

Church kept for Christ's return

by
James Hamilton

SINCE its last service in 1951, the Apostles' Chapel in Albury has stood empty, a silent reminder of the Catholic Apostolic Church whose followers regularly filled the building in the 19th Century.

Built in 1840, the chapel is a listed building, lying just off the A25. It was the centre of the Church, set up to the 1830s by a former solicitor, Mr. John Cardale, and Henry Drummond, then owner of Albury Park.

Mr. Drummond became one of 12 apostles of the Church which soon spread from its centre in Albury, attracting followers as far away as Australia and America.

The apostles' doctrine emphasised the need for repentance and preparation for the Second Coming, subjects which it believed the established churches were neglecting.

Enter the Apostles' Chapel today and you will find it unchanged from the day it held its last service, apart from the pews, oil lamps and other fittings, which are covered because of a leaking roof which is being repaired.

Inside, it is a plain and simple church whose most striking features include a low chandelier and a beautiful rose window designed by Augustus Pugin.

A gold-coloured dove suspended on a taut wire hovers above the font at the back of the church to represent the presence of the Holy Spirit.

There are several adjoining rooms including a round chapter house where the 12 apostles used to meet.

This striking Gothic-style chapel was forced to close because of the very structure of the Catholic Apostolic Church. In parallel with Biblical teaching, the apostles were the only

people authorised to appoint priests to run the churches. So when, in 1901, the last apostle, Francis Woodhouse, died at Cooke's Place, Albury, no more priests could be appointed.

Curator of the chapel is Mr. Peter Heath, one of the trustees, who lives at Cooke's Place which is also the church's property.

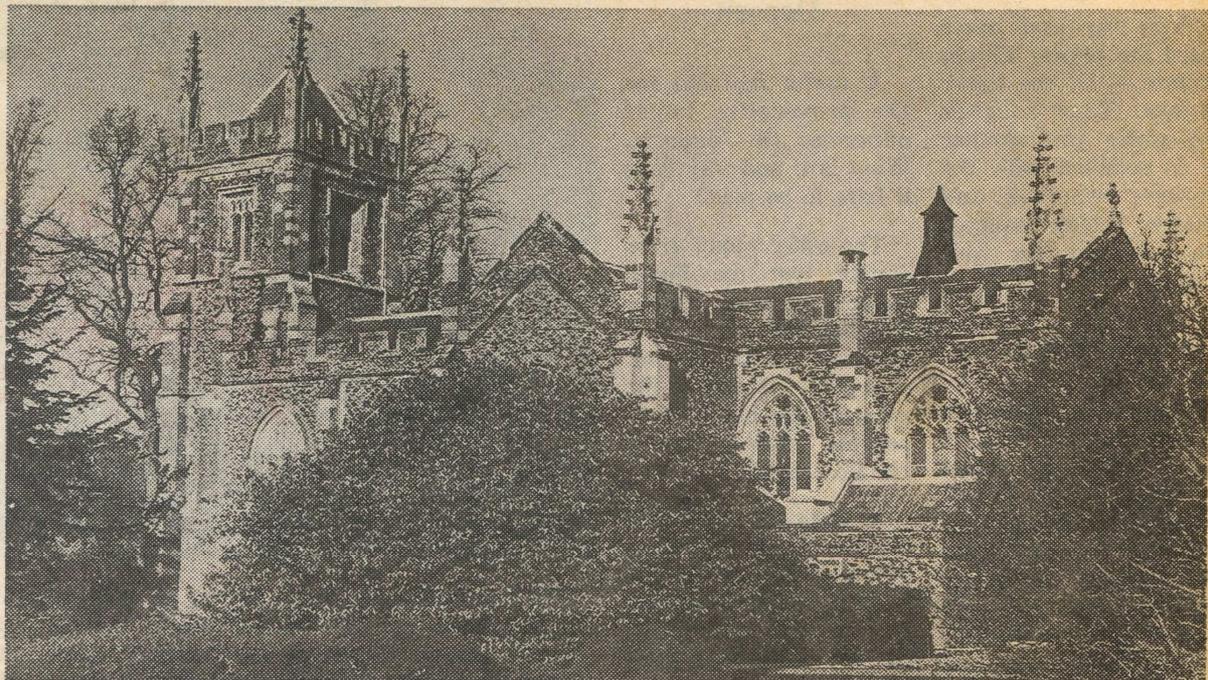
He attended the chapel as a boy and now, like other former members in the village, worships at the parish church of SS Peter and Paul.

He still believes the chapel serves an important purpose today. "It is clearly stated in the Bible that the Lord will return, so the present trustees keep the church so that at any time it can be used, should the Lord require it," he affirmed.

Until that time, the chapel remains unused, a monument to the Catholic Apostolic Church which played an important, if transitory, part in the history of Albury.



The front entrance of the "mothballed" Apostles' Chapel in Albury. It waits empty and silent for the Second Coming of the Lord.



A view of the south side of the Apostles' Chapel. The Gothic-style church opened on September 4, 1840. The stone used to build the church came from Ewhurst and the timber from the Albury Estate. The chapel was designed by William McIntosh Brooks.