Ecclesiology Today

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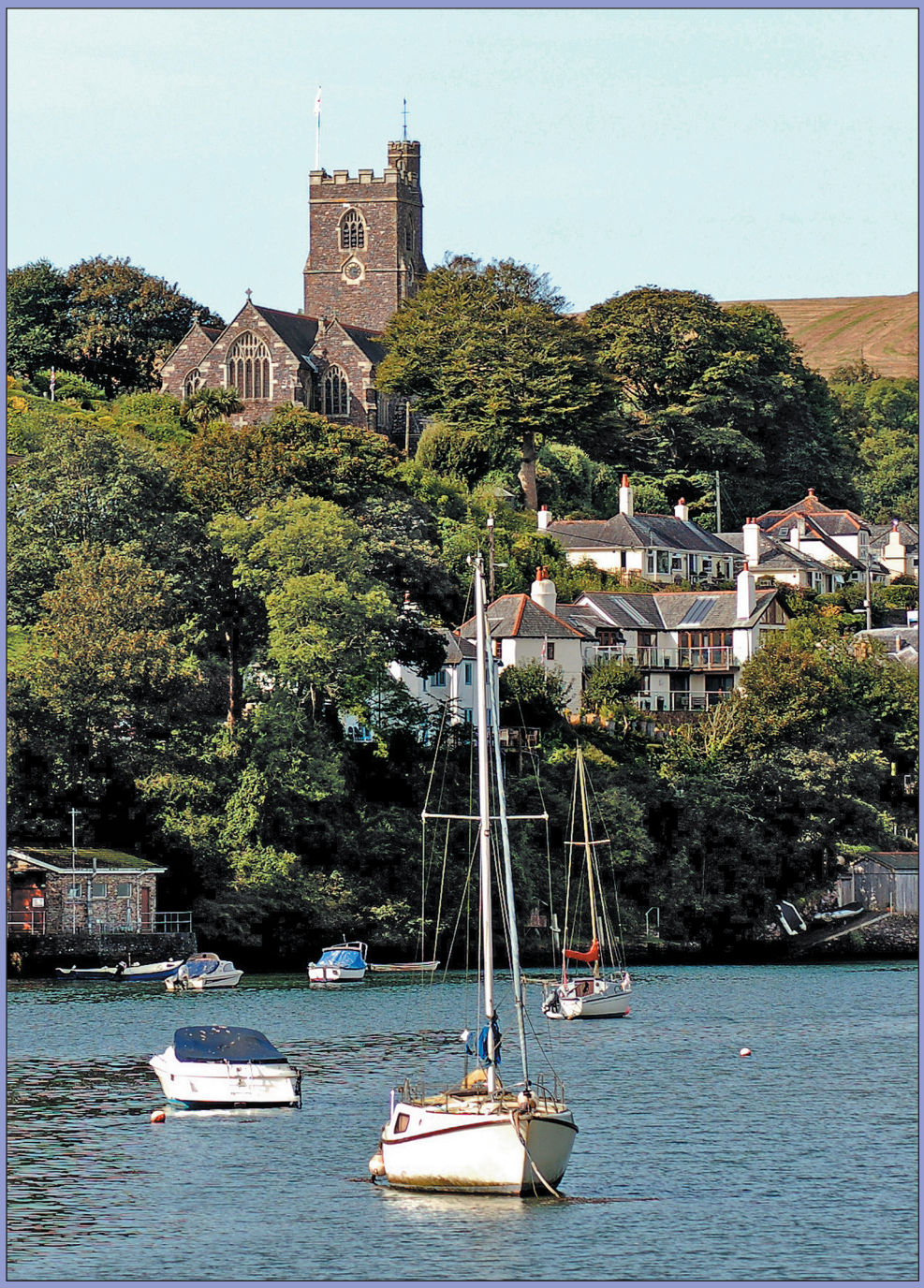

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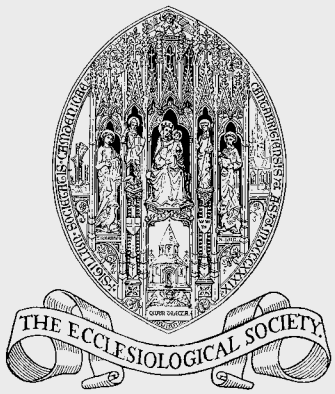

Journal of the Ecclesiological Society

Ecclesiology Today

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Issues 55 & 56 2017
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Editor's letter

Dear Fellow Member,

welcome to this double issue of *Ecclesiology Today*.

To open this edition Ken Powell pays tribute to the late Gavin Stamp, a Vice-President of this Society, who made an enormous contribution to the study and conservation of historic churches (and much else besides) and will be much missed.

We then have five articles on a variety of subjects ranging in time from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century. Trevor Cooper explores the phenomenon of twin pulpits in seventeenth-century churches, the reasons behind their introduction and the connections between the people who did so. Moving into the nineteenth century, Christopher Webster and Geoff Brandwood mark the bicentenary of the legislation which gave us the phenomenon known as 'Commissioners' churches', while Philip Modiano looks at the ideas of an architectural writer, the Revd John Louis Petit, who swam against the neo-Gothic tide in Victorian England.

Sue Andrew introduces us to the artworker Harry Hems of Exeter, through his work at Noss Mayo in Devon, and sheds light on the role of patronage in creating the interior of the church. Another case study of the interaction between patron, architect and craftsmen is to be found in our final article, by Alec Hamilton, which focuses on the twentieth-century 're-imagining' of the parish church of North Cerney in Gloucestershire. I hope this will whet readers' appetites for the Society's 2018 conference, which is on the theme of Arts & Crafts churches.

Finally I have to report one erratum and one addendum to the last edition. Figure 2 on page 61 should have been credited to the Bishopsgate Institute, from whose excellent library it comes. My apologies to the Institute for this error. Meanwhile, on page 42 Robert Drake argued that the chapel at the Priory of St Saviour in east London, designed by J. Harold Gibbons, ought to be listed; happily it has now been listed by Historic England, giving it the statutory protection it deserves.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Ecclesiology Today* and please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas for future articles.

Nick Chapple
editor@ecclsoc.org

OBITUARY: Gavin Stamp (1948–2017)

Gavin Stamp, historian, journalist and inveterate campaigner for historic buildings, died just after Christmas. A Vice-President of this Society, his passion for churches was unbounded. Last autumn, he published in *Ecclesiology Today* a typically trenchant article on the fate of St Mary at Hill, described by Gavin's friend and mentor, Sir John Betjeman, as 'the least spoiled and most gorgeous interior in the City'. The church had been badly damaged by fire in 1988. Gavin had somehow managed to get access two days after the fire and his photographs confirmed that most of the splendid fittings had survived the fire. The diocese undertook to fully restore the church. Thirty years on, the shell of the church has been restored but the fittings languish in a store in the West Country and the interior of St Mary at Hill, Gavin wrote, 'is more like a public hall than a place of worship'.

Gavin met Betjeman in 1974 and it was in that year that the latter enlisted his help in the campaign to save Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, from – it is hard to believe now – demolition and replacement by a block of flats and a 'worship centre', the result of an unholy alliance between the diocese of London and the Cadogan Estate. Betjeman asked Gavin to provide drawings for a publication, *A Plea for Holy Trinity, Sloane Street*, which, not surprisingly given the Poet Laureate's popularity, received wide publicity. In due course the demolition threat was lifted and today Holy Trinity is a thriving church. In due course, Gavin took over from Betjeman the 'Nooks and Corners' column of *Private Eye*, writing as 'Piloti' and using it to lambast the follies of a society that let historic buildings rot while promoting the banal and the offensive – the proposed 'Garden Bridge' was one project he helped to derail.

I first met Gavin in the mid 1970s when he was inhabiting part of the rambling clergy house of the church of St Alphege, Southwark, described by Betjeman as possessing 'perhaps the most convincing Roman Catholic interior in the Church of England'. (It was closed in 1987 and demolished a few years later – the clergy house still stands.) Gavin was already an active member of the Victorian Society, through which he met the wonderfully eccentric architect Roderick Gradidge, who engaged him to assist in his office. One Gradidge project on which Gavin worked was the refitting of the sanctuary in St Mary's, Bourne Street, with mahogany panelling and exquisite lettering by Gavin, who also produced a wonderful poster for the church in the manner of Martin Travers. It was Gradidge who enthused Gavin with a profound and lasting admiration for the work of Edwin Lutyens. For a time Gavin became a member of the congregation at

St Mary's, from where he was confirmed. Having married and acquired a house in King's Cross in the 1980s, with a view of the clock tower of the St Pancras hotel from the back yard, he attended Holy Cross in Cromer Street. He remained a loyal, but undogmatic, Anglican to the end of his life, lamenting the folly, as he saw it, of those of his friends who drifted to Rome. I recently unearthed a copy of *The Church in Crisis*, published in 1986, with essays by Charles Moore, A.N.Wilson, and Gavin, the latter writing on 'The Parish and its Building.' I recall vividly a visit to the church of All Souls in Leeds, long reckoned the city's most extreme 'high' church. Gavin was shocked, not only by the sloppiness of the Romanizing liturgy, 'camp and ludicrous', but equally by the antics of the parish priest (later defrocked), 'wearing filthy jeans and a black T-shirt which exposes the tattoos on his arms and neck, which, mercifully, are hidden by vestments in church'. Evensong that same day at Leeds Parish Church was rather more to Gavin's taste.

Gavin's move, with a wife and two young daughters, in 1990 to Glasgow, where he had been offered a teaching post in the architecture department at the Mackintosh School of Art, came as a shock to his friends in London. We missed him, of course, but the Scots quickly took to him. He was an outstanding teacher and in 1991 founded, and served as the first chairman of, the Alexander Thomson Society. Thomson was then a neglected genius, with many of his works under serious threat. In 2003 Gavin moved back to London, acquiring a flat in Forest Hill, a not particularly fashionable part of south London. Born in Bromley and schooled at Dulwich College (thanks to a local authority scholarship), Gavin was a passionate south Londoner. In 2005 he became part of a coterie of friends, including such well-known names in the field of architectural history and ecclesiology as Andrew Saint, Michael Hall, Peter Howell, and Teresa Sladen, which set out to visit churches across London south of the Thames. Over the next dozen years, meeting twice a year, our crawls took us to Battersea and Brixton, Carshalton and Croydon, Wimbledon and Woolwich, with extra-urban excursions to Brighton and Eastbourne. Heroically – for the cancer which was to kill him was then far advanced – Gavin led the last of these excursions in early November, 2017, beginning in Street's magnificent St John the Divine, Kennington, and finishing in St Giles, Camberwell. On 25 January we, with hundreds of others, gathered in that church for his funeral. At the time of his death, he was living in Camberwell, in sight of Scott's church, with his second wife, Rosemary Hill, the biographer of Pugin, whom he had married in 2014, the occasion marked by a wonderful party in the Royal Festival Hall.

For more than two decades Gavin served as chairman of the Thirties (subsequently Twentieth Century Society, a position for which his scholarship as much as his campaigning spirit well equipped him. Under his leadership, the Society transformed public perception of twentieth-century architecture (though Gavin felt latterly that it had become rather too preoccupied by 1960s concrete). He led a series of memorable foreign tours for members, to European cities, Paris and Berlin, Prague and Ljubljana, and to the battlefields and cemeteries of the Somme, Ypres, and the Marne and those of the Eastern Front (so little known in Britain). Gavin's 2006 book on Lutyens' Thiepval Arch has been judged by some his most memorable work – it certainly expressed vividly his anger at the tragic waste and futility of war. (How he loathed the triumphalism of the Bomber Command Memorial at Hyde Park Corner.) Never a committee man by instinct, he was an active trustee of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust and, for too short a time, a member of the London Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Gavin was sometimes caricatured as a reactionary. In his youth his political views were certainly conservative, though he later moved in a more liberal direction, while deeply disillusioned with the current political scene. When it came to church matters, he denied charges that he blindly opposed change – what he did oppose were projects which were 'merely a modish response to liturgical or aesthetic fashion'. Equally, as an architectural critic, while he could see little to admire in High-tech or the visual gymnastics of the late Zaha Hadid, nor in most of the work of contemporary Classicists, he felt that British architecture was moving in the right direction, with a new generation of architects designing buildings that were practical and in tune with their context. He wrote enthusiastically about Caruso St John's art museums in Walsall and Nottingham.

Accounts of Gavin's life and achievements have, perhaps inevitably, tended to focus on his campaigning and journalistic activities. He wrote a regular column for Apollo magazine from 2004 onwards, an opportunity, he wrote, 'to ponder, research, and write as best I can' – a number of his articles were collected in *Anti-Ugly: Excursions in English Architecture and Design* (2013). *Britain's Lost Cities* and *Lost Victorian Britain*, illustrated books aimed at a broad audience, provided a poignant reminder of an urban scene devastated by misguided planners and politicians, abetted by the architectural profession. Gavin never completed the big book on twentieth-century British architecture on which he worked during a visiting fellowship at Cambridge after his return from Glasgow, but his 2002 study of the work of George Gilbert Scott Junior, *An Architect of Promise*, the subject of his Cambridge

PhD thesis, is a major contribution to understanding of late Victorian architecture. Equally valuable is the edition of Gilbert Scott Senior's *Personal and Professional Recollections* (1995), while Gavin's illustrated biography of the latter, *Gothic for the Steam Age* (2015), contains many inspired insights into the work of an architect he had come to admire more and more. At the time of his death, he was working on a study of the architecture of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, whose red telephone boxes he had campaigned to save, before the age of the mobile spelt the end for most of them.

Gavin was a man of enormous integrity – to some he could seem, at times, stern and unbending. He could be a caustic critic of members of the establishment, including architectural peers, dames and knights, bishops, mayors and ministers. But he was at heart kind, a little shy, someone for whom the best of tradition, whether in architecture, politics or religion, was precious. I disagreed with him on a number of issues (women priests and the EU, for example) but we never fell out. He was a most excellent companion, a lover of Guinness, red wine and good, plain food. He is greatly missed.

Ken Powell

Seventeenth-century twin pulpits in England

Trevor Cooper

Trevor Cooper is current Chairman of Council of the Ecclesiological Society. He has had a life-long interest in churches, his research particularly focusing on church interiors of the first half of the seventeenth century and the future of church buildings.

THIS ARTICLE DISCUSSES a very rare type of seventeenth-century church furnishing which for convenience I will call 'twin pulpits'. As well as the objects themselves, we will look at the thinking behind them, and how the people who introduced them were connected. In many cases twin pulpits were introduced as part of a systematic and coherent re-ordering of the entire nave, so we will also consider how they fitted into these new interiors. As we will see, although this solution to church planning never became popular, twin pulpits represent an intriguing though ultimately unsuccessful attempt to embody theology in church furnishings, and their pattern of introduction demonstrates how concern over appropriate church interiors rippled across a network of relationships before the Civil War.

Twin pulpits consisted of a pulpit for the sermon and another equally tall one placed symmetrically opposite. This second pulpit was for leading the service – 'reading the prayers', it was often called, or 'reading the service' (and this included reading the bible lessons). In contrast, the normal arrangement was for the minister to read the service from a floor-level or very slightly raised reading desk. By the 1630s this was often attached to the preaching pulpit to create a so-called two-decker pulpit arranged on two levels, or a three-decker if the clerk's desk was also attached.[1]

Twin pulpits were introduced in just a handful of churches before the Civil War – two churches in Huntingdonshire, under the aegis of George Herbert and the Ferrar family, and another group in County Durham, in churches associated with John Cosin and his circle. After the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 Cosin was appointed as bishop of Durham and until the end of the seventeenth century twin pulpits continued to be inserted in some churches in the diocese. However unlike railed altars, which were also associated with Cosin and those of similar views, twin pulpits never became the norm.

Huntingdonshire

We will begin our discussion with two parish churches in Huntingdonshire, first a small building in the hamlet of Little Gidding and then the much grander church five miles away at Leighton Bromswold.

Little Gidding is well known today through being used as the title of T. S. Eliot's great twentieth-century poem, one of his *Four Quartets*. In the 1630s many people knew of it as the place where the extended Ferrar family, and those staying with them, lived, lives of strict and formal religious devotion, with a daily routine

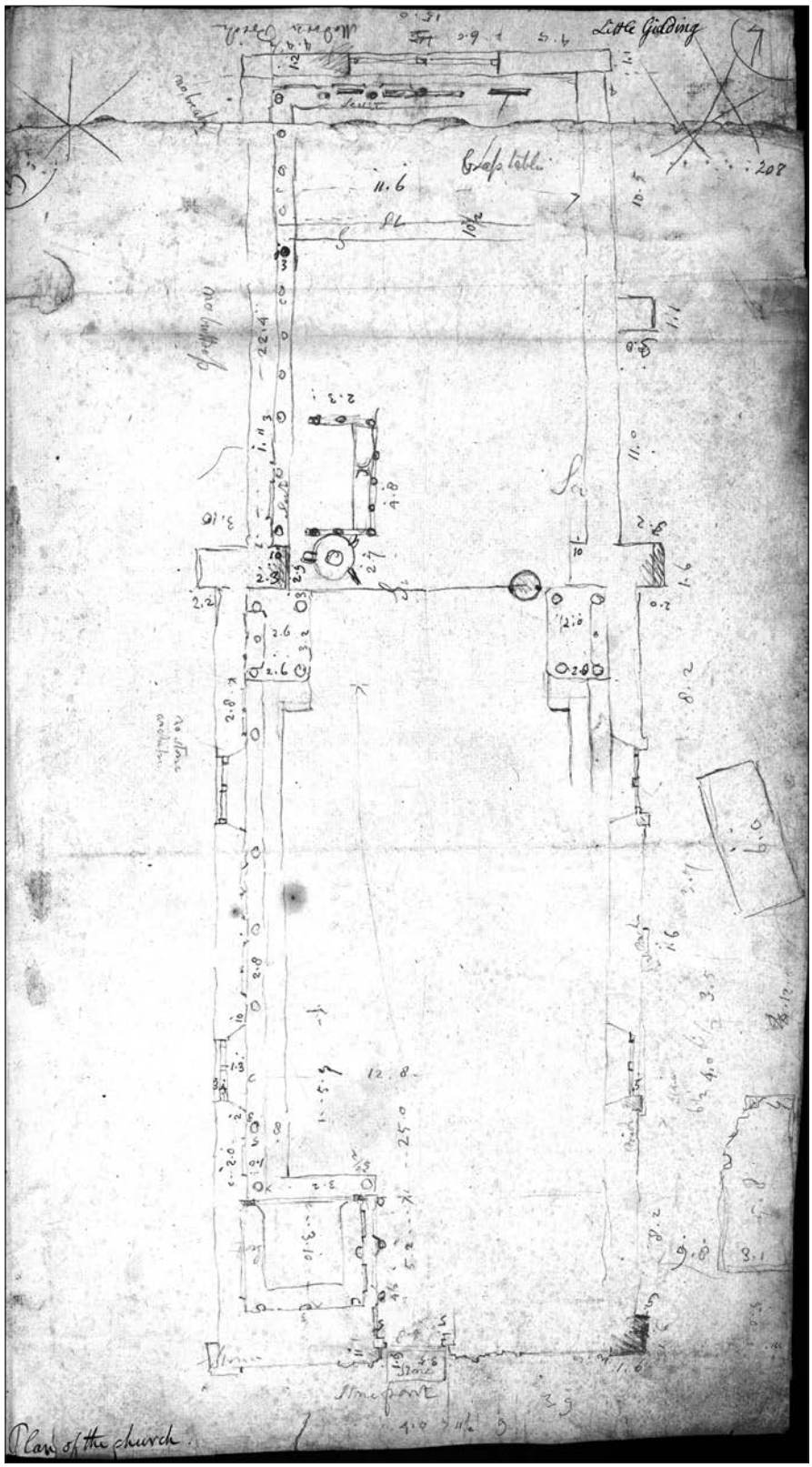

Little Gidding
Grave table
11.6
Plan of the church

Fig 1 (opposite): A plan of Little Gidding church, Huntingdonshire, drawn in 1798 by John Carter. East is at the top.. The rectangular pulpits are placed on the north and south of the chancel arch, to its west. The object just inside the chancel to the north is an eagle lectern, and next to the south pulpit is the brass font. (© The British Library Board: Add MS 29936, fol. 29)

Fig 2 (above): The interior of Little Gidding church looking east, drawn in 1798 by John Carter. The pulpit on the north side (for reading the service) is shown in some detail, including its canopy and supporting pillars. That on the south, being identical, is merely hinted at, including the hourglass to time the sermon. The eagle lectern and font are shown in their positions.
(© The British Library Board: Add MS 29943, fol. 208)

of worship, and experiments with dietary abstinence and night-watches. Their religious life was criticised by some as drawing on 'popery' for inspiration,[2] and certainly the Ferrars were pushing at the boundaries of what was then considered proper for members of the Church of England. The church was refurbished by the Ferrars, the only inhabitants of the parish, in about 1630 and, as a result of their notoriety, its interior is one of the best described of any of that period.

I have discussed the general arrangement of the interior elsewhere, and will focus here on the arrangements for preaching the sermon and reading the prayers. We have two pieces of contemporary evidence. A visitor in the mid 1630s commented that the 'reading-place' was 'of the same proportion' as the 'preaching-place'. And another writer gives useful additional detail, describing: 'The reading place & Pulpit standing each opposite to the other by 2: Pillars, at the ascent into the Chancell, the one on the right hand, the other on the left, close to each side of the wall'.[3]

So this church had twin pulpits – a reading desk and a preaching pulpit 'of the same proportion' standing opposite each other, one each side of the chancel arch. These matching pieces of furniture continued in use in the rebuilt church in 1714 and were recorded by Carter in his drawings of 1798. Figure 1 is his plan view: the pulpits are quite small, and rectangular in plan. His drawing (Fig. 2) shows one of the pulpits in some detail, with the one opposite merely hinted at, identical, so not needing to be drawn. Although small, these twin pulpits must have had considerable presence in a tiny church. They have since disappeared.

The second Huntingdonshire church with twin pulpits is that at Leighton Bromswold, about five miles down the road from Little Gidding.[4] George Herbert, the poet, was appointed prebendary of Leighton in 1626 – that is, he received an income from the church by virtue of being a member of the Lincoln Cathedral chapter. Although the appointment brought no parochial responsibilities and did not require his presence, he more or less immediately decided to rebuild the church, which had been in a semi-ruinous condition for nearly twenty years. Herbert was a close friend and spiritual confidante of Nicholas Ferrar – his 'entire friend and brother' – and had supported Ferrar in the introduction of night vigils and other devotional practices at Little Gidding. Given Herbert's distance from Leighton it was eventually arranged that the work at the church should be managed by Nicholas's brother John visiting the site three times a week.[5]

Looking after the funds for the restoration appeal was Arthur Wodenoth (sometimes spelt 'Woodnoth'), who was both a close

friend of Herbert's and a cousin of the Ferrars, and he saw things through after Herbert's death in 1633. Raising the necessary funds took some time, and money may have remained tight. The precise date when work started is not known, but a letter from Wodenoth of March 1632 talks of having been offered a donation of one hundred pounds which will be paid 'uppon the beginning of the work'. This donation was from the Dowager Duchess of Lennox, who in her own right was also Baroness Clifton of Leighton Bromswold; in addition she promised another fifty pounds later, and one hundred pounds on behalf of her son, then in his minority.[6] Building was certainly under progress some months later, in July that year, when John Ferrar reports a large number of masons and carpenters on site, and is fretting about money and providing Wodenoth with a copy of the cost estimate. There are rainwater goods dated 1632 on the south side of the chancel and dated 1634 on the south transept, suggesting that work may have occupied about two years from 1632. Probably a little later, and by 1641 at the latest, a splendid tower was added to the church, reliant on funding from the Duchess's son, James, 4th duke of Lennox.[7]

John Carter's drawing and plan, made in 1798, provide evidence for the church after its 1632–4 re-ordering. Carter's drawing (Fig. 3) can be compared with a recent photograph (Fig. 4), showing how the nave retains much of its original coherence of design. Not surprisingly, the design and the woodworking techniques of the surviving furniture show that the same group of carpenters worked at Leighton Bromswold as at Little Gidding.[8] The twin pulpits are visible from almost everywhere and dominate the large and imposing interior, the more so because the chancel screen is low. The nave seating is more or less uniform, and is made up of open benches with arms, rather than the high wainscoted pews enclosed with doors which had become more common by this date. As an author astutely commented in 1796, 'it was evidently the intention that . . . there should be no distinction between the seats of the rich and those of the poor'.[9] Probably the most drastic changes to the interior of the nave since the 1630s are the disruption of the transept seating, which originally ran around the walls (Fig. 5), and the removal of 'whitewash' (possibly rendering) from the walls by Ewan Christian, who restored the church in 1870.[10] Christian also repaired the nave seating, adding two new rows of benches in the nave at the front.

Carter's 1798 plan shows stalls in the chancel, and these returned along the screen, copying medieval precedent, as was not unusual for the first part of the seventeenth century.[12] Both Christian and an earlier writer imply that these original chancel

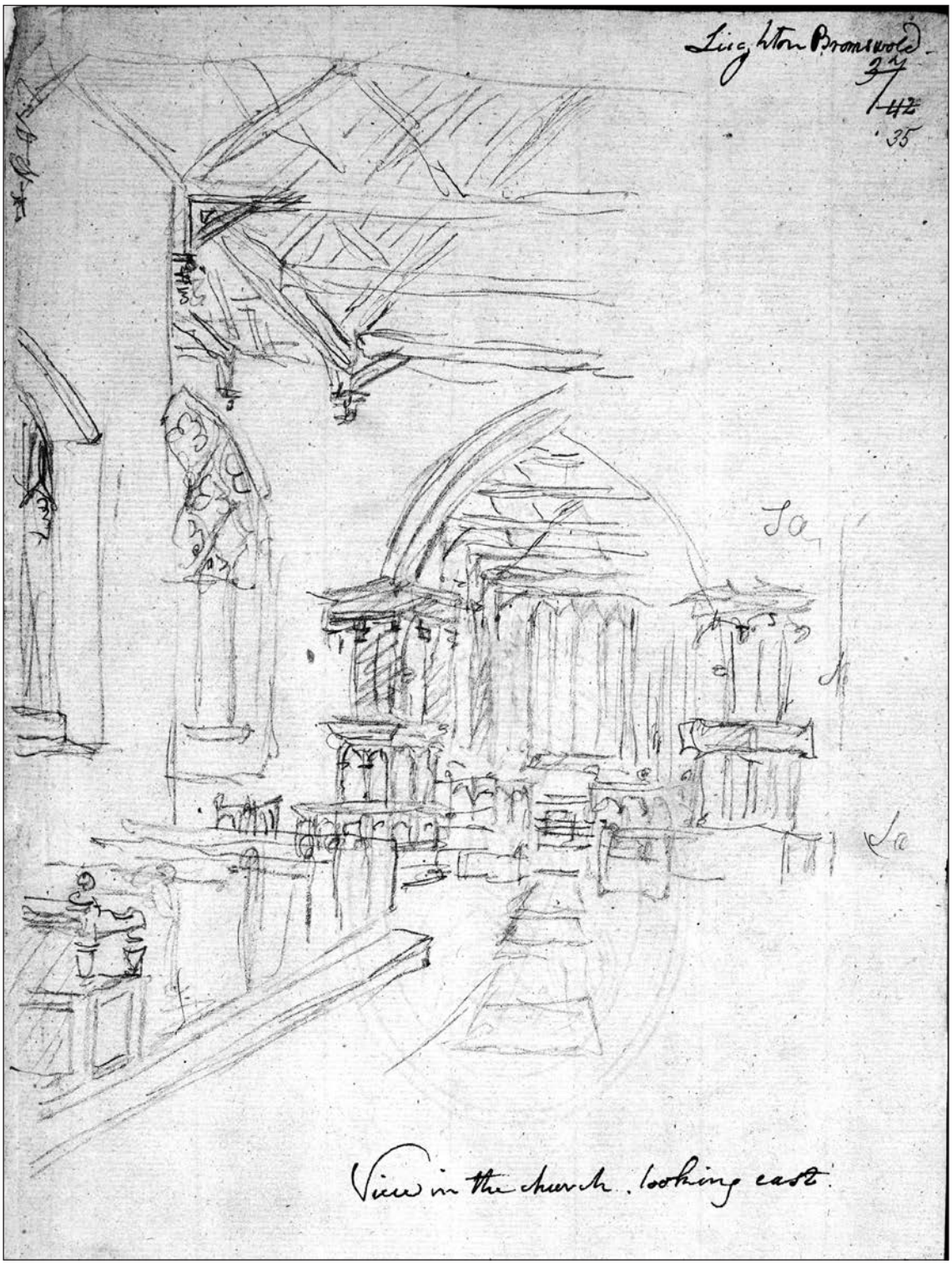


Fig. 3: The interior of Leighton Bromswold church, Huntingdonshire, looking east, drawn in 1798 by John Carter. The view is broadly the same as today (compare Fig. 4: opposite), though the Victorian restoration added slightly taller nave pews at the front. (© The British Library Board: Add MS 29936, fol. 35)

stalls were similar to the nave seating,[13] but by 1870 this original stalling had been placed elsewhere in the church (Fig.6). Christian built brand new chancel stalls (incorporating a small quantity of old woodwork), but overall his new stalls probably give a reasonable impression of how the Ferrars left the chancel in 1634, though unlike the originals his stalls do not return against the screen.

The screen itself probably stands at its original height (Fig. 7), though it is not impossible that it was cut down from a taller screen some time before 1798: examination of the woodwork does not resolve the issue. Such low-level screens of the earlier seventeenth century are known elsewhere, as at Deerhurst, Gloucester, but are rare. The altar rail is Victorian: there was no altar rail in 1796,[11] and we do not know the arrangement of the communion table in the 1630s.

Herbert lived at Bemerton near Salisbury, and may never have seen the work at Leighton Bromswold; his input to the planning, if any, is unknown, though he may have visited once or more between 1626 and 1630. Izaac Walton in his 1670 biography of

Fig. 4: The interior of Leighton Bromswold church in 2015, looking east. Note the open bench seats, the twin pulpits, and low screen. (Trevor Cooper)

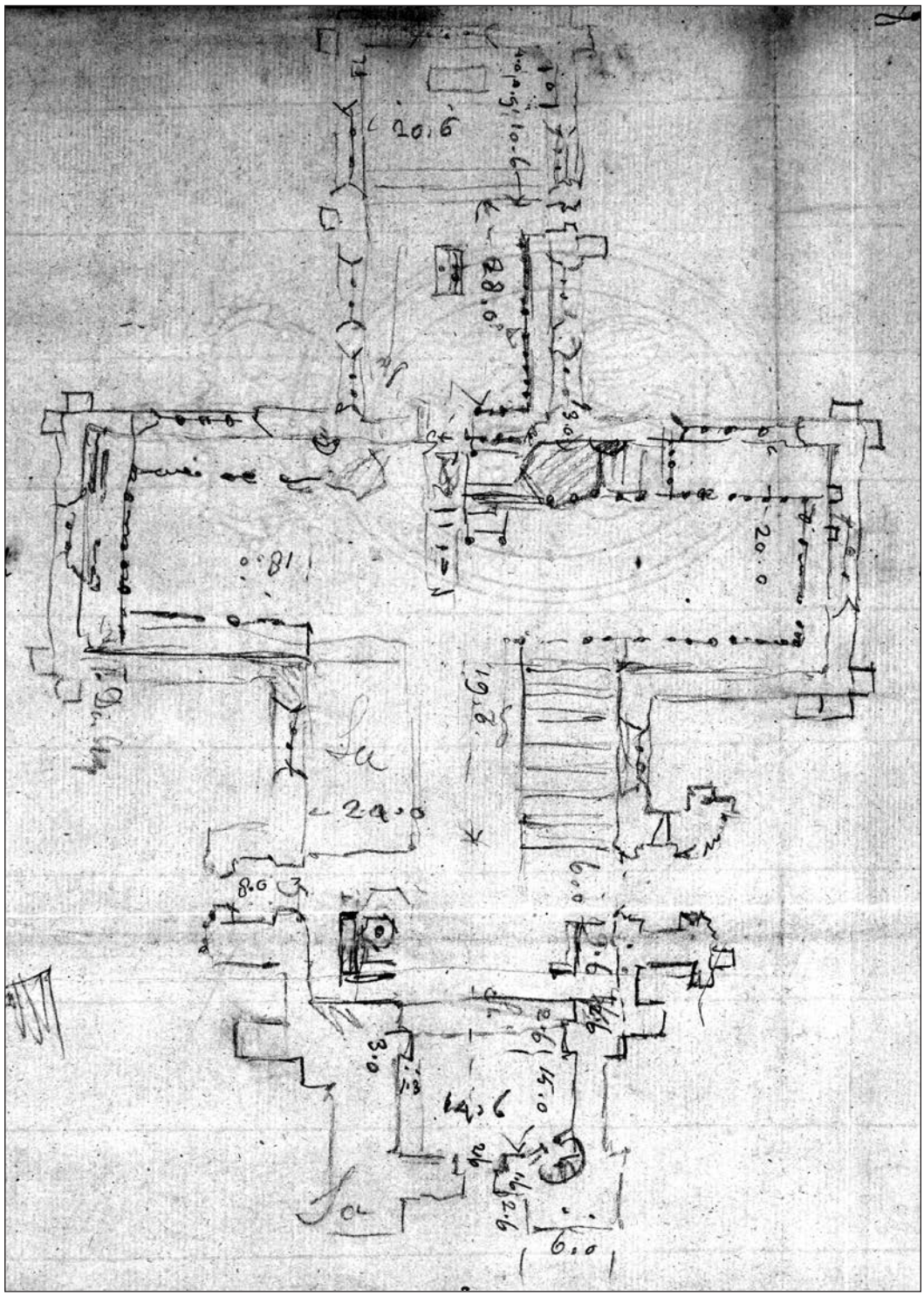


Fig. 5: A plan of Leighton Bromswold church, drawn in 1798 by John Carter. East is at the top of the plan. The pulpits stand either side of the chancel arch, that on the north only lightly sketched in. There is seating around the walls of the transepts. The rectangular east-west objects in the chancel and at the east end of the nave are probably ledger slabs, though this is not certain. (© The British Library Board: Add MS 29936, fol. 33)

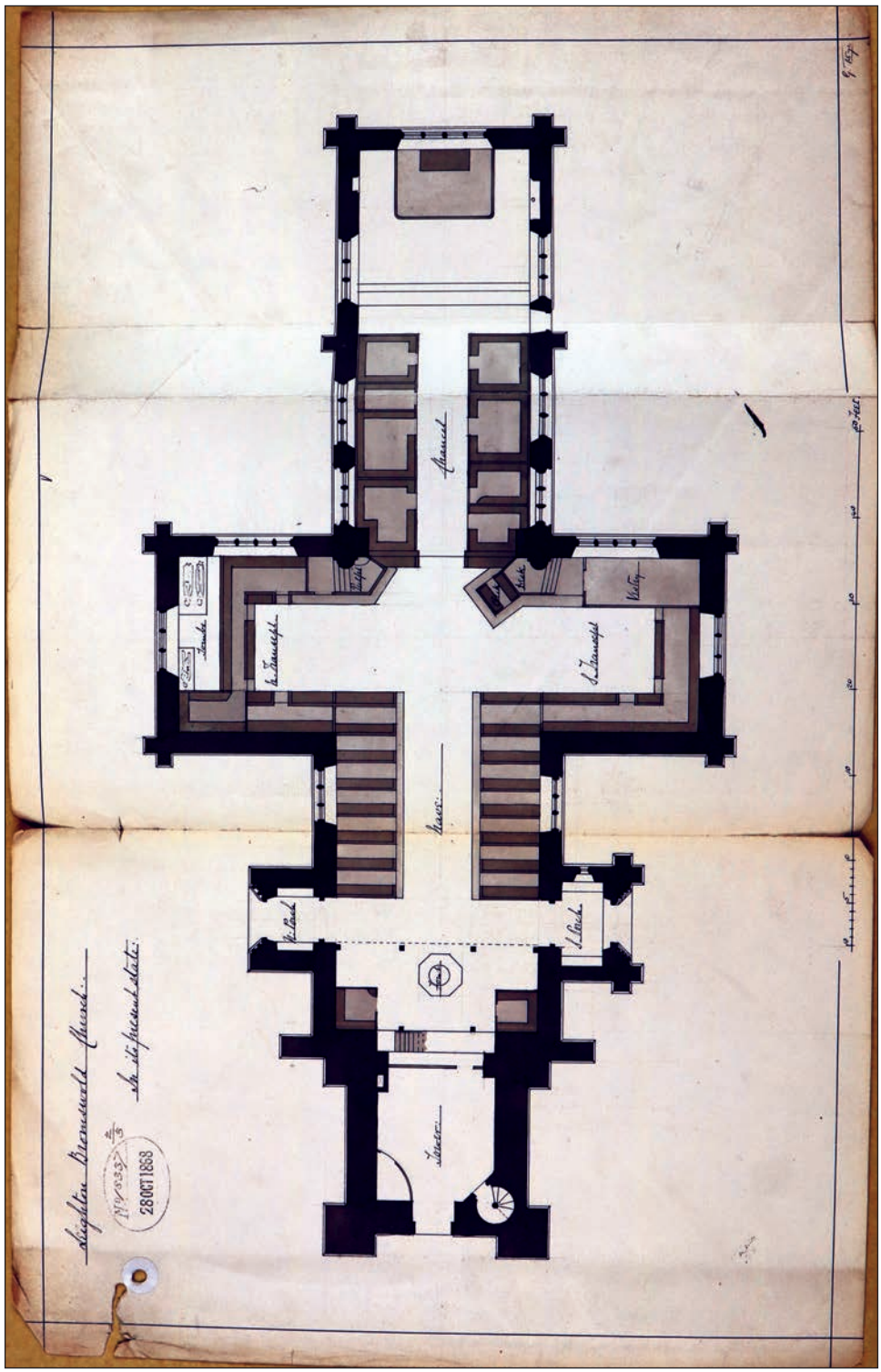


Fig. 6: Plan of Leighton Bromswold church, dated 28 October 1868, before the Victorian restoration. East is at the top of the plan. Compare the transept seating arrangements and the chancel arrangements with Fig. 5. (© Church of England Record Centre ECE/7/1/39324/4)

Herbert gives him the credit for the idea of twin pulpits, but Walton cannot be relied upon for this sort of detail. Nor does the relative building chronology help us decide who first proposed the idea: quite probably the work at Little Gidding was complete by 1630, and the nave at Leighton was probably furnished between 1632 and 1634; but these relative building dates tell us nothing about when the *concept* of twin pulpits was first discussed. There is a slight hint that the idea may have originated with Nicholas Ferrar – John Ferrar summarises one section of a now lost letter from Herbert by saying that Herbert discusses 'the building of the Church, in such & such a forme as N[icholas] F[errar] advised'.[14] As we will see, the two Huntingdonshire examples do slightly predate the Durham ones, but in truth we don't know whether these first implementations of twin pulpits were Herbert's idea or the Ferrars', or came from elsewhere.

What of the two church buildings in Herbert's Wiltshire parish of Fugglestone-with-Bemerton?[15] It is often said that Herbert undertook major repair and refurbishment of the entirety of both these churches, but the claim entirely relies on some vague and ambiguous comments made by Walton, whose primary purpose is to praise Herbert's generosity for not making claims against his

Fig 7: The chancel at Leighton Bromswold church in 2015, looking east. The stalls are largely Victorian; the desks at the west end are made up from original wood. (Trevor Cooper)

predecessor for dilapidations. As Charles points out, Walton is unreliable as to the state of ruination of the rectory; and in general his comments are to be treated with considerable caution. The surviving furniture tells us little: there are the remains of pew ends of the first half of the seventeenth century in Fugglestone church, and a door and window of the same period in Bemerton church, together with a chest made up of seventeenth-century panels, but none of this is evidence of major work, and could have been done at any time in the first few decades of the century. So there is no reason to believe there was a major programme of work during Herbert's brief incumbency.[16] We do know, however, that Herbert arranged for the chancel at Bemerton to be adorned with 'many apt sentences of the scriptures'[17] – this is not surprising, for as rector he was legally responsible for the fabric of the chancel at both his churches. We also know that in Herbert's time at one of his two churches there was no chancel screen, the pulpit hanging needed replacing, the table was lengthways in the chancel and unrailed, and there was singing of psalms at communion: all of which was perfectly normal for the early 1630s, but certainly shows no signs either of a recent refurbishment or of any particularly original or advanced thinking about church arrangement.[18] In particular there is no suggestion that either of the churches were given twin pulpits, either by Herbert donating them, or by the churchwardens, who were legally responsible for providing church furnishings.

Why twin pulpits?

Why twin pulpits? We have one clue from nearly forty years later: Walton has Herbert frequently saying that the twin pulpits at Leighton were of equal height so that 'neither should have a precedency or priority of the other, but that prayer and preaching being equally useful, might agree like Brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation'.[19] Whether or not Herbert said these actual words, they do reflect the general tenor of his thought. In his *Country Parson*, he speaks highly of preaching – the parson 'preacheth constantly; the pulpit is his joy and his throne' – but also emphasises the importance of approaching common prayer with due seriousness: 'when he [the parson] is to read divine services, he composeth himself to all possible reverence, lifting up his heart and hand and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty and unfeigned devotion'. And in his poem 'The Church Porch' he pithily summarises the relationship between public prayers and preaching:

> Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
> Praying's the end of preaching.[20]

This was not a new thought. Lancelot Andrewes, Herbert's old schoolmaster and friend,[21] bishop first of Chichester then of Winchester, had suggested in a sermon at Court in 1618 that 'all preaching is but to this end' that 'we should call on the name of the Lord'.[22]

The context is important.[23] From the 1590s if not before, some churchmen, Andrewes perhaps amongst the earliest, routinely criticised 'puritans' (a term of opprobrium) for focusing too much on preaching at the expense of public prayer. This line of attack on sermon-centred religion was especially common from those churchmen, among them the influential Andrewes, who encouraged formality and ceremonial in worship, often coupled with a high view of the sacraments and those who administered them. Thus in Andrewes's private chapel the lavishly-furnished communion table was prominently placed and railed in, with the lectern placed in its traditional (and prominent) axial position, whilst the pulpit was placed off-axis in the north-east corner.[24] In the 1620s and 1630s critics of those who held such views often labelled them as 'Arminian', thus damning them, probably unfairly, by association with the controversial Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius, who believed, against Calvin, that men and women could play a part in accepting or rejecting God's offer of salvation. Here was a sensitive area. For example, although Arthur Wodenoth was perfectly prepared to describe himself, with a wink to the reader, as a 'superstitious formalist' in his preferred style of public worship, he vigorously denied this particular doctrine of Arminius, saying he would 'soe farr shunn Armenianism as not to attribute the least inclination toward goodness to the utmost endeavour of nature'.[25]

This is an appropriate place to introduce John Cosin, recognised by contemporaries as a leading Arminian, who played a significant role in the religious controversies of the 1620s and 1630s, and was always to be found encouraging ritual and correctness in church services, rooted in a deep sense of historical continuity reaching back to the early Church. Amongst other roles he was made a prebendary of Durham cathedral in 1624, archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire in 1625, rector of the wealthy living of Brancepeth in 1626, and in 1635 became Master of Peterhouse, one of the Cambridge colleges. After exile in France from 1643 or 1644, he returned at the Restoration of the Monarchy and by the end of 1660 had been made bishop of Durham, where, amongst other things, he instituted a vigorous building campaign. Importantly for our purposes, quite early in his career Cosin became a member of a group of like-minded clerics who were patronised by the then Bishop of Durham, Richard Neile, an early Arminian, who, with his colleagues, was

heavily influenced by the thinking of Andrewes. The group is known to history as the Durham House Group, as it congregated at Durham House on the Strand, Neile's London residence. A good number of the group rose to prominent positions.[26] Many, including John Cosin, had close contact with the Ferrars (see appendix 1).

Given his overall views, it is no surprise to find John Cosin attacking what he saw as an over-emphasis on preaching at the expense of the priest's other responsibilities, 'to offer up the prayers and sacrifices of the Church, to administer the Sacraments, to bind and to loose'. And he argued that too much weight on preaching distorted the true purpose of people's coming together to worship, which was 'to do Him [God] open homage in the sight of all men'. In 1630 he complained to his parishioners in Brancepeth, Co. Durham that 'when some men would exalt the [preaching] pulpit, they cannot do it without debasing the [reading] desk; when they would canonize their preachers, they cannot do it without disgracing their readers [of the service]'.[27] And his own energies were directed to matters other than preaching.[28] Incidentally none of this should be taken to suggest that Cosin and other Arminians had identical views on preaching and the role of common prayer; but there was substantial commonality.

All this may seem a trivial spat, a clerical squabble about the relative importance of communal prayer and preaching, but not far under the surface lay some profound theological differences regarding the role of the priest, the means of grace, and the purpose of gathering together on Sunday. And twin pulpits touched on a connected and equally fundamental debate. For the reading desk was used not only for prayers, but also for the public reading of scripture by the minister; so the reading desks at Leighton and Little Gidding may be taking sides in the argument over whether salvation could ordinarily be obtained directly through the reading of the words of the Bible, or whether it was necessary to have a preacher, as a literal reading of the Apostle Paul (Romans 10: 14–17) would suggest. Arnold Hunt has discussed how Arminians tended to cluster around the former view, puritans round the latter.[29] Thus a friend of Cosin, Oliver Naylor, wrote to him in 1624 quoting with concern a puritan sermon claiming that 'there was no ordinarie meanes of salvation . . . but only [by] the hearing of sermons', and asking for Cosin's help in publishing a sermon which had been preached refuting this view.[30] Looking back twenty years, Barnabas Oley says that although Ferrar respected puritans, he would 'bewaile' their mistakes, including their view that 'preaching in the pulpit is absolutely necessary to salvation'.[31]

So these twin pulpits were not neutral design statements, arising from a desire for architectural symmetry: the raised reading desk was deliberately weighing in on one side of a contemporary debate, setting out to underline the value of common prayer, and perhaps to highlight the intrinsic value of the public reading of scripture. It seems likely that the twin pulpits at Leighton Bromswold and Little Gidding would been recognized by contemporaries as deliberately un-puritan, perhaps even anti-puritan. Ferrar was said by Oley to be 'very modest in points of controversie', and Herbert only moderately interested in public dispute ('of a midle temper'), but in these churches they were making a quiet but public statement.[32]

In contrast, in County Durham most if not all of the twin pulpits are associated with an overall conception of church planning which is most certainly anti-puritan. It is not surprising to find that these arrangements are largely associated with the circle surrounding Neile, and in particular John Cosin.

Co. Durham churches of the 1630s

In the county of Durham, which covers more or less the same ground as the Archdeaconry of Durham, there are four churches known to have had twin pulpits introduced in the 1630s: Haughton-le-Skerne, Sedgefield, Elwick and Brancepeth.

These four churches are part of a larger group of churches associated with John Cosin and the Durham Arminian circle in the 1630s, where other liturgical furnishings survive or are recorded which were in many cases distinctive and speak of their particular churchmanship – for example the presence of notably tall font covers, the use of old-fashioned solid bench ends in the nave seating, the introduction of a decorated chancel screen, the employment of individual cathedral-type stalls around the chancel and the positioning of a canopy over the communion table at the east end. All of these deliberately evoke pre-Reformation forms, and together reflect the theological views of the donors, reflecting their attempt to reach back to the liturgical principles of early Christianity. We will touch briefly on some of these, but our focus is on the twin pulpits, looking only at the four churches where they are known to have been installed.[33]

Haughton-le-Skerne, on the fringes of Darlington is the only one of the four where the twin pulpits have survived. Figure 8 shows the interior in the late nineteenth century, before the church was enlarged.[34] As in Huntingdonshire, there is one pulpit each side of the chancel arch.[35] When were they inserted? Our best evidence is a date of 1639 which was recently discovered incised into the woodwork of one of the pews (Fig. 9). This date is not surprising, as these pews have distinctive bench ends, with

poppy heads in imitation of English pre-Reformation work, which are similar (Fig. 10) to two other Durham sets dating from the second half of the 1630s (at Elwick and Brancepeth, both discussed later). The church also has two free-standing stalls which before the 1890 restoration faced east, as return stalls,[36] and these have pilasters similar to work of the later 1630s at Sedgefield. The limited evidence all suggests, then, that the entire church at Haughton-le-Skerne was refurnished in the late 1630s, and if so this would make the pulpits a few years later than those at Little Gidding and Leighton Bromswold.[37]

The minister at this church was one Eleazar Duncan. He was an Arminian, with Neile as his patron, and a friend of Cosin. His brother was Edmund Duncan, who was a close friend of the Ferrars, and supported George Herbert on his death bed. Another link between Eleazar and the Ferrars was Richard Drake, the

Fig. 8: The interior of Haughton-le-Skerne church, Co. Durham, looking east, before the restoration of 1894. The twin pulpits can be seen each side of the chancel arch. (Reproduced by permission of Durham County Record Office: Durham County Record Office D/Ph140/25)

ceremonialist rector of Radwinter in Essex, who was a mutual friend.[38]

Our second Durham church is Sedgefield. On 20 April 1638, it was reported that the carpenter Robert Barker had abandoned operations at Brancepeth church and had 'bene long at Sedgefield, about new seating the church there', which suggests that the nave was being fitted out. At this time the minister was Joseph Naylor, another prebendary of the cathedral, though not a member of Cosin's close circle. In 1634 he had succeeded Robert Blakiston, Cosin's brother-in-law, as rector of Sedgefield, and he remained there until 1667 (with a gap during the Interregnum). In that year his newly-arrived successor, Denis Granville (Cosin's son-in-law) found that Naylor's arrangement provided no seat for his wife in the nave of the church.[39] A commission was arranged to assign the seating in the church – a normal approach when a quarrel was brewing – and on 11 June 1670 the Chancellor of the diocese signed off the new seating allocation in the form of a plan, two more or less identical contemporary copies of which survive (Fig. 11).[40] The most straightforward reading of the evidence is that this 1670 plan shows the late 1630s arrangement of the nave. Slight confirmation is given by a picture now hanging in the

Fig. 9: Incised initials and date of 1639, now on the edge of the bookshelf of one of the nave pews at Haughton-le-Skerne church, Co. Durham. To the left and right of the date are initials, perhaps of the churchwardens responsible, or perhaps the craftsmen. Two nineteenth-century craftsmen responded in 1890 with their own framed inscription, partly visible on the horizontal part of the shelf at the back of the picture. (Trevor Cooper)

Fig. 10: Bench ends from the 1630s at (clockwise from top left): Haughton-le-Skerne, Elwick, Brancepeth, all in Co. Durham, and Great St Mary's, Cambridge. The first three are clearly from the same workshop. All are made of single planks and have poppy heads, making them old-fashioned for their time. (Haughton-le-Skerne, Great St Mary's, Trevor Cooper; Brancepeth, BB67/07818, reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive; Elwick A45/0191 at Historic England Archive © Historic Environment Scotland)

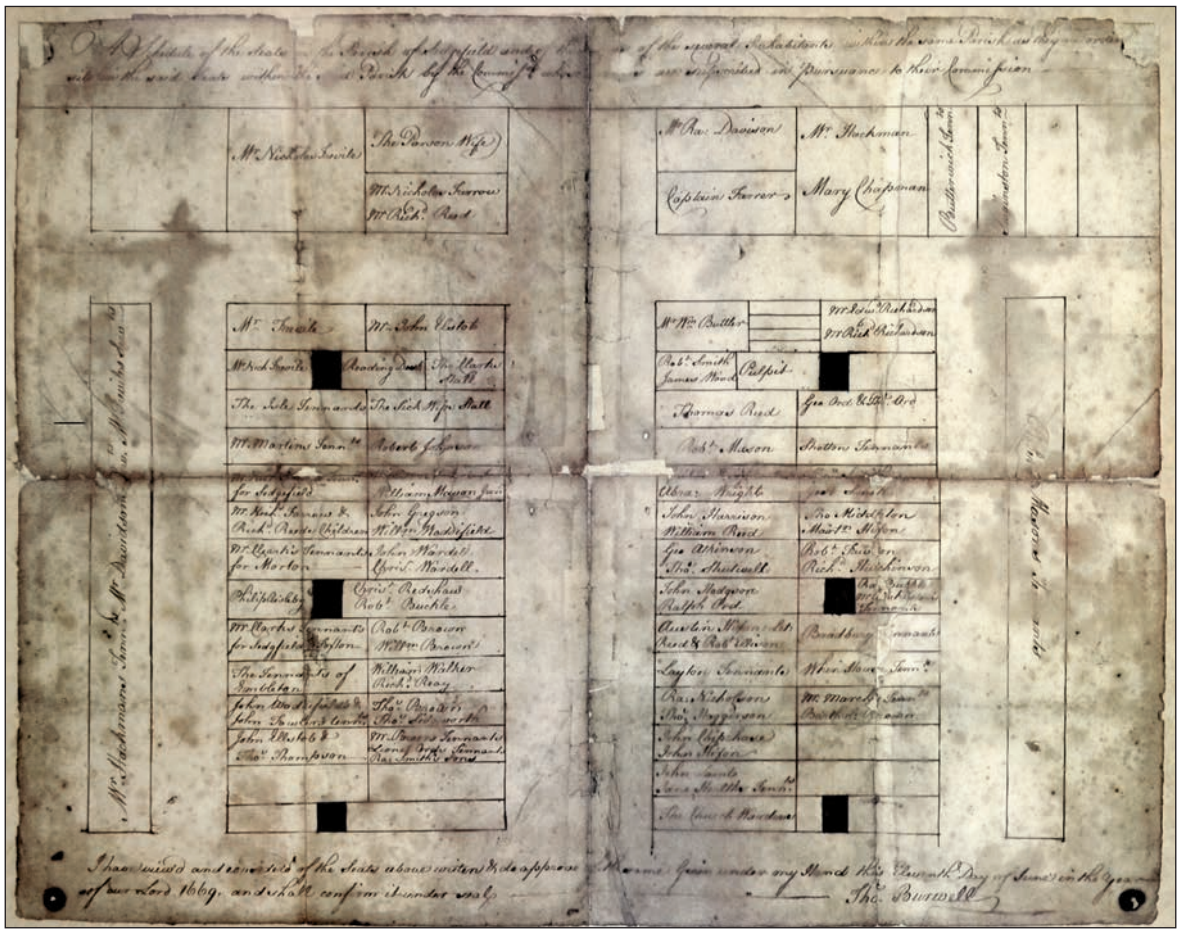


Fig. 11: A plan of the seating in the nave of Sedgefield church, Co. Durham, approved on 11 June 1669. East lies to the top of the plan. Note the twin pulpits on the north and south of the central aisle, against the first pillars west from the top of the plan.

vestry, which from internal evidence dates from about 1832, and which gives a glimpse of the nave pews: they appear to be sitting on the same sort of plinth as the 1630s pews at Brancepeth.

The plan shows that in this much larger church the two pulpits were not at the chancel arch, but each side of the aisle against the first pillar west of the chancel screen, the same arrangement as we will find at Brancepeth. Was the reading desk as tall as the pulpit? The striking similarity of the layout to that at Brancepeth would make it likely. Unfortunately, all the seventeenth-century nave furniture, including the twin pulpits, has been lost from this church, and appears never to have been illustrated, so we cannot be sure.[41]

The church is today notable for an elaborate seventeenth-century chancel screen, together with high quality stalls and panelling in the chancel of the same period (Fig. 12). Care is needed here, as the screen and chancel were much altered and added to in a major but undocumented reconstruction of 1829–30, costing the considerable sum of £600, when the

chancel was 'in a great measure restored to its ancient splendour'. The considerable quantity of new work is difficult to distinguish from the seventeenth-century original,[42] though initial observation suggests that much of the screen work is Victorian, and the 'railway carriage' arrangement of the stalls immediately to the east of the screen is clearly not contemporary. As we will see, the overall effect is not unlike Cosin's work of the 1630s in the chancel at Brancepeth, but we do not know whether or not the chancel at Sedgefield was originally fitted out at the same time as the nave seating in the church, or a little later. In the first part of the eighteenth century Joseph Naylor was said locally to have been responsible for this work;[43] this is possible, though the fact that he is buried in the chancel might later have led to the assumption that he rather than his successor, Granville, was responsible.

Fig. 12: The chancel of Sedgefield church, looking west, in 2013. (Trevor Cooper)

Our third church with twin pulpits is Elwick, where Cosin was Rector from 1624, though the cure was served by a curate from at least 1633. Cosin's writing does not appear in the Register and we do not know if he ever visited.[44] The evidence for twin pulpits is a report in 1794 when it was said that 'The pulpit is placed against the second south column, and the reading desk opposite', a similar arrangement to that at Sedgefield and Brancepeth.[45] New pews are mentioned as being 'in hand' in March 1636,[46] and a few bench ends of this period survive, re-used as choir stalls; as already discussed, they are very similar to those of the 1630s at Haughton-le-Skerne and Brancepeth (Fig. 10). It is likely that the pulpits were put into the church at the same time as the nave was repewed in 1636, though there can be no certainty on the matter (it is not impossible that the twin pulpits were introduced by Denis Granville, who was rector here from 1664 for a few years). The pulpits had gone by the 1820s, as they are not shown in the relevant 'Thorpe' plan of that date.

Our fourth and final Durham church known to have had twin pulpits in the 1630s is Brancepeth. John Cosin was rector here from 1626 and during the 1630s the church was entirely refurbished with sumptuous and impressive woodwork, the nave being fitted out in 1638–9; work on the tower and chancel was probably carried out a few years previously (see appendix 2 for evidence). As mentioned earlier, some at least of the carpentry work at Sedgefield was done by the same craftsmen as worked at Brancepeth: the woodworkers of Brancepeth were known for the quality of their work. The furniture at Brancepeth was rearranged and somewhat simplified in 1864 by Anthony Salvin but much of the seventeenth-century furnishing survived until all was destroyed in a disastrous fire in 1998 (Fig. 13).

A pew plan was made in 1639 (Fig. 14), and an eighteenth-century copy of this survived until the fire. The plan shows twin pulpits, one each side of the central alley, the same positioning as at Sedgefield. This arrangement was lost at the Victorian restoration, and the reading pulpit done away with, but a number of careful drawings were made before the restoration by Salvin and his wife Anne. They bring alive the dominant role played by the twin pulpits (Fig. 15).

These were just one part of a magnificent nave ensemble, which included carved bench ends with poppy heads, a spire-like font cover, and possibly a clock (its date is not known with certainty). As Adrian Green has pointed out, Cosin had clear ideas about what he wanted from building and furnishing schemes, and it seems he was fond of a retro poppy-headed style of bench end for the naves of his churches, as he introduced similar ones at Elwick and also at Great St Mary's, Cambridge where as Vice-

Fig. 13a: Brancepeth church, Co. Durham, before the fire of 1998: the pulpit. (BB67/07807, reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive)

Fig. 13b: Brancepeth church before the fire of 1998: the screen. (BB67/07814, reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive)

Chancellor he was responsible for re-ordering the church in 1639 (in the process provoking opposition from the parish); many of these bench ends remain in the south gallery.[47] Although clearly not by the same hand as the Durham examples, the Cambridge bench ends show the same old-fashioned solid construction and poppy heads (Fig. 10).

Cosin's chancel screen at Brancepeth was a bravura Gothic confection. His screen at Great St Mary's, Cambridge, of which we have no illustration, must have been similar, as it was said to be surmounted by 'a great hollowe pile of wainscot cast into the forme of a pyramis [pyramid] and capacious enough for the receiving of an image', and was lampooned by puritans as a 'triple crown' – that is, a pope's crown.[48] To modern eyes – and perhaps also to the seventeenth-century farmer – Brancepeth screen gave the impression of being a protective gateway to an important and beautiful place. And indeed, when one went through the screen, one found a splendid chancel (Fig. 16). There were miserere stalls for the communicants and a wooden communion table with central as well as end supports – unusual, and surely a deliberate reference to the stone altar with similar supports that Dean Richard Hunt had put into Durham cathedral in 1620, still in place today under the main altar. The carved woodwork each side of the window, removed during the Victorian restoration, is reminiscent of the medieval Neville screen in the cathedral, whilst the chancel screen used the chevron motif from the cathedral's pillars.[49] The ceiling was carved and decorated. And there were two plaques on the east wall, both from the epistle to the Hebrews. One, 'Let us draw near with a true heart', is from the reading for Good Friday, whilst the other, 'We have an altar', signals Cosin's understanding of the Eucharist.

It was presumably in this very chancel that Sir William Webb, a relation of Laud's, received communion in July 1633 which he described as 'most reverently here administered' by Dr Cosin, an experience which played a part in Sir William's decision to return to the Church of England from Roman Catholicism. Interestingly, the Tuesday when he attended communion was not a feast day.[50] This combination of rich chancel screen and cathedral-like stalls in the chancel is found elsewhere in churches associated with John Cosin and his circle, both before the Civil War and after his return as bishop.

Post-Restoration twin pulpits

When Cosin was appointed Bishop of Durham after the Restoration, he introduced twin pulpits into his rebuilt private chapel at Bishop Auckland. These twin pulpits are, I believe, unique amongst private chapels – or college chapels, or cathedral

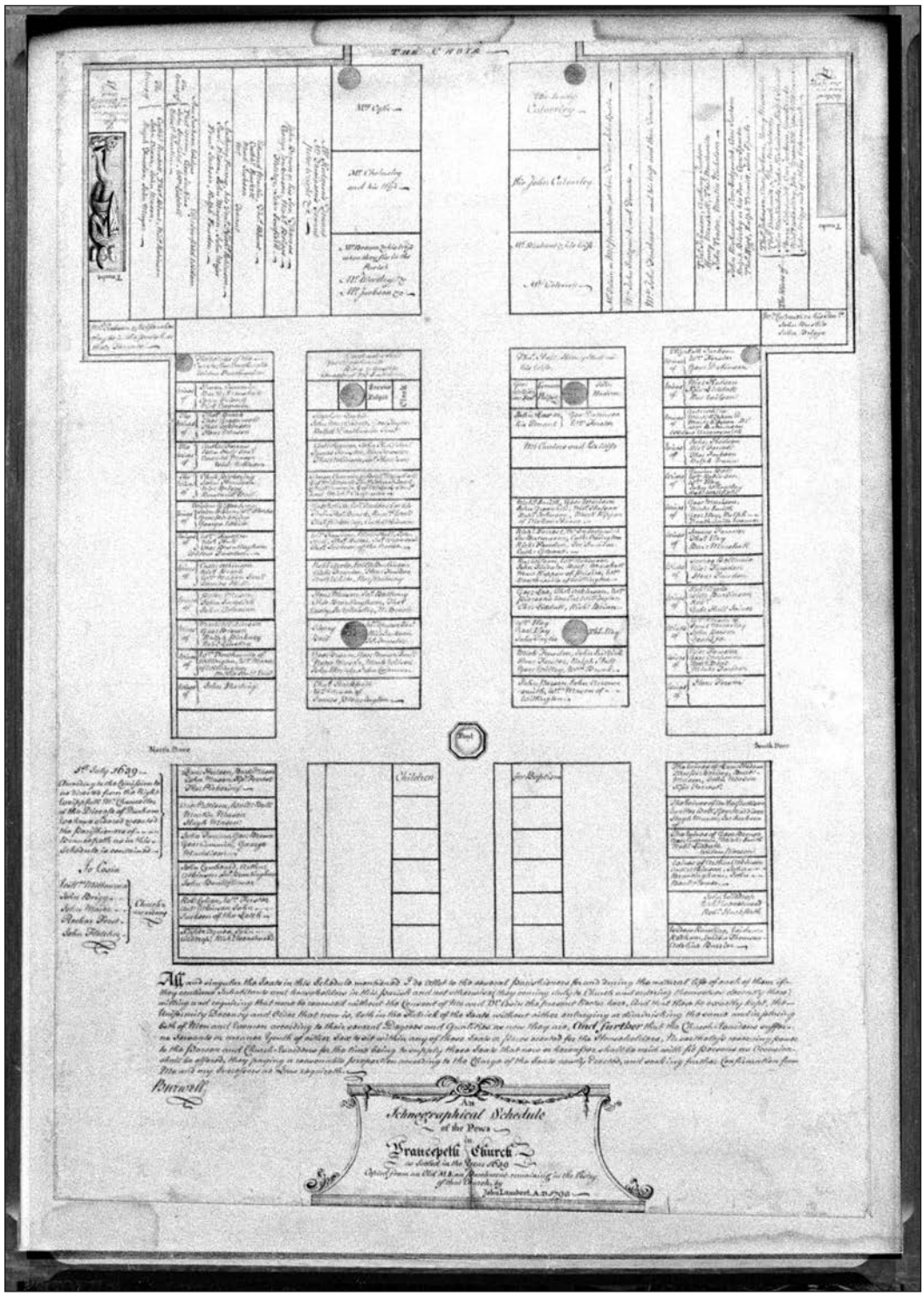


Fig. 14: A plan of the seating in Brancepeth church as at 1 July 1639. East lies to the top of the plan. The original plan has been lost, and the eighteenth-century copy shown here was itself lost in the fire of 1998. The twin pulpits are on the north and south of the central aisle, against the middle pair of pillars. (P. Ryder, reproduced by permission; held by Historic England Archive, MF001897/34)

Fig. 15: 'The middle aisle of Brancepeth church looking east'. This shows the church before restoration, when both pulpits were in place. Drawing, probably of 1825 and probably by Anne Nesfield, future wife of Anthony Salvin, the architect who restored the church in 1864. (Durham University Library Add. MS. 1508 fol. 7, reproduced by permission)

Fig. 16: 'Brancepeth Church the chancel looking east 1836', signed by Anthony Salvin. (Watercolour, private collection)

quires – of the period, and would surely have been noticed by guests attending services (Fig. 17).[51]

As one would expect with Cosin, the chapel at Bishop Auckland – a very large building – was richly decorated. The altar had a frontal made of cloth of gold-and-silver, and on it stood communion plate commissioned from the same craftsman who made some of the King's plate at St James's Palace. This survives, as does an exceptionally large bible and prayer book bound in purple velvet with decorated silver corner pieces from the same silversmith. Above the altar was a tapestry of the Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon, and each side of the east end was a perspective picture of a church. In large gold letters over the altar were the words 'Laudate Deum in decore sancto', that is, 'Praise God in the beauty of holiness', the Arminian's rallying cry. Over the side friezes were 'Santa sanctis' ('Holy of holies'), and 'Sursum corda' ('Lift up your hearts') (Fig. 18). Cosin's stall had a canopy of red and blue silk, the pulpits were similarly clothed, and the stalls of the various officiants and dignitaries were provided with a substantial collection of coloured cushions and covers, all of silk or fine velvet. Armorial glass acknowledged those country gentry who had donated to the cost of the windows, which were

generally glazed in a blue and white pattern. The walls were also elaborately painted and gilded, matching the soft furnishings and the Queen of Sheba tapestry. On the organ case were the figures of King David and Aaron, and above the organ hung a painting of angels playing musical instruments. And there were enough surplices for a choir of up to eight male voices and a couple of boys, though we do not know how often a choir was present.[52] The rich interior must have been reminiscent of Peterhouse chapel, the furnishing of which Cosin had overseen at great expense when he was Master nearly thirty years previously, though the imagery at Bishop Auckland was less overtly eucharistic than it had been at Peterhouse.[53]

At Auckland, Cosin sat at the west end, facing the altar down the length of chapel, and looking over the top of the large black floor slab placed on the central axis to mark the vault set aside for his burial. A litany desk was, as would be expected, placed on a central alignment, facing east towards the altar, and the twin pulpits were placed against pillars symmetrically either side of the central axis, directly overlooking the future burial place. They are now in their original position, having spent a period further east.[54]

Fig. 17: John Cosin's private chapel at his palace at Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, looking west, showing the twin pulpits either side of his tomb, and further west the screen to the ante-chapel, with the bishop's stall to the south of the entrance. The choir stalls are nineteenth century. (AA61/17, reproduced by permission of Historic England Archive)

Fig. 18 (top): A visualisation of the east end of the chapel of Bishop Auckland castle in Cosin's time. See text for discussion of the various items shown. (Courtesy of The Auckland Project. © The Auckland Project / Christianity & Culture, University of York)

Fig. 19 (bottom): The reading desk in the chapel at Bishop Auckland in 2011. The swag at the bottom of the pulpit bears the crossed scythe blades of bishop William Van Mildert, a reminder that the chapel was altered and restored by him in the early nineteenth century. (Trevor Cooper)

The pulpits have mottoes in Latin: 'assiduous in prayer' for the reading desk (Fig. 19); and 'sound in doctrine' for the preaching pulpit, which, unlike many other contemporary inscriptions on pulpits, emphasises teaching rather than proclamation.

At the consecration service in 1665 the preacher was George Davenport, Cosin's domestic chaplain and closely involved in forwarding Cosin's work in the diocese, including his building campaigns. Davenport argued that 'the beauty of this chapell' should persuade his listeners, both clergy and local gentry, to 'repair and beautify their own churches and chancells'. His own church of Houghton-le-Spring showed the way, where that same year the parishioners paid for new nave seating and a litany desk, and twin pulpits were introduced, presumably also at their expense. Davenport provided an organ. The following year he paid for the fitting out of the chancel with stalls, wainscoted walls and a chancel screen, and four years later (1670) a fine altar cloth was unveiled at Easter. None of these furnishings or fittings survive. In August 1666 Cosin inspected the chancel, and, in Davenport's words, 'liked all the work there & commends the Chancell above all the chancells in the countrey: but I excepted Branspeth'. Davenport was, of course, aiming to please the septuagenarian Cosin by holding up the work of his earlier years as a model for others; this is, in fact, the only known contemporary comment on Brancepeth's chancel.[55]

Several other chancels were beautified with screen and stalls during Cosin's episcopate and in the years immediately after. A screen and stalls survive at Egglescliffe, put in by the incumbent, Isaac Basire, between 1662 and 1676; Stanhope chancel was refurbished in 1665; whilst in 1682 the chancels at both Billingham and Kirk Merrington were beautified by the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral, and some of this work survives. As we have seen, the chancel stalls at Sedgefield may date from this period. Boldon is probably another example, as a chance mention by Davenport tells us that his great friend Richard Wrench, the incumbent there, 'hath been at great cost' upon the chancel of his church; but nothing else is known of this and there is nothing to be seen today.[56] This sort of work tends to have been funded by incumbents or well-off donors – raising unanswered questions about the views of others in the parish – so will not normally appear in churchwardens' accounts, even when they survive. In general, documentary evidence is in short supply. Thus in none of these cases do we know whether or not twin pulpits were introduced into the nave whilst the chancel was being refurbished.

However despite the general lack of documentary evidence and the loss of furnishings over the years, we do know that some other

Fig. 20: Decorative panelling at Aycliffe church, Co. Durham. a.(top): on the pulpit; b. (middle): on the reredos; c. (bottom): on the organ. Both b. and c. came from the reading desk, taken down in the nineteenth century. (Trevor Cooper)

churches in Co. Durham were given twin pulpits in the seventeenth century. At Aycliffe church a 'square, panelled, and box-like' Jacobean pulpit and reading desk survived to the north and south of the arch until 1881, a plan of that date suggesting they were of the same size; some of the seventeenth-century panelling from the reading desk survives in the reredos and organ case (Fig. 20); its date of creation is not known.[57] The churches at both Cockfield and Elton are shown as having twin pulpits in the 'Thorpe plans' of the mid 1820s and these may well represent the

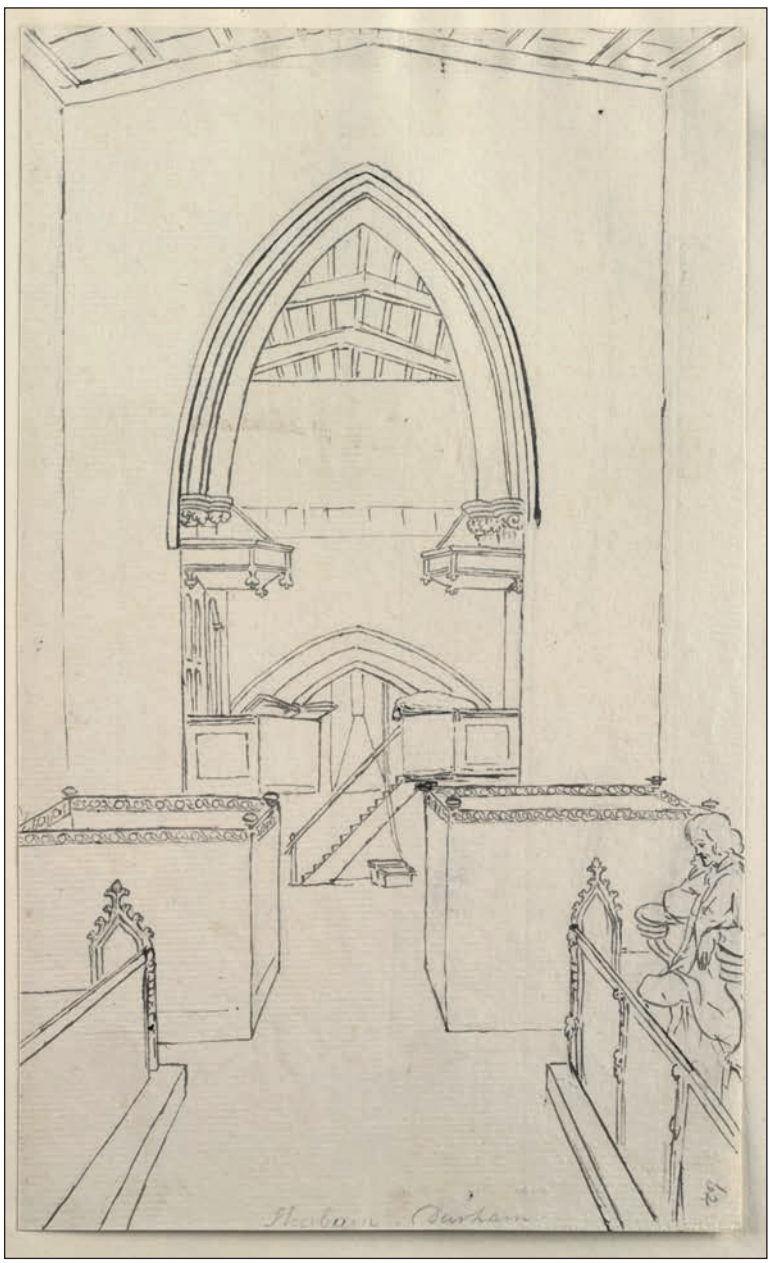
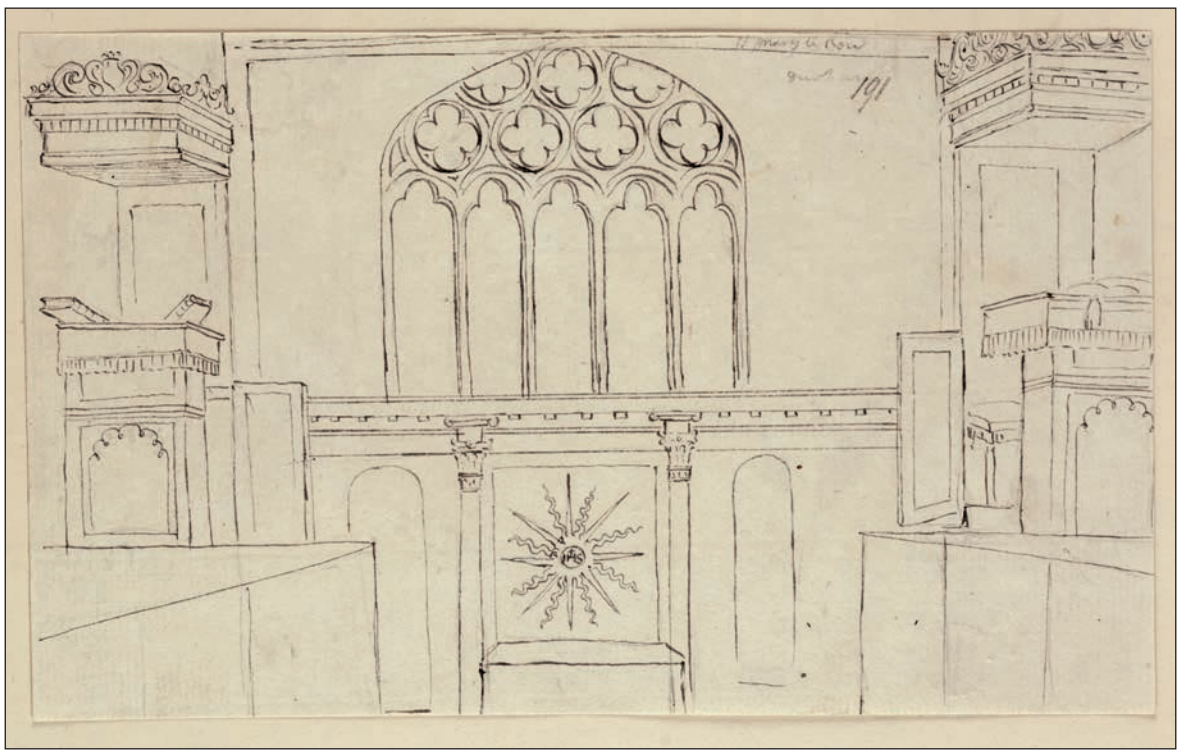


Fig. 21: A drawing of the interior of Sherburn Hospital chapel, Co. Durham, done by S. H. Grimm in 1773. The viewpoint is from inside the chancel, looking west through the chancel arch. The twin pulpits either side of the chancel arch can be seen. (© The British Library Board: BL Additional MS 15538, fol. 62)

seventeenth-century arrangement, especially at Cockfield where the pulpit was described in 1834 as 'ornamented with antique carving'.[58] The church of St Mary the Less in Durham had twin pulpits, now lost; the seventeenth-century woodwork adorning the chancel came from elsewhere, so gives no clue to the date that the pulpits were installed.[59] The chapel at Sherburn Hospital, not far from the city of Durham, is another example. The legal status of this building was anomalous, but it effectively acted as parish church for those in the vicinity,[60] and at an unknown date it was given twin pulpits, captured in a drawing by Grimm in 1773 (Fig. 21). They are no longer there; probably they perished in the fire of 1866.

The final definite example is the small church of St Mary-le-Bow in the city of Durham. The rebuilding of this ruined church was financed by a campaign organised by George Davenport, but although work on the fabric was more or less complete by 1676, funds then ran out, and the new building did not open until 1686, nearly ten years after his death. The pulpits are shown in a pew plan contemporary with the opening, and there is also a late eighteenth-century drawing of them by Grimm (Fig. 22). It was

Fig. 22: A drawing of the interior of Durham, St Mary-le-Bow looking east, done by S. H. Grimm in 1773. There are pulpits either side of the entrance to the chancel, with a sunburst reredos against the east wall. (© The British Library Board: BL Additional MS 15538, fol. 191)



not until 1707 that, still in the Cosin tradition, the church received a screen. The twin pulpits have since been removed, and the current chancel furniture is clearly not in-situ, and may not have been designed for the building.[61]

Reflections

Members of the Durham House group were at the forefront of liturgical experiment from the 1620s onwards, and there was probably much informal debate within this group about the best way to furnish a church. The appearance of twin pulpits in the 1630s in both Huntingdonshire and County Durham strongly suggests that this debate included people outside Neile's immediate circle, such as George Herbert and the Ferrars. Here we have another example of the 'processes of influence' and 'networking' which Margaret Aston began to explore for the revival of stained glass in the period.[62]

The position of the reading desk was certainly a live question. As Archbishop of York in the 1630s Richard Neile insisted, in some smaller churches at least, that the minister's reading desk be moved into the chancel, occupying the same position as in pre-Reformation England – an arrangement that was not to become standard again in the Church of England until the changes of the mid nineteenth century. Interestingly, although Cosin argued for the antiquity of this position, he recognised the right of the Ordinary (normally the bishop) to determine where prayers should be read, and does not appear to have suggested a return to the east-of-screen position when the Prayer Book was revised in 1662. As bishop first of Norwich, then of Ely, the leading Arminian Matthew Wren insisted in the 1630s that the reading desk should be close to the chancel and face south, though in the city of Cambridge he followed Neile's line. In Buckinghamshire Laud's agent, Sir John Lambe, sometimes moved pulpit and reading desk around to ensure tidiness and a good view of the altar, and on occasion required a two-decker pulpit.[63] But, as far as is known, of the Durham House group, only John Cosin and his circle introduced twin pulpits, so this was clearly a deliberate and carefully considered move rather than the following of a general party line. This should not be a surprise: in liturgical and theological matters the views of the Durham House group and those of similar viewpoint were neither homogenous nor static;[64] twin pulpits were certainly not 'part of a conscious design' for the future of the Church of England, as has been mooted for the re-introduction of stained glass during this period.[65] Whether a common Arminian position for the reading desk would have emerged we will never know: the Civil War changed everything.

In the years immediately following the Restoration twin pulpits never became popular, and as far as is currently known they were limited to Co. Durham. The reasons are probably prosaic: the arrangement was both unusual and more expensive than the normal two- or three-decker pulpit, and, in the absence of any firm instructions to the contrary or a shift in fashion, most churchwardens copied everyone else and continued to provide a high pulpit and low reading desk, with this arrangement remaining the norm for more than a hundred years. In contrast, the railed east-end altar, also an Arminian innovation, was eventually rolled out across the country: but that had episcopal backing.[66] Whatever their theoretical imperative, in practice twin pulpits disappeared from view, only occasionally re-appearing over the following centuries on the initiative of those looking for something a little different. The 1630s twin pulpits proved a dead end: but a fascinating and revealing one.

APPENDIX 1: Contacts between the Durham House Group and the Ferrars

A number of senior members of the Durham House Group are known to have been friendly with the Ferrars. They include bishop Augustine Lindsell (d.1634) who was Nicholas Ferrar's tutor and remained his friend; bishop Francis White (d.1638), who was a table guest at the Ferrars' house in London when John and Nicholas were children, and who remained in contact with them; and bishop Matthew Wren (d. 1667), who although not strictly a member of the Durham House group moved in the same circles, and one of whose protégés was Robert Mapletoft who was a close relative of the Ferrars by marriage, was in frequent contact with the family and preached at Nicholas Ferrar's funeral.[67]

And there were good channels of communication between John Cosin and the Ferrars, not least Richard Crashaw who was a Fellow at Peterhouse (where Cosin was Master) and tutor to the nephew of Nicholas and John Ferrar, and a regular visitor to them at Little Gidding. It is interesting that John Cosin had eleven Little Gidding bindings in his library, which were recognised by contemporaries as being out of the ordinary, though not too much should be read into this as we know nothing of how he acquired them.[68]

The Ferrars had some contact with Archbishop William Laud. He ordained Nicholas Ferrar to the diaconate in 1626, and at some stage the Ferrars presented one of their hand-made Old Testament 'harmonies' to him. Laud was present when John Ferrar and his son Nicholas presented two books to the King in 1640.[69]

APPENDIX 2: The refurbishment of Brancepeth church

John Hoffman presented in his thesis much of the documentary evidence for the very important and much-discussed interior of Brancepeth, and later published it in his 1978–9 article.[70] The evidence he cited includes the Cathedral granting trees to Cosin in 1628 to repair the choir of the church; the grant of bell metal in 1631 with bells being cast in 1632; a contract of 1634 to create a monument in the chancel and two carved 'escutcheons' (discussed in the text above); further work during May to July 1635 which included the 'colouring of the two tables' (perhaps commandment boards) in 1635; the porch and new church door being contracted for in 1635 using 'what lead he [the contractor] can save from the top of the steeple' and stone from the parsonage yard (Cosin also carried out work on the parsonage); and on 20 April 1638 the curate at Brancepeth hoping that 'sieling the roofe of the middle alley in the church' can be completed by summer (which would appear to refer to the nave of this aisled church). At an unknown date, which Hoffman thought might be between 1634–7, it was said that 'the steeple's wood and stone were decayed', and this gives context for the work on the tower.

A pew plan is dated 1 July 1639 and survived until the fire in an eighteenth-century copy (see text). At that date the seats were recent: 'they [i.e. the new users of the pews] paying in reasonable proportion according to the charges of *the Seats newly erected*' (my italics).

To this may be added two further piece of evidence: first, Cosin's preaching of sermons at Brancepeth church in June 1630, July 1632 and unspecified dates in 1633. Secondly that in July 1633 Sir William Webb had communion at Brancepeth (see text above).[71]

The Brancepeth woodworkers were famous for the quality of their work, and in 1633 five joiners and others from Newcastle St Nicholas visited Brancepeth, presumably to discuss matters of mutual interest, and no doubt to inspect the work there. Was Brancepeth perhaps a deliberate showpiece? (The extensive research of Martin Roberts into the seventeenth-century craftsmen of Co. Durham adds important technical and design context not only to the work at Brancepeth but also to the other Durham churches discussed in this article.)[72]

Davenport mentions Cosin visiting Brancepeth on just one occasion, in December 1662, some sixteen months after his enthronement as bishop but has no mention of building works at Brancepeth in the 1660s. In 1732 Loveday recorded the tradition that 'Bp. Cosin was Rector here, & improv'd it much'. As at Sedgefield, Loveday describes the screen as 'tabernacle-work', the earliest known description of either screen.[73]

Peter Ryder has suggested that the clerestory at Brancepeth was built by Cosin, as the clerestory used early medieval cross slabs in its construction; but this shows only that the clerestory was built some time after these early cross slabs were made, and not that it was the work of Cosin.[74]

Cosin's work at Brancepeth has recently been discussed by Adrian Green and Edward Swift, though some of Swift's suggestions may go beyond the evidence. The Brancepeth Archive & History Group, based in Brancepeth, have gathered an important collection of material relating to the church, and this, together with the work of Martin Roberts referred to above, should be consulted by anyone pursuing research on the building.[75]

Acknowledgements and contacts

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For lively discussion and generous sharing of information about various aspects of Co. Durham and the work of John Cosin I am especially grateful to Adrian Green, Martin Roberts and Peter Storey. Martin Roberts is currently revising the 'Pevsner' for Co. Durham, and may be contacted at martin.fleece@gmail.com. Peter Storey is a member of the Brancepeth Archive & History Group, which may be contacted via the relevant page at www.brancepethcommunityassociation.btck.co.uk/.

Notes

1 'The interior planning of the English parish church 1559–*c.*1640', in Paul Barnwell and Trevor Cooper (eds.), *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 1550–1689*, Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment (Donington, forthcoming).

2 Joyce Ransome, *The Web of Friendship: Nicholas Ferrar and Little Gidding* (Cambridge, 2011).

3 Trevor Cooper, '"Wise as serpents": The form and setting of public worship at Little Gidding in the 1630s', in Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern England*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Farnham, 2013), 197–220; Lynette Muir and John White (eds.), *Materials for the Life of Nicholas Ferrar: A Reconstruction of John Ferrar's Account of His Brother's Life Based on All the Surviving Copies* (Leeds (The Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society), 1996), 132; Bernard Blackstone, *The Ferrar Papers* (Cambridge, 1938), 34.

4 The interior is briefly discussed in my 'Wise as serpents', 211–16 (published before my discovery of the 1798 Carter material discussed later in this paper). See also RCHME, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Huntingdonshire* (HMSO, 1926), 177–80 and Charles O'Brien and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough* (London, 2014), 548–50. The latter takes account of Ewan Christian's notes and plan of 1868, to which I alerted the editor in 2010.

5 Amy Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (Cornell University Press, 1977), 121–31, 135, 151–53, 174–75, 181; H. B. Maling, 'Leighton Bromswold, the Church and Lordship', *Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 2 (1908), 205–20; Charles Smyth, 'Little Gidding and Leighton Bromswold', *Church Quarterly Review*, 165 (September 1964), 290–305; Arnold Taylor, 'The seventeenth-century church towers of Battersea (1639), Staines (1631), Crondall (1659) and Leighton Bromswold (?*c.*1640)', *Architectural History*, 27 (*Design and Practice in British Architecture: Studies in Architectural History Presented to Howard Colvin*, 1984), 281–96; Muir and White, *Materials*, 92; Ransome, *The Web of Friendship*, 106–07, 113–14.
6 Taylor, 'Seventeenth-century church towers', 288.
7 The Ferrar Papers (at Magdalene College, Cambridge) FP 846 and FP 862, the latter printed in Blackstone, *Ferrar Papers*, 275–76; Taylor, 'Seventeenth-century church towers', 288–90, taking 'ruff draught' to be a financial estimate.
8 I am grateful to Hugh Harrison for his close analysis of the woodworking techniques used at the two churches.
9 Izaak Walton, *The Lives of Dr. John Donne; Sir Henry Wotton; Richard Hooker; George Herbert; and Dr. R. Sanderson. With Notes and the Life of the Author*, ed. T. Zouch, 2nd edn (York, 1807), 305–6 as referenced (to the first Zouch edition) in Maling, 'Leighton Bromswold', 210. The slightly taller seats at the front are Victorian.
10 For Christian's restoration, see Church of England Record Centre ECE/7/1/39324/1 & 4.
11 Cooper, 'Wise as serpents', 214–16; Cooper, 'Interior arrangement'; Walton, *Lives*, ed. Zouch, (1807*)*, 305–06.
12 Cooper, 'Interior arrangement'.
13 Walton, *Lives*, ed. Zouch, (1807*)*, 305–6.
14 Charles, *Life*, 122–27, 201–5; Izaak Walton, *The Life of Mr. George Herbert…* (London, 1670), 48; Blackstone, *Ferrar Papers*, 77.
15 For George Herbert's church building see: Clifford Davidson, 'George Herbert and the architecture of Anglican worship' in his *Selected Studies in Drama and Renaissance Literature* (New York, 2006), 220–44; Paul Dyck, 'Locating the Word: the textual church and George Herbert's *Temple*', in Daniel W. Doerksen and Christopher Hodgkins (eds.), *Centred on the Word: Literature, Scripture and the Tudor-Stuart Middle Way* (University of Delaware Press, 2004), 224–44; Christopher Hodgkins, 'The Church Legible: George Herbert and the externals of worship', *The Journal of Religion*, 71 no. 2 (1991), 217–41; and Ceri Sullivan, 'George Herbert's building works', *Essays in Criticism*, 66 (2) (2016), 168–97.
16 Walton, *George Herbert*, 66, 68, 69; Charles, *Life*, 135, 150, 153.
17 John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark, vol. 1 (A–H) (Oxford, 1898), 310; George Herbert, *George Herbert: The Complete English Works*, ed. Ann Pasternak Slater, (London, 1995), 323.
18 Charles, *Life*, 228; John Chandler, 'The country parson's flock: George Herbert's Wiltshire parish', in Christopher Hodgkins (ed.), *George Herbert's Pastoral?: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton* (University of Delaware Press, 2010), 165; John Daniell, *The Life of George Herbert of Bemerton*, 2nd edition (1902), 332–23 (see also 193–95); 'Fugglestone St Peter', in Elizabeth Crittall (ed.), *A History of the County of Wiltshire*, vol. 6 (London, 1962), pp. 37–50.
19 Walton, *George Herbert*, 48.
20 Stanza 69 in e.g. *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson, (Oxford, 1941), 23.
21 Charles, *Life*, 49–54, 100, 210; George Herbert, *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of George Herbert*, ed. Alexander Grosart, The Fuller Worthies' Library (London, privately printed, 1874), vol. 3, 466–72.
22 Lancelot Andrewes, *Works*, eds. J. P. Wilson and J. Bliss, (Oxford, 1841), vol. 3, 318, cited in Peter Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and avant-garde conformity at the Court of James I', in Linda Levy Peck (ed.), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (CUP, 1991), 113–33, 126.
23 This has been much discussed. See e.g. Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor* (Oxford, 1990), 231–34, 241; Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590–1640* (CUP, 2010), 22–55; Peter Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes', 115–19, 124–30; Peter McCullough, '"Avant-garde conformity" in the 1590s', in

Anthony Milton (ed.), *The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume I: Reformation and Identity, c.1520–1662* (OUP, 2017), 380–94, passim.

24 Peter McCullough, 'Absent presence: Lancelot Andrewes and 1662', in Stephen Platten and Christopher Woods (eds.), *Comfortable Words: Polity and Piety and the Book of Common Prayer* (2012), 49–68, 56–68. The corner position may have been common for college chapels (James Jago, 'The Dissemination and Reassessment of Private Religious Space in Early Modern England', (doctoral thesis, University of York, 2012), 18).

25 Arthur Wodenoth, '1645, Expressions of Mr. Arthur Wodenoth', in *The Camden Miscellany X,* ed. Harold Spencer Scott, (Camden Society ser. 3, vol. 4, Royal Historical Society 1902) 118–28, 125–26.

26 Anthony Milton, 'Cosin, John (1595–1672)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (OUP, 2004) (hereafter *ODNB*); Adrian Green, *Building for England: John Cosin's Architecture in Renaissance Durham and Cambridge* (Durham University Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 2016); Andrew Foster, 'Durham House Group', *ODNB.* For the impact of the group on church furnishings, Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford, 2007), passim.

27 John Cosin, *Works*, eds. J. Sansom and J. Barrow, (Oxford, 1843–55), vol. 1, 95ff, 110, 162, 182.

28 I owe this point to Mark Kirby.

29 Hunt, *The Art of Hearing*, 22–55.

30 John Cosin, *Correspondence*, ed. George Ornsby, (1869 & 1872), vol. 1, 19–20. The refutation was not published until 1633 (John Downe, 'Concerning the Force and Efficacy of Reading', in his *Certaine Treatises* (Oxford,1633), 40).

31 George Herbert, *A Priest to the Temple, or, the Countrey Parson His Character, and Rule of Holy Life*, ed. Barnabas Oley, (London, 1652), preface (unpaginated).

32 ibid.

33 For the literature on so-called 'Cosin furniture' in Co. Durham churches, see the references in chapter 2 of Green, *Building for England.* The current 'Pevsner' has a brief discussion of this furniture (Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, 2nd edition (London, 2002), henceforth *Pevsner II*, 31–34) though some of the dates, carried over from the first edition (Nikolaus Pevsner, London, 1953, henceforth *Pevsner I*) are adrift. I have checked Pevsner's working notes, held by Historic England, to ensure that no dating evidence has been overlooked. In addition to the errors at Brancepeth, Billingham, Elwick and Haughton-le-Skerne which are noted below, *Pevsner I* gives the date of 1663 rather than the correct 1665 for the chancel stall ends at Stanhope (Durham County Record Office (henceforward DRO) St 1/3 (registers), 8–9; early copy at DRO EP/ST 15/59).

34 Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown, *Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present* (2011), 440–41.

35 Against *Pevsner I*, the balustres were almost certainly put in place at the Victorian restoration of 1890 (Durham County Record Office (DRO EP/HaS/23 and EP/HaS 276).

36 For original position, see Durham Cathedral Library (henceforward DCL) Add Ms 234 p.19, and the survey of 1890 at Durham University Library (henceforth DUL) DDR/EJ/FAC/3/318 or DRO EP/HaS/24.

37 *Pevsner I* misleadingly associates the woodwork with the church rate raised in 1662, but this is for reparation (common after the Commonwealth) and has no mention of pews (DRO EP/HaS 12 p.21).

38 Jason McElligott, 'Duncon, Eleazar ' (note spelling), *ODNB.* See also Michael Tillbrook, 'Aspects of the Government and Society of County Durham, 1558 – 1652' (doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool, 1981), passim, esp. 537, 543, 544, 552–4, 564, 582; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c.1590–1640* (Oxford, 1987), 54, 227; John Walter, '"Affronts and insolencies": the voices of Radwinter and popular opposition to Laudianism', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), 35–60, 51; Ferrar Papers at Magdalene: FP 1126, FP 1223, FP 1254, FP 1260 (Drake's letters to the Ferrars).

46 'Correction book', DUL DCD/D/SJB/5, fol. 16r, referenced in John Hoffman,

'John Cosin, 1595–1672: Bishop of Durham and Champion of the Caroline Church' (doctoral thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), 59; Hoffman says that Cosin made a gift of plate and bench ends in 1662, but no evidence is put forward for the bench ends. The date of 1665 for the surviving bench ends given in *Pevsner I* has no documentary supporting evidence and should be ignored.

47 Trevor Cooper, ed., *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia During the English Civil War* (Woodbridge, 2001), 198; Green, *Building for England*, e.g. 26, 84; Adrian Green, 'The Power and the Glory: John Cosin and architectural interchange between Durham and Cambridge', in Scott Mandelbrote (ed.), *Music, Politics and Religion in Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge: The Peterhouse Partbooks in Context* (Woodbridge, forthcoming) (I am grateful to Dr Green for giving me sight of this paper before publication); Cosin, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 356–382.

48 Cooper, *William Dowsing*, 199.

49 A point I owe to Adrian Green.

50 State Papers: Domestic: Charles I. ccxliii.33, quoted in Cosin, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 141; Laud refers to the event in his *The History of the Troubles and Trial of Archbishop Laud*, reprinted in his *Works*, vol. 4, ed. James Bliss, (Oxford, 1854), 60.

51 Cooper, 'Wise as Serpents', 211; Jago, 'Private Religious Space', passim; Annabel Ricketts, *The English Country House Chapel: Building a Protestant Tradition* (Reading, 2007), chapters 4 and 5, passim.

52 Green, *Building for England*, 98–102 and his 'Auckland and Durham Castles in John Cosin's time', in David Rollason (ed.), *Princes of the Church*, The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 39 (London, 2017); James Raine, *A Brief Historical Account of the Episcopal Castle, or Palace, of Auckland* (Durham,1852), 87, 90–91 the latter being a translation of Cosin, *Correspondence*, 169–70; Charles Oman, *English Church Plate 597–1830* (OUP, 1957), 183, 184–86, 208, 241, plates 84a, 112b, 127; George Davenport, *The Letters of George Davenport 1651–1677*, ed. Brenda Pask and Margaret Harvey, Surtees Society (215, 2011), 103, 108–09; ex info, Christopher Ferguson. There were kneeling cushions each end of the communion table, as in Bishop Andewes's influential chapel (McCullough, 'Absent Presence', 59–60).

53 Cooper, *William Dowsing*, 155–61; Peter Yorke, 'Iconoclasm, Ecclesiology and "The Beauty of Holiness": Concepts of Sacrilege and "the Peril of Idolatry" in Early Modern England, circa 1590–1642', (doctoral thesis, University of Kent, 1997), 184–93. See also Mandelbrote, *Music, Politics and Religion,* passim.

54 Raine, *Auckland*, 88–9 (for original position), 90 and plate opposite p.92 for their later position.

55 James Barmby (ed.), *Churchwardens' Accounts of Pittington and Other Parishes in the Diocese of Durham from AD 1580 to 1700*, Surtees Society, 84 (Durham, 1888), 332; Davenport, *Letters*, 1–29 (biography), 12–13, 142. 143, 144–45, 161–62, 171–72, 177, 184, 188; Hutchinson, *Durham*, vol. 2, 540.

56 Egglescliffe (work done by Richard Carter of Aislaby): DRO EP/Eg 182 p. 19; Stanhope: DRO EP/St 1/3 pp. 8 and 9, with early copies at DRO EP/ST 15 / 59; Kirk Merrington: DCL L/LP22/246, referenced in Patrick Mussett, 'Some aspects of church furnishings in Cosin's time', in Margot Johnson (ed.), *John Cosin: Papers Presented to a Conference to Celebrate the 400th Anniversary of His Birth* (Durham, 1997), 185–93, 187; Billingham: DCL L/LP22/246 and 251; Boldon: Davenport, *Letters*, 188. The date of 1625 given by *Pevsner I* for the screen at Billingham was based on an unreliable tertiary source and should be ignored.

57 J. F. Hodgson, 'Aycliffe Church', *Transactions of the. Architectural & Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, 3 (1880–89), 49–74, pp. 63, 68; Anon, 'Aycliffe (visit made 1886)', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne*, NS 2 (1886), 306–08, p. 306; plan of 1881 at DUL DDR/EJ/FAC/3/251.

58 DCL Add Ms 82–85; MacKenzie and Ross, *Durham*, vol. 2, 213.

59 DCL Add Ms 293, p. 92 (James Raine's scrapbook); Valerie Brown, *The Church of St Mary the Less South Bailey Durham City* (privately printed (copy in DCL), 2010), 112.

60 C. W. Gibby, *Sherburn Hospital Durham* (Durham, 1981).

61 For the rebuilding, see William Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, vol. 3 (London,1928), 137; see also Davenport, *Letters*, 14, 205, 222, 224–25, 232–33, 236, 238, 248. A copy of the plan is at DCL Raine MS 47 pp. 10–12.

62 Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (CUP, 2016), 658–61.

63 Cooper, 'Interior Arrangement'; Cosin, *Works*, 227–28, 345ff; G. J. Cuming, ed., *The Durham Book, Being the First Draft of the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1661* (London, 1961), 56–57; Cooper, 'Wise as Serpents', 213–14; R. Gibbs, 'The State of the Buckinghamshire Parish Churches in the 16th and 17th centuries', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 6 (1887), 150–67, 245–58.

64 Anthony Milton, 'The creation of Laudianism: a new approach', in Thomas Cogwell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* (CUP, 2002), 162–84; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, chapter 6.

65 Aston, *Broken Idols*, 661.

66 Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, 305–52.

67 Muir and White, *Materials*, 41, 100, 118; Charles, *Life*, 193; Ransome, *The Web of Friendship*, 143, 163, family tree at rear of book; David Ransome, *The Ferrar Papers 1590–1790 in Magdalene College, Cambridge: Introduction/ Finding List* (East Ardsley, Wakefield, Microform Academic Publishers, 1991), passim; Edmund Venables (rev. S. L. Sadler), 'Robert Mapletoft', *ODNB*.

68 Muir and White, *Materials*, 77, 79; Ransome, *The Web of Friendship*, 63; Trevor Cooper, 'The sack that never happened: Little Gidding, puritan soldiers, and the making of a myth', *The Seventeenth Century*, 31, no. 3 (2016), 3, 8; J. Mayor (ed.), *Nicholas Ferrar. Two Lives by His Brother John and by Doctor Jebb* (Cambridge, 1855), 117–23; David Pearson, 'Cambridge bindings in Cosin's Library, Durham', in Peter Isaac (ed.), *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain* (Winchester, 1990), 52–56, 59n36; Isaac Basire, *The Correspondence of Isaac Basire With a Memoir of His Life*, ed. W. N. Darnell, (1831), 20–22.

69 Muir and White, *Materials*, 66; Ransome, *The Web of Friendship*, 171; Peter Peckard, 'Nicholas Ferrar; from the Life by Dr. Peckard, with Large Additions from a Manuscript in the Lambeth Library', in Christopher Wordsworth (ed.), *Ecclesiastical Biography*, vol. 5 (London 1810), 235n; C. Leslie Craig, *Nicholas Ferrar Junior. A Linguist of Little Gidding* (London, 1950), 26; Alan Maycock, *Chronicles of Little Gidding* (1954), 22.

70 Hoffman, 'John Cosin', 60–70; Hoffman, 'Cosin's Cure of Souls', 77–80.

71 Cosin, *Works*, vol. 1, passim. The date of the table at Brancepeth is not known (the date of 1628 given in *Pevsner II* was based on a misreading of G. Addleshaw and F. Etchells, *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (London, 1948), 124).

72 Richard Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, vol. 2 (1884), 316; Martin Roberts, 'A preliminary biographical listing of building craftsmen' (unpublished).

73 Davenport, *Letters*, 100; Loveday, *Diary of a Tour*, 178, 182.

74 Peter Ryder, *The Cross Slabs at Brancepeth . . . after the Fire, a Major Archaeological Discovery* (Broomlee publications, 2009), 10.

75 Green, *Building for England*, 33–41; Edward Swift, 'Altars and Altercation', *History Today*, 57, no. 12 (December 2007), 42–48.

The 1818 Church Building Act: a bicentenary retrospective

Christopher Webster, with new photography by Geoff Brandwood

'The New Churches Bill was read a third time and passed', noted the *Morning Post* on 27 May 1818. Following Royal Assent, 58 Geo III c 45, better known as the 1818 Church Building Act, passed into law on 30 May and heralded the biggest concerted programme of church construction this country had seen since the Reformation.[1] The Commission's first meeting was held on 28 July 1818[2] and although initially established for ten years,[3] its life was extended, via a series of Acts, to 1856, by which time it had contributed to the erection of 612 new churches. After thirty-eight years, its funds were exhausted, but, crucially, public giving had largely replaced it as a means of financing church-building. In its scale it has never been equalled and the Act's bicentenary in 2018 is certainly an event to be marked. The best of the Commissioners' churches – those produced in the early 1820s and which are the focus of this article – are designs of the highest order.

However, the whole 'Commissioners' project' was one conceived and executed in the most inauspicious circumstances, when the cry 'the Church in Danger' had never been more potent. The conclusion of the wars with France in 1815 allowed Parliament to focus on domestic issues and, among other things, address what was widely seen as a desperate shortage of church accommodation; 'no clause in his Royal Highness's speech [at the opening of the 1818 Parliament] … has given more satisfaction' noted one commentator.[4] But the challenge to the Established Church was not just that of raising funds for building, there was also a need to divide parishes, provide additional clergy and find a means to pay and house them appropriately. In addition, the Established Church was under threat from the spread of atheism, Roman Catholicism and Nonconformity, the last of which comprised a range of denominations which were building at a prodigious rate and providing accommodation where the Church of England had not. And there was widespread criticism of the way the Anglican Church was organised with rampant absenteeism, pluralism and huge inequalities of clergy incomes.

The need for more accommodation

Anglican church-building throughout the eighteenth century had failed to keep pace with increases in population and especially with migrations from country to town; with only limited war-time additions, the situation was so desperate by 1815 that, many

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Geoff Brandwood has written widely about churches, including standard monographs on Temple Moore and Paley & Austin. He has a great interest in architectural photography and his work has been used by several well-known authors.

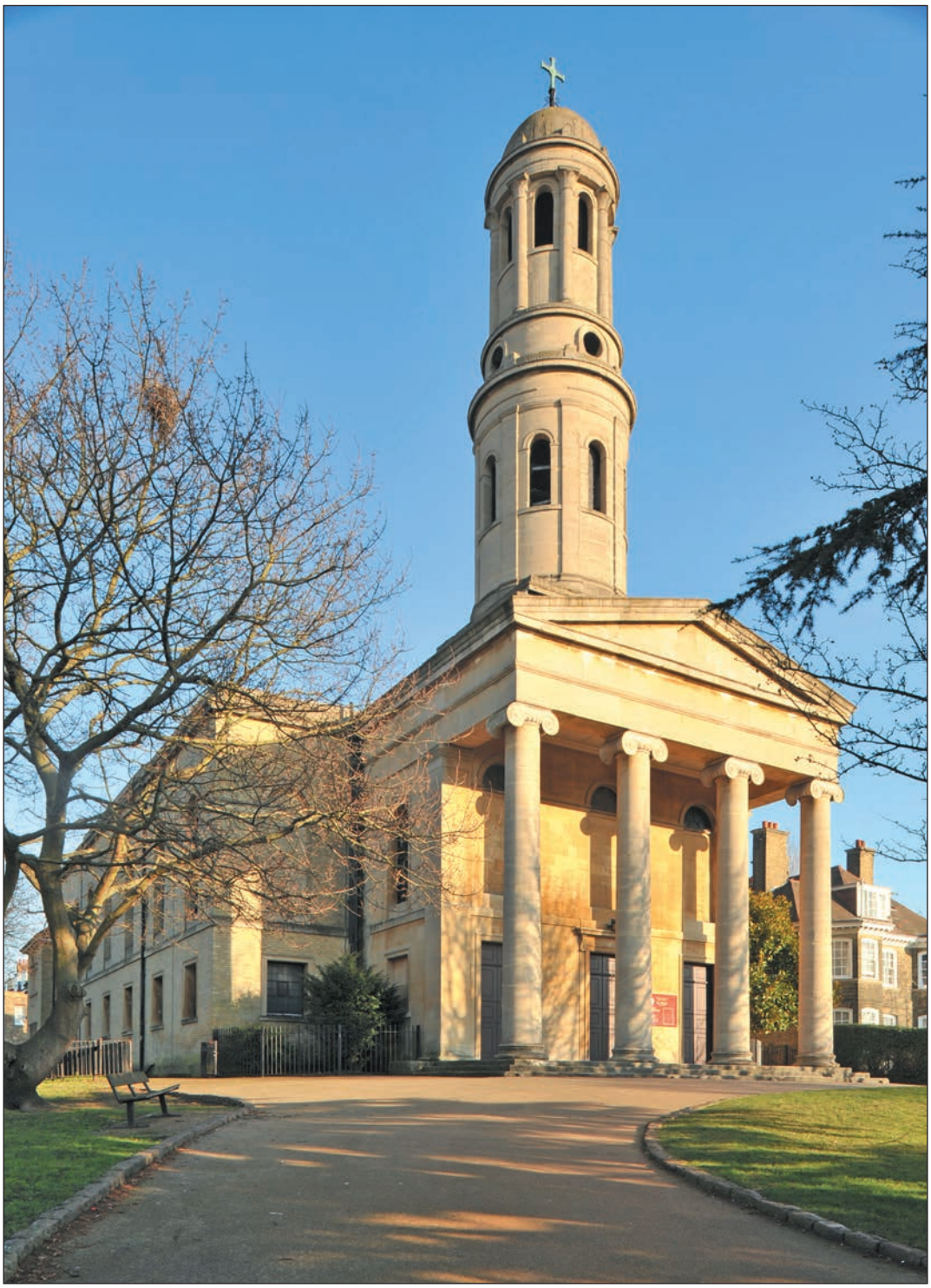


Fig. 1: St Anne's, Wandsworth, London (Robert Smirke, 1820–4). This early Commissioners' church became the model that many others followed in the capital: the rectangular plan is based on Gibbs' St Martin-in-the-Fields, but here adapted for the fashionable Grecian style. Smirke was fond of circular towers – often referred to as 'pepper-pot towers' – based on a design published by W. F. Pocock. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

Fig. 2: St Luke's, West Norwood, London (Francis Bedford, 1823–4). Display is concentrated on the 'show' entrance front and the rectangular body – another derivation of the favoured Gibbs model – is emphasised by the hexastyle prostyle portico. Some critics condemned the arrangement here – and in many other Classical churches – of the tower appearing to rest on the portico. Big Commissioners' churches required many doors for congregations of 2,000 to enter and leave conveniently, and to maintain social segregation. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

argued, only Parliament itself was capable of addressing the situation. But if sufficient places could be provided, it was widely believed – perhaps somewhat naively – that a number of the other threats, such as the alienation of the working classes and spread of Nonconformity, would also be significantly reduced.

The problem had been recognised through the eighteenth century, but its scale was certainly more pronounced for the late Georgians. The introduction of decennial censuses from 1801 provided clear evidence of a rising population and which parishes were most affected, and produced indisputable evidence for those campaigners keen to address the issue. The following statistics reveal the magnitude of the problem: at the start of the French wars in 1793, England's population was around 7 million; by 1801 it was 7.75 million rising to 8.75 million in 1811, and almost 10.5 million in 1821. Thus in the twenty years from 1801, there was an increase of almost two and three-quarter million; for many friends of the Established Church, this translated into a need for almost two and three-quarter million *extra* church seats.[5] And already in 1801, there was a severe shortage. More pragmatic commentators talked of one place for every three or four people,[6] but even on this last ratio around 700 new, medium-sized churches would have been required just to keep pace with a rising population. However, focusing merely on the shortfall of places masked a further problem: those seats that were available were disproportionally assigned to the middle classes; it was the urban labouring classes that were most likely to be denied a place in their local church.

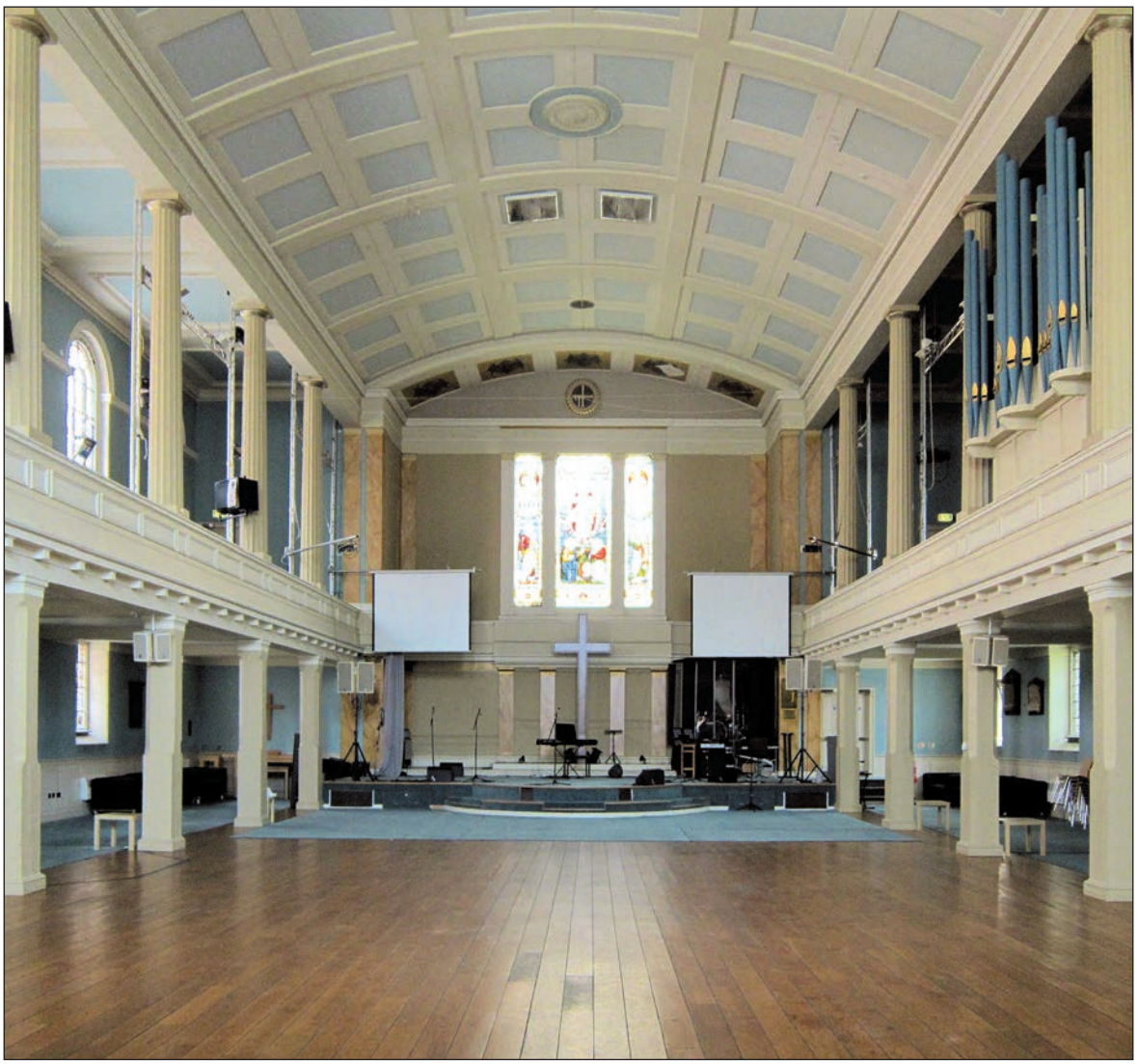
Certainly some additional seats were being provided, but of those places added in the three decades from 1790, the majority were in the middle-class suburbs of expanding towns where pew rents could make a significant contribution to construction and on-going costs. There were also some new churches in rural communities, gifts from the local squires. What the period before 1818 did not witness was any concerted effort to provide places for the lower classes in the rapidly expanding industrial towns whose spiritual needs were increasingly provided by Nonconformity or who were abandoned to a godless existence.

Early calls for the government to finance church-building included one from Richard Watson, bishop of Llandaff, who, in 1800, wrote to William Wilberforce, believing he had the ear of the Prime Minister. Watson proposed the building in London of churches that would be free to all: £100,000 from public funds would, he suggested, build twenty churches. He made a similar plea to Wilberforce in 1804 but neither produced any tangible results.[7] And there were also calls from the public.[8] But the solution was not simply one of building more churches: there also had to

Fig. 3: St Mary's, Wyndham Place, London (Robert Smirke, 1821–3). Here the tower and semi-circular portico are placed on the (liturgical) south side of the church. The illustration reveals how here, and in many other instances, the new churches were used as a key component in a new, exclusive residential development. Especially in built-up London, Classicism was the obvious stylistic choice to blend with secular buildings.
(Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

be reform of the parochial system. During what A. D. Gilbert calls 'the demographic revolution', by which he meant 'the geographical redistribution of the population' caused by the Industrial Revolution, it was in those places where the long-established parochial system had either broken down or was simply inadequate, that became most 'vulnerable to Nonconformist encroachment'.[9] More positively, the successful 1811 launch of the National Schools Society 'for the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church' which began an ambitious programme of school-building, seemed to point naturally to a parallel, centrally-driven programme to provide more churches.

Fig. 4: St Mary's, Wyndham Place, interior. Almost all the Commissioners' churches were built with galleries and here Smirke designed an elegant solution which translated the Classical language to the requirements of auditory worship (see Fig. 5). (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)



The Revd Richard Yates

Richard Yates, a London minister with private means and a tireless advocate for church extension, authored two widely circulating publications. The first was *The Church in Danger: a Statement of the Cause, and of the Probable Means of Averting that Danger, Attempted in a letter to the Earl of Liverpool*, of 1815.[10] An enlarged version appeared two years later as *The Basis of National Welfare … and Safety of the Church of England with Examination of Parliamentary Reports … [of] the Capacity of Churches and Chapels*. These long, detailed and cogently argued open letters to the Prime Minister laid bare the issues for all to see.

Over many pages of Yates's books are the depressing statistics rehearsed. For instance, in the Diocese of Chester, the population

Fig. 5: St John's, Islington, London (Charles Barry, 1826–8). The engraving usefully illustrates the period's auditory worship and the architectural implications that had to be accommodated in the Commissioners' churches. Here are 1,029 seats in rented pews in the galleries or at the sides of the nave; the 753 free places were provided by utilitarian benches in the central aisle or on out-of-the-way corners. The substantial three-decker pulpit occupies a central place from which the preacher could be seen by all, with the clerk at his desk at the lowest level. (Print of c.1830, published by Rock and Co., author's collection)

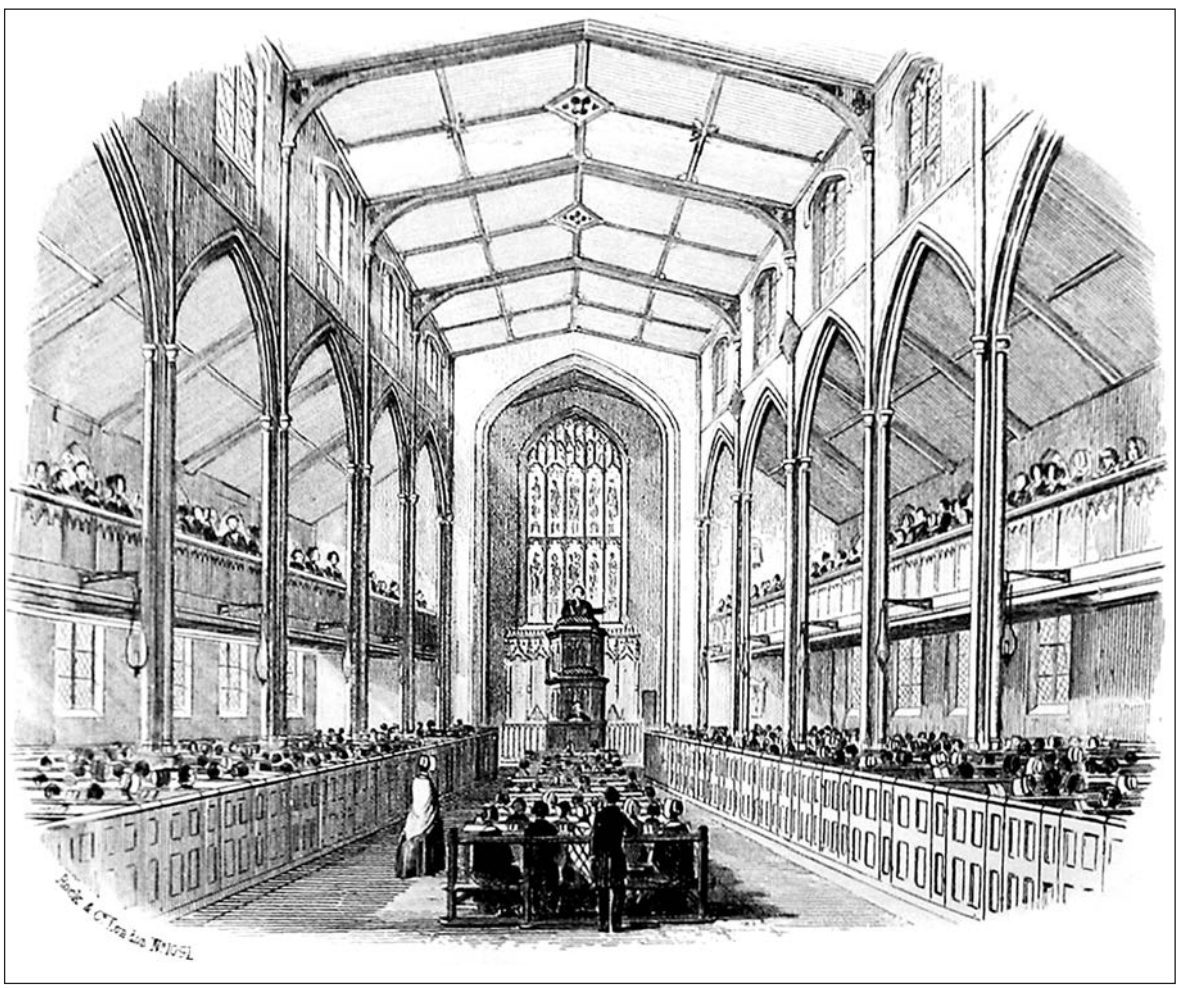


Fig. 6: St James's, South Bermondsey, London (James Savage, 1827–8). Savage had earlier received much praise for his Gothic St Luke's, Chelsea (Fig. 10) and here, in a confident Grecian design, illustrates how architects might be expected to work in either style. Somewhat unusually in this style, the design includes a clerestory and thus reveals how Classicism might easily be adapted to the demands of a traditional English church. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

of 1,286,702 had only 228,696 church places; in Lichfield and Coventry, 532,733 souls shared 108,532 places.[11] However, the situation in towns could be much worse. Stockport had church room for 2,500, but the 1811 census had revealed a population of almost 34,000; in Sheffield, there were 6,280 places for the 55,000 population.[12] Rochdale, with a population in 1811 of 37,229, had not a single free seat in the parish church.[13] Nationally, excluding London, the 'Excess of Population above the Capacity of Churches and Chapels [was] 4,232,326.'[14]

In London, Yates noted almost one million were 'excluded from the benefits and advantages of participating in the Instructive Public Worship of the Established Church.'[15] He identified the practical problems of dividing parishes and wished to impress upon 'the public mind the necessity of giving further Legislative and Constitutional Assistance to the National Religion through a Commission' empowered to provide 'appropriate accommodation for the Poor as well as the Wealthy classes.'[16] He recognised the challenges and devoted a further forty-two pages of his book to answering them with a series of commendably rational solutions. His juxtapositioning of national well-being and adequate provision of church accommodation was powerful and widely welcomed. Of *The Church in Danger*, the *British Review* noted 'the very masterly but afflicting picture of the physical evil in the state of the church'. Mr Yates has revealed 'the forlorn state of the Church of England ... nothing can be imagined more worthy of the attention of the statesman to whom [the publication] is addressed'.[17]

Religion and morality

A link between a lack of church accommodation and the detrimental effect this had on national welfare was often made. A principal concern of Yates was this: 'It is in the utmost importance to the safety of the State, that Religious and Moral Habits should pervade the general body of the People; that the Public Worship of the Parochial Services and Superintendence of the Established Church … must be considered one of the most indispensable Duties of the Government [and it must] provide the means to that End and Purpose.'[18] Without adequate places for worship 'Laws, Armies, Wealth, Finance, and Commerce, may, and indeed must, all sink under the baneful and destructive influence of the Want of Religious and Moral Character.'[19] A similar theme runs through a long article published in 1820: '[Without adequate church provision] many of the civil advantages and moral restraints … are necessarily annihilated.' The writer adds 'when we cease to have a visible church … the character of the middle and lower classes of society becomes proportionably deteriorated … [and]

Fig. 7: St Peter's, South Walworth, London (John Soane, 1823–5). Soane designed three churches for the Commissioners. Each uses the standard Gibbs plan but Soane's genius shines through in the way in which he provided a unique adaptation of the conventional 'temple-front and tower' for each of them. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

the preventative effect [of their teaching] upon the vices of the lower classes are absolutely and wholly lost.'[20]

Designs

After establishing the criteria to be used in awarding grants, a crucial task at the beginning of the Commission's existence was to identify appropriate models for the new churches. The group largely comprised senior clerics and members of both houses of Parliament, but, significantly, contained no architects.[21] The bishop of Chester, whose diocese included industrial Lancashire where the shortage of seats was calculated at over a million,[22] was keen that building was not delayed. He proposed a single design by Thomas Rickman should be adopted across the country, although this idea, fortunately, was not adopted. Instead, decisions were delegated to local committees in the recipient towns and cities, subject to the Commissioners', and their architectural advisors', assessments of suitability. The Commission thus needed to be clear about what it wanted. Being London-based, no doubt recently constructed churches in the capital would have been an obvious starting point in the process of identifying suitable designs.

Fig. 8: St George's Chapel, Regent's Street, London (C. R. Cockerell, 1823–4; demolished 1896). The selected site was one enclosed by other buildings and in such central London locations, Classicism was clearly the obvious stylistic choice to blend with the secular neighbouring structures. In order to accommodate a large congregation, galleries were arranged on two levels and with almost no opportunities for conventional windows the interior was principally lit by a huge iron and glass dome. Architectural critics deemed this to be the best of the capital's Commissioners' churches. (From a drawing by Thomas Shepherd in James Elmes, Metropolitan Improvements*, 1827, opp. p.100, author's collection)*

The eighteenth century had witnessed only limited church building. Some very fine, ambitious churches were erected in London in the first half of the century under the Queen Anne Churches initiative, but these were widely seen as excessively expensive. Furthermore, by the nineteenth century, that project was seen as one that had been badly managed; only eleven of the intended fifty churches had been built.[23] The quarter century prior to the establishment of the Commission had seen the construction of some imaginative designs in the capital which explored a range of plan-types: circular, in the case of St Peter-le-Poer (Jesse Gibson, 1788–92); octagonal at St Bartholomew the Less (George Dance junior, 1789–91); and Greek cross at St Mary's, Paddington (John Plaw, 1788–91) and St John's, Hackney (James Spiller, 1791–94). However, by far the most influential design of the century was that produced by James Gibbs for his church of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London (1722–26) itself based on Christopher Wren's St James's, Piccadilly (1676–84). Although Gibbs's church was Classical, the large nave, western tower and eastern chancel respected traditional, medieval layouts. And it was a plan that could be adapted to any of the stylistic alternatives. Wren observed that Anglican churches, unlike those for Roman Catholic worship,

Fig 9: St Thomas's, Stockport (George Basevi, 1822–5). This is a rare example of a Grecian design selected outside London. Interestingly, Basevi solved the 'tower over the portico' problem by removing it to the east end. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

Fig. 10: St Luke's, Chelsea, London (1820–4), by James Savage. His first church and one of the most impressive of all the Commissioners' churches: at £28,109 it was also one of the most expensive. E. J. Carlos writing in the Gentleman's Magazine *for 1826 (I, p. 203) thought 'the [details] of this elegant composition … would not disgrace any age in which the pointed style prevailed; the scale of grandeur and … tastefulness that marks the design … would do homage to a cathedral.' Thomas Allen, in his* Panorama of London *of 1828/30, 185, thought it 'was particularly deserving of attention; its stone vaulted roof … [is] unrivalled among modern specimens.' (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)*

Fig. 11: St Luke's, Chelsea, interior. Here was the first stone vault 'of the modern [Gothic] Revival' and the church Eastlake identified as the beginning of that revival. (Charles Eastlake, The Gothic Revival, *1872, 63.) It is, by any standards, a stunning interior. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)*

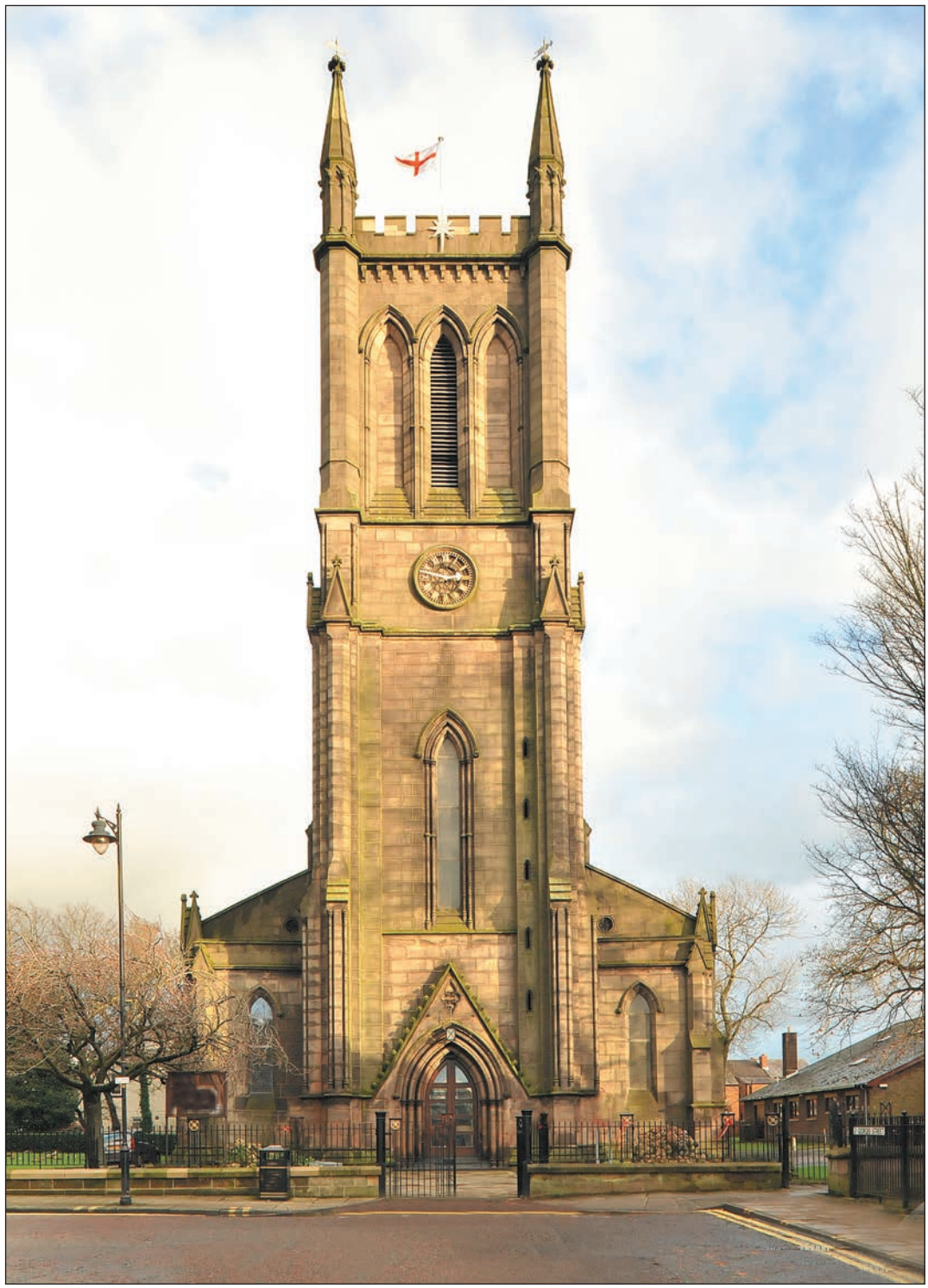


Fig. 12: St George's, Chorley, Lancashire (Thomas Rickman, 1822–5). From the start, Lancashire was committed to Gothic, a preference led by the clergy, and Rickman was promoted by the Bishop of Chester in whose diocese the county was situated. Here he designed an impressive Early English example with a tall clerestory. At £12,387 it was less than half the cost of Savage's Chelsea church for the same number of sittings. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

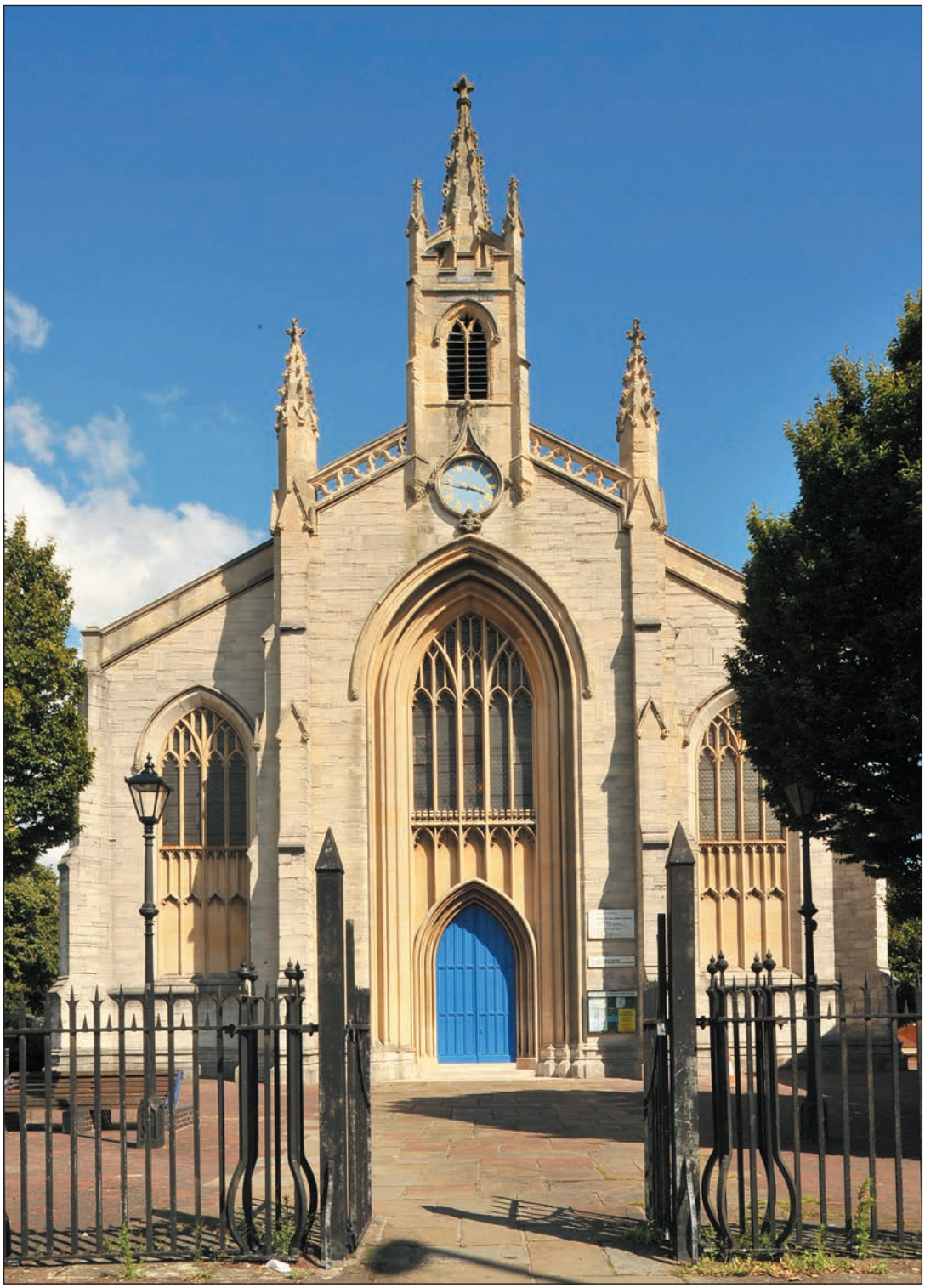


Fig. 13: All Saints, Portsmouth (J. Owen, 1825–7). Big traditional towers were a significant part of the cost of a new church and several architects explored cheaper alternatives. Here a bellcote provides a confident termination for the west gable. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

needed 'to be fitted for Auditories. I can hardly think it practicable to make a single Room so capacious, with Pews and Galleries, as to hold above 2,000 persons. I endeavoured to effect this, in building the Parish Church of *St James,* [Piccadilly,] *Westminster*, which, I presume, is the most capacious, with these Qualifications, that hath yet been built … I think it may be found beautiful and convenient, and as such, the cheapest of any Form I could invent.'[24] Wren's detailed opinions on the optimum design of churches, conveniently published in 1750, offered near unique guidance. Among successful recent London adaptions of the Wren/Gibbs model were St Botolph's, Aldersgate (Nathaniel Wright, 1789–91) and St Mary Magdalene, Islington (William Wickings, 1812–14).

No doubt seeking to capitalise in the predicted rush to build, in 1819 the minor London architect W. F. Pocock published his *Designs for Churches and Chapels* which included schemes that were circular, octagonal and semi-circular, as well as more orthodox rectangular ones.[25] Remarkably in an age of architectural pattern books, it was the *only* serious book of church designs before 1841.[26]

The two most prominent and most eagerly anticipated new churches in London of the 1810s were St Marylebone Parish Church, (Thomas Hardwick, 1813–17) and St Pancras, (W. and H. W. Inwood, 1819–22). Both are big, Classical designs, with layouts derived from the Wren/Gibbs model. Both have wide naves without aisles which avoid the necessity of internal columns that would have impeded the preacher's voice reaching the far corners. In 1819, as the Commissioners refined their intentions, these two churches represented the best recent models available. However, both had huge costs: around £80,000 at St Marylebone and £86,000 at St Pancras.[27] At this rate, the Commissioners' million pounds would not go far. A way had to be found to build churches of this size at a fraction of the cost and not surprisingly, budgets were always tight. Initially it was hoped they could be built in London for less than £20,000 and in the provinces for around half that figure.

One of the Commissioners' first tasks was to seek guidance from the three Crown Architects: John Nash, Robert Smirke and John Soane. This triumvirate produced a series of specimen designs in which a range of styles and plan shapes were explored. Faced with this evidence, the Commissioners took a cautious approach favouring the Wren/Gibbs model, although they were apparently prepared to consider alternatives and allowed a certain flexibility to the local committees.

A crucial issue was the optimum size of a church. As noted above, Wren believed that 2,000 was the maximum viable capacity, and this seems to have been the Commissioners' starting point.

However, this was quickly adjudged *too* large; those in seats some distance from the pulpit were unable to hear unless the preacher was gifted with a particularly strong voice. There are numerous instances of worshippers abandoning their new churches on this account. For instance, at Christ Church, Attercliffe, Sheffield (1822–26) the incumbent explained that although initially many newcomers were attracted in addition to those who had worshipped at the old chapel which the church replaced, few of them had continued to attend as they could not hear the reader or the preacher. 'This beautiful structure – the Admiration of the Country – which my archbishop was pleased to say, [was, in his

Fig. 14: St Peter's, Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester (Francis Goodwin, 1821–4). Goodwin secured a number of early Commissioners' contracts and although professionally disorganised, he could be relied on to devise an impressive composition. Always seeking economies, he regularly specified cast iron for his window tracery as an alternative to carved stone, as he did here for all the windows including the fine rose window that dominates the east elevation. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

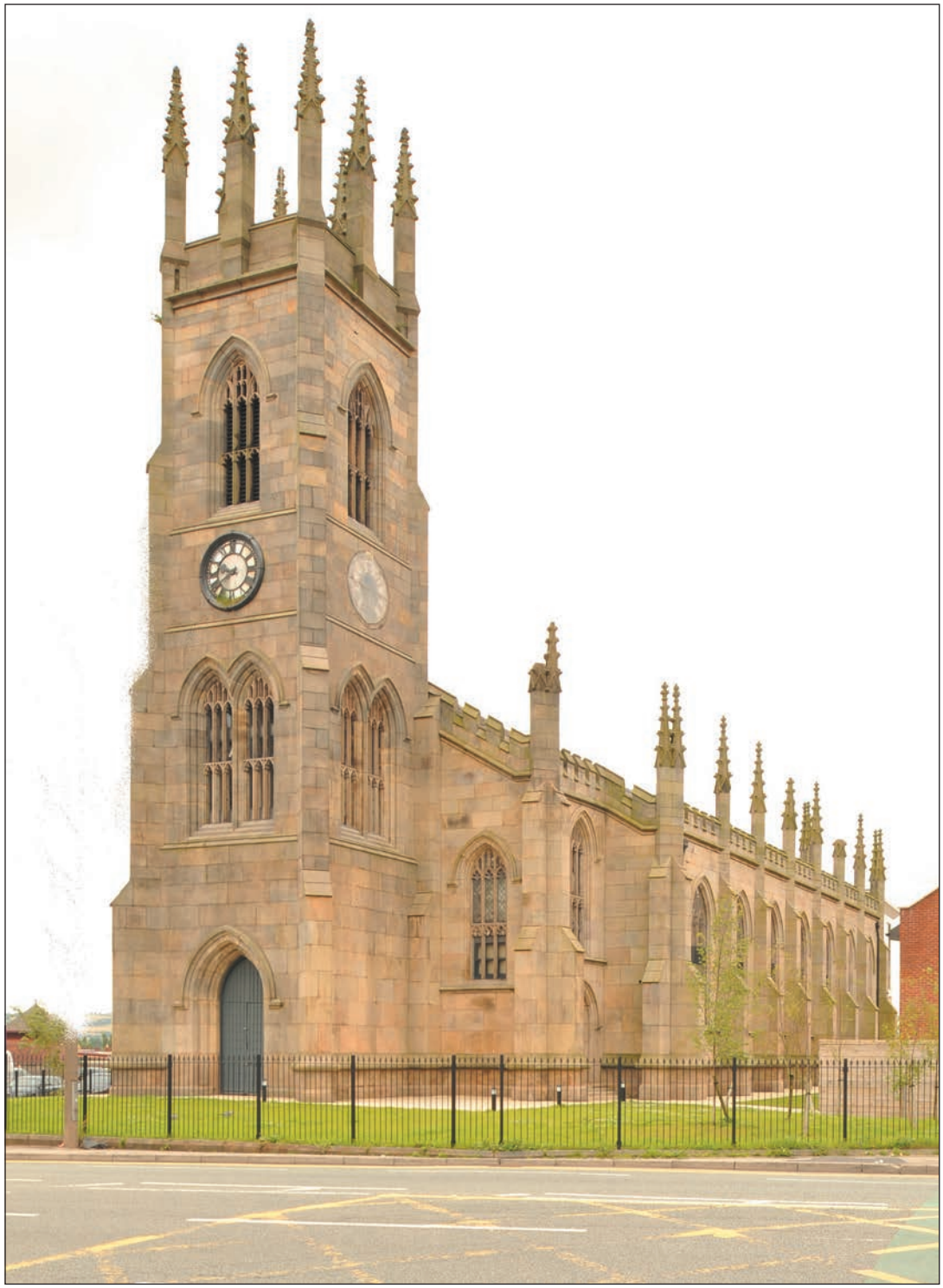


Fig. 15: Holy Trinity, Bolton, Greater Manchester (Thomas Hardwick, 1823–6, now converted to flats.) Hardwick's pre-Commissioners churches were all Classical, but he quickly adapted to the demands of Gothic. Unlike central London, northern Commissioners' churches were often surrounded by a substantial burial-yard. This demanded a composition that worked 'in the round' and without close secular buildings, Gothic seemed less anachronistic. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

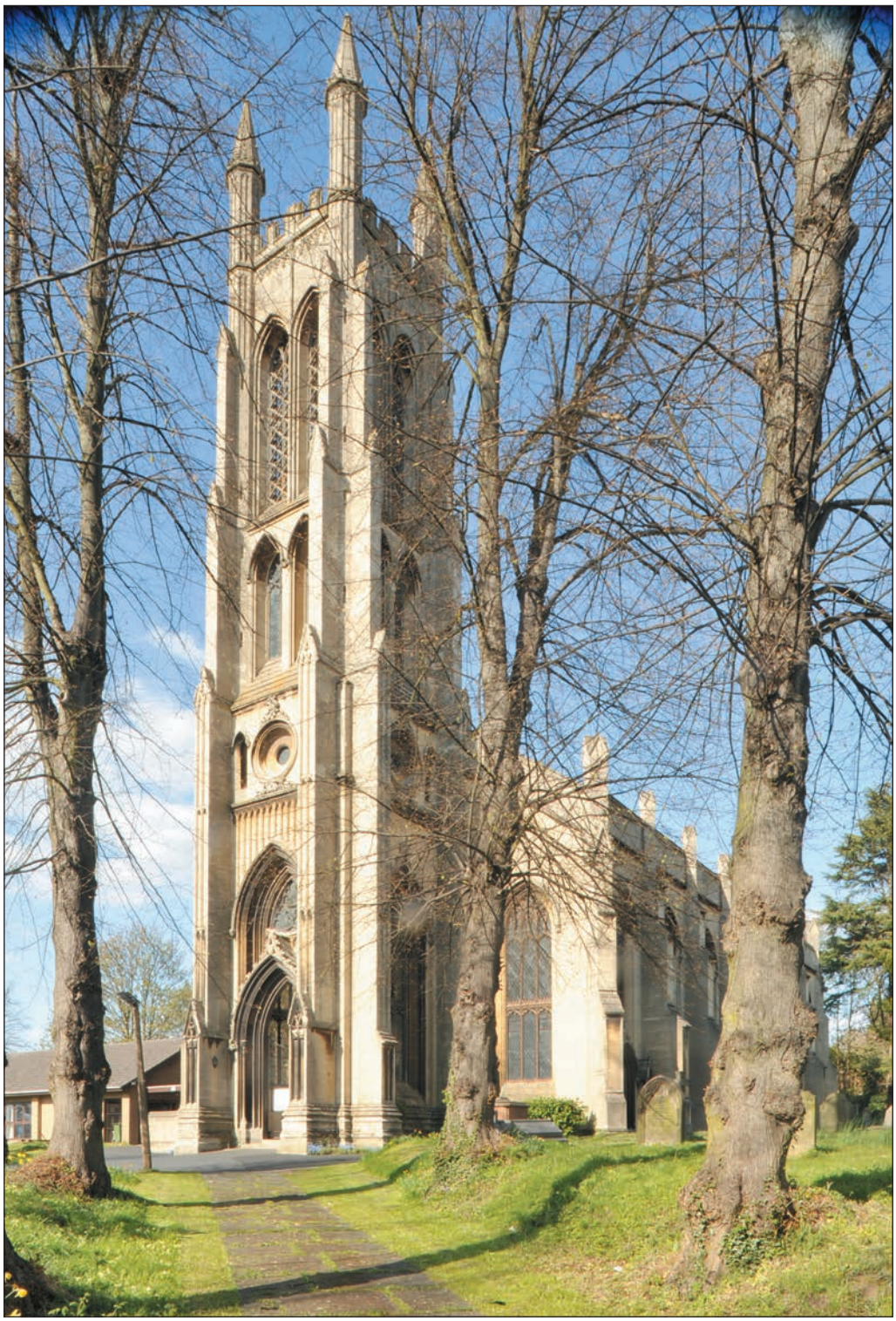


Fig. 16: St George's, Kidderminster (Francis Goodwin, 1821–4). This is another of Goodwin's impressive designs – 'showy' according to his critics – and one of his most expensive: £19,015 for 2,000 seats, almost twice the Commissioners' target of £10,000 per church in the provinces. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)

opinion] more worthy as to its exterior and interior than any other he had yet seen – is becoming useless!'[28]

Ten years into its endeavours, the Commissioners' churches were usually smaller with a norm of about 1,200 seats. Why were the early ones so large? The size was dictated by notions of economy of scale: it was demonstrably true that one large church was cheaper to build than two smaller ones, and two churches needed two ministers, two clerks, two clergy houses and two maintenance funds.

Interestingly, discussions about style do not seem to have been a priority. Arguably, the Commissioners were more concerned with

Fig.17: All Saints, Stand, Greater Manchester (Charles Barry, 1822–5). Here Barry produced an engaging variation on the standard plan by introducing a lofty open passage under the tower. He repeated this design for St Matthew's, Camp Field, Manchester. A challenge for architects was how best to arrange the north and south windows to light both the gallery and ground levels. It was easily solved by two independent windows in a Classical design but more challenging in Gothic. Here Barry cleverly avoids solecism by introducing two levels of windows joined by blank tracery. (Photo: Christopher Webster)

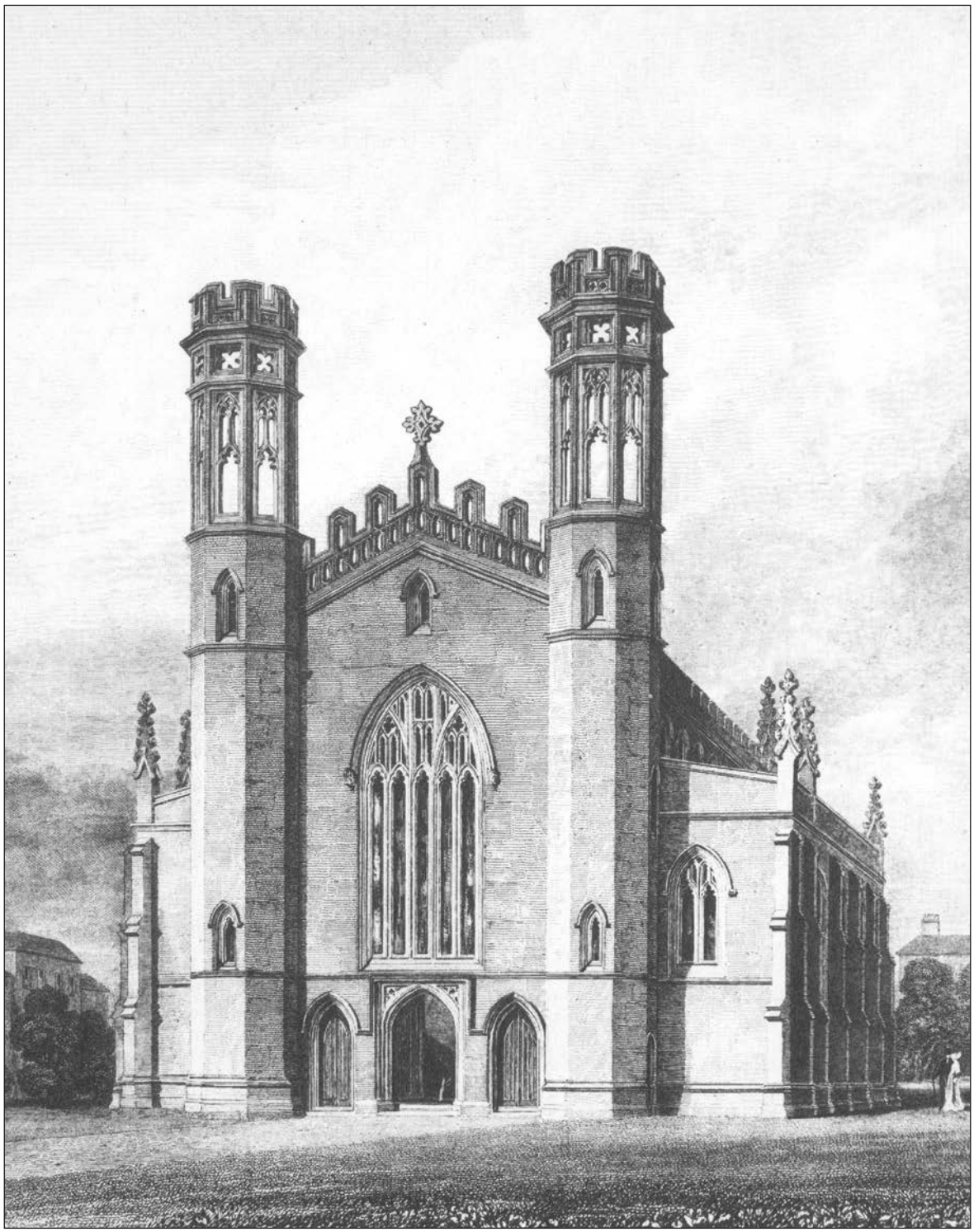


Fig. 18: Holy Trinity, Bristol (Rickman and Hutchinson, 1829–31). In the quest for economy and variety, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, proved a useful model. This was one of the more scholarly adaptations. The slim towers with doors on their sides provided staircases to the free seats in the galleries while there were no fewer than five other doors at the west end giving access to different areas of seating. (Engraving, c.1830, author's collection)

practical issues such as durability, the numbers of free places for the poor, and seating arrangements such that all could see and hear the preacher; utilitarianism is also suggested by the Act's much-quoted Section 62: 'providing proper accommodation for the greatest number at the least expense'. But to dismiss entirely the Commissioners' architectural ambitions in this way is misleading as, within the limited funds available, 'In every building to be erected under the authority of this Board, the character [should] be preserved, both externally and internally, of an ecclesiastical edifice for divine service according to the rites of the united church of England and Ireland'.[29] And more explicitly, one of the leading Commissioners, Archdeacon Wollaston, sent a long letter to George Jenner, the Commission's secretary, in August 1819. He was unhappy with some of the early designs. 'We get most crude devices: tasteless and unauthorised exterior; ill-arranged interior … anxious as I am that the work be done economically … at the same time [it should be done] handsomely because we are supporting the National Religion'.[30]

Inevitably, discussions about what might be deemed an appropriate amount of decoration prompted reflection on what was judged the profligacy of the Commissioners overseeing the 'Queen Anne Churches' of the previous century and these earlier ones were criticised as extravagant during parliamentary debates on the 1818 Bill.[31]

Architects

The first tranche of Commissioners' projects, often referred to as the 'First Grant' churches, comprised ninety-six buildings erected in the years 1819–32, although most were designed in the early 1820s. These were the work of forty-seven individual architects or partnerships. Very interestingly, only thirteen of them had ever designed a new church before – although several had already carried out alterations or rebuildings – and of these, only three had previously designed more than two churches. The list was headed by Thomas Taylor with six to his credit, followed by Thomas Hardwick with five and Thomas Rickman with four, including his three collaborations with the ironmaster John Cragg. How should the lack of experience be interpreted? It is indicative of how little church building had taken place during the wars with France, rather than an implication that experienced church architects shunned the Commissioners' projects. Indeed, few of the country's major architects did not, at some point, work for the Commissioners. Thus a new generation of architects was faced with the challenge of designing an unfamiliar building type: big churches, with correspondingly big structural, acoustical and practical challenges, and all to a very limited budget.

Style

In the provinces, Gothic was overwhelmingly the stylistic preference for Commissioners' churches from the beginning, but in London, it was Classicism, perhaps influenced by the legacy of Wren and his eighteenth-century successors. However, even here its popularity soon waned and by 1830 Gothic had largely triumphed.[32] Those parishes that had chosen a Classical design were, predictably, the recipients of Ecclesiological contempt after 1840, but even those that selected Gothic did not escape censure. A Commissioners' Gothic church had little to do with 'medieval authenticity' as, first of all, such a layout would have been entirely incompatible with the late-Georgian liturgy which was auditory, not sacramental; secondly, the post-1818 period was one still hostile to anything that smacked of Roman Catholicism – 'popery' as it was dismissively termed then – and a copy of a medieval example would have been entirely unacceptable. For the post-1840 generation, the visual 'failings' of the Commissioners' churches were claimed to be due to the chosen architect's inability to understand the principles and nuances of Gothic. This was a useful weapon for the Ecclesiologists, but is demonstrably nonsense. The ease with which the older generation of church architects adopted to the new post-1840 imperatives – for instance Charles Barry or R. D. Chantrell – rather suggests such 'authenticity' could easily have been produced before 1840 had the paymasters requested it.

Conclusion

Although the Commissioners' endeavours were initially welcomed as helping to ameliorate the desperate shortage of church accommodation, enthusiasm was short-lived and in many cases, the buildings had a miserable history. Insensitively altered and subject to entirely inappropriate 'correct' additions later in the nineteenth century, many limped into the twentieth to face abandonment and demolition as their congregations moved out from the inner cities where most had been built. From the early years of Victoria's reign they were subjected to withering criticism from the Ecclesiologists – actively publishing from 1841 – of which 'wretched', 'absolutely wretched', 'very objectionable' and 'miserable' are not untypical.[33] Indeed, they claimed they were not churches at all, merely 'sermon houses'.[34] Their reputation never recovered. As Frances Knight rightly concluded, 'The conventions which have shaped the study of nineteenth-century Anglican history have been determined to a large extent by the influence of High Church historians in the Tractarian mould.'[35] Typical of these Victorian writers is W. R. W. Stephens who said of the Commissioners' churches in Leeds, 'Three ugly ... churches [were

Fig. 19: St Mary's, Somers Town, London (W. and H. W. Inwood, 1822–4). The Inwoods had made a fine job of the earlier Grecian St Pancras, but struggled to adapt to Gothic. Predictably, it was a church mocked by the Ecclesiologists and pilloried by Pugin in Contrasts. *It was the cheapest of the big Commissioners' churches in London. (Photo: Geoff Brandwood)*

Fig. 20: St Lawrence's, Pudsey, West Yorkshire (Thomas Taylor, 1821–3). The Archbishop of York enthused over Taylor's designs; his Gothic authenticity made them commendably 'church-like' he claimed. However, this cavernous interior with its massive columns always compromised sound and sight in a way that more practically conceived designs, like St Mary, Somers Town (Fig. 19), with a lower ceiling and slender cast-iron columns, did not. (Photo: Ruth Baumberg)

erected] which proved to be utter failures.'[36] He offered no criteria for his judgement and omitted to note that all three were, in fact, so *successful* that within ten years of their erection, the trio needed the addition of galleries to satisfy the demand for seats. For too long these churches were being assessed by the standards the Ecclesiologists so successfully promoted and, in that context, they could never be judged as anything other than failures. This was the trap Harry Goodhart-Rendel, like so many others, stumbled into: 'in general', he wrote, '[the] early "Commissioners' Churches" are mere preaching-houses of little architectural worth'.[37]

Basil Clarke's, more balanced assessment, published in 1966, was a rare exception.

> Their activities have until recently, been found fault with by most writers on the subject. They were written from the Victorian point of view, regarding church building as something to be done to the glory of God, and involving personal self-denial: the Commissioners have been represented as cheese-paring and hard-hearted men, whose aim was simply to provide as many sittings as they could far as small a sum as possible. In fact they were keen Churchmen and did their work conscientiously. To act as agents of Parliament did not seem discreditable to them, as it did to later nineteenth-century churchmen, irritated by controversies about doctrine and ritual, in which Parliament always took the wrong side.[38]

Far more useful to historians are the opinions of pre-1840 writers. Those seeking such material are directed to the following: James Elmes' *Metropolitan Improvements* of 1827; Thomas Allen's *Panorama of London*;[39] and over thirty articles for the *Gentleman's Magazine* on the subject of 'The New Churches' written by E. J. Carlos between 1823 and 1833. Of C. R. Cockerell's Hanover Chapel, London (1823–25, tragically demolished in 1896) (Fig. 8), Carlos concluded, the design 'reflects the highest credit on the architect … [the building] is decidedly the best specimen of architecture in the whole [of Regent's] street … .' The critic W. H. Leeds noted 'a less favourable site can hardly be found … but the plan is extremely well [suited] to that most difficult of architectural problems, the Protestant church; for it is highly convenient as an auditory, and allows each part of the service to be seen from every seat.' For Allen, this 'beautiful composition' had an interior that was 'magnificent'.[40] The bicentenary of the initiative which produced this church, and a succession of other equally fine ones, is surely a cause for celebration.

Notes

1 *[First] Report of His Majesty's Commissioners …* (London, 1821), 3. Michael Port has published an exemplary study of the Commissioners' work to which those interested in this subject are directed. Michael Port, *600 New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818–1856* (Reading, 2006).

2 *Report*, 3.
3 *Report*, 9.
4 *Morning Post*, 1 April 1818.
5 For instance, Richard Yates, *The Basis of National Welfare* (London, 1817), 25.
6 Port [see note 1], 45.
7 *Lancashire Gazette*, 28 February 1818.
8 *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1814, 2, 213–14.
9 Alan D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976), 110.
10 London, 1815. 'The Church in Danger' had been a rallying-call for High Church Tories early in the eighteenth century.
11 Yates [see note 5], 156–7.
12 Port [see note 1], 22.
13 'The pews were appropriated by the leading families so that by 1814 there was not a single seat in the parish church to which the public had access.' W. Fishwick, *History of the Parish of Rochdale* (Rochdale, 1889), 146.
14 Yates [see note 5], 156–7.
15 Ibid., 25.
16 Ibid., 183–4.
17 *British Review*, 12, 1815, p. 276. There were similarly enthusiastic endorsements in *Critical Review*, 2, 1815, 129; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 85, 2, 1815, 84–85; *Christian Observer*, 11, 1815, 475.
18 Yates [see note 5], 11.
19 Ibid., 4.
20 *Quarterly Review*, 23, 1820, 559, 583–4.
21 A full list of the Commissioners can be found in Port [see note 1], 361.
22 Yates [see note 5], 156.
23 Ibid., 159.
24 Stephen Wren, *Parentalia or, Memoirs of the Family of the WRENS* (London, 1750), 320.
25 Published in London. For a fuller account of Pocock's book see Christopher Webster, 'Introduction' to the facsimile reprint (Reading, 2010).
26 Frederick Francis, *Original Designs for Churches and Chapels* (London, 1841). There was also George E. Hamilton, *Designs for Rural Churches*, (London, 1836), but its designs are so inept it could hardly be taken seriously.
27 This was the gross cost, before the remission of duties. Charles Lee, *St Pancras Church and Parish* (London, 1955), 42.
28 Letter, the Revd John Blackburn, perpetual curate, to the Church Building Commission. CBC Papers, Attercliffe file, no. 20,886.
29 Rule 11 of the Orders in Council, quoted in Port [see note 1], 49–50.
30 Ibid., 87–88.
31 Yates had already made the same point noting 'the expensive architecture adopted' by the earlier Commission. Yates [note 5], 159.
32 '… the Gothic style … has lately become so prevalent'. Thomas Allen, *Panorama of London* (London, 1830), 185.
33 *The Ecclesiologist*, 1, 1841, 141; 1, 1841, 195; 2, 1842, 93; 11, 1851, 174.
34 Cambridge Camden Society, *A Few Words to Churchwardens on Churches and Church Ornaments II, Suited to Manufacturing Parishes* (Cambridge, 1841), 5.
35 Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1998), 6.
36 W. R. W. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook* (London, 1879), 377.
37 Harry S. Goodhart-Rendel, *English Architecture since the Regency* (London, 1989), 50.
38 Basil Clarke, *Parish Churches of London* (London, 1966), 4.
39 Allen [see note 32], 184–188, 'the best condensed account of the New Churches of the Metropolis we have yet seen', according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830, 1, 528.
40 Allen [see note 32], 184.

The Revd John Louis Petit – standing up to the Neo-Gothicists

Philip Modiano

Philip Modiano happened across the Revd Petit's watercolours abandoned in picture dealers' cellars several years ago. It was through his research into Petit that he found out about the Ecclesiological Society and became a member.

I SUSPECT THAT MANY MEMBERS of our Society may have heard of the Revd John Louis Petit (1801–68) (Fig. 1), or even own one or two of his church watercolours, or his books; yet for some he may be unknown. In his day, at the height of the debates on Gothic Revival in the middle of the nineteenth century, he was famous, and one of the few who argued against the Neo-Gothic wave, remarkable in itself, but since then both his writing and his painting have been largely forgotten.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner included Petit in his lectures, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, but after reviewing just his first work, dismissed him rather abruptly: 'As a scholar he does not count …' and 'as a writer he cannot count either …'.[1]

Fig. 1: The Revd John Louis Petit. 1860s photograph. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the William Salt Library, Stafford.

These are conclusions I find unjustified, having looked more closely at Petit's work than Pevsner appears to have done. However, he does seem to have vanished from modern criticism of the period, with the exception of two incidents: his dispute with George Gilbert Scott about the renovation of St Mary's, Stafford (Fig. 2), which was decided against him by the Oxford and Cambridge Societies, and which is discussed in Webster and Elliott's compilation on the evolution of the Cambridge Camden Society;[2] and the extensive and vitriolic criticism that his first book received in the *Ecclesiologist* in 1842.[3] (His entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is similarly limited.)[4] While these incidents were important, they by no means sum up Petit's contributions to ecclesiology and are dwarfed by his writing and speaking over the following 25 years. At the time, these incidents probably helped to extend his reputation in an otherwise crowded field.

Here, then, I would like to give a brief introduction to Petit's writing on church architecture. While using some of his drawings as illustration, I will not discuss his art specifically, although this too seems to have been under-estimated until now for a number of different reasons. That is the subject of an article elsewhere.[5] If I quote his own words extensively, it is because they read well today, by no means the case for many of his contemporaries. To make it readable to the non-architect, and keep within reasonable limits, I stay at the rather general level, and in this sense do Petit an injustice. He did not avoid discussing architectural technicalities as I shall.

Born in 1801, John Louis Petit went to Cambridge in the 1820s, over fifteen years before the young men who would lead the Cambridge Camden Society and set up the *Ecclesiologist*. He took orders, as did nearly half Oxbridge graduates at that time.[6] Subsequently he served as a curate in Essex from 1828 until 1834 before turning his attention full time to ecclesiology, combining his profound interest in church architecture with his love of painting. In this too he was not unusual, being one of hundreds of gentlemen, many graduates and ordained, who were intensely occupied in antiquarianism, archaeology and history as these disciplines were evolving into sciences.[7]

Petit's first work, *Remarks on Church Architecture*, [hereafter referred to in this article as *Remarks*] was published seven years later in 1841, at a time when the fashion for Gothic had already become overwhelming. 'The saturation of the Church of England with…medievalism was even endorsed by the Primate himself…in 1832' and the Church Commissioners had been building, or renovating, nearly all churches in Neo-Gothic.[8] In this context Petit describes his objective:

Fig. 2: St Mary's, Stafford, by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1839–41. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection.

> …we are still in a great measure unacquainted with those principles to which buildings of the middle ages owe their peculiar beauty; and therefore the writer may perform a valuable service by bringing forward a collection of examples which will induce others to take a comprehensive instead of a limited view of the subject, and obviate those evils which result from the laying down of arbitrary rules upon imperfect data.[9]

And he went on to do exactly what he promised.

Petit accompanied his text with 278 illustrations, nearly all prepared by himself from his own watercolours, of different churches in different styles, from both the British Isles and the Continent, although mostly from England and France. These were distinctively artistic, by comparison with other authors' more mechanical drawings, and attracted attention as a result, as for instance in the *Ecclesiologist:* 'A great number of sketches, rough indeed [i.e. not measured], but always remarkably correct in perspective, and therefore not generally displeasing to the eye ... from their great variety give much value …'[10]

Petit's approach in *Remarks* was, therefore, diametrically the opposite to that of Professor Willis, Pevsner's exemplary scholar, who would say 'One building thoroughly and minutely examined in structure and history affords more genuine instruction than a cursory review of an hundred.'[11] Petit deliberately sought to provide the multitude of examples from different styles to broaden architects' understanding of beauty through form and proportion, to encourage originality and to oppose the idea of one correct style.

Each example conveyed an architectural message. In the first volume the different styles are grouped by chapter. For example on the Transition style, 'San Pantaleone at Pavia [see fig. 3] is a large and handsome brick building in the form of a cross; the nave being of great length…'[12] followed by a page on its special attractions. St Croix, Liège, is mentioned as one of the rare examples of Transition style in Belgium (Fig. 4).[13]

In the second volume specific themes are touched on, for example from the chapter on Composition he praises the tower at Leigh (Fig. 5), for simplicity and grandeur 'which has often failed to strike me in richer buildings'.[14] In the subsequent chapter he discusses Form and Proportion, citing numerous features of the church at Norbury (Fig. 6). Then, in the chapter on repairs, an example is Bakewell where the spire had recently come down and Petit suggests a detached belfry instead of reconstructing the tower (Fig. 7).

The *Ecclesiologist* had not yet been founded at the time Petit was writing the *Remarks*, and one of the leading proponents – possibly *the* leading proponent – of middle Gothic, was A. W. N. Pugin. His first significant work, *Contrasts*, had been published in

1836 and was to be his manifesto for fourteenth-century Gothic.[15] Yet *Contrasts* simply 'told its readers what they already more or less thought, giving back to them their own half-formed ideas…'.[16] There was no reasoning, simply an assertion that 'the wondrous superiority of …the 14th century by comparison with modern structures… must strike every attentive observer'.[17]

Petit certainly had Pugin's work in mind in writing *Remarks*,[18] but at this stage he is not against Gothic, just the way in which it was being practised. It was mainly the copyists that he was targeting.

> There is a manifest propriety, a careful adjustment, and a remarkable gracefulness of composition which pervades the whole (of the body of medieval church architecture)…till this is not only felt and appreciated, but reduced to practice, little beauty will result from the imitation of details.[19]

Instead he called for originality: 'The builder will thus learn, not to imitate, but to invent, perhaps to mark the period of his labours by a style distinguished from that of his ancestors otherwise than by its meagerness and deformity.' In urging development rather than Gothic authenticity, Petit was in line with the more advanced theorists of the pre-1840 generation; it is not surprising that he

Fig. 3: San Pantaleone at Pavia by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1839–40. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This drawing is reproduced opposite p.120 in Vol. I of Remarks.

Fig. 4: St Croix, Liège, by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1837–39. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This drawing is reproduced opposite p.150 in Vol. I of Remarks.

clashed with the Ecclesiologists, who were keen to encourage the reproduction of medieval precedents.

Of the restorers, Petit wrote: 'But alas for the building that falls into the hands of an ignorant or presumptuous restorer ! ... How many a noble church that for ages has preserved its beauty in spite of accident, violence or decay, seems to writhe and struggle under the fantastic additions and incongruous ornaments of some architect who fancies he can supply what its original designer omitted.'[20]

Petit proposed adopting and combining the best of different, including foreign, examples:

> Many continental features, if adopted with discretion, might not only give a pleasing variety to our buildings, but prove exceedingly useful in meeting cases for which English architecture has less perfectly provided. The circular or polygonal apse, the light central octagon, the tall slender turret, the tower surmounted by gables, are of comparative rare occurrence in England, while they constitute the principal beauties of many continental churches.[21]

Fig. 5: Leigh Church by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1838. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This drawing is reproduced opposite p. 44 in Vol. II of Remarks.

Fig. 6: Norbury Interior by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1838. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. An exterior view of the same church is reproduced opposite p.102 in Vol. II of Remarks.

Fig. 7: Bakewell Church, without central tower by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1838. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. A different view of the same church is reproduced opposite p.134 in Vol. II of Remarks.

Although he qualifies this by saying he would be sorry to see a continental manner 'generally introduced' and that the English models are in general 'the best that we could procure'.[22]

Remarks on Church Architecture was reviewed positively in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which unusually copied four woodcuts into their review. Although they tended to praise everything, they said more extravagantly than usual that 'Since the publication of Mr Hope's valuable essay, we have not risen with greater pleasure from the perusal of a work on the ecclesiastical architecture of the middle ages…'.[23] Thomas Hope had also advocated originality in his *An Historical Essay on Architecture* published posthumously in 1835 and Petit's work clearly followed in this tradition.

While Pevsner, writing in the 1970s, nit-picks about weak scholarship, because of less depth on each building noticed; or about his writing style for being too casual (the reason given for not counting Petit as a writer), he appears to miss the point of *Remarks*. Petit is pursuing a quest to understand what aspects and proportions of different styles make churches beautiful, at every level of scale, so as to broaden the basis from which present architects would work. Yet advocating originality, drawing on a multiplicity of styles and, heaven forbid, foreign models, in 1841, was like advocating freedom, tolerance and multi-nationalism in Italy just as Mussolini was coming to power. The extensive criticism that his book attracted in the first volume of the *Ecclesiologist* is perhaps testimony to the fact that it was significant at the time; it certainly offered an alternative to the journal's manifesto of copying medieval sources.

The rest of the 1840s saw the most heated debates, centered around the *Ecclesiologist*, and these probably decided Petit to give prime focus to his writing and to use his painting only to support that, and not as an end in itself. Gradually finished watercolours such as shown earlier became rare, and the more mixed architectural sketches, often confused with those of family members, predominate.[24] The *Archaeological Journal* began in 1844 and Petit was one of its most frequent contributors, with some fifteen articles over the next 30 years (including three posthumously published), as well as speeches to most of their annual congresses. These nearly always included some aspect that touched on the main themes I have described. For example, in 1845, writing on Tong, Church, Shropshire (Fig. 8):

> if we compare this central octagon and spire with any in Germany, where this feature is a common one, though it is exceedingly rare in England, we shall have no reason to pronounce that our own specimen suffers by comparison' and '…it is within the province of archaeology not merely to establish dates or certify historical facts, but also to encourage a true appreciation of the relics bequeathed to us, as indications of the spirit, character, and genius, of a former age.[25]

Or, in 1848, on Southwell Minster (Figs 9 and 10), concerning uniformity of style:

> …the three earlier styles [i.e. Norman, Early English, decorated] are exhibited without confusion or intermixture, in grand and distinct masses…..In all the three styles the work appears to have been most carefully executed, and affords, as pure examples of each as are to be found in any building now extant.[26]

Intense debate on restoration also continued during the 1840s. While Petit took a stand on St Mary's, Stafford, he is not known to have participated in the arguments concerning the Round Church, Cambridge, although he painted it before the restorations began (see Fig. 11).[27]

During the 1840s Petit also published four slim books of his speeches, the most attractive of which is *Remarks on Architectural Character*, the text of a paper delivered to the Lichfield Architectural Society in 1845. It is attractive especially because it is a beautiful item in its own right: large folio size (46x33cm) with

Fig. 8: Tong Church, Shropshire by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1840–45. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection.

just fifteen pages of text, and 45 full page illustrations – illustrations that 'convey to his readers some just principles that may guide their judgment to the real sources of the beauty…[and] illustrate the author's views more distinctly than any text could convey…'[28] However, perhaps mindful of earlier criticism, Petit took care to point out that he sought the underlying principles of beauty in churches not for beauty's sake, but because of its higher purpose:

> To come to the matter in hand – What should be the purpose of the church architect ? To design a structure, which will, in the first place, contain a sufficient congregation so arranged as to be enabled to perform in the best manner their public acts of religious duty; and which will also, by its beauty and solemnity, (inasmuch as the mind is affected by the senses,) dispose the worshipper to a frame most congenial to devotion.
>
> [The architect] will rather study [venerable models] attentively that he may understand and appreciate their beauty; than copy them minutely. He will not be so anxious to produce a picturesque effect, or imitate a particular style, as to design what will be seen, and felt, to be a good church.
>
> If he is earnest, his work will not be deficient in character.[29]

Fig. 9: On the left, Southwell Chapter House by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1847. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. On the right is the engraving of the drawing which was reproduced after p.214 in The Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute at Lincoln*, 1848.*

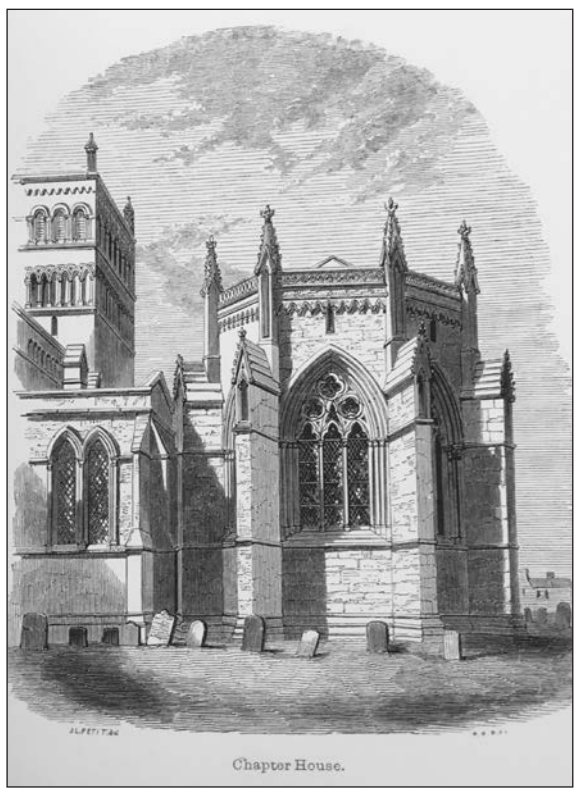


Fig. 10: Southwell Minster by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably later than figure 9, 1850s or '60s. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection.

The illustrations, all from the UK this time, demonstrated beauty in each different style according to proportion and architectural skill rather than conformity to a set of rules. For example in the Norman style, the tower of East Meon (Fig. 12); and the larger Romsey church which 'perhaps retains more of the Norman character throughout than any other we have' (Fig. 13).

'Character' for Petit seems remarkably close to Sir Ninian Comper's 'Atmosphere' in the latter's 'Of the Atmosphere of a Church'.[30] Both were concerned with the spiritual impact, although Petit focuses solely on the architectural design for a new church or a renovation, while Comper's concern is broader, covering music, lighting and the service itself.[31] Both, however adopt a rational approach. Petit used multiple examples and illustrations to convey what forms and structures work, and so as to inspire originality. Comper, when he moved to 'unity by inclusion' after 1910, synthesizes different styles in exactly the way that Petit had been calling for 50 years earlier.[32]

Yet at the end of the 1840s it was Ruskin's elaborate theories, and dramatic prose, that captured the stage. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* came out in 1849, followed by *The Stones of Venice* in 1853. On the one hand Ruskin proved to be an effective advocate

Fig. 11: Round Church, Cambridge, by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably c.1830. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. A very early example of Petit's monochrome style.

for some of Petit's themes: the irreplaceable value of ancient structures, overcoming the nationalist antipathy towards using foreign models, and the need for character, recognizing that the savagery that created this in Northern Gothic cannot be replicated. Nothing conveys this character of original Gothic better than Petit's drawings of our ruins (Figs 14 and 15). Yet on the other hand in the end Ruskin is as prescriptive as Pugin, or the Ecclesiologists. In 'The Lamp of Obedience' he defines the acceptable styles that architects should be obliged to follow with little more logic than in Pugin's appeal to self-evidence.

Nevertheless both Ruskin and Petit are grappling with the bigger problem, the definition of beauty in architecture. But they are operating on different levels, and come to vastly different conclusions. Ruskin tries to abstract rules from metaphysical

Fig. 12: East Meon Church by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1840-45. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. A different view is reproduced as illustration VIII in Remarks on Architectural Character, *1846.*

Fig. 13: Romsey Church by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1840–45. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. A different view is reproduced as illustration X in Remarks on Architectural Character, *1846. A similar view is reproduced in Petit's speech to the Archaeological Institute, also in 1846.*

Fig. 14: Crosland Abbey by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1845. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection.

Fig. 15: Byland Abbey by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1845. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection.

principles inspired by his love of Venice, and bolstered by his unique prose; Petit collects multitudes of examples of proportions which seem to work, what we might now call an evidence-based approach, so that architects can strike out for something original.

Anyway, by the early 1850s the intellectual debate had moved a long way forward. The arguments for preservation and careful restoration were being won, although it would be another fifteen years until the Committee for the Conservation of Architectural Remains was formed within RIBA.[33] Acceptable types of Gothic were no longer so restrictive, and looking to foreign models was no longer taboo.[34] Of course Petit was one among several influential voices opposing the strictures of the Gothicists, yet he was on the right side of the argument and his contributions had been significant.

For Petit, then, the issues left in the early 1850s were the exclusive predominance of (albeit more broadly defined) Gothic, and how Gothic could be developed beyond copyism. In 1854 he published his second major work *Architectural Studies in France* in which he looked closely in three regions of France for the best developed examples of round-arch styles. The studies were in considerable depth and collect another range of interesting and beautiful examples to inspire the architects to widen their repertoire.

For example the church of Montierneuf near Poitiers, which despite much alteration '…is still a very fine specimen of Romanesque….The nave has aisles and a semi-cylindrical roof…most of the arches are semi-circular…' (Fig. 16).[35] Or Poitiers Cathedral (Fig. 17), in the Angevine style, with 'the character of an enormous hall..; yet its very simplicity produces much grandeur', which he goes on to pin down.[36]

In the last two chapters Petit summarizes his case, now coming out strongly against exclusively Gothic, going well beyond what he was ready to say in 1841.

> It is now upwards of a quarter of a century since Gothic architecture has been decidedly fashionable, not merely as a study for the artist and the antiquary, but as a style to be revived by the architect. Is it too much to say that the result of this fashion (hitherto) is, that we have spoiled our old buildings by making them look new, and our new ones trying to make them look old ? The new Gothic churches of the day are, or promise to be, all that science or knowledge can make them; but medieval Gothic exhibited these and much more. It expressed a certain tone of feeling which does not now exist and is not likely to exist … Ours is not the age of Gothic art, but only of imitation.[37]
>
> The Gothic style is not a bad style, nor are the architects of the present day bad architects, yet the two do not agree together, and the result is unfavourable to both. I am far from denying that many modern buildings of great beauty and excellence of design have been erected in medieval styles. Yet, in general estimation…the highest praise is that a thing may be taken for something it is not.[38]

Fig. 16: Montierneuf by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1852. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This is reproduced opposite p.102 in Architectural Studies in France.

Instead his proposal is 'In any case, whether we revive or invent anew, let us aim to go beyond our predecessors, let us aim at some standard of perfection above any which they reached…I may be describing an impossibility; but if we try to reach it, we shall be sure to do something.'[39]

There is evidence to suggest that by the end of the 1850s architects were themselves open to using a wider range of styles; and they were certainly claiming originality rather than merely copying Gothic. Following a paper presented by Petit to RIBA on Italian architecture in 1855 all comments were positive, Professor Donaldson claiming 'The school of art in England…was much oppressed and the Italians might be congratulated that they had not an Ecclesiological Society to cavil at their proceedings…there was sufficient desire on the part of [our] architects to introduce novelties, but in many cases their employers were not sufficiently advanced and they were accordingly compelled to adhere to routine.'[40]

It is interesting that Petit then followed this up with a paper on the possible lessons from Byzantine architecture in 1858, based on a visit to Greece and Constantinople in 1857. Here the reaction was not nearly so positive.[41] It illustrates how Petit often went one step further than the main body of opinion was ready to accept. He was also persistent, following up this incursion into Byzantine architecture with a longer trip, also to Syria and Egypt, in 1865 and two articles on Middle Eastern religious architecture in 1866 (Fig. 18) just two years before he died, suddenly, from a chill caught while sketching.[42]

To summarize, in trying to widen the frame of reference that architects and their clients used in the middle of the nineteenth century, it must be said that, judged by results, Petit failed, and Gothic, albeit more varied Gothic, prevailed. Yet he contributed significantly to widening the range of what was acceptable, and might be considered to have shown a wider and deeper appreciation of beauty – character or atmosphere – in church architecture than any of his peers. And he has left us a wonderful record of that in his paintings, which surely deserve wider recognition. In recommending both the paintings and the writings of Petit, let us give the last word to Gilbert Scott, who, while acknowledging their differences about architecture, recalled:

> Lichfield always reminds me of dear old Mr Louis Petit … He was of a noble, generous nature, both as a scholar, as a gentleman, and as a most original artist …[43]

Fig. 17 (top): Notre Dame, Poitiers, by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1852. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This is reproduced opposite p.59 in Architectural Studies in France.

Fig. 18 (bottom): Church of the Monastery of Christ Pantocrator, Constantinople by the Revd J. L. Petit. Undated, probably 1865. Watercolour and pencil on paper. Private Collection. This is reproduced in the Archaeological Journal *Vol. XXIII, March 1866.*

Postscript

In researching Petit and trying to rescue him from obscurity, I am collecting as much information on, and examples of, his work as possible. I would be delighted to hear from members who have any of his paintings and could send me photos. Please send these to Philip@revpetit.com

Notes

1 Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (1972), p.100.
2 Described by Chris Miele, and separately by Gavin Stamp, in Chris Webster and John Elliott, *A Church as it Should Be* (2000), pp.274–5 and pp.182–3.
3 See *The Ecclesiologist* Vol. 1 (March 1842) p.90–110.
4 Guy Braithwaite *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2005). There are errors and omissions in this entry, due to be updated, besides its over-emphasis of these incidents.
5 My article in the *British Art Journal* vol xxxviii, no.2, Autumn 2017, classifies his painting styles, some of which are also illustrated here.
6 Francis Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (1998), p.107.
7 Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional* (1986), the community of gentlemen amateurs working alongside the emerging professions is especially described in chapter 2.
8 Simon Bradley, 'The Roots of Ecclesiology Late Hanoverian Attitudes to Medieval Churches', in Webster and Elliot, *A Church as it Should Be*, p.27.
9 Revd J. L. Petit, *Remarks on Church Architecture* (1841), Vol. 1 Preface i.
10 *The Ecclesiologist* Vol. 1 (March 1842), p.94.
11 Alexandrina Buchanan, *Robert Willis and the Foundation of Architectural History*, 2013, taken from the introduction to chapter 5, cited as CUL MS Add 5023.
12 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 1, p.120.
13 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 1, p.142.
14 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 2, p.44.
15 Rosemary Hill's biography claims that 'he gave the nineteenth century a new idea about what architecture could be and mean'. Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (2007), Prologue p.1.
16 Hill, *God's Architect*, p.182.
17 Quoted in Hill, *God's Architect*, p.155.
18 In rebutting the criticism of the *Ecclesiologist*, in 1843, in a published letter to the Lichfield Architectural Society, Petit quotes from Pugin, 'the gentleman to whose genius and zeal the present age will, if I mistake not, owe the revival of Gothic architecture'. *Address to the Secretaries…by the Rev J L Petit*, printed for the author by Thomas Lomax 1843; William Salt Library Stafford.
19 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 1 p.6.
20 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 2 p.129.
21 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 1 p.14.
22 Petit, *Remarks*, Vol. 1 p.13.
23 *The Gentleman's Magazine,* March 1842, pp.288–96.
24 Petit frequently painted with family members; dealers selling works by Petit do not distinguish those of his circle, see *British Art Journal* op. cit.
25 Revd J. L. Petit, Tong Church Salop *Archaeological Journal* Vol II 1845, pp.10, 13.
26 Revd J. L. Petit, 'Southwell Minster', *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute*, Lincoln 1848.
27 Chris Miele in Webster and Elliott, *A Church as it Should Be*, pp.263–74.
28 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Dec 1846, p.4.
29 Revd J. L. Petit, *Remarks on Architectural Character*, p.6.
30 Described in Anthony Symondson and Stephen Bucknall, *Sir Ninian Comper, An Introduction to His Life and Work* (2006).
31 Ninian Comper, *Of the Atmosphere of a Church*.
32 I am grateful to Nick Chapple for pointing out this parallel.

33 See Chris Miele, 'Professionalism and Restoration of Medieval Churches 1837–77', in Chris Brooks and Andrew Saint, *The Victorian Church* (1995).
34 Besides Ruskin, Webb and Street's foreign excursions, described in Dale Dishon's 'Three Men in a Gondola', in Webster and Elliott, *A Church as it Should Be*, Scott was now venturing abroad. Of course both the elder and younger Pugin's first publications were of foreign models in the 1820s.
35 Revd J. L. Petit, *Architectural Studies in France*, pp.102–103.
36 Petit, *Architectural Studies in France*, pp.59–60.
37 Petit, *Architectural Studies in France*, pp.170–171.
38 Petit, *Architectural Studies in France*, pp.173–4.
39. Petit, *Architectural Studies in France*, p.199.
40 *RIBA Transactions*, 1855, p.101.
41 *RIBA Transactions*, 1858
42 *Archaeological Journal* Vol. XXIII, March and December 1866.
43 Gavin Stamp (ed.), *George Gilbert Scott Recollections* (2005), p.298.

‘A Master in the Art’: Harry Hems and St Peter’s Revelstoke, Noss Mayo, Devon

Sue Andrew

Having spent many years gazing upward at medieval roof bosses, Sue Andrew has come to appreciate carvings at lower level and later date, especially the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century work of Harry Hems of Exeter.

SCULPTOR AND CARVER Harry Hems (1842–1916) established the highly-prolific and internationally-renowned Ecclesiastical Art Works in Exeter in the late nineteenth century, yet he has been comparatively little studied. In part this may be because the archive of original documents from his business was almost certainly destroyed when his sons retired in 1938,[1] but letters from Hems to a patron concerning the furnishing and decoration of one particular church built in 1880–82 – St Peter’s Revelstoke, Noss Mayo, Devon – do survive.[2] These letters, together with the rich and varied carvings at the church, and contemporary photographs of the work taken at Hems’s studios, afford us a rare and fascinating glimpse of the man and his methods (Fig. 1).

Carving a career – the early years of Harry Hems

Hems was born in Islington, and seemed destined to spend his working life in the cutlery business, his mother’s family being the Wostenholms, owners of a firm of highly successful cutlers based in Sheffield. An apprenticeship with the firm did not suit, however, although Hems did adopt as his personal motto the firm’s trademark: I.X.L. (I excel). Having been inspired originally at the Great Exhibition in 1851 by the carving of Thomas Wilkinson Wallis, Hems turned to woodcarving. He was indentured to Arthur Hayball of Sheffield, a talented carver with a keen interest in the developing art and science of photography, a medium which Hems would later use himself to very good effect. Hems worked as hard for Hayball as ever he would, though does not seem to have enjoyed a good relationship with his master whose skill he recognised but whose character he found miserable.[3]

The Gothic Revival of the mid-nineteenth century ensured that a traditionally-trained skilled carver was not short of work and, after serving out his apprenticeship in Sheffield, Hems was employed for two years in various parts of the United Kingdom before venturing to Italy to work in studios in Florence and Carrara. At the beginning of 1866 Hems was back in England, and in December of that year he came to Exeter to work on the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. Arriving by train, just outside the station Hems picked up an old horseshoe, his ‘Luckie Horseshoe’, with which he would long be associated and after which he would name his studios.

Fig. 1: Harry Hems, c.1890, from a print in Emily Baring’s scrapbook.

Gradually building up a loyal workforce, Hems's drive and determination, his attention to detail and his business acumen, which included a flair for self-promotion, soon brought him to the attention of several notable architects, among whom was Sir George Gilbert Scott. Working at the church of St John the Baptist, Stowford (Fig. 2), for Scott in 1874, it was recorded that:

> Almost all the wood and stone carved work, which was most extensive, and much of it most elaborate, was executed by Harry Hems, of Exeter, whose fame as an ecclesiastical sculptor and carver is a sufficient guarantee of the excellence and fidelity with which the carving has been done.[4]

An association with other well-respected architects, such as Edward Ashworth at Topsham, near Exeter, in 1876, and John Loughborough Pearson at Dartington, 1878–80, ensured that Hems's star continued to rise. He took on more craftsmen – in the census of 1881, 23 men and seven boys were employed – and soon required new premises to accommodate his business. In 1881 he purchased the freehold of two acres of land, some three minutes walk from the centre of Exeter in Longbrook Street. Here new

Fig. 2: Detail of bench end at the church of St John the Baptist, Stowford, Devon, carved 1874. The knife beneath the severed head of the saint is based on a bowie knife produced by the Sheffield cutlers, Wostenholm, Hems's maternal ancestors. On its blade it carries the I.X.L. *mark.*

studios – the Luckie Horseshoe Studios – were built according to plans drawn up by architect Robert Medley Fulford, with whom Hems worked on many occasions (Fig. 3).

The buildings survive, with a restaurant – Harry's – now occupying the ground floor, and a firm of chartered civil and structural engineers occupying the upper floors. Hems's office is remarkably intact – his photograph is above the fireplace and a frieze of Delft tiles collected by Hems, together with an inscription carved some twelve years after Hems first moved in, winds its way around the room (Fig. 4). On the outside of the building, below a statue representing Art, is a shield bearing the horseshoe picked up by Hems some sixteen years before. Beneath is Hems's motto: 'I.X.L.'.

In 1882, aged 40, Hems had reached his prime, but, never lacking in ambition, he remained keen to expand his business and extend his studios further. A major commission for the carving at St Peter's Revelstoke, Noss Mayo, Devon, must therefore have seemed heaven sent.

Background to the building of St Peter's

The ruins of the medieval church of Revelstoke shelter in woodland on cliffs above Stoke Bay, south Devon. Dedicated to St Peter before the Reformation, it is now more usually known as the church of St Peter the Poor Fisherman and is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. The church was devastated in 1868 when the roof of the nave collapsed, apparently riddled with dry rot.[5] Only the south aisle remained in occasional use.

Fig. 3: Hems's former 'Luckie Horseshoe Studios', Longbrook Street, Exeter.

In 1877 Edward (Ned) Charles Baring (1828–97) (Fig. 5), from 1882 until 1890 senior partner of Barings Bank, and his wife, Louisa Emily Charlotte Baring (1839–92) (Fig. 6), purchased the Membland estate with the Manor of Revelstoke and Noss Mayo. Emily Baring's family, the Bulteels, lived nearby. Extensive building work was undertaken on the main house and estate houses at Membland in the late 1870s. In August 1878 a son, Rupert, was born, but died at the tender age of seven weeks and was buried in the churchyard on the cliffs.

Fig. 4: Hems's office at his studios is largely intact. The fire surround is carved with his initials and his 'Luckie Horseshoe', and his portrait hangs above.

Thoughts turned to the ruined church – what was to be done? Rebuilding would be difficult as considerable damage had been done to pillars and walls by the roof collapse, moreover, most of the congregation dwelt in the village of Noss Mayo, on the banks of Newton Creek on the estuary of the River Yealm, one and a half miles distant. Here nearly all the inhabitants lived by fishing. Described as 'a quaint, homely and honest set of people, half aquatic, and little acquainted with the world outside their narrow sphere',[6] the villagers observed Sundays religiously. Although there had been a Chapel of Ease in Noss since 1839, Ned and Emily Baring decided, for the benefit of the good fisherfolk, to build a new parish church of St Peter on a sloping site above the village (Fig. 7).

Plans for the new church

Plans for the new church were drawn up by architect James Piers St Aubyn (1815–95) in 1880.[7] St Aubyn's architectural practice was based in London, but he worked extensively in the south-

Fig. 5: Edward Charles Baring, by Rudolf Lehmann, 1879. Ned Baring was created 1st Lord Revelstoke in 1885. Image courtesy of the Baring Archive.

Fig. 6: Louisa Emily Charlotte Baring, Lady Revelstoke. Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017.

west, particularly in Cornwall, where members of his aristocratic family lived. Although criticised for his restorations of medieval churches, 'many, if not most' of which were 'unnecessarily destructive',[8] St Aubyn could produce new work of great sensitivity. It is acknowledged that 'He was an accomplished deployer of Gothic in his new churches, most of which are relatively small, but the largest ... are impressively composed, often on difficult sites.'[9]

St Aubyn's plans reveal that the church was to be built in the Perpendicular Gothic style to accommodate 200 persons. An influence on the design of the new church was assuredly the medieval church of Newton Ferrers situated on the opposite bank of the creek. St Aubyn used the precipitous nature of the site at Noss to advantage, building a vestry and store beneath the north aisle, accessed by a winding staircase enclosed within a projecting turret. As would be expected, the plans contain a wealth of detail of the building and its furnishings, from the vestry fireplace and chimney to the hinges and lock plates on the doors of the tower screen.

In employing an architect with West Country connections, the Barings set a precedent for the building of the church. This was to be carried out entirely by the Barings' own men, under the general supervision of their agent, Samuel Adams, and under the

Fig. 7: St Peter's Revelstoke, set above the fishing village of Noss Mayo, 1880s, from a photograph in Emily Baring's scrapbook.

immediate direction of clerk of works, George W. Crosbie. Using local dun stone quarried on the estate, and granite from Dartmoor, the intention was to build according to the best local traditions, and this carried through to the interior decoration and furnishings, also assigned to local artists and craftsmen. John T. Fouracre, of Fouracre and Watson, Plymouth, was appointed to create the stained glass windows, to provide painted panels for the reredos and chancel, and to decorate the walls and ceilings. Henry Gullet of Yealmpton provided the marble inlay in the chancel, and Hems was entrusted with all the oak furnishings and fittings. [10]

The pulpit

The carvings shown in St Aubyn's plans are Gothic traceried. Yet a visit to St Peter's reveals a great array of elaborately carved oak, some of it decidedly unconventional, that does not appear in the original drawings. Hems's letters to Mrs Baring are particularly instructive with regard to these changes, none more so than his letters regarding St Aubyn's pulpit.

The pulpit is drawn in detail in St Aubyn's original plans of 1880 (Fig. 8) and was carved at Hems's studios according to these plans in 1882 (Fig. 9). Since the architect's drawings for the pulpit must have received prior approval, Hems was at considerable risk of offending his patrons when he commented on the design in a letter to Mrs Baring written on 16 June 1882. He referred to the pulpit thus: 'the pulpit...somehow has a poverty stricken look about it – as if it were meant for a mission church!' As a postscript to this letter, Hems added 'I had a letter from Mr St Aubyn 2 days ago – very crossly worded.'[11]

The response he received from Mrs Baring, if any, is not known, but nearly two weeks later, the pulpit is mentioned again. In a letter of 29 June 1882, Hems writes:

> I am venturing to send for your much esteemed acceptance a photo of the pulpit. Now that it is all together and quite finished off it does not look at all bad for a simple pulpit? Of course it has no pretention *(sic)* to richness, being nothing but ordinary traceried work judiciously designed.[12]

Sadly no further correspondence on the matter appears to survive. What is abundantly clear, however, is that Hems's words had the desired effect. In 1884 a most elaborately carved oak pulpit, presumably designed by Hems, took the place of that drawn by St Aubyn. Keen to publicise his work, Hems ensured that a drawing of it was published three years later in *The Furniture Gazette*.[13]

The pulpit is carved inside and out, with four inset panels of scenes from the bible, including the stoning of Stephen and Paul

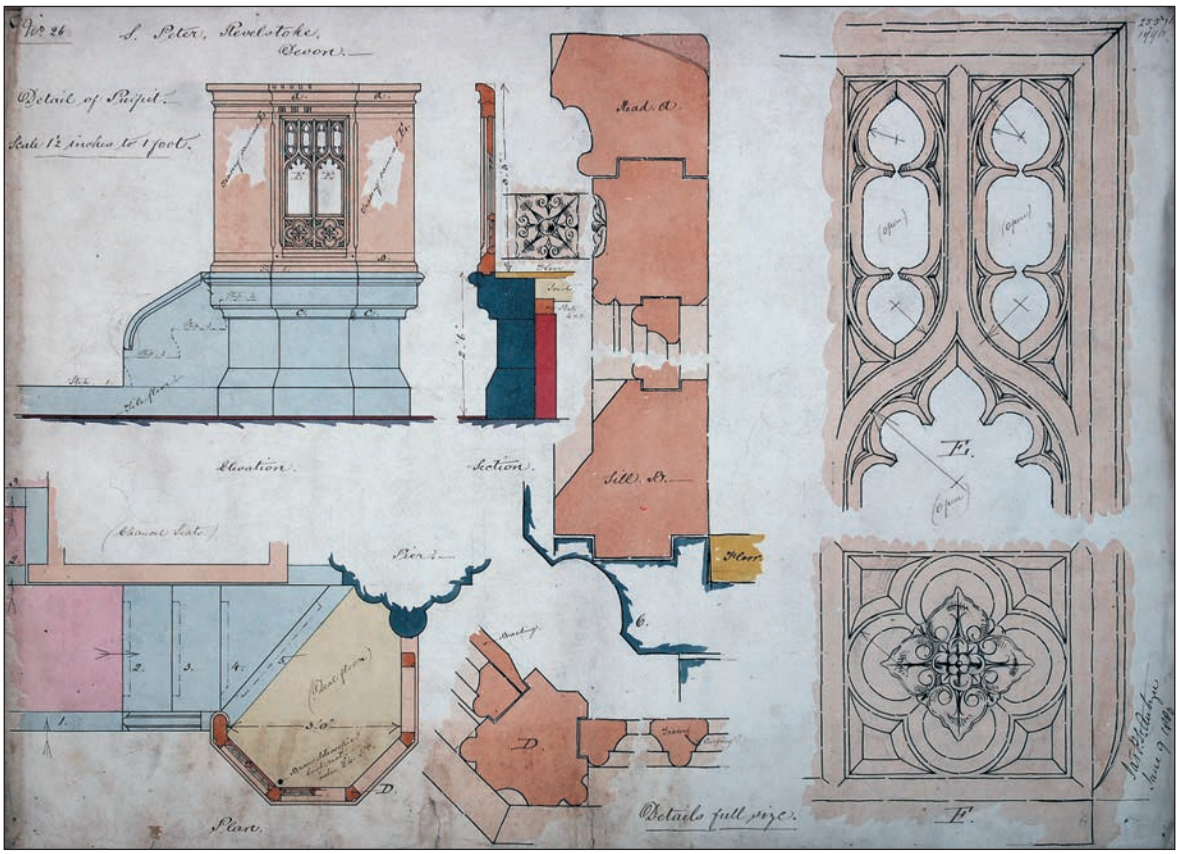


Fig. 8: Plan of pulpit for St Peter's Revelstoke by J. P. St Aubyn, 1880. © Plymouth Museums Galleries Archives

preaching at Athens (Figs 10 and 11). The carving is signed and dated: HARRY HEMS Sculp EXETER 1884. Careful examination of the pulpit also reveals that it bears the I.X.L. mark which Hems had adopted from his maternal ancestors, the Wostenholms.

Hems may truly have felt that St Aubyn's original pulpit did not fit with the increasingly lavish decoration at St Peter's, but ever mindful of a business opportunity, and aware that the Barings were not short of funds, it is not difficult to understand why he proceeded as he did. The Barings wanted the best and Hems was astute enough to use this to his advantage, with the consequence that all were satisfied, save perhaps the architect.

The chancel roof

The church, including the chancel, is overarched with wagon roofs, and studded with bosses at the junctions of ribs and purlins typical of those found in late medieval churches in Devon (Fig. 12). Hems's letters regarding the chancel roof are particularly useful for an understanding of his working methods.

On 5 June 1882, Hems noted:

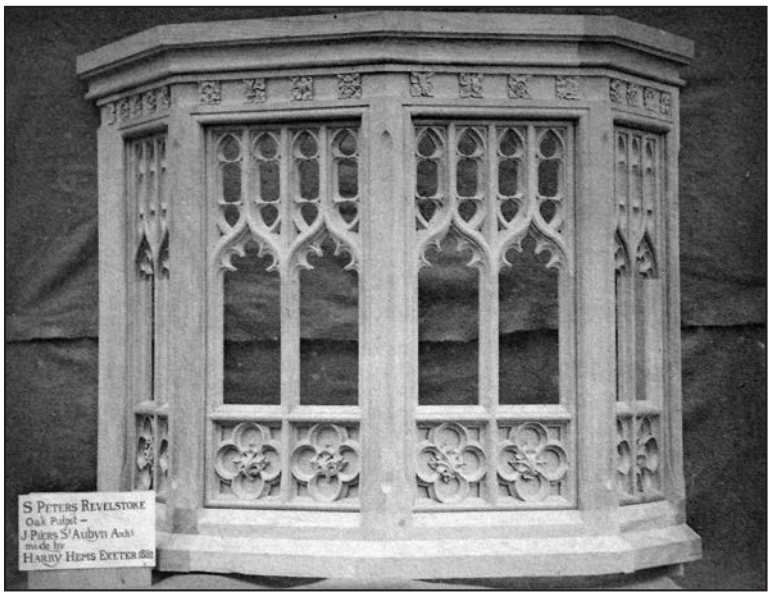


Fig. 9: Photograph of pulpit carved by Harry Hems for St Peter's Revelstoke, 1882. © Plymouth Museums Galleries Archives

> On Saturday I was in S. Andrew's Plymouth (I did work there under Sir Gilbert Scott) and looking at the chancel roof with Dr Wilkinson the vicar, saw at once precisely the line of work to pursue in your chancel. S. Andrew's is a grand specimen of the typical Devonshire roof. The ornament coming down at Noss hard upon the projecting corbels would look a little crude & so I shall stop it – as is always done in the best old Devonshire churches with carved representations of angels. I have sketched out the effect & enclose it. Half the angels will belong to the church militant & wear crosses on their heads & bear shields; the other half will pertain to the church triumphant & hold their hands in the act of prayer.[14] (Fig. 13)

Four days later, on 9 June, Hems wrote to Mrs Baring about the roof again:

> Madame, I feel anxious about the angels and roof work being <u>just</u> what it ought to be. I shall run down tomorrow (Saturday) with an angel, & put it in place, that you may see the effect & judge the size &c. Then I shall go to the old church at Revelstoke & see which of the enrichments in the roof there we can copy. If it is possible to utilize them all we ought certainly so to do? I shall bring down modelling clay &c so that careful impressions of them can be made on the spot & these can be carefully copied in the new work.[15]

On 26 June a further letter read:

> I hear that Mr Baring likes the roof work, for which I am very glad. He says I am all behind, but the fact is I have felt that your handsome church should be, so far as regards my own particular work anyhow, altogether the outcomings of Westcountry workmen. I have therefore quite firmly refused all offers of outside help and my own little staff of Devonshire artists have done every stroke of the carved work which, I earnestly trust, will for many generations to come adorn S. Peter's at Revelstoke.[16]

Fig. 10: Paul preaching at Athens, detail of pulpit carved at Hems's studios, 1884.

Fig. 11: The stoning of Stephen, detail of pulpit carved at Hems's studios, 1884.

Fig. 12: St Peter's Revelstoke, interior.

These letters to Mrs Baring emphasise the care and attention to detail that Hems was exercising in his approach to the building project and, equally, his desire that this was recognised by his patrons. Hems also recorded his significant connections with the medieval parish church of St Andrew's Plymouth, the largest in Devon, and the architect who oversaw its restoration in 1875, Sir Gilbert Scott, all of which served to reassure the Barings that their trust in him was not misplaced. In the last of these three letters Hems even manages to turn what might have been perceived as a criticism, regarding the slow progress of the work, to his favour.

Fig. 13: Angel in the chancel roof.

The cherubs in the chancel

The building of St Peter's was a deeply personal project for the Barings, especially for Emily Baring. While ostensibly for the fisherfolk of Noss Mayo, the church also acted as a memorial to members of the Baring and Bulteel families. One of the stained glass windows by Fouracre was in memory of Lady Elizabeth Bulteel, Emily Baring's mother, while another remembered her two young sons who had died, Arthur (d.1863) and Rupert (d.1878). But the church was for the living too and Hems's letters document a personal touch in the decoration of the chancel later discussed by Maurice Baring, son of Ned and Emily Baring, in *The Puppet Show of Memory,* published in 1922. In this work of autobiography, Baring recalls: 'Hugo [his younger brother] and I both sat for cherubs' heads, which were carved in stone on the reredos'.[17]

Maurice's memory failed him somewhat as the cherubs' heads were not on the reredos but on the north and south walls of the chancel, but he was recalling an event which happened when he was just eight years old. Hems's letter sets the record straight. On 16 June 1882, he wrote:

> You will not forget to let me have a cabinet head – or rather two cabinet heads each – one in profile and the other full faced of Masters Maurice and Hugo? S. Maurice was a great saint at Plympton S Maurice in the days long ago & there is not the least possible reason why Masters Maurice and Hugo should not be made into little saints now! The larger the head, the readier for practical purposes. I do not want the shoulders shown but just a head full of detail.[18]

The heads, carved in grey marble (Fig. 14), are clearly portraits of the two boys, but they do not seem out of place alongside the other four carved cherubs and must have been a source of amusement to Maurice and Hugo, while perhaps, a source of some comfort to their mother.

Fig. 14: Carved stone heads in the chancel of Maurice Baring (b.1874) and Hugo Baring (b.1876).

The bench ends

In a book presented to the Barings' daughter Elizabeth on her marriage to Viscount Castlerosse in April 1887, the effect of the carved bench ends is described:

> Wander where you will along the hallowed aisles, or up the stately nave, and note, even as you pace along, the carven ends that flank every bench. There are three score and ten of them, or thereabouts, each carved in a different pattern from its fellow, all showing diversity of conception and design; yet every one blending and forming a unit in one harmonious whole. [19]

The architect's plan for traceried bench ends, like the pulpit, seems to have been rejected in favour of an array of figural, foliate, and elaborate traceried work, all carved by Hems's men. While the architect's name appears in photographs of the bench ends taken in the Luckie Horseshoe studios, it is certain that St Aubyn did not design them all; many were the inspiration of Hems himself or were copied by Hems from those at the ruined church on the cliff. In a letter published in March 1882, Hems declared: 'The ancient fane is a fifteenth-century building. Its old bench ends, curiously carved in oak, are at present in my atelier at Exeter, and I am producing exact facsimiles of them for the new church'.[20]

The figural carvings, many of new design, reflect this world and the next, and so the arms of the Baring family are found with saints and angels (Fig. 15) not far distant. Two carvings are particularly distinctive and receive special mention in Hems's letters: one of Bishop Temple of Exeter, later Bishop of London

Fig. 15: Bench end of angel, carved at Hems's studios, 1882.

and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who consecrated the new church at Noss on 6 September 1882 (Fig. 16), the other of a great sea fight.

There are several reasons why Hems may have chosen to represent Bishop Temple (Fig. 17), appointed at Exeter in 1869. The bishop was 'a quintessential Victorian, rugged, tolerant and emotional' and had 'enormous energy',[21] all of which would have appealed to Hems, who recognised Temple as 'a venerable and learned divine'.[22]

On 15 June 1882, Hems 'took the bull by the horns' and sent a photograph of the carving of the bishop to the episcopal palace in Exeter. In the accompanying letter he explained that the figure was carved:

> wearing the high mitre of the 15th century, richly attired and carrying his crozier on the right side. The left hand is open. This exceptionable *(sic)* attitude refers without doubt, to the unselfish character of this particular bishop, of whom it is recorded upon more than one authority, that he freely gave one half [of] his stipend to form a new bishopric in Cornwall.[23]

Hems received a reply from the bishop himself, describing the carving as 'exceedingly skilful', which he forwarded on to Mrs

Fig. 16: The consecration of St Peter's Revelstoke, 6 September 1882, from a photograph in Emily Baring's scrapbook. The figures are 1. Bishop Temple, 2. Ned Baring, 3. Archdeacon Earle, 4. Revd H. F. Roe.

Fig. 17: Bench end portraying Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter, carved at Hems's studios, 1882.

Baring as he thought the correspondence would 'amuse' her.[24] Naturally, mention of the carving of the bishop found its way into the newspapers, thus associating Hems in the public mind with an authority of the church who had proved his worth in Devon, despite being a controversial appointment initially.

The carving of the sea battle again gave Hems the chance to associate himself with the great and the good (Fig. 18). On 13 July 1882 Hems wrote to Mrs Baring:

> I really hope that the last of this set of bench ends will be the best! It is not altogether ecclesiastical – save that in the bible we read of wars and rumours of wars! But I think it will be pre-eminently suitable for the tastes of the good fisher people, who, for generation after generation, will undoubtedly worship at the church your goodness has created. It is a representation of an ancient sea fight. There-in, you can see an old vessel (named Baring or Bulteel I conclude for there is a 'B' on the mainsail?), who puts out into the channel and deliberately thrashes a couple of hugh *(sic)* Spanish galleons. The only witness to this doughty deed appears to be the veritable great sea-serpent himself who...raises his head...and looks on in astonishment.[25]

Hems also carved the figure of Ned Baring in the crow's nest, identifying him by his initials 'E.C.B.'. Despite being transfixed by a huge arrow, Baring hurls a rock down upon the enemy. The sea battle bench end was all about the power and influence of the Barings, yet Hems made sure it was about him too, for in the upper corner, just to the left of the central figure of Ned Baring, and easily read, runs the inscription 'HARRY HEMS and his Merrie Men carved all these bench ends at EXETER 1882' (Fig. 19).

The font cover

None of the surviving letters from Hems to Mrs Baring mentions the font cover. It is likely, however, that the font cover was designed by Hems as his name alone appears on the label photographed alongside the cover in 1884 – there is no mention of St Aubyn the architect. The cover is a *tour-de-force* of figural and foliate carving. Eight cherubs are carved around its base, perhaps representing the eight surviving Baring children, and four angels playing musical instruments stand at its top (Fig. 20). The cover can still be lifted using original counterweights.

It is in a raised position that the beauty of the carving can best be seen, for inside the cover is revealed the dove of the Holy Spirit coming down upon the child who is baptised and a prayer: 'O LOVING FATHER THEE WE PRAY LOOK ON THIS BABE NEW BORN TODAY' (Fig. 21).

Fig. 18: Bench end of sea battle, with a Baring ship, carved at Hems's studios, 1882.

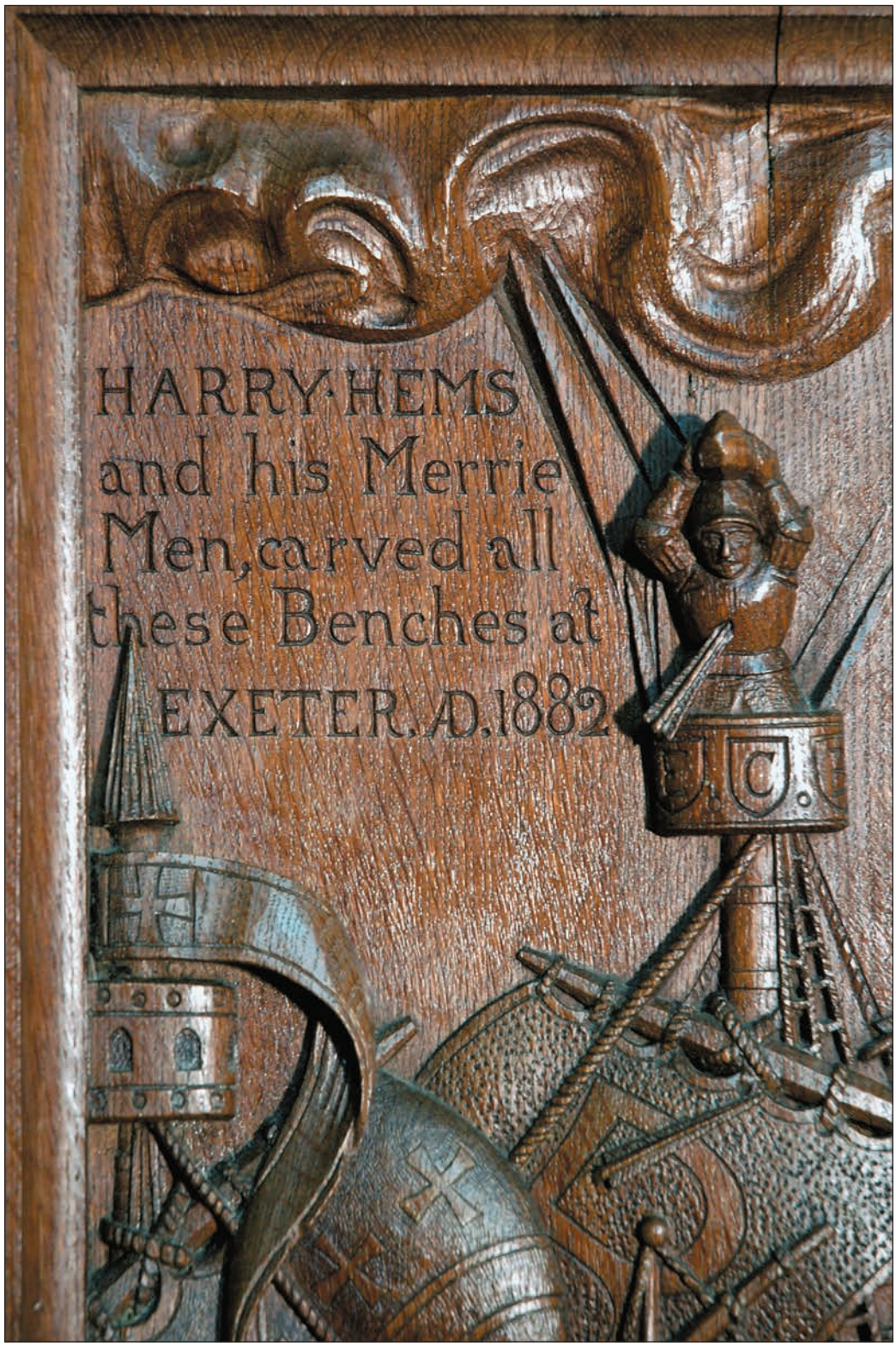


Fig. 19: Detail of Hems's inscription on bench end.

Fig. 20: Font cover carved at Hems's studios, 1884.

Fig. 21: Interior of font cover carved at Hems's studios, 1884.

For Hems the carving of the font cover must have held a particular poignancy. He was a man who took great delight in his own family though, sadly, in late February 1884, Hems and his wife Charlotte lost a son, Archie, at the age of eight weeks – the only one of Hems's eight children with Charlotte not to survive to adulthood.

Conclusion

There is much other woodwork at St Peter's worthy of discussion, from the ornate lectern whose design was worked up by Hems from a sketch by Maurice Baring, to a small coffer which records in a carved inscription the gift of the church by the Barings. Each of the carvings has a story to tell, but the object here has not been to provide a descriptive account of all the church's furnishings and fittings, rather to utilise the letters and some of the carvings to explore Hems's character and methods.

There is no doubt that Hems forged an excellent relationship with Mrs Baring. His letters to her are respectful, yet candid, suggesting what might be done and the authority on which this was based. Hems had the research, experience, and a highly-skilled local workforce to make material his wealthy patrons' wishes and he was not afraid to talk about it.

While the letters appear hurriedly written, with smudging and scorings out, they are, in fact, carefully crafted, with just the

right amount of detail and a personal touch which is appealing. Accompanied by a steady stream of photographs of work for approval, the Barings were kept fully informed of developments, and any implied criticism of the pace of work seems to have been dealt with swiftly and boldly by Hems.

Hems appears supremely self-confident: for a carver to tell his patron that the architect, whose designs he should have been translating, was angry with him, is remarkably forthright. Perhaps Hems was anticipating that if he did not bring the matter to the Barings' attention, St Aubyn would, and, if so, he was keen to elicit Mrs Baring's support.

At St Peter's, Hems and his men had an unrivalled opportunity to produce work of extraordinary variety and richness and he took full advantage of it. The moment passed quickly, however, as in 1890 Lord and Lady Revelstoke lost their fortune when Barings Bank experienced a financial crisis and had to be bailed out by the Bank of England and other banks.

Nonetheless, Hems was commissioned to make a cross for the churchyard at Revelstoke. The text of a letter dated 5 January 1892 from Lady Revelstoke, regarding the cross, survives as it was later used as a testimonial by Hems. It reads:

> My Dear Mr Hems
> I must tell you how beautiful I think the cross you have just erected in Revelstoke Churchyard. One can see at a glance it has the stamp of a Master in the Art. I admire it more and more every day, and so does his Lordship, who bids me tell you so.
> Always yours very sincerely, L. Emily C. Revelstoke.[26]

While working at St Peter's Revelstoke in 1882, Hems had in hand 24 other churches in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.[27] Yet through his work in the new church at Noss Mayo and his letters to Mrs Baring, a view emerges of the man and his methods not so easily seen elsewhere. For Hems, St Peter's was 'one of the most exquisite little churches in all England'.[28] Many would still agree.

Author's acknowledgement
I would like to thank Jane Barnett, Christopher Bradley, Mel Ellis, the Revd Anne Legge and Mary Wilcox for sharing information about St Peter's. I am especially grateful to Nicholas Baring for allowing me to reproduce images and information from Emily Baring's scrapbook, and to Alun Sands and Sam Pounds for their support and for granting access to Hems's former studios in Longbrook Street, Exeter. Nick Chapple's helpful suggestions have been much appreciated.

Notes

1 Although the great majority of Hems's original documents are lost, the Devon Heritage Centre holds a series of large scrapbooks kept by Hems in which he pasted newspaper cuttings and journal articles pertaining to his business. Although a few personal notes are included, the scrapbooks very much reflect the public face of Hems.
2 These letters survive in a scrapbook kept by Louisa Emily Charlotte Baring.
3 Harry Hems, 'Why I succeeded in business', *Pearson's Weekly*, w/e 17 November 1894, 279.
4 *North Devon Journal*, 29 October 1874, 5.
5 *Western Times*, 24 April 1868, 6.
6 *Western Daily Mercury*, 1 October 1881, 2.
7 St Aubyn's plans for the St Peter's Revelstoke, Noss Mayo, are held in the Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, PWDRO 1422/32.
8 Peter Beacham and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Cornwall* (2014), 76.
9 Beacham and Pevsner, *Cornwall*, 76.
10 PWDRO 3642/230. Copy of book presented to Elizabeth Baring on the occasion of her marriage to Viscount Castlerosse, 1877.
11 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 16 June 1882.
12 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 29 June 1882.
13 *The Furniture Gazette*, 1 November 1887.
14 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 5 June 1882. St Andrew's church, Plymouth, was badly bombed in the Second World War and Hems's work there was destroyed.
15 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 9 June 1882.
16 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 26 June 1882.
17 Maurice Baring, *The Puppet Show of Memory* (1922), 40.
18 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 16 June 1882.
19 PWDRO 3642/230.
20 *The Weekly Mercury*, 18 March 1882.
21 Nicholas Orme (ed.), *Unity and Variety A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter, 1991), 127.
22 Copy of letter from Hems to Temple, sent to Mrs Baring 16 June1882.
23 Copy of letter from Hems to Temple, sent to Mrs Baring 16 June 1882.
24 Copy of letter from Hems to Temple, sent to Mrs Baring 16 June 1882.
25 Hems, letter to Mrs Baring, 13 July 1882
26 Testimonial in Hems's scrapbooks, D.H.C., Exeter, *c.*1893. This cross has not yet been securely identified, but may be that in memory of Elizabeth Crocker, who died in August 1882, and was the first to be buried in the new churchyard. Lady Revelstoke paid for her memorial.
27 *Western Daily Mercury*, 8 September 1882.
28 Harry Hems, letter to the editor, *The Devon Evening Express*, 23 January 1883.

Re-constructing the pre-Reformation church: Will Croome and F. C. Eden's antiquarian ecclesiology at North Cerney, Gloucestershire

Alec Hamilton

Dr Alec Hamilton recently completed a DPhil at Kellogg College, Oxford, on 'The Arts & Crafts in church-building in Britain 1884–1918'. His book, 'Arts & Crafts Churches', is to be published in 2020.

DECRYING the 'restoration' of medieval churches by Victorian vicars, grandees, dunderheads and architects is well-trodden ground. The conventional Morris/SPAB view that ancient buildings were butchered by be-cassocked Philistines has gradually been replaced by a more nuanced understanding, led by Chris Miele in 1995, with his analytical assessment of the way in which architects worked with clerics in the mid-nineteenth century,[1] and more recently, William Whyte's account of expressions of Victorian theology through the minutiae of church architecture.[2] Less well examined have been the motivations and understanding of those individual laymen who paid the bills, and whose personal theology, or lack of it, informed the way in which 'their' churches took new shape.

As part of the present author's researches for his now completed DPhil – 'The Arts & Crafts in church-building Britain 1884–1918' – the medieval church of All Saints, North Cerney, Gloucestershire (Figs 1 and 2) emerged as an example, albeit a late one, of the process by which a church was re-furnished, even re-imagined, as one man's vision of a pre-Reformation village church. This was not the chilly ecclesiology of an intense church architect with a liturgical theory of how a church ought to be – as with Comper at St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire – nor the caprice of an architect inventing a vigorous new church interior with little or no evidence (or much religion), as with William Weir at St Michael and All Angels, Onibury, Shropshire. Nor was it sedulously academic or historicist: this was a mixture of fancy, devotion, connoisseurship, wilfulness, aestheticism and sensitivity, and, while it has come to be seen, locally at least, as the vision of one man, the reality is that it is the product of a potent trinity of idealism, money and practicality. It was also a vigorous repudiation of all things Low Church Victorian.

All Saints, North Cerney, is rich in antiquarian interest: the county history society's Transactions contain no paper on any aspect of the church later than 1900 – the interest is all scratch sundials, 'manticores' and heraldry.[3] The revised *Buildings of England* volume makes amends: 'For many the most attractive of Cotswold village churches, largely thanks to William Iveson Croome (1891–1967) of Cerney House, whose benefactions from 1913 onwards filled the church with exquisite furnishings.'[4] As we shall see, this is only part of the story. It has also been described as 'one

of the most beautiful churches in the Cotswolds, a unified work of art furnished in an eclectic style combining a rare late-medieval stone pulpit and painted glass with later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furniture and exquisite new work by [F. C.] Eden.'[5]

The archival resource for All Saints is substantial and detailed, for Croome was an inveterate recorder and historian. In the years before his death he donated most of his papers and photographs to Gloucestershire Archives (GA), including much on North Cerney. These include a Log Book showing the 'repair, discovery and decoration of the fabric' of the church from 1900 to 1952 in photographs, carefully numbered and annotated.[6] He donated other photographic albums too: one records the altar arrays for different liturgical seasons and different occasions. In the 1950s he compiled a lengthy and scholarly *History* of the church, which remains unpublished, but can be found in several drafts in the Gloucestershire Archives.[7] Most remarkable among the archives is Croome's list of craftsmen 'who actually wrought the work' in the church; this not only identifies their work, but provides

Fig. 1: All Saints, North Cerney, Gloucestershire, from the south. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

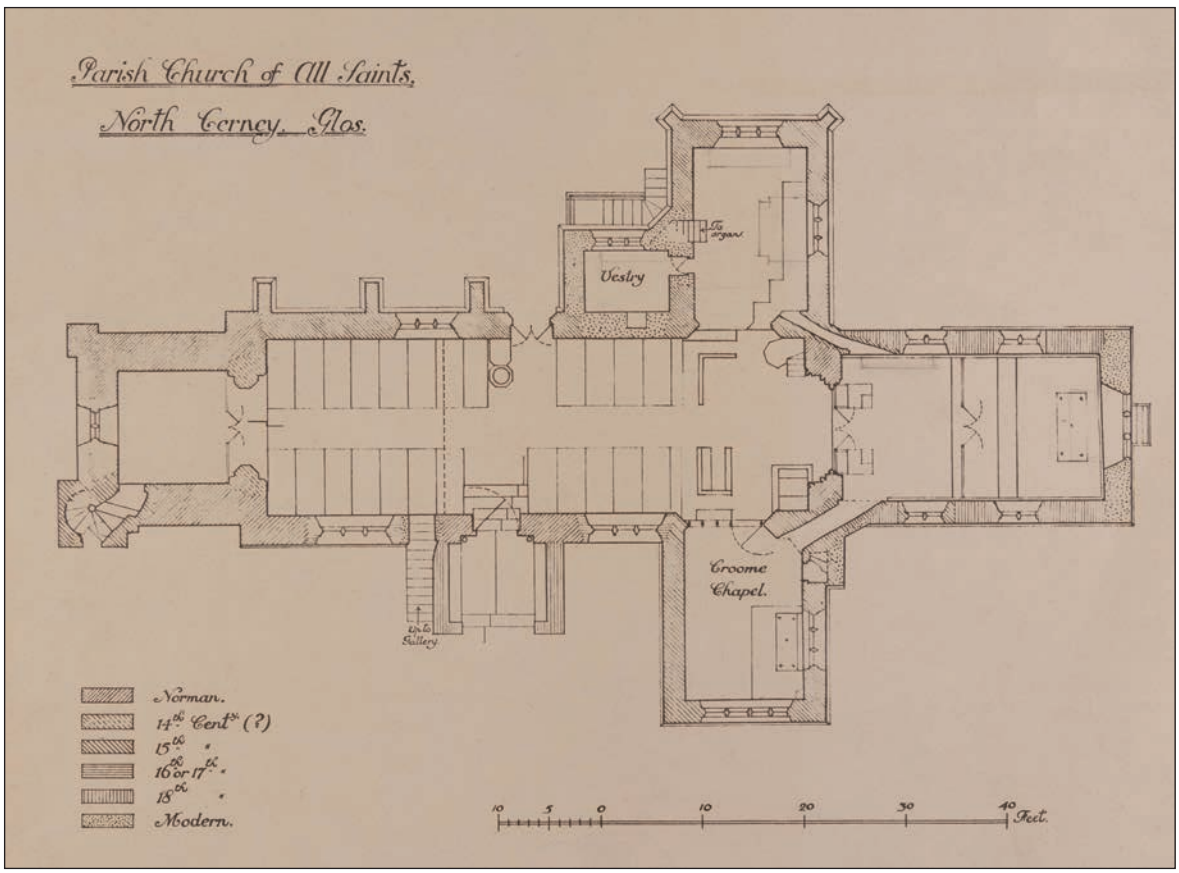
biographical notes on each of them, drawn from Croome's personal knowledge.[8]

Money and devotion – Will Croome

William (Will) Croome CBE MA FSA was a country gentleman (Fig. 3). His family connections with North Cerney went back to 1814, when the Croomes bought the estate. Will was born in Cerney House, and lived there – his parents' only child – until his father died in 1895. His mother took young Will to Weston-super-Mare, where her parents and sisters lived, and she resided there until at least 1911. Will retained the closest of ecclesiastical connections with North Cerney: he served as churchwarden there throughout his adult life, was a regular server, and acted as sacristan. Anthony Symondson SJ, who knew Croome, recorded his impressions:[9]

> Croome was one of the last of a rare breed of late-Victorian and Edwardian country gentlemen who, being men of taste and scholars in their own right, often bachelors, placed their knowledge and energy at the service of the Church.[10]

Fig. 2: Plan of All Saints, North Cerney, drawn by F. C. Eden. Undated. (RIBA Collections PA 2/8(5))



Croome was not only a devout Anglican, but was dedicated to the service of the wider church and, in particular, its fabric. An incident in his early life was formative – a talk, when he was just sixteen, with the then Rector of North Cerney, Canon Peter Goldsmith Medd. As they sat in the south transept of the church, Medd spoke to young Croome 'of the responsibility he would have when he came of age… and in particular the responsibility he would have for the church. This incident impressed Croome deeply.'[11] He sat on the Gloucester Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) from 1923, and was its Chairman from 1950; Vice-Chairman of the Central Council for the Care of Churches from 1943; Chairman of the Cathedrals Advisory Committee for England, 1953–67; and Chairman of the Grants Committee of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust from 1964.[12] His many publications include *The Care of our Churches* (reprint of an address to Gloucester Diocesan Conference, 1951) and *Old Churches, New Churches* (address to the Cheltenham Deanery Lay Council, n.d., 1960s). Locally, he was President of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society in 1953; his Presidential address was on 'Gloucestershire Churches'. In his honour and memory, the annual lectures of Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society (of which he was President from 1961) are 'The Croome Lectures'.

Croome had a vision of the church and his role in it that was both romantic and powerful. He 'discovered medievalism as a youth at St Barnabas, Pimlico, and [as a twelve-year old] attended the consecration of [Comper's] St Cyprian's, Clarence Gate, where, he said, a vision of English medieval liturgical worship was opened to him in a way then unknown.'[13] Croome saw himself as part of a tradition of country gentlemen who maintained the dignity of 'their' church:

> The first half of the [eighteenth] century, not always regarded as a very active period in the life of the church, was here [in North Cerney] a time of continuous and extensive expenditure upon both the fabric and the furnishing of the building, much of it due to the energy and enthusiasm of one man, Robert Rich of Cerney House… a prime mover in all that was done.[14]

Croome was the inheritor of Rich's estate and therefore, by implication, his church (Fig. 4) and people. As Anthony Symondson relates:

> Effectively North Cerney church became [Croome's] private chapel and he was also responsible for appointing the incumbent, although I am not sure if he was actually the patron. Whoever that was had to walk to the beat of his drum.[15]

Croome was not in fact the Patron – that was and is University College, Oxford – but his interest in North Cerney church *was*

nevertheless to some extent proprietorial. He was Lay Impropriator of the South Transept. The history is not wholly clear, but at some point in the sixteenth century, the Rich family – then Lords of the Manor – seem to have been granted permission to build a chantry chapel on the south side of the church. It also acted as a family vault, and they interred their dead under the floor. The chapel's 'ownership' seems to have passed with the ownership of Cerney House – hence it was at first known as the 'Rich Chapel', and became the 'Croome Chapel' in due course.

The churchwardens were responsible for the upkeep of the nave (they were here known as 'Sequestrators' of the parish). The

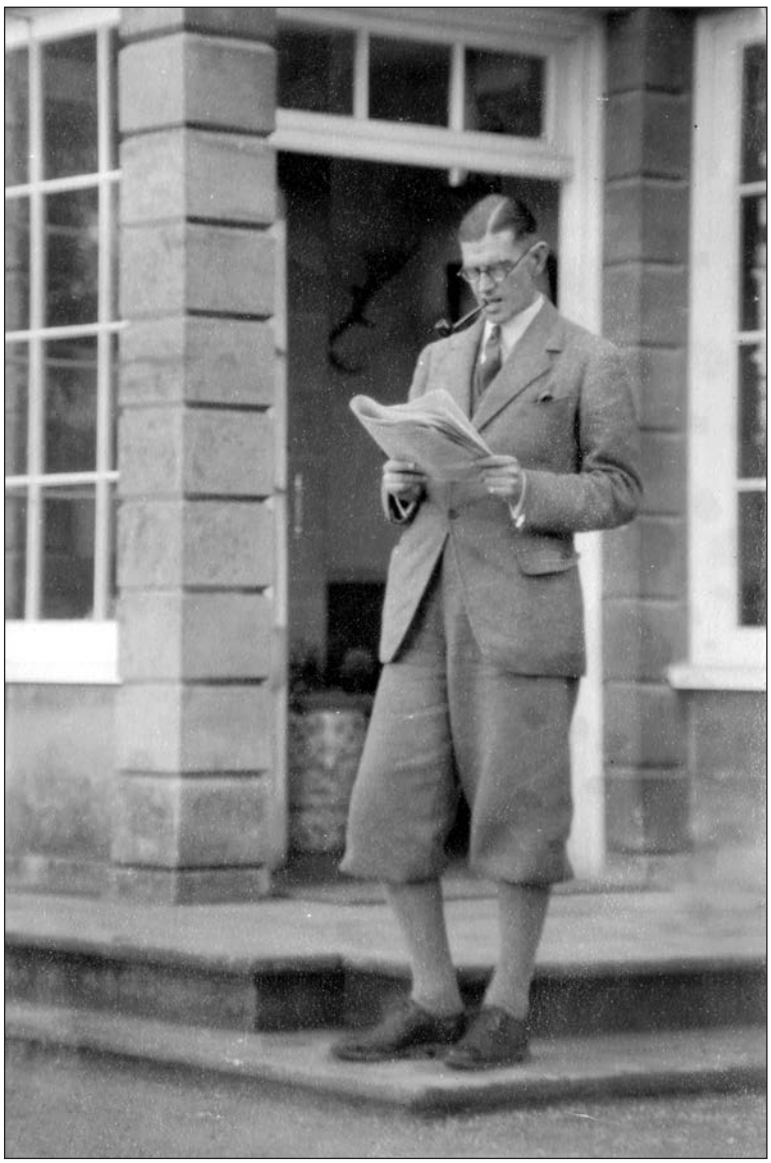


Fig. 3: Will Croome in 1930, from an album in the possession of Christopher Mills, son of Croome's chauffeur, Cyril Mills.

incumbent was responsible for the chancel, but somehow the Croomes retained power over the south transept chapel:

> Ever since my father's death in 1895, my mother had planned to restore the chapel (i.e. the south transept) but for financial reasons it proved impractical until I came of age, when we undertook the work together as a memorial to him.[16]

There followed a complete excavation of the chapel, with the uncovering of the coffins in the vault – which, after examination, was sealed with concrete. The result was not merely a memorial to his father, but a completely re-conceived High Anglican Lady Chapel, in realisation of Croome's personal vision.

This proprietorial and controversial act – conducted without a faculty or permission of any kind – led to a furore in the parish. The opposition was led by another local landowner, Revd John Priestly Foster of Cotswold Park. Foster tried to influence the parishioners against Croome with gifts of coal, and there were accusations of popery, angry PCC meetings, threats of legal action,

Fig. 4: Interior of the church looking east, before 1912. (Historic England Archive CC76/00747)

then conciliatory words from the parish priest, and letters from the Archdeacon. In the end the parishioners voted in favour of Croome by 88 to nil.

Vision and taste: Martin de la Hey

The driving force in the re-furnishing of All Saints was not, initially at least, Croome, but the incumbent, the Revd Edward William Martin Oldridge de la Hey (1866–1937) (Fig. 5), a keen amateur archaeologist who took up the living at North Cerney in 1908. He 'had a vision from the beginning [of] what he wanted the church to be and had the exquisite taste which enabled him not only to seek out many choice things for it, but also to persuade those who worked with him that only the best would do.'[17]

Fig. 5: Revd Martin de la Hey and family; undated photograph, probably c.1913. (Gloucestershire Archives GA 2507/12)

In the view of his successor as Rector, James Turner, 'his coming to the parish was to have important consequences, for it was he more than anyone else who was responsible for the complete transformation [of the church].'[18] After graduating with First Class Honours from University College, Oxford in 1889, de la Hey, after a brief incumbency in Marple, Cheshire, was appointed tutor at Keble College in 1893. Croome records how de la Hey found their architect:

> Martin de la Hey was presented to North Cerney in 1908. He came to inspect, and found the lovely 17th century rectory uninhabitable. Back at Keble he said, 'Does anybody know an architect? I don't.' And he was told, 'Have F. C. Eden, a Keble man.'[19]

De la Hey told Eden 'he was in despair about the church – full of rubbish, dark and dirty. Eden fell in love with it.'[20]

'Within five years… Rector de la Hey, guided step by step by Mr Eden, and assisted by the generous benefactions of the Croome family, had transformed [the church].'[21] This comment by Turner makes the roles of the triumvirate clear – de la Hey as spiritual, ecclesiastical visionary, Eden as practical implementer, Croome as paternalistic, enlightened funder (though it was rather less cut-and-dried than that in practice).

Fig. 6: F. C. Eden on the running board of Will Croome's Sunbeam, Lechlade, July 1929.
From l to r: Eden, Croome's mother Mary Stuart Croome, her sister Ruth, Will Croome. (Courtesy of Christopher Mills).

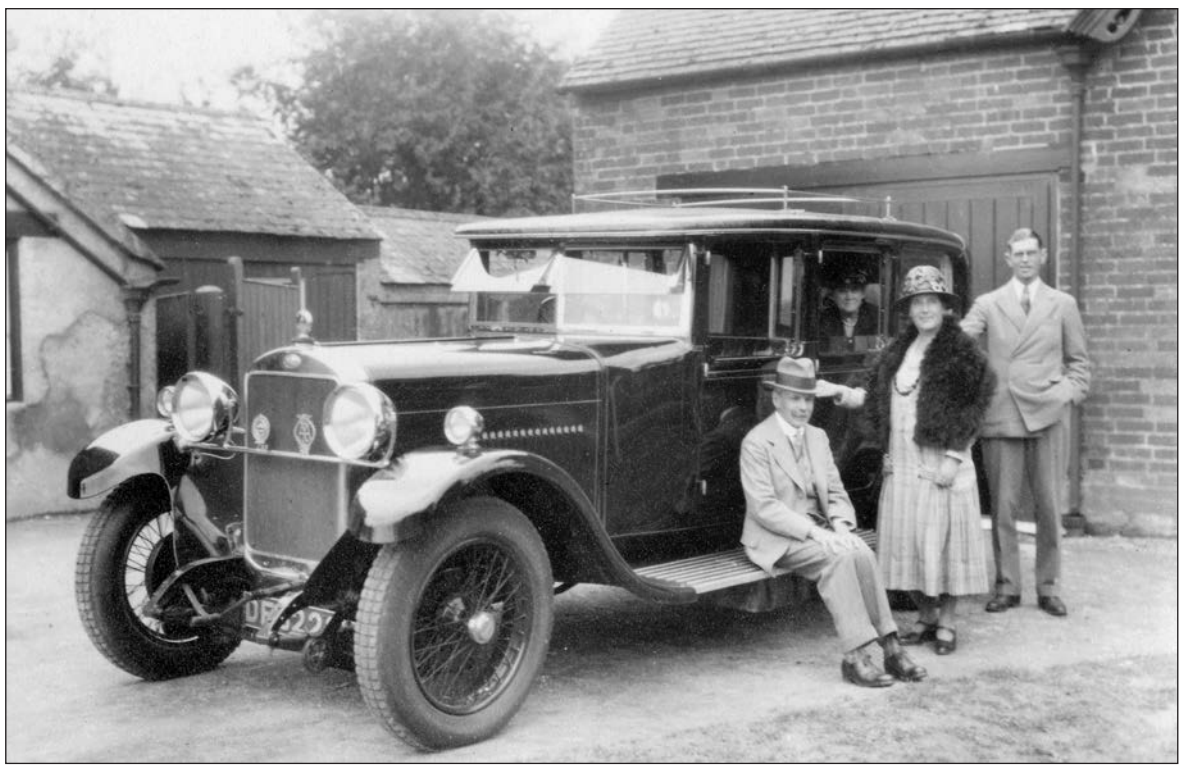


Fig. 7: Late fifteenth-century wooden figures on the Lady Chapel reredos. From l to r: St Martin, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Urban. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

De la Hey's role has been rather diminished by the passage of time: Croome wrote the history, Croome was part of the county and church establishment, and Croome was rich, but it was de la Hey, for example, who first saw the church's processional cross in an antique shop in France in 1913. He brought back a photograph which was shown to Croome and his mother, 'whom he begged to purchase it. They did so.'[22] Croome acknowledged de la Hey's 'almost uncanny facility in discovering fine antique works of art,'[23] but it was Croome who had the time to seek things out, and the money to secure them.

Eden (Fig. 6) was first engaged as de la Hey's architectural and archaeological adviser in 1909 or 1910. By 1912 Croome had met Eden, admired his knowledge, and identified his skills as antiquarian and glass restorer. Together they adopted the habit (seemingly paid for by Croome) of visiting Italy for several weeks every year, latterly joined by another architect, Walter Tapper (1861–1935), whom Eden knew from Bodley's office. They went to look for antiquities and other good things to install in North Cerney church, (Fig. 7) or to discover suitable craftsmen to make them.[24] An early find was the fifteenth-century Madonna and child in the Lady Chapel which they acquired in Italy in 1913.[25]

As Croome's role became more dominant, de la Hey rather faded into the background. He seems never to have enjoyed good health, and this may have declined further. Nonetheless he was appointed to Gloucester DAC in 1925, and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Gloucester, 1911–23, and again in 1929. About that time his wife came into money, and in 1930 she bought Cerney House from Croome. The social transposition may have been smooth, or it may have been awkward for all parties. It must certainly have changed things. De la Hey, now living in Croome's old family home, remained the incumbent until his death.

Practical perfectionism: F. C. Eden

Frederick Charles Eden (1864–1944) is a somewhat fugitive figure. After a brief time in 'the office of the ageing [sic] William Butterfield',[26] he started his architectural training with Bodley and Garner. 'Bodley's almost entirely ecclesiastical practice fully coi[n]cided with the tastes and interests of Eden'[27] and he 'always revered Bodley as his master'.[28] After ten years with Bodley, in 1902 Eden went into partnership with Percy French Freeman and Victor Tylston Hodgson. He increasingly concentrated on church fittings, and set up studios in Red Lion Square, London, around 1910. As well as the work at North Cerney, Eden was responsible for the fittings at St Mary the Virgin, Elham, Kent. He built just four churches of his own: the sober St John's, Harpenden, Hertfordshire (1908), the wildly Italianate St George the Martyr, Wash Common, Newbury, Berkshire (1933), King Charles the Martyr, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire (1939), and the cathedral at Masasi in what is now Tanzania (1910).

Eden was, in Croome's words, 'an architect of skill and fertile imagination…a sound antiquary and archaeologist and... a devout and convinced Catholic',[29] while in the opinion of Francis Eeles, 'Few men had a greater capacity for combining originality and tradition coupled with an unusual sensitivity to refinement of detail. He was not only an architect but an artist….. a most lovable man, a charming companion, and a devoted son of the Church of England.'[30] Unlike some of his fellow church architects, he 'had a grasp of theology, had made very wide liturgical and hagiographical studies, and was completely familiar with the Bible, and especially the Psalms.'[31]

Eden 'never sought the limelight, nor did he hesitate to refuse work when the client wished him to do what he regarded as improper or unworthy.'[32] For one incumbent 'who had rejected all his fine designs for furnishing a new chancel, substituting mean and makeshift stuff…he inlaid boldly on the cornice [of the pulpit he was allowed to provide], 'Where there is no vision, the people perish."[33]

Eden's work at North Cerney

For a quarter of a century, until a severe stroke in 1934 left him incapable of work, F. C. Eden created many new furnishings and stained glass, which collectively would transform the interior of the church. When he first saw it, he said, 'Give it to me and I'll make it as lovely as any village church in England', but he was not impressed, at first, by the Croomes: 'Who are these Croomes who own this dreadful transept? Make them tidy it up for a start.'[34]

By the time he started work at North Cerney, Eden had largely forsaken architecture, and was concentrating increasingly on

church furnishings, especially glass. His first work at North Cerney was probably in the north chapel, from where in 1912 'the glass of both the North and the East windows was sent up to F. C. Eden.'[35] Re-leading the windows also involved some re-organisation, as a previous glazier had fixed some of the lights the wrong way round.[36] The next year Eden was similarly engaged on the East window in the south transept, where by now Croome's first major works were starting.

The nave South window is also by Eden (1913), as is the heraldic South window of the Lady Chapel (1914) (Fig. 8). Croome portentously noted, 'The large South window contains the Arms of all the principal Lay Impropriators of the Rich, Tyndale, Holder and Croome families, with those of some special benefactors of the church among the latter family.'[37] It replaced what Croome described as some 'dark and ugly stained glass' of 1856.[38]

The entire conception of the Lady Chapel was Croome's but 'Mr Eden was consulted early in [1912] and drew his plans upon

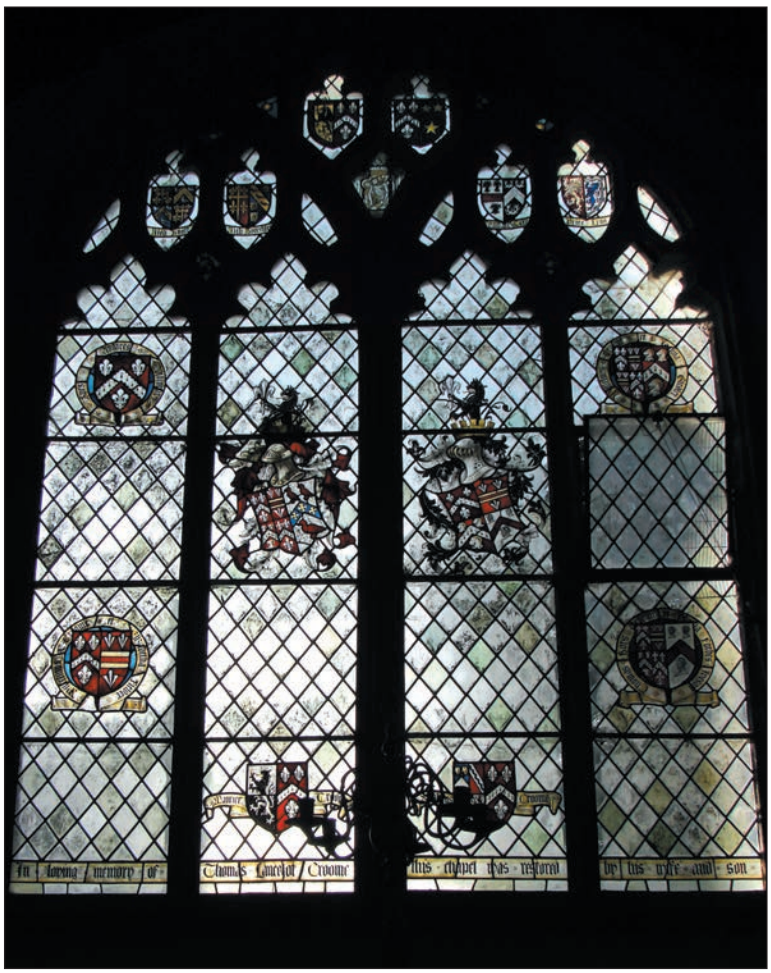


Fig. 8: Lady Chapel south window, 1914. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

which work was begun on 1 September 1912.'[39] The most striking feature of the chapel is perhaps the screen (Fig.9), featuring an Annunciation over the doorway, designed by Eden and carved by his friend Laurence Turner (Fig. 10), a member of the Art Workers' Guild. (Eden was elected to the Guild in 1915.) The figure of St George was added in 1920. The altar, reconstructed using an excavated medieval altar, was adorned with statues bought by Croome in Italy (Fig. 7). The footpace was engraved with a memorial text to Croome's father in Gothic script: 'Pray for the soul of Thomas Croome…'

In 1917, Eden made a small window on the south side of the gallery (Fig. 11) in memory of Percy Joyce, who had done so much of the glazing restoration and who died in action in the First World War. Croome noted it was:

> made and given by F C Eden as his memorial to his glazier, killed in the first world war. Percy Joyce in 1911–1913 re-leaded and re-fixed all the ancient glass in North Cerney church: first the two windows of the Catharine chapel [north transept]; then the Lady Chapel [south transept]. He also glazed the large armorial window and fixed the St Nicholas window in the nave.[40]

Eden made another small window, in the vestry, in 1918.

The next major work was the design, making and installation of the high altar reredos (Fig. 12) of 1924, given in memory of Croome's clergyman uncle, also William, and wife Louisa. It draws yet more strongly on Croome's Prayer Book Catholic inclinations and Eden's decorous decorative skills – its rich fastidiousness suggests Comper, and it is perhaps no surprise that Eden and Comper were friends. Croome described it as 'one of Eden's happiest works.'[41]

The theme is the Coronation of the Virgin: Christ the King crowns his Mother Queen of Heaven. Seven angels throng around them. The Latin text is: 'Accipient regnum decoris et diadema speciei de manu Domini' (They [shall] receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of pure gold from the hand of the Lord: *Book of Wisdom* 5:17).[42] The 'they' in question are the 'Justi'. The quotation is from the First Lesson for Evensong on All Saints Day. The iconology is rather personal – and expresses perhaps Will Croome's forceful personality and Eden's compliant scholarliness:

> The single side-niches contain figures of St William of York, and St Louis of France, the name-saints of those commemorated here, and in the southern group will be found the figure of St Kenelm, the boy-King in Gloucestershire.[43]

The framework was made by Norman & Burt of Haywards Heath, established Sussex church builders, but the figures in the

Fig. 9: Lady Chapel screen, 1913. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

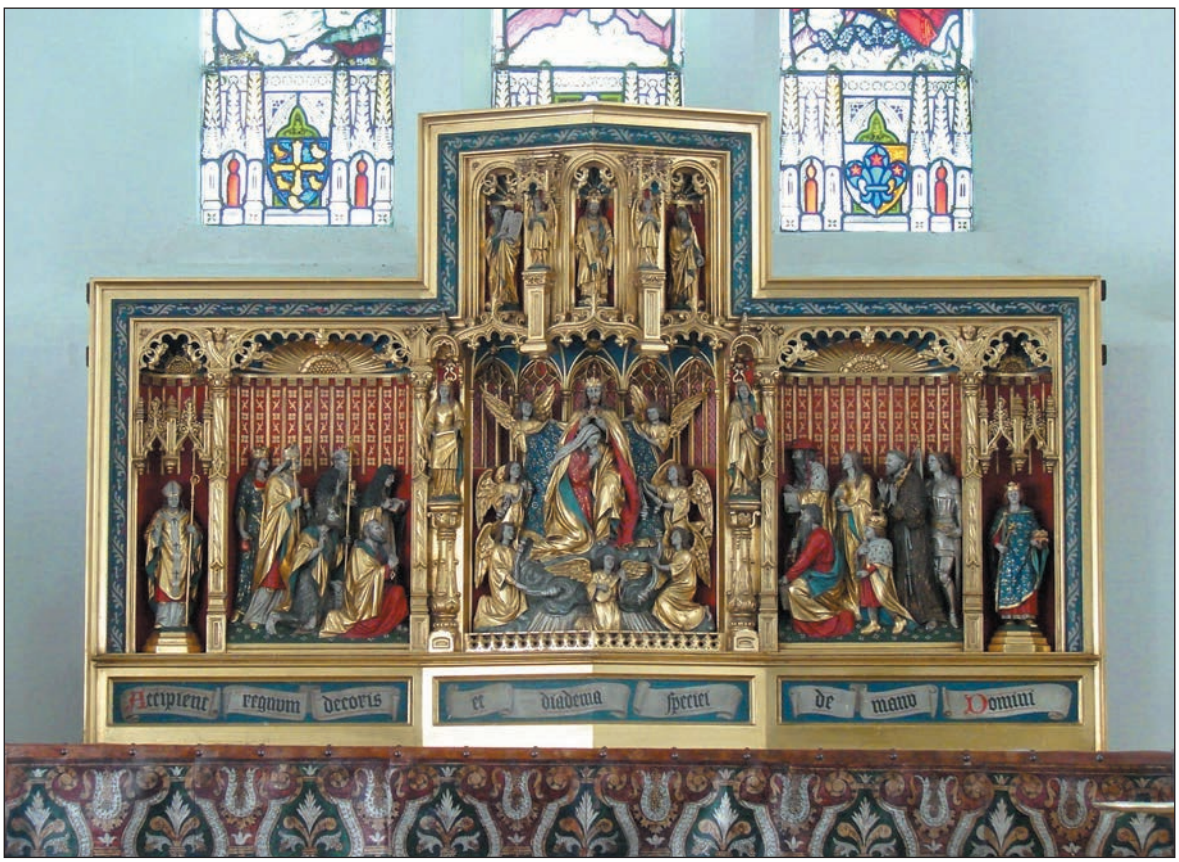
Fig. 10: Carving of the Annunciation by Laurence Turner, before its installation in the Lady Chapel screen. Photograph from an album belonging to F. C. Eden.(RIBA Collections A399/48)

Fig. 11: Window in memory of glazier Percy Joyce, 1917. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

panels had more exotic origins: they were carved by Alfonso Noflaner 'of St Ulrich (later re-named Ortisei), in Tirol (later re-named Alto Adige) and his two sons' and 'decorated in gold and colour' by Alfredo Marus of Fitzroy Street, London (who had also coloured the figure of St George atop the Lady Chapel screen (Fig. 13)).[44] Noflaner also later carved the figures on the Rood of 1929. Otherwise, he has left little trace in England, although he carved another reredos, also designed by Eden, at St James the Great, Hebden Bridge in 1934.[45] We perhaps can assume Croome encountered him on a journey to the Tyrol, perhaps with Eden. We do not know how Croome and Eden worked with these makers: was their brief tight or loose; were the makers 'trusted' to come up with their own designs? The iconography of the figures on the reredos is specific enough to suggest a very detailed brief even for the frame.

Eden's next contribution was the porch gates of c.1925 (Fig. 14), so dated by Alan Brooks.[46] Croome's notes include the heraldic cartouche over the gates made by William Smith, an eccentric and a misfit and an extraordinary instinctual wood carver, 'discovered' by Eden. Croome told Smith's tale at length,

Fig. 12: High altar reredos, 1924. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)



with touching human detail, in a pamphlet published in 1950.[47] After he was invalided out of the army, the British Legion found him work as a messenger in Eden's office. 'He began to fidget about the office and it got on Eden's nerves. He asked Smith if he had not a hobby …'If Ah had tools in mah hand, Ah could carve; Ah'm sure of that." And so it proved. Smith was sent to evening classes at the V&A, emerged as a talented carver, and was employed by Giorgio Marus (brother of Alfredo, who decorated the high altar reredos at North Cerney), who later carved the figure of St George on the Lady Chapel screen. The subsequent tale of Smith is sad and touching – he physically attacked visitors to Eden's offices, eventually threatening Eden himself. Finally, Smith disappeared 'without a word', but not before he had made more contributions to the adornment of the church.

In 1928 Smith carved a new oak frame, designed by Eden, for a dossal in the north transept (once the children's part of the church, but now to be Croome's St Catharine's Chapel). Eden's altar re-used the former *c.*1736 chancel table. The velvet appliqué dossal was made, Croome records, by 'Mary Davis, of Oxford Street (Mrs Antrobus).' Mrs Antrobus was an acknowledged authority on

Fig. 13: Carving of St George atop the Lady Chapel screen (viewed from the chapel), 1920. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

Fig. 14: South porch gates, 1925. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

church textiles, had aristocratic connections, a business in Oxford Street, and a rather Arts & Crafts interest in the inter-relationship of the crafts.[48] The mix here is typical: tactful, fastidious design by Eden; re-use of found materials; exquisite work by the best exponents; set in original work by a local craftsman.

In 1929 Eden designed the church's imposing, elaborate Rood Loft (Fig. 15), which was again carved by Smith. (It is a Loft in intention – it is accessible by a tiny spiral stair – but is barely wide enough to accommodate any but the slenderest persons, and insubstantial enough to deter all but the slightest.) He did not carve the figures, however: the Virgin Mary and St John were carved by Alfonso Noflaner; the Christ is Italian, of about 1600 according to Brooks (Fig. 16). It was purchased on one of the Italian forays: 'It was in Florence that [Croome], with [Eden and Tapper's] advice, bought the continental furniture and statuary (notably the corpus on the rood) for the church.'[49] The cross was 'decorated with colour and gold' by local man W. Court of the Post Office, Woodmancote, Glos, an almost Hardyesque figure: 'He

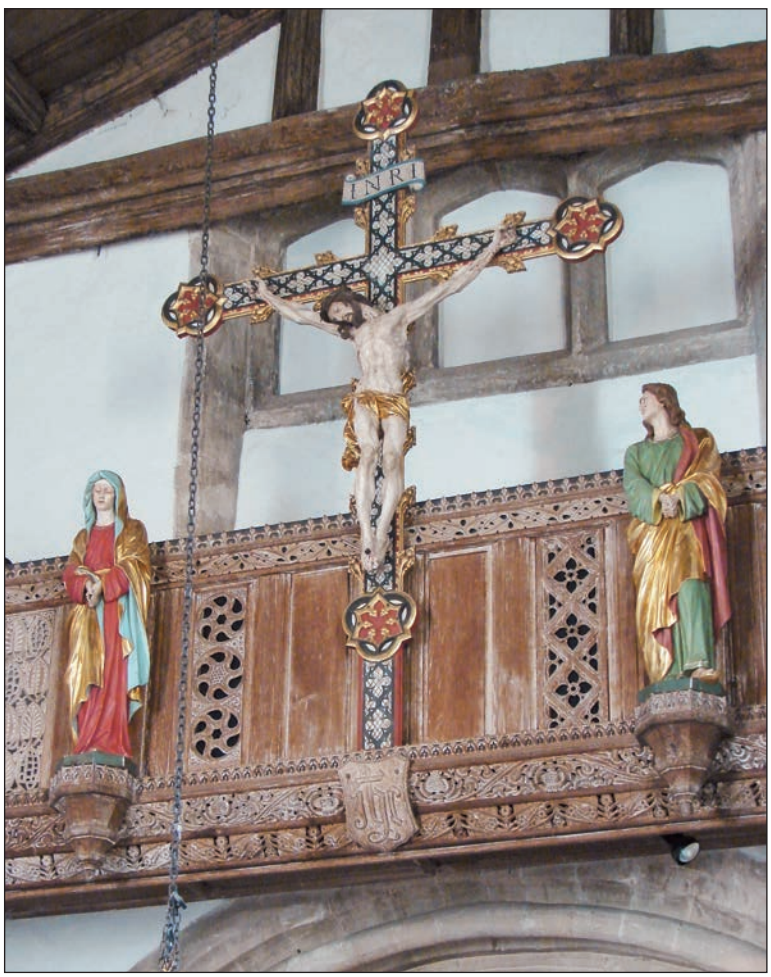


Fig. 15: Rood loft, with the figures of the Virgin Mary and St John flanking Christ on the cross, 1929. Photo: Alec Hamilton)

had been a framer, carver and decorator in London. He is a sideman at the church now (1950) and for many years past.'[50] Croome revelled in the link between congregation and fabric. The Rood screen was paid for by Mrs de la Hey, the Rector's (now wealthy) wife. In the same year Eden also completed a design for a chancel screen. It was never made, but a screen of a rather different design, by his erstwhile pupil Henry Medd (1892–1977), was erected in 1934.[51]

Croome was inclined to distinguish in his notes between work made under Eden's instruction, and work either not so made, or to Croome's instruction: for example, Frederick Blowing of Cirencester 'made the oak frontal-case under the Tower from a plan by W I Croome'; Croome later states that Tibbenhams of Ipswich 'made the Medd chancel screen' – Medd was its designer, not maker. Other work done under Eden's eye included the marbling of the front of the eighteenth-century West Gallery (Fig. 17), but Croome's notes only mention Herbert Mason: 'Churchwarden. Later a skilled carpenter, he was at first a painter,

Fig. 16: Figure of Christ, c.1600, found in an antique shop in Tirano in 1925. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

and as a young man it was he who 'marbled' the front of the gallery.'[52] The matter of who did the physical work was important. Croome wanted to give due credit, especially to the humbler craftsmen – blacksmith, painters, gilders – but the division of labour between the architect Eden, and the client Croome is often unclear.

Nothing is clear cut, for memory too is fallible: in discussing the altar, Symondson says this: 'the Sisters of Bethany executed the needlework and H. A. Bernard Smith and his assistants the painted decoration, while the mason's yard of W. D. Gough (…trained by Comper) did much of the carving. All of this I was told by Croome when he showed me the church.'[53] Yet Croome's 1950 notes list entirely different craftsmen for the job.

To take another example, there is a surviving drawing for the Lenten array signed by Eden (Fig. 18). In Gloucestershire Archives there is an envelope containing 12 small sketches, on tracing paper, of frontals (Fig. 19).[54] One is signed by Croome – it is sketched on a sheet of DAC stationery: and Croome was DAC Secretary. Did he sign as Secretary or designer? It is dated 1944, the year of Eden's death. Perhaps Croome knew Eden's style well enough to copy it. The evidence is a little confusing.

Fig. 17: West gallery, showing the marbling carried out in 1913. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

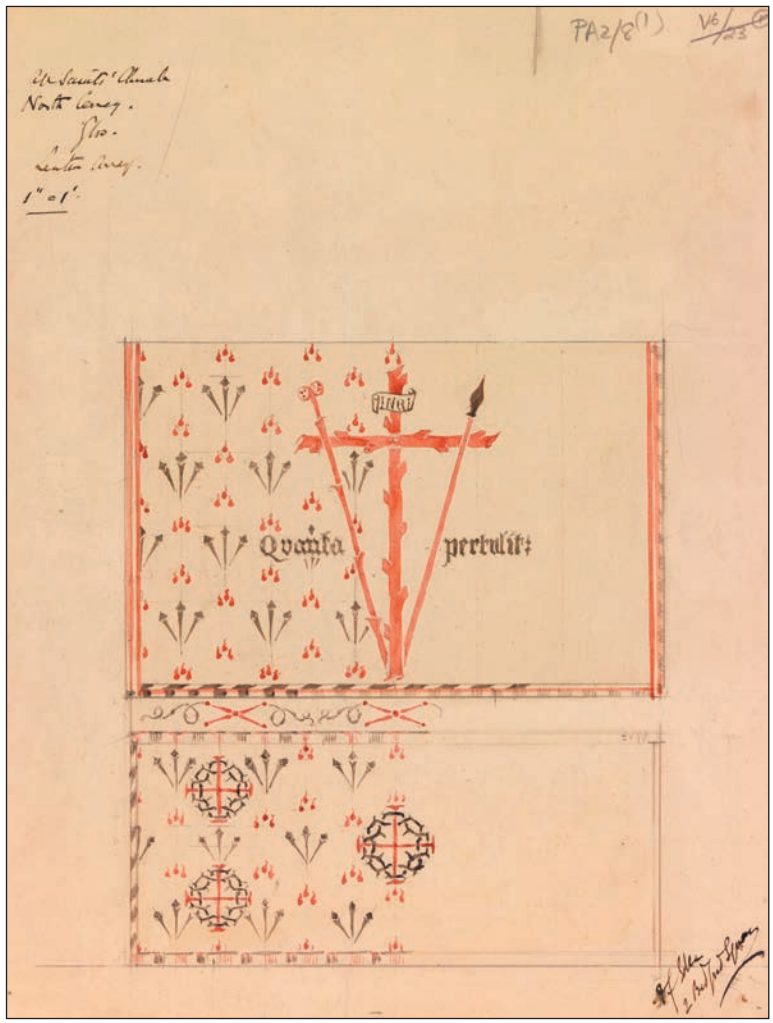


Fig. 18 (top): Design for Lenten array by F. C. Eden. Undated. (RIBA Collection PA 2/8(1))
Fig. 19 (bottom): Design for a frontal by Will Croome, 1944. (Gloucestershire Archives GA 2507/10)

Conclusion

While de la Hey, Eden and Croome were clearly the leading figures in North Cerney's transformation, thanks to Croome's fastidious recording we can understand this as the achievement of a whole community: some using their money, some their vision, others their knowledge, skill and labour. Virtually all of their restoration survives to this day, both in the fabric and the spirit of the church (Fig. 20). The emotional attachment to things of beauty for the furtherance of worship, so dear to the aesthete de la Hey, remains, and Croome's intense, personal, commanding, sometimes overpowering, always civilised insistence on making God in the image of England's Catholic past informs a building which is neither learnedly dry nor swooningly soppy. The church has the elusive spirit of a pre-Victorian age, where pious display, commitment to richness of ornament, and the focus on time-honoured ritual as much about mystery as theological correctness, express a lost richness of belief.

Author's acknowledgement

My thanks to Canon Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis for his insightful comments on the first draft of this article; for making available his unparalleled knowledge of Will Croome – including recordings of Croome addressing Cirencester Archaeological & Historical Society from the pulpit of St John's, Cirencester in the late 1950s – and for locating photographs in the album which belonged to Croome's chauffeur.

Notes

1 Chris Miele, "Their interest and habit': professionalism and the restoration of medieval churches 1837–77' in Chris Brooks and Andrew Saint, *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 151–172. See also *Ecclesiology Today* 19, April 1999, pp. 2–6; and Chris Miele, 'Morris and Conservation', in Chris Miele, ed, *From William Morris: Building Conservation and the Arts and Crafts Cult of Authenticity, 1877–1939* (Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 30–65.

2 William Whyte, *Unlocking the Church: the lost secrets of Victorian sacred space* (OUP, 2017).

3 *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* (BGAS), from 1876 to the present

4 Alan Brooks and David Verey, *Gloucestershire: the Cotswolds* (Yale University Press, Buildings of England, 1999), p. 506.

5 Anthony Symondson, *Stephen Dykes Bower* (RIBA publishing, 2011), p.7.

6 Gloucestershire Archives (GA): P70 CW 3/48

7 *All Saints Church, North Cerney: some notes, historical and descriptive by W I Croome (Revised to January 1950).* Typescript in GA: D3709/1. Various typescript versions are also at GA: D2507/13 and D6881/3. Hereafter referred to as Croome, *History*.

8 GA P70 CW 3/12. The note also exists as a photocopied leaflet in the church itself.

9 'I knew Croome and visited him in Cirencester often.' Comment by Anthony Symondson at Vitrearum's Church Art blog: medieval-church-art.blogspot.co.uk/2008/08/percy-dearmer-and-the-warham-guild.html, dated 8 September 2008 (accessed 5 June 2012).

Fig. 20: Interior of the church looking east in 2017. (Photo: Alec Hamilton)

10 Symondson, *Stephen Dykes Bower*, op cit, p. 7.
11 Jonathan MacKechnie-Jarvis, 'William Iveson Croome: his work for the care of churches', *Cirencester Miscellany 3* (Cirencester Archaeological & Historical Society, 1996), pp. 13-31; p. 13.
12 Biographical information from Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society website, www.cirenhistory.org.uk/croome.htm (accessed 5 June 2012).
13 Symondson at Vitrearum's Church Art blog, op cit, 9 September 2008.
14 Croome, *History*, p. 5.
15 Symondson at Vitrearum's Church Art blog, 9 September 2008.
16 Croome quoted in James Turner, *History of North Cerney and its church* (n.d., but *ca* 1981), p. 66. This is a typewritten history of the church and its rectors in GA: P70 IN 4/17 (Another copy is at GA D4747). Hereafter referred to as Turner, *History*.
17 Turner, *History*, p. 61
18 Ibid.
19 Croome, 'Frederick Charles Eden FSA FRIBA 1864-1944' (typescript, n.d.) RIBA Drawings and Archives EDFC 1/4.
20 Ibid.
21 Turner, *History* p. 75.
22 Croome, handwritten note on the back of a photograph in GA: P70 CW 3/6
23 Croome, *History*, p. 38. In 1936 de la Hey's widow bequeathed a collection of miniatures to the Ashmolean 'of considerable importance… formed mainly by the Revd Martin de la Hey, Fellow of Keble College and Rector of Cerney, Cirencester.' (Richard Walker, *A Selection of Miniatures in the Ashmolean Museum* (Ashmolean Museum, 1997), p. 12)
24 Symondson at Vitrearum's Church Art blog, op cit, 8 September 2008.
25 Turner, *History*, p. 75. Alan Brooks (*Pevsner*, p. 507) says the Virgin is French.
26 Turner, *History*, p. 66
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Croome, Obituary of Eden, *Church Times*, 21 July 1944
30 F. C. Eeles, Obituary of Eden, *Manchester Guardian*, 28 July 1944
31 Croome, 'Frederick Charles Eden, FSA, FRIBA.', reprinted from the *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters* Vol XIII, No 4, 1962-3, pp. 554–557; p. 554.
32 Eeles, Obituary of Eden, op cit.
33 Croome, 'Frederick Charles Eden FSA FRIBA', op cit, p. 557.
34 Croome, 'Frederick Charles Eden FSA FRIBA 1864-1944' (typescript, n.d.), op cit.
35 Croome, *Log book, showing the 'repair, discovery and decoration of the fabric' of the church, 1900-1952*. (GA: P70 CW 3/48), caption 35.
36 Ibid.
37 Croome, *History*, p. 32.
38 Croome, *History*, p. 15.
39 Croome quoted in Turner, *History*, p. 66.
40 Croome, handwritten note on back of the photograph of the window. (GA 2507/12)
41 Croome, *History,* p. 27.
42 The translation is in Croome, *History*, p. 27.
43 The identities of the figures in the side panels is not spelled out in any source I have been able to find. Revd Allan Barton suggests these (with his comments): North side – St Helen (holding a nail? – she discovered the true cross); a bishop; St John the Baptist; St John the Evangelist (tonsure and beard are curious); St Peter (kneeling, with key), St Anne (often shown teaching her daughter to read, here with book and stylus). South side - St Jerome (Cardinal's hat and scroll, as translator of the Vulgate); St Paul (with the sword of his martyrdom); St Mary Magdalene (with ointment pot); St Francis; St George. (By email 11 June 2011.) Croome identifies the diminutive king – otherwise inexplicable – as St Kenelm.
44 Croome, *Craftsmen Notes*.
45 The catalogue of Insom & Prinoth, an Italian church furnishers of Val Gardena, Bolzano, dating from c.1930 has recently been offered for sale on e-bay. It shows work by Noflaner in West Hartlepool and London as well as Aargau and Zurich

in Switzerland. It also gives a list of medals won: Gold at St Louis in 1904, Milan, London and Newcastle in 1906 and Dublin in 1907; Silver at Innsbruck in 1893, Liverpool and St Louis in 1907 and Bolzano in 1929.

46 Brooks, *Pevsner*, op cit.

47 Will Croome, *Notes on William Smith, carver, and his work in the church, and details of other craftsmen concerned with the church 1900-1950*. (Typescript in GA: P70 CW 3/12.) The notes were published as a Roneoed copy of the typescript in 1950.

48 Mary Antrobus (née Symonds) (not Davis) was a prolific author and, with Lady Cecilie Goff, carried on a 'needlecraft' business at 399 Oxford Street under the name 'Miss M. Symonds'. It was dissolved in 1932. (*The London Gazette*, 22 April, 1932.)

49 Symondson, comment on Vitrearum's Church Art blog, op cit, 14 March 2009 (accessed 10 June 2012).

50 Croome, *Craftsmen Notes*.

51 Henry Medd was son of the previous rector of North Cerney, Canon Peter Medd (1829-1908), and was articled to Eden in 1911. He was Master of the Art Workers' Guild in 1959.

52 Croome, *Craftsmen Notes.* Croome*, History*, p. 24 adds, 'In 1913 the panels were lightened by 'marbling' them, a usual treatment of such work at the time of its first building.'

53 Symondson, comment on Vitrearum's Church Art blog, op cit, 14 March 2009.

54 GA 2507/10.

Alan Brooks and Jennifer Sherwood, ***The Buildings of England, Oxfordshire: North and West***. Yale University Press, 2017, 638 pp., 124 col. pls, £35.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 0 300 20930 3

Published in 1974, *Oxfordshire* was the penultimate volume in Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's monumental *Buildings of England* series and, at over 1000 pages, the largest. For the new revised edition, Yale University Press has split the county into two to keep these handbooks within a reasonable compass. In consequence, the present volume is restricted to Oxfordshire north of the River Thame less the City of Oxford and its immediate environs. With the sister volume, *Oxford and the South East*, in preparation by Simon Bradley, the two volumes will be a more than worthy successor to the first edition.

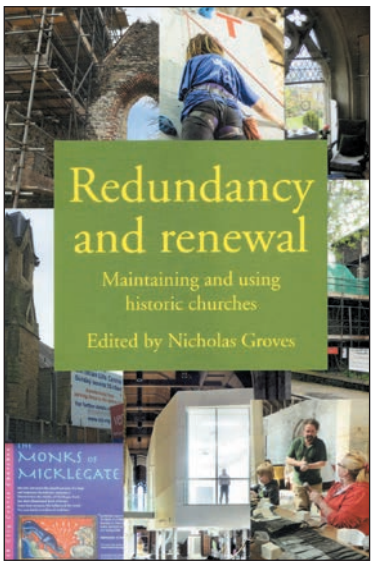
Pevsner's contribution was confined to Oxford itself, and so Jennifer Sherwood was responsible for the whole of the area covered by the present volume. Alan Brooks has ably revised and expanded her text in the light of research undertaken since 1974. The Introduction has been extensively rewritten. Philip Powell has contributed a new section on geology and building stones, Gill Hey on prehistory, and Paul Booth on Roman and Anglo-Saxon archaeology, all covering the whole of the county. Brooks then provides an overview of the major trends in building along the lines of the first edition with an important contribution by David Clark on vernacular buildings in stone and timber.

The gazetteer itself now provides more context for the buildings that are described. A brief history is given of the more important settlements, often with comments on topography that will be welcomed by modern landscape historians. The account of structures follows the familiar pattern of major buildings and perambulations established by Pevsner, but with extensive revisions that reflect current understanding. There is the occasional lacuna. For example, the concept of specifically 'military' architecture in relation to castles is now almost universally questioned (v. Broughton Castle) and it is now clear that planned landscapes have a long history before the seventeenth century (v. Blenheim). Nevertheless, these are the exception: by and large Brooks provides the very latest research.

The photographs, still bound into the centre of the volume, are now in colour. Another welcome addition is a series of engravings that are inserted into the text itself. The glossary is also much improved: for those of us who do not know our arris from our echinus, there is a series of explanatory diagrams and figures

which are a great improvement on the sparse originals. Overall, Alan Brooks and his collaborators are to be congratulated in providing an excellent up-to-date guide to the buildings of north and west Oxfordshire.

David Roffe, University of Oxford



Nicholas Groves (ed.), ***Redundancy and renewal.*** Lasse Press, 2016, 125 pp., 84 col. pls, £14.95, pbk, ISBN 978 0 9933069 2 1

This collection of papers, presented at conferences organised by the Norwich Historic Churches Trust (NHCT) in 2014 and 2015 and supplemented by four specially written contributions, provides an overview of church closure as well as describing the experience of NHCT, which currently looks after eighteen of Norwich's redundant medieval churches.

Steven Saxby's paper, 'The use, reuse and abuse of "alternative use"', narrates the history of church closure in England and the varied approaches taken in finding alternative uses. The option of alternative use was not actually permitted until 1923 and then only for educational and charitable use. Until then closure really meant demolition. Even then many people were 'appalled by the prospect of even the site of a demolished church being put to secular purposes. It was not until 1952 when wider uses were contemplated. Since then the range of uses is getting ever wider from climbing centres to restaurants – the latter relatively rare, but likely to hit the headlines – and housing. Discussions still continue on appropriate use, controversy caused around alcohol, noise and also, still, for the Church of England, the use by another faith group.

Robert Piggot looks at how Norwich churches have been maintained showing how it has often been at the initiative of volunteers which in turn has increased public awareness and influenced planning policy relating to redundant churches. In 1967 the Bishop of Norwich set up a Commission which in 1970 declared 24 of Norwich's churches to be surplus to requirements. Faced with the possibility that they could all be demolished, in October 1970, the Norwich Society called a public meeting at which the Friends of Norwich was formed becoming in 1974 the NHCT. From the beginning, it was seen as acceptable and indeed essential that a strategy of adaptive reuse be adopted.

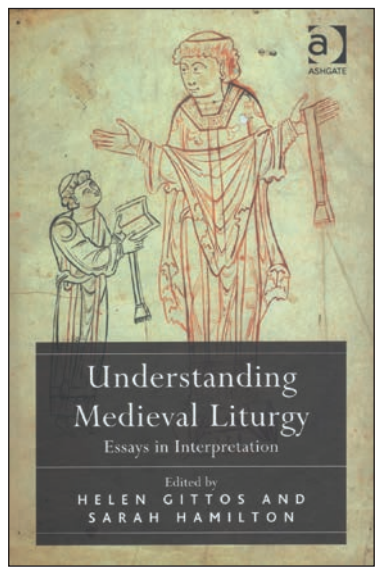
Nicholas Groves' paper, 'With concern, but not without hope', looks at what has happened to the once 62 Norwich churches; many demolished, or bombed by the Luftwaffe. His appendix lists the uses to which the eighteen NHCT churches have been put over the years – mostly secular – including a boxing gym, a book

shop, arts centres, publishing company, exhibition spaces, theatre spaces, circus training school, night shelters as well as being used by other Christian congregations. Rory Quinn's paper, 'Returning churches to the community', describes how NHCT seeks tenants and approaches negotiations with potential users around adaptations and managing the conservation of art works and churchyards. Originally, the aim was to only allow community uses, but the number of churches means that they have also granted tenancies to commercial users. The overriding conditions are that the buildings must be made accessible to the public at least on an occasional basis. There have been problems fortunately most of them resolved amicably. As he says 'it takes a special person to take on a premises as unusual as a church and we have been fortunate that so many appreciate their special qualities'.

Susan Curran's 'Confessions of a former tenant' recalls with some nostalgia the travails of operating a business in St Mary Coslany not least of which was coping with various wildlife that shared the space and the winter temperatures in a building almost impossible to heat adequately. But for the six years 'we never got sick….probably because any germs any of us brought in must have died in the artic wastes'. But, 'when I was a child I wanted to live in a castle … and it was a delight to be responsible for a while for my own round tower. I loved the expansiveness of St Mary and its echoing calm'.

Becky Payne

Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton (eds), ***Understanding Medieval Liturgy***. Ashgate, 2016, 332 pp., 8 b&w pls, £75.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 1 4094 5150 1



'Medieval liturgy' can be surprisingly difficult to pin down. Depending upon your disciplinary perspective, it might denote a loosely-defined set of cultural practices articulated by rotating calendars and life-cycles; or the principal foundation of western music; or the rendering of doctrine into memorable words and gestures; or the impetus for well-documented institutional endowments; or the guiding force behind the making of artefacts and buildings. Liturgy can sometimes seem like a minefield of gradations, variations, distinctions and *differentiae*. As Helen Gittos reminds the reader, the very word 'liturgy' has become suspect. Its vast chronological and topographical span, and the bewildering array of disciplines it straddles, militate against grand historical syntheses of liturgy.

This collection of essays showcases four of the main perspectives from which the field is currently surveyed: the

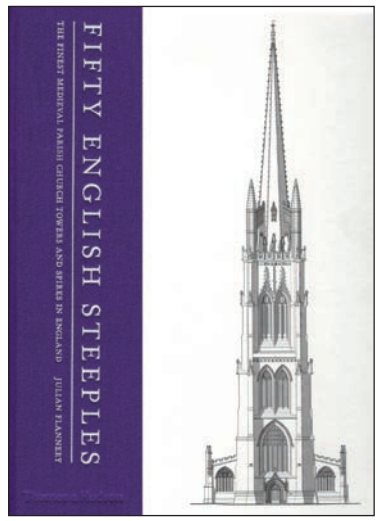
archaeology of rites; the history of modern liturgiology; investigations of specific types of rite; and the fruitfully researchable interoperation of text, space and performance. Rather than attempt a misguided big-sweep study, this samples a selection of approaches and case studies, with a bias towards neglected fields. The case studies, for instance, focus upon occasional rites such as excommunication, church dedications or death rituals. These rites, less infrequent than their designation might imply, permit large-scale obstacles to be judiciously side-stepped while opening windows onto the status and understanding of rituals among medieval laity.

Students of liturgy are confronted, at one point or another, with the problem of variants. Given their need to produce single-text editions, this has long preoccupied musicologists: dense tables of variants, sometimes of questionable utility, remain a stock-in-trade of journals such as *Plainsong & Medieval Music*. While much attention has been paid to the sifting of textual and melodic variants, did they really matter? As William Flynn reminds us, variant readings among Carolingian sources militate against their presumed role as vehicle for ritual uniformity; the uses of York and Salisbury also show greater diversity than still commonly-used Victorian editions would seem to suggest (Matthew Cheung Salisbury); and the theme of diversity extends well beyond music, permeating such rites as excommunication (Sarah Hamilton). Modern users of Procter and Wordsworth's Sarum Breviary or Dickinson's edition of the Sarum Missal are misleadingly presented with an apparently stable and uniform text; the confected completion of Michel Andrieu's *Pontifical Romano-Germanique* by Cyrille Vogel and Reinhard Elze is similarly booby-trapped (Henry Parkes).

A welcome sign of vitality in modern liturgiology has been the willingness of several disciplines to investigate the spaces and texts through the medium of (or as a site for) performance. The iterative process reveals aspects of liturgy that remain hidden within the two-dimensionality of text (which, as the authors of this punctiliously-curated volume repeatedly inform us, may be inherently unstable). This justifies Gittos' and Hamilton's focus upon occasional rites (which, by their very nature, are experienced afresh on each iteration); the temporal situatedness of liturgical rites, even seemingly generic ones like Mass, also highlights their interdependence with specific spatial contexts. Great buildings like the west front of Wells Cathedral can be read as liturgical paratexts, in this case for Holy Week (Carolyn Marino Malone: although the reader should also consult Paul Binski's detailed study of the same issue in *Becket's Crown*, not cited here).

Magnus Williamson, Newcastle University

Julian Flannery, ***Fifty English Steeples: The Finest Medieval Parish Church Towers and Spires in England***. Thames & Hudson, 2016, 496 pp., many b&w pls and diagrams, £50 hdbk, ISBN 978 0 500 34314 2



This book is an extraordinary achievement – a true labour of love. Julian Flannery is neither a professional architectural historian nor primarily an historic buildings architect. As an architect, based in the West Midlands, he has worked on projects with leading edge practitioners such as Nicholas Grimshaw, Future Systems and Will Alsop. But historic buildings have always been a passion for him. This book, he says, was inspired by a reading of Rosemary Hill's 2007 life of Pugin. Then there was a visit to Louth, its 287ft high tower and spire, so admired by Pugin and the highest in England save for the spires of Salisbury and Chichester cathedrals, 'faultless in conception and faultless in execution … one of the most sublime achievements of English architecture'. Surviving churchwardens' accounts record the completion of this magnificent structure in 1515, after around 60 years of making, and constructed out of 200 tons of Ancaster stone. (James Fowler, who carried out a major Victorian restoration, noted that nowhere were the spire walls more than 10 inches thick.)

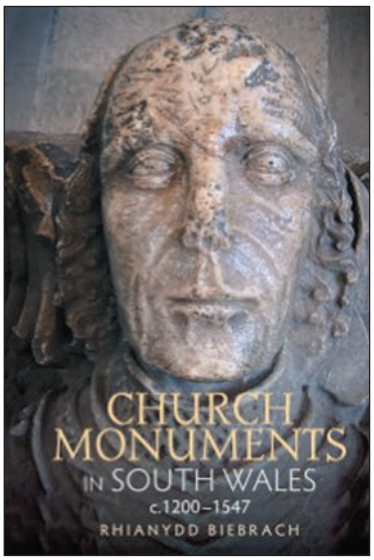
From Louth, Flannery travelled across the centre of England, from Somerset, across the central limestone belt to the fringes of Yorkshire – Patrington could hardly be excluded – with a substantial excursion into East Anglia. St Laurence's, Ludlow, and Newcastle Cathedral, with the only flying spire in England, are outliers – southern and most of northern England and the far west do not feature in the book. The accounts of the 50 churches are well researched, drawing on the writings of Britton and Brandon, Rickman and Sharpe, Cox and Harvey and others. Flannery is a sound judge of buildings, extolling the 'extraordinary imagination and enormous self-confidence' that drove the design of 'the single most important parish tower in England' at St Cuthbert's, Wells. He is also an accomplished photographer – some of the photographs in the book have something of the touch of an Edwin Smith or John Piper.

But above all, of course, it is the detailed drawings which make this book unique. The surveys made use of the theodolite, an instrument in use in the Victorian period, as well as the mundane tape. But what Britton, Brandon and others did not have was the modern computer. Only within the last 30 years has computer drawing become fundamental to architectural practice and a few traditionalists may still be resisting it, but it is used here with great skill to produce drawings which form a definitive account of the

steeples included in the book – of great value to anyone involved with their future maintenance. The subtle use of shading is an attractive device which animates the drawings.

The design and production of this book are of the highest standard – nothing is skimped and *Fifty English Steeples* should find a place on the shelves of any serious ecclesiologist.

Kenneth Powell



Rhianydd Biebrach, ***Church Monuments in South Wales c.1200–1547***. Boydell and Brewer, 2017, 211 pp., 4 col. + 48 b&w pls £60.00 hdbk, ISBN 9781783272648

This monograph is the latest in the Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture series. After a concise account of the history of post-Norman south Wales, from the thirteenth century to the early sixteenth century, the remaining chapters deal with patrons of such monuments and who they were intended for, the location of materials and how such materials were transported to the churches, the purpose of such monuments and their destruction or neglect in succeeding centuries.

Monuments are found in the two cathedrals of Llandaff and St David's, and in the remains of monasteries and priory churches, such as Ewenny Priory, Brecon Priory and Abergavenny, but these remain because they later became parish churches. The vast majority of monuments in parish churches are found near the coastal areas of south Pembrokeshire, the coast of Monmouthshire and, in particular, the Vale of Glamorgan. There is a reason for this: because the Anglo-Normans and Flemings who colonised the area settled in the richer, more fertile lowland areas where they carved out marcher lordships, leaving the upland areas to the native Welsh.

During the thirteenth century, cross slabs had been the chosen form of commemoration as they were relatively cheaper and easier to erect. The author has recorded 370 monuments, of which 53 are in the two cathedrals, 91 in monasteries and priory churches and 156 in urban churches. Most of the surviving monuments were erected in the period *c.*1250–1350. This is also the period when building projects at cathedrals and monasteries were begun. After 1350, the number commissioned was drastically reduced because of the demographic collapse following the Black Death and the devastation caused by the Glyndwr revolt. However, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, emergent families of Welsh descent who had made good by becoming gentry, stewards and local JPs, sought to mark their new status after

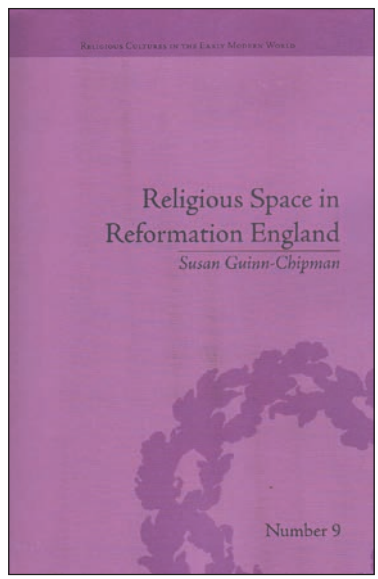
Glyndwr's revolt in the early fifteenth century by engaging in the kinds of commemorative display practised by their English counterparts.

There are extensive studies of families, Anglo-Norman and Welsh, who commissioned monuments and the kind of material, stone, alabaster, brass, etc., which comprised the monuments and from where the material was likely to have come from, either from local workshops or from across the Bristol Channel. Also, there are very detailed descriptions of many of the effigies themselves, such as those in the churches at Ewenny, St Athan, Coity and Coychurch.

The chapter headed 'Spirituality and the Desire for Salvation' is particularly interesting. Probably the chief aim of the monuments was the encouragement of clergy and passers-by to pray for the spiritual easing of the soul's path through Purgatory. A number of monuments have the exhortation to pray for the deceased and some effigies have both hands together as in prayer. However, there were other purposes to the monuments. Some of the new landed gentry of Welsh descent wanted to show their descent from the Welsh nobility by displaying heraldic devices (whether genuine or spurious) as well as displaying the arms of English gentry they had married into. A notable example is the Herbert family, with monuments at Abergavenny and Tintern. As Biebrach writes, 'a potent mixture of social, political, territorial and familial bluster and anxiety is conveyed in their design and execution.'

The author concludes with a chapter on the losses of these monuments, partly because of the Reformation, where praying hands were often destroyed (because there was no necessity now to pray for the dead as Purgatory had been abolished during Edward VI's reign), the Civil Wars, but also significantly because of neglect in the eighteenth century and at the hands of Victorian restorers, certainly before the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

Peter Freeman



Susan Guinn-Chipman, ***Religious Space in Reformation England: Contesting the Past***. Routledge, 2016, 235 pp, £36.99 pbk, ISBN 978 1 138 661882

This book offers a tantalising, stimulating discussion of how the parish churches of England and Wales were affected by the long Reformation from the 1530s to the 1630s. This timescale permits the author to discuss the uneven progress of changes required, first under Henry VIII, then more starkly under Edward VI, reversed

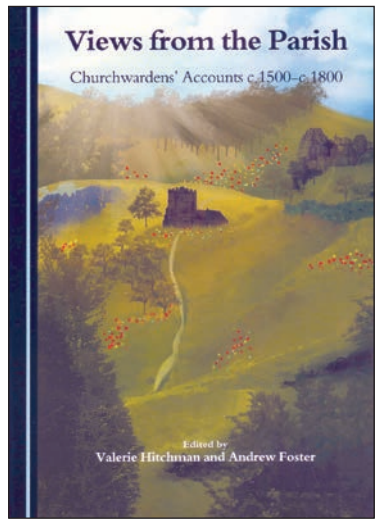
under Mary, and reinstituted with some ambiguities under Elizabeth I. It also enables incorporation of how 'Arminian' changes, that influenced policies most notably in the 1630s, represented a coda to the whole story being told, by re-stressing elements of 'sacred space' and practice lost at the Reformation, but re-asserted to the chagrin of many Protestants fearful of a return to Rome. The stress throughout is on adaptation, compliance and 'resistance' in several forms, accompanied by discussion of how important 'memory' was in shaping how communities coped with the changes and subtly modified their responses in different parts of the country. Case studies based on Wiltshire and Cheshire provide the detailed examples of stories within stories, usefully different regions with Catholic recusancy strong to the north.

John Aubrey and other late seventeenth century antiquaries are used to good effect to show how the whole process of the Reformation from the Dissolution onwards was assimilated and carefully digested to accommodate memories on all sides. This process may be detected in earlier writers like Spelman and Fuller, who noted the 'sacrilege' of those times and yet wrote in favour of how the Reformation had given birth to the Church of England. This work takes in the loss of rood screens and lofts, wall paintings, re-ordering of pews, debates about altars and communion tables, rails, chancels and stained glass windows. It skilfully unpicks diverse factors involved in these debates ranging from outright traditionalism to Catholic dogmatism, alongside secular concerns such as the cost and inconvenience of the changes. While the story highlights destruction and iconoclasm, it is also replete with examples of how communities coped and negotiated change as the nature of 'worship' altered over the period.

The author draws cleverly on art history, archaeology and architectural history, and combines theoretical discussion of how 'resistance' and 'memory' were constructed with apposite examples. The book provokes intriguing ideas: to what extent did diocesan officials, particularly after 1660, also play a part in constructing the memories promoted by antiquarians? Likewise, whilst the focus is strong on the east end and chancels, there were other spaces within churches that were perhaps also being contested: bell towers, porches and graveyards yielded many court cases over this period. The theme of 'memory' could also be usefully applied to customs such as church ales and rogation tide perambulations when the 'space' of the whole parish was exploited. This book will be treasure trove for all who seek new ways to interpret the impact of the Reformation in our localities.

Andrew Foster, University of Kent

Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (eds), ***Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c.1500–c.1800***. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, 234 pp., £47.99, hdbk, ISBN 978 1 4438 8366 5



This rewarding volume of essays arose from a 2010 conference that explored churchwardens' accounts as a rich and still underexploited source for understanding many aspects of life in the early modern period. It showcases the value of using the parish as a primary unit of analysis, in which social, cultural, religious and political aspects can be considered together, contextualised and compared with other settings.

Those who use these sources will appreciate the early attention to methodology and the helpful information in the appendices. Valerie Hitchman's thorough introduction to what can be found in the accounts is followed by Gary Gibb's discussion of how they came into being. He handles the duality of the sources – that they are empirical records as well as texts that require a 'reading' – without labouring the point. He also reminds us that some actions may have crossed boundaries among local officers, and so it is beneficial to maintain a flexible approach when working with parish documents. These two essays prepare the ground for the subsequent exploration of how churchwardens' accounts can be used beyond the familiar emphasis on the direction and pace of religious change.

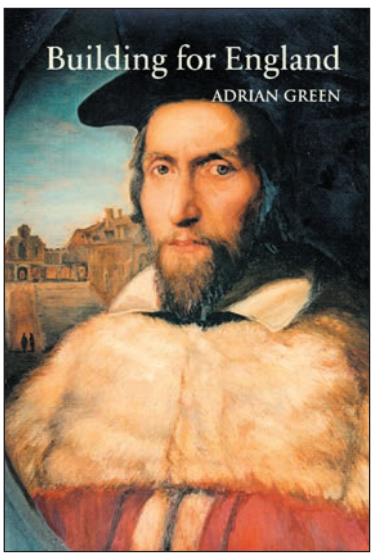
One area is the use of the common purse as a source of income. Sheila Sweetinburgh reveals how craftsmen fared as recipients of parish funds over the middle years of the sixteenth century. Concentrating on a later period, Christopher Webb creatively uses payments for the killing of animal pests to shed new light on how the labouring poor could supplement their marginal incomes. Jonathan Willis' chapter brings in a sensory perspective, demonstrating how expenditure on items such as organs and singers trace the changes in parish music in the late sixteenth century. His nuanced findings add to our understanding of the Reformation as a gradual and syncretic process.

The meeting of cultures is another theme developed in the collection. John Walter explores the interface between the national and local at the end of Charles I's personal rule, illuminating the growing politicisation of parish communities. Katherine Olsen, Toby Barnard and Evie Monaghan explore Welsh and Irish churchwardens' accounts to elucidate how an essentially English institution was accommodated in other lands. These essays are particularly welcome, based as they are on geographical areas where the scarcity of sources has led to them being previously overlooked. As Margaret Spufford pointed out, a misguided preoccupation with typicality and quantification on a macro-scale

has undermined the real significance of parish studies. The essays here show the value of parish sources in revealing how people and communities adapted, made decisions and found ways of 'getting along'.

Throughout the volume, the authors are careful not to overreach with their conclusions, reflecting the tone of the book as a demonstration of work in progress. In the same vein, the limitations of the source type are refreshingly discussed in an objective way. This all adds to the scholarly rigour of the contributions, which, through asking new questions from old sources, challenge some of the conventions and maxims that have as much obscured as explained certain aspects of early modern religion and parish life.

Margaret Bullett, University of Huddersfield



Adrian Green, ***Building for England: John Cosin's Architecture in Renaissance Durham and Cambridge***. Durham, Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 151 pp., £45.00 hdbk, ISBN 978-0-88844-863-7

Building schemes inaugurated by John Cosin are immediately recognisable. Heavy dark oak strongly carved in a version of Gothic that is not convincingly medieval and often contains unexpected Renaissance details, all done with unusual confidence, a fondness for screens and stalls and oversized font covers. He was a compulsive builder and furnisher, mostly of churches, though he got his hands on two castles and a library. The sites of his operations were primarily Durham and its diocese, and the University of Cambridge, for he was a member of the chapter at Durham, then bishop after 1660, and he was Master of Peterhouse from 1635 until 1644. This book by Adrian Green, who is based at Durham University, is the first to make a full assessment of Cosin's architectural achievements and to understand how they are interconnected. He has been able to identify the components of his strange, hybrid style, and name many of the craftsmen who worked for him. He explains the personal links that Cosin had with the churches where his woodwork appeared, and shows how his influence permeated the diocese of Durham both before and after the Civil War. What is particularly valuable is Green's ability to set Cosin's activities in the context of the High Church movement that was spreading thought the country in the 1620s and 1630s, and that resumed its progress after the Restoration.

Cosin was central to the Laudian movement, with its liberal, anti-Calvinist theology, its 'beauty of holiness' agenda, and its desire to increase the authority of the Church in the nation at

large. Beginning at Durham Cathedral, where he rapidly gained an influence greater than his position as prebend would normally allow, he helped to create a setting for the ceremonial form of worship that the Laudians thought most dignified. A stone high altar was installed; altar-cloths and candles, in disuse since the Reformation, were reintroduced, new screens surrounded the choir, and music accompanied the services. The largest font cover in England soared towards the vault of the nave, a great wooden spire, to honour the rite of baptism. Baptism and Holy Communion were the two sacraments retained by the Church of England, and the Laudians made the font and the altar the twin poles of the theology of salvation.

The return of ceremony and ritual, and the renewed importance of the altar made many followers of mainstream plain religion feel that High Church worship was reverting to Catholic practices. The leaders of the new movement, however, such as Lancelot Andrewes, Richard Neile, William Laud, Matthew Wren, George Montaigne and Cosin, all believed that there was much that was admirable in pre-Reformation worship, practices that could be retrieved and used in Anglican services. So more elaborate forms of worship were developed wherever these new men prevailed, and one requirement was a beautified church.

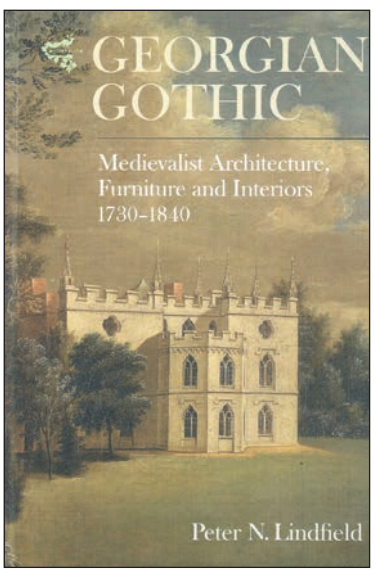
Cosin restored his own church at Brancepeth near Durham where he was rector from 1626 onwards. A forest of new woodwork arose, filling the nave and chancel with furnishings of an idiosyncratic Gothic character. In this remarkable interior Cosin presided, leading the ceremonies of the service. When he moved to Cambridge in 1635, he was able to furnish another interior, the chapel at Peterhouse, which became the centre of the new mode of worship in the University. Angels, cherubs, sunbursts, flaming hearts, statues and painted glass now appeared, creating a much warmer climate of Anglican devotion. Peterhouse chapel still stands, but Brancepeth burnt to ashes some years ago.

Back in Durham as bishop after the Restoration, Cosin turned his attention to restoring the Cathedral after the terrible damage of war, then made many alterations and additions to the Castle to give it a suitable grandeur as the headquarters of a Prince Bishop. More personal, perhaps, was his work at his country residence, his palace at Bishop Auckland. He restored the castle there as his private dwelling, and set about building his finest work, a new chapel that he intended as his mausoleum. He used the ruins of the medieval banqueting hall as the frame, retaining the arches of *c.*1200 for his nave, but raising the walls much higher, and furnishing the interior with his exuberant woodwork. The screen is a master-work of geometrical design. The roof is divided into

coloured compartments, where carvings of his coats of arms and bishop's mitre blazon his power to all who enter. He lies buried in front of the altar.

Adrian Green is inclined to believe that the real motive behind this lifetime of building was the need to assert the authority of the Church in a time when it was always under attack by those who disliked episcopal government and the hierarchical principle that went with it. Puritans were profoundly opposed. Many English people preferred the presbyterian system. Increasing numbers wanted to break away from the established Church. For Cosin and his associates, strong leadership was what was needed; discipline, order, and well-regulated services had to be imposed. The Church had to demonstrate its power and authority, or it would be brought down. It *was* brought down in the Civil War, a war caused in part by the very practices that the High Churchmen were trying to impose, for they alienated so many people by their apparent tendency towards Catholicism. Nonetheless, Cosin may well have believed that he was contributing to the strength of the national Church, hence the title of Green's book: *Building for England*. Whatever conclusions the reader might come to, he will have been very well informed about the relations between religion and architecture during a critical phase of our history. This is an extremely informative book about an imaginative and ambitious churchman who held positions of national importance. Read it, and be surprised!

Graham Parry, University of York.



Peter N. Lindfield, ***Georgian Gothic: Medievalist Architecture, Furniture and Interiors 1730–1840.*** Boydell Press, 2016, 266 pp., 58 b&w pls, 11 graphs, £50.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 1 78327 127 6

This is a bold book, for it discusses Gothic architecture without dealing with churches. It surveys the extent and development of Gothic(k) as a style for secular buildings, interiors and furniture; in fact the buildings are mainly residential, and although it has a commencement date of 1730, there is some consideration of Wren, Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh. The use of the word 'medievalist' in the title indicates that what it is looking at are designs consciously relating to the Middle Ages, and thus, in Colvin's dichotomy, at Gothic Revival and not Gothic Survival.

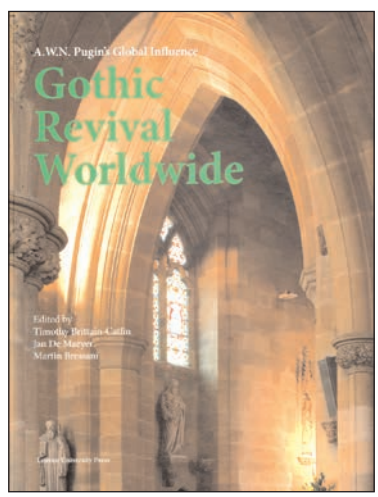
The case the book makes – persuasively – is that Georgian Gothic must not be seen as an unsatisfactory precursor of the Victorian or Puginian Gothic Revival, but on its own terms, as a full-fledged style arising from contemporary responses to the medieval architecture which was all around. It classifies it into first

a classical Gothic (medieval features on a classical structure), then rococo Gothic (scrollwork on a classical structure), then some mixture with neoclassicism, and finally the last half-century of the book's period; here, it argues, full antiquarian and archaeological rigour was brought to bear by men such as James Wyatt, William Porden and Jeffry Wyatville, who used Gothic as a high-end style, exclusive because complicated and expensive. The discussion of this last phase is perhaps the strongest section of the book, although one could wish for more context, as Eaton or Windsor were of course contemporary with Commissioners' churches and with so many modest Gothic or Tudor secular structures.

Despite its repudiation of Pugin (or at least of the Pugin of *True Principles*), the book does still have a sense of travel, from the un-archaeological Gothic of Batty Langley to the more scholarly style of the Wyatts, and a sense that this is desirable progress. There is good and fair discussion of Langley and Kent, among others, but should we still be seeing a progression rather than accepting 'classical Gothic' at face value? Are we still afraid of being rapped on the knuckles by a Victorian ecclesiologist if we admire a classical doorcase on a medieval church or ogee-topped windows on a symmetrical pile?

The book is valuable in giving equal prominence to architecture and furniture, which modern scholarship can so often divorce, although the volume's origins may be revealed by the footnotes, which tend more to (copious) primary sources for furniture and secondary for architecture. It is appropriately illustrated with well-reproduced black and white plates. It is not, however, without its faults, and the author has been badly served by his editors; there is much repetition which should have been cut, especially in the earlier parts, and who is the intended audience for a book referring in the text to 'John Evelyn (1620–1706), a diarist and writer' or 'Raphael (1483–1520), a Renaissance artist'?

Jonathan Kewley, Historic England



Timothy Brittain-Catlin, Jan De Maeyer, Martin Bressani (eds), ***A.W.N. Pugin's Global Influence: Gothic Revival Worldwide***. Leuven University Press, 2016, 256pp, 181 b/w and col. pls, £55.00 hdbk, ISBN 978 94 6270 091 8

In 2013 G. A. Bremner's majesterial *Imperial Gothic*, published by Yale, told the story of the dissemination of the Gothic Revival during its heroic phase in the early- to mid-Victorian period throughout the far-flung British Empire. The new book reviewed here expands the story both geographically and intellectually,

including parts of the world which few of us would normally associate with the Gothic Revival. It consists of sixteen multi-authored essays whose origin derives from a major international conference in 2012 hosted by the University of Kent and directed by Timothy Brittain-Catlin to celebrate the 200th anniversary of A.W. N. Pugin's birth.

It is prefaced by an illuminating introduction by the editors which points up the truly remarkable burgeoning of Pugin studies over the past couple of decades which has served to place this extraordinary man in the consciousness of the culturally aware on a similar level as, say, Wren, Lutyens, or (this writer's hero) Sir Gilbert Scott. The ensuing chapters are the work of scholars drawn from not only the Great Britain but also the USA, Canada, France, Belgium and Australia, all countries profoundly touched by the Gothic Revival as it rippled out from these shores in the wake of proselytising by Pugin and the Ecclesiological Movement.

There are three ensuing sections. The first has three essays dealing with 'Pugin and Puginism in Europe'. That by Stephen Bann takes a fresh look at Pugin's links with France – his family visits, connections and formative experiences there. Pugin was, Bann notes, 'at the very epicentre of French antiquarian studies'. Similarly, as Gilles Mauray discusses, Pugin was intimately bound up with the Gothic Revival and antiquarian movements in Belgium (which he visited at least eight times) and their leading exponent, Jean-Baptiste Bethune. The third continental essay looks at the extraordinary church of Notre-Dame de Bonsecours in Rouen dating from 1840–44 where, as Jessica Basciano argues, it's donors were, in true Puginian fashion, re-establishing 'medieval architectural forms by a desire to recreate a medieval social order that they imagined as structured according to Christian principles.'

The second section moves us to more distant lands with 'Puginism in the Americas and the Pacific'. Three essays look at Canada, one exploring the work of William Hay, a Scot who trained in Scott's office and emigrated to Canada in 1846 (Candace Iron), another unravelling the manifold 'Meanings of Gothic in Atlantic Canada, *c.*1840–90 (Peter Coffman) to different groups of people, and the third the work of the Irish emigré Joseph Connolly whose application of Puginian principles transformed Roman Catholic church architecture in Ontario in the later nineteenth century (Malcolm Thurlby). Gothic in the United States is viewed through the figures of Richard Upjohn (Stephen McNair) and Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Goodhue (Cameron Macdonell). Decidedly new territory for

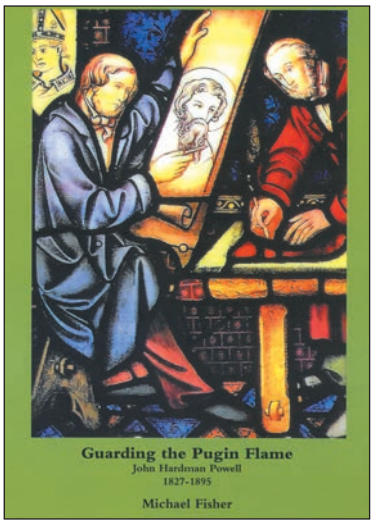
almost anyone will be Latin America, where Richard Sundt presents what he freely admits is a preliminary but nonetheless fascinating introduction to some very diverse and, indeed, impressive ecclesiology. G. A. Bremner takes us to Melanesia and the formation of a Gothic tradition there and Karen Burns in 'Global Gothic' brings in selected Australian buildings and their international context. Finally Thomas Coomans takes us to, yes, northern China and Inner Mongolia by way of the influence of Belgium and Bethune and thus, indirectly, the influence of Pugin.

The third section has four essays on 'Reevaluating Puginism in Britain'. Particularly rewarding is Henrik Schoenefeldt's study of the design for the Palace of Westminster, showing how Gothic form was moulded to the awkwardly modern needs of a large public building. Alex Lawry contributes a salutary chapter on labour relations in the building industry. He dares to suggest that the wondrous medieval dream may not have been all that Pugin cracked it up to be. Venal builders had actually been interested in money and even Pugin himself could admit, inconveniently, in 1846 that 'the men have struck on every job I have in hand'. Peter Lindfield looks at Pugin's furniture under a questioning subtitle of 'Evolutionary, Revolutionary, Reactionary?', while Stephen Kite examines Ruskin and the importance of shadow in the viewing and appreciation of architecture.

There are many riches in this book but it has to be said that some of the links to Pugin are pressed rather hard. Pugin's work unquestionably provided a springboard that helped propel the Gothic message internationally, but he had the good fortune of being able to build on a well-established tradition in which the Gothic dream was already gaining significant high ground – witness the abundance of widely read literature (e.g. Rickman's best-selling *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture*, had gone into four editions by the time Contrasts came out), the building of some fine churches, and, from 1839, the work of the proselytising Cambridge Camden Society which was taking the message and its fulfilment to far distant shores. This book, it should be said, is a work for the specialist rather than the general reader who may baulk at the not insubstantial price. The layout is generous and pleasing but sadly there is no thematic index (only one with people's names) and the lack of running heads is a sloppy and irritating omission. Another, really sad fault is that so many illustrations are simply a disgrace – poor composition, bits of buildings cut off, some grossly dark, some strange colours, and lots of converging angles (if you have the book, try e.g. 1.2, 2.2, 4.5, 5.7, 7.9, 8.6 and lots besides). Although many photos should never have been submitted by the authors in the first place, the Leuven

University Press could have done so much with the very simplest of image processing to improve things.

Geoff Brandwood



Michael Fisher, ***Guarding the Pugin Flame: John Hardman Powell, 1827–1895.*** Spire Books, 2017, 289 pp, 125 b/w and col. pls, £55 hdbk (but see special offer below), ISBN 978 1 904965-51-0

This is a most welcome addition to the extensive literature on Pugin and those connected with him. It is a biography of John Hardman Powell (1827–95) who became Pugin's one and only pupil and married his eldest daughter, Anne (1832–97). He became chief designer for Hardmans of Birmingham from 1849 and, after Pugin's tragically early death in 1852, would carry on the spirit of 'the Master's' work through the firm. Powell was born the son of a Birmingham brass-founder, William Powell, whose family were related to the Hardmans through marriage (hence the middle name): both families were devoutly Catholic.

The Powell-Hardman-Pugin triangle came about thus. Pugin met John Hardman junior (1811–67) via the Catholic seminary at Oscott. In his co-religionist he found not only a friend but also a manufacturer in tune who could realise his ideas for medievally-inspired metalwork. In 1844 the two of them began collaboration on stained glass. Just prior to this J. H. Powell had been working for Hardman and the latter was greatly impressed by his skills. He considered that training under Pugin would be of huge benefit. Pugin, famously, did not take on pupils, but Hardman managed to persuade him to make an exception for his seventeen-year-old protégé. So it was, shortly before Christmas 1844, that Powell moved into The Grange, Pugin's home in Ramsgate, and began working on cartoons which were then sent up to Birmingham to be turned into stained glass.

Despite occasional fallings-out, Pugin developed a very high regard for Powell, describing him to Hardman in 1848 'as the most trustworthy excellent person I ever knew'. He excelled at figure drawing and his style was almost indistinguishable from that of Pugin (although later developing in somewhat other directions). Such was Pugin's faith in Powell that he allowed him to act as his business manager when he was away travelling. It was a blow to Pugin when, in 1848, as his apprenticeship was drawing to a close, Powell decided to return to Birmingham. This nearly led to a breach between Pugin and Hardman with Pugin threatening to give up stained glass design. However, Hardman seems to have brokered peace and Powell returned to Ramsgate. Here in August 1850, in Pugin's new church of St Augustine, he wed Anne Pugin

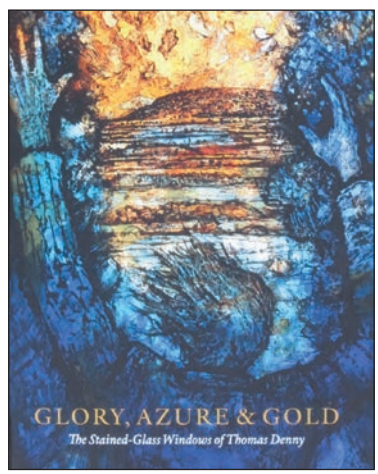
at the start of a forty-five-year, very happy marriage which produced twelve children.

After Pugin's death Powell returned to Birmingham in March 1852. Michael Fisher calculates that under Powell Hardmans carried out some 4,000 stained glass commissions in addition to an array of metalwork jobs. The book has a select list of fifty-four major stained glass jobs: it is a pity this is not longer, given that there are blank end-papers. Also subheadings in the chapters would have been welcome to aid navigation, especially as the index lacks thematic entries. But that said, the book brings together a wealth of material, much of it drawing on hitherto untapped sources. As always, Michael Fisher writes engagingly and brings to life a warm, likeable man, a good businessman and excellent artist. There is wide variety in the illustrations, not just of glass and metalwork, but also many quite delightful pencil sketches by Powell that illuminate the domestic side of his life. A fine achievement.

Geoff Brandwood

Readers of *Ecclesiology Today* may buy copies of the book for £45 by sending a cheque made out to 'J. P. & D. Elliott' to Spire Books, South Barn, Old Standlynch Farm, Downton, Salisbury SP5 3QR.

Antonia Johnson and Josie Reed (eds), ***Glory, Azure & Gold – The Stained Glass Windows of Thomas Denny.*** Reed Contemporary Books in association with Lund Humphries, 2017, 104 pp., 100 col. pls, £40 hdbk, ISBN 978 184822 2281



This development of a 2015 limited edition is a very welcome expansion of the earlier text. It is a sumptuously illustrated volume, clearly structured and a delight throughout. A good cross-section of Denny's commissions are presented where the sheer beauty, splendid colour and painterly inventiveness are imaginatively presented. Often the expressive images seem freed from obtrusive lead lines and most have dramatic impact.

Thomas (widely known as Tom) Denny, has introduced a growing audience to modern religious art. Having a father who was an architect and a mother who was a painter, he was directed to Edinburgh College of Art for both his undergraduate and graduate training. This background has provided a sound basis for an amazing corpus of work. Tom himself is quick to thank these key factors and, in addition, his friend and colleague Patrick Costelo, who has been responsible for cutting, leading and fixing most of his windows. To many this is a creative partnership second to none.

All the windows seem to be filled with detailed references to scripture, history and local interest. They all warrant careful attention and detailed scrutiny. Colour, shape and narrative always weave a complex and rewarding set of visual images. Denny's innovative approach is clearly underpinned by endless joy and delight. His life's work encompasses almost everything from major cathedrals to highly significant village churches. His work sits comfortably alongside international modernists such as John Piper (Coventry) or Marc Chagall (Chichester and Tudeley), or even Matisse's masterpiece chapel (the Rosary in Vence). Denny is truly a 'one-off' and, seemingly, never disappointing on any front. The surprise throughout is that so many gems of such great variety are revealed and are so well illustrated. All the work appears to be lovingly carried out as a celebration of light, colour and creativity. He is, above all, a brilliant artist and an outstanding crafts person. His prolific output is highly significant. For example, his ten windows at St Christopher, Warden Hill, Cheltenham are, to my knowledge, only matched by Marc Chagall's twelve windows at All Saints, Tudeley, near Tunbridge Wells. Thank heaven for enlightened patronage and a revival of interest in stained glass in religious settings!

Happily the stained glass windows and text are very largely self-explanatory. Efforts to use a discerning eye and spend a little time can be very rewarding – but you do have to look carefully. For example, the Bolton Percy's website is both seductive and illuminating. This is a splendid book, but it is to be hoped that any future edition would contain location plans and more information about the buildings in order to contextualise Denny's work.

Professor John L. Taylor

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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