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'DECORATING THE PARISH  
CHURCH IN POST-REFORMATION  
ENGLAND: *Material Culture,  
Community and Identity in Dorset,  
Somerset and Wiltshire, 1560-1640*'**

**by SUSAN ORLIK**

The immediate post-Reformation period in England was one of tumultuous change, upheavals which greatly affected the design and layout of parish churches. In this superbly illustrated and fully referenced pioneer study, Susan Orlik examines the detailed surviving evidence of these innovations in the parish churches of Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset, in the context of national trends, making frequent comparisons with examples elsewhere. The five chapters between an Introduction and Conclusion discuss the seating arrangements (the importance of pews, for example, and the need for all sections of the community to hear and see the preaching of The Word); the design of the all-important pulpits for the delivery of that message; the important display of Royal Arms within the church; the significance of new thresholds such as screens; the design of fonts, communion rails and communion tables; and the display of Biblical texts on the walls. Despite the reputation of Puritanism for austerity, and the frequent assumption by historians that decoration was associated with Laudianism, it was a period of flamboyant decoration in woodwork and other forms of material culture under Protestants of many different hues. There is a glossary of technical terms and a gazetteer of the (nation-wide) sites discussed, a bibliography and a comprehensive index.

The book is printed in colour throughout and lavishly illustrated, it has 384 pages, properly sewn and bound in real cloth, with a colour dustwrapper. The ISBN is 978-1-915774-03-3 and the retail price is just £35.

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