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Ecclesiastical joinery of the first half of the seventeenth century in south Wiltshire and beyond: the influence of economic and social developments

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Have you the lion's part? Pray you, if it be, give it to me, for I am slow of study.

Midsummer Night's Dream: Act 1, Scene 2, line 234

'SLOW OF STUDY', says Snug the Joiner of himself, yet Peter Quince, his bookish carpenter colleague, is enthusiastically caught up in the smallest detail of their script. What does this tell us about the relative standing of Shakespeare's rude mechanicals at the start of the seventeenth century? And what do the church furnishings commissioned during the early seventeenth century and made by Snug tell us about the economic and social and Church infrastructure mobilized to support its implementation? There certainly appears to be a correlation between the programme of reordering of churches and the stimulation of the trade economy.



An invitation by the PCC of St John the Baptist, Tisbury, Wiltshire to come up with a reordering scheme to make the church more accessible for the twenty-first century, made it clear that a detailed examination of the woodwork was overdue. This involved a careful archeological inspection of seating and the church as a whole, and some outstanding research into archival material by Laurence Keen.¹ Comparison with other ecclesiastical joinery in the area has led to the conclusion that the pews at this church are of relatively inferior quality, and made more so by having been re-fashioned at least five times since installation in the 1630s. Nevertheless they have charm and patina, and their future has been given careful thought.

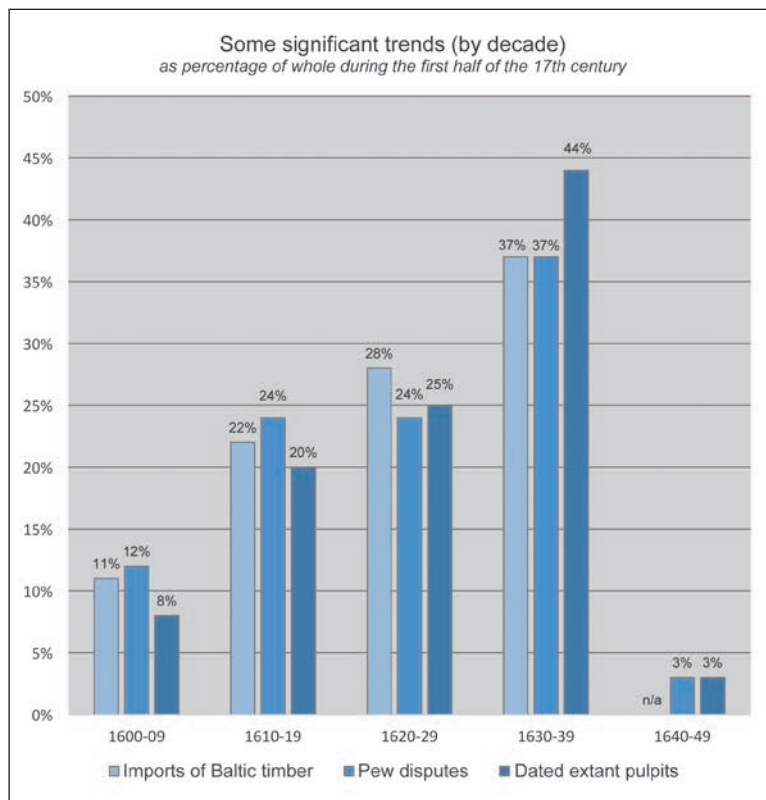
This specific case has encouraged a consideration of joinery of the period in other churches both in the Salisbury area of Wiltshire and elsewhere in the country. It has prompted reflections on the speed of the changes to church furnishings (principally within the single decade 1630–40) and their consistency across the country, and the secular infrastructure of materials and craftsmen. It has also raised the question of why the high standards of craftsmanship on display in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean buildings seem to fall away in the mid seventeenth century.

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Speed of change and consistency of work in parish churches

The speed of change across the country in churches of all types in the first decades of the seventeenth century was formidable. This is ground which has been well-covered by Fincham and Tyacke, Yates, Parry and others: suffice to say that by the 1640s, there had been a transformation in furnishings in almost every cathedral, including the introduction of coloured glass, silverware, wood-carving, and embroidered coverings to communion tables. In most parish churches the period saw less dramatic change, but many, perhaps most, parishes renewed their pulpit, reading desk and holy table, and introduced galleries, and sometimes carried out complete repewing. Under the changes espoused by Archbishops Laud and Neile and some like-minded bishops from the mid 1630s, parishes introduced altar rails and often tidied up their seating, and in some places there was pressure to introduce screens. Given the approximately eight thousand parish churches involved such change would be impressive if achieved today, even with the speed of modern communications.

Later re-orderings make it difficult to measure the relative rate of change in each decade after 1600. Nevertheless, Trevor Cooper



The chart compares three measures of activity in the first five decades of the seventeenth century: (a) English imports of Baltic timber (70% from Gdansk, the rest from Ducal Prussia, Latvia, Riga etc.); (b) recorded pew disputes in four English dioceses and the Star Chamber; (c) dated extant pulpits by decade of construction. For sources, see text.

has prepared an analysis of the known, dateable pulpits that are mentioned in Pevsner's collected *Buildings of England* series.² The statistics appear to demonstrate an acceleration from the early 1600s, with the highest level of activity in the decade of 1630–40. In fact, during each decade of the first half of the seventeenth century, there is a striking correlation between Cooper's analysis of dateable pulpits, the rise in the number of pew disputes,³ and imports of Baltic wainscot (discussed later)⁴ (see chart).

Some of this re-furnishing was a result of the increased formality in church worship encouraged by a number of key individuals, such as Laud and Neile. At each appointment these people could influence the liturgy, and the furnishings required to support it, in their cathedrals and university colleges and Royal Peculiars. They could also influence the choice and even the detail of style; and it is surely no coincidence that the detailing at, say, Laud's library at St John's or the paneling in the libraries, chapels and dining halls of Lincoln, Merton or Wadham Colleges (all completed before 1620) appear later to be echoed in the reordering of parish churches in the 1630s and 40s (Table 1).

The rapid career path of some of these key individuals (Table 2) gives some indication of how these views were promulgated across the country. Although they had little direct control of the style of furnishing in parish churches, we can assume they set the tone, commissioning work they deemed exemplary.

But it is notable that despite this speed of change and lack of top-down control, there was considerable consistency in both technique and surface decoration of church furniture. Chinnery has written about some of the contemporary joinery techniques used, noting the consistency of jointing, panel size, composition, proportion, dimensions, mouldings, carved motifs and arrangement of decorative panels,⁵ but he does not explain the reasons for the remarkable similarities that appear in work spread not only across England – from Devon to Durham, York to Yarmouth, Salisbury to Shrewsbury – but even more widely, from Copenhagen to Connecticut. Museums in Boston, Chicago and New York display examples of local, mid seventeenth century oak furniture that could easily be mistaken for an English or even a Salisbury equivalent.

What was happening that could account for both the similarity of work and the sudden decline in the standard of joinery (it occurred principally in the single decade 1630–40), this curious consistency over such a geographical spread? One clue to

Table 1: Some significant joinery projects

King's College Chapel (screen)	1533
Trinity College, Cambridge (chapel)	1564
Gonville and Caius, Cambridge	1565
Royal Exchange, London	1566
Middle Temple (dining hall)	1570
Longleat	1579
Emmanuel College, Cambridge	1584
Trinity Hall, Cambridge (chapel)	1584
Woollaton Hall	1588
Gray's Inn (Dining Hall screen)	1590
Montacute House	1596
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge	1596
St John's College, Oxford (Old Library)	1596
Hardwick Hall	1597
St John's College, Cambridge (2nd Court and library)	1598
<i>Accession of James</i>	1603
Wadham College, Oxford	1610
Merton College, Oxford (Tower of the Orders)	1610
Cantmarle, Dorset	1612
Oxford University Schools, (Tower of the Orders)	1613
Lincoln's Inn (dining hall)	1618
Lincoln College, Oxford	1618
Banqueting House, Whitehall	1622
Peterhouse, Cambridge (chapel)	1623
Exeter College, Oxford	1623
<i>Accession of Charles</i>	1625
Brancepeth	1626
Laud's appointment to Canterbury	1628
St John's, Leeds	1631
Inigo Jones's repairs and new portico to St Paul's	1631
St John's College, Oxford (Canterbury Quad)	1632
Lambeth Palace (stalls and screen)	1633
Laud's archiepiscopal visitation to Salisbury	1634
Balliol College Chapel (screen)	1636
Oriel College, Oxford	1637
Probable date for Tisbury pewing (see text)	1637

Table 2: Appointments of some key ‘ceremonialist’ clerics

		<i>start</i>	<i>end</i>
Lancelot Andrewes	Dean of Westminster Abbey	1601	1605
	Bishop of Chichester	1605	1609
	Bishop of Ely	1609	1619
	Dean of Chapel Royal	1617	1626
	Bishop of Winchester	1618	1626
Richard Neile	Bishop of Rochester	1608	1610
	Bishop of Lichfield	1610	1614
	Bishop of Lincoln	1614	1617
	Bishop of Durham	1617	1628
	Bishop of Winchester	1628	1631
	Archbishop of York	1631	1640
William Laud	Chaplain to Richard Neile, Bishop of Rochester	1608	1610
	President of St John's College, Oxford	1611	1621
	Dean of Gloucester	1616	1621
	Bishop of St David's	1621	1626
	Bishop of Bath and Wells	1626	1628
	Bishop of London	1628	1633
	Chancellor of Oxford University	1630	1641
	Archbishop of Canterbury	1633	1645
Richard Montagu	Dean of Hereford	1616	1617
	Archdeacon of Hereford	1617	1620
	Bishop of Chichester	1628	1638
	Bishop of Norwich	1638	1641
Matthew Wren	Dean of Windsor	1628	1635
	Bishop of Hereford	1634	1635
	Bishop of Ely	1638	1667
	Bishop of Norwich	1635	1638
	Prebendary of Westminster Abbey	1635	1638
John Cosin	Archdeacon of East Riding of Yorkshire	1625	1660
	Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge	1635	1643
	Dean of Peterborough	1640	1660
	Bishop of Durham	1660	1672



Fig. 1: Wainscot in the screens passage, Wadham College, Oxford. This well-executed work probably dates from 1610. The construction is standard, with a top horizontal panel with low-relief carving, dry mounted within rails and stiles.



Fig. 2: St John's, Tisbury, Wiltshire, detail of former pew door with traces of nailed dovetail hinges and green paint (of unknown date). The pews at this church date from the 1630s, but have since had a complex history of change and adaptation. A shell-head above a rail carved with rope-work guilloche is common in Wiltshire and the South-West. Note the 'dancing sea-horses' or, more probably, dolphins.



Fig. 3: St Peter's, Fugglestone, Wiltshire, a pew door almost certainly from the 1630s, now mounted as wainscot wall-panelling. The marks from the door-hinges are still visible on the right of the picture. Compare these repeating 'shell' decorations with those at Boscombe (Fig 5).

the American material may be found in the itinerant Puritan craftsmen who settled on the East coast of the America: sister villages to Tisbury and Chilmark (three miles apart in Wiltshire) lie within a few miles of each other on Martha's Vineyard and there is even a town called Salisbury in Connecticut. Artisans were the type to be attracted to the Utopian promise of the New World, taking their pattern books and skills with them and at the same time denuding the skill-pool of those that remained.⁶

But what were the factors at work on Snug, 'slow of study', still back in England, which enabled him to execute an apparent orthodoxy of design from Yorkshire to West Wiltshire, most particularly in the carved panels usually mounted in the uppermost frames (Figs 1–9)? There seem to be four factors: the power of the guilds, the organisation of workshops, the use of materials prepared on an industrial scale in the Baltic, and a shared source of visual inspiration in pattern books.

Fig. 4: St Peter's Alstonfield, Derbyshire, a box pew (now painted green) with deeper relief carving. The decorative elements are recognisably the same as found elsewhere – guilloche (interlinked circles) to enrich the linear elements, with serpentine sea-creatures, most probably based on Renaissance pattern-book versions of dolphins, used as decorative fillers, here combined with a thistle and rose.



Fig. 5: St Mary's Boscombe, Wiltshire. Below is a detail of a pew door and two side panels, collectively showing three different styles of surface decoration. The left hand panel is now made up into a reading desk below the pulpit. Compare the shell decoration on the frieze with that at Fugglestone (Fig. 3) and St Lawrence Stratford-sub-Castle (Fig. 19).





Fig. 6: St John's, Leeds, Yorkshire. The church was completed in 1634. The furnishings have been moved around since that time, but retain much of their original form. The pattern of carved top panel set as a frieze within joinery in the form of a 'kit of parts' is common across the country and will be found in many of the illustrations shown here.



Fig. 7: St Cuthbert's, Crayke, Yorkshire. The pulpit is dated 1637. The essential form, framing, decorative elements, panel sizes and construction details are common across the country.

Nature of the guilds, nationally and locally

During our period the Guilds, both merchant and craft, became more prominent than previously. After the abolition of private chapels and chantries in the Reformation, the Guilds had seemed to lose focus and ended with their original charters revoked.⁷ In response, they reformed themselves and obtained new secular charters, especially under James I who was alert to the revenue opportunities;⁸ substantial fees were charged for new charters for the emboldened towns as well as for the Guilds which both he and his successor, Charles I, saw as easy targets for forced loans and taxation, not least to finance wars.

Communal advantages of the Guilds included the bulk purchase of raw materials (especially from overseas), the shared use of tools (especially the larger ones, e.g. saw-pits and those that were capital-intensive), labour and training. Typically, they elected committees of overseers, regulating standards of workmanship, protection of trade interests and regulation of trading conditions. They appointed 'Viewers and Searchers' who had the power to visit workshops to inspect raw materials, finished articles and methods of production. When it came to training, the 'Great Statute of Artificers' in 1563 stipulated the terms of the apprenticeship system (seven years) after which it allowed admission as a 'journeyman' to the Freedom of the Company; it maintained a rigid social order between master, journeyman, apprentice. The Guilds both limited wages (an unpopular role when there was rampant inflation) and maintained the going rates for both labour and finished work. They were particularly protectionist against other trades, cut-price competitors, and 'strangers and foreigners' (a reflection, perhaps, of the resentment caused by the massive influx of Huguenot refugee craftsmen after

*Figs. 8 (below left and right):
St Michael's, Mere, Wiltshire, carved top rail to the backrest and a bench end. This work is reputedly by William Walter of nearby Maiden Bradley (see Fig. 21), c.1640. As elsewhere, the tops of the bench ends are crowned with shell-heads (integrated into the top rails and not merely planted on), and rope-work guilloche is used as a linear element. Along the back rail, sinuous shapes in low-relief fill the space, in basic shape not unlike the 'dolphins' at Tisbury or the serpentine figures at Alstonfield (Fig. 4).*



the 1560s).⁹ In London the demarcation between carpenters, turners, carvers, inlayers and joiners was zealously maintained.

Salisbury incorporated in 1612 after a 'long campaign of the merchant class for freedom from the Bishop's domination',¹⁰ and had a particularly flourishing wool export trade before 1650 (largely via Antwerp) as well as an active local woodwork industry. One of the first acts of the corporation under the new charter was to order all trades and crafts to form themselves into companies and submit their constitutions to be officially confirmed and sealed by the mayor. Although there had been a local Carpenters Guild since at least 1440, the new 'Joyners Guild' was formerly re-constituted in April 1617 with greater powers of enforcement and breadth of activities.¹¹ In the new charter, the Salisbury joiners



Fig. 9: St Michael and All Angels, Winterbourne Earls, Wiltshire, the pulpit. Notice on the upper rail the repeated shell-head decoration quite common in Wiltshire, and the horizontal paired 'hearts' in the upper panel, seen at Leeds and Crayke, Yorkshire (Figs 6 and 7) and even in a chest to be found in Guilford, New Haven County, USA (illustrated on page 445 of Victor Chinnery, Oak Furniture, for which see reading list at the end of this article).



Fig. 10a (top left): Cleaving quartered oak with a froe to produce quartered shingles and, with larger sections of timber, wainscot panels. Notice how the wainscot is wedge-shaped at this stage in the process – thicker at one side than the other. Because the oak is quartered (split across the rings) the expansion and contraction with changes in humidity are reduced and it will be much less prone to warp as it dries out.

Fig. 10b (top right): Quartering oak logs with wedges.

Fig. 10c (left): A froe, a typical splitting tool.

Fig. 10d (above): A froe being used for splitting longer boards. The wood is held in a frame, and the froe is being used as a lever to separate the boards.

Images from Peter Follansbee's website, pfollansbee.wordpress.com

Fig. 11a: A reconstruction of the medieval water-driven hammer at Abbaye de Fontenay, France, showing the use of water power for splitting logs. The water-wheel can be seen through the open doorway. The mill wheel drive-shaft is operating a heavy repetition hammer, by means of the 'cogs' on the axle. These cogs alternately push the end of the beam down, then release it suddenly; at the other end of the beam, off the frame to the left of the picture (and shown in Fig. 11b), is a heavy hammer which drops when the end of the beam is released.



Fig. 11b: The hammer at the end of the beam. Here it is set with a splitting tool, for industrial-scale riving of wood. Millions of square feet of wainscot are estimated to have been imported to England each year, a trade that nearly trebled between 1600 and 1630, with 70% originating from timber conversion yards in Gdansk.

were granted a concession unthinkable in London, permitting them to carry out ‘joyning, carving, inlaying and such turning as joiners do use’, thus trampling over the traditional demarcation lines. This may have contributed to a loss of focus, a dilution of skill and, later, falling standards.

From local archives pertaining to Salisbury, we now know of some individuals and their workshops, such as William Arnold’s craftsmen who moved from Montacute to work at Wadham College.¹² We know of Edward Batten, a joiner working at Chantmarle (Dorset),¹³ of the Beckham family (Reynold, John, William, Benjamin and Humphrey), of the painter-carver Rosgrave,¹⁴ and of Thomas Caper, a Flem described as ‘a resident of Salisbury’, who made the pulpit in 1631 for Newport, Isle of Wight.¹⁵

Workshops, local joiners and carvers

According to Dick Reid, an experienced master carver based at York,¹⁶ carvers, then as now, seldom design, create or develop ornament but tend to copy modify, adapt and stretch from templates and pattern books. Results depend on the templates and tools available. Simpler patterns were devised that were capable of being replicated by less experienced hands; much can be achieved with four to six standard chisels and a set of punches (to give background texture).

From the earliest times, even up to 1980s, there was a ‘union’ rate, and an ‘ability’ rate, which was tiered between mere surface-relief carvers to those who could carve ‘in the round’ (i.e. three-dimensionally). A competent three-dimensional carver could thus earn almost double the rate of pattern-carvers engaged on simple surface decoration. There is little doubt in Dick Reid’s mind that



Fig. 12: An example of medullary rays from quartered oak. Medullary rays extend vertically through the tree across and perpendicular to the growth rings and allow the radial transmission of sap. When wood is quarter sawn (cut with the rings perpendicular to the face of the board) the medullary rays can produce beautiful patterns. Panels would often be selected merely because of the visual quality of their medullary rays. This would suggest that such panels were never intended to be painted.



Fig. 13: A typical layout of a seventeenth-century joiner's workshop, at Den Gamle By, Aarhus, Denmark.

the issue of the 1617 Salisbury Joiners' Guild charter, breaking up the traditional, local demarcation lines between the joiners, carvers, inlayers and turners, will have contributed to a lowering of standards in each discipline.

For example, the guilloche on rails of the pew panels at Tisbury (Fig. 2) is a much-simplified interpretation of the more elaborate detail found in contemporary furniture and joinery across Europe and North America. It is swiftly executed with a straight, hollow gouge with two sharp blows with a mallet, first at a slanting angle on the diagonal and then vertically – quaint and effective but hardly evidence of a master-carver at work.

Little detailed analysis has been done on the manning, layouts and sizes of workshops in our period, and there is ample opportunity for further research through wills and local records. Nevertheless it is the author's and Dick Reid's contention that not much has changed over the centuries. In Den Gamly By (in Aarhus, Denmark), a typical seventeenth century early joiner's workshop is presented which very closely resembles the author's from the 1970s and 80s, and those he remembers of joiners and cabinet-makers in the Salisbury area during the 1960s.

This would suggest that, typically, Snug's workshop might have had between four and ten bench-bound, workshop-based employees who prepared the components for any framed paneling, then disassembled them into manageable sections for transportation to site, where they were dry-jointed and pegged before fixing. Wainscot panels that required surface decoration



Fig. 14: Cabinet in the chateau, Azay le Rideau, Loire, France. The decorative devices used by joiners in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (compare this Figure and Fig. 15 with the other illustrations) are remarkably consistent across Europe and were clearly derived from pattern books and widely disseminated through prints.



Figs. 15 (above and opposite): Early seventeenth-century cupboard and wainscot in the Mayor's House, Den Gamle By, Aarhus, Denmark; all the familiar decorative devices are present in the woodwork and are even painted onto the walls.

could either be sent off to a nearby carvers' workshop and returned prior to assembly, or carved in the joiner's workshop by an itinerant journeyman, who would most probably be available to other local workshops as well – again, then as now. Later, noticeably after the 1630s with the softening of the demarcation between the trades, joiners were taught the setting out and some of the simpler techniques for decoration.

Baltic timber trade, Poland and the production of wainscot

During the Middles Ages, Belgium and Netherlands were almost totally deforested and even in England, forest cover was



never as great as folklore would have us believe. Rackham's analysis of Domesday Book seems to indicate 12% forest cover in 1086 and a slight increase to 15% by the early seventeenth century. As early as the ninth century, large volumes of timber came from the surrounding northern European regions; by the early seventeenth century, by which time the Hanseatic League had formed into a disciplined commercial network, 80–90% of English exports were wool and textiles and the principal balancing import had become timber.¹⁷

Timber exports were much aided by Renaissance advances in navigation and ship design. For example, the cargo capacity of a Hanseatic cog (a type of ship) before the fourteenth century

Fig. 16: Detail of joinery, Rowallan Castle, Ayrshire, Scotland (c.1600). Note the same serpentine, dolphin-like monster that can be found in decorative panels all over Europe, as well as the shell-head decoration in the upper panel.



was 90–100 tonnes; in the fifteenth century a hold could carry 300 tonnes. By contrast, the caravels (another type of ship) of the late sixteenth century could carry up to 1000 tonnes.¹⁸ This increased capacity meant deeper submersion and required deeper, better organized (and fewer) harbours, which made the trade easier to monitor for political and revenue control.

The area now known as Poland (where the forest cover was and remains typically about 35–40%), was a principal source for oak and for good reason; the oak was far superior, principally because the forestry management in the region produced taller, straighter, slower-grown trees which provided for boards that were knot-free, low in tannin, light in weight, dimensionally stable and easy to work. Native English oak was and is faster grown, more likely to have come from open fields and deer parks, so tending to be gnarled and crooked – ideal for ships keels, beams and braces but less consistent or suited for fine decorative work. Moreover, the preparation and seasoning of boards, especially of English oak, required heavy hauling and splitting equipment not available to the ordinary joiner. It would have been easier and cheaper for Snug to buy pre-prepared components.



Fig. 17a: Cabinet in Chicago Fine Art Museum.



Fig. 17b: Detail of chair in New Haven Museum, Connecticut.



Fig. 17c: Cabinets in Metropolitan Museum, NYC.

*Figs. 18 (right and opposite):
St Andrew's, Great Durnford,
Wiltshire, pulpit (dated 1619), possibly
by Humphrey Beckham, with early
pulpit hanging (1657). The rope-work
guilloche is common in the area, as is
the arch, here carved into the panel in
shallow relief.*



Trees from forests along the river Vistula, some as far as 300km upstream, were floated down to Gdansk, mostly in two periods, (March to May and September to December). It took about three weeks to arrive from the upper reaches. At Gdansk it was cut into shorter, manageable lengths in well-organised timber-conversion yards. From there, the components were packaged in bundles, and shipped to the major ports such as London, Amsterdam and above all, Antwerp – the supreme international and cultural exchange city of Europe. A further long sea voyage would show up any tendency to warp or split so what came to market was already well seasoned. A time of six to twelve months was achievable from tree-felling to arrival as planks in London, Antwerp or Amsterdam.¹⁹

Until the Industrial Revolution, sawing timber along its length in saw-pits was an expensive process. By contrast, split and riven boards were relatively easy to produce, especially if, as with the Elizabethan and Jacobean joinery, the panels were small and splitting was mechanically assisted with water-driven hammers (Figs 10–13). Straight-grained oak splits (or is ‘riven’) cleanly and easily at 90 degrees to the growth rings; a few subsequent strokes with a smoothing plane produce fine surfaces decorated with medullary rays (a particularly attractive characteristic of oak when



converted with tree-rings perpendicular to the face). Timber that is ‘quartered’ in this way is dimensionally stable and not prone to warp.

Wainscot is the term originally applied to these high-quality riven panels. Framing member such as rails, stiles and muntins (the horizontal, main vertical and intermediate vertical components) were exported from Poland, sometimes with special profiles complete with tongues, grooves and mouldings and even joints prepared prior to shipping.²⁰ Provincial English joiners could thus order from their local market town a package of mass-produced components and simply cut them to length. At a time when transport costs could be as much as three or four times that of the raw material,²¹ it helped if the city or market town was close to a navigable river.

Opinions vary about the quantities produced but at a conservative estimate, there were millions of square feet of wainscot imported to England each year,²² a trade that nearly



Figs. 19 (above and opposite top): St Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle, near Salisbury, Wiltshire. The arch on the central panel of the pulpit is not carved out of the wood, but added afterwards, held on by nails. The guilloche ornament on the middle rail and the geometric strapwork in the frieze are rather crudely carved in low relief, as are the familiar shell decoration on the cornice, canopy and bottom rail.



trebled between 1600 and 1630, with 70% originating from Gdansk.²³ This goes a long way to explain so much consistency – the raw material supply of components from the Baltic was the same for Leith, Yarmouth, London, Salisbury or Exeter.

Sources for decorative carving

It is now well established that the sources for the decorative motifs, including those used in carving, came through Renaissance prints that were widely disseminated throughout Europe.²⁴ There were four principal printed sources.

The first was Sebastiano Serlio's (1475–1554) *I sette libri dell'architettura* (*Seven Books of Architecture*), published in 1537 and widely circulated in Europe. Although the first English translation was not published until 1611, prints were available a full half-century earlier in England. The second was Jacques Androuet du Cerceau's (1510–84) *Plus Excellents Bastiments de France* (1579) including fanciful engravings of decorative architectural elements and ornament, especially influential for designers and craftsmen of Antwerp (in a style known as Northern Mannerism). The third was from Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–1607) a Dutch Renaissance architect, painter and engineer, known for books on

Fig. 20 (below): Side panel in St Mary's, Winterbourne Gunner, Wiltshire, originally from St Giles's, Imber, on the Salisbury Plain. This pew panel has similar shell head and rope-work motifs to those found elsewhere in the area, but poorly executed. The decorated panel below has the fretwork incised into the decorative panel rather than being left in relief, as at Tisbury (Fig. 2). Compare also the upper pulpit panel at St Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle (Fig. 19). This is a curious piece.





Figs. 21 (above and opposite): The pews and pulpit at All Saints, Maiden Bradley, Wiltshire. The lower part of the pulpit has been altered or added. Compare the rope-work guilloche, design of the shells and geometric fretwork with that at Mere (Fig. 8). All the timber sections are substantial, and well-selected; all the mouldings are crisp and confidently executed.

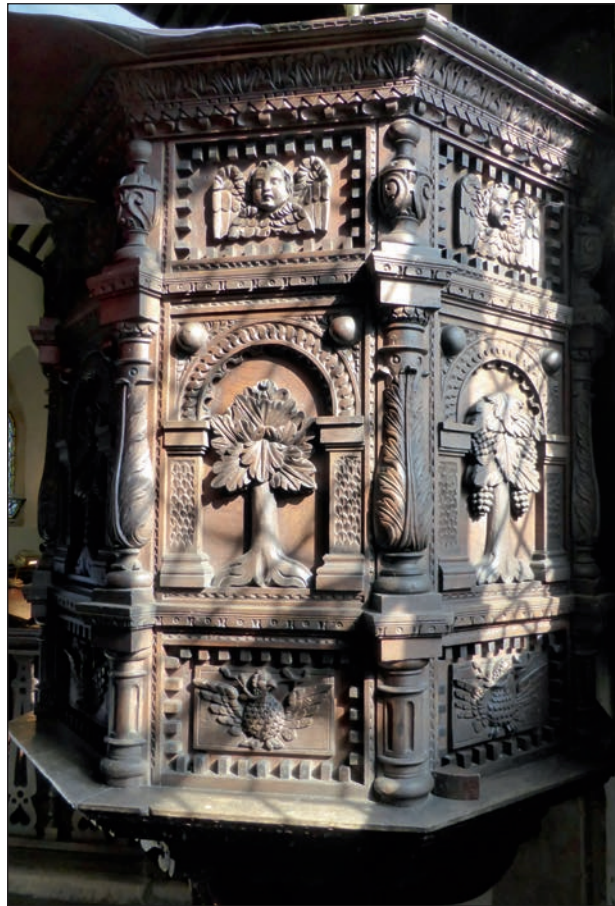
garden designs (1583,) ornaments (1565) and perspective (1604), who fled Antwerp in 1585 because of Spanish occupation, and moved to Frankfurt. The fourth source was Wendel Dietterlin (1550–1599), a German mannerist painter, printmaker and architectural theoretician, best known for his treatise on architectural ornament *Architectura: von Austheilung, Symmetria und Proportion der Fünff Seulen*, published in its final edition in Nuremberg 1598.

This international set of decorative elements influenced the often quite humble world of English parish church furnishings. For example, some of the pews at Tisbury are decorated by what initially appeared to be simplified, two-dimensional sea-horses. Further enquiry would suggest they are actually panel fillers representing dolphins, a common motif in paneled joinery of the period. The dolphin was abundantly celebrated from Etruscan times, and from the Renaissance onwards it was an extremely popular decorative motif, especially in Italy and all over France (where it was *de rigueur* in the decorative arts of French Crown, even though there is no real knowledge why the heir to the

throne was known by that name), appearing on coins, sculpture, door-knockers, prints, and tapestries. In seventeenth-century joinery across Europe, dolphins appear as decoration in both secular and ecclesiastical wood and stonework. It has been claimed that the dolphin was also a symbol for sacramental fish, with wine and a basket of bread, to represent the Eucharist and the Last Supper in Christian art,²⁵ but this does not appear to have much



Fig. 22: St Mary's Wyllye, the pulpit, originally from the church at Wilton. This particularly exuberant pulpit is dated 1628 (not visible in the photograph) and shows work of turners, inlayers, joiners and carvers – the four principal woodwork disciplines traditionally represented by separate Guilds; conventional demarcation lines were, in 1617, relaxed in favour of the Joiners Guild in Salisbury permitting members to carry out 'joyning, carving, inlaying and such turning as joyners do use'.



pre-occupied Snug or his contemporaries. Unlike the representation of cherubs or angels, more tell-tale signs of high church sentiment, there appears to be no particular significance to their deployment in church furnishings.

Comparing the output of contemporary Salisbury craftsmen against those, say, in Suffolk, York or Somerset, it seems they favoured the Flemish-inspired ornament and to have followed de Vries more than the others. They were not isolated in this – similar decoration can be found in a small cabinet in the Loire at Chateau Azay le Rideau (Fig. 14), in houses and churches in Denmark (Fig. 15), in Scotland (Fig. 16), in Flanders²⁶ and in New England (Fig. 17).

All the decorative elements appear to be derived from the same prints and pattern books that were reinterpreted by the master craftsmen and set out using 'pricked' chalking templates in card or leather;²⁷ these could be rolled up in a tool-box (and even transported to across the Atlantic to New England by a dissenting artisan). Our joiner, Snug, was no Grinling Gibbons and although

he might not have owned his own versions of the actual Flemish prints, he probably had access to his Master's copies. The chosen decoration was adapted to swift, deft execution using a few well-practiced strokes of a carving chisel.

Seventeenth century work in the Salisbury area

We can see the fruits of the Salisbury craftsmen's labours in churches local to Salisbury, including what remains of their work in Fugglestone (Fig. 3), Mere (Fig. 8), Winterbourne Earls (Fig. 9), Great Durnford (Fig. 18), Stratford-sub-Castle (Fig. 19), Middle Woodford, Winterbourne Gunner (Fig. 20), Maiden Bradley (Fig. 21), Bruton, Wylke (Fig. 22), Sherrington (Fig. 23a), and in Salisbury (St Thomas's), as well as slightly further afield at Puddletown and Folke (Fig. 23b) in Dorset.

The applied decoration, in particular of carved scrolled guilloche detail, the shellheads, the decorated top panels, were done by immediately recognisable 'techniques'. These were either by those of a few itinerant carvers who moved between these local workshops or (less likely) by individuals who were attached to particular employers. Dick Reid cautions against the detection of 'recognisable hands' in surface decoration (as opposed to relief carving) since identical patterns tended to be used in individual workshops over many years and were often part-prepared by the less-skilled.²⁸

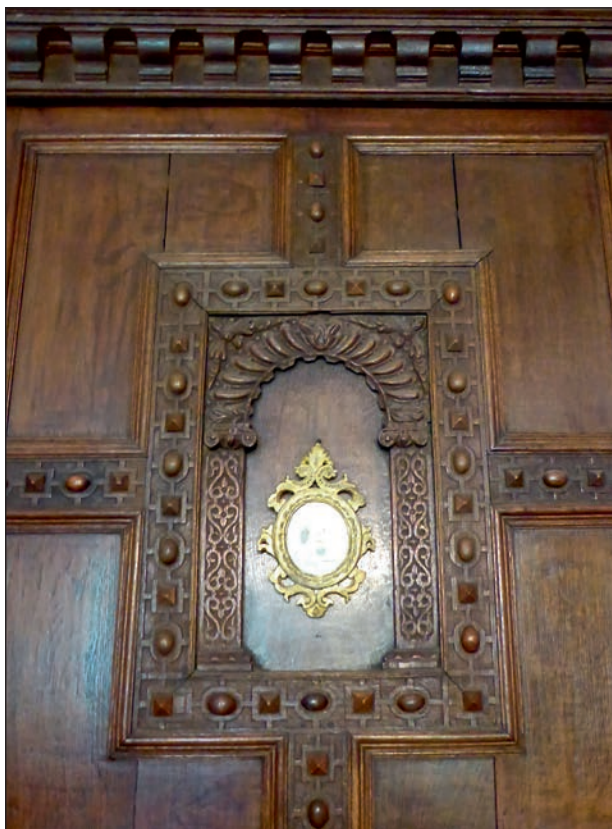
In Salisbury diocese the typical quality of the work falls away as the seventeenth century progressed, and this was probably a widespread phenomenon. By the time of the late 1630s, the timber sections are thinner, the mouldings and mitres are less crisp and the decoration is more two-dimensional; examples can be seen at Tisbury (Fig. 2), Fugglestone (Fig. 3). Winterbourne Earls (Fig. 9), and Winterbourne Gunner (Fig. 20). The whole effect is

Figs. 23: Pew details from Folke, Dorset and Sherrington, Wiltshire. The Folke example almost certainly dates from the rebuilding of 1628. The basic shell pattern is familiar from other illustrations shown here. Whereas at Mere (Fig. 8) and Tisbury (Fig. 2) and Maiden Bradley (Fig. 21) the shell is carved from a block separately attached to a framed bench end, at these two churches the entire bench end is a single plank, not panelled within a frame – an old-fashioned approach.



Fig. 24 (top right): Detail of joinery, dining hall, Wadham College. Within the smaller square of the pattern is a decorated arch, a common detail in Renaissance paintings and pattern books; a more elaborate version of this detail can be found at Lincoln College (following image).

Fig. 25 (bottom right): Detail of over-mantel panelling, Lincoln College, Oxford c.1618. The carved relief detail is noticeably deeper, richer, crisper and more elaborate than tends to be found in the 1630s.



reduced. Nails, rather than joints, are more evident for attaching the deeper mouldings and decorative elements. It is almost as if either the local journeymen had stopped trying, or the hybrid vigour that had emerged in the late sixteenth century through the combined talents of dedicated architects and Huguenot émigrés

had just petered out. Perhaps our joiner, Snug, was under such pressure to churn out the work on mass-produced scale than he could not keep up. Perhaps the downward pressure on prices removed the passion for excellence; perhaps the zeal of the Guild's 'Viewers and Searchers' was waning; perhaps the effect of the Salisbury Joiners' new charter of 1617 was to spread skills too thinly; perhaps the pressures of the tendering process followed the usual trajectory, squeezing out talent and favouring the mundane.

The standards of the joinery in, for example, Tisbury can scarcely bear comparison with the high-quality work apparent in the university colleges like Wadham (Fig. 24), St John's, Lincoln (Fig. 25), Peterhouse or the late Elizabethan and Jacobean 'prodigy' houses in the Wiltshire area like Montacute (Fig. 26), Longford Castle or Longleat. These houses were created under the control of architects such as William Arnold, Robert Smythson and John Thorpe and the woodwork carries energetic, fluent carving and mouldings in deep relief. Similarly, the better surviving pulpits of this period such as Abbotsbury (Fig. 27), Maiden Bradley (Fig. 21) and Wilton (now in Wylke) (Fig. 22), display robust, high-quality three-dimensional turning, carving and inlaying in the blind arches, fluted columns and shell details.

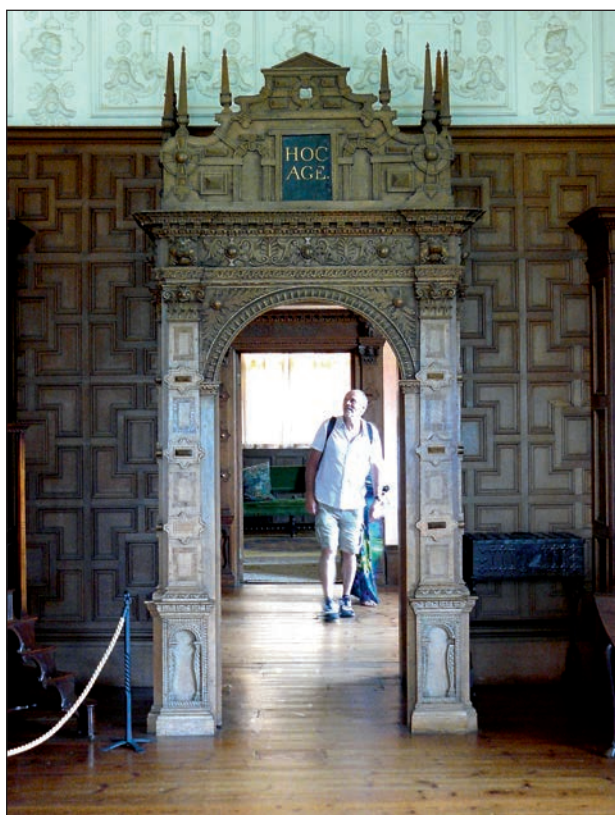


Fig. 26: Detail of joinery in Montacute, Somerset. This is very high quality workmanship, requiring a range of different trades to build up the decorative elements. The square within a larger square is a motif commonly found (as at Wadham and Lincoln College, the previous two Figures).

These were clearly intended to impress and display something of their costs. It is probably no coincidence that the Abbotsbury pulpit bears a partly-legible family coat of arms, indicating it may have been a personal gift, perhaps connected with the Strangways' estate,²⁹ while Wilton and Maiden Bradley churches adjoined respectively the homes of the Earl of Pembroke (James I was a regular visitor to Wilton House) and the Duke of Somerset, who might well have contributed handsomely. This would explain the high quality of the furniture compared with places where churchwardens were obliged to fund their interiors from parishioners, by means of church rates, pew rents or similar.

Conclusions

It seems clear that the principle reason for the consistency of technique over such a wide geographical area, not just in Britain but also northern Europe and New England was owing to the semi-industrial provision of similar dimensioned timber stock – supplied as a kit of parts. The movement of itinerant craftsmen and the re-use of print and pattern books would tend towards the repetition of decorative elements.

The role of the re-established Guilds was instrumental in training, thus maintaining the standards and orthodoxy of technique, although standards were certainly slipping towards the end of the reign of Charles I. In addition to the possible causes already listed this may also have been because there was so much refurbishment of churches that the market became saturated, practitioners became less motivated and the resentment of some

Fig. 27: St Mary's, Abbotsbury, Dorset. The pulpit is of very high quality. The arches have been carved separately, then applied to the panels. Although the standard of workmanship is high, there is rather little by way of fresh invention, merely a skilful reworking of standard patterns.



church wardens in complying with new requirements led to them opting for the cheapest options. Only when a rich patron took a personal interest do we tend to find a return to earlier standards.

All this goes a long way to explain the standardised, rather inferior work at Tisbury, where the principal local noble family, the Arundells, were still paying substantial fines for continuing to practice as Catholics and were probably indifferent to the quality of workmanship in their parish church, and unwilling to sponsor anything at all special.

The recent techniques developed for dendro-provenancing (initially in relation to religious painted panels) has opened up a wealth of further research opportunities about the Baltic timber trade. Similarly, as Keen's research on Tisbury and Chantmarle has shown, there is a considerable unexplored material accessible in local town and county archives about individual craftsmen and their workshops. Other areas meriting further investigation include: the revenues recorded in the contemporary port books; the migration movements of individual craftsmen; the iconography of some of the decorative elements; the extent that Guilds were really responsible for the quality of their members work and how far their geographical influence extended. It is difficult to ignore the fact that the increasing tax revenues from trade via the ports wool export and timber imports must have greatly benefitted crown revenues, whether by accident or intent, without alienating the nobles on whom royal power depended; this also merits further investigation.

Finally, the collation of a definitive photo library of Jacobean joinery, with all the pattern recognition and sorting facilities of modern digitized image formats, would greatly add to our available knowledge.

Acknowledgements

I am particularly grateful to Trevor Cooper, Laurence Keen OBE, FSA, Prof. Peter McCullough, Prof. Robert Neild, and Dr Nicholas Riall FSA for advice and bringing specific publications (and, in some cases, unpublished material) to my attention. Special mention must also go to Dick Reid with whom I have, over many years, pooled our shared experience of how craftsmen actually work and think.

Further reading

This short bibliography lists some key works relating to seventeenth-century furniture, guilds (including those in the Salisbury area), and the Baltic timber trade, together with some general discussions of Reformation changes to English church interiors.

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- V. Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: the British Tradition* (Woodbridge, 1979).
- ‘Trade Companies since 1612’, in E. Crittal (ed.), *Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire* (1962), VI, 136–38.
- ‘Tisbury’, in D. A. Crowley (ed.), *Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire* (1987), XIII, 195ff.
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- C. H. Haskins, *The Ancient Trade Guilds and Companies of Salisbury* (Salisbury, 1912).
- S. Jervis, *Printed Furniture Designs before 1650* (London, 1974).
- G. Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour – the Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge, 2006).
- E. Power and M. Postan, *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1933).
- RCHME, *Ancient and Historical Monuments in the City of Salisbury* (London, 1980).
- O. Rackham, *The History of the Countryside* (London, 1986).
- O. Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: its History, Vegetation and Uses in England* (2003).
- C. Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture in England: a Traffic in Piety* (Woodbridge, 2001).
- T. Wazny, ‘Baltic timber in Western Europe – an exciting dendrochronological question’, *Dendrochronologia*, 20(3) (2002), 1–8.

T. Wazny, 'The origins, assortments and transport of Baltic timber', in C Van de Velde et al (eds), *Constructing Wooden Images* (Brussels, 2005), 115–126.

A. Wells-Cole, *The Art of Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Influence of Continental Prints, 1558–1625* (New Haven and London, 1997).

R. Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge, 2010).

N. Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship – the Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600–1900* (Oxford, 2000).

H. Zins, *England and the Baltic in the Elizabethan era*, (Manchester, 1972).

Notes

- 1 Keen concludes that the Tisbury joinery is made up of a mixture of pieces from seventeenth century box pews with fragments datable to 1637; that the sills and pew bases are not original and, importantly, the pew ends show evidence of being reused doors. None of the original pews survive in their original state. What now survives is a hotchpotch of seventeenth and 18th century woodwork, reordered in 1827, 1854 and 1871 and several times since. (L. Keen, *Architectural, Historical and Archeological Assessment of St John the Baptist, Tisbury* (Dorchester: prepared for Parochial Church Council, 2014). See also Luke Hughes, *St John the Baptist, Tisbury: Survey of seating joinery* (London: Luke Hughes and Company, 2013).
- 2 Trevor Cooper, 'The interior arrangement of the English parish church from Elizabeth I to 1640' (forthcoming) in P. S. Barnwell & Trevor Cooper (eds.), *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 1550–1689*, Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment (Donington: Shaun Tyas, forthcoming). I am very grateful to Trevor Cooper for permission to use in this paper his forthcoming results for the number of dated pulpits.
- 3 Catherine Wright, 'The spatial ordering of community in English church seating, c. 1550–1700' (PhD Thesis, University of Warwick, 2002), p. 89ff. I am grateful to Dr N. Riall for drawing this reference to my attention. As Dr Wright points out, a similar (though not identical) profile is reported for a different group of jurisdictions by Kevin Dillow in 'The social and ecclesiastical significance of church seating arrangements and pew disputes, 1500–1740' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1990), pp193–95.
- 4 H. Zins, *England and the Baltic in the Elizabethan era* (Manchester, 1972), Fig. 7.13.
- 5 V. Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: the British Tradition* (Woodbridge, 1979), 118 ff.
- 6 For the work carried out by a particular New England workshop in the seventeenth century, see Peter Follansbee and John D. Alexander, 'Seventeenth-century joinery from Braintree, Massachusetts: the Savell shop tradition', in Luke Beckerdite, *American Furniture* (1996), available online at www.chipstone.org/article.php/222/American-Furniture-1996/Seventeenth-Century-Joinery-from-Braintree,-Massachusetts:-The-Savell-Shop-Tradition (accessed May 2015).
- 7 V. Chinnery, *Oak Furniture*, 23ff.
- 8 For example, the London-based Carpenters Company received its new charter in 1607.
- 9 After the Spanish Wars of Religion in the 1560s, over 50,000 Huguenots are estimated to have fled from the Low Countries to England, putting great strain on individual cities; in Norwich, there number may have been as high as 30% of the population (see C. Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture in England: a Traffic in Piety* (Woodbridge, 2001), 33).
- 10 RCHME, *Ancient and Historical Monuments in the City of Salisbury* (London, 1980), I, xlvii.

- 11 'Trade Companies since 1612', in E. Crittal (ed.), *Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire* (1962), VI, 136–38; C. H. Haskins, *The Ancient Trade Guilds and Companies of Salisbury* (Salisbury, 1912), 340. Joiners' Hall survives in St Ann Street, Salisbury, though much of its interior has been lost.
- 12 M. Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture: its Rise and Fall, 1540–1640* (New Haven and London, 2009).
- 13 Edward Batten of Salisbury made the ceilings, pulpit and pews: 'Againe to this Chappell Edward Batten of Salisbury did make and sett up sielings of wainscot viz. in the North part a pulpit, the Minister's pewe, & another pewe, and two lower pews behind that, likewise on the South part, two higher & two Lower pews, and also seates be round the Chappell, which was all finished 20th February 1617, and for this Batten had of me by Composition 11 li. 8s. 0d. (John Hutchins, *History of Dorset*, 2nd edition (1813), vol III, 299, quoted by L. Keen in 'Chantmarle, Cattistock. Sir John Strode's account of his building and the consecration of his oratory or chapel', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, 133 (2012), 37–41).
- 14 V. Chinnery, *Oak Furniture*, 449.
- 15 C. Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture*, 35, 197.
- 16 From private conversation with Dick Reid OBE, master carver based in York, now in his eighties and responsible *inter alia* for the restoration of carvings at Hampton Court and Windsor Castle after their respective fires. He is Training Coordinator and Court Assistant of the Worshipful Company of Masons, formerly a Trustee of the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, Master of the Art Workers' Guild in London 2003–4 and a past President of the Master Carvers' Association. In 2002 Dick was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of York.
- 17 For this section, see the various relevant works listed in the bibliography. In general, written sources (mostly custom records) confirm the trade; dendrochronology reflects its scale and, most recently dendro-provenancing (matching tree-rings with particular geographical areas to establish the provenance of a piece of timber) increasingly confirms the source.
- 18 T. Wazny, 'The origins, assortments and transport of Baltic timber', in C Van de Velde et al (eds), *Constructing Wooden Images* (Brussels, 2005), 115–126, p. 115.
- 19 T. Wazny, *Origins*, 123–24.
- 20 O. Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: its history, vegetation and uses in England* (2003), 151 and 462.
- 21 See R. Neild, 'Nevile and his Court: the turbulent history of Nevile's Court, Trinity College, Cambridge', *Georgian Group Journal*, 22 (2014) and R. Neild, 'How Nevile built Trinity', *Construction History*, (30:1, 2015), 39–51.
- 22 Adam Bowett, *Woods in British Furniture Making 1400–1900* (Kew Publishing, 2012), xi–xiv, 242–50, 320; N. Riall, *Renaissance Stalls at the Hospital of St Cross*, The Hospital of St Cross and Almshouses of Noble Poverty, 2014.
- 23 See graph in text.
- 24 See Summerson and Girouard in outline, and Jervis and Wells-Cole in formidable detail: J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530–1830* (1983); M. Girouard, *Elizabethan Architecture*. For Jervis and Wells-Cole, see the list of further reading.
- 25 C. Avery, *A School of Dolphins* (2009), 120–33.
- 26 See e.g. the illustration of paneling in St Catherine, Birtles, Cheshire, made up of remains of seventeenth-century Flemish choir stalls, in C. Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture*, 73.
- 27 A. Wells-Cole illustrates copies of pages from such pattern-books used by the Abbot family, plasterers and joiners in Exeter (*The Art of Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: the Influence of Continental Prints, 1558–1625* (New Haven and London, 1997), 160–61).
- 28 In New England, the Savell workshop in Braintree, Massachusetts produced a series of objects with more or less identical carving (Peter Follansbee and John D. Alexander, 'Seventeenth-century joinery', *passim*).
- 29 RCHME, An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Dorset, vol I (West), 1952, 3. The arms are described as 'Egioke (?) impaling Denham'.

Peter F. Anson, ‘Pilgrim Artist’

Nick Chapple

Peter F. Anson (1889–1975) was, despite his restless, roving life, a prolific artist and writer, best known to ecclesiologists for his book, *Fashions in Church Furnishings, 1840–1940*. Anson’s life and work was equally divided between his two passions: on the one hand, the religious life and its manifestations in church buildings; on the other hand, the sea and seafaring folk. Nevertheless his legacy of work in each field is still significant in itself. A large collection of his carefully observed and finely executed drawings, including much of the original artwork for *Fashions in Church Furnishings*, is held today in the Historic England Archive.¹ This article provides a short introduction to the man and his work and a selection of images from the archive.

After a childhood troubled by ill health, at 19 Anson enrolled at the Architectural Association (AA) School in London. While there he became fascinated by the work of A. W. N. Pugin and frequented churches noted for their ritual and display such as St Mary’s, Bourne Street, St Matthew’s, Westminster, and St Mary’s, Primrose Hill. After two years at the AA, Anson joined the Benedictine community on Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, where in 1913 he was received into the Roman Catholic church.

Having struggled for many years to adapt himself to the monastic way of life in several communities, it was clear to Anson by the mid-1920s that he would instead have to make his career as an artist and writer. What he described as the turning point in his artistic career came in the summer of 1919 when he spent several weeks in the studio of topographical artist and engraver

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St Mary’s, Brigg, Lincolnshire, (ME001096, reproduced by permission of Historic England).

F. L. Griggs, in Chipping Campden.² Anson's first published book illustrations appeared in the same year and his first exhibition, mostly of maritime subjects, followed in 1922.

The years 1929–36 were described by Anson as his 'Pilgrim Artist Period' and it is from this time that much of the collection in the Historic England Archive derives.³ Wandering through the British Isles, Europe and the Middle East he sent back drawings of churches and religious houses for publication in the Catholic newspaper *The Universe*. In 1946 he estimated that over 800 of his drawings had been published in the paper.⁴ He also published, in 1938, *The Caravan Pilgrim*, an illustrated account of his travels across Britain in a gipsy caravan. He continued to produce drawings based on photographs taken during these travels through the Second World War when travel was impossible in Europe and difficult even at home.

In 1934 Anson was commissioned by the editor of *The Universe* to go to Walsingham in north Norfolk, to draw the priory ruins and the Slipper Chapel. While in Norfolk, Anson became acquainted with artist-craftsmen James and Lilian Dagless, who agreed to work with him to design and execute schemes for decorating and furnishing churches. Just a few such schemes were realised before the outbreak of the Second World War, but 'out of these jobs', Anson later recalled, 'came the inspiration to write and illustrate a big book dealing with the planning and furnishing of churches.'⁵

Biddlestone Chapel, Northumberland. The country house to which it was attached was later demolished, but the chapel survives in the care of the Historic Chapels Trust (ME001118, reproduced by permission of Historic England).





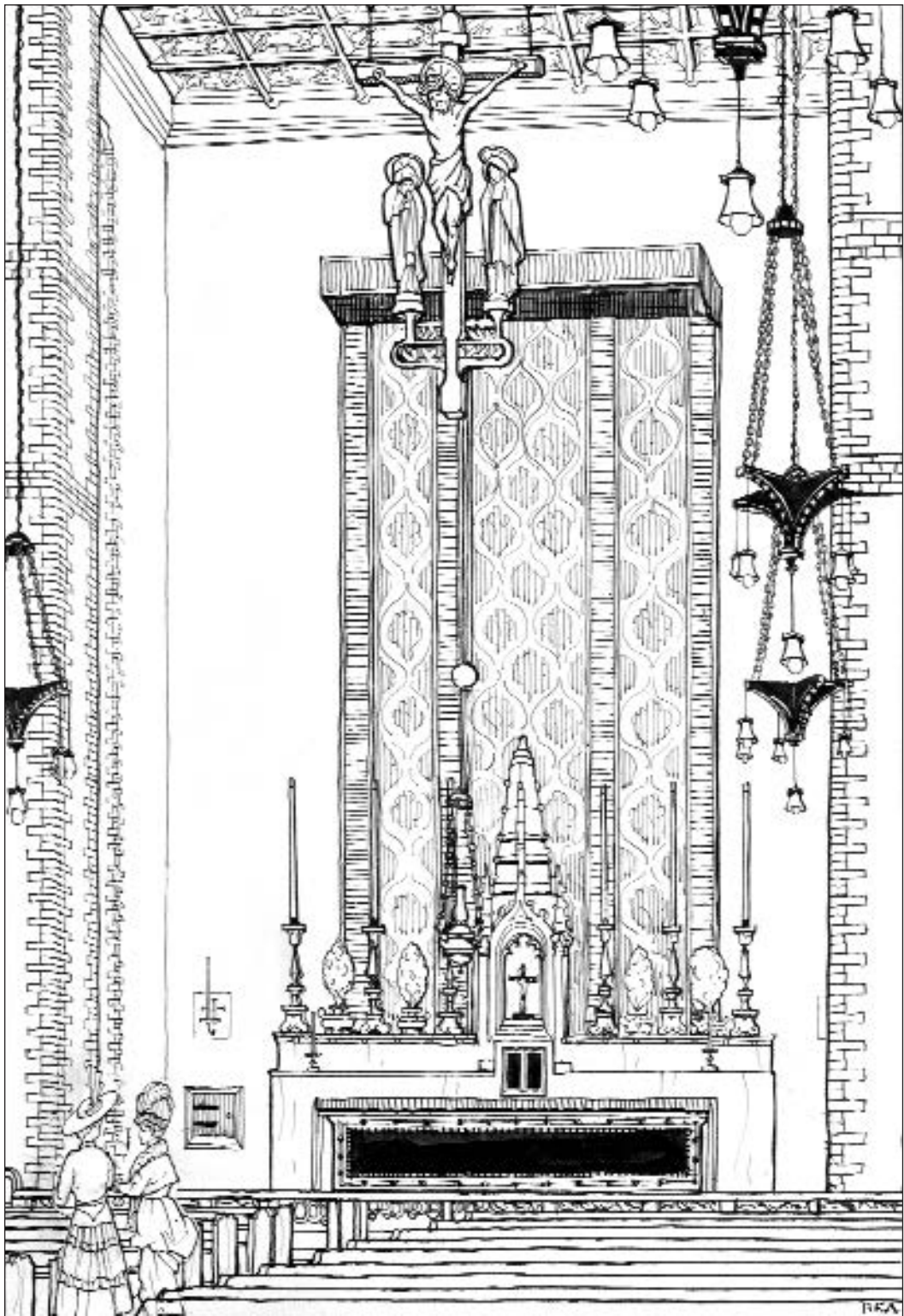
St Mary's, Primrose Hill, London, where Anson had early experiences of Anglo-Catholic ritual (ME001860 reproduced by permission of Historic England).



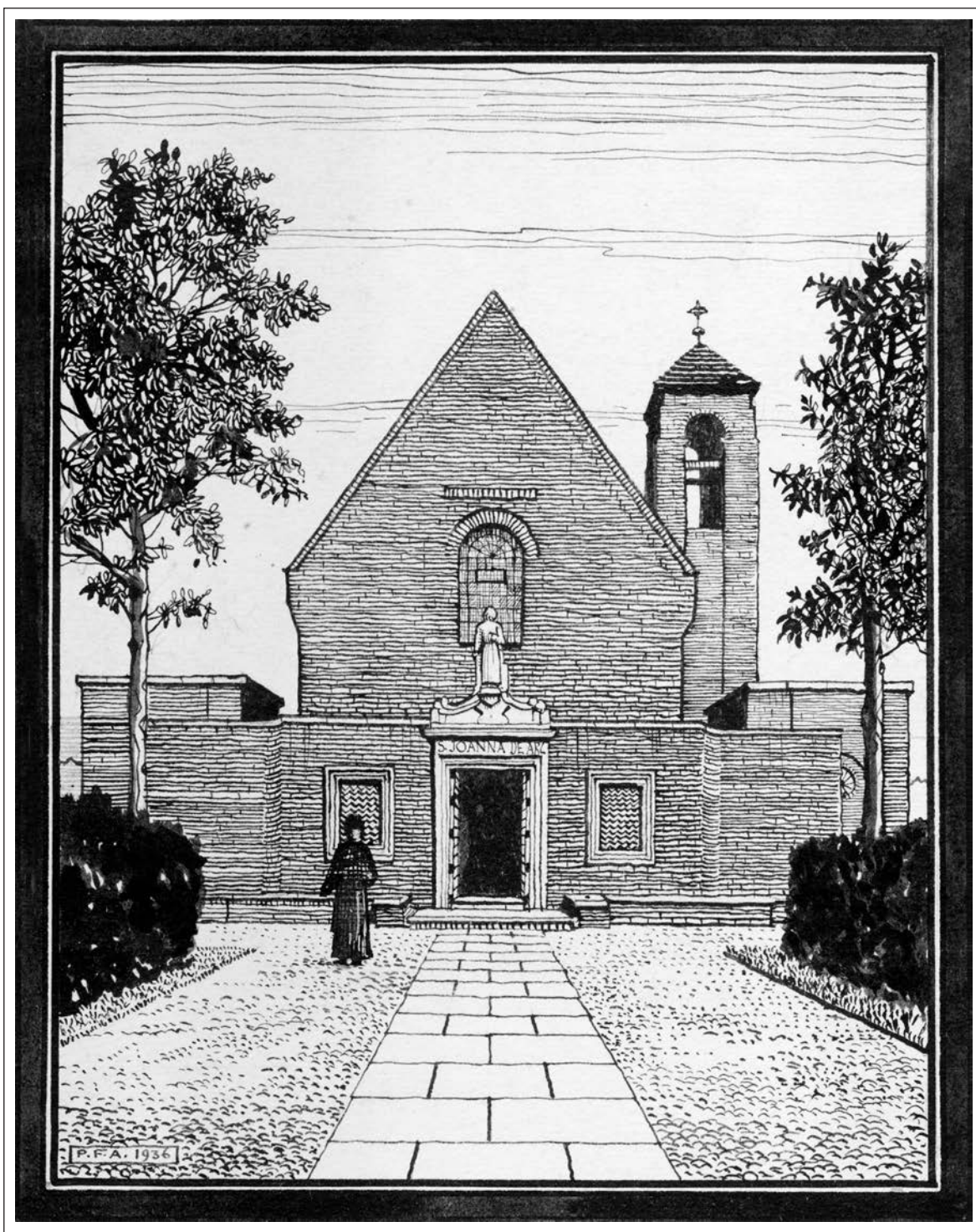
St Mary and St Romuald's, Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees (ME001210, reproduced by permission of Historic England).

Anson's 'big book' was rejected by several publishers in Britain but was eventually accepted in the USA and (in a version revised and Americanized by Monsignor Thomas F. Croft-Fraser and the Revd H. A. Reinhold) was published in 1948 under the title *Churches, their plan and furnishing*. It was illustrated with Anson's characteristic line drawings (some of which were later re-used in *Fashions*) and demonstrated his knowledge not just of the history of European church buildings and liturgy but also of recent trends.

Whereas *Churches, their plan and furnishing* was essentially about Catholic churches, Anson had never lost his early fascination with the Anglican church of the Victorian and Edwardian period. It led him to attempt, with the encouragement of John Betjeman, a study of the ecclesiastical craftsmen and decorating firms of the period – 'the men who actually created the most outstanding church fittings and decorations'.⁶ Even in the 1950s, however, the evidence to create such a survey was hard to come by: few incumbents were interested in the Victorian work in their buildings, while the authorship of it was often unrecorded and the craftsmen uncelebrated. Even church furnishers and decorators themselves were at that time reluctant to admit to the 'Victorian misdeeds' of their firm.⁷ Instead, Anson relied on his shrewd eye and witty turn of phrase to produce a personal view of a century of ecclesiastical design. The result was 'his masterpiece', *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840–1940*, published in 1960.⁸

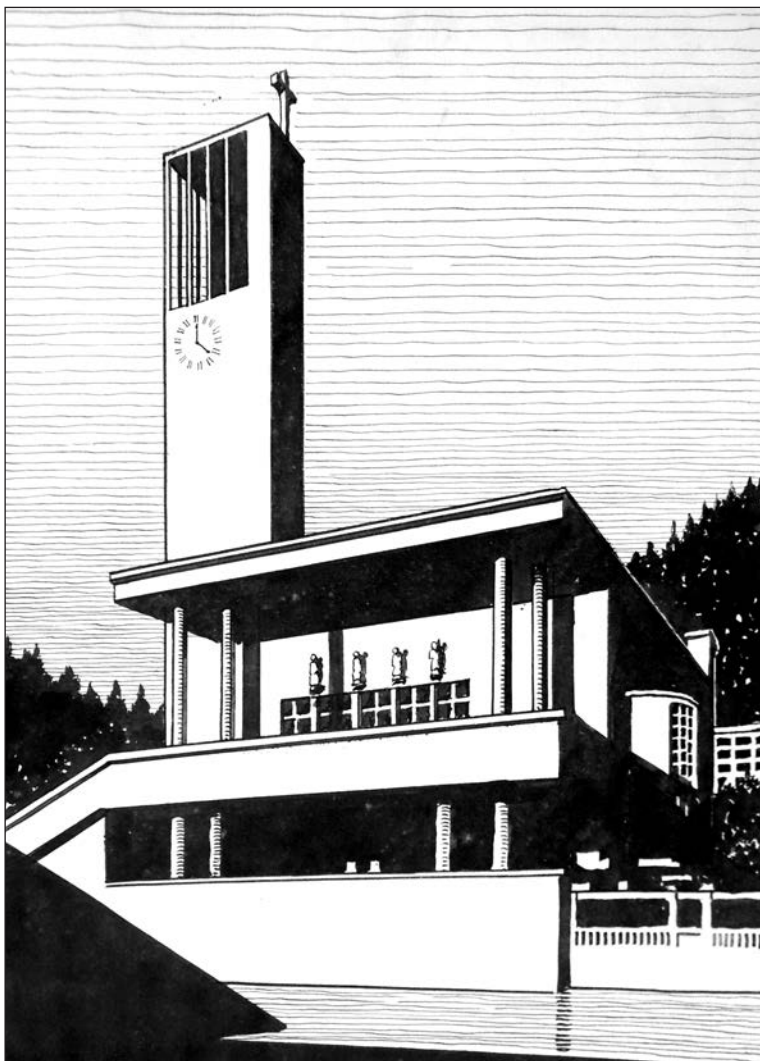


Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Northfleet, Kent, with ladies dressed in the fashions of 1914 (ME001033, reproduced by permission of Historic England).

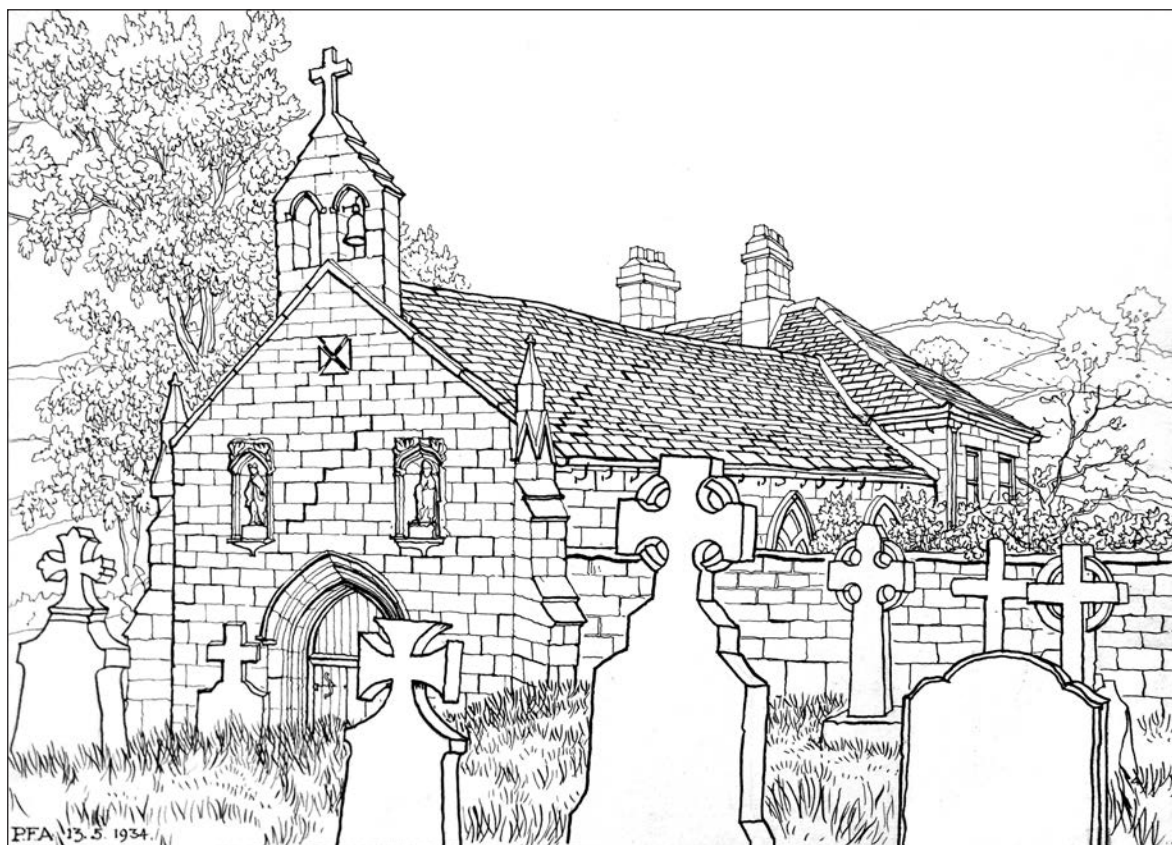


The modern church in England: St Joan of Arc's, Farnham, Surrey, by Charles Nicholas and J. E. Dixon-Spain, 1930 (ME001218, reproduced by permission of Historic England).

At some time between 1966 and 1971, a collection of Anson's original drawings was deposited with the National Buildings Record (as it then was, now the Historic England Archive). It consists of nearly 500 original drawings and a small number of reproductions. The majority of the illustrations from *Fashions* are in the collection, as well as many of those from *Churches, their plan and furnishing* and from *The Universe*. The latter are perhaps the most interesting, presenting as they do, a collective picture of the architecture, old and new, of the Catholic church in the mid-twentieth century. Forty years after his death, Anson remains an enigmatic figure, but the artistic quality and documentary value of his work – as illustrated in these pages – deserves to be better known.



*The modern church in Europe:
St Charles Borromeo, Lucerne,
Switzerland by Fritz Metzger, 1933
(reproduced by permission of Historic
England).*



All Saints, Thropton, Northumberland
(ME001115, reproduced by permission
of Historic England).

Notes

- 1 See archive.historicengland.org.uk. The catalogue reference for the collection is PFA01.
- 2 Michael Yelton *Peter Anson: monk, writer and artist* (Anglo Catholic History Society 2005), 13
- 3 Peter F. Anson *A Roving Recluse* (Mercier Press 1946), 194
- 4 Anson 1946, 195
- 5 Anson 1946, 205
- 6 Peter F. Anson *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840–1940* (The Faith Press 1960), 8
- 7 Anson 1960, 9
- 8 Michael Yelton 'Anson, Peter Frederick (1889–1975)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition January 2011

Revising Pevsner's *Cambridgeshire*: some thoughts on visiting a county's churches

Simon Bradley

Sixty years separate the first appearance of Cambridgeshire's *Buildings of England* volume (Fig.1) and its replacement by the full revised new edition, published by Yale University Press, in October 2014. The project of revision extended over some five years, taking turns with my other editorial duties for the Pevsner series. St John's College, where Sir Nikolaus had himself been a Fellow during his busiest years at Cambridge (Fig. 2, kindly appointed me an Affiliated Scholar for the duration, and provided an office room and full use of other facilities. These included the college bike sheds, a vital resource for this non-driving author. Areas which could not easily be reached on two wheels or by public transport were covered by car, with the help of friends or family in the driver's seat. These amounted to sixteen of the sixty days' fieldwork devoted to the county, excepting Cambridge itself and the diocesan capital of Ely.

Much of the mental labour on a project of this kind belongs to planning and logistics rather than scholarship. The territory must be divided into areas that can be covered in a working day, and any necessary appointments made. Follow-up appointments may be needed for buildings that were inaccessible on the first visit. The weather (especially for the cyclist) and the length of daylight must also be taken into account.

The churchwardens of Cambridgeshire were a vital human element in this process. Advance phone calls to their numbers as listed in the *Ely Diocesan Handbook* revealed whether a church was normally kept open, and if not, whether it could be left unlocked and ready to visit, or whether the key should be collected in person. I duly picked up church keys from parsonages, private houses, almshouses, a garage, a pub, a school, a secure box in a churchyard hedge, and from under the mat in the church porch. Not once was the request to see inside a church met with reluctance or suspicion, and many churchwardens were pleased and intrigued that a visitor from London should be taking the trouble to come so far, whether or not the illustrious name of Pevsner was familiar to them. Only twice did a churchwarden who was present at the visit prove to be so chatty that I began to wonder if the process of inspection might ever begin in earnest.

I also became something of an expert concerning the facilities inside a twenty-first-century parish church. Thanks to the growing number of buildings adapted for social uses, there is

Simon Bradley is joint editor of the *Pevsner Architectural Guides*, Yale University Press. His revised edition of the *Cambridgeshire* volume in the series was published in 2014, and he is author or co-author of three other revised *Buildings of England* volumes.

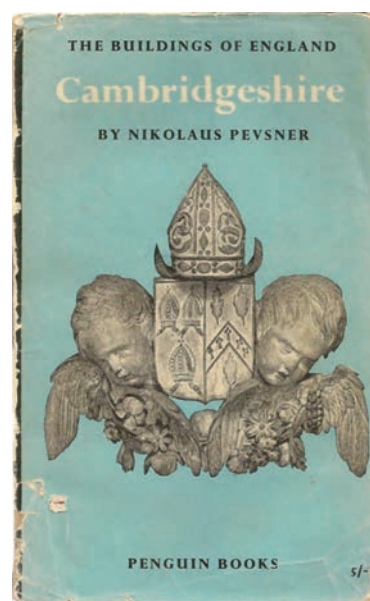
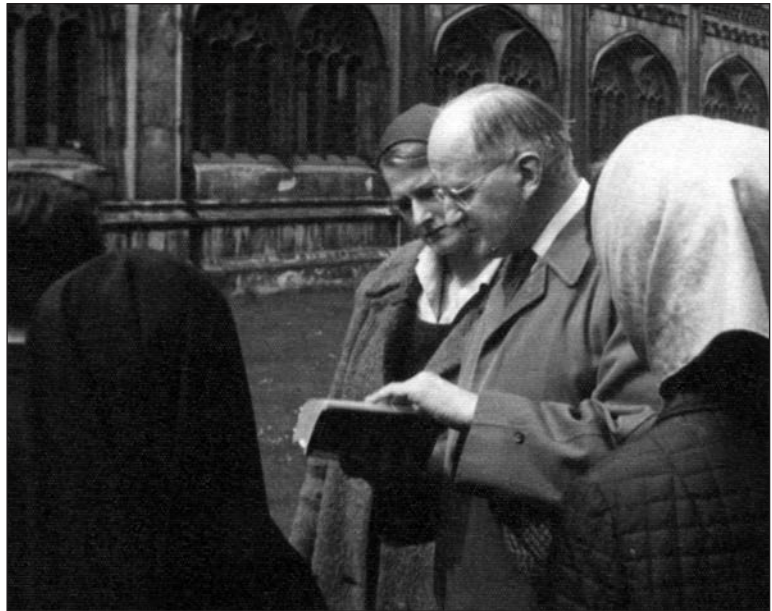


Fig. 1: Cover of the first edition of *Cambridgeshire*, 1954. It shows a carving from the Wren Library at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Fig. 2: Pevsner in Cambridge with students from Birkbeck College, London, May 1966. (Courtesy of Pevsner family archive)



much more to these than in Pevsner's time. Cycling days were enhanced by the chance to wash hands and face, and to replenish the water bottle. Even better, some churches had their own kettles and tea-making equipment (use of which was always duly acknowledged in the collecting box). The presence of a meeting enclosure with table and chairs at the west end of the nave made it easier to sit and mark up the research notes on the clipboard, or to take down useful details from the church guidebook, or just to consume a packed lunch on a wet day. At the end of some 160 parish church visits, I found myself more sympathetic to those congregations who seek to introduce such facilities to their churches, for all that the results are sometimes painful in aesthetic terms.

People unfamiliar with the revised *Buildings* series sometimes assume that their *raison d'être* is chiefly to keep up date, in the narrow sense of taking in any physical changes since the first edition appeared. Although this is certainly important it makes up a relatively small part of the whole, for updating must everywhere go hand in hand with correction and expansion. Every word of Pevsner's original text must be checked for accuracy. His village entries were usually written in the evenings of long and demanding days of fieldwork, without the aid of photographs, or any visual record except his own memory and a few hasty sketches of plans, tracery, and other details. Despite these constraints, straightforward errors in the church descriptions are relatively rare. Often they concern questions of number or degree, such as miscounting the tiers of lucarnes on a spire, or misjudging the relative sizes of piers or windows. Pevsner was also prone on

occasion to mistake new Victorian features for well-preserved medieval ones (the stone panelling below the south chapel window at Bassingbourn church is one example).

Significant omissions are another matter. Overlooked masonry breaks, the presence or absence of a plinth or string course, small variants in the design of arcade piers, the reuse of old window jambs with new tracery – any of these may prompt a reinterpretation of how a church building has grown and changed. Each church description should ideally be underpinned with a narrative understanding, so that a typical multi-phase building can be read in terms of its development rather than merely taken apart into features of various dates. Some of the old text's weaker entries fail to do so, simply recording a few



Fig. 3: St Mary's, Swaffham Prior: 'the thrill and surprise of the church is its tower'. (Photo: C B Newham)



Fig. 4: St Mary's, Guilden Morden, a 'far-reaching' restoration by G. G. Scott in 1855–56. (Photo: C B Newham)

stylistically datable details without regard for their physical context. Fortunately, since Pevsner's description of Cambridgeshire was first published the area has been covered in full by the Victoria County History, and by several volumes of an uncompleted county survey by the old Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. These more searching accounts were usually helpful, and often invaluable, in teasing out the story of each building.

Drawing together the individual entries to form a county-wide picture of Cambridgeshire's medieval churches was a harder task. Some authors for the *Buildings* series have already got to know their counties before starting work, but in most cases I was visiting each parish for the first time, and with the aim of coming away with sufficient notes and digital photographs to avoid the need for a return trip. The format of the series and the time available also ruled out any comparative study of mouldings or tracery details, let alone the depth of coverage that Birkin Haward achieved in his book on the church arcades of Suffolk (1993). The Introduction to the revised edition nevertheless summarizes the

Fig. 5: The chancel of All Saints, Little Shelford, restored by Cambridge architect R. R. Rowe in 1878–79. (Photo: C B Newham)



Fig. 6: The tower of All Saints, Croydon: repaired by William Weir in 1937. (Photo: C B Newham)



locations of some basic forms, including pier types, and draws attention to features of unusual interest.

In most cases these features are shared with the counties round about. The relative modesty of Cambridgeshire's churches often means that neighbouring counties can make a better show of them. East Anglia's round west towers are a good example. Cambridgeshire has just two of these, at Snailwell and Bartlow (another two have been lost) – a mere fraction of the total from Norfolk or Suffolk. More distinctive to the county is its concentration of octagonal or polygonal tower tops, which are thought to derive from Ely (Fig. 3). The famous fourteenth-century Octagon over the crossing is later than most of the parish examples, but the cathedral's Transitional west tower appears originally to have been octagonal, and may have served as the model.

Here and there it was possible to identify works by an individual medieval carver or workshop. The most arresting case concerned the late fourteenth-century corbels to the clerestories at Barrington and Whaddon, which are carved as hunched grotesques with tightly curled beards, deep brows and deep-cut open mouths. Perhaps some work by the same carver may emerge beyond the county boundary in Hertfordshire, which is now being revised by James Bettley.

Church restoration is another subject that has been neglected in past publications, the *Buildings of England* not excepted. The date-shaded plans of the RCHME used to lump together Georgian, Victorian and twentieth-century work as 'modern', and even the church biographies in the Victoria County History often contain little more than year dates, without further details of what was done. Greater depths can now be explored in two invaluable websites, Lambeth Palace's Church Plans Online and the British Library's British Newspaper Archive. The latter in particular helped to identify many architects and details that were not

Fig. 7: *St Paul's, Gorefield, a church omitted from Pevsner's Cambridgeshire but included in the revised edition.*
(Photo: Simon Bradley)





Fig. 8: Screen in the north aisle of Holy Trinity, Bottisham, incorporating 'excellently detailed' woodwork of the late fourteenth century (Photo: C B Newham)



recorded by faculty, including one far-reaching scheme by George Gilbert Scott at Guilden Morden (Fig. 4). Altogether, over seventy names could be identified as active in Victorian and Edwardian church restoration in the county. Cambridge's two leading Victorian architects, William Milner Fawcett and Richard Reynolds Rowe (Fig. 5), make a strong showing, but there is also work by most of the national figures, from G. F. Bodley to William White. The decorating and stained-glass firm founded in Cambridge by F. R. Leach, a follower of Bodley, is also well represented.

Research for the book also confirmed that much church restoration in Cambridgeshire conformed to the expected pattern of progressive or episodic campaigns rather than drastic single transformations. Chancels and naves often followed separate paths, sometimes with different architects working simultaneously at the same church; seating might be taken in hand well before the roof was fixed; a medieval roof might be repaired only to be wholly replaced a decade later. As the process continued into the twentieth century, the results became more self-effacing and thus less likely to earn a mention in the text. The work of the Arts and Crafts architect William Weir illustrates the point. Weir was busy at quite a few Cambridgeshire parishes over the years, but only his

Fig. 9: Carved bench ends in St Andrew's, Chesterton; the figures are dressed in the fashions of c. 1430–40. (Photo: C B Newham)

Fig. 10: *St Andrew's, Cherry Hinton:*
'a chancel of the noblest design, E. E.
at its best.' (Photo: C B Newham)



work at Croydon church, with its new tower parapet added in 1937 (Fig. 6), was sufficiently assertive to deserve inclusion. Similar programmes of conservative, like-for-like restoration continue in our own time, especially at churches which used the fast-perishing local clunch for external features, but there is rarely space in the revised *Buildings of England* books to record such details.

Post-medieval churches are less problematic. Those of Cambridgeshire were treated so briskly by Pevsner that one parish – Gorefield, in the Isle of Ely – was missed out completely. Its church is by Francis Preedy, a black-flint-faced affair of 1870–1, still wholly in the spirit of archaeologically correct English Gothic (Fig. 7). Other overlooked Anglican places of worship in the fens

never achieved parochial status, and have been overtaken by redundancy and domestic conversion. Two of these were initiatives by Canon Sparke, the proud and very wealthy vicar of Littleport: Little Ouse chapel (1869), buried in a lonely glade near its eponymous river, and St Matthew (1878), likewise miles from any substantial settlement. Such buildings represent a high-water mark of church provision in a region of intensive agriculture whose population had not yet begun to fall. By contrast, relatively few rural churches in the southern half of the county have been made redundant, and most of those affected are being looked after by one of the national or local trusts.

Redundancies of this kind would have filled Cambridge's original Ecclesiologists with incredulous dismay – a measure of the distance between their age and the early twenty-first century. But as I scanned church walls for mouldings and masonry breaks, or puzzled over the details of one of the medieval screens (Fig.8) or benches (Fig. 9) in which Cambridgeshire is still so rich, a sense of continuity with the early Victorian pioneers often made itself felt. Several of the county's buildings and features were singled out by the Cambridge Camden Society as good subjects for imitation: the towerless thirteenth-century church of St Michael at

Fig. 11: Church of the Holy Sepulchre, known as the Round Church, Cambridge, 'an object lesson in the activities of the Cambridge Camden Society, sponsors of Salvin's drastic restoration'. (Photo: C B Newham)



Fig. 12: The Norman font of St Peter's, Coton, the restoration of which was sponsored by the Cambridge Camden Society.
(Photo: C B Newham)



Longstanton (especially for colonial situations), the chancel of the same period at Cherry Hinton (Fig. 10), and the Decorated stone reredos at Harlton among them. More than that, the restorations sponsored by the Society in its first flush of zeal now have their own interest and value, from the reconstruction of the Round Church (Fig. 11) at the top of the scale to the modest reworking of doorways or fonts at places such as Barrington and Coton (Fig. 12).

It is therefore earnestly to be hoped – as John Mason Neale might have phrased it – that visitors and readers will use the new edition of *Cambridgeshire*, and the revised editions covering other English counties, to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the buildings they may encounter there, and to embrace the Victorian legacy of restoration and embellishment as a valid part of their continuing story.

Book reviews

Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* Yale U.P. 2014, 790 pp., 131 col. pls, many plans etc, £35.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 0 300 20596 1

It has become customary for a reviewer to admire the expansion of a new edition of a *Buildings of England* volume, so here are the bald figures; the 1954 first edition had 405 pages (182 Cambridge city, of which 169 were on the University); the second of 1970 488 (260 and 201) but many footnotes, this 2014 edition has 712 (324 and 280). A quick calculation shows that the latest edition has the same proportion of city to county as the first, even though three villages are now sensibly incorporated into the Outer Area of the city and the pages are, of course, larger. The visual improvements, 131 excellent colour plates and a large number of text figures, outweigh any misgivings about handling a bigger book. Personally, I could have done with more c.1740 William Cole drawings than the single example of Steeple Morden, but where to stop?

As with other new editions, many more ‘lesser’ buildings are included, so for instance, seven places of worship in March are now described rather than the previous four. For the principal church of St Wendreda, Simon Bradley’s expansion of Pevsner’s original text gives a better sense of the building’s character as well as describing more architectural details (like those myriad angels on the roof), but he doesn’t lose Pevsner’s key observations. More of the furnishings are described and attributed, especially the later nineteenth-century contributions like the pulpit and stained glass and there are a few more post-Reformation monuments too. This is typical of parish church entries throughout the volume (and also the college chapels and halls), the result of more diligent research and the huge growth in local history – the Cambridgeshire Local History Association umbrella now lists over a hundred online groups.

Along with extended entries for all three 1871–89 churches by T. H. Wyatt, March now includes the 1953 Roman Catholic church (‘not ambitious’), Trinity Church 1888–9 (‘an excitable mixture of middle Gothic motifs’) and the Centenary Baptist 1870–1 (‘violently modernized in 1960’). Bradley continues to drop in those personal observations for which the original ‘Pevsners’ are so renowned and loved. So at Litlington, a 1993 American memorial window is summed up as ‘Bad’, the upper parts at Fordham are now ‘with awful hoodstops’ by Rowe and the 1877 work at Grantchester includes ‘the rather nasty S aisle added by A.W. Blomfield’. Long may the *Buildings of England* volumes carry on in this vein and so stand out from other merely descriptive guides and histories.

It is the scholarship of course that makes these books so indispensable, even in the age of the internet (though the dire quality of some church websites makes you wonder just what they have been

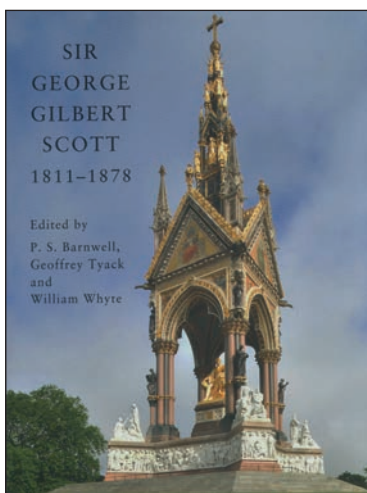


reading). This particularly applies to the extensive and invaluable introductory period summaries. A whole page is devoted to Victorian church buildings and restoration in the county (after half a page on the city churches) with due acknowledgement of the efforts of our predecessor body, the Cambridge Camden Society. However, the greater detail in the entries, such as more accurate accounts of the survival of medieval pews and attributions for the restorations, are important improvements in this current period of radical internal re-ordering.

As well as the national architects, two local men are now credited with many nineteenth-century restorations, Richard Reynolds Rowe, and William Milner Fawcett ('not a man of much talent') and, as Bradley remarks, their careers 'await attention'. Their story may not prove to be that exciting, but it is likely to be typical of the breed. Both held civic and diocesan Surveyorships and came into contact with national architects – Rowe worked on the Octagon at Ely Cathedral with Scott and Fawcett as Borough Surveyor must have encountered them working at the Colleges. It is good to see today's architects credited with what can be quite substantial new works. Congregations forget their names all too easily; it was David Joy who designed the stepped battlements on the tower at Horningsea in the 1990s, not an unknown craftsman 'probably c.1825'. Of course, there are many more things that could have been included, but let us be glad they were not. A *Buildings of England* volume is not intended to be the last word, but the current *informed* word and the starting point for anyone needing to know about their building and its standing in the county. This 2014 *Cambridgeshire* volume is an exemplary exercise in concise scholarship linked to perspicacious observation and just leaves the reader itching to visit and explore.

Richard Halsey, Chairman, Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust

P S Barnwell, Geoffrey Tyack and William Whyte (eds.), *George Gilbert Scott 1811-1878. An Architect and His Influence* (Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment, 3) Shaun Tyas, Donington, 2014, 248 pp, 84 b&w pls, £40 pbk, ISBN 978 1 907730 37 5



This useful and well-presented collection of essays sets out to disseminate recent thought and scholarship on the career, output and influence of Scott – and, as the footnotes testify, there has been a lot of this since the last attempt at synthesis in 1980 (D. Cole, *The Work of Sir Gilbert Scott*, which remains indispensable and contains the only easily accessible and reasonably complete list of works). Knighted and buried in Westminster Abbey, Scott received the highest professional accolades and was considered by Gladstone to be 'the best ecclesiastical architect in Europe, and therefore the world'. This is a view one suspects Scott shared although his own deprecating account of his upbringing, education and intellectual capacities, and his obsession with slights and criticism, both real and imagined (as reflected, not least, in his famous *Recollections*) has in part been responsible for his tarnished reputation. More relevant, perhaps, is the prodigious scale of his personal industry that has

predisposed critics to characterize him as pedestrian and routine, despite the evidence to the contrary of so many of his buildings.

Selective and provisional though this book is (as its editors admit), it goes a long way to create a more rounded picture of Scott. Skilfully using the evidence of his London churches, Geoff Brandwood locates Scott in the vanguard of architectural innovation, as one of the first to adopt Pugin's true principles and to introduce continental idioms and structural polychromy. G. A. Bremner claims that Scott was one of the first architects to adapt European architectural conventions to the special climatic needs of the colonies – a sensitivity that was partly, he suggests, born out of the colonial and missionary experience of his parents' families. Claudia Marx, in her revealing and important chapter on church restoration, charts a growing sensitivity to ancient fabric, moving already in the 1840s against conjectural reconstruction of medieval churches to a position in the late 1870s where he favoured the retention of eighteenth-century fabric and fittings. Gavin Stamp, in his even-handed introduction, emphasizes Scott's analytical skills and sees him as an 'inspired and brilliant archaeologist and interpreter of altered or damaged fabric' (p. 17) – pre-requisites for sensitive intervention – but, as Marx and others stress, he saw churches as living entities, which had to adapt in order to survive: 'any attempt to banish religious motives from the treatment of churches is suicidal ... They were built from such motives, and must ever be treated with like aim' (quoted by Marx, p. 96). Here, rather than in any callous disregard for authenticity, lay the nub of his differences with Morris and the SPAB.

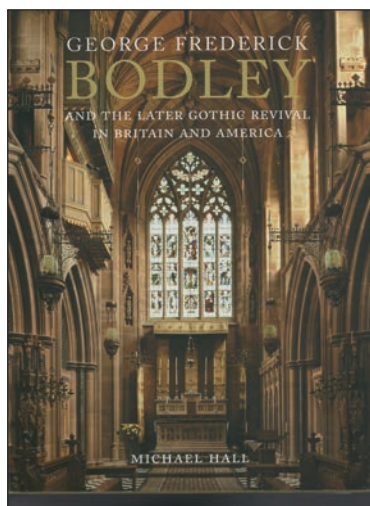
Despite his thin skin and defensiveness, Scott was skilled in handling people, whether individual clients, committees or employees. Geoffrey Tyack reveals considerable versatility in Scott's dealings with the Oxford college authorities and Simon Bradley shows how he guided independently-minded Cambridge clerics and scholars with definite ecclesiological views but with little experience in organizing large-scale projects of their own or, indeed, in dealing with a commercial outfit as large as his was. Scott's office, as William Whyte demonstrates, differed from other Victorian architectural practices in scale rather than structure or process. Employing at its peak perhaps between 30 and 40 staff (including letter writers and copyists), success lay in choosing the right men for the job, particularly as clerks of work and heads of individual sections. T. G. Jackson spoke of his 'wonderful power of providing rapid expressive sketches' and by implication, through teamwork and interpretation, appointing the staff able to transform them effectively into finished drawings. Kimberly Frost shows the process at work on the Glasgow University job, which at one point involved 1,000 workers: Scott himself only visited on three occasions, but could clearly rely on his clerk of work and others who attended the many business and site meetings and liaised with the London office in negotiating revisions to plan and budget. The effectiveness of communication between central office and site is striking – Scott signed off the changes and his head man, Mr Burlison, fine-tuned the costings, setting the well-oiled

organization to work, with materials and efficient staff in the right place at the right time: as Harry Hems noted ‘contractors were never kept waiting by the hour ... details and everything were always ready to the minute’ (quoted by Whyte, p. 228).

His commitment to Gothic as a style for all seasons – flexible, friendly, un-forbidding and eminently suitable for houses – found expression in his *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture* (1857, revised 1858), a polemic that, as Peter Howell points out, bore little relation to the position of domestic work within his own *oeuvre* – only five major houses – but much more to the trauma of responding to Palmerston’s rejection of Gothic for the Foreign Office. Michael Port throws new light on this episode, not least the damaging impact on Scott’s health and mental state, struggling to balance his client’s demands and his own view of what was best with his sense of professional pride and the financial needs of his family.

One of the strengths of this book is that Scott emerges as a real person. In what is in many ways the most illuminating chapter (Chris Miele on the young Scott, which delves into his family background and the early years so cursorily covered in the *Recollections*) we see many of the forces that formed his complex character. His family – bourgeois on his mother’s side, ‘shabby genteel intelligentsia’ on his father’s – were deeply evangelical within a Church of England tradition where fair dealing and low-cost restoration were almost ‘a sacred charge’. Quietly respectful of their social superiors yet employing an un-self-conscious intimacy with people of all classes – qualities that were characteristic of late-Georgian evangelicalism and may have given Scott his common touch. The other side of that coin was a deep-seated disapproval of overstated self-worth. While Scott senior gave his son the freedom to study and sketch and pursue the career of his choice, he said he would never reach the top of his profession and, deep down, perhaps, Sir George Gilbert Scott was always surprised to find himself there.

Martin Cherry



Michael Hall, *George Frederick Bodley and the Later Gothic Revival in Britain and America* Yale U.P., 2014, 506 pp., 298 pls (mainly col.), £50.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 0 300 20802 3

G. F. Bodley dominated the last phase of the Gothic Revival, and was widely acknowledged as the head of his profession from the mid-1880s until his death in 1907. He had an extremely large practice, yet his achievements are little recognised today outside those groups that have a specialised appreciation of Victorian church architecture. This situation has arisen because Bodley never designed a building of national prominence. Also, there has been no biography of him, and no thorough assessment of his work until the publication of this wonderful volume by Michael Hall, which must have all the bells of all his bell-towers pealing out their approval.

What makes Hall's book so compelling is his ability to relate Bodley's churches – he was primarily a builder of churches – to the constantly evolving religious scene of Victorian England, with its debates over the appropriate application of Gothic styles, over liturgy and ceremonies, and the role of beauty in worship. For Bodley the religious scene was always Anglican – Tractarian to begin with, moving to Anglo-Catholic in the later phase of his long career, which began in the 1840s when the Ecclesiological Society was in the ascendant and ended when the Arts and Crafts Movement was at its height. He would engage his architecture with theological advances, with Pre-Raphaelite principles, and with Aestheticism. He absorbed the ideas of Pugin and Ruskin, but he also learnt from Newman and Pater. Undeniably, he built some of the most beautiful churches of his age.

Born in 1827 in Hull, where his father was Physician to the Royal Infirmary, he grew up in a prosperous, moderate-Anglican family. He chose not to go to university, but entered George Gilbert Scott's office as a pupil in 1846, remaining there for six years. During this time he began to share Scott's responsiveness to the theory of 'development' that was being promoted by members of the Ecclesiological Society, notably Beresford Hope, Benjamin Webb and William Butterfield, as the architectural equivalent of Newman's principles of development in theology. Gothic should not just be revived by reproducing the style of its finest phase, deemed by Pugin and others to be that of the thirteenth century, or Middle Pointed; it could be developed in various ways that would make it more suitable for the needs of nineteenth-century society. This advance would allow architects much greater freedom to enlarge and extend the principles of Gothic design, a freedom that Bodley would exploit for most of his career. His distinctive characteristics become evident in his early churches at France Lynch and Selsley in Gloucestershire in the late 1850s, with the use of polished stone and polychromatic decorative elements, and the sensitive application of colour to draw attention to the major points of liturgical emphasis. Above all, there is the creation of a quiet glory in the chancel by means of delicate marbles softly lit.

From an early stage Bodley felt an affinity with the Pre-Raphaelite artists, recognising that their attempts to give painting a moral force and draw it into the service of religion had similarities to his own designs for architecture. (Ruskin was a common source of inspiration here.) His vision of the mutual co-operation of the arts was most fully realised at St Martin's, Scarborough, during the 1860s, when Rossetti, Madox Brown and Morris painted panels for the pulpit, Morris designed the windows, Philip Webb decorated the sanctuary roof and Burne-Jones painted the altarpiece. Bodley employed Morris and his firm in the restoration of the medieval chapel at Jesus College, Cambridge, and working again with Morris on the restoration of the fifteenth-century hall at Queens' College, Cambridge, produced stunning results: one of the most beautiful interiors in the University.

The pursuit of beauty became ever more urgent. But beauty came at some cost, and Bodley was fortunate to be commissioned by wealthy patrons who were willing to fund his expensive schemes. Michael Hall's research into the figures who were the god-parents of Bodley's most memorable churches becomes fascinating social history as he explores the various impulses that caused Victorian men and women to pour money into religious edifices. After St Martin's, Scarborough, came St John the Baptist at Tue Brook, Liverpool, with its gloriously painted interior and its breath-taking chancel-screen. At Hoar Cross in Staffordshire, Bodley raised what to my mind is the most beautiful post-Reformation Gothic church in England, Holy Angels, commissioned by Emily Ingram Meynell as a memorial to her husband. Its beauty is of a conventional, fourteenth-century kind, but the perfection of the stonework and the carving, and the combination of the decorative elements of the chancel, create an exceptional harmony. The light effects of the Burlison and Grylls windows on the rosy stone induce an atmosphere of timeless mystery.

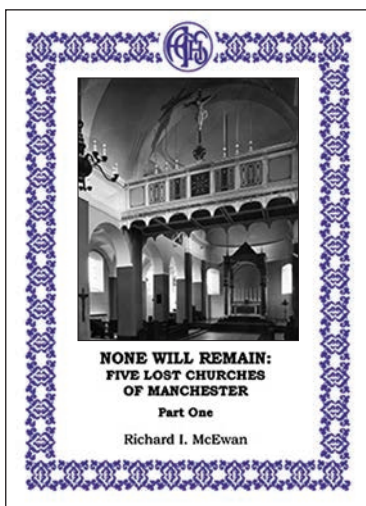
From the later 1870s onwards, Bodley's Anglo-Catholicism modulated into what Hall calls Anglo-Aestheticism. This is the beauty of holiness carried to a new level, in response to the principles of art enunciated by Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde. He strove to produce a synthesis of architecture, carving, colour and light that would enhance the spirituality of devotional space in an unprecedented way. Beauty was an aspect of sacramental worship: it was an expression of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and in a more general way, an assurance of Christ's presence in the world, (as the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins most convincingly declared). Michael Hall's thoughtful exposition of the links between the aesthetic movement and the work of Bodley and of his pupil Ninian Comper (especially at Clumber for the Duke of Newcastle) is most enlightening.

In the last years of Bodley's life his practice was still enlarging: he was engaged in the new cathedral at Liverpool together with Giles Gilbert Scott, and in America he was commissioned to build the National Cathedral in Washington, an undertaking that only reached completion, after many changes, in 1989. Bodley's legacy has remained surprisingly intact. Almost certainly there is a church of his near you, the identity of its designer half-forgotten. Go and experience it, and read this revelatory book.

Graham Parry, University of York

Richard I. McEwan, *None Will Remain: Five Lost Churches in Manchester* Anglo-Catholic History Society, 2014, 2 vols, 183 pp. and 185 pp., many pls, £35 (inc. p&p) pbk, ISBNs 978 0 9560565 6 6 and 978 0 9560565 7 3. (For copies, telephone 020 7833 1555)

This is the story of the rise and fall of five Anglo-Catholic churches in central Manchester. Volume 1 covers St John's, Miles Platting,

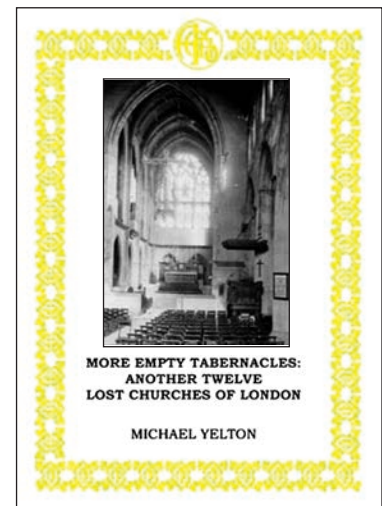


St Gabriel's, Hulme and Our Lady and St Thomas, Gorton. In Volume 2 are St Alban the Martyr, Cheetwood and St Benedict's, Ardwick.

These churches were founded and built, with the highest hopes and ideals, in the poorest districts of town. Each foundation aimed to bring the full splendour and ceremony of Anglo-Catholic worship into the most deprived communities, and at the same time to reach out with practical help to those who needed it most. A common narrative runs through all five stories: their foundation, armed with noble principles but slender means, in the poorest of districts. In several cases the church building was never fully completed according to plan. The increasing use of Catholic symbolism and ceremonial in the liturgy, bringing down the ire of the bishop (Manchester was from its inception in 1847 a 'low' church diocese) and vociferous opposition from extreme Protestants in the city. The case of Fr Sidney Faithorn Green of St John's, imprisoned at Lancaster Gaol for 20 months in 1881–2 for his stubborn resistance to the bishop's instruction, was notorious. Only with the succession of Bishop Temple in 1921 was there a period of tolerance and stability. All too soon however the blitz of the Second World War disrupted all of these inner city districts. The church of St Alban was put out of action for several years. The war was followed by a disastrous time of inner-city clearances, when whole swathes of the city were labelled as slums and simply wiped off the map. Hulme was supposedly the largest slum clearance area anywhere. Readers may know the wonderful street photographs of Shirley Baker which capture this era so vividly. Few churches could survive such an onslaught, although the author makes it clear that the diocese's failure to produce any coherent plan was partly to blame for their loss. Indeed it seems that a fatalistic attitude afflicted both the populace and the diocese at the time. Eventual closure was inevitable in all five examples. The Anglican church's decision on the ordination of women proved to be a final blow, triggering in some cases a mass defection to the Roman Catholic church.

It is a sad tale, and the loss of these five churches has left all their respective districts impoverished. A set of coloured photographs of the interior of Tapper's Our Lady and St Thomas, so calm and ordered, harmoniously coloured and solemn, are grievous to contemplate because there is nothing else in that place that can offer anything remotely comparable. A relative late-comer, built only in 1926–7, this church was an odd one out in several respects. I remember being amazed to read in Pevsner of a Byzantine basilica with saucer domes in West Gorton and rushing off to see it. Sadly it was never finished. Funds ran out, leaving it with only two of the intended three bays.

St Gabriel at Hulme, by Medland Taylor (1869), was likewise unfinished, having never gained its intended crossing tower and spire. The church, a beacon in the wilderness, just managed its centenary, but closed the following year and was demolished soon after. A local head teacher who knew it well recalls rather sourly that St Gabriel's 'had different vestments and frontals for every Sunday but never paid the quota'.



St John in Miles Platting was the pioneer of the five, being built in 1855 by J. E. Gregan for Sir Benjamin Heywood. Heywood also provided a school, baths and a mechanics' institute. Heywood's Bank and manager's house in St Anne's Square demonstrates what a fine architect Gregan was. The church was in a plain Romanesque style with an Italianate campanile. Because the land was unavailable it never acquired a south aisle. Over the years the interior, also plain to begin with, was beautifully adorned, and by 1912, still under the patronage of the Heywoods, had acquired a fine peal of bells. The Manchester blitz wrought considerable damage to both church and rectory. It was followed by a period of steep decline as mills and factories closed, houses were cleared and residents moved to distant estates. St John's survived initially, and indeed saw a notable development in the foundation of the Manchester branch of the Samaritans in 1960. Despite considerable opposition, after the last service at Easter 1973 St John's Miles Platting was summarily demolished.

I have to declare a particular interest in the churches of Volume 2 – St Benedict's, Ardwick, and St Alban, Cheetwood – , having researched their architect Joseph (not James, as the author states on p. 188) Stretch Crowther. St Alban's was an early work of his. A product of the copybook phase of the Gothic revival, it was built of stone in the best Dec style, with lavish carving where it could be afforded. St Benedict's was very different. Founded twenty years later under the patronage of the Bennett family the money went on structure, not decoration. Brick was exposed inside and out, and the plainness of the fabric was more than compensated for by its soaring proportions and huge clerestory windows. The building has survived, and is a prominent landmark on the approach to Piccadilly station; in the distance can be seen Edward Pugin's St Francis, Gorton, and Butterfield's St Cross, Clayton; brick basilicas all three.

St Alban's closed in 1994. The subsequent fate of the building was particularly tragic, though not without an unexpected moment of redemption. The site was fenced off while the authorities pondered its fate, but the local populace had other ideas. Soon the building was surrounded by burnt-out cars, and a ring of old mattresses placed to cushion the fall of stolen lead and slates. Anxious to prevent injury or even death it was hastily ordered that the building should be demolished. And so in the dead of winter, January–March 1998, the church of St Alban the Martyr was destroyed. Working in Manchester at the time I was able to keep an eye on the site and watch how it was done. Demolishing a church, which is mostly air surrounded by a masonry envelope in a state of tension, is not an easy task. It was fascinating to watch the demolition men evolve their methods. Crowther had been at pains in all his churches to provide high-level access for maintenance. Now his characteristic turret stairs came into their own, as the demolition men, dispensing with scaffolding, shimmied up and down the spiral stairs. It was like watching a cathedral being built – but in reverse.

The astonishing thing was that for a brief week or two St Alban, never an object of great beauty, especially after wartime damage, was transcendent. Once the outer walls were gone the low winter sun shone straight through the building, illuminating the golden stone of the arcades and picking out their delicate naturalistic carving as they had never been seen before. Tintern Abbey in Strangeways! Add great bonfires to the picture, roiling smoke and the ant-like demolition contractors and their machines, and the scene had an unforgettable drama. And then it was gone.

St Benedict's was the last to go, closing in 2002, but the building now serves as an indoor climbing centre. Artificial cliffs and rock faces in garish colours utilise the building's great height and airy volume. It is a salvation of a sort, though only time will tell whether it is financially viable in the long run.

I would have liked to read more on the politics and the process of closure and demolition in the other churches, but there is plenty to ponder in the author's End Note. He quotes at length the final, and it has to be said very fair, report of 2001 which led to the closure of St Benedict's. Those readers who may perhaps have become impatient with the emphasis on ceremony, the lascivious lists of chasubles, albs, lace-trimmed cottas, birettas and so on may nevertheless agree that 'The Anglo-Catholic movement was one of the bravest and most sustained attacks on the notion that beauty doesn't matter'. Not surprising perhaps that it was an uphill struggle in Manchester. That struggle was largely successful in the end, but the greater struggle, 'the battle to win the poor for the Church' is yet to be won.

Matthew Hyde

Short Notes

Richard J. Goy, *Florence a walking guide to its architecture* Yale U.P. 2015, 398 pp., 213 col. pls plus maps, £16.99 pbk, ISBN 978 0 300 20987 7

For the past 49 years, Eve Borsook's *Companion Guide to Florence* has set the standard by which other books on the city have been judged, but while its descriptions of the buildings remain readable, it is now dated in every other respect. *Firenze*, published by Allemandi in 1992 has much to commend it, but its chronological format makes it frustrating for use on a visit. Goy's new book is thus to be warmly welcomed. It is about the size of a recent Pevsner and has obvious similarities with that series' city guides, but it is much more user-friendly: the maps are clearer and while the photographs are smaller, the large number of them allows most of the key buildings to be illustrated so that the visitor can be quite sure about what he or she is looking at.

The book is planned around a series of expertly planned walking tours that encompass not only the city's most admired architectural sites, but also its lesser-known gems. Maps are tailored to each walking tour and provide additional references and insights, along with introductory

chapters on the city's architectural history, urban design, and building materials and techniques. There is also a complete bibliography, glossary of key terms and other useful reference material.

Roy Tricker, *Anglicans on High: the Anglo-Catholic revival in Suffolk and the surrounding area* Fitzwalter Press and Taverner Publications, 2014, 224 pp., many col. pls, £35.00 pbk, ISBN 1 901470 21 0

This engagingly written and thoroughly researched book is described disarmingly by its author as 'a small miscellany of churches, parishes, people and events that I have gleaned from a variety of sources over a number of years'. In fact it is a detailed survey of the county's Anglo-Catholicism in the 150 or so years that followed the start of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s. It opens with a useful account of the beginnings of Anglo-Catholicism nationally, then proceeds to examine how it developed in the county. Twenty-four parishes are considered in detail, with several illustrations of each church, an architectural description, notes on its clergy and key events. This is followed by accounts of a further twenty-two parishes covered more briefly. There are biographies of thirteen important clerics followed by a list of others who appeared in the 1903 'Ritualistic Clergy List'. The book concludes with a chapter that examines the opposition to the movement within the wider Anglican community. Currently, there is much interest in the history of Anglo-Catholicism and in the drive towards a complete picture, this book provides another significant episode.

Paul Griffiths, *St Peter's and Highfields* Kairos Press, in association with St Peter's, 2014, 64 pp., 27 col. pls, £5.00 pbk, ISBN 978 1 871344 34 9. For copies, telephone 0116 2702121.

St Peter's, Leicester, was designed by G. E. Street and constructed 1872–7, 'a serious design', according to Pevsner. This booklet is an account of the life of the parish and throughout, Griffiths considers the church in the context of the wider community in which it was built, with a series of references to secular events and non-Anglican congregations. The book begins with a survey of the church building movement in the city in the mid-nineteenth century, offering interesting information about the funding initiatives for St Peter. Much of the book deals with the twentieth century and examines in detail the clergy, the parishioners and the worship in which they were engaged. By the second half on the century, Highfields was a suburb undergoing much change: not only were the road planners keen to build an 'inner motorway' through the area, but it also acquired a large immigrant population and its physical decline was palpable. However, the large West Indian population injected new life into the church and, despite earlier threats of closure, the parish is now thriving. Perhaps surprisingly, Griffiths is able to end his account in 2014 on a positive note: 'After 140 years, St Peter's still holds a valued place in the community of Highfields.'



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