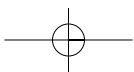
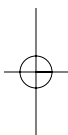
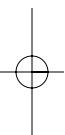


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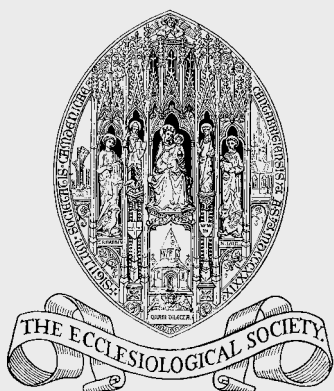
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*Journal of the
Ecclesiological Society*

Ecclesiology Today

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Issue 58 2020
published May 2020

Editor's letter

Dear Fellow Member,

welcome to this, the fifty-eighth edition of *Ecclesiology Today*.

We begin with an extended piece by Simon Bradley on the changes wrought in the Victorian period on the churches of the City of London. The text began life as a paper written for our 1996 conference on the City churches and was subsequently written up by Simon for publication by the Society. I am delighted that, more than twenty years later, we have finally been able to bring it you in this edition of *Ecclesiology Today*.

One of the architects whose work is included in Simon's article is William Butterfield, who appears again, this time as a designer of church plate, in our second article. Carol Bennett tells the story of how two fine chalices and patens came to be given to Lincoln Cathedral and of the recent research confirmed their attribution to Butterfield. We return to London for our third article, in the company of Andrew Saint, who recounts the 'unlucky' story of Holy Trinity Kingsway, a church for which great plans were made, but which is now no more than a façade (albeit a very distinguished one, as shown on the cover). Alec Hamilton, convenor of our 2018 conference on Arts and Crafts churches, reprises his introduction to the conference in his article, which gives his personal view of this somewhat elusive phenomenon in late-Victorian and Edwardian church-building.

We come up to date in our last article, which ventures onto the often-controversial territory of bats in churches. A group of officers of the Bats in Churches partnership project provide an account of the difficulties encountered when humans and bats are using the same historic building. Importantly, the article also describes efforts that are being made, in churches up and down the country, to, as the title of the article puts it, find 'harmony on common ground'.

Looking forward, our next edition of the journal (ET59) will be comprised of the papers from the 2019 conference on chancel screens after the Reformation. Contributions for the following edition, ET60, are welcome and can be sent to me at the email address below.

Nick Chapple
editor@eccsoc.org

City churches:Victorian changes

Simon Bradley

TWO THEMES DOMINATE the history of the City churches in the later nineteenth century: demolition and restoration. In each case the City's experience was unique. The demolitions resulted from large-scale redundancy on a scale not seen in England since the Reformation. The reason was the inexorable decline of the City's resident population. The Church was ill-prepared to deal with the problem, and several attempts had to be made before legal machinery was in place to allow the progressive disposal of the churches and their sites. While every lover of church architecture would wish to have all these churches back, it must surely be acknowledged that some losses were inevitable, even without a change in ecclesiastical law. For there existed then neither statutory protection for historic buildings, nor any tradition of the preservation of redundant churches, either as monuments or for non-ecclesiastical uses. Add to this the rich parochial endowments of most of them, and the high value of their City sites, and it is remarkable that so many churches did survive into a more conservation-minded age. Moreover, the fate of London's secular monuments, whether redundant or merely inconveniently situated, was scarcely more assured under the Victorians, who swept away Temple Bar, Northumberland House, Christ's Hospital, and many of the Inns of Chancery.

Church restoration is a more familiar part of the Victorian scene. The phrase makes one think first of medieval churches, but the restorations in the City derive their special interest from the fact that here stood the greatest concentration of post-Reformation churches in England: the fifty or so rebuilt after 1666, and another dozen that escaped the Great Fire but which were subsequently rebuilt. Again, it is impossible not to regret the loss of so many of their original fittings, and the churches which do preserve a pre-Victorian atmosphere are amongst the most precious survivors, but their interest would surely be diluted in proportion if by some miracle every surviving City church had remained in its condition in 1800. For the Victorian restorations undoubtedly made the churches more complex and therefore more interesting buildings, if not always more attractive ones.

Not all the City churches are classical, of course, and the medieval examples amongst them were duly re-medievalised, like thousands of others across Britain. The Temple Church, the subject of a very important campaign of restoration between 1825 and 1862, lies outside the scope of this paper.¹ The medieval parish churches of the City proper were restored rather later in the

Simon Bradley is joint editor of the Pevsner Architectural Guides and has contributed several volumes in the revised series, including London: The City Churches. He has also published extensively on railway architecture.

century, without much fuss, and frequently without much feeling. Thus St Giles Cripplegate was stripped of galleries and given a new chancel arch in 1858–64, and refaced externally by Frederick Hammond in 1884–1905.² Hammond was a local architect in general practice rather than a church specialist, in which respect his work was typical of the tight-knit, face-to-face world of the Victorian City.³ The more distinguished name of Aston Webb appears at St Bartholomew-the-Great, from 1886, and his restoration, too, is rather more distinguished, with its careful distinctions between new and old work. But the exception proves the rule, for Webb owed the work to family connections: his brother E. A. Webb was both churchwarden and a partner in the pharmaceutical firm Evans, Lescher & Webb, for which Webb had designed a warehouse in nearby Bartholomew Close in 1878.⁴

This is to anticipate, however; for the advent of church restoration in the City, in the familiar Victorian sense, dates from the 1850s, a generation earlier than these examples. Moreover, it began not with medieval buildings, but with those of the Wren period – a much more distinctive business, as will appear. The story of the demolitions goes back further still, and must be discussed first.

Early demolition proposals and the emergence of resistance

The earliest casualties were due to specific improvement schemes and therefore did not raise any general question of the future of the City churches. First to be demolished, in 1782, was St Christopher-le-Stocks, destroyed to make way for the Bank of England; a second church, St Michael Crooked Lane, went in 1831, in clearances for the new London Bridge approach. In the same year, John Shaw's new St Dunstan-in-the-West was begun, the last instance in which a medieval church which had survived the Great Fire was rebuilt. But as it approached completion in 1833, a committee convened by the City Corporation was laying the first plans for wholesale demolition. Its findings were made public in the first weeks of 1834. Thirteen churches should go, it was said, beginning with St Clement Eastcheap; their parishes were to be amalgamated, and the sites sold.⁵

Ruthless practicality already favoured the destructive party. The early nineteenth century saw the City abandoned as a place of residence by the wealthier proprietors, merchants and businessmen who constituted its Anglican elite. They had remained there long after aristocratic society moved westward, mostly in the seventeenth century (John Henry Newman was born a banker's son in Old Broad Street). But they increasingly sought new homes, at first in such genteel suburbs as Islington, Clapham or Camberwell; by the 1840s mostly in the West End.⁶

This did not mean that the City's overall population was yet falling, as is commonly supposed. The census for 1851 gave a figure of 129,000 – a slight increase on that for 1841, and some 90,000 more than in late-medieval times.⁷ Only in the 1850s did the absolute total begin to decline. Rather, the problem was that the 64 parish churches remaining were concentrated disproportionately within the old City walls, particularly in the commercial centre and along the river – exactly those areas which lost residents first. As early as 1818, the High Church *British Critic* described some as 'almost deserted'.⁸ Had the population been Dissenters or non-attenders, as in other areas of weak allegiance to the Establishment, there is more chance that the churches would have been kept in the hope that their parishioners would return to the fold, but in the City these parishioners were no longer there.

Nonetheless, the first demolition scheme failed swiftly and (it seemed) absolutely. There were a number of reasons for this. Local resistance was swift and sure: by the end of January 1834 four City wards had already passed opposing resolutions, as had the vestry of St Clement Eastcheap. Nor were all the provisions tactfully framed: for example, the clergy of the defunct parish churches were to be pensioned off, but individual parishioners were to bear the cost of relocating family monuments to the successor churches. Moreover, the blacklist paid no attention to questions of architectural merit: incredibly, St Stephen Walbrook was included.⁹

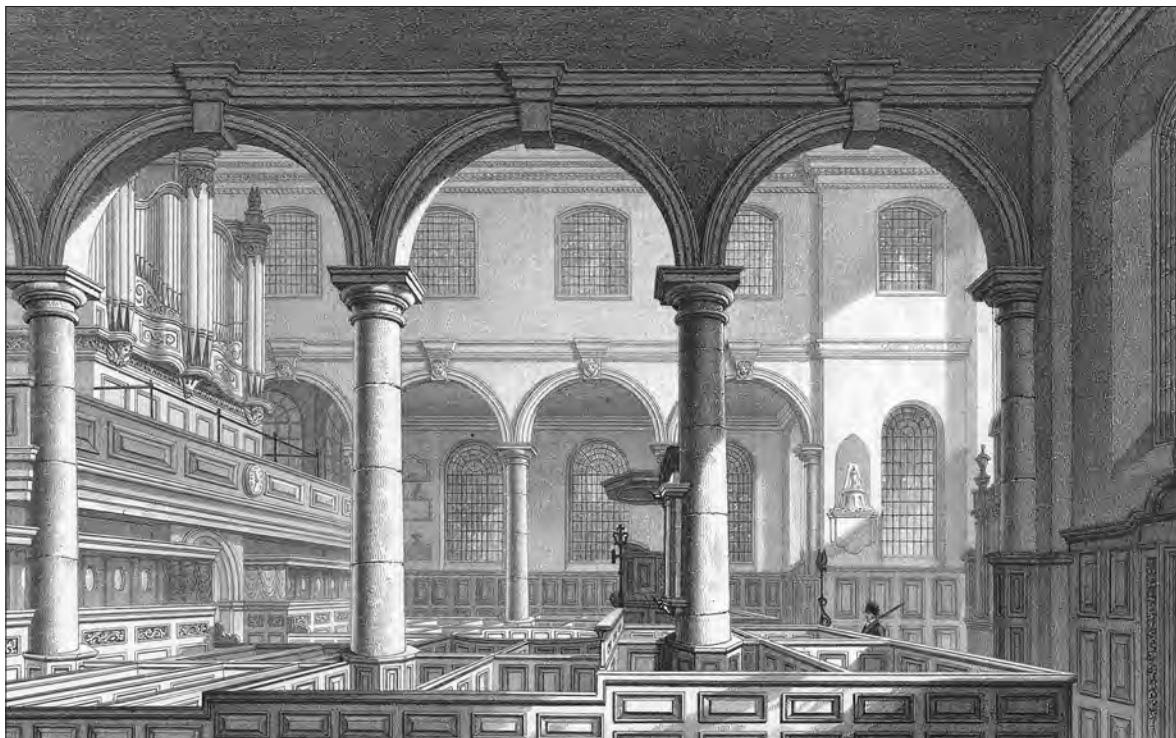
More important than such local and specific reasons, perhaps, was the beleaguered mood in which the Church of England found itself. Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation were then newly enacted, and the orthodox wing of the Church was watching in impotent dread as the Whig ministry plotted the reform of the Corporations and of the Church of Ireland. So Church periodicals were already primed to respond with die-hard alarm. In the vanguard were the London antiquaries of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Its leading contributor, E. J. Carlos, had given Shaw's St Dunstan-in-the-West a favourable reception not fifteen months before, despite 'painful feelings' at the loss of its predecessor,¹⁰ but outright abolition of the ancient churches and their parishes was another matter. An anonymous letter from Thomas Saunders, another antiquary, had no time for statistical arguments: 'Britons, Christians and Men! Spurn the unholy attempt, and nobly resolve to protect the altars and consecrated ground of your country and your God!'¹¹

Examples can be multiplied: 'Church spoliation in the City of London!!! Places of Worship about to be Desecrated!!!! by a Christian committee' (*Christian Remembrancer*); 'The offspring of schism, innovation and irreligion' (*British Magazine*).¹² It was not

necessary to be a City parishioner or to love architecture to sympathise. The loss of church buildings, even to finance new churches elsewhere as was intended, was still thought of as a victory for the Church's enemies, real or imagined. So neither the Bishop of London, Charles James Blomfield, nor Archbishop Howley of Canterbury accepted the scheme, though the estimate of the average site value alone at £2,000 must have set Blomfield's mind racing, preoccupied as he was with church extension in the rest of his diocese.¹³

The next losses amongst the churches, St Benet Fink and St Bartholomew Exchange (Figs 1 and 2), were therefore due to further public improvements, and not to any policy of demolition. The occasion was the rebuilding of the Royal Exchange on an extended site, after it burnt down in 1838. The sites of the churches themselves were not required, but Sir William Tite's new Exchange required widened approaches, which was enough to seal their fates. *The Gentleman's Magazine* muttered darkly about the 'disgraceful precedent' thus created, but there was no campaign of protest to match that in 1834.¹⁴ Protests may also have been averted by the early proposal that St Benet's should lose only its tower (it appears thus in Wyld's Map of 1842). Furthermore, St Bartholomew was nominally replaced by a new City church, St Bartholomew Moor Lane (for which a parish was carved out of St Giles Cripplegate), one of several short-lived churches of around 1840 on the City fringes. Its architect, C. R.

Fig. 1: St Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange, interior view, 1837, engraved by John Le Keux after a drawing by Robert Billings. From George Goodwin, *The Churches of London: A History and Description of the Ecclesiastical Edifices of the Metropolis (1838–39)*.





Cockerell, is said to have reused much of Wren's old stonework as well as most of the fittings. More typical of future developments was the use of proceeds from the sale of St Benet's site to build a successor church in Tottenham: the first instance of the diocese diverting resources from the City to the outer parishes.¹⁵

Another straw in the wind was the proposal that the south wall of St Bartholomew's, discovered during demolition to be medieval work re-used by Wren, be preserved by incorporation into Cockerell's Sun Life Assurance building on the site – probably the first reference to the intended partial preservation of a City church as a monument.¹⁶ Wren's churches themselves were of course too recent to benefit from the medievalism that swayed the early Victorian imagination, so one must ask how well his reputation as an architect stood up to such changes in taste.

The answer seems to be: better than one might expect, at least at first. St Paul's in particular remained a source of national pride, despite Pugin's fulminations against what he considered its dishonest construction.¹⁷ The eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries had seen sporadic modernisation of Wren's church interiors, but most of those described in Hatton's *New View of London* (1708) were still in broadly similar form in the late 1830s,

Fig. 2: St Bartholomew-by-the-Exchange during demolition. Anonymous watercolour, 1840. (© City of London Corporation)

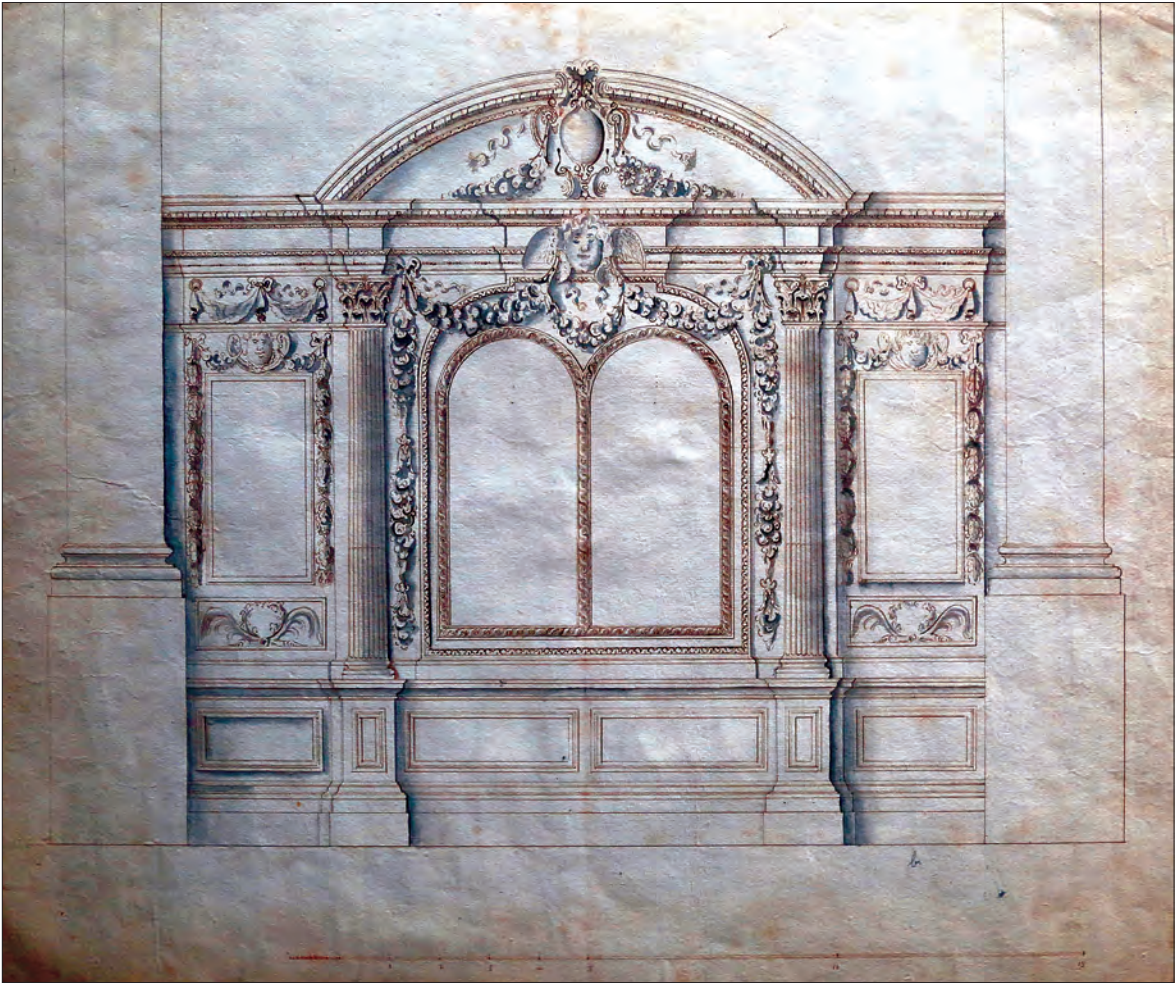
as is clear from George Godwin's *Churches of London* (1838–39), the first substantial collection of interior views. This reluctance to modernise was doubtless due in part to mere inertia, especially in parishes with declining populations, but new work of around 1850 provides fascinating evidence of deliberate, self-conscious respect for Wren and the Wren style.

The best-known instance is at St Mary-at-Hill, where in 1848–49 much new joinery was inserted by William Gibbs Rogers in connection with alterations by James Savage (Fig. 3). As Pevsner wrote of Rogers in 1957, 'His work can hardly be distinguished from that of the seventeenth-century joiners, a feat which few would expect from an Early Victorian craftsman'.¹⁸ What is due to the seventeenth century and what to Rogers is even now not entirely clear, despite the investigations that followed the disastrous fire of 1988.¹⁹

Gibbs Rogers went on to work at St Stephen Walbrook in 1850–51, and here we are fully informed about the attitude of the restorers towards Wren. The architect, John Turner, was required by the vestry to restore the church to its condition 'in its best days'. The rationale was set out in a letter to *The Builder* from one

Fig. 3: St Mary-at-Hill, interior view, 1875. (Courtesy of the LAMAS Glass Slide Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London: Slide B509)





W. F. Rock of the restoration committee. The committee had visited most of Wren's churches, and

unanimously agreed that every attempt (and there have been many) to alter his original work or to add to his original embellishment has signally failed. They have consequently determined not vainly to try to improve the beautiful building confided to their care, but they will endeavour to restore and to preserve it.²⁰

In the event, the work was modest by comparison with that at St Mary-at-Hill. The most notable new work was the pediment Rogers made for the reredos, to replace that removed when Benjamin West's painting was installed in the 1770s. This pediment is said to have been carved from an original drawing by Thomas Creecher which was then kept at the church, with additional foliage of a lushness more characteristic of Rogers' work at St Mary-at-Hill and indeed of the mid-nineteenth century generally (Fig. 4),²¹ but there is no doubt that the intention was to come as close to the Wren manner as possible.

Fig. 4: St Stephen Walbrook, rejected design for a reredos by the joiner Thomas Creecher, c.1678–79, from which William Gibbs Rogers derived the pediment for the reredos in 1850–51.

(London Metropolitan Archives, P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695. © City of London Corporation)

As Wren's acknowledged masterpiece, St Stephen's was a special case, but scattered instances from the first half of the 1850s suggest a similar attitude amongst other City vestries. The first is the strange episode of St Martin Orgar, or rather of the rectory built on its site. The medieval church of St Martin, in Martin Lane south of Cannon Street, was not rebuilt after the Great Fire, when its parish was attached to St Clement Eastcheap. The patched-up tower had a curious posthumous existence as part of a French Protestant church, which fell out of use in the 1820s. Then in 1851 the site was used for a rectory for St Clement's, by John Davies. Few of the City clergy were then resident, and the provision of such parsonages was generally considered long overdue. But the resulting building hardly looks like the average town house, for it has a tall tower like a bell-tower (though apparently always empty of bells), with on the top an ornamented timber cupola. *The Builder* again makes clear the sense of tradition behind the design, which was conceived as an addition to the skyline ornamented by Wren – a conception obscured since the timber cupola was replaced by a squared-off top stage of brick, some time before 1935. Less obviously, *The Builder* explains that the parish insisted on a projecting clock in a timber housing, overruling the suggestions of the architect, who presumably intended one in the circular openings of the tower.²² The clock survives, hardly distinguishable from those of the Wren churches that inspired it.

In the same conservative category, one might include repairs to St Nicholas Cole Abbey, tendered for in 1856 by John Young Jun. The colour scheme is specified as 'fawn, warm lavender, and dead white', which might easily be an eighteenth-century colour scheme.²³ There are also the twin pulpits of St Sepulchre's (strictly a pulpit and lectern), made by Messrs Pratt of Bond Street in 1854, and sometimes mistaken for seventeenth-century work (though the twin pulpit and lectern is a characteristically early nineteenth-century arrangement).²⁴ Altogether there is enough evidence to amend the picture of somnolent neglect in the 1850s presented by Dickens's celebrated pieces in *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1859). The City parishes may have been a backwater in terms of taste, and many of the churches must indeed have been in poor condition; but others were being kept in good repair, and were clearly a source of pride. The lack of fashionable medievalisms and the apparent indifference to Cambridge Ecclesiology may reflect the introverted character of City taste, which during the eighteenth century had fallen behind the polite taste of the West End.

This introverted, late-lingering taste was rapidly overtaken by events, however. The year 1854 saw the prospect of wholesale

destruction return; the later 1850s the first manifestations of new ideas of restoration that were entirely to dissolve any differences between the City and the world outside it.

The bishops, demolition and new suburban churches

The campaign to remove the churches has been ably reconstructed by Michael Peel in his pamphlet for the Ecclesiological Society, so does not need detailed summary here.²⁵ The first attempt to establish the legal machinery to thin out the churches was a bill promoted in 1854, in the last years of Bishop Blomfield's episcopate. A total of 29 churches were to be removed. Though there was a bias against keeping the smaller and plainer churches, several of Wren's masterpieces were among them, including St Swithin and St Mary Aldermary. Also scheduled for demolition was St Helen's Bishopsgate, the second most important medieval survivor in the City. The failure of the bill was greeted with great relief by *The Ecclesiologist*, as one might expect, and also by *The Builder*. The latter described the City churches in Ruskinian terms as 'the handwriting of a past generation, houses of memory', and published a composite view of the threatened church towers.²⁶ *The Builder's* support for their preservation is a reminder that its editor between 1844 and 1883 was George Godwin, author of *The Churches of London* in 1838–39, and a valuable friend to the churches thereafter.²⁷

Blomfield was replaced as bishop in 1857 by Tait, who made a fresh attempt on the churches. A report which he commissioned issued in a new Union of Benefices Act, 1860. Funds from the sale of the churches and their sites were to be diverted to new parishes in the suburbs, mostly for the construction and endowment of new churches, but also for new schools. Unions could be made only where the united parish could provide a house for the incumbent in the City. This was the Act under which demolitions began in earnest, though it gave sufficient delaying powers to vestries and patrons for the process to be a slow one.

St Benet Gracechurch Street was the first to go, in 1867–68 (Fig. 5). Its details are typical.²⁸ The order of redundancy was made in 1864, confirming a vote of the vestry in the previous year. The parish was united with All Hallows Lombard Street. On demolition, the site fetched some £24,000 – a huge increase on the 1830s estimate – and the materials £611. About a third of the site went for street widening. This is an important point: though the sites of the demolished churches are usually described as having been built on, more than half of them gave up some land for street improvements (the preoccupation of the City Corporation with easing the flow of traffic helps explain why no serious resistance was offered to the demolitions from that quarter

Fig. 5: St Benet Gracechurch Street, exterior view, 1887. From William Niven, London City Churches Destroyed Since AD 1800, or now threatened (1887).



in the 1850s and 1860s). The income was spent as follows. The sum of £7,200 went to build a new church, St Benet Mile End, Stepney, with a further £9,000 as an endowment. Its consecration in 1872 effectively marked the end of the process of disposal, nine years after the vestry's vote for self-abolition.²⁹ The sum of £1,500 was set aside to buy a parsonage house, as the Act required.³⁰ The removal of human remains cost £2,100, and £470 went to the lawyers: both substantial sums. Finally, £4,000 was spent on the repair and re-pewing of All Hallows Lombard Street.

The new suburban parishes which were created in this way often saw themselves as the heirs to the former churches, many of whose church is St Dionis, Parson's Green, built by Ewan Christian in 1884–85. The parish began as a district of the medieval parish of All Saints' Fulham, with the first services in a mission hall built in 1878 by Arthur Billing. In the early 1880s it was hoped that the pending demolition of St Olave Jewry would finance the erection of a proper parish church. When demolition was postponed, funds from the sale of old St Dionis, demolished

in 1878, were used instead. Its site fetched £47,000, of which £7,000 went to the new building and £3,000 for its endowment. Without the influx of funds from such defunct City churches, parishes of this kind would probably have struggled for years to build an adequate church. At Parson's Green, for instance, it was another decade before enough money could be found to complete the tower.³¹

It is therefore to the credit of the Victorian architectural profession that it collectively regarded the demolitions not as opportunities for more work but as a depletion of the nation's architectural capital. This much is clear from the deputation from the RIBA which waited on the bishop in March 1860, while the Union of Benefices Bill was in progress. Its distinguished leader was C. R. Cockerell, the former Surveyor to St Paul's.³² The deputation was realistic enough to accept the principle of selective demolition, but sought to mitigate the damage in two ways. The first was the establishment of a category of protected churches. *The Builder* gave an incomplete list of these, all of the Wren period – surely a reflection of Cockerell's own reverence for the architect. They included St Stephen Walbrook, St Bride, St Lawrence, Christ Church, St Andrew Holborn, St Martin Ludgate, St Mary Abchurch, and St Michael Cornhill, all of which survive in some form; also St Antholin and St Mildred (which one is not specified), which do not. But no such list was established. Indeed, St Stephen and St Lawrence appeared on a provisional list of twenty churches for demolition drawn up in 1861.³³

The second proposal was the preservation as landmarks of the towers of such churches as were demolished. Again, as far as the 1860 Act was concerned the delegation sought in vain, but something of the kind did happen a decade later, though the momentum faltered after the first few cases. St Benet Gracechurch Street was never a likely candidate, for the site of its tower was needed for street widening – a circumstance the men of the RIBA had overlooked. However, the next to go, St Mary Somerset (demolished 1869), had its tower preserved by special Act of Parliament and vested in the Corporation.³⁴ The tower of All Hallows Staining, the next casualty, was saved in 1870 by its neighbour the Clothworkers' Company, which bought the site. The procedure was more complicated here, since a complex tangle of interests had led the church authorities to proceed under a special Act of Parliament rather than using the 1860 Act.³⁵ The next to go was St Mildred Poultry, in 1872, and here again the tower lay in the way of street widening. St James Duke's Place and St Martin Outwich followed, both eighteenth-century buildings without steeples of note. Only with the demolition of St Antholin Watling Street in 1875 was a Wren tower – and one of the most

admired – destroyed without the excuse of street improvements. The preservation of part of its spire at Forest Hill and the erection in 1880 of a monument sixteen feet high on its site seem sadly inadequate acts of expiation.³⁶ Thereafter, the only tower to be kept was that of St Olave Jewry, converted in 1892 into a parsonage for St Margaret Lothbury as the Act of 1860 required – an elegant solution, which deserved wider application.

The hardening of attitudes that led to the destruction of St Antholin's tower is as mysterious as the process by which the earlier towers were saved. Nor is it always clear why some churches were kept and others demolished. Only three of the twenty listed for redundancy in 1860 recur on a subsequent list dated 1861, and of this second list only four were demolished under the Act (St Dionis, St George Botolph Lane, St Mary Magdalen and all Hallows-the-Great (Fig. 6)). Some churches had narrow escapes, in which popular opposition may have played some part: when St Edmund the King was under threat in 1889, a (successful) petition against demolition was kept within the doorway.³⁷ That so many of the greater Wren churches survived, however, must have been due as much to the tendency to merge

Fig. 6: All Hallows-the-Great, interior view, c. 1890. (Courtesy of the LAMAS Glass Slide Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London: Slide C140)





small parishes into larger ones as to any questions of architectural quality.

'Restoration' to a pre-Wren period

This is to take the story far beyond the arrival of the restorers. The pattern is of drastic restorations in the late 1850s and 1860s, with more modest and respectful work thereafter. Proposals to transform Wren's churches were not new, and two curious early examples may be cited. Both reveal dissatisfaction with their plain exteriors, rather than with their fittings and liturgical arrangement. The first is a drawing of c.1800 of St Stephen Walbrook, as improved almost beyond recognition by one Alexander Poole Moore (Fig. 7).³⁸ It is a wildly impractical design: a huge dome and drum are set on top of columns which could never have borne the weight, and the tower is moved slightly to the south, on the axis of a giant new portico. A more plausible scheme was illustrated by William Bardwell, a not very successful architect, in his rambling book *Temples Ancient and Modern* (1837). He proposed that Wren's under-used churches be dismantled and re-erected in the suburbs. Bardwell was motivated by admiration for Wren's churches, which he considered 'almost the perfection

Fig. 7: Alexander Poole Moore's proposal for St Stephen Walbrook, c.1800.

Reproduced in The Builder, 1885, Vol 49, plate after p.532.

of Protestant church building'. Since their hemmed-in City sites would not have corresponded to their new suburban situations, he provided specimen drawings to show how St Vedast's walls might be adorned with Italianate detail.³⁹

Such schemes remained speculative until the 1850s, when the threat of wholesale demolition galvanised the parishes themselves into action. It seems clear that church restoration was consciously embraced as a means of fending off demolition. This was the motivation behind the first and easily the most spectacular plan: an Italian Gothic recasting of St Dionis Backchurch drawn up by G. E. Street in 1857 (Figs 8 and 9).⁴⁰ Street suggested that by making the City's churches more attractive, the decline in attendances might be reversed. His design was drastic: a vaulted chancel was to be formed within the church walls, themselves largely new, and the tower was to be transformed into a polychromatic vision from the age of Dante. (The curious chancel is a reminder that the constricted City streets left little scope for the deep chancels required by the newly-introduced surpliced choirs, who usually had to be accommodated within the existing



Fig. 8: St Dionis Backchurch: engraving by J. B. Allen after a drawing by Thomas Shepherd, 1829. From Thomas Shepherd, *London and its Environs in the Nineteenth Century* (1829).



Fig. 9: St Dionis Backchurch, lithograph by J. R. Jobbins, 1860, showing G. E. Street's unexecuted design for the adaptation of Wren's church.

volume of the building.) Nothing was done, however, and the church was demolished in 1878.

In the event, St Michael Cornhill became the first City church to be thoroughly remodelled to suit High Victorian taste, at the hands of Sir George Gilbert Scott.⁴¹ Work began in 1857 and continued into 1860, with more work in 1868. There was some involvement of the parish architects, first W. A. Mason (to 1858) then Herbert Williams, but there is no evidence that they contributed materially to the design. The work has many claims to importance besides its early date. It enlisted the efforts of many of the best church artists and craftsmen of the day, and strongly influenced several schemes in the following decade. It was also the most widely publicised of the City church restorations and was favoured with a visit from the Prince Consort on its completion in 1860.⁴² Even today St Michael's evokes the High Victorian mood better than any other City church, despite much toning-down since the Second World War.

The church building was unusual for several reasons. The nave had been promptly rebuilt by the parish after the Great Fire, with no demonstrable involvement by Wren's office. The medieval tower remained until 1715–22, when it was rebuilt in a mixed style: round-arched classical below, to match the nave, but turning Gothic above, to echo the former tower. The designer of all but the top part was almost certainly William Dickinson; of the bell-stage, Nicholas Hawksmoor.⁴³ Scott had therefore to decide whether to take a round-arched style or a Gothic one as his starting-point. That he was dissatisfied with the mixture as found is suggested by the report that he aimed originally to rebuild the tower completely. Even without this, the work eventually cost the huge sum of £16,000, financed out of glebe income.⁴⁴

Scott's solution was to Gothicise the porch on to Cornhill and to reserve a round-arched medieval style for the interior. The new porch required the demolition of a house, which pushed up the cost while diminishing the parochial income for the future. Its rich Continental Gothic pays no heed to the early eighteenth-century Gothic tower behind it (Fig. 10). It is notable for the fine tympanum sculpture by J. Birnie Philip, 'Michael disputing with Satan about the body of Moses', somewhat reminiscent in style of such Early Renaissance artists as Lorenzo Maitani or the Pisani. Scott's *Recollections* (1879) do not mention the porch, describing rather how he had 'attempted by the use of a sort of early Basilican style, to give a tone to the existing classic architecture' of the church proper.⁴⁵ He added Lombardic tracery and ornate surrounds to the windows, as may be seen from the churchyard to the south. 'The great ugly stable-like circles of the clerestory become roses under his plastic hand', wrote *The Ecclesiologist*; but

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Fig. 10: St Michael Cornhill, the Gothic north porch on Cornhill, added by Sir George Gilbert Scott, c. 1858. (Photo: f0rbe5, Flickr, 2014; used with permission)

these were mostly removed in 1952, and only the two-light windows of the aisle remain.⁴⁶ Otherwise the seventeenth-century interior was plain enough not to give Scott much trouble. His medievalising overlay is still unmistakable, despite the loss of much polychrome decoration (Fig. 11). A few old fittings were retained: the font bowl, a wrought-iron sword-rest, and a carved pelican and paintings of Moses and Aaron from the reredos. The new reredos, designed by Scott, is a grand Italianate affair of Derbyshire alabaster with Cosmati-type marble inlay (Fig. 12). In front is a fine, sinuous wrought-iron communion rail. Over the reredos appears a magnificent stained-glass oculus of Christ in Glory, designed by the young firm of Clayton & Bell at the height of their considerable powers. Alfred Bell was a pupil of Scott's, and

J. R. Clayton first met him in Scott's office, Scott directing work their way later. As they yet lacked their own facilities for making glass, the work was probably done for them by Heaton & Butler.⁴⁷ The chancel side windows, the great west window and a little light in the porch also survive intact, but the windows of the aisles sadly lost their decorative surrounds in the 1950s. The colours were originally carried all over the walls and vaults in rich polychromatic stencilling by George Trollope & Son, of which only the border of the oculus survives. Birnie Philip contributed the fine carved wooden angel-corbels below the cross-ribs, which remain. The inspiration is presumably the traditional dedication to St Michael and All Angels. Other carved fittings were by William Gibbs Rogers: the fine pulpit on a stubby marble column, the proud eagle lectern, and the pews. The last are traditional in two respects: they are truly pews, not benches (i.e. they have opening

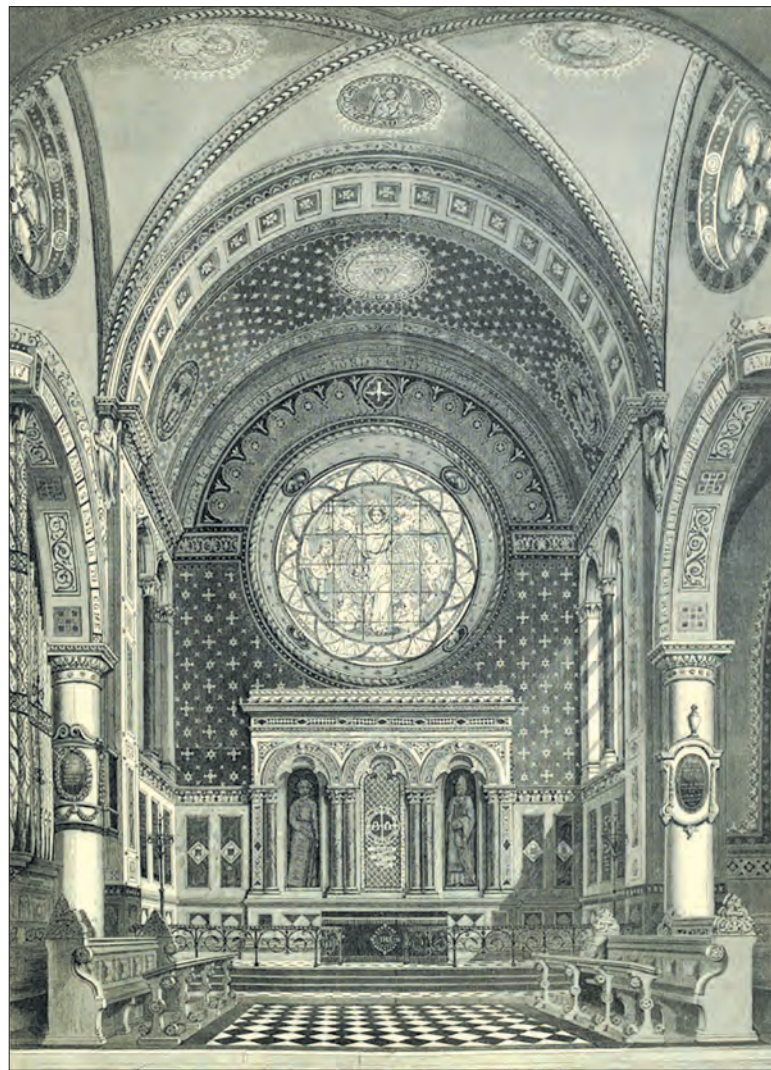


Fig. 11: St Michael Cornhill, interior view showing the decorative stencil scheme executed for Scott by George Trollope & Son, c.1858 (Building News).



doors), and they include raised churchwardens' pews at the west end. Otherwise they are a world away from Rogers' neo-Wren work of ten years before. Their highly individual carvings were left to his own invention, in fulfilment of good Ruskinian precept. Motifs of foliage and vines predominate, but he chose to ornament one with an image of a scapegoat, after Holman Hunt's famous painting of 1856.

Scott was also busy medievalising at St Alban Wood Street in the late 1850s. Though this qualifies as a Wren church, it was already wholly Gothic, so the question of how to treat the architecture was less problematic.⁴⁸ Medievalising work was also proposed at All Hallows Barking in 1863, the date of a design by George Aitchison Jun. A drawing for this, preserved in a bound volume of drainage plans at the London Metropolitan Archives, shows a new west end with a powerful spire, in a fashionable thirteenth-century Franco-Italianate manner. It is uncertain whether this ever came close to execution. One can also trace the influence of Scott's round-arched style in two restorations of the 1860s: St Mary Aldermanbury (1863) and St Swithin Cannon Street (1869; Fig. 13), both by Edmund Woodthorpe. Both have medievalising 'Lombardic' tracery after that at St Michael Cornhill, including at the former wheel windows like those of Scott's clerestory. Whether Scott would have thought the device appropriate here is another matter, for both churches were much

Fig. 12: St Michael Cornhill, Scott's alabaster reredos of c.1858, incorporating paintings of Moses and Aaron, 1672, by Robert Streeter, retained from the previous Wren-period reredos; east window by Clayton and Bell. (Photo: Mark Kirby, 2019)



Fig. 13: St Swithin-London-Stone, interior view, 1875, showing Edmund Woodthorpe's Lombardic stencilling scheme of 1869. (Courtesy of the LAMAS Glass Slide Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London: Slide B990)

more decidedly classical externally than St Michael's. Internally, Woodthorpe's debt to Scott is obvious, particularly at St Mary's. Early photographs show a similar triple-arched reredos and an arcaded pulpit, though of stone, not wood. Otherwise only the font and some insignificant woodwork was suffered to remain.

More respectful restoration

The 1870s saw a shift away from such drastic interventions, and thereafter most restorations were more respectful. This reflected a growing appreciation of the 'Renaissance' architecture of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century generally. The change was foreshadowed at St Swithin's, where Woodthorpe kept the reredos, pulpit, communion table and rails – a complete *volte-face* from his work at St Mary Aldermanbury, six years before. It found expression also in an important paper by the Revd E. L. Cutts, 'On the Desirability of Restoring Churches in the Italian Style of Architecture', delivered to the RIBA in 1870.⁴⁹ Cutts argued that a Classical church might be made more 'churchlike', in the language of the time, but should never be Gothicked. The debate that followed showed considerable appreciation of the qualities of Wren's churches in particular. One should not confuse this with

the conservatism of St Stephen's vestry twenty years before, for few of the assembled architects doubted that the churches should be transformed. The consensus was that rich colour and pattern were desirable, on the model of Renaissance Italy. The architects were also unhappy with the presence of galleries in many of the churches. Cutts suggested a compromise: where they were integral to the design they should stay; otherwise they should go. But he was more sympathetic to the qualities of other fittings – pulpits, reredoses, pews and communion rails – all of which Scott had done away with at St Michael's.

The challenge was taken up by Butterfield, in two restoration schemes of the 1870s. The better known is St Mary Woolnoth (begun 1875). Here he stencilled the walls and made the obligatory raised chancel, but kept the chancel fittings and set the gallery fronts back against the walls. At St Clement Eastcheap he removed the gallery altogether, as it did not contribute to a regularly planned interior, but incorporated parts of the woodwork into the new stalls. Otherwise there was much shuffling-about of furnishings, partly reversed by Comper in the 1930s. In this instance Butterfield even kept the tester, a fitting associated by then with the supposed complacent torpor of Georgian churchmanship, and routinely discarded in most restorations elsewhere.⁵⁰

Similar, often more modest restorations followed at many City churches. Some were paid for by proceeds from the sale of other churches: one example is St Mary Aldermary, restored by Charles Innes in 1876–77 with funds from St Antholin's. Much work was done by Ewan Christian, architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in which capacity he surveyed the fabric of every City church. His schemes include St Anne and St Agnes, St Martin Ludgate, St Vedast (Fig. 14), and St Olave Hart Street, all in the decade after 1887. Typically, galleries were removed, pews cut down, and stalls made up from bits of carved wood. It was probably at this time, too, that the churches acquired the stencilled and patterned walls that appear on so many old photographs. Stained glass appears more often to have been left until later: the important sequence at St Botolph Aldersgate, for example, was begun only in 1885, eleven years after the restoration by John Blyth. The obvious parallel to all this work in the context of the City is the redecoration and embellishment of many of the Livery Halls at about the same time.⁵¹

Substantial alterations to the external architecture were rare, and tailed off from c.1875. In that year, Butterfield altered the steps in front of St Mary Woolnoth, and Thomas Garner added embellishments (since removed) to the tower of St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe. The outstanding late Victorian example is the



Fig. 14: *St Vedast, interior view, 1875, showing Ewan Christian's reordering of the 'chancel'.* (Courtesy of the LAMAS Glass Slide Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London: Slide B810)

doorcase added to St Botolph Bishopsgate in J. F. Bentley's restoration of 1892–94. This was an early Georgian church, however; it is more than likely that Bentley would not have had the temerity to do such a thing to one of Wren's. Even his more thoroughgoing restoration of the elder Dance's St Botolph, Aldgate, with its pretty balustraded gallery fronts and its ranks of plaster angels along the aisle ceilings, manifests more respect for the old building than at first appears, for Bentley refused to remove the galleries or to add a new deep chancel, and lost some donors as a result.⁵²

The case of St Stephen Walbrook is depressing to relate against this background of growing appreciation. Its restoration, by Alexander Peebles, came in 1886–87, prompted by the discovery of dry rot in the pews. By this date, one would have thought, Wren's greatest parish church should have been appreciated in its seventeenth-century form. Indeed, the Royal Academy's gold medal for architectural drawing had been awarded in 1884 to E. H. Sedding for measured drawings of St Stephen, later published in *The Builder*. Certainly, Peebles' scheme was strongly opposed by the Grocers' Company, patrons of the living. The scheme was put to arbitration and largely approved by a committee consisting of Ewan Christian, J. F. Pearson and J. T. Micklethwaite, as well as

F. C. Penrose, Surveyor to St Paul's, whom Peebles had already consulted. At this stage the intention was to repair and cut down the pews; but the appearance of the empty church so struck the committee that they decided to put in movable benches instead (Fig. 15). An utterly inappropriate mosaic, since removed, was laid on the exposed floor.⁵³ As *The Builder* wrote in 1896: 'No worse blunder in treating an ancient building could have been made'.⁵⁴ Lord Palumbo's more recent interventions are mild in comparison.

The episode of St Stephen's nicely illustrates the eternal conflict between those who seek to preserve a historic building from demolition or decay in its current form and those who wish to modernise it to suit changing uses and tastes. A similar conflict appears to have occurred at St Mary-at-Hill from 1879. In that year it was threatened with demolition to make way for the new District Railway. A meeting was held to defend the church,



Fig. 15: St Stephen Walbrook, interior view showing the benches installed by Alexander Peebles in 1886–87, replacing the original box pews. From G. H. Birch, London Churches of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries (1896).

presided over by the architect W. M. Teulon, elder brother of the better-known Samuel Sanders Teulon. The meeting formed a preliminary committee for the 'City Church and Churchyard Protection Society', a shadowy body which disappears from the records a few years later.⁵⁵ In effect, this was a semi-autonomous committee of William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The new society appears to have included a higher proportion of architects than the SPAB proper, which always had an uneasy relationship with the profession. Where the City churches were concerned, however, there was always much common ground between them. W. M. Teulon had already served on a sub-committee organized in 1877 by T. L. Donaldson, a past president of the RIBA, to resist Bishop Jackson's attempts to streamline the machinery for disposing of City churches (pressure from this quarter may have helped swing the City Corporation against accelerated demolitions).⁵⁶ But it was the SPAB's members in Parliament who secured a clause in the railway bill preserving St Mary's church, and who called into question the further destruction of the City churches.⁵⁷ Having saved St Mary's, those who treasured the church as it was had to fend off a scheme to subject it to the usual restoration and reordering to accommodate a surpliced choir.⁵⁸ A compromise appears to have been reached, in which the chancel paving was renewed to the old design and some pews were removed from the east end to accommodate minimal seating for the choir.⁵⁹

St Mary-at-Hill is thus a clear case of an 'unrestored' interior, deliberately preserved as such.⁶⁰ At other City churches, it is difficult to say whether the failure to carry out a full restoration was due to inertia, poverty, or genuine appreciation of their untouched state. St Benet Paul's Wharf is one example. It suffered damage in 1890 when a neighbouring warehouse caught fire, and was restored by Herbert Knight the following year.⁶¹ The modest cost – the lowest tender was £627 – was borne by the Earl of Powis, a leading member of the Welsh-speaking congregation which had rescued it from demolition in 1879. Was it only lack of money that forestalled a more drastic restoration, one that might have removed the gallery on the north side, as Blomfield or Ewan Christian would undoubtedly have done? Even St Mildred Bread Street (Fig. 16), usually considered the least-altered amongst the Wren churches until its destruction in the Second World War, was subjected to two modest campaigns: 'repairs and restorations' advertised in 1881, to designs by T. Milbourn, including the installation of hot water apparatus and 'brass work', and in 1894 some reseating in connection with repairs to the tower. The sums tendered were around £1,100 in the first instance, £300 in the second.⁶²



Fig. 16: St Mildred Bread Street, interior view showing one of the least altered interiors of any of Wren's churches, destroyed in 1941. From G. H. Birch, *London Churches* (1896).

Other interiors were enriched with fittings saved from demolished churches, both by adding to existing ensembles, and by replacing original pieces with others considered finer. In the former category belongs the screen from All Hallows-the-Great at St Margaret Lothbury (Fig. 17), in the latter the pulpit from St Michael Queenhithe at St James Garlickhythe. A creative juxtaposition of old and new work was achieved in the parclose screen at St Margaret Lothbury, in which the communion rail from St Olave Jewry supports an upper screen designed by W. Rowlands Ingram, brother of the Rector, Canon A. J. Ingram. Other new furnishings of exceptional quality include the font at St Botolph Aldersgate, designed and given around 1880 by J. P. Seddon as a coda to the restoration by Blyth in 1873–74. Some fittings recall exceptional parish clergy: the della Robbia tondo at St Margaret Pattens was introduced by the late Victorian incumbent J. L. Fish, advanced Ritualist, Neo-Jacobite and scandalous absentee (he lived on the Isle of Wight), as a monument to a Non-Juring bishop.⁶³ Stained glass is usually of a high quality and, despite bomb damage and changes of taste, work by many good artists and makers survives: Heaton, Butler & Bayne (at St Andrew Undershaft), Ward & Hughes, Lavers & Barraud (both St Botolph Aldersgate), Charles Clutterbuck (St Botolph Aldgate), F. W. Moody (St Botolph Bishopsgate, for Powell & Sons), Kempe (St Dunstan-in-the-West and St Katherine Cree), and C. A. Gibbs (St Peter Cornhill), as well as Clayton & Bell's windows at St Michael Cornhill, already mentioned. Ancillary buildings of note include S. S. Teulon's defiantly Gothic church house at St Andrew's, Holborn, built in connection with his restoration of the church in 1869–72, and the much-altered parish hall by All Hallows London Wall. This was built by H. I. Newton in 1902 so that workers arriving on cheap early morning trains into Liverpool Street could find shelter before their offices opened – an example of the Church's mission to the city's daytime working population, which numbered 332,000 in 1901.⁶⁴

By the end of Victoria's reign, most of the remaining churches had been restored or repaired, but this did not mean that their future was secure. Bishop Tait had envisaged half of the City parishes disappearing, although it was increasingly clear that the logical end of the 1860 Act was the abolition of all but a handful. The reason was the inexorable decline of the resident population, hastened by booming City property prices and by the advent of trams and railways. By the 1890s the only populous parishes were those on the City fringes, notably St Giles, St Andrew Holborn, and the three St Botolphs. The situation in that decade was summarised by the Revd Henry William Clarke in his book *The City Churches* (1898). The innocuous title suggests kinship with



such appreciative late nineteenth-century publications as those by G. H. Birch or Arthur Mackmurdo. In fact, it is a merciless and meticulously documented account of what Clarke saw as the City Church 'system', a scandalous waste of ecclesiastical resources, expounded over 400 pages, and seasoned with much detailed personal abuse. Much of it drew on articles Clarke had published in the *City Press*. He thought all but fifteen churches should go forthwith, to pay for new churches in the East End. His statistics showed that Sunday services at the 47 remaining churches in the City proper were emptier than ever. Together they provided 20,000 places, at a time when the population had shrunk to 25,000. The average attendance on any Sunday was about 3,000 in the morning and 3,200 in the evening. Fourteen of the churches lay within 360 yards of St Stephen Walbrook. Clarke presented tables showing single-figure Sunday congregations in most of these. He had a keen eye for clerical absenteeism and for moribund or misused parochial charities.

Clarke's partiality, however, led him to overlook the very features that encouraged the defenders of the churches. In pastoral terms, the crucial innovation was the weekday services introduced in the 1860s, forerunners of many later pastoral initiatives. Clarke also disregarded any claim the churches had to preservation as historical monuments, objects of beauty, or incidents in the townscape. But the fact that a clergyman could carry on a series

Fig. 17: St Margaret Lothbury, interior view showing the Wren-period screen, pulpit and sounding board, all transferred from All Hallows-the-Great after its demolition. Other features from St Olave Jewry and St Christopher-le-Stocks were also transferred to St Margaret's.

(Photo: Mark Kirby, 2019)

of articles in the City's own daily newspaper urging the demolition of more than thirty of its churches shows how far these claims were from universal acceptance. The twentieth century would have more to say, on both sides; but that is another story.

Author's note

This article is based on a paper given at the Ecclesiological Society's City Churches conference of 1996. Submitted for publication not long afterwards, it fell into the hiatus between the society's well-remembered series of stapled pamphlets and the later transformation of *Ecclesiology Today* into the present, fully illustrated journal. Any references to more recent published sources are therefore lacking, as it seemed simpler to publish the article substantially as first written. The illustrations – more than would have been feasible twenty years ago, and of far better quality – were kindly supplied by Mark Kirby, who also prepared the article for publication. I am grateful also to Trevor Cooper and Anthony Geraghty, for helping to reconnect the typescript with its author.

Notes

- 1 On these see J. Mordaunt Crook in *Architectural History* (1965), and C. M. L. Gardam in *Transactions of the British Archaeological Association Conference 1984* (1990).
- 2 D. Braithwaite, *Building in the Blood: the story of the Dove Bros. of Islington* (1981) pp. 123–129; Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: London 1* (3rd ed., 1973), p. 177.
- 3 Examples of such restorations might be multiplied: cf. St Katherine Cree, restored 1878–79 by R. P. Notley of Gracechurch Street.
- 4 E. A. Webb, *The Records of St Bartholomew Smithfield* (1921); information from Ian Dungavell.
- 5 *Gentleman's Magazine* New Series Vol. 1 (1834), pp. 50–51, etc.
- 6 David Kynaston, *The City of London* Vol. 1 (1993), pp. 30, 140.
- 7 John Summerson, 'The Victorian rebuilding of the City of London', *London Journal* Vol. 3 (1977); Maurice Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages* (1990), p. 108.
- 8 *British Critic* Second Series Vol. X (1818) Part II, p. 5.
- 9 *Gentleman's Magazine* New Series Vol. 1 (1834), passim.
- 10 *Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. 102 (1832) part 2, pp. 297–301.
- 11 *Gentleman's Magazine* New Series Vol. 1 (1834); identified in James M. Kuist (ed.), *The Nichols File of the Gentleman's Magazine* (Wisconsin, 1982). A few years before, Saunders had helped initiate the great struggle to preserve the Lady chapel of St Mary Overy (now Southwark Cathedral) from demolition for the new London Bridge approach – a Surrey counterpart to the destruction of St Michael's Crooked Lane (Simon Bradley, 'The Gothic Revival and the Church of England 1790–1840', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1996, chapter 2).
- 12 *Christian Remembrancer* Vol. XVI (1834), p. 63; *British Magazine* Vol. V (1834), p. 62, by 'Athanasius'.
- 13 On Bishop Blomfield see Andrew Saint, 'Anglican Church-Building in London: 1790–1890', in C. Brooks and A. Saint, *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society* (1995), pp. 34–35.
- 14 Thomas Saunders was City Comptroller in 1841, which may have prevented him protesting (C. Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London* (1896), p. 205).
- 15 *Gentleman's Magazine* New Series Vol. 15 (1841), p. 153 and passim.

- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 A.W. N. Pugin, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841), p. 5.
- 18 Pevsner and Cherry *The Buildings of England: London 1*, pp. 169–170.
- 19 Paul Jeffery, *The Parish Church of St Mary-at-Hill* (1996).
- 20 *The Builder* 1850, p. 381.
- 21 Drawing by Thomas Creecher, c.1678–79, London Metropolitan Archives P69/STE2/B/025/MS07695. Kindly identified by Mark Kirby, 2019.
- 22 *The Builder* 1851.
- 23 *The Builder* 1856, p. 666.
- 24 Information from Mr Charles Brown. It may also be significant that refacing work of the late 1850s made no attempt to medievalise the exterior of St Sepulchre's, as the *Building News* reported in dismay (1859, p. 759).
- 25 M. J. Peel, *Bishop Tait and the City Churches 1856–1868* (1992).
- 26 *The Builder* 1854, pp. 198–9. Two views showing the other steeples followed in that year. All three were reprinted in 1879, when the issue of demolitions was again addressed.
- 27 Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (2nd ed. 1985), p. 259.
- 28 See Revd Henry William Clarke, *The City Churches* (1898).
- 29 The church was demolished in 1950 after air raid damage.
- 30 In this instance the provision came to nothing; though a site was bought in Pudding Lane, it was not used and it was taken for the Underground railway around 1880.
- 31 A. R. Winnett, *A History of St Dionis Backchurch and St Dionis Parson's Green* (1935), pp. 30–34.
- 32 *The Builder* 1860, p. 429.
- 33 Peel, *Bishop Tait and the City Churches*, p. 16.
- 34 Thomas Milbourn, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Architectural Society* III (1870), pp. 253ff.
- 35 Peel, *Bishop Tait and the City Churches*, pp. 13–14.
- 36 Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, p. 338; Gordon Huelin, *Vanished Churches of the City of London* (1995), pp. 35–36. A relief from the monument survives at St Mary Aldermanbury.
- 37 *The Builder* 1889 part 2, p. 15; Peel, *Bishop Tait and the City Churches*, p. 12.
- 38 Published in *The Builder*, 1885, pl. following p. 532.
- 39 William Bardwell, *Temples Ancient and Modern; or, Notes on church architecture* (1837), pp. 197–198 and Plates 13 and 14.
- 40 The scheme is described by Stephen Humphrey in his article for the London Topographical Society, reprinted for the Ecclesiological Society in 1983.
- 41 Contemporary sources include *The Builder*, 1857, p. 174, the *Illustrated London News*, 1859, and several entries in the *Building News* for 1858–60.
- 42 Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, p. 224.
- 43 See Paul Jeffery, *The City Churches of Sir Christopher Wren* (1996), pp. 301–304.
- 44 *Building News* 1858; Clarke, *The City Churches*. The latter calculates the glebe income at some £3,200 a year by the end of the century.
- 45 George Gilbert Scott, *Personal and professional recollections* (1879), p. 192.
- 46 Quoted by B. F. L. Clarke, *The Parish Churches of London* (1966), p. 27.
- 47 Peter Larkworthy, *Clayton and Bell, Stained Glass Artists and Decorators* (Ecclesiological Society 1984).
- 48 Even so, the fittings suffered grievously: only the pulpit was kept, with the communion rails and some other woodwork incorporated into a screen around the organ (RCHME, *London Vol. IV: The City* (1929), p. 90).
- 49 I am grateful to Dr Chris Miele for these references.
- 50 Butterfield was probably responsible for the disappearance of the tester from St Edmund Lombard Street, which he restored in 1864.
- 51 Examples include the Armourers' and Braziers' Hall, by Alexander Graham, 1872–73; Mercers' Hall, by George Barnes Williams and J. G. Crace, 1878–81; Tallow Chandlers' Hall, by E. N. Clifton, 1871; Vintners' Hall, by Messrs Crace, 1876–78; etc.: Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 1, The City of London* (1997), *passim*.
- 52 A. G. B. Atkinson, *The Story of St Botolph Aldgate* (1898), pp. 210ff.

- 53 Report by Neil Burton for the GLC Historic Buildings Division, 1985.
- 54 *The Builder* 1896 part 1, p. 55.
- 55 *The Builder* 1879 part 1. The choice of title is of some interest: churchyards were much valued as open spaces in the densely built-up City, and after burials ceased in the 1850s several were adapted to serve as public gardens. The first, St Botolph, Aldgate, and St Nicholas Acons, were so altered in 1858 (Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, p. 217).
- 56 Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, p. 307. Other prominent members of the sub-committee were E. B. Ferrey and R. Phene Spiers. Welch records the City's resolution to oppose a further demolition bill, in 1882 (p. 353).
- 57 Chris Miele, 'The first conservation militants: William Morris and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings', in Michael Hunter (ed.), *Preserving the Past: the rise of heritage in modern Britain* (1996), pp. 35–36; information from Dr Miele. Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, p. 322, records questions by Percy Wyndham to Parliament, 12 March 1879.
- 58 Augustus Hare, *Walks in London* (1901 ed.), Vol. 1 p. 330. The leader of the conservatives was the formidable Sir Henry Peck of Peek Bros, whose city house, office and warehouse survive next door (Welch, *A Modern History of the City of London*, pp. 342, 348).
- 59 Paul Jeffery, *St Mary-at-Hill*, pp. 38, 44.
- 60 See Mark Chatfield, *Churches the Victorians Forgot* (1979). 60.
- 61 A. Hardwick, *Memorable Fires in London* (1926); *The Builder* 1891 part 1, p. 117, tender.
- 62 *The Builder* 1881 part 1, p. 781; 1894 part 1, p. 79 (tenders between £285 and £325).
- 63 Gordon Huelin, 'St Margaret Pattens: a City parish in the nineteenth century', *Guildhall Miscellany* III (1971).
- 64 David Kynaston, *The City of London* Vol. 2 (1995), p. 242. *A Modern History of the City of London*, pp. 342, 348).
- 59 Paul Jeffery, *St Mary-at-Hill*, pp. 38, 44.
- 60 See Mark Chatfield, *Churches the Victorians Forgot* (1979). 60.
- 61 A. Hardwick, *Memorable Fires in London* (1926); *The Builder* 1891 part 1, p. 117, tender.
- 62 *The Builder* 1881 part 1, p. 781; 1894 part 1, p. 79 (tenders between £285 and £325).
- 63 Gordon Huelin, 'St Margaret Pattens: a City parish in the nineteenth century', *Guildhall Miscellany* III (1971).
- 64 David Kynaston, *The City of London* Vol. 2 (1995), p. 242.

Lincoln Cathedral: the re-discovery of two chalices and patens by William Butterfield

Carol Bennett

RECENT RESEARCH HAS REVEALED that the architect William Butterfield (1814–1900) designed two chalices and patens late in his career for Lincoln Cathedral. Since their first use these sacred vessels have been stored in the cathedral's strongroom and used on some special occasions, but the name of their designer had been forgotten. An unlikely find in the Lincolnshire Archives led to the discovery of Butterfield's original drawings for these pieces. An almost indecipherable index card written by the first Lincolnshire county archivist, Joan Varley, stated that there was material about Lincoln Cathedral in the Greaves deposit in the Lincoln diocesan archives. Normally one would not expect to find cathedral material in diocesan archives, but Bishop Arthur Greaves held both cathedral and diocesan posts. He was subdean of Lincoln (1933–37), archdeacon of Stow (1937–51), suffragan bishop of Grimsby (1937–58), and cathedral precentor (1937–59).

In one of the boxes there was a notebook, untitled, and with no name written in it.¹ It contains notes from Lincoln chapter meetings from 4 February 1882 to 28 June 1909. Noting who was present, the author named the other members of Chapter by their titles, while referring to himself as 'E. T. L.'. This internal evidence reveals that the author was Edward Tucker Leake (1841–1925) who was, according to his memorial tablet in the cathedral, 'For 48 years Canon Residentiary and successively Chancellor and Subdean of this Cathedral Church.' These notes afford a 'fly on the wall' view of the business of chapter meetings. How Bishop Greaves came by this notebook is a mystery, but he obviously thought it was important to preserve it.

An entry for the meeting of 19 March 1887 states that a 'New Chalice & Paten (Designed by Mr Butterfield)' was offered by 'a few Lay Members of the Cath'l Congregation' and accepted for use at Easter 1887. An online search for 'William Butterfield, Lincoln Cathedral', led to the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. Among its collection of Butterfield drawings, there were designs for not one, but two chalices and patens for Lincoln Cathedral – the second set dating from two years later, in 1889.

Written on Butterfield's drawing for the 1887 paten is the comment, 'Lincoln/By March 31st' (Fig. 1).² The date of Easter that year was 10 April, so it can be assumed that this plate was ready in time for Easter communion. In addition, there is an estimate, sent to William Butterfield, from Hart, Son, Peard & Co., ecclesiastical metalworkers, addressed from 53–54 Wych Street, London, and dated 5 January 1887:

Carol Bennett is an art historian and lecturer who has worked for many years in Lincoln Cathedral Library. She is currently the interpretation officer, curating an exhibition about the cathedral's history in a new visitor centre, as well as selecting plate for display in the Treasury.

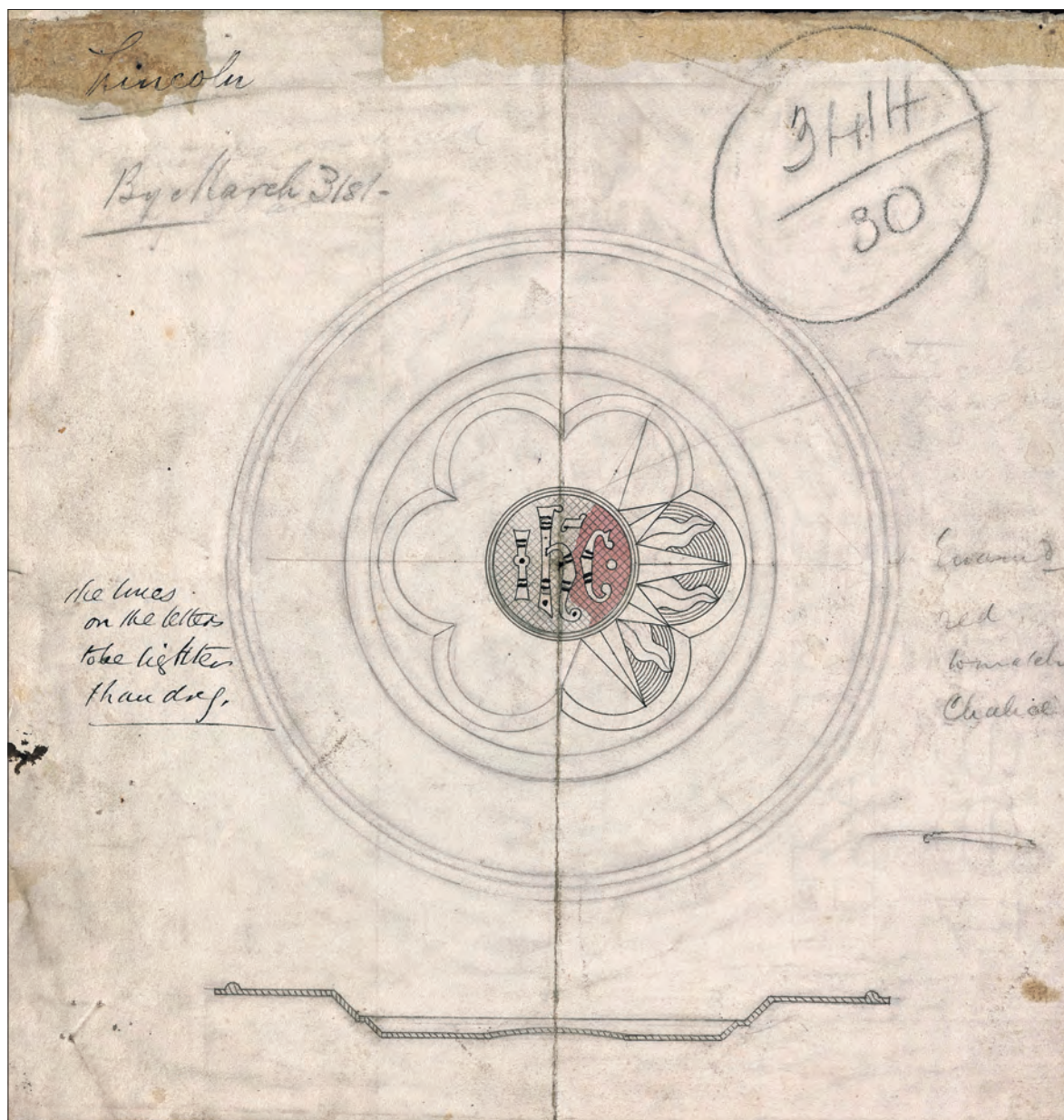


Fig. 1: Butterfield's drawing for the 1887 paten. (Getty Research Institute. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

Sir

We estimate the cost of the silver gilt Chalice with Enamels and engraving to your drawing herewith returned to come at Twenty five pounds (£25.0.0) Your command, for which we would be glad to receive

Yours respectfully,
Hart, Son, Peard & Co
[signed]

Written on the back is 'Mr Hart's tender for Chalice Lincoln Cathedral', with the addition of 'and Paten' in paler ink. The

estimate for the paten was overlooked, but a note dated 19 March 1887 on this same page states, 'The Silver Gilt paten for this chalice will cost Four pounds, ten shillings.' It is signed by A. B. Midland(?).³ Butterfield's drawing of the chalice shows it in elevation, with a drawing of the base below.⁴ Midland also signed his name to a comment added to this drawing, 'Lincoln Cathedral. Chalice referred to in my tender of January 5.87.'. Butterfield's notes on the drawing state that there were to be enamels in red and green on the stem, and 'Engravings on each face of the Base.' The base itself is stepped (Fig. 2). A separate drawing makes it clear that the initials 'IHC' appear once on the base 'Beneath the Cross on the knop', and that the fleur-de-lys should appear five times with 'Circles and hatched'.⁵ The drawing for the paten bears the note, 'Enameled red to match the Chalice'. Recent photographs taken for the cathedral's inventory of plate show how perfectly the designs were executed (Fig. 3).⁶

The Lincoln Minster Sacrist's Register is a hand-writtenn ledger, begun in 1896. It lists existing items of plate, with later ones in date order. Here, the 1887 chalice and paten are recorded as 'The gift of William J. Butler DD, Dean of Lincoln and Friends, 1888' [sic].⁷ This was the first communion plate presented to Lincoln Cathedral since Dean George Gordon's gift in 1824. Gordon gave twelve pieces of plate made by the goldsmith to royalty, John Bridges, to make up for the loss of all of Lincoln Cathedral's plate in 1805 when thieves broke through five locks to get it, and not a single item was retrieved.⁸ In 1805 there were only two cups and covers; Dean Gordon replaced them, but did not add to their number.⁹ Communion was infrequent in 1824, but by the time Dean Butler arrived in Lincoln in 1885, he was not alone in encouraging taking the sacrament more often.¹⁰ Aside from the 1887 and 1889 Butterfield communion plate, the sacrist's register records a third chalice and paten, set with sapphires (maker not known), given to the cathedral in 1893 in honour of the Butlers' golden wedding by their friends in Wantage, in Oxford Diocese, where Butler had been vicar.¹¹ Between 1887 and 1893, thanks to Dean Butler, the cathedral communion plate had increased by 150 per cent.

It is not surprising that Dean Butler chose Butterfield, for a second time, to design the 1889 chalice and paten. While Butler was at Wantage, Butterfield designed a chapel of ease to the parish church. Called St Michael's on the Downs, it was a chapel for the workhouse, now demolished.¹² Butterfield also designed a novitiate, built in 1878 for the convent of the Wantage Sisters.¹³ Butler had encouraged the foundation of the sisterhood, and kept a close relationship with them. After he moved to Lincoln, the sisters made a superb white altar frontal, in the *opus anglicanum*

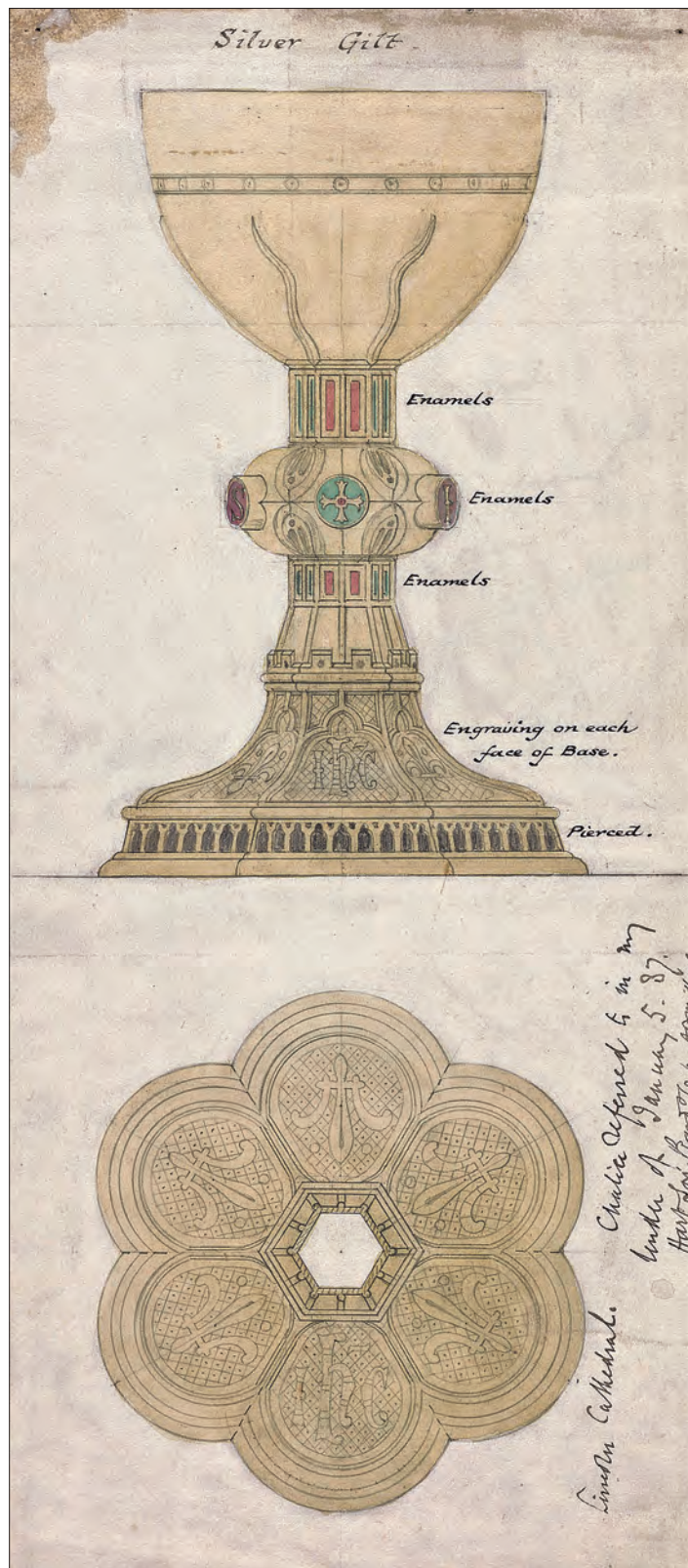


Fig. 2: Butterfield's drawing of the 1887 chalice. (Getty Research Institute. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: THE RE-DISCOVERY OF TWO CHALICES AND PATENS BY WILLIAM BUTTERFIELD



Fig. 3: Lincoln Cathedral's 1887 Butterfield chalice (left) and paten (right). (Images courtesy of Lincoln Cathedral)

manner, for the cathedral's new and much larger high altar.¹⁴ The dean personally helped to lift the huge marble slab into position on his 70th birthday on 10 February 1888.¹⁵ This focus on the altar was consistent with Butler's emphasis on communion. On his arrival in Lincoln as dean, in 1885, there was only one weekly celebration on a Sunday. He added an 8 am Sunday communion service, as well as a weekday one, with the addition of a 7 am communion on the first Sunday of the month, and on great festival days. Butler often commented on the increasing number of communicants among the congregations in his care, both at Wantage and Lincoln.¹⁶ Clearly, there was a connection between Butler's emphasis on the Eucharist and his commissioning of much needed additional communion plate from Butterfield.

The 1889 chalice and paten bear jewels given by William Butler's wife Emma. The jewels are turquoise, amethyst, opal, aquamarine and topaz, some retaining their jewellery settings.¹⁷ Once again, Butterfield's elegant drawings survive (Figs 4 and 5).¹⁸

There is another letter from Hart, Son, Peard & Co., dated 23 November 1889. Entitled, 'Tender for Chalice and Paten with Jewels Lincoln Cathedral', it states that the cost of making the chalice and paten combined was £33. The value of gold remaining from the settings was £4.¹⁹ Once again, Butterfield's designs were followed exactly (Fig. 6).²⁰

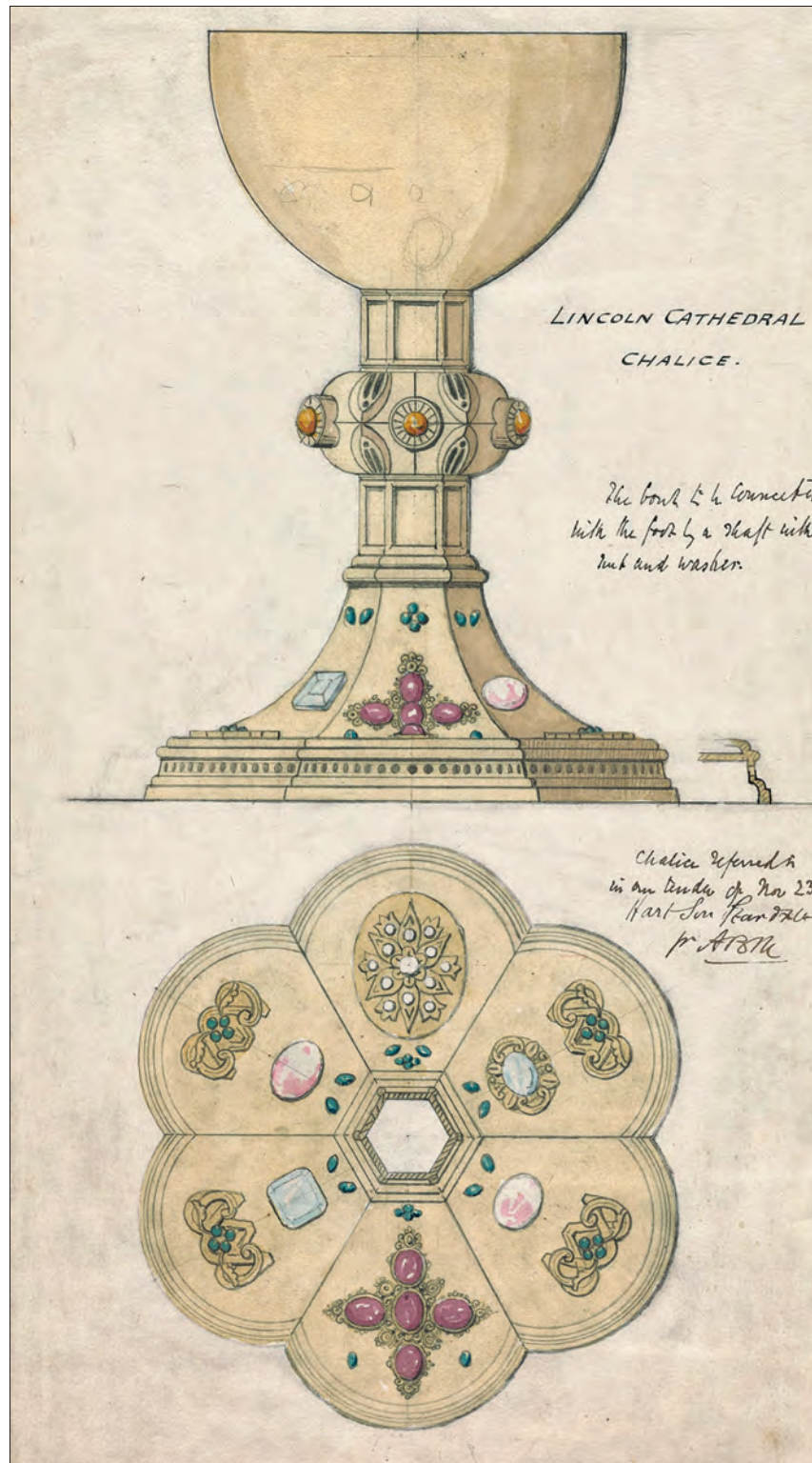


Fig. 4: The 1889 chalice design. (Getty Research Institute. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: THE RE-DISCOVERY OF TWO CHALICES AND PATENS BY WILLIAM BUTTERFIELD



Fig. 5: Butterfield's design for the 1889 paten. (Getty Research Institute. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program)



Fig. 6: Lincoln Cathedral's 1889 Butterfield chalice (left) and paten (right). (Images courtesy of Lincoln Cathedral)

When photographing the 1889 chalice for the cathedral inventory, collections assistant Lewis Monkley noticed that some of the jewels were no longer set into the chalice. By chance he found a box, hidden out of sight, on the top shelf in the strongroom, marked 'Ecclesiastical buttons'. To his surprise, on opening the box he found the jewels missing from the chalice.²¹

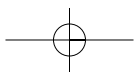
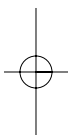
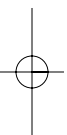
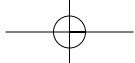
The gift of her jewels was Emma's heartfelt tribute to both Lincoln Cathedral and her husband. Aged 75, William suddenly became ill and died on 14 January 1894; Emma's death followed just three days later. Their graves lie side by side in the cloister garth. Butterfield's plain design for their memorial survives at the Getty Research Institute. Although the next dean, Edward Charles Wickham, wrote on the drawing to say the chapter approved it, this design was never executed.²² Butterfield's single stone slab for both husband and wife was discarded in favour of two separate ones.

There is still much to be discovered about Lincoln Cathedral's plate. Somewhere, there is a pair of candlesticks, recorded in the sacrist's register as 'the gift of W. Butterfield, Esq.'²³ They adorned the retable of the altar Dean Butler had set up under the east window of the Angel Choir – said to be the first time an altar had been placed there since the Reformation. Butterfield's gift seems a friendly gesture of support for the dean's endeavours at Lincoln. These candlesticks are yet to be identified, but the hunt continues!

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Notes

- 1 Lincolnshire Archives (LAO), DIOC/Bishop Greaves, Box 3.
- 2 Getty Research Institute (GRI)/Library Catalog/Special Collections/Manuscript/Archive, Lincoln Cathedral: communion plate, 1887–89, William Butterfield architectural and design drawings. Series II. Designed ecclesiastical objects, item 6 recto.
- 3 GRI, Butterfield drawings, Series III. Estimates, Seven letters from Hart, Son, Peard & Co., item 3, recto, and 3, verso
- 4 *Ibid.*, item 5, recto.
- 5 *Ibid.*, item 4.
- 6 Lincoln Cathedral Treasury, PS 063 and PS 066.
- 7 Lincoln Cathedral Library, Lincoln Minster Sacrist's Register, 1896–1947, pp. 1–2.
- 8 LAO, Monson 28/A/19/2, p. 106a; Lincoln Cathedral Treasury database.
- 9 *Lincoln, Stamford and Rutland Mercury*, 19 July 1805.
- 10 Arthur John Butler, *The Life and Letters of William John Butler, late Dean of Lincoln and Sometime Vicar of Wantage* (London, 1897). While at Wantage, Butler wrote to the Revd John Keble: '... communicants are increasing with us, as everywhere else, to an almost startling extent.' (p. 69).
- 11 Lincoln Minster Sacrist's Register, item IV, p. 2.
- 12 Butler, *William John Butler*, p. 33. In a letter to the Revd John Keble on 16 December 1845, Butler relates a conversation he had with Butterfield (p. 33).
- 13 Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 253. Wantage was in Oxfordshire until 1974; it is now in Berkshire.
- 14 Lincoln Minster Sacrist's Register has a full description of this frontal; its design was based on 'a medieval hanging remaining in St Edmund's, Salisbury', item XIII, p. 4.
- 15 Butler, *William John Butler*, note on p. 327.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 324–327, 353.
- 17 Sacrist's Register, as above, p. 1.
- 18 GRI, Butterfield drawings. Series II. Designed ecclesiastical objects, item 2, recto; item 1, recto; item 3.
- 19 GRI, Butterfield drawings. Series III. Estimates, Seven Letters from Hart, Son, Peard & Co., item 2 recto and item 2, verso.
- 20 Lincoln Cathedral Treasury, PS 028 and PS 029.
- 21 Lincoln Cathedral Treasury database.
- 22 GRI/Library Catalog/Manuscript/Archive, Lincoln Cathedral, William John Butler, 1894, William Butterfield architectural and design drawings. Series IV. Memorials.
- 23 Lincoln Minster Sacrist's Register, item XXIX, p. 8.



The unlucky story of Holy Trinity Kingsway

Andrew Saint

Many will have remarked a concave sweep of stonework set back from the frontage across Kingsway from Holborn Tube Station in London, shaming its taller neighbours with its generosity and *élan* (Cover image and Fig. 1). In the centre, a porch of opposing convexity graced by four Corinthian columns shields an entry. Above it, the parapet jumps up to support an empty bellcote, while to each side of the screen giant niches loom over cavernous side doors, flanked in the frieze by attendant angels in relief.

This was Holy Trinity Kingsway (1910–11), a church for just 75 years but one unique in the central London of its time for its forthright classicism. It was built under adverse circumstances and struggled throughout its short existence with poverty and thin congregations. The soaring tower designed to surmount the porch by its architects, Belcher and Joass, never stood a hope of fulfilment. In the 1980s the body of the church was pulled down, leaving just the screen and the paved court in front for smoking, lunching or hanging about. Few perhaps heed the inscription in anomalously Gothic lettering over what is now the entrance to offices: ‘Enter, Rest & Pray’.

The story of Holy Trinity is worth telling because it goes back further than appears, because it is well documented and because of the noble quality of the fragment that remains.

Andrew Saint was General Editor of the Survey of London, 2006–15. He has written frequently about church architecture and edited (with Chris Brooks) The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society (Manchester University Press, 1995), and (with Teresa Sladen) Churches 1870–1914 (The Victorian Society, 2011).



Fig. 1: Holy Trinity Kingsway, front in 2019. Belcher & Joass, architects, 1910–11. (Chris Redgrave copyright)

A second church for St Giles in the Fields

Historically, this part of London belonged to the parish of St Giles in the Fields, which in the early nineteenth century was mostly – with the exceptions of the professional enclaves of Lincoln’s Inn Fields and Bedford Square – overpopulated, impoverished and degraded. So when money became available for building additional urban churches under the 1817 and 1818 Acts, St Giles was an obvious candidate – it being then believed that new churches would go far towards solving social problems.

But the parish botched its early attempts to take advantage of the church-building Acts. Soon after the Commissioners for New Churches started their work, William Howley, the Bishop of London and later Primate, wrote to inform St Giles that they conceived the parish to be ‘one of those which most urgently call for their interposition’.¹ Howley’s letter was addressed to the pluralist octogenarian John Buckner, Bishop of Chichester as well as Rector of St Giles. Buckner, by then seldom seen in the parish, merely passed it to the Vestry, who agreed that they needed two extra churches and set up a committee in January 1819 to seek suitable sites.²

This potentially powerful committee included two judges living in the Bedford Square area and the parliamentary printer Luke Hansard, a fervent upholder of the established Church. They quickly opted for a site at the eastern end of Lincoln’s Inn Fields. There had been abortive attempts to build a church here in the 1690s (when Wren was involved) and again under the Queen Anne Acts for new London churches.³ This time the committee believed they could persuade the Fields’ trustees – mainly the lawyers of Lincoln’s Inn – by getting one of the judges and a bencher of the Inn, Sir Alan Park, to lean on them. Park bungled his approach, however, and the proposal was once more rebuffed, to the dudgeon of the committee, especially Hansard, who reacted by penning a prolix letter to the Commissioners.⁴ The committee now lapsed into torpor until 1824, when the aged Buckner died and Christopher Benson took over briefly at St Giles. A flurry of activity followed: two sites were earmarked and subscriptions solicited. Once more the benchers of Lincoln’s Inn were approached and again they snubbed the parish.⁵

Finally, in 1826, a fresh location for St Giles’ first chapel of ease came into focus. Little Queen Street was a shabby thoroughfare running north from Great Queen Street to Holborn, taking up about half the width of the present Kingsway. Charles Lamb the essayist’s family lived here in the 1790s, and this was where his sister Mary murdered their mother in a fit of insanity; indeed the

suggested site took in their tragic lodgings on the street's west side.⁶ From the parish's standpoint this down-at-heel position had one advantage: it was owned by the Crown, which might be induced to offer favourable terms for a church on its property. Pressure must have been applied in the right quarters, for in March 1826 the Treasury wrote to the Commissioners stating that 'My Lords will recommend to His Majesty that a gratuitous Grant should be made of the Premises in question for erecting a Church in the Parish of St Giles in the Fields.'⁷

How next to pay for the church? The Commissioners seldom met the complete cost of the churches which bear their name. They had told Benson that they would lend £9,000 for each of the parish's two churches on condition that these sums were repaid from a church rate within ten years. J. E. Tyler, Benson's successor, looked into this and found it impracticable. A church rate had never been levied in St Giles, he explained: the parish was too poor, its numerous Catholics and Dissenters would oppose it strongly, and the administrative arrangements it had shared for a century with its neighbour, St George's, Bloomsbury, were too entangled for such a rate to be applied in one parish only. Tyler might have added that a head of political steam was building up just then about the undemocratic nature of this and other London vestries. So in November 1827 he wrote begging the Commissioners to find the whole cost of the Little Queen Street church, estimated at about £5,000. Remarkably, Tyler's proposal was accepted and honoured, even though the final cost of the church rose to £8,521.⁸

The first Holy Trinity

Designing the 'chapel of ease' could now begin. Francis Bedford, the architect chosen, was an experienced designer of Commissioners' Churches, with nine to his credit – he seems to have designed little else. St John's Waterloo is the best known of four Bedford churches in South London, all in the neo-classical style with costly porticoes. But his last two London churches, St Mary the Less, Lambeth, and Holy Trinity, Little Queen Street, were both Gothic, then often thought of as cheaper. Bedford was perhaps selected because he had contrived elsewhere to accommodate large numbers of seats economically; the figure for Holy Trinity was almost 2,000 sittings, well above average for a London Commissioners' church.

To save effort and maybe money, Bedford came up with a near-replica of the Lambeth church adjusted to the Holborn site. This was wholly enclosed except to the east, where it faced Little

Queen Street. For that single show side Bedford specified Bath stone and a four-light traceried east window, whereas the other sides were of plain brickwork. Flanking entrance porches, a substantial turret over the centre and four high pinnacles completed a front verging on the gimcrack (Fig. 2). Inside, he contrived an unusual tripartite set of angled piers and arches to carry the back of the turret, thus also ‘demarcating Bedford’s first chancel’, as Michael Port puts it.⁹ By good fortune there are rare if fuzzy photographs of the church inside and out taken no later than 1881, showing how it then looked (Fig. 3).¹⁰



Fig. 2: Holy Trinity Little Queen Street. Engraving of exterior from Gentleman's Magazine, January 1832. Francis Bedford, architect, 1829–31.

As these angled arches are absent from Bedford's plans in the Church Commissioners' files,¹¹ they may have been an afterthought, inserted in response to strictures on his designs by the Office of Works' architects, who vetted plans for Commissioners' Churches. Not untypically for his day, Bedford had his own ideas about construction. His similar Lambeth church had escaped such nit-picking, so in vexed response he set out at length in which of his previous churches he had used one carpentry technique or another. Nobody took heed of the substructure, which included a shallow burial vault. Bedford



Fig. 3: Holy Trinity Little Queen Street. Interior views from a poster of 1881 formerly at Holy Trinity Kingsway. (Historic England Archive AA75/2141)

merely stated that the foundation 'has not been examined but is supposed to be good'.

Vacant possession of the site was obtained around May 1829, when Bedford called for tenders. The successful bidders were J. & P. Bedall, carpenters of High Holborn, names obscure in the annals of London building; they cannot have done well from the job, for they were bankrupt by the end of 1830.¹² That year the church acquired its name of Holy Trinity, an organ (by Henry Lincoln) and heating (by Bailey).¹³ The finished building was consecrated in February 1831. Some months later a Dublin Protestant newspaper reported that 'one hundred panes of glass were broken by a Popish infidel mob'.¹⁴ True or not, the story is indicative of the unruliness and religious antagonism then prevalent in the back streets of St Giles. E. J. Carlos completed the negative picture with a slashing review in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1832. Carlos scoffed at the columns of Bedford's arcade, ornamented by un-archaeological hoops, 'which girdles, by way of distinction, are very appropriately painted black'. He also deprecated the triple chancel arch: 'the ensemble is awkward and the detail mean'.¹⁵

For years the Little Queen Street church remained a chapel of ease to St Giles, since despite repeated applications the jealous mother church would not allow it a separate district. Between 1867 and 1878 it enjoyed one clergyman of distinction, George Henry Stanton, subsequently a keen church-building bishop in Australia.¹⁶ Holy Trinity finally acquired its district in 1884, after which the church was re-orientated by the architect C. F. Hayward.¹⁷ Hitherto the two entrances had flanked the chancel. That hardly suited Victorian ideas of propriety, so a west gallery was removed and a chancel and reredos installed at that end. The style of worship stayed evangelical, when most other Anglican churches locally had crept High.

The church was also drawn into the competitive arena of missionary and relief work – increasingly the *raison d'être* of many London churches in poor districts. In St Giles there was a strong tradition of outreach by Wesleyans and Catholics, not to speak of the parish church itself. Holy Trinity was handicapped for want of a parish room or schools, while its vaults were reserved for bodies deposited there between 1831 and 1854 (when central London burials were prohibited). Eventually a church room was hired. When the lease expired, James Lachlan Evans, vicar from the 1890s, squeezed in a small hall on back land directly south of the church.¹⁸ Charles Booth's investigators acknowledged the parish's social work coolly: 'in Holy Trinity everything proceeds on very cautious lines.'¹⁹

The Disaster

By the time the church hall was ready in 1904, the London County Council was well advanced with the infrastructure for its great Kingsway–Aldwych road scheme.²⁰ Like previous Victorian arteries smashed through the fabric of central London, Kingsway–Aldwych was partly a slum-clearance project. The major slum pockets concerned were Holywell and Wych Streets near the Strand, but Kingsway was also aligned so as to wipe out another, centred on Little Wild Street in the Holy Trinity district. Further north, the road line picked up Little Queen Street, doubling its width and ripping out its whole east side. The west side was to remain. For here stood the church, and to its north the Holborn Restaurant, created in 1875 by Frederick Gordon next to the High Holborn corner and later enlarged till it abutted Holy Trinity. At the height of its fashionable repute around 1900, the LCC could hardly requisition and destroy it.

The church's exposure to the new Kingsway must have been welcome. Yet Bedford's east end, in Commissioners' Gothic, was bound to look unworthy on the LCC's great avenue, where grandiose fronts of Portland stone like those now rising round the Aldwych were anticipated. So, W. D. Caröe, architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, was asked to sketch out a new east front for Holy Trinity. This initiative doubtless came from the vicar, Evans, who had been a contemporary of Caröe's at Trinity College, Cambridge. For the moment they got on well enough for Caröe to ask Evans if he could recommend a local lad to employ as an office boy. His sketch for the front seems not to survive.²¹

With the works for Kingsway all but complete, disaster struck. In 1905 sinister cracks proliferated in the church's structure. The causes were twofold: not only had the LCC driven a tram tunnel underneath its road close to the front, but in addition the Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway had dug deep tube tunnels *en route* to the new Holborn Station close to the church's foundations, draining further water out of the subsoil. The remedy looked obvious – these bodies must pay for the reinstatement of Holy Trinity and its hall, also damaged. Called back, Caröe consulted the eminent church builders Thompsons of Peterborough, and came up with an estimate of £4,480.²²

Over ensuing years of argument and bargaining these certainties ebbed away. Since the experts could not say whether it was the tram tunnel or the tube which had caused the damage, apportioning responsibility was impossible. Cannily, the LCC and the railway company banded together to oppose the church's claim. Busick Pemberton of Lee and Pemberton, among Evans's

few staunch friends among the local lawyers, got a first paltry offer raised in February 1908 to £1,200. The LCC, wearing another hat as the authority for building standards and safety, now issued a dangerous structure notice warning that Holy Trinity must be repaired or shut. That May a competent engineer, R. C. H. Davidson, provided Caröe with an independent report on the church's state. His verdict was bleak. He found cracks missed by previous investigations and concluded: 'The structure, a weak one in design, is very much shattered ... The fabric is so shaken and its cohesion so destroyed that anything short of re-construction, in my opinion, could not be depended upon as a permanent remedy.' Total rebuilding alone would answer. But there was no money – not even enough to fight the compensation offer, which Pemberton finally pushed up to £1,500. If Evans had fought on, his opponents would have maintained that Bedford's weak design, not their tunnelling, was most at fault.²³

Looking for an architect

The diligent and plucky Evans now girded his loins to get his church rebuilt from top to toe. The obvious source for advice was the capable Caröe. Supposing that the job was his for the picking, Caröe wrote bumptiously to Evans in December 1908, saying he would reduce his fee for his earlier work if he were employed. But Evans had come to feel that Caröe's response to the structural crisis had been inadequate. The clergy authorities, led by the suffragan Bishop of Islington, Charles Turner (another Trinity man), likewise urged him to look further afield. 'We want a free hand in order to choose another architect if we think it desirable after personal inspection of a number of churches, yet we don't want to do anything which is not honourable', noted Evans.²⁴

Someone advised him to look at a number of Gothic churches in the London suburbs by Caröe, Cutts and Alder. We don't know if he did go, but we have Caröe's reaction when apprised of these intended visits. Examining them would be 'a sorry task', he told Evans: 'none are the least suited to the problem that you have to solve. I cannot hide from myself that if I did work at the same level as that of Alder or Cutts, you would not have had this task imposed upon you.' Since Bishop Mandell Creighton, he carried on,

a man of real authority on architecture and a man of genuine taste and knowledge most sadly left us, London has suffered not a little as regards its church architecture. It is enough now for an architect to have individuality or imagination, and to endeavour not to produce the common or the commonplace, and he has no chance of employment under the Bishop of L's Fund, or where the same influence is at work. The general level of the work being thus produced is of the feeblest order no whit so good as that done 50 or 60 years ago, and London is

left behind by the Provinces which are not so handicapped. Here it is only the essentially commonplace which is acceptable or even understood, freshness, real scholarship and architectural interest have no chance. Whoever you select to employ for your church, I hope on this important site you will at least make clear to your Diocesan [Bishop Winnington Ingram] that your standards of taste are better than his, and altho' you must of necessity be content with the economical you will not with the common. He is the most delightful and loveable of men, but his influence on latter day architecture in his Diocese has been deplorable – especially after that of his predecessors under whose influence I have done whatever is best of my London work. I wish you could wander further afield than London and its suburbs in your search, for recent London churches have become a sort of architectural byword.²⁵

This indiscretion can have done Carøe little good. He was better served by a friend of Evans's and yet another Trinity Cambridge alumnus, W. F. T. Hamilton, Rector of Cromer. Before moving there, Hamilton had built and paid for a small church by Carøe, St Mary at Bethany, Woking, and was full of praise for its architect.

Carøe treated me excellently. He liked to cooperate with a Trinity man, and you would get that benefit ... He was most loyal to me, and brought his great genius to the task. He is such a true artist that he took as much pains with my simple church as if it had been a great one.

Evans may have replied doubtfully, for in a follow-up letter Hamilton added:

There is a very nice Architect, an earnest Christian man, who has just built the Schools for F. S. Webster at All Souls [Langham Place]. His name is Beresford Pite ... He is a brother-in-law of W. R. Mowll of Brixton, and built his Church [Christ Church, Brixton Road], but that would not be the model you would want.²⁶

Going classical

What kind of model *was* right for a church in the central London of 1909? It now dawned on everyone that only a fully classical church would do. Gothic seemed stale and tired, while Beresford Pite's Byzantine might suit the Brixton Road but hardly Kingsway. So it was that the new Holy Trinity fell to the senior architect whose fame Pite had done so much to promote as his assistant – John Belcher.

This change of heart came from a convergence of views. Kingsway was to be proudly civic and classical, and the church had to fit in there. Lately there had been mounting enthusiasm in both architectural and ecclesiastical circles for Wren, St Paul's and the churches of the English Baroque – not least Gibbs's St Mary le Strand, which acquired a fresh setting under the Aldwych scheme. Furthermore, the freehold of the Holy Trinity site still belonged

to the Crown. Like other Crown land, it came under the Office of Woods and Forests, which was in the throes of reconstructing Regent Street in an idiom much like Kingsway–Aldwych. Evans had hopes of a subsidy from the Woods and Forests. To obtain that, counselled the Bishop of Islington, he must have an architect who could talk to the Woods and Forests as well as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.²⁷

The Archdeacon of London, William Sinclair, urged that Sir Arthur Blomfield & Sons and John Belcher should be consulted as to their abilities to design a classical church.²⁸ Surprising recommendations perhaps; but the problem was the utter lack just then of classical church architects in England. After a decade of secular urban buildings in full Beaux-Arts or Edwardian Baroque mode, not one English church had dared follow suit.²⁹

That rang out from the answers received. Old Sir Arthur Blomfield was dead, and although his sons alluded in reply to many classical London churches which he or they had altered or extended, they could point to nothing entirely new. As they remarked: ‘We do not think your clients will find any architect in London at the present time who has had any very considerable experience in the building of new *classical* churches, as an opportunity does not very often occur.’³⁰

Belcher echoed the Blomfields. ‘There have been very few opportunities of late years for the erection of churches in a classic style’, he told Evans. But he promoted himself better:

As you say, I am much interested in the style of Architecture adopted by Sir Christopher Wren and have come into close contact with his work as a member of the Commission appointed to deal with the structural repairs at St Paul’s Cathedral by the failure of the foundations ... I need hardly say that I shall be very interested in the erection of a church in this traditional style in such an important position.

Belcher also enclosed photographs of two of his recent buildings, Electra House in the City and the grand Ashton Memorial at Lancaster, and alluded to books he had written.³¹ Evans’s father-in-law, Harry Nisbet, now nudged him to get a ‘big design’ from Belcher and carry it out in stages. Archdeacon Sinclair likewise weighed in:

Such a man as John Belcher, who is at the very top of his profession, would give you a building of exquisite grace and proportions, which would attract the notice of all London. It would also be far better [than a Gothic church] for light and hearing, which are both important points with your class of parishioners.³²

Hearing of Belcher’s appointment, Caröe dispatched another of his catty letters. He was glad, he said, that Evans had fallen ‘into

the hands of my friend Mr Belcher, whose versatility is shewn by his earlier secular Victorian Gothic buildings, which are as prominent and well known as his admirable later work in the City.' The only time he had been in rivalry with Belcher, he added, was over 'a very important City building' now completing, in the competition for which he had come first and Belcher second. He had been 'thrown over for no adequate cause ... treated merely as a hack surveyor' and left 'in a detrimental position'. Could he therefore now have his full fees for his previous work?³³

Belcher

John Belcher (Fig. 4) is something of a mystery.³⁴ The son of an architect of the same name with a City of London practice, he worked originally with his father and later in other partnerships, so that it is always hard to know how much was his own work. His plentiful architecture, mostly secular, is uneven in quality. Like others of his generation, Belcher favoured Gothic or Tudor in his early years but took to classicism when tastes changed in the 1880s. The brilliant Institute of Chartered Accountants, designed with Beresford Pite and dating from 1890–93, lifted him in middle age from second rank to renown. Thereafter a stool in the Belcher office was prized by go-ahead young men, who helped in submitting adventurous designs for the big competitions of the day. There is a description of the office around 1900 in the memoirs of C. H. Reilly, an architect with a similar background in City work. Belcher, as Reilly describes him, hid unobtrusively in his private room, guarded by his powerful principal assistant, J. J. Joass.³⁵

When Joass succeeded Beresford Pite, the tenor of Belcher's architecture changed again. Joass, a Scot, had imbibed the full classical disciplines in the Glasgow office of John Burnet. In his heyday he devised Michelangelesque masonry claddings for modern steel frames, manifest in his two West End *tours de force* of the Edwardian years, the Royal Assurance Office in Piccadilly and Mappin and Webb's Oxford Street shop. Though built under Belcher's name, their elevations were due to Joass, who had been taken into formal partnership by the time that Holy Trinity came along. As the practice's many urban buildings continued uneven, there has been a tendency to ascribe only the best of them to Joass. Belcher was indeed busy latterly with official assignments like the presidency of the RIBA, and ailing in health from about 1909.



Fig. 4: John Belcher (1841–1913) by Frank Dicksee. Portrait commissioned to mark Belcher's presidency of the RIBA, 1904–06. The dome to the left is that of Electra House, Moorgate, also shown in the drawing, while the sculpture behind stands for Belcher's attachment to the applied arts. (RIBApix 100445)

But Belcher always possessed a strong aesthetic streak. Back in the 1870s he had been an accomplished musician and singer in the circle of John Ella, who had done much to promote English musical standards. According to Stuart Gray, he was then ‘better known to the public as a musician than as an architect’.³⁶ He was something of an author too. His early publications were on music, including the rare *Lectures on the History of Ecclesiastical Music* (1872) and a revised edition of Ella’s *Musical Sketches* (1876). Belcher also lectured to the RIBA on the positioning of church organs.³⁷ Much later came *Essentials in Architecture* (1907), an attempt to explain the art of building to a wider public; and, with Mervyn Macartney, two large volumes on *Later Renaissance Architecture in England* (1901), consisting mainly of examples. These were probably the books he alluded to when writing to Evans.

In architecture Belcher had confidence, quiet authority and an imperturbable manner. But he was open to collaboration and experiment, and keen to bring sculpture into his architecture. Some of the practice’s later buildings seem personal to him, above all the extravagant – and very Wrenian – Ashton Memorial in Williamson Park, Lancaster. Nor, after Belcher died in 1913, did Joass ever design so spectacularly again.

One other personal matter is pertinent. Belcher, like his father, was a lifelong and active member of that strange apocalyptic sect, the Catholic Apostolic Church. That may have shaped his temperament. It certainly helps account for the fact that Kingsway was his only Anglican church, though he did do a few restorations.³⁸ Years before, he had designed a Catholic Apostolic Church in Camberwell in an Early English style (1876–77); it still exists, but in damaged form following bombing. Belcher made later designs for Catholic Apostolic churches, all Gothic, but none seems to have been built.³⁹

Holy Trinity Kingsway, a different proposition, must have been approached by the Belcher and Joass practice *de novo*. Who then designed it? Surviving correspondence suggests that the church was a true collaboration. Letters are signed by both principals, or sometimes by an assistant, A. G. Wallace – perhaps the George Wallace who designed the handsome screen for the Ascension, Lavender Hill, where his father was vicar.⁴⁰ Stuart Gray and Alastair Service, the foremost experts on Edwardian urban architecture, both believed that the Holy Trinity screen was due to Joass, and they may be right. But Belcher himself, occupied and ill though he often was, certainly played a role, if as always it is hard to know exactly what.

Designing and building the new church

Belcher and Joass put in their first design for Holy Trinity in June 1909 (Fig. 5). Predictably, given the practice's Edwardian record of opulent buildings, it was not cheap. The elliptical forecourt, based perhaps on Sant'Andrea al Quirinale and/or Santa Maria della Pace in Rome, and the pretty porch, surely out of St Mary le Strand (Fig. 6) were much as built. Over them reared a three-and-a-half storey tower (also with something of St Mary le Strand to it), while behind came a sizeable drum and low dome carried on an octagonal base. Flanking the tower were to be two small spaces, also shallow-domed, housing a baptistry and a morning chapel with the altar turned eastwards, contrary to the church's main axis.⁴¹

To an extent Evans had brought this extravagant design down on himself, for the parish's appeal leaflet had aimed high:



Fig. 5: Holy Trinity Kingsway, perspective of exterior from Building News, 29 April 1910.

Standing almost at the top of Kingsway, the new church must always be a landmark to those who pass north and south along this splendid road, as well as to those going east and west along High Holborn a few yards away. It must bear comparison as best it can with the beautiful tower of St Mary's, in the Strand, which rises in full view at the bottom of Kingsway, and with all the masterpieces of Wren, from Bow Church to St Bride's.⁴²

Appeals are one thing, reality is another; little money had come in despite Evans's persistent efforts. Still, the design was something to take to George Leveson-Gower, the affable and cultured Commissioner of Woods and Forests. Leveson-Gower and his



Fig. 6: St Mary le Strand from the north-west. (Courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

deputy, Frederick Hellard, realized that the tower was kite-flying, but they promised to help by raiding the St Matthew's Chapel Fund – money set aside from the sale of the former St Matthew's, Spring Gardens. Ecclesiastical slush funds of this kind were Evans's only hope. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners found another £1,000 from the sale of St Philip's, Regent Street, while the Bishop of London's Fund granted £2,250.⁴³ Even adding the £1,500 compensation, this was well short of the estimated budget of £8,000 – remarkably, a lower figure than the final cost of the Little Queen Street church many years earlier. But then the new church was planned to have just 456 sittings on the ground and in a small west gallery, as opposed to the 1,980 allowed for in the 1820s, crammed into aisles and galleries. So far had the Church of England lowered its hopes of attendances amidst the urban poor.

Even without the tower and dome, Evans and Pemberton were soon getting nervous about costs and insisting on major revision. Belcher stayed unruffled, though he did admit that the fittings, lighting and heating would bring the whole over £8,000: 'You must give me credit for wishing to do my best for you', was his laid-back attitude. He was liable to catch cold and suffer from bronchial attacks, he slipped in, so Joass would have to attend any meeting after dark.⁴⁴

Reluctantly, the architects drew in their horns. The church was shortened and the central piers and dome were removed, leaving an auditorial interior with passage aisles, a barrel vault over the whole, vestigial transepts (one reserved for an organ) and a three-sided end to the chancel instead of a rounded apse. A perspective by the painter George Murray tried to flatter the cut-down outcome (Fig. 7).⁴⁵ The basement, housing an ample parish room, probably meant more to Evans than the church on top. Outside, the forecourt screen was now to be of brick. When Leveson-Gower heard that, he extracted more money from the St Matthew's Chapel Fund so that stone could be restored. In the end the Crown stumped up a total of £3,500. Only because of that subsidy do we have the screen today.⁴⁶

With building about to begin, Carøe popped up again in February 1910. Wearing his hat as architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, he asked to vet the plans and then objected to the foundation methods proposed. He also renewed his demand for his fee, telling Evans, 'as you seem now to be able to embark on a scheme which may almost be called extravagant, I do not see why I should be the further sufferer.' Belcher went to see Carøe and pour oil on troubled waters, while his engineer, Alexander Drew, explained that the ferro-concrete foundations were designed in two parts, in case the tower could ever be afforded.⁴⁷



Fig. 7: Holy Trinity Kingsway, George Murray's perspective of revised design for interior, from Academy Architecture, 1912, Part 1.

Forty-nine bodies having been removed from the vaults and consigned to Brookwood Cemetery, construction took place in 1910–11. Belcher and Joass contrived to get the job for their favourite builders, Godsons of Kilburn. Lady Mary Glyn, wife of the Bishop of Peterborough, laid a foundation stone in October 1910 and the consecration took place in April 1911.

The construction process was fairly fraught. First, the finding of an old well caused some redesign of the foundations and extra costs; Evans and his helpmeet Pemberton felt they had not been kept informed and had to be soothed.⁴⁸ Next Sprague, the scrupulous clerk of works, announced his resignation. It turned out that he had condemned some timber intended by Godsons for the roof but had not been backed up by the architects. Caröe, still hanging about in the wings, was consulted and pronounced Sprague right. 'Confidentially', wrote Evans to Pemberton, 'I believe that Joass is at the bottom of this – Joass does not like

Sprague because Sprague is too straight and keeps us too well informed of what is going on and puts his foot down on jobs which Godson is constantly trying on.' Eventually Belcher and Joass managed to smooth things over, and Sprague returned.⁴⁹

Another issue reveals Belcher's personal involvement over the sculpture. Because of the foundations affair, Evans and his committee had insisted that no extra work should proceed without their sanction. So Evans was peeved to find Belcher preparing for the sculpture – the vases on the ends of the screen and the four angels in relief on its frieze (replacing what look like putti in the perspective view). That sent the latter back post-haste to Leveson-Gower, to plead that his carver, Abraham Broadbent, might put the work in hand. This would be done 'at my own risk', Belcher promised Pemberton: 'May I ask you to kindly arrange that I should use my own discretion in this matter, on the above understanding?'⁵⁰ Later Evans, noticing the angels for the first time, complained that they were 'insufficiently clothed' for a religious building. Belcher, a pastmaster of the demure brush-off, replied: 'The figures you speak of are not realistic and no one can find fault with them. They are moreover winged symbolical figures or terminals with acanthus leaves below frequently employed in decorative carving in church architecture.'⁵¹ We can be glad that these angels were allowed (Fig. 8). Though somewhat worn now, they are unusual and high-quality relief sculpture, each with one wing extended and the other furled. The column capitals too, presumably also Broadbent's, are very finely carved,



Fig. 8: Holy Trinity Kingsway, angels in the frieze carved by Abraham Broadbent. (Chris Redgrave copyright)



Fig. 9: Holy Trinity Kingsway, capitals to the portico columns. (Chris Redgrave copyright)

with soft-leaf acanthus leaves at the corners and strings of pomegranate husks dropping centrally from the abaci (Fig. 9).⁵²

The final bill came to over £14,000, leaving all parties dissatisfied. Belcher and Joass got none of the new fittings they had hoped for, Godsons had to send in repeated grouching letters for their balance, and Evans was obliged to scrape around for years to find the extra money.⁵³

Aftermath

In January 1914 Evans wrote an up-beat letter to his bishop, Winnington-Ingram, telling him that services in the rebuilt Holy Trinity were ‘greatly appreciated by the Parishioners, and Mid-day Services, which we have held during Lent, have been largely attended by clerks and others working in the neighbouring Offices.’ In the ample basement, he went on, ‘drilling, gymnastics and rifle shooting are carried on nightly’. Outside,

we have also been able to carry on our Spiritual Work among the occupants of the large lodging houses for men in the Parish ... Besides the work among these 1,500 men, there are 200 poor outcast women living in the Parish whom we are trying to help, and among these Mrs Synge, whose name your Lordship knows, does real good work.⁵⁴

Fig. 10: Holy Trinity Kingsway, interior in 1983. (Historic England Archive BB84/315)



This by then was the kind of activity that evangelical churches like Holy Trinity mostly aimed at in deprived areas, but with falling populations after the First World War, even that was hard to keep up. Evans estimated his pre-war population at 5,500 in 1914; afterwards it dropped quickly. It soon became manifest that the area was over-churched. In 1938 Holy Trinity was amalgamated with St John's, Drury Lane, which closed. That was just a reprieve. After the Holborn Restaurant was replaced by a banal office building in the 1950s, commercial pressures to redevelop the church site intensified. The axe of redundancy finally fell in 1986.⁵⁵ Offices replaced the body of the church, but the screen was admired and could be saved, since Holy Trinity had fortunately been listed in 1974.

That was surely a reasonable outcome. Surviving photographs of the interior suggest it was unlovable (Fig. 10). The woodwork framing to the lower portions of the walls promised by George Murray's view had either never been completed or been stripped out, while the upper walls were left in bare brick instead of light-reflecting plaster. A Wren-style hall of this kind, without the rich timber fittings we associate with the City churches, becomes the bleakest of Protestant auditoria. Belcher, already ill when Holy Trinity was designed (he died in 1913), and Joass evidently concentrated their real efforts on the screen alone. Things might have been different if their tower and dome had really been on the cards. Joass certainly continued to regret the tower (to have been called after Charles Lamb); it was said he spoke of leaving money to pay for it in his will.⁵⁶

So Carøe was right to be sceptical about the choice of smart architects to the commercial rich for Holy Trinity. Evans would have been better advised to go to the 'earnest Christian', Beresford Pite, who could have designed an impressive and thoughtful classical church if asked. All the same, we should be thankful for the unique and powerful fragment that remains.

Notes

- 1 Camden Archives, St Giles-in-the-Fields Vestry Minutes, 24 December 1818. The Vestry Minutes are the source of most of the information in the next three paragraphs.
- 2 Holy Trinity, Little Queen Street, the church here discussed, was followed by Christ Church, Endell Street (1844–5), which was designed by Benjamin Ferrey and demolished in the 1930s.
- 3 Paul Jeffery, 'The Church that Never Was: Wren's St Mary, and Other Projects for Lincoln's Inn Fields', *Architectural History* 31 (1988), 136–47.
- 4 Church of England Record Centre (afterwards CERC), 7/1/36566 Part 1, letter of 21 February 1819.
- 5 CERC, 7/1/36566 Part 1, letter of 9 Nov 1824.
- 6 Kathy Watson, *The Devil Kissed Her: The Story of Mary Lamb* (Bloomsbury, 2004), 43–9; Winifred F Courtney, *Young Charles Lamb 1775–1802* (Macmillan, 1982), 114–9.
- 7 CERC, 7/1/36566 Part 1, 31 March 1826.
- 8 CERC, 7/1/36566 Part 1, letter of 19 November 1827.
- 9 M. H. Port, *Six Hundred New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818–1856* (Spire Books, 2006), 182.
- 10 From a poster commemorating the church's 50th anniversary, presciently copied by Gordon Barnes but now seemingly lost.
- 11 CERC, 7/1/36566 Part 1, *passim*, for this and the preceding paragraphs.
- 12 Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 337; *New Monthly Magazine*, 33 (1831) 47.
- 13 Camden Archives, St Giles-in-the-Fields Vestry Minutes, 1830.
- 14 *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, 14 July 1831.
- 15 *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1832, 9–10.
- 16 *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, sub G. H. Stanton.
- 17 London Metropolitan Archives (afterwards LMA), DL/A/MS19224/117; National Archives (afterwards TNA), CRES 25/2179.
- 18 TNA, CRES 25/2179, 1902–3.

- 19 Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Poverty 1st series, *Religious Influences: Inner Ring North* (1902), 181.
- 20 There is no full study of the Kingsway–Aldwych scheme, but James Winter, *London's Teeming Streets* (Routledge, 1993), 207–16 offers a useful critique.
- 21 LMA, P82/TR11/125/8, Caroe to F. E. J. Smith, 26 May 1909, about his design for the front; TR11/178, Caroe to Evans, 19 Dec 1901, about hiring a boy.
- 22 LMA, P82/TR11/125/3, typescript with chronological summary of the disaster; see also *The Times*, 6 August 1909.
- 23 This paragraph mainly from CERC 7/1/36566 Part 3 (Pemberton to Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 17 June 1908; Davidson's report, 27 May 1908).
- 24 Undated note (1908) in LMA, P82/TR11/125/3.
- 25 LMA, P82/TR11/125/3, Caroe to Evans, 20 December 1908.
- 26 LMA, P82/TR11/125/5, Hamilton to Evans, 9 February 1909.
- 27 LMA, P82/TR11/125/5, Bishop of Islington to Evans, 10 February 1909.
- 28 LMA, P82/TR11/125/6, draft letter from Evans, 16 March 1909.
- 29 Andrew Derrick reminds me of Gribble's Brompton Oratory (1880–84). That arguably was of an earlier generation and taste.
- 30 LMA, P82/TR11/125/6, letter from Sir Arthur Blomfield & Sons, 2 March 1909.
- 31 LMA, P82/TR11/125/6, Belcher to Evans, 2 March 1909.
- 32 LMA, P82/TR11/125/6, Nisbet to Evans, 14 March 1909, and Sinclair to Evans, 17 March 1909.
- 33 LMA, P82/TR11/125/7, Caroe to Evans, 20 April 1909.
- 34 The only illuminating modern studies of Belcher are by Alastair Service, 'Belcher and Joass' in *Architectural Review*, 148 (1970), 283–90, and A. Stuart Gray, *Edwardian Architecture, a Biographical Dictionary* (Duckworth, 1985) 103–6.
- 35 C. H. Reilly, *Scaffolding in the Sky* (George Routledge & Sons, 1938), 48–51.
- 36 Gray, 106.
- 37 *RIBA Transactions* 5 (1888–9), 33–51.
- 38 South Marston Church, Wiltshire, is the most interesting example.
- 39 These include a grand design for Leeds, 1882, where the smaller church built in 1886 may or may not have been Belcher's (RIBA Drawings Collection, PA303/3, and information kindly received from Ken Powell); and the church in Maida Vale, where for some reason Pearson was preferred (*British Architect*, 3 May 1889, 315, 345).
- 40 *Survey of London*, 49 (2013), 136.
- 41 By the time this first design was published in *Building News*, 29 April 1910, 585–6, it had already been reduced.
- 42 Copy in TNA, CRES 25/2179, February 1909.
- 43 For the various funds raided, TNA, CRES 25/2179, February 1909; LMA, P82/TR11/125/9 and 10.
- 44 LMA, P82/TR11/125/15, including Belcher to Evans, 11 December 1909.
- 45 The revised designs were published without a plan in *Building News*, 18 October 1912, 542; there is a full set of drawings with plans in TNA, LRRO 1/3949.
- 46 LMA, P82/TR11/125/16; paying for the stone front, Hellard to Evans, 18 January 1910.
- 47 LMA, P82/TR11/125/17–18; Caroe to Evans, 9 February 1910.
- 48 TNA, CRES 35/3116, November–December 1910.
- 49 LMA, P82/TR11/125/26; Evans to Pemberton, 21 November 1910.
- 50 LMA, P82/TR11/125/27, Belcher to Pemberton, 23 December 1910.
- 51 LMA, P82/TR11/125/29, Belcher to Evans, 23 February 1911.
- 52 I am very grateful to Gordon Higgott for expert advice about the architectural order and sculpture.
- 53 LMA, P82/TR11/125/31, Belcher to Evans, 28 December 1911, puts the final cost at £13,651 16s; P82/TR11/183 gives a round £14,000 figure.
- 54 CERC 7/1/36566 Part 3, Evans to the Bishop of London, 22 January 1914.
- 55 TNA, CRES 35/267.
- 56 Service in *Architectural Review*, 148 (1970), 289.

Snarks and Boojums – in pursuit of the ‘Arts & Crafts church’

Alec Hamilton

THE ‘ARTS & CRAFTS CHURCH’ is a seductive idea. Somehow one can visualise what it is, without having had it explained or described or defined – just as one can an ‘Arts & Crafts house’. But what *is* it?

That very question – ‘What is an Arts & Crafts church?’ – was the title I proposed in 2009, when I was pitching (there is no other word for it) to do a DPhil. My interviewers, Paul Barnwell and Geoffrey Tyack, thought it was a good title ‘for a book’. It had also caught the eye of the then-Chair of the Ecclesiological Society, Trevor Cooper, when he and I first met in 2008. Trevor said, ‘That would make a good Ecclsoc conference.’ And, a mere ten years later, it did: ‘Arts & Crafts Churches’ in October 2018. It attracted a distinguished list of speakers – Andrew Saint, Chris Wakeling, Lynne Walker, Alan Powers, Simon Green, Kate Jordan – and was certainly stimulating.

The decade’s delay was because my DPhil supervisors felt I ought not to waste time setting up a mere conference when I should be concentrating on my thesis – by then soberly titled, ‘The Arts & Crafts in church-building in Britain 1884–1918’ – which I duly completed in 2016. And now, that research – and a good deal more besides – has, at last, become a book, as Messrs Barnwell and Tyack predicted: *Arts & Crafts Churches*, to be published by Lund Humphries in September 2020.

This article draws together three elements: the introductory talk I gave at the 2018 conference; the broad argument of the book; and some indicative notes on six of the many less familiar churches I visited for the book, exploring what it was about them that caused me excitement, and might do the same for you.

We need first, perhaps, some definitions.

What exactly is ‘Arts & Crafts’?

To many people, ‘Arts & Crafts’ means William Morris, or at least is something to do with him. Thus, a church with Morris & Co. glass (and there’s plenty of that) ‘is’ Arts & Crafts. Isn’t it?

It rather depends whether you think Morris ‘is’ Arts & Crafts or not. Or whether his principal designer, Edward Burne-Jones was. But surely Burne-Jones was a Pre-Raphaelite? What is the difference? Date? Attitudes? The boundaries, as will become clear, are wonderfully porous.

Morris is now a sort of national treasure, a giant of culture. His enormous shadow blots out a good deal, but yes, Arts & Crafts is

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to do with some of the ideas he championed and promulgated: a rejection of the machine, a taste for the simple – looms and floppy hats and tankards of ale and white-washed walls and rational dress and unbuttoned relationships in smocks and sandals. Hippies *avant la lettre*. So, Laura Ashley? Cath Kidston? Not quite.

Then what about Ernest Gimson and the Barnsley brothers – good, honest furniture: hay-rake stretchers and wooden dowels? Truth to materials. Joy in the making. C. R. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft, cycling all the way from the Mile End Road to Chipping Campden. Cotswold idylls. Country life.

Yes, it *is* something about freedom, ‘back to the land’, free thinking, social democracy, socialism, but how does that square with a Liberty print, or a piece of silver by Archibald Knox? Or a house by Voysey, John Betjeman’s favourite? Was Metroland Arts & Crafts? And what about gardens – Gertrude Jekyll? Lutyens? And so on.

One is soon engulfed in a tumbling cornucopia of images and ideas. The desire to bring it into focus is irresistible, and it is getting worse. For we now see ‘Arts & Crafts’ through the thickening, distancing fog of the 50 years (and counting) since Sanderson relaunched Morris fabrics (‘Very Sanderson’) during the Kings Road *Granny Takes a Trip* years. And today there are craft markets and craft magazines and children’s Arts & Crafts kits of pipe-cleaners and coloured card. Oh, help!

Arts & Crafts church?

If Arts & Crafts is hard to define, it is all the harder to define ‘Arts & Crafts church.’ What, after all, is even a church? Not only now – when we all revere Richard Dawkins – but back then, when it was increasingly possible to be an atheist, fashionable to be a Theosophist or Spiritualist, and perfectly acceptable to not care a jot.

There is the suspicion in some quarters that, if it exists at all, the Arts & Crafts church is, in some wholly explicable and rational way, a progression from the church architecture of the Gothic Revival to – O shade of Nikolaus Pevsner! – the start of the Modern Movement. But is it?

If you ask someone who knows something about churches to name an Arts & Crafts church, the chances are they will name one of what might be called ‘The Big Three’: Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, by Sedding, E. S. Prior’s church at Roker and Lethaby’s at Brockhampton. Might it be a start to see if we can draw any worthwhile conclusions – definitions, even – from these exemplars?

First, and most famous – since it is in London – Holy Trinity, Sloane Street (1887–90; John Dando Sedding) (Fig. 1). Betjeman



Fig. 1: Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, Chelsea, London: the interior looking east. (Photo: John Salmon)

called it 'The cathedral of the Arts & Crafts'.¹ It is not entirely clear what he meant by 'cathedral' – big and stately, or more than that? It has no diocesan purpose, nor a privileged liturgical status. Structurally it is just a late Gothic Revival church and Alan Crawford has argued that the 'Arts & Crafts' is really in the furnishings, which came after the church was built.² Most of that work was done by members (or 'Brothers' as they are known) of the Art Workers' Guild (AWG): F. W. Pomeroy (a member from 1887), Harry Bates (AWG 1886), Onslow Ford (AWG 1913), Christopher Whall (AWG 1889) and, after the death of Sedding (AWG 1884), Henry Wilson (AWG 1892). So, the AWG has something to do with it. But what?

Secondly, St Andrew's, Roker, Tyne and Wear (1905–07; Edward Schroeder Prior, AWG 1884) (Fig. 2). Oh, look! Its website calls it 'The cathedral of the Arts & Crafts'. It is certainly big, but it is not silkily, suavely smooth like Sloane Street: it is rugged, macho, muscular. It has furnishings by Ernest Gimson of Sapperton in Gloucestershire (AWG 1891), maker of 'Good Citizens' furniture'. Gimson is surely quintessentially Arts & Crafts – so that means this church must be too, mustn't it? Is it all a matter of who did it? Did the right person – the right *sort* of person – do it? Yes, there is something in that.

And Prior was one of the founders of the AWG. So he 'is' Arts & Crafts: so Roker must be. The painted ceiling in the chancel is by MacDonald Gill (AWG 1910). So he 'is' Arts & Crafts, then, is he? And so is his elder brother Eric, who joined the Guild in 1904. Or does Eric Gill begin to suggest that simply being an AWG member is not quite enough. Perhaps it is possible to be a member of the AWG and not exactly 'be' Arts & Crafts.

Thirdly, All Saints', Brockhampton-by-Ross, Herefordshire (1901–02; W. R. Lethaby, AWG 1884) (Fig. 3). I cannot find that anyone has called Brockhampton an Arts & Crafts cathedral, but it is 'the perfect Arts & Crafts church' according to Philip Wilkinson on his blog, 'English Buildings' (4 October 2008). And, oddly, according to another blogger, Adam Withington, writing in January 2013: 'that rare beast, an Arts & Crafts church'. Pevsner called it Expressionist.³ To some it seems more like a Hollywood pastiche of English quaintness, theatrical and insincere, but then Lethaby had very singular views about religion and architecture. It has glass by Christopher Whall (AWG 1889) and woodwork by George Jack (AWG 1906).

There again is that thread of the AWG, but otherwise, and frustratingly – to those of a classifying disposition – the 'Big Three' churches exhibit little other similarity. They look different from each other. They feel different. The way they were built was



Fig. 2: St Andrew's, Roker, Tyne and Wear: the interior looking east. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

different. Their architects' sense of commitment to the some what unregimented ideas of the Arts & Crafts varied. And liturgically they vary too: as likely to be High-ish (Sloane Street) as Low-ish (Roker) or neither (Brockhampton). (And we have not even mentioned any Nonconformist church...) All three, however, were built around 1900, and by people who knew – even admired – each other. There is a sense, if not of style or aesthetics, then of a commonality of endeavour.

The AWG connection is not enough, however, for there were many architect members of the AWG who built churches which were somehow 'not' Arts & Crafts: Walter Tapper, George Fellowes Prynne, W. D. Caröe (though he was able to do both), and there were a good many 'Arts & Crafts churches' built by men who were never members of the AWG: Percy Currey, Charles Ponting, W. J. Hale, Godfrey Pinkerton. And there are outliers like Edgar Wood, co-founder of the Northern Art Workers' Guild, and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (or perhaps he was just a Vienna Secessionist manqué). Some architects teeter on the borderline:



Fig. 3: All Saints, Brockhampton, Herefordshire, from the south-east. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

John Douglas or W. H. Brierley, for instance. Some rather seem to come and go: Charles Nicholson, for example, is in the Arts & Crafts spirit at the start of his career, but profoundly out of it at the end. Ditto Lutyens. And is it all architecture, or can furniture or glass make a church Arts & Crafts? And if not, why not?

Well, you can draw the parameters where you like, of course, but I decided, for the purposes of the thesis and then the book, that it was the building that mattered because it expressed new ideas in architecture. Which is why my thesis was about ‘church-building’. Whereas furnishings – which could come later, and not necessarily under the eye of the architect – might be dictated by the taste and ideas of someone else: the client, for example. Glass even more so. (However, there are a number of decorative schemes that so profoundly change the nature of an existing church that they cannot sensibly be excluded – Christopher Whall’s glass in Gloucester Cathedral, or the Weir Schultz/Gimson work in St Andrew’s Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, for example.)

After all that, though, it turns out that ‘What is an Arts & Crafts church?’ is the wrong question. When you are in them, most of all there is an overwhelming sense of what these churches

are *not*. They are different from what went before. They are not exactly anti-Gothic Revival, but they are certainly different from it. At odds, even. They are rejecting something: it might be the Industrial Revolution, the Great Exhibition, machine capitalism, Gilbert Scott, rubrics, rules. Not *anti*-Victorian, exactly, but somehow – and this is clearer to us now than it was to them then – thrillingly *Not*-Victorian.

A coincidence of history

‘Arts & Crafts’ is not really an architectural category at all. Just because there is a book by Peter Davey called ‘Arts & Crafts Architecture’ does not mean it exists.

The phrase ‘Arts & Crafts’ was never intended to describe architecture, never mind an aesthetic, let alone an era. It was essentially a headline, a sort of slogan. The name was arrived at in 1887 after a discussion about what to call the first Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES) exhibition; ‘Decorative Arts’ and ‘Combined Arts’ were also suggested.

The ACES had sprung from the AWG, founded in 1884, and the two shared many members, but the AWG did not do public exhibitions – it was (and still is) a private club, by invitation only; a place for meeting, chatting, debating, hearing lectures, sharing ideas; a Common Room. The founder members had all worked for Norman Shaw. Yes, they had pretty well all rather disliked the Great Exhibition, they preferred Bodley to Scott, and they were mainly architects, though there were as many fine artists in the early years. The architects wanted to mix with the artists, and they all wanted to know about craft, and, ideally, to know how to do it.

They embodied a new, adventurous spirit in architecture: a disinclination to operate as previous generations had. They were aware of, knew about, respected precedent, but they declined to follow it.

The rise of this refusenik spirit in architecture coincided with – did not cause, but ran alongside – something similar in religion. Jean-François Lyotard, the high priest of Postmodernism, called it ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’, though ‘scepticism’ would be better.⁴ In 1800 it was quite difficult to be an atheist – certainly hard not to go to church every Sunday (though some men of fashion like Samuel Pepys had not, generations earlier). By 1900 it was entirely possible to be an atheist in public – there were even atheist missions to the poor. That change was steady, patchy, but relentless. God was slipping away.

Arts & Crafts coincided with the idea that found its voice first in Matthew Arnold’s ‘long, withdrawing roar’ of the Sea of Faith, in his poem *Dover Beach*, of 1867, and culminated in Hardy’s 1910

bleak threnody of existential despair, *God's Funeral*. Depending on your point of view, a tragic loss or a brave new world. Something was in the air.

It is no good coming at it through architectural history – it simply will not stand up to interrogation and architectural analysis. It will not be categorized. It is resistant to being described. Arts & Crafts is not an architectural form, it is a sociological phenomenon. Nor is it an aesthetic – unlike Modernism, which came afterwards, or Gothic Revival, which came before. It is a demonstration – a symptom – of a change in the way people think and believe.

For 'Arts & Crafts church' is not an architectural type at all, but a tangible expression of something disappearing, and known to be disappearing, and something much less certain taking its place: something spiritual and unclear. God was no longer at the centre of the Victorian universe, and churches were no longer the concrete validation of His eternal verities. It was not that people all stopped believing in God; nor that they were simply no longer going to church regularly: it was that a church was now a nexus of two differing ideas of society. On the one hand, that God still mattered; on the other, that he had been replaced by us. The old, vengeful, jealous judge in the long beard was being ousted by the young, friendly shepherd. God was being humanised.

Going back to the Big Three for a moment, one other characteristic is worthy of notice. All three were built for very rich people: Lord Cadogan paid £20,000 to have Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, built; Sir John Priestman paid £6,000 (of a total cost of £9,000) for Roker, and Madeline Foster paid for Brockhampton in its entirety (she was an American retail heiress and married a junior member of the gilded Foster family, who owned Black Dyke Mills).

So is it all about money? To a great extent, yes. These churches are the products, on the whole, of deep pockets. Around 1900, to build a church was an act not only of faith (not perhaps of faith primarily at all), but of something awfully like conspicuous consumption and display.

Careful! While that may be true for some of the Anglicans, it is a much more complex picture among the Nonconformists. They took the building of chapels and churches to be a demonstration of community power and the continuing significance and power of Christianity, and Roman Catholic churches expressed a new confidence, freed of the restrictions caused by institutional anxiety about Popery – anxieties which, in the period, evaporated like incense. Indeed, religious debate and controversy, as it had raged in the 1860s and 1870s, was vanishing – embarrassingly irrelevant, so that Parliament would neither

approve or disapprove a new Prayer Book in 1928. It simply did not matter.

Now, to flesh all this out, and to suggest it is both more complicated and more seductive than all this, here are brief notes on six of the 200 or so churches I write about in detail in the book. My visit to each had the sense of discovery, of something new: something I could recognise, but not quite put my finger on. They all embody the same light-hearted, fair-minded mood, but each in its own idiosyncratic way. Each is an expression of a new idea in architecture and in religion: individuality, and thinking for yourself.

We start on comparatively firm, non-controversial ground.

St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire

(1899–1900; Robert Weir Schultz)

This is, I think, the only surviving complete English church by Robert Weir Schultz (1860–1951, AWG 1891) (Fig. 4). The interior is largely the work of his friend, Ernest Gimson (AWG 1891), who with Weir Schultz furnished and fitted St Andrew's chapel, Westminster Cathedral (1910–16).

Fig. 4 St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire, from the south-west. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)





Fig. 5 St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire: the pulpit. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

Woolmer Green was built under the aegis not of a rich man, but an energetic priest, the Rector of Welwyn, Arthur Cayley Headlam (1862–1947), educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, and Fellow of All Souls, 1885.

The local newspaper report of the laying of the foundation stone – internal evidence suggests it was written by the Rector in conjunction with Weir Schultz – says this:

The material is throughout the best local brick, with stone dressings and a tiled roof... the object of the designer has been to build a simple village church... which shall have nothing in it out of harmony with the very unpretentious character of the surroundings...strong in its main lines, which shall have no unmeaning ornament but a certain amount of rich chasteness...⁵

Local-ness, simplicity, harmony, ‘rich chasteness’ – all very Arts & Crafts. The roll-call of craftsmen is impeccably AWG. The screen was carved by Laurence Turner (AWG 1891) from Schultz’s designs. As was the font. The choir desks were made by Ernest Gimson (AWG 1891). Gimson also designed some hanging lamps for the sanctuary which were never made. The pulpit (Fig. 5) and reading desk (lectern added later) were drawn by Weir Schultz. The altar rails were made to a design by him by ‘a country

smith’, possibly Alfred Bucknell. The carving of St Michael over the porch (1913) was executed by a lesser-known figure, H. W. Palliser (AWG 1922). The trowel used by Lady Lytton in laying the foundation stone was made by Henry Wilson (AWG 1892), ‘a unique work of art. The handle is of beaten silver, and is ornamented with five precious stones.’⁶ I wish I knew where it is.

St John the Baptist, Curbridge, Oxfordshire

(1904–06; Charles Nicholson)

Nothing quite prepares one for the interior of Curbridge, a vigorously rustic composition of furniture and furnishings in rich carmine and holly green, with an altar and reredos seemingly constructed from recycled panelling, a naively simple altar rail, and rustic iron candelabra on the end of several congregational benches, at once elegant and simple (Fig. 6). It all *looks* very ‘Arts



Fig. 6: St John the Baptist, Curbridge, Oxfordshire: the interior looking east, showing the painted furniture and roof. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

& Crafts', even down to the 'pink' – the device of Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft – painted on the front of the pulpit. The word it suggests most strongly is 'folksy'. The effect is deeply un-English. Painted congregational seating in warm, domestic colours can be found in rural churches across northern Europe, but why employ this European device in Oxfordshire? Green-stained and green-painted benches are to be found in many churches of the period – Norman Shaw's St Michael's, Bedford Park, for one. Was everyone simply following Morris, who designed a green table in 1856?

The ceiling has beams, rafters and frieze in red and green, emphasized by black and white checkerwork – all rather reminiscent of another essay in knowing rusticism, Randall Wells's St Edward the Confessor, Kempley, Gloucestershire (1902–04).

Nicholson's youthful fling with Arts & Crafts *brio* did not last beyond the Great War. He (AWG 1898) went on to be a slightly dull diocesan architect to seven dioceses. As to the makers of the benches, altar rails, pulpit, lectern, altar, reredos and candelabra, history is as mute as if they had been medieval men. We are not even sure who paid for it.

Even folksier, is this:

Chalmers Memorial Church, Port Seton, Cockenzie, East Lothian

(1904; Sydney Mitchell)

It was built for (and by) the fishermen of the newly-formed United Free Church of Scotland (UFC), and in anticipation of an influx of workers to the area's mines. The principal funder was Mrs William Wood (1823–1902), daughter of the Revd Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), a prime mover in the 1843 Disruption, when 450 evangelical ministers walked out of the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland. She was connected by marriage to the Cadells, Lairds of Cockenzie, and thus also to F. C. B. Cadell, the Scottish Colourist.

What draws the eye upwards is the mass of painted stencilling. Blue fish, gulls, waves and stylised foliage riot and cluster on the ceiling. In the chancel, its higher status reflected in rich reds and gold, a scarlet 'dossal' emphasizes the east end behind the Elders' chairs. The effect is unnervingly 'High' (Fig. 7).

Who carried out this colourful artistic outpouring on walls and ceiling? It may have been the Edinburgh firm of Moxon and Carfrae, though there is no hard evidence to connect them to the work. Another and appealing possibility is this: the lady who laid the foundation stone had two great-nieces, Agnes 'Aggy' Morison



Fig. 7: Chalmers Memorial Church, Port Seton, Cockenzie, East Lothian: the interior looking north-east from the gallery, showing stencilled roof timbers and coloured screens and dossal. (Photo:Alec Hamilton)

Cadell (1873–1958) and her sister Florence ‘Flo’ St John Cadell (1877–1966), both respected, albeit minor, painters. They lived in Edinburgh, and, according to a member of the family, ‘went everywhere in a pony and trap – and bred dogs and goats.’ On the assumption the stencilling and painting was done around 1905, Aggy and Flo would have been 32 and 28 respectively – just the age to be shinning up scaffolding and wielding brushes. The interior scheme certainly took the congregation aback. When the fishermen, who had been away off Great Yarmouth, returned home, there was a call to whitewash it over. Somehow, happily, it never quite happened.

There are unorthodox, free-minded women throughout the story:

St Laurence's, West Woodhay, Berkshire

(1882, 1884; Arthur Blomfield)

Never mind its rather everyday exterior: it is the contents that matter. The interior is largely the work of an un-regarded artist, Jessie Cole, and her sister Edith, the daughters of the big house. In 1880 their father, William Henry Cole – whose wife was the

*Fig. 8 (top right): St Laurence's, West Woodhay, Berkshire: a bench front in the nave, carved by Jessie Cole.
(Photo: Alec Hamilton)*



Fig. 9 (bottom): St Laurence's, West Woodhay, Berkshire: 'white' altar frontal (c.1882–83), worked by Edith Cole. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)



daughter of Alfred Brooks, of Justerini & Brooks the wine merchants – bought the West Woodhay estate. The Coles had three daughters: Jessie (1853–1936), Annie (1856–1938) and Edith (1859–1940). Only Annie married. As upper-middle-class women, they did not – could not – seek fame, nor was it accorded to them.

Mary Howard McClintock records that Jessie Cole (her aunt), ‘was architect for the estate and built cottages and the schools, the laundry and men’s club, putting into these simple buildings a dignity of good planning, proportions and materials far better than usual...’⁷ Jessie was mathematical and creative.

The woodwork at West Woodhay was both designed and made by her (Fig. 8). Here is honest handiwork that combines scholarship and originality, and made with gusto and commitment. There is a clear preference for things personal rather than manufactured, for the simple over the complex, and an interest in beauty and the natural world. A harking-back to the past.

Jessie also ‘carved the pulpit, signing her name deep in the wood at the back where no one could see’.⁸ She also made the church chest, 1906. More conventionally, her sister Edith made all the altar frontals (Fig. 9). The sisters also provided much of the glass – though they did not design any of it, with perhaps one exception. The windows were designed by Henry Holiday (AWG 1884) when he was working for Powells, in 1890.

Jessie Cole wrote this personal manifesto:

There is nothing to compare with creating a thing, if you love what you are doing – you can’t make anything beautiful unless you are in love with it, of course....I suppose an artist has the happiest life of anyone, though a craftsman comes pretty near him.⁹

Arts & Crafts: QED.

And finally, two churches to stand for the ‘discoveries’ made along the way:

Mount Vernon Hospital Chapel, Northwood, London (1902–04; Frederick Wheeler)

Marooned beyond a bustling hospital car park, and almost overwhelmed by brambles, this tiny Grade II★ listed chapel stands empty, and with a deeply uncertain future. Even though it is small, seen from below it has both presence and romance (Fig.10). It is an unapologetically ‘Voysey’ church – not that Voysey ever built a church. Stylistically, it reflects some aspects of *Art Nouveau* – it would not look out of place in Darmstadt.



Fig. 10:(top): Mount Vernon Hospital Chapel, Northwood, London, from the east. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

Fig. 11:(bottom): Mount Vernon Hospital Chapel, Northwood, London: the chancel, looking north-west, showing the original screen amid the clutter of the library use of the building. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

Mount Vernon was the country branch of the North London Consumption Hospital. The chapel was the last building to be constructed, to the design of the hospital's architect, Frederick Wheeler (1853–1931). His only other known church design is the incomplete, humble, rather workaday St James the Great, Littlehampton. Mount Vernon was his one opportunity for unwonted creativity. It is full of unnecessarily pretty and costly detail, such as the green-blue enamel medallions on the door hinges. What remains of his vision – the chapel has been a library, a lecture theatre and simply abandoned in its time – are the chancel screen (Fig. 11), the rood (removed from, or not yet present on, the screen in 1905) in the vestry, two of the six elaborate electroliers (the others stolen), a green-tiled dado (behind book shelves) and a colourful reredos of uncertain provenance. Fowler's slightly decadent, European dream glimmers still, but it needs someone to be its saviour, as the hospital contemplates expansion and development all around.

St Mary's, Temple, Corsley, Wiltshire

(1902–03; William Henry Stanley)

It is a church for a doll's house (Figs 12 and 13). Julian Orbach, compiling the revised Wiltshire volume of the *Buildings of England*, suggested I visit. Happy chance.

It was paid for with £10,000 from the 1899 will of Mary Barton of Corsley House, in memory of her husband and son. She gave the land too. Her architect was W. H. Stanley (1856–1933) of Trowbridge, county architect of Wiltshire, who built no other church, nor anything else of any great significance, it appears. Yet it is the work of a man of real, perhaps unfulfilled, talent, influenced by Arts & Crafts aesthetics: intimate, thoughtful, restrained, precise, unfussy, harmonious. The church was never made over to the diocese, but remained in the hands of the Trust set up by Mrs Barton.

When I visited, the Trust was at a moment of crisis: the members ageing and – as the Chair told me – unable to find younger replacements, the burden worrying, the congregation tiny and the future by no means certain. It is now in the safe haven of the Friends of Friendless Churches, to add to their other Arts & Crafts churches: St Mary, Llanfair Kilgeddin, Monmouthshire (sgraffiti by Heywood Sumner (AWG 1884) in a church carefully restored by Sedding); St John the Baptist, Matlock Dale, Derbyshire, the sole country church by Guy Dawber (AWG 1897), with glass by Louis Davis (AWG 1891) and plasterwork by George Bankart (AWG 1900); and St Eloi, Llandeloy,



Fig. 12: St Mary's, Temple, Corsley, Wiltshire: the south side and porch. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

Pembrokeshire by John Coates Carter, architect of Caldey Abbey. All worth a visit, and all discussed, along with about 200 others, in *Arts & Crafts Churches*.

Conclusion

So, what conclusions can we draw? I confess I find it difficult to conclude anything very authoritative about these churches – their variety, wilfulness, caprice, and sheer invention rather defy solemn assessment, let alone pigeon-holing. They are about delight and adventure, and need to be experienced through those ideas. Analysis is useful, but it leaves much unexplained. There is perhaps too much poetry in them; too much good-heartedness and good humour. They do not much want to be measured and dissected.

For, most importantly, they expressed a new idea in architecture: the supremacy of ‘me’; individuality. It rather defies their being tied up in a neat package with clear boundaries and unarguable pattern. Their architects were not much interested in ecclesiological correctness, architectural precedent, or ‘a church as



Fig. 13: St Mary's, Temple, Corsley, Wiltshire: the interior looking northwest. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

it should be'. These churches expressed most vividly the notion of the architect as artist, as opposed to the businessman of the previous generation, or the gentleman of taste of the previous century. And the clients loomed ever larger. Not content to be told what was good for them (though Norman Shaw was good at gently persuading clients not to embarrass themselves), but often with their own ideas; individuality was their defining characteristic too. The church acknowledged it: the Anglo-Catholic W. H. Frere wrote in 1906, 'we must recognise that access to God is to a large extent a markedly individual act. The worshipper is throughout the service in an individual relationship to God.'¹⁰ The monolithic God of Gilbert Scott's stern Gothic had splintered into the many personal spiritual 'journeys' we still find ourselves on now: 'I am not religious, but...'

Notes

- 1 John Betjeman, *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches* (London: Collins, 1958), p. 255.
- 2 Alan Crawford, 'Arts and Crafts Churches', in Andrew Saint and Teresa Sladen (eds), *Churches 1870–1914* (Victorian Society, 2011), pp. 62–79.
- 3 Nikolaus Pevsner, 'Lethaby's Last' in *Architectural Review* 130, 1961, pp. 354–7.
- 4 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* translated from the French by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 1.
- 5 'Woolmer Green Church', cutting from an unidentified local newspaper, n.d., n.p., in a scrapbook of ecclesiastical ephemera compiled by the Revd A. C. Headlam up to 1903. (Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies: DP/119/3/10).
- 6 Report of the laying of the Foundation Stone in a newspaper cutting, n.d., n.p., in Headlam's scrapbook.
- 7 Mary Howard McClintock, *The Queen Thanks Sir Howard* (James Murray, 1945), p. 184. McClintock wrote this and a second book about the Cole family – see note 8.
- 8 Mary Howard McClintock, *Portrait of a House: a Period Piece* (Carroll and Nicholson, 1948), p. 29. This second book is a detailed description of life at West Woodhay House as McClintock knew it.
- 9 Jessie Cole, quoted in McClintock, *Portrait of a House*, p. 31.
- 10 W. H. Frere, *The Principles of Religious Ceremonial* (London: Longman, 1906), p. 25.

Bats and churches: finding harmony on common ground

Rachel Arnold, Ione Bingley, Claire Boothby, Honor Gay and Rosemary Riddell

THE CULTURAL, historical and social significance of our churches and the unique fabric that they hold is unequivocal, and thus their continued protection is of high importance. Likewise, bats warrant protection for the critical role they play in the natural environment. They account for a third of all mammal species in the UK and are cited as ‘indicator species’ as their population size is indicative of an area’s ecological health.¹ However, when these twin figureheads of the rural landscape occur together, a conflict can result, causing stress and upset to church communities, heritage experts and bat ecologists.

The UK’s bat population declined precipitously during the last century, primarily due to habitat loss for roosting and feeding caused by agricultural intensification, land use changes and building development. However, some of our native bat species have started to slowly recover as a result of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and EU law, under which they are robustly protected. In 2017 for example, there were 165 cases of bat crime referred to the police with twenty per cent confirmed as offences, continuing an upward trend of reports from 2010 when the Bat Conservation Trust initiated their Bat Crime Annual Report.

Following the loss of traditional habitats such as native woodland, churches have become important roosting sites for bats. However, unlike in residential and commercial buildings, where bats and people are separated by the roof cavity, the open architecture of churches means that bat faeces and urine can damage unprotected, priceless artefacts and cause suffering to the rural church communities that use and maintain the building.

As a response to this long-standing issue, which has gathered considerable media and political attention, the Bats in Churches partnership project was granted funding in 2018 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with a further sum coming from the project partners, so that ecologists, church architects and heritage experts could work together to trial and implement systems to manage the issues specifically caused by bats in churches, through a specially designed licence. The project is a unique cross-sectoral partnership between Natural England, the Bat Conservation Trust, Church of England, Churches Conservation Trust and Historic England.

This article takes a closer look at how bats are using churches and the impacts that they can and are having on church interiors. It will also cover what has been termed the

‘conservation dilemma’,² and describe the solutions that have been attempted in the past to mitigate the conflict. Finally, it will address the systems that are currently being implemented by the ongoing Bats in Churches project.

Background

There are seventeen breeding species of bats in England but, like much of Britain’s wildlife, bat populations have declined considerably over the last hundred years. Bats are faced with many threats including building and development work, which can damage or remove potential roosting sites, agricultural intensification, habitat fragmentation, cat attacks, pesticide use, timber treatments and some types of roofing membranes, artificial lighting and wind turbines.

It is within this vulnerable context that the robust protection of bats under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 must be understood. All British bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are strictly protected by law. It is a criminal offence, punishable by fine and/or prison sentence, to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill bats;
- damage or destroy a breeding or resting place;
- obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places;
- possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is in a place of shelter.

Churches are places of worship and community; they are also treasure-houses, their combined architectural and heritage interest arguably forming Britain’s most important art collection and their curtilages are often of outstanding ecological value.

The historical significance of the nation’s churches is immense: 12,500 Church of England buildings are listed according to the National Heritage List for England, with the Church of England caring for 45 per cent of England’s Grade I listed buildings. Churches are generally the oldest building in a settlement still in use; often they are the largest, most architecturally complex, most archaeologically sensitive and most visited building in a settlement.

It is likely that churches have sheltered bat roosts throughout their history. They are stable, porous buildings with many entry and exit points and they offer a variety of types of shelter: in the roof space, under tiles, and in the many cracks and crevices. As farm buildings have been converted into dwellings and woodland

cleared, churches have remained largely stable and anecdotal evidence suggests they have become disproportionately important roosting sites for bats in some areas as a result, all the more so because churchyards are often the only species-rich habitat in an ecologically impoverished landscape.

Unlike in dwellings, where, hidden away in attics and between roof tiles, roosts often go unnoticed, in church buildings that are host to large populations of bats, the mess that they create can cause significant damage to historically important items and put an additional strain on those often overstretched individuals in charge of maintenance (Fig. 1). Furthermore, this tension can affect the viability of the building as a place of worship and community engagement further polarising views. It is in situations like these that a 'conservation dilemma' arises as it appears that a choice must be made between protecting our natural heritage or cultural heritage.³



Fig. 1: Plastic sheeting to protect pews from bat droppings at St Swithin's, Old Weston, Cambridgeshire. (Bats in Churches)

This impasse raises the need for adequate support and long-term bespoke solutions for each affected church and community, as well as the bat population. Only with the application of resource and expertise can a place of peace and tolerance be re-established, and these potentially conflicting aspects of our national heritage thrive.

The status of British bats

The order Chiroptera (bats) evolved over 60 million years ago, and now makes up a fifth of the known mammal species around the globe. There are just over 1,400 species of bat worldwide, seventeen of which are known to breed in the United Kingdom, from the smallest, soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) weighing only 4–7g, to the largest, noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*) at 21–30g.⁴

The historical evidence on bat abundance in Britain is fragmented and few data were collected in a systematic way, but it is generally considered that there were substantial historical declines in bat populations, dating back to at least the start of the twentieth century.⁵ The greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) for example are estimated to have declined by as much as 90 per cent over the 1900s and are now restricted to south-west England and south Wales, with the lesser horseshoe also found in western Ireland.⁶

From data collected by volunteers through the National Bat Monitoring Programme, recent population trends for some species are better understood. Figures show a stable or recovering trend for many of our bat species over the last twenty years, which suggests that the current legislation and the conservation efforts are having a positive impact.⁷ Unfortunately, there are significant gaps in the data and there are currently insufficient records to determine population trends for seven of the seventeen breeding species.

While there are positive trends for some bats in recent years, this needs to be placed in the context of historical decline and interpreted in relation to the numerous threats they now face. A third of the most highly threatened mammal species in the UK are bats.⁸ Habitat loss, pesticide use, fragmentation of landscapes, and cat attacks are among factors which are considered detrimental, according to the Bat Conservation Trust. Other modern human-induced pressures include wind turbine collision,⁹ urbanisation and building development,¹⁰ and artificial light. Artificial lighting, for example, can result in bats avoiding lit areas and, when a light source is near a roost, bats have also been known to emerge later (thereby reducing the time available for foraging), abandon the site, or become effectively entombed.¹¹

The reproductive ecology of bats also makes them vulnerable. Bats are long-lived mammals relative to their size.¹² We have several records of our mouse-eared species (*Myotis spp.*) living over twenty years, and greater horseshoe bats can live into their thirties.¹³ Like many long-lived species, they reproduce slowly. Females usually give birth to a single pup in the early summer in their maternity roosts. This is usually in a different site, featuring alternative conditions, from the hibernation roost that is used for overwintering.

Bats raise their young in colonies, which mainly consist of females. The size of these colonies can vary greatly. Brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auratus*) for example tend to roost in relatively low numbers, between five and 50 females, but in contrast, soprano pipistrelles can have very large maternity roosts, often numbering hundreds of bats.¹⁴ Due to their slow reproductive rate and the fact they gather in colonies when giving birth and raising young, the disturbance of a maternity roost could inflict considerable damage on a local bat population.

The importance of churches for bats

While all bats would have survived in completely natural conditions in the past, a number of bat species have adapted over generations to make use of the human landscape. Many churches can be home to large, internationally significant maternity roosts. In the National Bat Monitoring Programme, there are currently records of roost counts in churches for nine species of bat. However, a greater number of species have been recorded using churches in the past.¹⁵

Churches can provide perfect conditions for bats. Over the years, gaps form in the roof and the walls, allowing them access. There are often small cavities in the supporting timber frame and joints, as well as space in the roof and eave voids, and gaps under the roof tiles and around the doors. Previous studies indicate that the age of a church is likely to affect their suitability for bats, with pre-sixteenth-century churches seeming particularly apt.¹⁶ However, different bat species have different needs. Horseshoe species, for example, need relatively unobstructed flight space for access and space to hang upside-down when in roost. Others like the pipistrelle species will fit into small crevices, so very small gaps will allow sufficient opportunities to gain access to the building, with small pockets and gaps providing suitable areas for roosting.

Importantly, churches can be used by bats throughout the year, but they will often use different areas of the same or alternative churches in different seasons. Research by Madeleine Ryan found that soprano pipistrelles preferentially choose to roost in the southern areas of the church in the summer, which provide the most warmth for maternity colonies.¹⁷ Generally, bats need

warmer conditions in maternity roosts, usually between 30 and 40°C.¹⁸ However, the cooler areas of the church such as the crypt or bell tower are more likely to be used in the winter months for hibernation when bats need cold areas (for most species between 0 and 6°C) with high humidity.¹⁹ However, in some cases the same areas are used throughout the year. Smith and Racey found that pipistrelle species at Dore Abbey used the timber mortice joints in the roof space in both the summer and winter.²⁰

It is not just the church itself that provides the ideal roosting location, but the features of the surrounding landscape. Churchyards often provide hedgerows and mature trees that can provide bats with good foraging areas, as well as providing linear features, which aid navigation. The distance to good foraging sites – all of our native species are insectivores – and water is often a limiting factor for bat roosts and different species will travel varying distances for these resources each night.²¹

The best estimates, which are now out of date, indicate that over 60 per cent of pre-sixteenth-century churches in England could have bat roosts in the summer months.²² A new study in the Bats in Churches project that is described in further detail below will update these figures over the next three years with the aim of determining the driving factors affecting the likelihood of bats roosting in a church. We do not yet know if churches have become more important for bat conservation over recent decades. What is clear from existing research is that churches are often used by bats and that these buildings are undoubtedly important for the conservation of many British bat species.²³

Effects on historic fabric

From monumental brasses to painted rood screens, everything inside a church can be affected by its environment, and this includes the presence of bats. The most evident impact on the churches is the physical presence of bat droppings on floors and surfaces and the need for regular cleaning (Fig. 2). This is visible to churchwardens, visitors, bat specialists and historic buildings conservators alike, but the residual effects of the presence of bats go deeper than that.

It has long been understood that bat droppings and urine splashes on historic surfaces can have a damaging effect. Over the last thirty years, several research projects have been carried out to investigate the effects of bat droppings and urine on various materials, with the most recent and in-depth by James Hales.²⁴ He analysed the content of bat droppings and urine and tested their effects on materials in situ and in a controlled laboratory environment. His experiments led to deeper understanding of the damage droppings and urine can have on historic fabric, and the extent to which this is permanent or reversible.

A bat's diet consists solely of insects and therefore the droppings are mainly made up of their indigestible exoskeletons. This content is relatively harmless to historic surfaces, but small amounts of nitrogen, fats and oils are present, which can cause staining on porous materials such as stone. Droppings can also adhere strongly to surfaces, especially in damp or moist conditions, making them very difficult to remove, which can be a problem for friable or vulnerable areas. Bat urine contains 70 per cent urea that forms ammonia when dry. This strongly alkaline substance is chemically aggressive and causes etching and staining in various materials (Fig. 3). Urine spots can be considered to be of a higher cause for conservation concern, coupled with the fact that they are harder to detect and remove compared to the droppings. This means that the urine can often sit undetected on the surface of a historic object for a long period of time.



Fig. 2: Extensive bat droppings and urine staining at St Moren's, Lamorran, Cornwall. (Bats in Churches)

Fig. 3: Urine staining (the dark spots) on a ledger slab at St Remigius's, Dunston, Norfolk. (Bats in Churches)

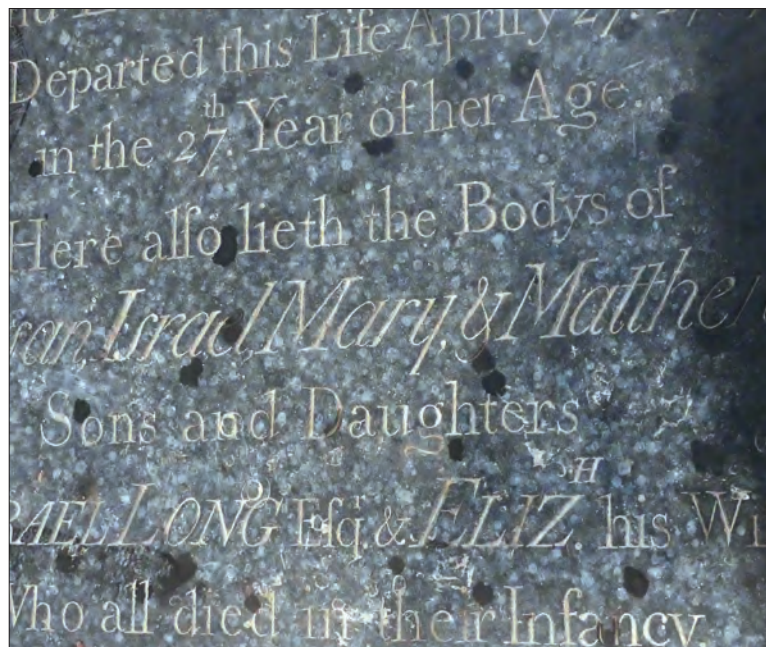


Table 1 summarises the effects of droppings and urine on the various materials found in historic churches drawing upon the research carried out by Hales and by Stephen Paine,²⁵ and visual inspection of churches during the Bats in Churches project.

Alongside the physical and chemical damage caused by the bat droppings and urine on the surface of historic fabric, there are other reasons why the presence of bats can be detrimental to the interior of a church.

Firstly, the increased need for regular cleaning can result in an over-zealous approach. Even the most careful cleaners, and most sensitive approaches to polishing, waxing and wiping, remove thin layers of historic fabric. This intended good maintenance can result in loss of paintwork, illegible inscriptions in metal work and other such damage.

Secondly, droppings also act as a source of nutrients for bacterial and fungal growth which causes decay.²⁶ Large accumulations of droppings act as a substrate for general dust, dirt and humidity. This presents the added problem of sulphuric and nitrile acids that attack surfaces, alongside the presence of the droppings.²⁷

Finally, the physical movement of bats across historic surfaces can cause abrasion and discolouration. Bats clambering over a door or across the top of carved wooden rafters when entering and exiting their roost will slowly wear this surface down and cause them to darken after years of abrasion by fur and claws.

Although there is ample evidence for the damage that bat urine and droppings cause to church artefacts, and research has

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Stonework | Staining. Marble and alabaster are particularly affected. Since these are generally the material of which significant monuments are made, this creates a problem and can be visually disturbing, as well as damaging. Urine is drawn into these porous substrates prior to evaporation, which means that as well as there being a white powdery residue left on the surface, a small measure of urine precipitate is distributed below the porous surface. Droppings alone can result in staining, especially on marble, but it is more likely when droppings and urine appear together. |
| Untreated wood | Watermarks and staining in addition to a lightening of the surface in areas that had been exposed to urine. |
| Waxed Wood | White bloom developed within wax coating. |
| Wood coated with shellac | Blistering due to the ingress of urine resulting in detachment of the shellac coating from the substrate. |
| Tiles (coated/encaustic) | Significant staining and white deposits are visible on the tiles that accelerate the degradation and process. This can cause cracking and blistering of surface finishing. |
| Tiles (uncoated/pantiles) | Significant staining and white deposits. The porous surface will absorb the urine and its damaging chemicals into the surface. This can be damaging in the long term, but no research has been carried out. |
| Plaster | Staining |
| Glass | No obvious effects, but if left in contact with a stained glass or plain window for a long period of time the urine and droppings will accelerate the degradation and corrosion process. Droppings can adhere to the surface and may cause vulnerable painted surfaces to delaminate. |
| Metal (copper alloy) | Significant staining. The presence of urine on the surface of the metal can result in a chemical change which leads to permanent etching of the brass. |
| Lead | Light staining. |
| Textile | Drops of urine are visible on the surface of textile and cause significant staining. If the pile of the textile is particularly deep the fibres are often congealed and stuck together. |
| Wall paintings | Staining, physical degradation of the substrate, flaking and in extreme cases delamination – although this is combined with a damp environment. |
| Other painted surfaces | Risk of adhesion of droppings to vulnerable painted surfaces causing delamination and loss. |

Table 1: Effects of bat droppings and urine on materials found in historic churches.

been carried out in some areas, there is a large amount of research still to be done. Areas of concern include painted medieval rood screens and medieval stained glass, as well as ways in which churches can potentially clean some of their more robust historic fabric like woodwork and tiles. This is a knowledge gap that the Bats in Churches project aims to fill by working closely with conservators at project churches.

The presence of bats can also complicate the process when churches are applying to undertake urgent repair work, for example after lead theft, through the Faculty system (or equivalent consent processes for non-Church of England places of worship). The timing of the work is dependent on the type of roost present so the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and architect need to plan the faculty application to take account of the time-limited window for the works or they risk being delayed considerably. This is where the Bats in Churches project, described in more detail below, is hoping to combine the specialist knowledge of their various partners to provide guidelines to churches looking to navigate this procedure and to update the standard procedure itself.

Measures attempted to ease the co-existence of bats and churches

There have been attempts to understand how to discourage bats from roosting in churches, whilst avoiding damage to the population. In 2012–14 the University of Bristol carried out research into Natterer's bats (*Myotis nattereri*) in historic churches. The bats show high fidelity to their church roosts and to their foraging areas, which suggests that they could be slow to find new roosts. While population modelling indicated that excluding the bats would have a detrimental impact to their welfare and conservation status, the study did have some success in the use of deterrents to humanely move the roosts within a church to prevent accumulations of droppings and urine in sensitive areas (Fig. 4).²⁸

The study suggested that these methods are likely to be most effective in the spring, before the young are born and when Natterer's bats are more transient. They also had success with the use of high intensity ultrasound. In most sites, the bats moved away from the noise and found other locations within the church to roost, and a majority continued to use the new roost site even after the acoustic deterrent was taken away. In contrast, the use of artificial light as a deterrent was terminated prematurely for welfare concerns as the bats were reluctant to leave the roost at all, raising the potential of entombment and death from starvation. Therefore, it shows that the use of deterrents could be a useful tool for licensed ecologists, but must be carefully regulated.



Fig. 4: Alabaster monument at St Nicholas's, Stanford on Avon, before and after cleaning and the installation of bat boxes as part of the Bats in Churches project. (Left: Copyright John Wiggins, Right: Bats in Churches)

Many churches with bats embody the fifth Mark of Mission in their interpretation, striving to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth, engaging visitors both with their church's history and heritage, and with its biodiversity, through the resident bats or the churchyard flora. Church communities that live harmoniously alongside their bats and are motivated to protect and understand them often have strong partnerships with bat groups, like Holy Trinity, Tattershall, in Lincolnshire (see case study below). When the different communities of interest come together they can find common ground.

The Bats in Churches project

When bats are an issue, the problems facing a PCC are compounded by the need to navigate the multiplicity of organisations which deal with the regulatory or advisory issues arising from impacts of bats in churches. Organisations such as dioceses, Natural England and Historic England are grounded in different disciplines, with disparate missions and priorities, and each with their own distinctive ethos. No single organisation

possesses all the knowledge, relationships or resources needed to support church communities in England who are struggling with the impacts of bats. This situation has resulted in an increasingly heated debate from voices entrenched on either side.

It was from this challenging environment that the Bats in Churches partnership was born. Through a collaboration between Natural England, the Church of England, Bat Conservation Trust, Churches Conservation Trust and Historic England, a shared vision has developed around what needs to be achieved to resolve the conflict of bats and churches.

Following a successful development phase that enabled church communities to live alongside their bats in three pilot churches, the project won funding totalling £4.5 million (£3.8 million coming from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the project partners making up the rest) for five years (2018–23). A group of 102 churches with serious bat impacts was selected to participate, including two that have unofficially closed their doors due to a number of compounding factors made worse by the presence of bats.

The project recognises that practical solutions are the overriding concern of church communities affected by bats. In-depth ecological surveys are being funded for project churches where these are necessary (Fig. 5). The surveys are carried out by ecologists registered to use the newly developed Bats in Churches Class Licence (BiCCL). This new licence, designed by Natural England specially for the project, enables registered ecologists to take slightly more experimental approaches to separate church communities and bats, whilst not affecting the favourable conservation status of the bats.

The survey results enable the ecologist to understand the extent of the bat population and how they are using the church and surrounding area. Pairing this knowledge with information from heritage experts on the significance of the church fabric, they can work with the church architect and church community to design mitigation.

Each church situation is unique, so each proposed solution reflects the behaviour of the bats and the structure of the church. Examples include: making bespoke bat boxes in the roof spaces (Fig. 6), selectively blocking entrance holes to prevent bats flying across the church, and provisions of bat boxes in churchyards.

Cleaning a church inhabited by bats can be an intensive and depressing task. The project is able to purchase covers for monuments at risk while churches wait for more permanent solutions or when extensive works are not appropriate. A series of conservation cleaning workshops, in which there is already considerable interest, will be led by conservators from the



Fig. 5: Ecologist Dr Lotty Packman surveying St Remigius's, Dunston, Norfolk, for bats. (Bats in Churches)

Churches Conservation Trust. Attendees will receive a free conservation cleaning kit and bespoke advice.

Alongside this, the project is working hard to raise awareness of the biology and ecology of bats, as well as church heritage to engage a wider audience of potential volunteers. This includes history and heritage talks, bat walks, and project presence at village functions and fairs.

There is a significant citizen science element to the project, encouraging and training people to survey their local churches for bats. With 16,000 churches making up the Church of England estate, this will provide a clearer picture of church perspectives towards bats, and of how bats are using churches nationally, as well as raising awareness of bats in churches.

Finally, the project is keenly aware that staff and resources will cease at the end of 2023 and is mindful of the need to develop and foster relationships that last beyond the project. Some dioceses,



*Fig. 6: A bat box being installed in the roof of All Saints', Swanton Morley, Norfolk.
(Copyright: Dr Lotty Packman Wild Wings Ecology)*

churches and bat groups already have excellent relationships and data sharing arrangements. The project is learning from existing good practice and is working to link county bat groups with churches and dioceses to ensure that the networks of support and knowledge that are made and shared during the project continue to be maintained.

Case Study: Holy Trinity, Tattershall, Lincolnshire

The Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, Tattershall, is an outstanding example of harmonious co-existence with an extremely rich population of up to seven different bat species. The church community has built an excellent partnership with the local bat workers and enthusiasts that make up Lincolnshire Bat Group and they use bats as a unique selling point to engage visitors (Fig. 7).

The church is a major building of the late fifteenth century, retaining much of its original structure, including medieval roofs, the north, west and south doors in the nave and the chancel doors. The fabric is of high archaeological, architectural, historical and artistic significance. It is also an important place for bats, with no other site in Lincolnshire known to support as many species, including breeding populations of soprano pipistrelles and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). The church has been part of the National Bat Monitoring programme (NBMP) for many years, with bat counts dating back to the 1980s.

The congregation have embraced their bats vigorously, and their bat-themed events and merchandise featuring 'Tatty Bat' are an integral part of visiting the church. However, cleaning is a constant challenge (Fig. 8).

Supported by the Bats in Churches project and with input from the church community, a BiCCL registered ecologist and church architect are altering the way that the soprano pipistrelles use the church. This is to prevent them from roosting in certain areas and flying through the building, thereby reducing their impact on the fabric and community use. Existing access points over the south and west nave doors are being blocked and replaced by an access point in the south transept window, confining their impact to a less used and more manageable area. The effect on the main visitor area, a servery and heritage centre, will also be reduced by blocking the roost directly above it. A programme of activities and training is supporting the PCC to offer an improved visitor experience and production of new interpretation material. Faculty was gained for the bat mitigation works in 2018.

The example of Tattershall has given ideas and hope to other church communities who feel overwhelmed by the impacts of



Fig. 7: Bat information for visitors at Holy Trinity, Tattershall. (Bats in Churches)



Fig. 8: Physical protection of important memorial brasses in the north transept at Holy Trinity Tattershall. (*Bats in Churches*)

bats on church use and fabric. The way the community has not only accommodated its bats but exploited them to engage visitors has lessons for similarly affected churches.

Case Study: All Saints, Braunston-in-Rutland

All Saints' church in Braunston-in-Rutland is a modest Grade II* listed medieval church surrounded by a grassy churchyard set at the highest point in the heart of the village conservation area, enabling the tower and its small spire to be seen from most approaches. Three medieval features are of high significance: the c.1120 font, the c.1400 south wall paintings, which are somewhat fragmentary, and the late medieval bishop's indent at the chancel step.

Bats have been recorded in the church for several decades, but the population increased dramatically about seven years ago when a nearby chimney collapsed and a maternity colony of soprano pipistrelle moved into the roof void of the south aisle. The bats were able to gain access to the church from the roof void via holes in the south aisle ceiling. Although cleaned regularly, bat droppings could be seen on most floors and walls with a

concentration in the south aisle where the most significant items of heritage interest are located.

The cleaning burden and the smell became so acute that at one point the PCC thought the church might have to close. Desperate for help, the churchwardens contacted their local MP, Sir Alan Duncan, who helped to publicise their plight, leading to the church becoming one of the three pilot churches in the development stage of the Bats in Churches project (Fig. 9).

After carrying out the necessary dawn and dusk bat surveys, the BiCCL registered ecologist, Dr Charlotte Packman, concluded that there was no need for the bats to enter or fly inside the church and recommended the temporary blocking of holes in the south aisle ceiling to cut access into the church from the roost, meaning that the only access points to the roost were external and that the bats would not be entering the nave.

Subsequent monitoring showed that the temporary blocking had not affected the numbers using the roost. Permanent blocking using heritage building materials took place in April 2019 and the soprano pipistrelle colony continues to thrive with more bats using the south aisle roof space than before, but with no mess or nuisance inside the church.



Fig. 9: Visitors attending a bat walk at Braunston-in-Rutland. (Bats in Churches)

Sue Willetts, one of the church wardens who championed the church's involvement in the Bats in Churches project commented: 'It's been a fantastic outcome for us. The church can now be used as intended.'

Conclusion

Church buildings must be valued by, and useful to, their communities in order to thrive. In addition to the unequivocal cultural importance of the historic objects inside the church, many churches aim to provide facilities and position themselves at the heart of their communities. In some areas they are venues for vital services such as health centres, post offices and food banks. Upkeep and care of churches often falls to a few volunteers who work hard to maintain their historic fabric, needing project management and fundraising skills as well as time. While the value of bats for Britain's biodiversity is highly significant, within this context, managing the impact of bats can be overwhelming.

The launch of the Bats in Churches project aims to shine a long overdue beacon of hope for many overstretched church communities, providing practical solutions to the impact of bats and offering learning opportunities about these remarkable animals. Gathering robust research data into the behaviour and impact of bats in church environments is an important first step, which must be followed by bringing separate communities of interest together. The ultimate aims of the project are to create pioneering, multidisciplinary solutions, to enable communities with distinct drivers and passions to respect one another's concerns, and to build and maintain support networks of volunteers. This is crucial if church communities are to live alongside their bats and in doing so preserve their priceless heritage for generations to come, which is what the Bats in Churches project aims to achieve.

For more information and updates on the project please visit www.batsandchurches.org.uk or follow @BatsinChurches on twitter.

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Notes

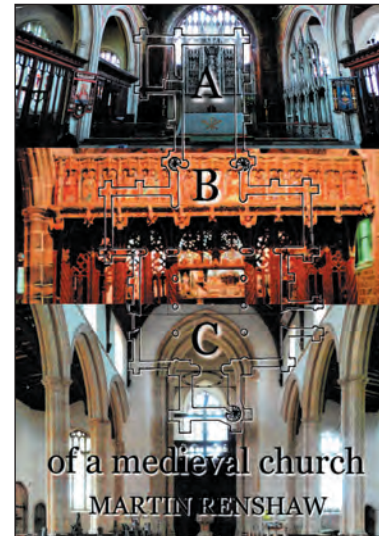
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Book reviews

Martin Renshaw, *ABC of a Medieval Church*. Birling, At the Sign of the Pipe, 2018, 118 pp., 14 col. pls, many b&w pls, £8 (plus £1.50 p+p) pbk, ISBN 978 0 95671 025 3. Copies can be ordered from www.soundsmedieval.org

According to its blurb, the purpose of this book is to show ‘how all medieval church buildings ... were designed functionally’ and ‘how the daily working demands made on medieval churches were accommodated’. The Introduction amplifies this and states that the occasion for producing the book is the report of the Taylor Review of the Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals, and that it has been written to inform the Community Support Advisors and Fabric Support Officers whose appointment the Review recommends. The aim is laudable – church communities, church visitors and church curators would all benefit from such a book. Sadly, however, this is not that book.

It rapidly become apparent that the subject is limited, as is entirely reasonable, to parochial buildings (though, confusingly, drawing some examples from cathedrals and even monasteries, sometimes to the exclusion of parish churches – a retable at Bristol Cathedral [p. 31], formerly Abbey; evidence for parclose screens at Lincoln Cathedral [p. 83]). The work is divided into three main parts, the ABC of the title: A for Altars (in other words the chancel); B for Barriers (screens, especially the rood screen); C for the ‘Church’, which might be interpreted as the rest of the building, but in reality concerns a ragbag of features and of short jejune references to other buildings such as priests’ houses and church houses. The first section is by far the longest, and is dominated by description of evidence relating to choirs, organs and acoustics: while it is true that these topics have hitherto largely been neglected in the past, and certainly merit exploration, the length of discussion is disproportionate in relation to the whole; so is the second section on screens. The sense of disproportion is increased by the fact that there is almost no discussion of the nave or its aisles; most worryingly in the context of current conservation and management debates, there is no mention of benches or pews. Other surprising omissions, given the aspiration to understand the functions of the church, include reference to pulpits and preaching; and to the prayer-prompting purpose of monuments to the deceased, and the importance of retaining them in their original positions. If what really interests the author – a lifelong church musician and an organ builder by profession – is music and its infrastructure, he should have produced a book on that subject rather than distort the content of



what is billed as a comprehensive exposition of the evidence for the medieval functions of churches. A final section returns to the Taylor Review, and is a polemic in favour of using chancels for religious service, turning the rest of the building over to community use, in which the question of the fate of organs and of church music again dominates and alleged short-comings on the part of clergy, organists and others are none too subtly identified. There may be a place, even a need, for such a discussion, but it is not in the context of the advertised aims of this book.

The text is punctuated by errors, questionable interpretations, over-generalisations, and irrelevant observations. A few examples will suffice. First, of error: legislation concerning the provision and management of parish churches issued by Archbishop Pekham and Bishop Quivel (or Quinel) of Exeter, enacted in 1281 and 1287, is stated (p. 6) to be of the early fourteenth century, despite the fact that the legislators died in 1292 and 1291, respectively, an error which reveals a lack of awareness of its historical context and, therefore, full significance. In discussing why medieval documents refer to a 'pair of organs' (p. 57) there is no recognition of the fact that 'pair' in Middle English could simply be a plural or could indicate a 'set' of items; and the Latin version given, 'pars organorum', means 'part of the organs' not 'a pair' (it should be 'par'). Second, questionable interpretations: two examples, relating to acoustics – there seems to be an assumption that many (most?) chancel roofs were boarded, as was the case in the south west of England, but the characteristic English form is open timber, which had very different acoustic effects; an implied comment on p. 53 about the possible deadening effects of modern carpeting fails to take account of the fact that medieval church floors were strewn with rushes or straw. Third, over-generalisations: one example will suffice – the discussion of choir stalls implies (p. 14) that they always turned, college-style, to back on to rood screens, though many exist which do not, and doing so reduced the ability of the laity to see the all-important elevation of the host at the high altar. Finally, irrelevant observations: the same discussion of choir stalls introduces an Aunt Sally that misericords were for monks, only (correctly) to dismiss it (p. 15), rather than drawing the positive conclusion that they are possible evidence for the chanting of the full office by the clergy associated with the church; and in more than one place there are statements such as one that the inner face of the, usually low, priests' doorway is often taller than the outer face and the door itself, which 'needs some explanation, but I have neither seen, nor can think of, anything convincing in this respect' (p. 18) – perhaps the author has never tried to stoop through a low doorway in a thick wall. There is no point in invoking further examples. The sum of such infelicities undermines any confidence

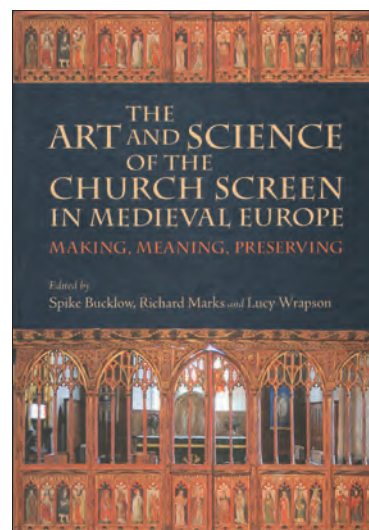
in the authority of the work. Their combination with the problems of balance and the lack of comprehensiveness in the content unfortunately means that the kind of handbook which is needed, and which this work aspires to be, has yet to be written.

P. S. Barnwell, Kellogg College, Oxford

Spike Bucklow, Richard Marks and Lucy Wrapson (eds), *The Art and Science of the Church Screen in Medieval Europe: Making, Meaning, Preserving*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2017, 309 pp., 62 col. pls, 78 b&w pls, £75.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 1 78327 123 8

This set of papers was first delivered at a conference held in Cambridge in 2012 on Medieval church screens. The title of the book conveys the intent of the event which was to bring together a range of disciplines, some often associated with 'science' such as conservation and archaeology, and others with 'the arts' such as the various pertinent branches of history, in order to give as rounded and nuanced a picture as possible of the current state of scholarly play with regard to this complex and often elusive topic. Eleven essays scrutinise the subject from various perspectives, seven focusing on England and Wales and four looking further afield to discuss issues of design, function and survival in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Scandinavia. Whilst most of what survives dates from the late Middle Ages, the chronological parameters are extended in the case of Scandinavia where the focus is on case studies from the thirteenth century, and in the Netherlands where, in an interesting addendum to an essay on Pre-Reformation chancel screens, the writer examines the phenomenon of the construction of screens and their purpose for the seventeenth-century Calvinist regime.

The title is admirably to the point, but prosaic, and perhaps masks to a degree the fascinating contents of the book. An introduction urges the necessity for thinking about the subject holistically, to consider not only their materiality and physical context, but also the social nature of screens, that they are partners in the dynamic with their audience. One essay which takes up the theme of the importance of human agency in our understanding of the subject focuses on German screens, their role in theatrical spectacle, and especially the variation of visual experience and understanding as viewers confronted them from different physical perspectives. Revisionism is present, though suggested rather than insisted on. In the article on Italy, there is an allusion to ongoing research, which might ultimately lead to a re-think of some famous Italian paintings heretofore considered as parts of retables but which seem probably to have been originally elevated above screens. In the section on England and Wales, three essays explain



with lively clarity how a close examination of materials, techniques and working methods is indispensable in moving towards a more precise knowledge of screens, at the same time bringing to life the role of the craftsmen and their suppliers. One essay reflects on the screen as part of a greater visual whole, and another looks at the subject regionally – the South-West. There is a fascinating and thorough discussion of the role of inscriptions in the Middle Ages and Reformation periods which the author describes as ‘texting and de-texting’, and an account of the unusual screen at Catfield with its sixteen kings on the dado, suggesting a genealogical reading.

There is an exhaustive bibliography, an indispensable resource to any aspiring scholar of this huge subject, and the book throughout is helpfully illustrated with black and white photographs judiciously placed within the text and supplemented by groups of colour plates. This is an absorbing and highly informative volume which merits a wide readership. The hardback is expensive, but hopefully the publishers may consider a paperback or online edition.

Catherine Oakes, Kellogg College, University of Oxford



Michael Hodges, *The Knights Hospitaller in Great Britain in 1540: A Survey of the Houses and Churches etc of St John of Jerusalem including those earlier belonging to the Knights Templar*. London, The Grand Priory of England, 2018, 150 pp., very many col. pls, £20 pbk, ISBN 978 0 95126 648 9. Copies can be ordered for £25 inc p&p by sending a cheque, payable to ‘The Grand Priory of England’, to The Grand Priory of England, Craigmyle House, 13 Deodar Road, London SW15 2NP.

The title of this book is something of a misnomer. It might entice the casual reader with the prospect of an analysis of the state of the Knights Hospitaller order on the eve of the Reformation, adding, perhaps, something to the debate on the spiritual vitality of the Church in the early sixteenth century. The book disappoints in this respect. In reality it is a potted history of the churches and lands granted to the order in Britain from its foundation in the early twelfth century into the modern day. An introduction sets the scene with an account of the origins of the Hospitallers and their introduction into England. Initially outshone by the Templars, they gained popularity in the later twelfth century and, with the grant of Templar lands after 1312, the order became a major holder of land. It was dissolved in 1540, revived in the reign of Mary, and again suppressed by Elizabeth. Thereafter, it lived on only in the minds and titles of recusants and English exiles in Malta before its reinvention in the recent past. A

county-by-county gazetteer, the bulk of the book, then follows. Each entry, illustrated with copious colour photographs by the author, records the grant of the land in question, what is known of its extent, its fate after the Dissolution, and a brief description of the extant churches and other structures associated with the property. A cursory index of places concludes the volume.

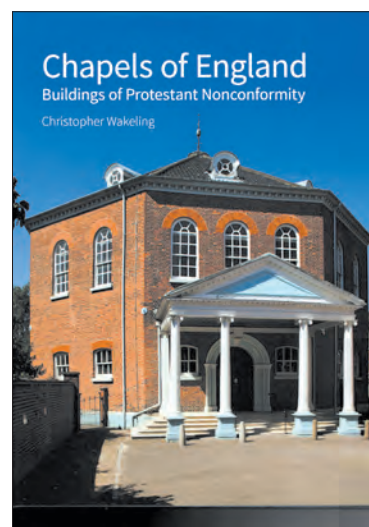
There is little new here, but it could have been otherwise. Hodges notes in the Preface that his main sources are the *Victoria County History* and Pevsner's *Buildings of England*. Beyond mining data, however, he makes little use of them to draw wider conclusions. There is no analysis of patterns of patronage and its chronology; it would surely have been worth a comment that the major grants date from the time of the second and third crusades in the later twelfth century and were predominantly aristocratic. Nor is there any appreciation of the organization of commanderies and preceptories; indeed, for many properties there is no indication at all from where they were managed. Again, the introduction notes the closer relations between the order and the crown from the fourteenth century onwards, but it would have been useful to learn more about how the order fitted into the politics of the period. Above all there is no general analysis of the buildings they left behind. The only headline conclusion is that the Hospitallers were the largest landowners after the crown in 1540, albeit without supporting statistics.

The volume, then, is a missed opportunity. It was commissioned by Fra' Ian Scott, the Grand Prior of England, as, it seems, a record of the former glory of the order in Britain – the date of 1540 in the title probably subconsciously references a Catholic nostalgia and a sense of unfair dispossession – and in those terms it clearly ticks the required boxes. It could have been much more. As it stands, it might be a starting point for anyone interested in writing a more discursive history of the Hospitallers and their buildings, but beyond that it is otherwise difficult to identify a wider purpose and readership.

David Roffe, University of Oxford

Christopher Wakeling, *Chapels of England: Buildings of Protestant Nonconformity*. Historic England, 2017, 320 pp., 290 pls, largely in colour, £50. ISBN 978 1 84802032 0

Religious diversity has been a fact of English life since the Reformation and the buildings of the English Nonconformity have been a part of the English townscape and countryside since the Act of Toleration in 1689. Nor has the Anglican Church been indifferent to this rise in the number of other places of worship,



which exceeded in number those of the Established church early in the nineteenth century and whose influence was made which which exceeded in number those of the Established church early in the nineteenth century and whose influence was made there is a good argument to be made, as Christopher Wakeling does in this scholarly and comprehensive book, that both the 1711 'Fifty Churches' Act and the 1818 'Million Pound' Act were establishment responses to the two chapel and meeting-house building booms which followed respectively the Act of Toleration and the rise of Methodism.

It is extraordinarily valuable to have a complete account of Nonconformist architectural history for the twenty-first century. However there is such a wealth of buildings to be considered and a vast corpus of literature to be surveyed, as witness the twelve-page, two-column bibliography in this book, that it is also surprising that anyone has been prepared to attempt it. One problem with much of the literature is that it is written from within a particular denomination or even congregation, bringing with it an inevitably blinkered view. Christopher Wakeling has been determined, nevertheless, to provide as complete a survey as possible using an architectural historical approach and providing enlightening comparison between the denominations rather than highlighting their idiosyncrasies. In addition he has supplied in the course of the text, something almost as valuable, and that is a historiography of the study of Nonconformist architecture.

The book provides an historical survey in eight chapters starting with a brief account of the situation pre-1689 followed by three chapters on each of the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and culminating in a chapter on 'Chapels since 1914'. The examples are, as far as is possible, taken from buildings which are still standing if not always being used for the purpose for which they were intended. Illustrations, many of which were taken specifically for the book, are not restricted to the outside of buildings but show, often using breathtaking photographic expertise, the complete interiors of some very large spaces, such as the Baines's Baptist chapel in Rugby and Cubitt's Union Chapel, Islington.

In the early days, chapels (or meeting-houses as they were more often known) tended to be compact vernacular structures similar to the cottages and barns from which they were sometimes converted. In towns they might rise to two storeys and offer a decently designed frontage to the street: there are suggestions of architectural influences from other Protestant countries, such as Scotland and the Netherlands. Wakeling tracks the evolution of the two main plan-forms and the switch between the earlier form with the façade on the long wall (often with two symmetrically placed entrances) and the now more familiar form with the façade on the gable end and a single entrance.

Country chapels remained of modest proportions well into the nineteenth century whereas those in the more affluent towns grew in size and architectural ambition, with plans of five bays becoming more usual and nods to Classical architecture in porticoed entrances and pilastered facades, even the occasional tinge of Gothic. Wakeling is a sure-footed guide through these complexities, giving appropriate space to the buildings of the Moravians and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion as well as the main denominations and drawing our attention to the exceptions, as for instance octagonal chapels, as well as the more usual designs. He also has an eye for the eccentric as in the delightful cottage orné Independent chapel in Roxton, Bedfordshire, and the rustic pre-Gothic Congregational chapel at Little Longstone, Derbyshire, with its rough-hewn sandstone dressings almost taking over the façade from the ashlar it surrounds.

As the nineteenth century proceeded and Nonconformity came into the ascendant, more new chapels were built and old chapels rebuilt, initially in response to growing numbers but later more on the 'build it and they will come' principle. Although Classical styles predominated early, Pugin's assertion of Gothic as the only true Christian style influenced Nonconformists, with even the smallest village chapels and 'tin tabernacles' having pointed windows as a matter of course. The Unitarians, curiously, were drawn to Pugin's argument and built among the largest and most impressive of Gothic buildings, notably at Gee Cross in Cheshire and Todmorden in Lancashire. Although architects who specialized in Nonconformist buildings thrived many designed both for the Established church and others: Butterfield's first Gothic church was designed for the Congregationalists.

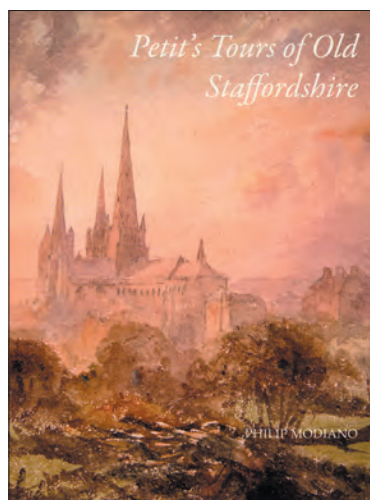
Wakeling identifies the twenty years leading to the Great War as the heyday of Nonconformist building. The need in the large towns and affluent suburbs for churches (and they were more often called that) in which thousands of people could be able both to see and hear what was being delivered from a central pulpit provided the greatest challenge to the ingenuity and technical expertise of the Nonconformist architect. It led to the use of a profusion of plan-forms – octagons, circles, ovals – for providing column-free spaces, an adventurousness which attracted the attention of church architects in Europe and America. Wakeling has a real love for these eclectic large spaces which he refers to as 'Protestant auditoriums' and this chapter really shows off his encyclopaedic knowledge and widespread sympathies. He writes well about the Methodist Central Halls and the two important Christian Science Churches – the Arts and Crafts influenced First Church of Christ Scientist, Manchester, by Edgar Wood and the First Church of Christ Scientist, London, now the Cadogan Hall,

which is here described rather aptly as ‘a piece of North Africa dropped into the red brick streets of Chelsea’.

His survey of twentieth-century chapels in the final chapter is both informative and wideranging, the buildings discussed include a Seventh-Day Adventist church, a Brethren Hall, two Mormon churches, a Jehovah’s Witness assembly hall and a Salvation Army corps hall. Wakeling also finds room for consideration of the architecture of the newer ‘house’ churches and the charismatic churches, whether they have adapted old church buildings as House on the Rock has strikingly at St George’s, Tufnell Park, or whether they have commissioned new buildings in the warehouse or retail park style, as Huddersfield Christian Fellowship have at Cathedral House, Huddersfield. But he also makes the broader point that while, in the period between the world wars, Nonconformist architecture in general nervously followed the patterns of the past, a greater adventurousness, both liturgically and architecturally has led, in the period since 1945, to a reassertion of its place in an international movement.

In *Chapels of England*, Christopher Wakeling has produced so much more than a lavishly illustrated picture book. It certainly is that but it also has a well-written text which is full of detailed descriptions of examples of a rarely-celebrated and important building type and of penetrating historical and architectural analysis and which is as full of wit as it is of scholarship. It fully deserves its place on the bookshelves of all those who appreciate the diversity of the English ecclesiastical heritage.

Chris Skidmore



Philip Modiano, *Petit's Tours of Old Staffordshire*. York, RPS Publications, 2019, 180 pp., 193 col. pls plus many maps, £14.00 pbk, ISBN 978 1 9164931 0 0. Copies can be obtained from orders@yps-publishing.co.uk

This publication is, in the words of the author, ‘a fun’ introduction to the life, ideas, and art of the Reverend John Louis Petit (1801–68). Petit, polemicist, watercolourist, and critic of the ‘excesses’ of the Gothic Revival, is now better known to readers of *Ecclesiology Today* through Philip Modiano’s pioneering research into his life and work (volume 55 & 56, pp. 75–98). Modiano’s aim in the present volume is to bring Petit to a wider audience. After a brief introduction, he devises nine tours of scenes in and around Staffordshire that Petit painted between the late 1820s and early 1850s. The subjects are predominantly churches, but not exclusively so: Petit was often drawn to landscapes and occasionally industrial subjects, notably in the Black Country. Modiano attempts to identify each, providing details with maps

on how to get there and where to park. He then examines how the various scenes fitted in to Petit's appreciation of architecture and the developments of his ideas. A final chapter provides an account of Petit's life.

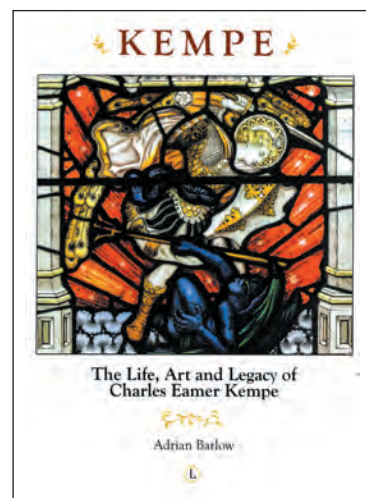
Modiano's commentary is engaging, if occasionally Pooterish and at times even dyspeptic. It is good to know that the telephone kiosk in Wootton is now a book deposit and the old post box a planter, while I suppose that it might be useful for the would-be Petit tourist to know that there is an inordinate number of speed traps on the A34. On the other hand, there are asides of considerable interests. I was amused and bemused to learn that the Anastatic Drawing Society proved to be a mere footnote to history, so described itself in a footnote. More seriously, Modiano makes a compelling case for the value of Petit's watercolours as both works of art and historical evidence. In the course of his life they evolved from competent but conventional works of craftsmanship, through skilful architectural illustrations, to impressionist evocations of place which encapsulated his understanding of beauty as inherent in the historical ensemble of a building, what he called 'character'. Careful comparison of the paintings with the present-day equivalents suggests that in the process Petit rarely took artistic licence. His oeuvre – as many as 12,000 works – is thus a valuable witness to the form of many churches before restoration. Ever Petit's champion, Modiano also subscribes to his aesthetic and is therefore critical of the rule-based Gothicist restorations that ensued. However, they too have become, for many of us, part of our own historically mediated aesthetic. Modiano avers that he would subscribe to the reinstatement of the flat roof of the south transept of St Mary's, Stafford; many of us would not.

This book, then, is as opinionated and idiosyncratic as its subject and all the better for that. There can be few works on early nineteenth-century architectural controversies that are quite so accessible and readable. Above all there are the pellucid paintings – all reproduced in full colour – which for the most part are published for the first time. Modiano is to be congratulated for bringing them together and rehabilitating the unjustly ignored architectural critic and artist who created them.

David Roffe, University of Oxford

Adrian Barlow, *Kempe: The Life, Art and Legacy of Charles Eamer Kempe*. Cambridge, Lutterworth Press, 2018, 312 pp., 12 col. pls and many b&w pls, £22.50, hdbk, ISBN 978 0 71889 463 4

Adrian Barlow's excellent volume provides us with key new insights into the work of the nineteenth century's most prolific



stained glassmaker and his studio. Benefiting from the recent discovery of new archival materials, Barlow argues against Kempe's reputation for producing what Arthur Benson termed 'the same simpering faces everywhere' (p. 236) and, in Nikolaus Pevsner's damning phrase, having a style betraying 'an almost uncanny force of inertia' (p. 237).

Kempe considers its subject from three standpoints; his life, his art and his legacy, and although the book contains useful and supportive illustrations in black and white, and colour throughout it is the text that bears the burden of the argument. For those seeking more visual evidence, this book has a companion volume, the large format *Espying Heaven: The Stained Glass of Charles Eamer Kempe and his Artists* that concentrates very much more on the visual aspect of the theme. See <https://amzn.to/2LxGR9I> for bibliographic details.

Barlow demonstrates how Kempe identified himself initially as an architect through important early work including the redecoration of St Wulfrun, Ovingdean and St John the Baptist Tuebrook (1867–72); that Barlow argues 'needs to be understood as one of the decisive statements of the Aesthetic Movement' (p. 31).

Developing a studio necessarily meant handing more artistic control to trusted employees such as John William Lisle. By the last years of the century Kempe was 'increasingly away from the office, either travelling the country to meet clients and visit churches or at home in Lindfield' (p. 97).

Barlow argues that it is the distance from day-to-day life of the studio that has fuelled much of Kempe's later reputation as an upper middle class dilettante. He shows how *Master of Glass* (1988) by John Lisle's daughter Margaret Stavridi was not only pioneering in its illumination of Kempe's life and career, but also contributes to this perspective because she felt that her father's contribution to the enterprise remained under-acknowledged. In reality Kempe seems to have been even-handed in his policy of insisting on the anonymity of his workforce, but with its rigid internal hierarchy the studio could never be considered an example of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The Kempe that Barlow reveals 'saw no reason to be abashed about his prosperity' (p. 230). He 'always recoiled from the idea that his work should be "modern" and gratified whenever told that his windows looked authentically fifteenth century' (p. 105). Does that mean that we must agree with Arthur C. Benson's assessment that Kempe 'had very good taste, but no genius. His windows are beautiful, tame decorous things, a good copy of antiquity, but with no inspiration and very mannerised'? (p. 240)

For Adrian Barlow the answer must be 'No', with best riposte in the sheer diversity of Kempe's activity. Aside from the evidence of stained glass in hundreds of churches throughout the country, there are the glories of the painted church interiors of his early career; the successful architectural commissions that range from Temple Newsam in Leeds to (working with the American architect Dudley Newton) Wakehurst on Rhode Island; his fascination with garden design and his explorations into textile design. Far from a sense of 'inertia', Adrian Barlow shows an urgency and vitality to Charles Eamer Kempe's life and career.

Graham McLaren, Bath Spa University

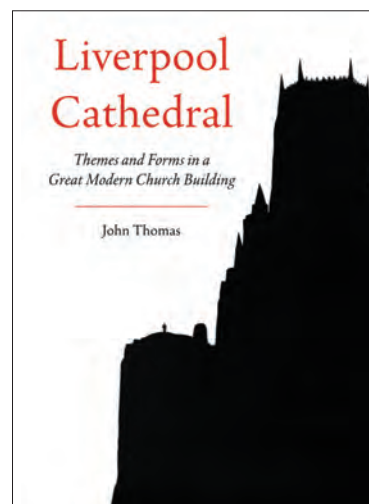
John Thomas, *Liverpool Cathedral: Themes and Forms in a Great Modern Church Building*. Wolverhampton, Twin Books, 2018, 68 pp. £8.00 pbk, ISBN 978 0 9934781 3 0

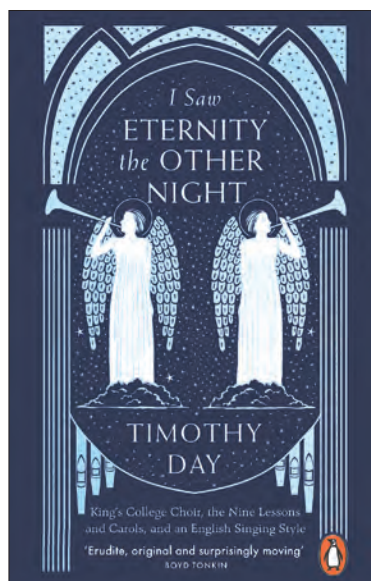
For over 45 years, as he tells us, John Thomas has enjoyed a love affair with Giles Gilbert Scott's mighty Anglican Cathedral. He has published on it several times before, as shown by the useful, comprehensive bibliography he includes here.

This is not, however, a guide to the cathedral nor a history of its 80-year building programme, but rather a series of personal, often insightful reflections about aspects of a building which is open to many interpretations and points of view and which turned the Gothic Revival into a glorious Gothic Finale. It contains no illustrations (other than two pages of sketches to show details of tracery and other details) or plans.

There are eight short, readable 'sections' (as they are called). After a brief account of how he came to appreciate the building, Thomas moves on to 'Form & Space' where he shares his thoughts about its architecture and what it conveys: he sees, for example, a strong sense of the Baroque about the planning and experience of the 'Central Space'. To go round the cathedral with this section in hand would be illuminating. There is then an excursus about Gothic in general and 'modern' Gothic (i.e. for the twentieth century) in particular, followed by examinations of ornament and detail as played out at Liverpool. He shows how Scott assimilated wide-ranging inspiration from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the strong influence of themes from Spanish late Gothic. The author then explains how the building is used to set out the Christian message through sculpture and glass, just as medieval buildings did. He concludes with musings on the greatness of the cathedral and on its uncertain place in an uncertain world.

Geoff Brandwood





Timothy Day, *I Saw Eternity the Other Night: King's College, Cambridge, and an English Singing Style*. London, Allen Lane, 2018, 416 pp., 16 col. pls, 27 b&w pls, £25.00, hdbk, ISBN 978 0241352118 2

A student of ecclesiology can be extremely well informed about the architectural form of church buildings, their furnishings and the liturgical texts intended to be used, and from where in the building these would be spoken or sung. But what did the liturgy sound like, especially singing during divine service? The advent of electrical recording made it possible to record church music in the acoustic where it was performed, and it is the availability of recordings that makes so much of Day's book possible.

English church music – certainly in cathedrals and choral establishments – enjoys an enviable reputation internationally. It is fairly easy to assume that what we hear now is somehow timeless. The most widely-recognised English 'church' choir is that of King's College, Cambridge. Timothy Day explores how this sound has developed over the past century and puts the choir in its context in English choral music. In doing this he explores interesting links between secular music – in particular the early music revival in the first part of the twentieth century – and the sound of King's with this link turning full circle as King's College produced the Cam River Boys (later known as the King's Singers) taking the sound of the choir back to the concert hall.

Day has spent a lifetime with recorded music and has in recent years explored a particular interest in the sound of English Cathedral Music. For an introduction to his insights you can hear him in an illustrated lecture given in September 2018 to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Archive of Recorded Church Music (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0EI5U4PkRw>).

Intelligent and knowledgeable music critics still write that singers from King's College maintain 'a ritual that has gone on virtually unchanged for centuries'. Day shows comprehensively, from a breadth of recorded and written sources, that this is not true. England has a venerable tradition of composing church music but not a comparable tradition of performing it. Making imaginative use of written sources Day explores the eighteenth and nineteenth century sound of cathedral choirs, and boys in particular. 'Shrillness' characterises the tone – a long way from the mid-twentieth-century 'King's sound'. The role of the Cambridge Camden Society is acknowledged for its role in encouraging an improvement in the performance of choral music.

Who is singing in the choir? There was a dramatic shift here from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. Men, singing until their deaths in lieu of a pension persisted into the second half of

the twentieth century – even in Oxbridge colleges – before the ubiquity of choral scholars. Singing was also not a proper activity for a gentleman, or the sons of gentlemen.

Male pronouns and attitudes to manliness pervade the book, and the influence of these attitudes on singing styles is explored. The visible expression of emotion being inappropriate for male singers as it was not ‘manly’. Given the context explored by Day the great disruption caused by the introduction of girl choristers is given a useful context and cast in a fresh light.

What of the faith that lies behind church music? In the final chapter of this book ‘The meaning of it all’ Day explores the broad context of a decline in belief that characterised much of the time when the music offered in choral worship was reaching high standards. Groups like The Sixteen, Tenebrae and Voces8 owe a great deal (including many singers) to the King’s College Choir. They can attract large audiences to hear church music removed from its liturgical context. Each Holy Week in recent years St John’s Smith Square – which is essentially a concert hall – promotes performances of music for the Holy Week liturgy, but without the liturgy, the audience happy to pay for what they could hear without charge in the nearby Westminster Abbey. Recordings make it possible to hear church music without the setting of the faith.

Timothy Day writes in an engaging style about many people he has met and treats with respect. It delivers far more than the title may suggest, exploring a distinctive cultural contribution to national – and international – life. He helps us to understand another layer of what was happening in the buildings we all love.

David S. Knight

Dan Barasch, *Ruin and Redemption in Architecture*. London, Phaidon Press, 2019, 240 pp, very many b&w and col. pls, £39.95, hdbk, ISBN 978 0 7148 7802 7

Any reader of *Ecclesiology Today* will be intrigued by the title of this new book on the adaptive re-use of old buildings. How have they sinned to seek redemption? Sadly the author does not tell us in an otherwise engaging book. This is a shame in one sense as the old saying in conservation is that ‘there is no such thing as a bad building, only bad owners’. That buildings fall into disrepair, or become redundant, is our fault, perhaps collectively, and not those of the building. It is owners who need redemption, not buildings. Perhaps this book goes some way to address this in showing the range of inventive new uses which allow for atonement.

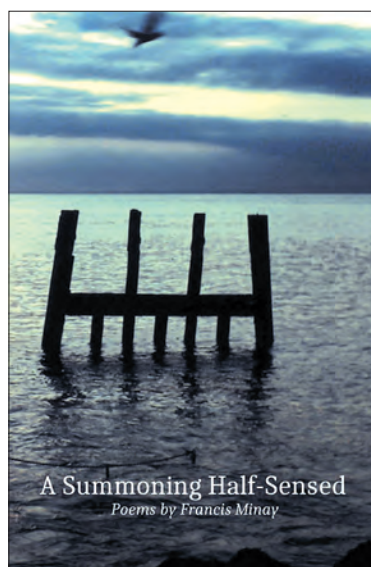
It is certainly an attractive book as should be expected of this publisher. The designers have gone overboard in mirroring both



the title, and the organisation, of the book in its cover design. The bold black topography of the title is deeply impressed into the hard covers and symbolically torn in two with the word 'Ruin' above the tear. 'Redemption' is set below and impressed into a gold gilt background – a promise of the heavenly life to come! The four sections of the book – forgotten, lost, transformed and reimagined – are also impressed in their respective parts of the cover. The design quality carries through into the rest of the book which covers a total of 66, mainly twentieth-century, redeemed buildings throughout the world giving several pages to each.

Sadly, and somewhat surprisingly, only two of these are ecclesiastical – the gaunt concrete carcass that is St Peter's Seminary, Cardross, in Scotland, and the current poster boy of the adaptive re-use of churches, the thirteenth-century Dominican church in Maastricht, Holland. After its foundation it remained in religious use only until the French invasion of 1794 after which time it did service as a warehouse, printing works, archive, school, florists, and, until its latest re-use as a bookshop in 2005, an enormous bike shed. Clearly such large and flexible spaces – one thinks also of St Francis, Gorton, in Manchester as a monastic church on the same scale – can go through many lives but this one certainly seems to suit it. An enormous black, galleried, freestanding three-storey bookcase now straddles the southern arcade and half fills the nave in doing so whilst coffee, and cake, may be taken in the chancel. Cardross on the other hand, opened in 1966 but closed by 1980 and largely derelict by the 1990s, has proven more problematic – one reason being the reticence of the Archdiocese to allow a commercial usage, another the recent closure after 26 years of the organization hoped to be its salvation, the Glasgow-based arts charity, NVA. For some time there has been talk of allowing the 'curated decay' of this architecturally powerful Grade A listed building and it seems that may be the case now as Historic Scotland have refused to take it into care. If this handsome and lively book goes into a second edition Cardross may have to move from 'Reimagined' to 'Lost' but it ably illustrates the need for books such as these to help save them from ruin.

Julian Holder, University of Oxford



Francis Minay, *A Summoning Half-Sensed: Poems*. Edinburgh, Covenanters Press, 2019, pp. 93, £12.95, pbk, ISBN 978 1 905022 39 7

For a number of years Francis Minay was the incumbent of the fine Perpendicular church at Bolton Percy near York, where, in addition to his parochial duties, he occupied the unique role of

Chaplain to the Arts in the northern diocese. Among his innovations he introduced an annual series of poetry readings at Bishopthorpe Palace which aimed to explore some of the varieties of spirituality expressed by English poets. Now, in retirement in a remote part of Scotland, he has brought out a volume of his own poetry which reflects on the elusive presence of the spiritual in his life and in the landscapes that he has inhabited.

Unsurprisingly, the early poems engage in revisiting scenes of childhood. The attics of memory are disturbed in order to retrieve those significant moments, those peculiar incidents that have survived beyond their time to convey 'a sense of something far more deeply interfused' in the varied texture of ordinary experience. Long walks in the countryside or by the sea, visits to historic places, watching birds, even remembering the pleasures of steam trains: all these stir the imagination and elevate his thoughts. In a poem about winter mornings at his theological college, the early call of the thrush impels him to get up: ('Reluctant, I obey the summons, / stumbling to Chapel, half-asleep, to meditate a long halfhour') and the 'insistent summoning' of this call remains with him to the present day.

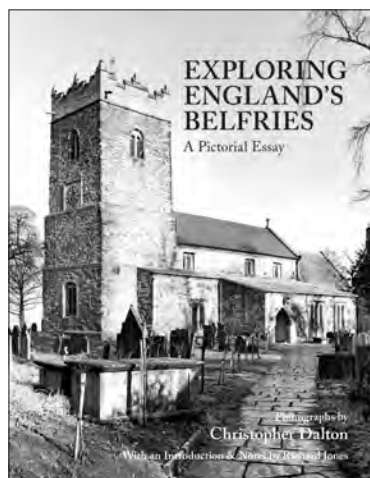
As an art student in Edinburgh, he designed a stained-glass window depicting 'The Expulsion from Eden', a subject that entails a gaze 'along an ever receding track / to childhood's brief eternity' yet also prefigures a lifelong interest in stained glass that culminated in the commissioning of a Millennium Window for his church from Tom Denny, the most inspired of modern glaziers. Minay's poem on Denny's window is a remarkable contemplation of the artist's entrancing creation. The rich and subtle colours, the figures that emerge from the landscape as the eye sees and understands more of the design, the recognition that glass can capture spiritual states in a way comparable to Thomas Traherne's magical poetry, all these impressions are registered here. A similar sense of half-felt presences is expressed in a poem on a summer evening's ramble around the grounds of Appleton House, in his parish. Andrew Marvell had made the house a diorama of recent history, and Francis Minay feels that the neglected gardens 'were dense with unseen beings' and 'the lambent evening air seemed / sibilant with whispered conversations, as if, invisible, a throng / were gathered there'. This poem, like many others in the collection, is full of shadows "half-sensed", semi-understood, on the borders of our ordinary consciousness.

The language of these poems is accessible and unpretentious. There is no evident attention to structure or verse patterns. Some of the poems, indeed, read as if they were composed of metrical prose cut into strips. Yet they have an engaging quality that holds

the attention and prompts one to reflect that our private experience is surrounded by an atmosphere full of invisible compounds, derived from memory, hope, the influence of natural scenery and the faint possibility of a benevolent end to life. A volume worth sharing.

Graham Parry, University of York

SHORT NOTES



Christopher Dalton, *Exploring England's Belfries: a Pictorial Essay*. Birmingham, The Bardwell Press, 2019, 232 pp., 100+ b&w pls, £39.95 hdbk, ISBN 978 1 905622 57 3

Christopher Dalton, who died in 2008, has been described as 'one of the greatest post-war photographers of historic buildings'. He was also a distinguished archaeologist of bells and belfries. This book, with more than one hundred superbly evocative black-and-white photographs in high-quality reproduction, celebrates his work portraying churches in their landscape settings, tower exteriors and interiors, historic bell frames, and a chronological sequence of bells and their ornamentation.

It is not widely known that England's belfries contain a rich heritage of bells by a great variety of makers of all periods, including some very fine examples of mediaeval bellfounding. In these pages one can trace the outline of this craft tradition, from a remarkable eleventh-century survival to a product of the Victorian industrialised bell trade. The sequence of photographs has been put together by Richard Jones, a fellow bell-lover who assisted the photographer on many belfry visits. He has also provided an introductory essay and an appendix of notes giving background to the bells and belfries represented.

The Ecclesiological Society

The Ecclesiological Society is for all those who love churches, and are interested in their fabric, furnishings and use. The Society was founded in 1879, as a successor to the Cambridge Camden Society of 1839. It has a lively programme, including various lectures, an annual conference, and visits to churches at a range of locations in the UK. Members receive the Society's periodical, *Ecclesiology Today*, twice a year.

Membership is open to all. For further details, see the Society's website at www.ecclsoc.org, or write to the Hon. Membership Secretary at the address given overleaf.

Contributions to *Ecclesiology Today*

The Editor is always pleased to receive articles for consideration for publication in *Ecclesiology Today*, or suggestions for proposed contributions, whether fully worked out or at an early stage in development. The Society wishes to encourage less-experienced authors, and the Editor is happy to provide informal support and guidance to those in this position.

In furtherance of the Society's aims, articles should promote 'the study of the arts, architecture and liturgy of the Christian Church'. They may be historical in nature, or reflect contemporary matters. They need not be restricted in time, place or denomination, and although in practice a significant number deal with Church of England churches, in recent years a wider range of material has been covered, a trend which it is wished to encourage. Articles dealing with individual buildings are welcome, although the Editor will expect the discussion to highlight matters of wider significance. The Society's interests cover a very wide field, and it is therefore important that articles should be written in a way which can be understood by anyone with a general interest in churches.

Most articles are objective and factual, but there is the opportunity for well-argued personal views on matters of general interest to be put forward in the occasional 'Viewpoint' series.

Prospective authors are invited to communicate with the Editor at the earliest possible stage. There is no formal process of refereeing, but articles will usually be sent to one or more readers for an independent opinion before acceptance for publication, and eventual publication may be dependent upon the author making such modifications as the Editor, in consultation with the readers, may recommend.

Proposed contributions should preferably be submitted by email. They should be prepared in accordance with the style guide, available on the Society's website or by application to the Editor. Authors are reminded that they are responsible for any fees and permissions required for the reproduction of illustrations.

Books for review should be sent to the Reviews Editor. Material for *Church Crawler* should be sent to the News Editor.

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