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QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955

CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

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NOTE: This report can be read at three levels of detail:

The SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES give a brief overview and checklist.

The APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS give a fully reasoned report sufficient for most purposes.

The ARCHITECT'S INSPECTION NOTES give a finely detailed record of the inspection observations on which the report is based, for future reference.

PREAMBLE TO THE QUINQUENNIAL REPORT ON THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 and the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, both of which have statutory force, require each Diocese to establish a scheme for the inspection of every church at least once every five years. Over the years Commissions of General Synod and Working Parties of the Council for the Care of Churches have made recommendations on the establishment of Diocesan Schemes, the selection and terms of appointment of the inspectors, and the scope, form and content of the reports. The current recommendations are contained in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR', Second Edition, 1995, published for the Council for the Care of Churches by Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ. The following is intended to conform with those recommendations.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Attention is drawn to the Terms of Appointment of the professional adviser included in Appendix B.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

A thorough inspection of the structural condition and state of repair of the Church has been made, covering all parts visible from ground and floor levels, readily accessible roofs, galleries or stagings, and where applicable from ladders provided by the PCC. Inaccessible and hidden roofs and valleys are excluded, and ceilings have been examined from floor level only unless otherwise stated.

IT IS EMPHASISED THAT THE INSPECTION HAS BEEN PURELY VISUAL, and parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered such as boarded floors, roof spaces or hidden timbers at the wall heads have not been opened up for inspection (unless otherwise stated in the report). Such woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered unexposed or inaccessible have not been inspected and therefore it cannot be reported that any such part of the building is free from defect. It is possible that any concrete used in the construction, alteration or repair of the church between 1923 and 1975 contains High Alumina Cement and/or Calcium Chloride additives. No investigation has been carried out to determine whether these substances are actually present and therefore it cannot be reported that such parts of the building are entirely free of risk in this respect. Where concrete of that period is persistently damp the risk of failure becomes significant and the appropriate investigations should be carried out.

Chimney flues were not inspected, nor were inaccessible flat roofs. Manhole covers were not lifted and none of the services, including the drainage, were tested. Damp meters were not used. Unless otherwise stated the inspection was carried out in dry weather, when it was not possible to ascertain whether the rainwater goods or gullies or surface water drains were watertight.

Recommendations for further investigation are included where suspicions have been aroused during the inspection but problems of access or the need for special equipment or opening-up have prevented full exploration. Where it is suggested that some part of the building be kept under observation this is for the attention of a future professional adviser as well as of the Church Council.

FORM OF THE REPORT

This is a general report only, as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Diocesan Scheme. It follows, in broad terms, the form recommended in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR' 1995 (mentioned above) and the requirements of the current Diocesan Scheme.

This report is the COPYRIGHT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISER and is provided to satisfy the statutory requirement for a quinquennial report ONLY. It is confidential to the Church Council, the Diocesan Authorities and their respective professional advisers. It describes defects observed, is NOT A SPECIFICATION for execution of any work and MUST NOT BE USED FOR OBTAINING BUILDERS' ESTIMATES. An indication of likely repairs costs is included, but it must be understood that the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken, so the figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT IT MUST NOTIFY THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND/OR OBTAIN A FACULTY BEFORE PUTTING ANY REPAIR WORK IN HAND. In most cases specifications, schedules and descriptions of the proposed repairs will be required. This report is not a substitute for such documents but it may be cited in support as identifying the need for repairs.

One copy of this Report should be kept with the Church Log Book and Records, for future reference. The Architect will send the requisite number of copies direct to the Diocesan Office.

REPORT ON THE 2010 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION

of the Parish Church of

SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, COCKFIELD

Diocese of Durham

Archdeaconry of Auckland

Deanery of Barnard Castle

Historic Buildings Listing: Grade II*

(Six headstones in churchyard listed separately, Grade II)

Conservation Area: Cockfield

Civil County and District: County Durham

Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 128 242

Date of Inspection: 5th May 2010

Date of Report: 27th November 2010

Report by CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch. R.I.B.A.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The earliest parts of the Nave and Chancel are believed to date from around 1200 A.D., although the slight misalignment between the two may indicate differing dates of construction within the early 13th century. It remained a modest place of worship until the mid 19th century, when in 1865-8 the church was sympathetically restored and the Vestry/Organ Chamber added to the north side of the Chancel. The south Porch was also rebuilt at this time, in suitably Gothic style, and the gallery within the west end of the Nave was removed. All this was to designs believed to be by Charles Hodgson-Fowler, who was certainly the architect for the substantial enlargement of the building in 1911 by eastward extension of the Chancel and Vestry, westward extension of the Nave and the addition of the North Aisle, incorporating re-used original windows, etc., and a new four-bay arcade. Such was his care in blending new work with old that even the most experienced analyst may have difficulty interpreting the details of what has been done.

The building thus achieved comprises Nave and Chancel with a twin bell-cote surmounting the west gable, a North Aisle parallel with the Nave, an Organ Chamber/Vestry alongside the north wall of the Chancel (with Heating Chamber under) and a south Porch. Roofs are covered with green Lake District (Chancel, Vestry/Organ Chamber) or Welsh (North Aisle, Nave, Porch) slates. The timber roof structures are open internally to the Nave, Porch and Vestry, and concealed by faceted

timber ceilings in the Chancel and North Aisle. Walls are of sandstone rubble with finely-tooled dressings to the architectural features, the stonework being plastered in the Chancel and Vestry internally.

A plan of the church is included on the buff-coloured sheet following the 'Summary and Priorities' section of this report.

PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS AND RECENT REPAIRS

This is the first time the present writer has reported on this church. A copy of the 2004 report, by George Stastny, was available on the architect's file for reference in compiling this one. Peter Ryder's archaeological assessment dated 1998 was also studied, and the writer has his own records of the repair project carried out in 2007, for which he served as conservation-accredited architect to satisfy English Heritage grant conditions.

All previous reports, which cumulatively will form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past fifty years, should be carefully kept.

Repairs and works carried out since the last inspection have included:

Re-lining of the central valley system with new cast lead sheet; re-slatting of the Nave roof with re-used Welsh slates together with renewal of the plaster ceiling panels between its rafters and provision of insulation under the slating; overhaul and where necessary replacement of rainwater gutters and downpipes; re-pointing of the chimney stack externally and of structural crackings internally; consequential redecoration of Nave ceiling, Chancel walls and Vestry. All carried out in 2007 with grant aid from the joint English Heritage/Heritage Lottery scheme for places of worship.

Various minor repairs to doors (including security improvements) and window glazing.

Upgrading of lightning conductor to 'pulsar' type (2006).

Reinstatement of leadwork in central valley system following thefts on two occasions in 2009.

Installations of sound reinforcement system (2008) and digital projectors (2010).

Provision of a range of kitchen cupboards, worktop and sink in the Vestry.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

- a) Attention is drawn to the recommendations of the **Preamble** to this report, and to the **General and Technical notes** given in **Appendix `B'**.
- b) The following inaccessible parts were not included in the inspection:-
 - i) Any voids below floors and above ceilings.
 - ii) Interior of the Organ.
 - iii) Roofs, etc., were examined internally from floor levels and externally from ground levels and from the central valley system.

c) The Architect's detailed inspection notes are given in the following appendix, with descriptions of various parts of the building where appropriate, and comments on the condition of the fabric. These notes are an important part of the report, and should be read by the Parish (PCC officers, etc.), for the appraisal, recommendations and priorities in this report have been prepared from them. They are not a specification for repairs, and are unsuitable for obtaining builders' estimates. When the PCC is ready to proceed with any part of the recommended repairs, it is advised to contact the professional adviser for recommendations as to the appropriate course of action and ask him to prepare any necessary specifications and schedules.

APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following remarks inevitably concentrate on the defects noted during the inspection but it must be emphasised at the outset that the church is in good condition overall, and evidently very well cared for with a great deal of excellent work having been carried out since the last inspection. This report is intended to help direct the efforts of those responsible towards an orderly programme for the work needed in the foreseeable future.

A) STRUCTURAL CONDITION OF THE FABRIC:

Considering the extent of past alterations to the building, with extensions and additions in the 19th and early 20th centuries in particular, there is surprisingly little evidence of significant structural movement. Minor cracking shows running through the joints of the rubble stone walling where that newer work meets the original fabric, as is only to be expected. More noticeable crackings show in the medieval walling around the south-east corner of the Nave and suggest that its foundations are perhaps rather shallower than those of the 19th and 20th century elements. These crackings were filled and pointed as part of the 2007 repair campaign and the lime-based mortar shows up rather white against the generally darkened stonework. At the time of this inspection, some two and a half years after the pointing was done, there were no signs of movement in these crackings so they should merely be reviewed in the course of future inspections. For this purpose they are recorded in detail in the appended inspection notes.

Despite prolonged saturation by leakages through the failing valley gutter linings before the 2007 repairs, the underlying structural timbers were found to have suffered relatively little decay - some minor patches of wet rot and a little woodworm but, mercifully, no sign of dry rot. The timbers of the Nave roof and those exposed by the work on the valley gutters were treated with preservative as a precaution in the course of the re-covering works.

B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

The external walls of the church are of local buff-coloured sandstone rubble with finely-tooled dressings to the architectural features. Despite superficial erosion in some limited areas and a very few more deeply eroded stones - none yet needing replacement - the stone appears to be weathering well overall. Some of the worst erosion is internal - in the Vestry, due to past saturation - and internally and externally in the south Porch (perhaps due to defective or missing rainwater gutters, now renewed). The mortar pointing, too, seems to be sound - extensive areas clearly having been re-pointed in recent years. Some very minor areas have been attended to since the last inspection - notably the chimney stack rising from the valley between the Vestry and Chancel roofs. Further minor re-pointing work is desirable within the next five years in the following places:

Retaining wall on north side of Heating Chamber steps: Various voids to fill.

Walling above Heating Chamber door: Open joints to fill.

South wall of Chancel - small area of open joints just under west end of eaves.

East wall of Chancel - a few small voids needing filling.

Two of the stones in the surround of the Vestry door have been split, presumably by fixings for the locking plate of the door internally or perhaps in the course of an attempted break-in. The spalled pieces should be gently eased off and then re-fixed using a masonry adhesive.

C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

The roofs of the eastern parts of the church (Chancel and Vestry/Organ Chamber) are covered with green Lake District slates laid to diminishing courses. These are likely to date from the 1911 extension of the church and remain generally sound, showing a few broken corners and one or two slipping slates at the time of the inspection but needing only minor routine repair in due course.

The roofs of the North Aisle, Nave and South Porch are covered with blue/grey Welsh slate. Whilst much of this will have been laid in 1911 that covering the original medieval eastern part of the Nave probably dated from the 1865-8 restoration (along with that still remaining on the South Porch). This was failing and consequently the whole of the Nave roof slating was stripped and re-fixed, with new underlay and battens, in 2007. The Porch slating is now probably the oldest on the building, but remains reasonably sound, perhaps being rather less exposed to the elements than the higher roofs. The North Aisle roof slating also remains in good order, again needing only minor routine repairs from time to time for the foreseeable future.

The main problem with roof coverings rightly identified in the last quinquennial report was the state of the lead linings to the valleys between the Nave and North Aisle and the Chancel and Vestry roofs. These formed the core of the 2007 repair campaign, in which the old linings were stripped out, the timber gutter bases re-organised to an improved layout of drips and falls, and new sand-cast lead sheet linings were laid. This left the valleys in excellent order. Unfortunately, in 2009 lead thieves attacked on two separate occasions and although the basic lead linings were reinstated the sacrificial strips under the tails of the eaves slates had to be omitted after the second occasion, as having been just too vulnerable.

As a possible defence against etching of the lead by acidic run-off from the Nave roof slating a strip of copper has been incorporated up towards the ridge of the north slope of the roof to poison the lichens which secrete the acid.

The mortar fillets at the various abutments of the slating with gable upstands, etc., were all renewed or patched in the course of the 2007 repair project, and the ridges were re-pointed where necessary. Some of those that were not in need at that time are now beginning to show some cracking or looseness and may need attention within the next five years. The abutment of the south slope of the Chancel roof with the east gable of the Nave was investigated in preparation for the grant-aided repairs in 2007 and straightforward remedial work was carried out - no further leakage at this junction has been reported since.

Also as part of the 2007 campaign, the cast iron rainwater gutters, hopper heads and downpipes were replaced where necessary and overhauled and repainted generally. These too remain in good order.

The gullies taking the discharge from the rainwater pipes are generally serviceable although some have been rather troublesome in recent years - that by the north door in particular. However, much has been done to clear them and the associated drain runs and

soakaways, so that at the time of this inspection, following efforts by one of the specialist drain clearing companies, all were reported to be free-flowing.

At the time of the inspection nesting materials needed clearing from the hopper head at the east end of the Chancel/Vestry valley gutter and minor accumulations of leaves and debris needed clearing from the valley gutters themselves. All gutters, downpipes and gullies should be checked at least twice a year and cleared where necessary.

D) WINDOWS AND DOORS:

The east window of the Chancel and the westernmost two windows in its south wall contain rather nondescript stained glass, compromised by past repairs but in reasonable condition. Most of the rest of the windows have uncoloured obscure or pale yellow tinted glass in diamond-pattern leading with clear glass borders. Minor repairs to this glazing have been carried out since 2004 and at the time of this inspection all seemed to be in serviceable condition. The Vestry window has lost its leaded glazing and single panes of glass have been set directly into the stone surrounds. This renders them prone to fracture should there be any structural or thermal movement, and it is not clear whether they are of any type of safety glass. However, no action need be taken other than to reconsider the glazing technique should the present panes fail.

Some of the windows contain opening (sliding) vents and the iron frames to these should be kept well painted to inhibit rust. Wherever possible they should be maintained in working order to provide ventilation. The external wire guards intended to exclude birds have perished to the point of uselessness and should be renewed if the vents are usable.

The Heating Chamber door is showing its age somewhat and could do with minor refurbishment - its hinges are rusting quite badly and could do with painting to inhibit this. The latch handle on its outer face is probably too far gone and will most likely have to be replaced.

The external door to the Vestry could do with stripping and re-finishing to remove the unsuitable varnish rightly condemned in the last report, and its ironwork needs painting to inhibit the rust that is taking hold.

The iron railings around the Heating Chamber steps could do with re-painting within the next year or two.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

The floors throughout the building are on solid bases - stone paving to the passageways, wood block to the pew and choir stall areas and in the Vestry; tiling to most of the Chancel with marble in the Sanctuary. All seems to be in fair condition. A small area of wood block in the Vestry, just inside the door through from the Chancel, is loose underfoot so could do with lifting and re-adhering to the base. The flooring is punctuated by runs of cast iron grilles for the heating system, which all seem to be in good order.

In general the redecoration carried out as part of the 2007 works is standing well - though some patching may have been carried out since in areas affected by residual dampness.

The Chancel and North Aisle ceilings were not included, unfortunately, and still await repainting in due course.

Furnishings and fittings appear to remain in good order generally but the telescopic sections of the communion rail are unduly stiff. The fine war memorial Rood Screen in the Chancel archway and the historically interesting galleried panelling from former pews now lining the south wall of the Nave also seem to be in sound condition.

F) INSTALLATIONS:

The **electrical** installation was completely re-wired in 2008, using M.I.C.C. cable throughout. It was tested in 2009 so the next test is due in 2014. The tungsten-halogen lamps in the floodlight fittings in the Chancel, Nave and North Aisle are reported to fail too frequently and these lights are rather glaring and unsympathetic. Consideration is being given to replacing them. Otherwise, the purely visual inspection in the course of this quinquennial survey found no obvious defects except that the external floodlight mounted on the north-east corner of the Vestry appears to be wired in ordinary P.V.C. cable which is not suitable for external exposure.

The **heating** system comprises an oil-fired Trianco Eurostar boiler in the basement Heating Chamber serving cast iron radiators together with pipes in underfloor ducts. It is reported to be reasonably effective and is serviced annually. The plastic oil storage tank was mentioned in the 2004 quinquennial report as having been 'recently renewed'. Combustible lumber stored in the Heating Chamber should be kept well clear of the boiler.

The limited **plumbing** installation in the Vestry excites no comment but the incoming water supply pipe is poorly lagged both where exposed in the Heating Chamber and externally so new pipe insulation should be fitted to protect it from frost.

The **lightning conductor** installation was upgraded in 2006, with a 'pulsar' terminal fitted to the bell-cote together with an additional downtape. Unfortunately, shortly before this quinquennial inspection the lower section of the original (copper) downtape had been stolen and reinstatement was awaited.

The two **bells** are in regular use and apparently in good order. Their fittings and fixings (apparently of stainless steel) were last attended to in 2007.

The **organ** also remains in regular use and is tuned by Harrison & Harrison. It is reported to be in good working order but asbestos has been identified in the blower box lining and at the time of this inspection removal or encapsulation was awaited.

Since the last inspection the church has been fitted with a **sound reinforcement** system (2008) and digital projectors with screens (2010).

The church has an adequate number of appropriate **fire extinguishers**, serviced annually.

G) MONUMENTS:

A wall-mounted memorial to Thomas and Hannah Watson, dating from the early eighteenth century, is set on the east wall of the Nave north of the Chancel arch. Its sandstone

surround is rather weathered and shows signs of possible efflorescence but this does not seem to be causing damage so no action need be taken.

The two medieval cross-slabs set into the east wall of the North Aisle are also in stable condition. However, those set into the walls of the South Porch are suffering severe and rapid erosion - one having lost its design completely and the others following not far behind. In order to arrest further deterioration it would be worth easing these stones out, lining the resulting recesses with damp-proof material and re-setting the stones. This would protect them from further moisture and salt transference from behind, which is the basic cause of the damage.

H) CHURCHYARD:

This is in two sections: The original burial ground surrounding the church, now closed for burials and maintained by the Local Authority, and a southern extension which has been sold to the Parish Council and its headstones cleared to the boundaries to allow it to be used for pasture. This latter has not been included in the inspection.

The original churchyard is well kept, with attractive planting. It contains a considerable number of headstones, ranged in suspiciously straight rows and records suggest these were re-arranged at the time of the 1911 extension of the church. Several appear to be of artistic or historic interest and six of these are listed in their own right. These all appear to be in sound and stable condition.

North-east of the church is a substantial table-tomb (with eroded inscription) whose end panels are falling in and it would be sensible to have these re-set before they become a temptation to children. On cursory inspection the headstones generally are in safe condition.

The churchyard also contains a considerable number of mature trees, some overhanging neighbouring properties. All should be checked by a specialist at least once every five years - presumably the Local Authority arrange this.

The northern (roadside) boundary is defined by a rubble stone wall topped with iron railings and punctuated by the main entrance gateway with stone piers supporting the iron gates. The gates have been refurbished since the last inspection but the railings need painting and the stone walling is disintegrating in places with occasional stones having fallen out so needs consolidation and re-pointing within the next five years.

The western and eastern boundary walls are also of rubble stone, in fair condition for the most part but could do with some limited consolidation where affected by structural movement or gradual deterioration.

The southern boundary wall (between the original burial ground and the later extension) is in a state of disintegration generally and needs extensive consolidation. It retains the original churchyard ground level for a height of up to a metre above that of the extension.

The churchyard paths are in good condition although a small void at the South Porch threshold is harbouring vegetation and this could do with cleaning out and filling with inert material.

The second stone step up of the flight at the northern door to the church has become displaced and needs re-bedding.

At the time of the inspection the concrete drainage channel around the church building awaited repair at the south-west corner, having been damaged by thieves stealing the lightning conductor tape.

The churchyard notice board, just beside the main gateway, has been partially repainted but is beginning to show the need for further repainting before long.

SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church is basically sound and very well looked after. A lot of excellent work has been done in the last six years, especially the major roof repair project in 2007.

The main threat to the well-being of the building now appears to be from thieves, who have attacked the lead of the valley gutter system twice and the lightning conductor once. All reasonable precautions appear to have been taken but the risk remains.

The deterioration of the medieval cross-slabs built into the walls of the Porch is of serious concern, and was highlighted in the 1998 archaeological assessment. Whilst this may not be a high priority for the P.C.C. consideration should be given to seeking grants for implementing protective measures.

Most of the other recommendations of this report comprise little more than routine maintenance. The following order of priorities sets out, in broad terms, the relative urgency of foreseeable repairs over the next five years. However, it is not a definitive programme of work and items further down the list could be brought forward if desired.

An indication of the range of likely cost, at present-day prices, is shown for each priority category. However, in many cases the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken. The figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard. V.A.T. is not included but is likely to be incurred on all repair work. No allowance has been made for inflation or for any professional fees.

I. OF UTMOST URGENCY:

None required.

II. ESSENTIAL within the next SIX MONTHS:

- a) Minor repairs to roof slating.
- b) Clearing and checking of all valley and eaves gutters, downpipes and gullies (repeat twice a year).
- c) Clear combustible materials well away from boiler in Heating Chamber.
- d) Lagging of incoming water supply pipe where exposed.
- e) Reinstatement of lightning conductor and damaged drainage channel, if not done already.

(Range of likely cost: £300 - £1,000)

III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- f) Refurbishment of Heating Chamber door; re-finishing of Vestry door.
- g) Repainting of railings round Heating Chamber steps and on northern boundary wall.
- h) Removal or encapsulation of asbestos in organ blower box.
- i) Re-setting of loose end panels of table tomb to north-east of church building.
- j) Re-painting of churchyard notice board.
- k) Re-setting of displaced step in flight to northern entrance.

(Range of likely cost: £500 - £1,000 excluding churchyard maintenance work)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- l) Renewal of wire mesh bird guards to opening vents in windows.
- m) Re-fixing of loose woodblock flooring in Vestry.
- n) Easing of stiff telescopic sections of communion rails.
- o) Consider replacing tungsten-halogen light fittings. Replace cable serving external light on Vestry with exterior grade material.
- p) Consider installing damp-proof membranes behind cross-slabs built into Porch walls.

(Range of likely cost: £500 - £9,000)

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- q) Re-pointing of specified limited areas of external stonework; repair of spalled stone of Vestry door surround.
- r) Patching of ridge pointing and of mortar fillets at abutments.
- s) Redecoration of Chancel and North Aisle ceilings.
- t) Testing of electrical installation (2014).
- u) Checking of churchyard trees by specialist.
- v) Consolidation of boundary walling.

(Range of likely cost: £3,500 - £6,000 excluding churchyard maintenance work)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- w) Review of structural crackings.

CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch., R.I.B.A.
CHARTERED ARCHITECT

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, COCKFIELD

UNDER THE INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955 AND
THE CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

DATE OF REPORT	27TH NOVEMBER 2010
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