975 Despite original Anglican intention to convert church into a school, municipality of Pontresina decides to replace Holy Trinity with block of 57 flats. Decline challenged by Swiss Evangelical Commission, Protestant, Catholic, Quaker bodies.
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1974 BBC's Moment in Time photography and videos, important Movable Religious Heritage local group mission activities, people are given an alternative, interesting view of church. "...one of the most beautiful examples of late 19th century of the late 19th century" (The Arab Mirror "Sengstad and Neumann in die Schweiz" (Die Kirchenwunder der 19. Jahrhundert", 1875) "... considered to have been the most important of all English churches built in Switzerland" (Peter Schwobert "Anglicans in Switzerland", 1992).

Movable Religious Heritage

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East window
by Walter G. G. Smith in London, 1882. Donated by Mrs E. de Boreale, Geneva, France.
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Recessed niches
Recessed niches for further storage.
Pontresina, CH.
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East wall window by local artist P. Agost (1874). Donated by Mrs Agost, Samedan 1890 and by Thea, Pontresina, CH.
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Recessed niches
Garden of Marianne Alpa, Pontresina
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Research Project Aims

I To increase public interest in and awareness of British cultural and religious heritage in the Engadine valley of Switzerland

- Stage an exhibition (St. Peter Museum Pontresina, accepted for 2018-21) to include items of Movable Religious Heritage, take 100 new professional photographs of items considered invaluable
- Move exhibition to national capital (2 Year) after 2017
- Keep writing items in the two languages as permanent exhibit
- Persuade the Swiss national glass museum (Nidwalden in Samedan) to take the East Window
- Investigate and record the history of all PUE's Anglican churches built in the Engadine valley including architect's archive, correspondence and chapters, diaries of architects, write short reports and eventually a book.

II To persuade the Church of England and Swiss authorities to make every effort to preserve remaining Anglican churches and their contents

- Find out if the Church of England would consider introducing a prayer in the Dismissal in Europe (Switzerland) to include letters in safe contacts to safeguard historic C of E buildings and their contents.
- Encourage relevant Swiss authorities in the country to preserve British cultural and religious heritage in Switzerland - in the event of an unavoidable decision, to record items of quantity and inventarially religious heritage.

