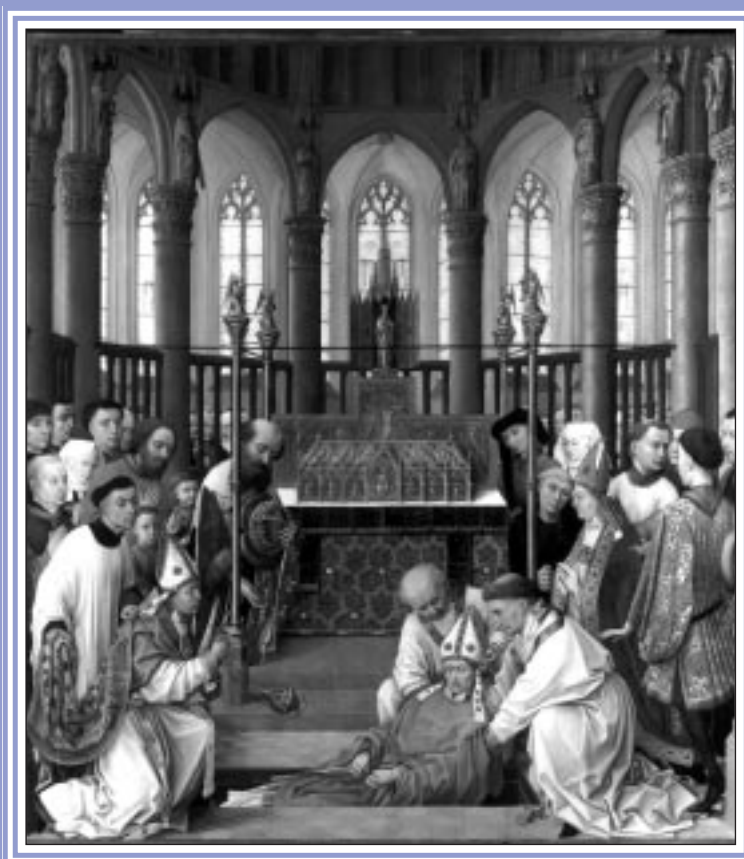


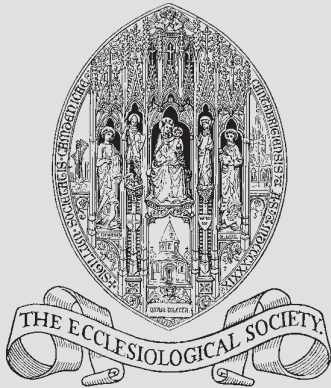


Ecclesiology Today



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Ecclesiology Today

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Rogier van der Weyden & Workshop. The Exhumation of St Hubert.
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Chairman's Letter

Ecclesiology Today

I WROTE TO EVERYONE in April apologising for the delay in producing this issue of *Ecclesiology Today*. I apologise again.

We tried a new technological approach, but were hit by snags, which have sent us endlessly backwards and forwards fixing small glitches. Now that it is in your hands, I hope you find it is interesting overall, and that there is something here to your particular taste. John Elliott, our editor, tries hard to accommodate a range of interests, and this issue is not untypical in the way it ranges from Romanesque to twentieth-century work.

We plan one further issue this year, expected in late Autumn. It will, I imagine, be as thick as this one, so I hope you will feel you have achieved value from your subscription, even though you will have received only two issues not three.

Looking ahead, your Council have spent considerable time considering the future of *Ecclesiology Today*. Under John's editorship it has grown from a slim centre-stapled item to a well-designed, properly-bound periodical, containing up to four times as many pages. With this increase in size has come an increase in cost, which we have met through a steadily-growing membership and increasingly competitive quotations from a hard-pressed printing industry.

But as the size has increased, so has the pressure on John of producing what is in essence a small book three times a year. Your Council have unanimously concluded that the time has come to move from three issues a year to two. We do not expect that you will receive any fewer pages, but the production effort will come round just twice a year, and this will make life much easier.

The Council has created a Publications Subcommittee to work out the details of this change, and to oversee our publications going forward. It is possible, for example, that we will continue to mail members three times a year, even though only two of those mailings will include *Ecclesiology Today*. I expect to give you more details of the change in the next mailing.

Sir Ninian Comper

From time to time the Society publishes monographs on matters connected with churches or their furnishings. We are delighted to announce that the next will be a book on the church architect Sir Ninian Comper. This is a joint work by Stephen Bucknall, who over many years has built up a gazetteer of some six hundred places where Comper's work may be seen, and Fr Anthony Symondson, who has written a substantial introduction to Comper's life and work, based around a series of historic photographs. You should receive your copy some time during the Autumn. It will be free of charge to members with up to date subscriptions.

AGM and lecture

Members and their guests are welcome to our AGM and lecture, a flyer for which should be enclosed with this issue. This is being held is at 6.30 on Thursday 29 June 2006, at the St Anne's Church Centre, Dean Street, Soho, London W1. Our lecturer is Dr Sue Branfoot, speaking on *Goth or vandal? The church and cathedral restorations of Sir George Gilbert Scott*. After her lecture we will hold the Annual General Meeting, followed by further refreshments. We look forward to seeing you there.

Disability policy

The Council of the Society has recently been considering how it might improve the way it provides services to those of its members who have a disability. The Society wishes to organise its events, and provide its other services, in a way which does not unreasonably exclude or disadvantage anyone with a disability. To understand better where any problems might lie, we invite any member who has faced difficulties in attending an event (or in making use of our other services) to contact me or any other member of Council in confidence. In general, it would be helpful if anyone with a relevant disability wishing to attend an event contacted the organiser in advance.

Previous publications

In January 2004 we issued free to members a copy of Christopher Webster (ed.), *'temples . . . worthy of his presence': the early publications of the Cambridge Camden Society*. This should have been received by all members in good standing at that time. We know that mailing difficulties can arise with members whose details are in transition (for example, those moving house or catching up with past subscriptions), so if you are sure you did not receive a copy, please drop a line to our membership secretary, John Henman (whose address is on the back page).

Similarly, in Spring 2004, we mailed everyone a copy of *How do we keep our parish churches?* If you think you did not receive this, could you contact John Henman.

In the near future we hope to offer our back stock of this and other titles to members.

Inspired!

Members will know that the long-term future of church buildings is increasingly receiving attention: the Society contributed to the debate by publishing *How do we keep our parish churches?* English Heritage have now launched a major campaign called *Inspired!* to secure a future for church buildings, and you should receive a copy of their literature with this issue. I would urge you to look through it carefully, and, if you find yourself in agreement, lend your voice to the campaign by sending off the *Inspired!* postcard.

Trevor Cooper,
Chairman of Council
June 2006

Dr James Johnston, 1963–2006

Trevor Cooper
Chairman of Council

As members will know from a mailing earlier this year, our Hon. Secretary, Dr James Johnston, died in an accident in mid-March. He was 43 years old. James was suffering from multiple sclerosis, which developed rapidly and without remission. This affected his balance, which led to a fatal fall.

I and other Council members miss him, both as a friend and a colleague. I know that many others will feel the same, as James was extremely active in matters concerned with historic churches, and was known to many members through one society or another. Our sympathies particularly go out to his family at this time of loss.

In late April there was a service to celebrate his life, attended by numerous friends and colleagues, at which the Society was formally represented by a number of Council members. Roger Evans, Chairman of the Friends of Friendless Churches, has kindly given us permission to reprint more or less verbatim the memorial address he gave at this service.

Memorial Address for Dr James Johnston

3 p.m., Thursday, 27th April 2006, St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street

Rising at the invitation of Francis Johnston, to pay this tribute to our friend James, whose bounding enthusiasm and expertise in the matter of church monuments and everything else involving historic churches we all knew, leaves me under an awful sense of responsibility to do James well. I cannot actually recall James expressing views on memorial addresses (some of you may – or will make something up to tell me afterwards), but I am confident, that if he did so, his requirements and expectations were for the highest standards. Hence, I declined the invitation to speak from the modern reading stand in front of the altar rail. I am sure James would have expected his memorial address to be delivered properly from this glorious eighteenth-century pulpit.

I knew James as a Fellow Trustee of the **Friends of Friendless Churches**, for over a decade. He was noted for his quiet sense of humour, his enthusiasm for historic churches in every aspect, and sound expert counsel – not merely in the sense that all well run charities need accountants on their council – and James was immensely sensible and practical about business affairs – but that James really did know his stuff on historic churches. He was the very best of company and great fun – a gentleman in the very best sense.

When we had a new issue with a particular church, James's immediate response was: let's go and have a look. He relished our Trustees' tours of inspection of our churches.

It was during our Trustees' tour of our north Wales churches the summer before last that we had our first sense that something was seriously wrong. James had acquired a walking stick and said he

had minor problems with a knee. Llantrisant old Church, if it ever enjoyed a carriage drive, is now only accessible on foot through what appears as an obstacle course and various fields. James insisted both on coming, and on everyone else going on ahead to leave him to potter behind slowly at his own pace. On the way back our advance guard discovered a leg protruding from a ditch: James had fallen into a thorn hedge. At least one vehicle driving past had not heard his cries for help. It required some insistence to get him to agree to go to Ysbyty Gwynedd to get patched up, which he evidently needed. Afterwards, James insisted on continuing with dinner and with the tour.

When subsequently his condition was diagnosed, he continued with life with the same quiet determination to carry on as before: no fuss, no bother, just another complicating factor to be dealt with, without complaint – in such circumstances, real fortitude.

What is striking is that James led a very busy public life and all those who knew him speak of him in similar terms: his quiet humour, his boundless enthusiasm, practical good sense and expertise.

His public activities involved a formidable compass, with a common theme of scholarly pursuits and jolly good outings.

He was Hon. Secretary of **The Ecclesiological Society**; and Hon. Secretary of **The Church Monuments Society**. He was a founder member and Hon. Secretary of the **Ledger stone Survey of England & Wales**, Julian Litten's brain-child, to survey & record all those flat tombstones in church floors, neglected, walked over, worn, often covered with rotting carpet (though not here in St Magnus Martyr) and treated with contempt by modern parsons and casually destroyed by vandalistic re-orderings, but which are an immense source of historical information at risk unless recorded.

He was Hon. Treasurer of **The Folly Fellowship**. He sat as the Cathedrals Fabric Commission's nominee on the **Fabric Advisory Committee of St Edmundsbury Cathedral**: his family Suffolk connection he was enormously proud of. He sat on the FAC of St Edmundsbury at the key and exciting period when the Dykes Bower bequest with fund raising made possible the splendid project of the completion of the tower.

James's range of contacts' allowed him to initiate a few years ago a biennial meeting of societies connected with church buildings – over twenty came – the last held in the Cheshire Cheese – to discuss common concerns.

James was the embodiment of what is a quintessentially English phenomenon in origin: if you want to change something, to advance learning as to some area, to help some cause – you join, run or found a society to do so. James led a very busy public life of service in what he did for all these organisations.

Born in Bombay in 1963, his sister, Helen Fleming, says he was fascinated by Indian temple architecture from an early age. The family returned to England for good in 1969. He took up what I

hope will not be regarded as disrespectfully described as church crawling with his Father. He attended University College School, Hampstead. He was apparently dyslexic (not something anyone would notice). He developed a keen interest in chemistry. His sister recalls his creating a reverse baked Alaska by using a microwave to serve cold ice cream with boiling jam inside. At Exeter University, he obtained a top first in chemistry. At University College, London, he obtained his doctorate in organic chemistry. I am unable to enlighten you as to what that involved: Simon Leach, a school friend, recalls James at this time with his jeans with holes, as acid had eaten through where he had wiped his hands – a description wholly in contrast to James's always very pukka presentation thereafter.

He then changed course. He qualified as a Chartered Accountant, with a firm then called Deloitte, Haskins & Sells, later Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte, later Coopers & Lybrand and latterly styled PricewaterhouseCoopers, a series of changes of title as complex and confusing to outsiders as the marriage policy of the Emperor Charles V.

James as an accountant specialised in church finances, including being seconded by PricewaterhouseCoopers *pro bono* to go and help Southwark Cathedral in a difficult period. He was a member of the Audit Committee of the Royal Institution, and Chairman of the Audit Committee and Member of the Council 2001/2.

James's life had these themes: churches, churches and more churches, explored from proper lodgings – by which James meant a suitable pub with good beer. Simon Leach recalls James's enthusiasm for really good Indian food, which involved forays to obscurer restaurants in Southall. In all this, James accumulated books, books and more books – all these organisations which James belonged to publish scholarly publications. He even owned a copy of that exotic legal textbook, David Smith's *Bees & the Law* and the last writer on that subject, was Quintilian, the ancient Roman.

It is a doubtless unreasonable expectation of the human condition that we should leave this world more or less in the order we entered it. James's life was cut short tragically; but for his family, all the more tragic, especially for his father, Francis Johnston, whom I also know as Treasurer of the Winchester branch of the Prayer Book Society (such is the close intertwined world of organisations represented here today in such numbers) and his sister Helen Fleming.

I have spoken largely of James the public figure, because that was what he was; but for his family, as son and brother and relative, the personal loss is enormous and to them we all extend our especial condolences.

James Johnston was a splendid man, a scholar, a boundless enthusiast for our heritage, great company and fun. We are delighted to gather here today to give thanks for his life and to salute his memory.

The patronage of Iffley church – a new line of enquiry

Mark Phythian-Adams

Introduction

No-one visiting St. Mary's church, Iffley, in Oxfordshire can fail to be struck by its scale and opulence compared with other Romanesque churches of similar ground plan, date and style in the region. Iffley is a very grand and sophisticated late Romanesque parish church.

The masons (or perhaps the master mason) at Iffley had probably already worked on some major buildings, including the chapter house door in St. Frideswide's Priory in Oxford, and possibly came originally from the great royal foundation of Reading Abbey.¹ The four monolithic octagonal columns of Tournai "marble" in the tower arches (and the smaller one in the west front) at Iffley constitute the finest surviving example of the architectural use of Tournai marble in England. Other examples come from major buildings: octagonal columns are to be found in the cloisters at Rochester Cathedral and the great twelfth century

Mark Phythian-Adams is a lawyer, whose career spanned merchant banking and investment management.

St. Mary's church, Iffley, Oxfordshire.



patron of the arts, Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, used Tournai marble in Wolvesey Palace. Tournai marble was also used for some very important church fixtures such as tombstones and fonts, including those at Winchester and Lincoln cathedrals. Its use and the subsequent development of Purbeck marble as its successor is associated with some important patrons of the arts in the twelfth century, perhaps especially Henry of Blois.²

It is therefore puzzling that the general opinion has been that Iffley church was built by Robert de St. Remy, a relatively minor Norman knight. Equally puzzling is the gift of the church to Kenilworth Priory by his daughter, Juliana de St. Remy. It was very rare at that time for a woman to carry out such a transaction, unless she was widowed and Juliana appears never to have married. Furthermore, "Patronage was a calculated act, full of social, political and spiritual significance ... it was something far too important to be left entirely to the whim of an individual."³ Such a gift indicates a close connection between the religious house and the donor family and there is no evidence of such a connection between Kenilworth and the St. Remys, prior to Juliana's lordship of Iffley.

The analysis in this paper attempts to address these issues and suggests that the effective patronage came from a more important family than the St. Remys, namely the Clintons.

The date of the church

There is no clear evidence of the date of Iffley church and this complicates any attempt at an identification of the patron. In the past, the date range of 1175–1183, has often been used, based largely on the date of the charter recording Robert de St. Remy's dispute with Oseney Priory regarding its claim to the church.⁴ This was presumably on the basis that Oseney Priory would have made its claim soon after the church had been dedicated. Such dating is not consistent with the architectural evidence and as long ago as 1965, Jean Bony seemed to imply that the usually accepted date of 1175–83 was surprisingly late.⁵ Professor Zarnecki appears to have accepted this, when suggesting a date around 1170.⁶

Richard Halsey dated the sculpture workshop responsible for Iffley to between 1140 and 1170.⁷ It is this date range, in which John Blair proposes that the use of Purbeck marble (which replaced Tournai marble, for example, at Wolvesey Palace) rose to national importance, and during which one might expect the use of Tournai marble to diminish, perhaps on cost grounds if no other. The earliest major churches, in which Purbeck marble is known to have been used, date from the 1160s.⁸ The Iffley Tournai columns have very similar dimensions to those used in the arcades of the nave and of the transept crossing of Tournai cathedral

completed between 1140/41 and 1171, but probably by about 1150,⁹ and the use of Tournai marble at Rochester is thought to have been around the middle of the twelfth century.¹⁰

On the basis that the St. Frideswide's chapter-house doorway is to be dated to the late 1140s or 1150s and the Iffley sculptures suggest a later and more mature reflection of the earlier work of the sculpture workshop in St. Frideswide's, a date for Iffley church of between 1155 and 1170 would seem to be reasonable.¹¹

Possession of Iffley between 1155 and 1170

If Iffley church was built between 1155 and 1170, there are three possible candidates for patron.¹² The first is Henry of Oxford, who exchanged Iffley for land at Walton (in North Oxford) with Geoffrey de Clinton. This exchange was confirmed by the king in a charter executed at the siege of Chinon in 1156, presumably not long after the exchange, and appears to rule out Henry as patron, unless the church is even earlier than the above analysis of the architectural history would suggest.

The second candidate for patron is Geoffrey de Clinton, son of the first Geoffrey de Clinton, Henry I's chamberlain. The last candidate is Robert de St. Remy, who may have held Iffley from Geoffrey de Clinton from the late 1150s, but who is not certainly connected with Iffley before 1177.

The St. Remy family and its estates

Given the received opinion that the St. Remy family were the patrons of Iffley church, this family will be considered first. A brief summary of what we know about that family and their estates, together with a family tree in Appendix 1, will set the discussion in context.

The St. Remys were knights or minor aristocracy; they feature as witnesses to the king's charters. Attending their lord's and, in particular, the king's courts brought the minor aristocracy into contact with the "great and the good", providing the opportunity to conclude marriage contracts for their male heirs with the younger daughters of more elite aristocrats. For example, one Robert de St. Remy married a daughter of Thomas Bardulf, obtaining a share of Bradwell in Essex. Thomas Bardulf was a rising member of the nobility, having married the heiress to the Barony of Shelford in Nottinghamshire.¹³

St. Remy lands in England

The St. Remy family was reasonably prosperous. It had lands in Hampshire at Mapledurham in Buriton (apparently from at least 1185), in Bedfordshire at Wildon (apparently from at least 1186) and in Granteton, in Cambridgeshire (apparently from at

least 1180). The family also held the manor of Iffley, at least from 1177.¹⁴

The St. Remy family's interests in Normandy

It seems possible that the St. Remy family may have had greater assets in Normandy than it had in England, certainly by the early thirteenth century. In 1204, King John ceded Normandy to the French King. As a result, Robert IV, Juliana's nephew, had to choose between being Norman or English. It was a difficult decision to make because estates in the kingdom which was not chosen were forfeited. Robert IV, as head of the family, chose to be a Norman,¹⁶ suggesting that the St. Remy family estates in Normandy were greater than their English interests and that the St. Remys may have remained predominantly Norman in spirit and outlook.

Juliana's inheritance in the context of custom and law in twelfth century England

When Juliana's father, Robert de St. Remy died after 1183 and before 1189, the St. Remy family estates in Hampshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, seem to have passed to the eldest son, another Robert.¹⁷ But Iffley (and, presumably, Mollington discussed below) passed, not to the eldest son, but to Juliana.

In general terms, inherited family estates descended on a death to the eldest son, assuming there was a surviving son, although part of a family's estates could be given to younger sons and to daughters, in order to provide them with some security. Land acquired by a lord in his lifetime was available for this purpose. A father's acquisition, however, which formed part of his son's inheritance, became the son's patrimony and was no longer available for younger sons and daughters. Even where the succession was effected by family settlements, the descent to the eldest son of inherited lands was usually followed.¹⁸ Glanvill, the twelfth century commentator, stated that a man might not easily make grants from his inheritance to younger sons "except with the consent of the heir".¹⁹

If Robert II, Juliana's father, inherited Iffley either from his father or more possibly his younger brother Richard,²⁰ therefore, it would have passed on his death to his eldest son, Robert III, as part of the patrimonial estate. However, Juliana became "domina" of Iffley, suggesting that Iffley was not part of the St. Remy patrimonial estate and that it came into the family during Robert II's lifetime as an acquisition. An alternative possibility is that Iffley was "woman's land".



Interior, St. Mary's church, Iffley, Oxfordshire.

Women's inheritance of land in the twelfth century

Given the strength of the rules of primogeniture in this period, it is perhaps not surprising that society developed a mechanism for providing for other members of the family to inherit property. This was what is known as woman's land. Parcels of a family's estates passed down the generations to be used as dowries on marriage or to provide for an inheritance for daughters, or for younger sons.²¹ But the woman's family demanded to maintain an interest in a dowry and in a woman's inheritance from the matrilineal line, to seek to ensure it did not pass to those with no blood connection with their family.

However, women rarely controlled their own inherited property or property they brought to a marriage, except in widowhood. This control rested from time to time with her father, her husband, her sons or her overlord.²² The husband was "custos", almost a trustee, of the property and Robert de St. Remy's defence of the family's right to the advowson of Iffley church could just as well have been the exercise of his rights and duties as "custos" on behalf of his wife (or daughter) as the protection of his own rights. Unlike a trusteeship as we know it, the husband or father could take the profits from the assets, but the property remained in a very real sense the wife's (or daughter's), separate from his patrimonial lands. He could not easily dispose of such assets and custom demanded that, in general, such assets would pass down the female line or to younger sons, even though, in principle, the eldest son would be the apparent heir. Such arrangements operated almost as a subset within the normal rules of patrilineal inheritance. It is not surprising, therefore, that gifts to religious houses apparently by men were not infrequently in substance by women of woman's land.

Acquisition or woman's land

For Juliana to have become "domina" of Iffley, therefore, there are two principal possibilities. First, Robert acquired Iffley during his lifetime and either gave or left it to Juliana, in order to provide for her. Secondly, Iffley came into the St. Remy family on or following a marriage and, as woman's land, descended to Juliana. The first explanation requires us to assume either that the church was built before Robert acquired Iffley or that he built this magnificent church on land which was not his patrimony and which he might reasonably have anticipated would be required for his daughter or younger sons. The second explanation would suggest that if the church was built when Robert was lord of Iffley, the inspiration and effective patronage may have been that of the wife or daughter concerned and of the family from whom the land originally devolved.

The evidence for a Clinton family connection with the St. Remy family

Before analysing the evidence for these alternatives, it is convenient here to look at the evidence for a Clinton family connection with the St. Remys. We have evidence from three charters, the first two being extracted in the Cartulary of Kenilworth Priory, to suggest that Juliana de St. Remy was related to the Clinton family (see Appendix 2 for extracts of the Clinton/Verdun family trees and notes):

- i. Henry de Clinton, in a charter dated between 1173 and c1216 (Charter H 1442)²³ confirming the gift by Juliana de St. Remy of land at Mollington in Warwickshire to Kenilworth Priory, described Juliana as “cognata mea”. If that is taken to mean a first cousin, Juliana’s mother would have been an aunt of Henry de Clinton, although the word may have been used to indicate a remoter relationship, in the same way that today the word cousin is often used. The same word is used in a charter dated between 1135 and 41 (no. 11) of Maurice de Clinton being a cousin or kinsman of Geoffrey de Clinton, Henry’s father. Maurice was possibly a second cousin to Geoffrey. There does therefore seem to have been a family connection and in volume 10 of the *VCH* for Oxfordshire, concerning Mollington, J.F.A. Mason describes Juliana as a cousin of Henry, presumably on the basis of this charter;
- ii. In a charter dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries (Charter 155), Henry de Clinton confirmed gifts which are otherwise certainly from members of the Clinton family. The gifts were those of Henry’s grandfather, of his father, of himself, of Juliana, of Lescelina de Verdun, sister of Henry’s father and therefore his aunt, and of her son, Bertram de Verdun, a cousin of Henry, in that order; and
- iii. Thomas de Verdun granted to St. Mary’s, Aunay, in Normandy, in a charter dated to 1194, a gift made by Juliana, “whose inheritance he possesses by hereditary right”. Thomas was the son of Bertram de Verdun and grandson of Lescelina.²⁴

In the absence of evidence of any other St. Remy family connection with the Clintons, it would seem that Juliana was related to Henry de Clinton, through the de Verdun family; her mother may, perhaps, have been a daughter of Lescelina de Verdun, in which case Juliana would have been Henry’s first cousin once removed.²⁵

It is evident from Miss Wood’s contribution to the *VCH* on Iffley and especially from her *Notes on Iffley* in MS Top. Oxon. D. 413, in the Bodleian Library, that she did not have available to her the evidence of Charter H 1442 extracted in the Kenilworth

Priory Cartulary, which had not then been edited. She refers only to Charter 155, which is reproduced in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*,²⁶ but apparently did not appreciate that the gifts confirmed were only by members of the Clinton family. The commentary by C. Watson in his *Edition of the Kenilworth Cartulary* assumes Juliana to have been related to the Clintons.

Iffley (and Mollington) as an acquisition by Robert de St. Remy or as woman's land

An analysis of the evidence as to whether Iffley was an acquisition by Robert II during his lifetime or woman's land suggests that both Iffley and Mollington were woman's land.

Robert de St. Remy and Iffley

Robert II, Juliana's father, is recorded as having carried out only two acts with regard to Iffley. One was to tax the inhabitants of Iffley to help pay a forest fine, in 1177,²⁷ the other was to defend the family's right to the advowson of the church.²⁸ Both acts could have been carried out either in his own right or as a custos of his wife's or daughter's land. There is, however, no record that he executed transactions more clearly demonstrating that the land was his family's, whereas, shortly after his death, Juliana gave away tithes on the mill, land in Iffley and in Cowley and lands in Mollington, as well as Iffley church. Although it is dangerous to argue on the basis of silence in the records, the evidence is consistent with Iffley being woman's land.

Juliana's gifts to Kenilworth Priory

Kenilworth Priory was a foundation of Geoffrey de Clinton in or around 1124. He was chamberlain to Henry I, who enriched him with large estates in Warwickshire at the expense of the Earl of Warwick. Geoffrey planned and began to build a castle at Kenilworth and, with some of the properties he had recently acquired, endowed a new Priory of Augustinian Canons nearby. The king and other major families, such as the Earls of Warwick, together with local knights also gave to the priory.

Patronage carried important social, political and religious implications and Juliana would not have made these gifts, had there not already been a close tie with Kenilworth, either through her family as donors or because she was a tenant of a major donor. These ties were not mutually exclusive in that a tenant might have been related to a major donor or the family's involvement might have been initiated as a result of being a major donor's tenant.

Tenants of a major donor or founder were, not infrequently, donors, sometimes under pressure from their overlord, but the circumstances of Juliana's gifts would seem to make it unlikely that they were made solely because she was a tenant of the Clintons:

i. Gifts by tenants, with no other family tie to the religious house, were commonly made during the first flush of patronage after its foundation, when there would be sometimes personal encouragement by the lord of his vassals.²⁹ The great majority of gifts to Kenilworth were made in the lifetime of the founder Geoffrey de Clinton and that of his son. Juliana's gifts, on the other hand, were made some sixty five years after the foundation. Of twenty nine churches given to Kenilworth Priory, Iffley church was one of only two churches given after 1159, the other being Hethe church, which was given by Lescelina de Verdun. As we have seen, she may have been Juliana's grandmother. Hethe was probably also woman's land.³⁰ Furthermore, Juliana's gifts were made when her putative overlord was Henry de Clinton, a significantly less powerful overlord than his forebears and one who was not especially generous in new gifts to the Priory. Had the gifts arisen from a lord/vassal relationship, it is arguably more likely that her father (or another St. Remy) would have been a donor in Geoffrey (II) de Clinton's lifetime, but there is no record in the Kenilworth Cartulary of any other St. Remy family gift;

ii. Gifts to a religious house, other than by the founder family or major donors, tended to be of property in the locality of the religious house. At Cluny, for example, such gifts were usually within a day's journey of the abbey. At Fontenay, gifts were primarily not more than sixteen to nineteen miles from the abbey, a long one day's walk or a one day round trip on horseback. A gift further away was almost always from a very powerful and wealthy person.³¹ The great majority of the gifts to Kenilworth Priory were situated within a twenty mile radius of the priory, but Iffley is more than twice that distance;³²

iii. Religious institutions would seek consents and confirmations of gifts from living relatives and later generations of the donor's family, especially in the case of lesser families, effectively to cement the family relationship and preempt any possible disputes, although they were by no means always apparently obtained. Such participation or confirmation would be regarded as beneficial to the relative; by participating in the gift, the donor's relative enhanced his relationship with the religious house and, through it, with God. As we have seen, Henry de Clinton and Bertram de Verdun confirmed and/or consented to gifts by relatives and there are many other examples in the Kenilworth Cartulary.

The most important relative from whom to obtain such participation or confirmation was the heir. Juliana having had neither husband nor children, the next person entitled, if it

were St. Remy family land, would have been her eldest brother, Robert III.³³ But there is no confirmation of or participation in Juliana's gifts by any of her St. Remy relatives. The only exception is her nephew's confirmation, not of her gift as such, but that he held land in Cowley, granted to him by Juliana, of the canons.³⁴ On the other hand, Kenilworth apparently deemed it important to obtain a confirmation from the subsequent holder of Iffley Manor, Richard filius Nigelli (see below), in respect of this same land.³⁵

The lack of any confirmation of or participation in Juliana's gifts by her St. Remy relatives might not in itself be especially significant, were it not that Juliana was giving on her own as an unmarried woman. A large proportion of women's grants to churches were made with the participation of the heir and this may suggest that such participation was most desired when the donor was least able to control the heir's subsequent actions.³⁶ If Iffley and Mollington were woman's land, on the other hand, there would be less purpose in Kenilworth Priory seeking confirmations from the St. Remy relations of Juliana; rather the house would look back to the donor family from her mother's side, as seems to have been the case;³⁷

iv. Juliana gave her body to Kenilworth Priory, should she die in England, together with her land in Mollington.³⁸ While there is no evidence as to how Juliana came to own this estate, the Clinton family owned demesne land in Mollington and tithes there had already been given to the priory by Geoffrey de Clinton, the founder.³⁹ The gift of a donor's body and the acceptance of it by a religious institution showed a particularly close connection between donor and institution. Golding wrote that: "Pre-existing ties pre-determined burial choice rather than the random choice of a burial place establishing a tie between the family and monastery."⁴⁰ Juliana's gifts may be compared with gifts in Charters 229 to 231, in which Cecily, daughter of Roger le Waite, whose family had previously patronised Kenilworth, gave property from her inheritance with her body for burial and her son was also buried in the priory. Her gift of woman's land, was made jointly with her husband as a gift of "their" land, together with her body but not his; neither he nor Cecily's first husband was apparently buried in the priory.

Juliana's gift of her body would suggest that her relationship with Kenilworth was a consequence of an earlier family connection and, as we have seen, there was an apparent family relationship between Juliana and the Clintons, but no evidence that other St. Remys had any relationship with Kenilworth or that any were buried there. As Cownie has suggested, "Patterns of

patronage were closely related to patrimony, inheritance and tenure but such associations rarely stretched further than one generation unless an inheritance was involved.”⁴¹ The charter evidence that she was related to the Clinton family, the founding family of Kenilworth, establishes a tie going back to the priory’s foundation. Indeed, religious houses founded by Anglo-Norman magnatial families were effectively family “mausolea”.⁴²

Events after Juliana’s death

The suggestion that Iffley was Clinton family land is supported by one further piece of evidence. Despite all her or her family’s generosity to Kenilworth, Juliana did not give Iffley Manor to Kenilworth Priory. Not only that, but apart from a few minor gifts out of her land at Iffley, she appears to have given the manor to no one. When she died, her nephew, Robert III, seems to have possessed the manor, but after a few years it passed, on his (presumably early) death, without apparent opposition from the St. Remy family, into the hands of a certain Richard filius Nigelli, who had been claiming it since 1190, possibly the date of Juliana’s death.⁴³ Iffley never returned to the St. Remy family.

The only party to demur at the possession of Iffley by Richard was none other than Henry de Clinton. As Clinton family woman’s land, if that is what it was, the Clintons would be expected to seek its repatriation, it having apparently passed to someone with no blood relationship with the Clintons. “Property law was family law ... the family sought to maintain the unity of its property and to make provision for cadet branches. Hence the family retained an interest until the cadet branches became so tenuous that it ceased to have any relevance, and this only occurred after the lapse of several generations. The family always sought to secure reversion.”⁴⁴

Miss Wood suggested that, assuming that the Clintons were the overlords of the St. Remys, there being no heirs of Juliana, the land would revert to the overlord on Juliana’s death and that the Clinton claim would have been based on escheat.⁴⁵ But she was not aware that there was an heir for Juliana in England, namely her brother, Robert III, and his descendants.⁴⁶ It would seem that the St. Remy family, not the Clintons, should have challenged Richard’s claim and subsequent possession. But it appears that the St. Remy family did not. Furthermore, if the Clinton claim arose on Juliana’s death, probably in 1190, why did Henry de Clinton apparently wait four years until after her nephew’s death before making a claim?

A possible alternative explanation for the Clinton claim, that the Clintons as overlords claimed escheat after Juliana’s brother died in 1194, on the minority of Robert IV, does not seem likely.

Property inherited by a minor fell into the overlord's hands until the heir came of age and could do homage. In respect of the other known St. Remy lands, Robert IV appears in the Pipe Rolls and the king is the lord claiming wardship. In these circumstances, the king could claim "prerogative wardship", meaning in effect that because he was claiming rights of wardship over an individual in respect of some land held of the king, the king was entitled to such rights over all lands of which the minor was heir.⁴⁷ In that event, the king would also have claimed in respect of Iffley, which he apparently did not.

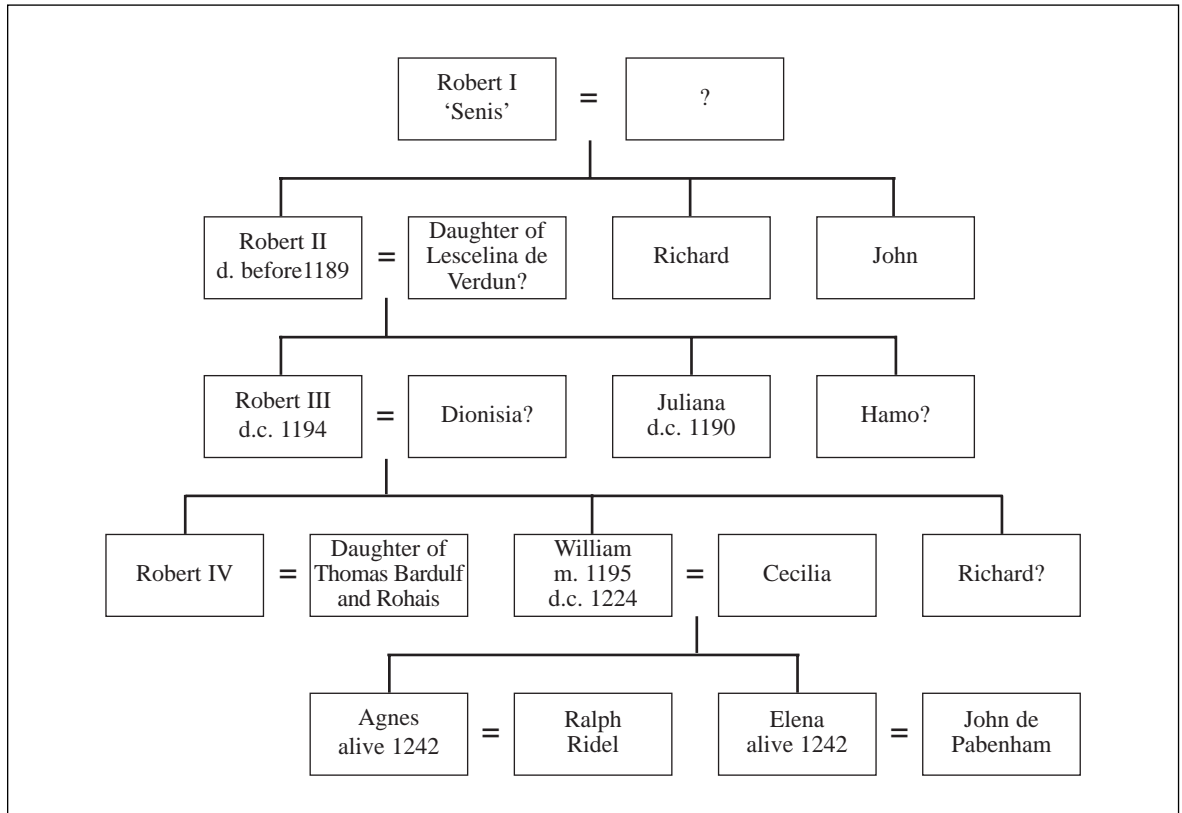
Conclusion

The surviving evidence, whilst not conclusive, suggests that Juliana's relationship with Kenilworth lay through the Clinton family and that Iffley and Mollington were Clinton family woman's land. Miss Wood in her *Notes on Iffley* held in the Bodleian Library, wrote: "If ... any of the male de St. Remys alive after 1190 with land in Hampshire, Bedfordshire etc were the first Robert's sons mentioned in 1176 then Juliana must have had Iffley and Mollington from her mother."⁴⁸ Had the Kenilworth Cartulary been available to her, she would have known that Juliana did have a brother Robert (III), who himself had a son called Robert (IV) and a younger son William.⁴⁹ It would seem that Miss Wood would then have concluded that Iffley did descend to Juliana from her mother, had she had all the available information.

It is not surprising after over eight hundred years that the evidence should be such that there can be no certainty as to the patron of Iffley church, but the analysis set out in this paper better fits the evidence we do have than merely looking for the answer in the St. Remy family.

If the patronage of Iffley is to be found in one of the major families of the twelfth century, the Clintons, it becomes easier to explain why the building was such a lavish example of late twelfth century conspicuous consumption, although whether the church was built before the St. Remys obtained possession, which might not have been until the mid 1160s or even later, cannot now be established.⁵⁰

Appendix 1 St. Remy Family Tree

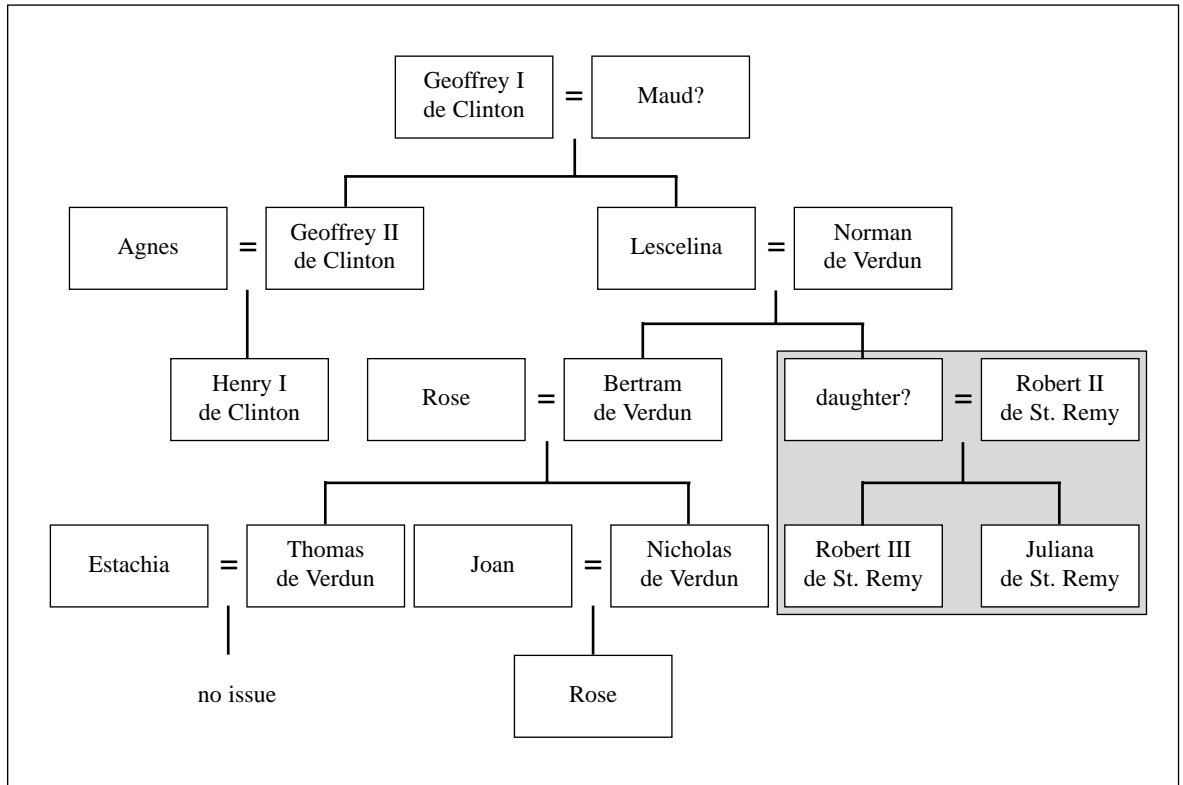


- 1 Robert I is labelled “senis” in a charter dated between 1156 and 1159 in Normandy, indicating that there was also a younger Robert (no. 73 in Delisle, *Recueil des Actes de Henri II* (1916–27) vol. I, 209 and Round, op. cit., note 24, 525).
2. In a charter of Henry Duke of the Normans dated November 1151 (no. 20 in Delisle, op. cit., vol. I, 26 and Round, op. cit. note 24, 820), there are eighteen witnesses, followed by “et Roberto de Sancto Remigio et Ricardo et Johanne fratribus eius, et multis aliis.” It is assumed that this Robert is Robert II and that the Robert in 1 above was his father. The Richard in this charter may well be the Richard appearing in the Pipe Rolls as having lands in Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Huntingdonshire/Cambridgeshire in the early 1150s, in which case early St. Remy interests in England were through a younger son.
3. The Pipe Rolls record that Robert II had to pay a forest fine in the 1170s “on behalf of his sons”.
4. Charter 953 in *A Cartulary of the Hospital of St. John the Baptist* (ed. H.E. Salter, 1914) and charter 445 of the *Oriel*

- College Records* (ed. C.L. Shadwell and H.E. Salter, 1926) for the Hospital of St. Bartholomew, both dated around 1190, record gifts by Juliana of a rent from Iffley Mill, and describe her as “Iuliana filia Roberti de sancto Remigio”.
5. Kenilworth charters H1483–H1487 establish that Juliana had a brother Robert (III), who had a son William. H1487 describes William’s father as Robert de St. Remy “juvenis”.
 6. The Pipe Roll for 1194 records Robert IV’s succession as a minor.
 7. Mrs Nineham has suggested that Juliana’s father married the daughter of Thomas Bardolf, but the dates do not fit. Henry II granted lands in Hallaton, Leicestershire in 1171 to Thomas Bardolf on the latter’s marriage with Rose Hanselin (*VCH* for Leicestershire, vol. 5, 121–133). Either Robert III or Robert IV was the Robert in question and, for the family tree, she is shown as having married Robert IV, who was a minor in 1194 and therefore born in or after 1173.
 8. The inclusion of Dionisia (described in 1202 as wife of Robert de St. Remy), Hamo and the later Richard arise from references in the Pipe Rolls. Dionisia may however have been the daughter of Thomas Bardulf.
 9. William “filio Roberto de Sancto Remigio” is recorded in *Magni Rotuli Scaccarii Normaniae* (ed. T Stapleton (1840), 191) for the year 1195 as having married the sister of William of Semilly.
 10. William’s wife, Cecilia, is recorded in the Pipe Rolls in respect of the St. Remy estates in Granteden and Wilden, and her daughters are recorded in respect of Wilden.

Appendix 2

Extracts from Clinton/Verdun Family Trees



1. Geoffrey (I) de Clinton was Henry I's Chamberlain and an important Justiciar. He was used by Henry I to keep the Earl of Warwick in check and was, for this reason, granted major estates in and around Warwick, including Kenilworth.
2. Geoffrey (II) de Clinton married Agnes, daughter of Roger, Earl of Warwick. He was Sheriff of Warwickshire in the Anarchy, although he had ceased to be by 1154, and may have been the King's Chamberlain.
3. On her marriage, Lescelina is said to have been granted lands by her mother, probably including the village of Hethe. The village, other than the church, was used as dower land for Eustachia, wife of Thomas de Verdun, Juliana's heir in Normandy. After being inherited by Thomas's brother, Nicholas, it appears in the hands of Rose de Verdun, Lescelina's great granddaughter, in 1242-3.
4. Bertram de Verdun was a powerful man, being Sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire from 1168 to 1183. He died on crusade in 1192. If, as appears to be the case, he and Juliana were closely related, Juliana's very unusual ability to

- grant in her own name, despite being neither married nor widowed, is perhaps more readily understandable.
5. Apart from Bertram de Verdun's small gifts in Charter 1473, including land in Ashow, which may have been her mother's, the Verdun family did not patronise Kenilworth Priory.
 6. The marriage of Robert II de St. Remy to a daughter of Lescelina is included as a possible explanation for Juliana's stated relationships with Henry I de Clinton and Thomas de Verdun, but there is no firm evidence of such a marriage beyond the circumstantial evidence considered in this paper.

For references concerning the Clintons and Verduns, see the Introduction to Watson, *op. cit.* note 23, especially 130 et seq. See also D. Crouch, 'Geoffrey de Clinton and Roger, Earl of Warwick: New Men and Magnates in the Reign of Henry I', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. LV No. 132 (1982), 113-124.

Notes

- 1 See contributions in J. Blair (ed.), *Saint Frideswide's Monastery at Oxford* (1990).
- 2 G. Zarnecki, 'Henry of Blois as a Patron of Sculpture', in S. Macready and F.H. Thompson (eds.), *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque* (1986).
- 3 E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135* (1998), 200.
- 4 H.E. Salter (ed.), *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Osney vol. vi*, Oxford Historical Society (1936), 135.
- 5 J. Bony, 'Origines des piles gothiques Anglaises a fut en delit', in M. Kühn and L. Grodecki (eds.), *Gedenkschrift Ernst Gall* (1965), 107-108.
- 6 Zarnecki, *op.cit.* note 2, 168.
- 7 Blair ed., *op. cit.* note 1, 164.
- 8 J. Blair, 'Purbeck Marble', in J. Blair and N. Ramsey (eds.), *English Medieval Industries* (2000), 47-49.
- 9 J. F. King, 'The Tournai Marble Baptismal Font of Lincoln Cathedral', in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 155, (2002), 1- 21 at 15. The Lincoln font is dated between 1149 and the mid 1150s, *op. cit.* 19. The dimensions of the octagonal columns in the main arcades of Tournai cathedral nave and transept (and in the nave tribune gallery) are 3.05m in height and 18cm to 20cm from side to side, V. Scaff, *La Sculpture Romane de la Cathedrale Notre-Dame de Tournai* (1971), 90-100. The Iffley Tournai monoliths in the West tower arch are 3.09m in height and have the same width. The East tower arch at Iffley has monoliths of 2.71m and 2.65m in height and the same varying width.
- 10 T. Tatton-Brown, 'The chapter house and dormitory facade at Rochester Cathedral Priory', in *The Report for 1993/4 of the Friends of Rochester Cathedral*, 28.
- 11 See the comments in Blair, *op. cit.* note 1, at 164 and 237.
- 12 A convenient starting point for studying the history of Iffley is the relevant section in volume 5 of the *Victoria County History* ("VCH") for Oxfordshire (1957), written by Susan Wood. This provides most of the references required to go back into the original records. Mrs Ruth Nineham has also considered the history in 'Who built Iffley church?', Iffley Local History Society Publication No. 5, nd.
- 13 See Appendix 1.
- 14 The evidence for these dates comes from the Pipe Rolls for the relevant years.
- 16 *Book of Fees* (1920-1931), Vol. 1, 120. His brother William managed subsequently to recover part of the family's English estates.
- 17 The evidence again is in the Pipe Rolls: his son inherited as a minor in 1194.
- 18 J. C. Holt, 'Politics and Property in Early Medieval England', in *Past and Present* 57 (1972), 3-52 at 12-16.
- 19 J. Hudson, *Land, Law, and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (1994), 182-183.

- 20 See Appendix 1.
- 21 H. Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History* (1995), 107.
- 22 Hudson, op. cit. note 19, 112.
- 23 C. Watson, *Edition of the Kenilworth Cartulary*, London University Thesis, 1966. All references to charter numbers hereafter are to the numbers in this edition.
- 24 J. H. Round (ed.), *Calendar of documents preserved in France* (1899), 189 and Watson, op. cit. note 23, 130.
- 25 It seems unlikely that the family connection was a generation earlier, i.e. Juliana's grandmother, because of the lack of any other St. Remy connection with Kenilworth, see below.
- 26 Volume VI, pt. 1 (1830), 222.
- 27 Pipe Roll (PRS xxvi), 14.
- 28 See note 4.
- 29 J. C. Ward, 'Fashions in Monastic Endowment', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32, 427-451, at 436.
- 30 *VCH* for Oxfordshire, vol. 6, 175 and Appendix 2.
- 31 C. B. Bouchard, *Sword, Miter and Cloister: nobility and the Church in Burgundy*, 980-1198 (1987), 200-202.
- 32 Although Mollington was within the principal area of gifts to Kenilworth, the Clinton family appears to have had demesne land there and the gift is associated with the gift of Juliana's body, which is indicative of an established relationship – see below.
- 33 Hudson, op. cit. note 19, 108 et seq. The relationship of a consenting heir, when known is usually parent/ son and, less usually, that of a brother, Hudson, op. cit. 194.
- 34 Charters H1484-6. If Iffley had been part of Robert II's inheritance, which, as discussed above appears unlikely, the absence of any confirmation from the St. Remy family would be all the more surprising, although Hudson warns that charters may be silent when consent was in fact given, op. cit. note 19, 184.
- 35 Charter H1487.
- 36 Hudson, op. cit. note 19, 197.
- 37 See S. D. White, *Custom, Kinship and Gifts to Saints* (1988), 115-116, regarding consents to women's gifts by maternal relations.
- 38 Charter H1444.
- 39 Charter 127 dated 1154 X1159.
- 40 B. Golding, 'Anglo-Norman Knightly burials', in Harper-Bill and Harvey (eds.), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood* (1986), 35 at 37.
- 41 Cownie, op. cit. note 3, 181.
- 42 Golding, op. cit. note 40.
- 43 See *VCH* for Oxfordshire, vol. 5, 191.
- 44 Holt, op. cit. note 18, at 20-21.
- 45 Op. cit. note 12, 192.
- 46 Hudson op. cit., note 19, 108. See Appendix I
- 47 R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings* (2000), 163.
- 48 M.S. Top. Oxon. D. 413.
- 49 See Appendix 1.
- 50 The date of Oseney Priory's claim to the advowson of Iffley (see note 4) may have had more to do with the date of the younger Geoffrey de Clinton's death than the building of the church. He seems to have died between 1172 and 1174, see Watson, op. cit. note 23, 109, and as he had been a patron of Oseney, the priory may not have felt able to make a claim earlier.

Photographs: Professor Malcolm Thurlby.

The work of Sir John Ninian Comper: pastiche and valueless as an expression of contemporary art?

aj25

Jane MacAllan

'If there must be medieval imitation in the C20, it is here unquestionably done with joy and care. Beyond that appreciation can hardly go', carped Nikolaus Pevsner when reviewing the ecclesiastical architecture and decoration of Sir John Ninian Comper.¹ Moreover, Pevsner decried Comper's work as 'tiresome historicism'² and his later style as mere 'borrowing from all sorts of styles', in other words, pastiche.³ He further impugned that 'as pieces of contemporary art they are of course all valueless'.⁴ These censorious remarks were published in Pevsner's popular *The Buildings of England* series. He had become disillusioned with some architecture of the nineteenth century, viewing it as poor imitation of earlier styles, failing to understand or capture the atmosphere of the original. It lacked originality and did not express the character of the period in which it was built.⁵ This underlies Pevsner's assessment of Comper's achievements, which has had a damaging effect on Comper's reputation.

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Comper, who started work as a church architect in 1888 and continued until his death in 1960,⁶ held strong convictions on what constituted the appropriate language for expressing religious beliefs. This is evident in both his work and writing. He had several papers published in which he justified his treatment of altars by revealing the historical sources for his ideas and, moreover, relating these to religious principles and traditions. Throughout Comper's practice, religious movements challenged beliefs and the form of worship. This resulted in architectural styles, the furnishing and decoration of churches being critically examined.⁷ In the Anglican Communion, both in England and Scotland, there was much debate over the form of liturgy and its ritual practice, which continued in to the twentieth century.⁸ The Eucharist was central to Anglican worship and the dogma and controversy surrounding its celebration was foremost in the development of worship.⁹ Awareness and consideration of these issues underpinned Comper's approach to his art and architecture.

Comper considered that the purpose of a church was to house the altar, the fundamental structure for worship.¹⁰ His treatment of the altar can be broadly divided in to two approaches. In his early work, the altar was emphasised by the use of riddel posts and a tester (Figs 1 & 3). Around 1904 his style changed. He explained this by referring to a speech of Socrates in Plato's *Banquet* that he



Fig. 1 High altar of St. Wilfrid's Church, Cantley.

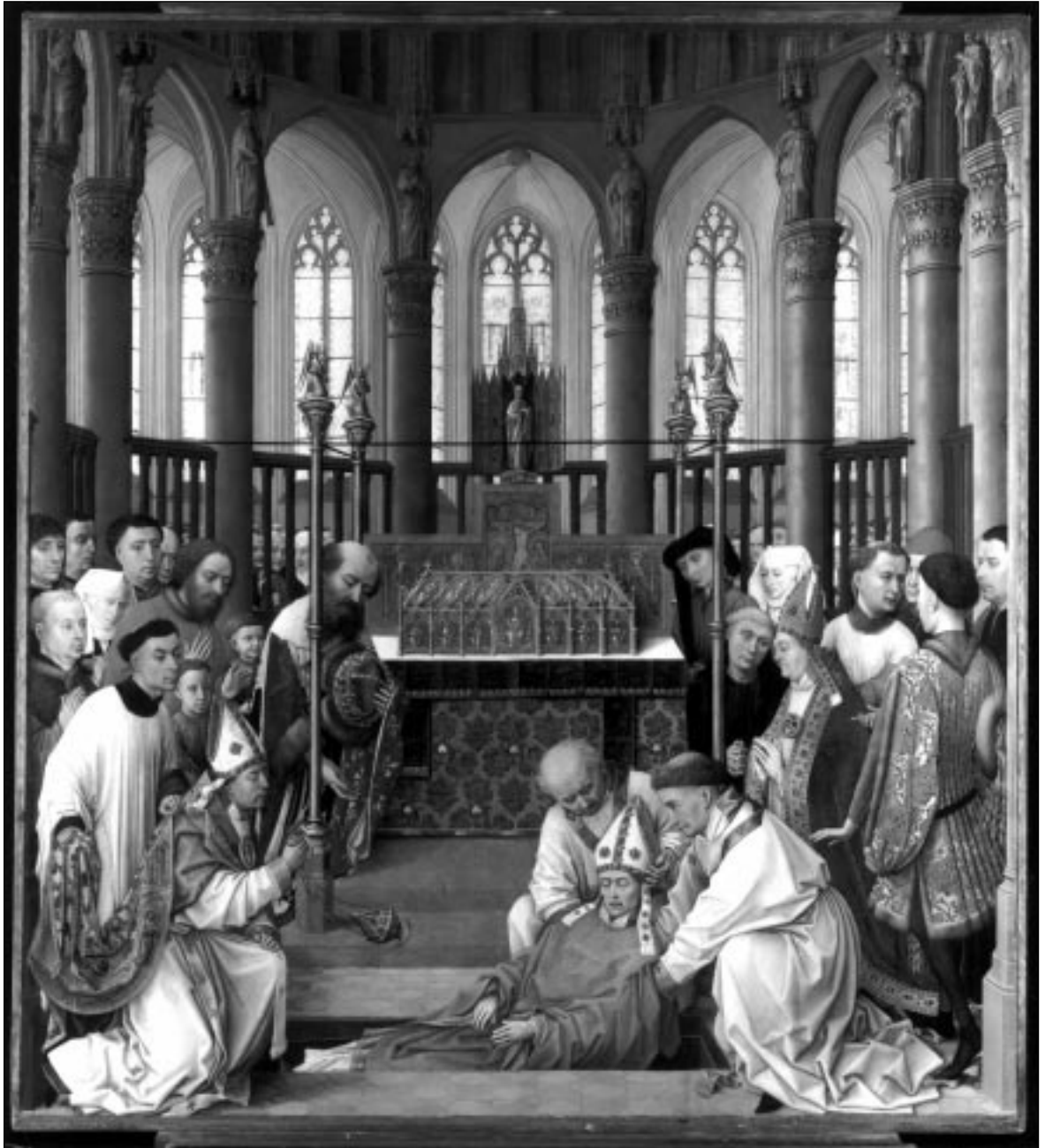
paraphrased as 'he seeks "in youth" for unity in beauty by exclusion and he ends by finding it by inclusion'.¹¹ The Secretary of the Society of St. Osmund contested Comper's earlier interpretation of a medieval altar and, as a result, he was invited to give a lecture to the society to justify his ideas in 1893. Later the same year, due to the 'unexpected orthodoxy' of his paper, *Practical Considerations on the Gothic or English Altar and Certain Dependent Ornaments*, Comper was invited to repeat it to the Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society and, again, to the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society. The lecture was published the following year by Dr John Wickham Legg, a liturgiologist, in his book, *Some Principles and Services of the Prayer Book Historically Considered*, and was republished in the *Transactions of St. Paul's*.¹² This paper was the first of Comper's writings expressing his opinions on church planning and decoration and revealing the sources for the inspiration behind his style.

Comper divided his paper in to twelve sections, each addressing one particular aspect of the altar and its ornaments. For each, he referred to historical examples to assert the traditional Christian use. He was a staunch Anglo-Catholic and, like the Oxford Movement, he believed in the use of Gothic forms

'because it is the only original style that Christianity has produced'.¹³ He supported the return to the ancient tradition in ornaments and ritual as set out in the conservative 'ornaments rubric' of *The Book of Common Prayer* from 1548-9. Comper regarded the customs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as exemplars, which he put in to practise in his restoration of the medieval church of St Wilfrid's, Cantley. His aim was to achieve

Fig. 2 Rogier van der Weyden & Workshop. The Exhumation of St Hubert.

© National Gallery, London.



beauty and ‘truth to nature’ by historical exactitude, reflecting concerns that were characteristic of the Victorian era and which captured the public imagination.¹⁴

In particular, Comper esteemed Flemish paintings of the fifteenth century for their ‘absolute fidelity to nature, even in the smallest details’.¹⁵ He compared the depiction of the altar in Rogier van der Weyden’s painting, *The Exhumation of St Hubert*, of the late 1430s (Fig. 2),¹⁶ with an engraving of a French altar, similarly styled, a copy of which was given to him by Dr J Wickham Legg.¹⁷ Comper noted that the riddel posts surmounted by angels projected in front of the altar. He adapted the arrangement for Cantley by placing the foremost posts flush with the front of the altar. Moreover, the surmounting angels carry tall tapers instead of the instruments of Christ’s Passion. Comper’s sources suggest that the term ‘English Altar’ for this design incorporating riddel posts is clearly a misnomer. His design for the hanging pyx was inspired by an ink drawing in the Islip roll, dating from around 1532, of a hanging pyx in the form of a triple crown and the gilt decoration from a description in the *Rites of*

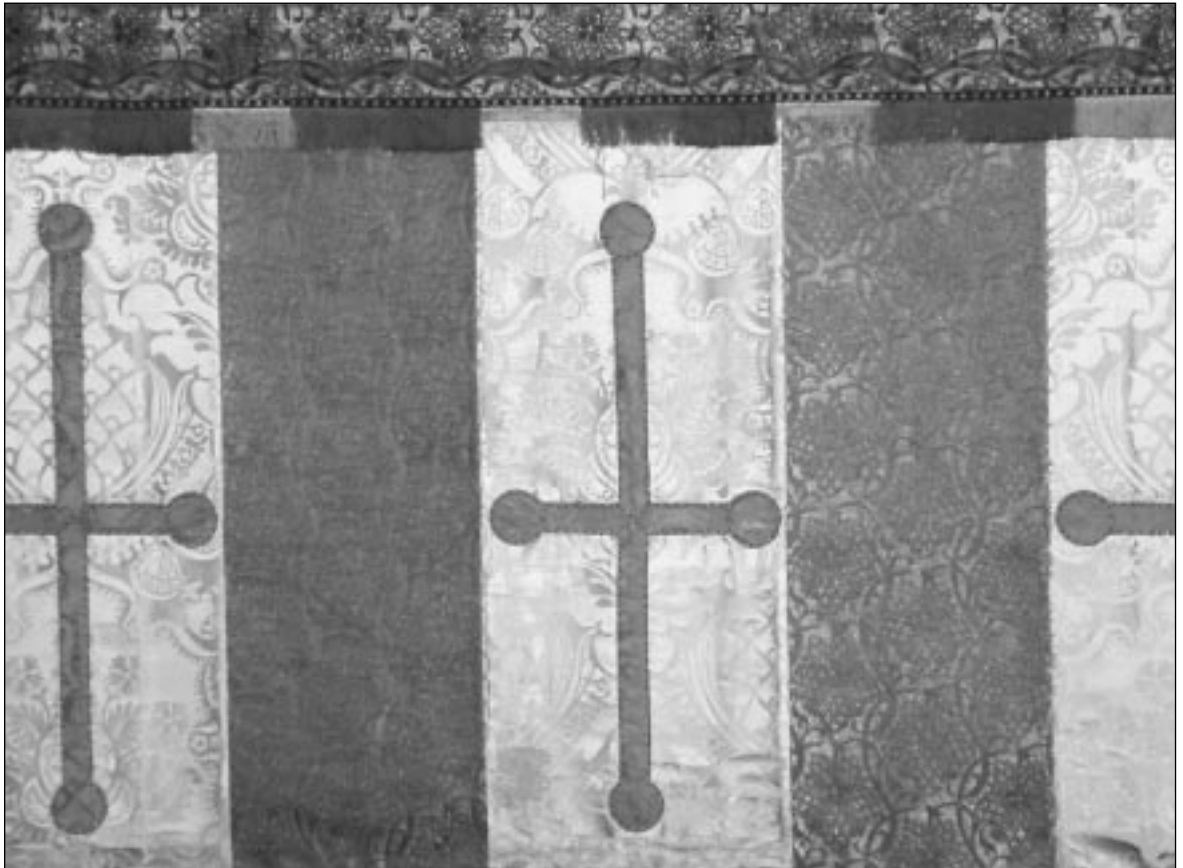
Fig. 3 Tester with hanging pyx at St Wilfrid’s Church, Cantley.



Durham written in 1593 (Figs 3 & 9).¹⁸ Thus, Comper had carefully researched every detail of the altar and its decoration to ensure fidelity with historical Christian tradition in order to capture the spiritual atmosphere and, therefore, the beauty of a medieval altar. Yet Pevsner dismissed Comper's treatment as 'completely derivative'.¹⁹ He failed to acknowledge that Comper had attempted to restore continuity with the faith of the past and had striven to achieve unity in his artistry that was in sympathy with, and appropriate for, a medieval church. This was Comper's early ethos of 'unity by exclusion' based on Gothic forms.

Similarly, Comper applied scholarly research for the design of his textiles. His altar frontal for the Church of St Michael and All Angels, Inverness, incorporates blue silk damask orphreys woven with a design by Comper called 'Hubert' (Fig.4). This is clearly based on the rich fabrics of the garment worn by a man in the right foreground of van der Weyden's painting (Fig. 2).²⁰ Moreover, Comper incorporated blue and white liturgical colours associated with the festival of Michaelmas and the heraldic cross of St. Michael to convey layers of meaning.²¹ He designed an altar frontal for St. Margaret's Church, Braemar, using a rose-red silk

Fig. 4 Altar frontal at St. Michael and All Angels Scottish Episcopal Church, Inverness.



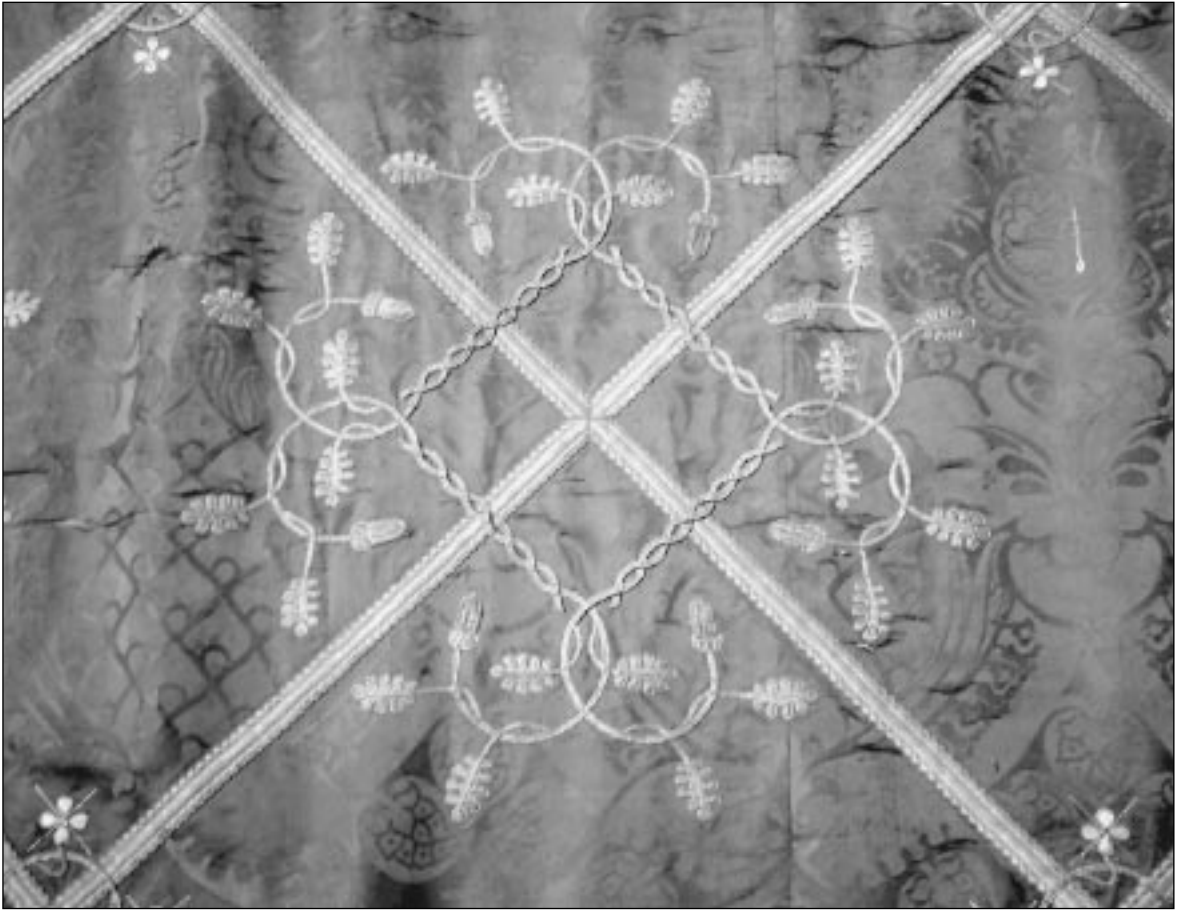


Fig. 5 Detail of altar frontal from St Margaret's Scottish Episcopal Church, Braemar.

damask woven in a design he called 'Old Cathedral' (Fig. 5). It is likely that Comper's inspiration for the embroidery is the *opus anglicanum* work on the Butler-Bowden cope, which dates from 1330-50 (Fig. 6).²² Comper adapted the motif of entwined oak branches, which provided architectural tracery to define space for figures, to create an original simplified, geometric, foliate design. The rose-red fabric together with the gold embroidery produced a rich frontal that is both striking and symbolic. Whilst Comper retained the medieval spirit in his frontals, the designs are a combination of Flemish pattern and *opus anglicanum* embroidery. In this respect, his work is pastiche. Yet it reveals an attempt to recapture the status of the Church prior to the Reformation and to align it with medieval craftsmanship carried out to glorify God. The frontals act to convey religious meaning besides focusing the worshipper's attention on the altar, the heart of the church, by enriching it with colour, pattern and texture. It is the function as well as aesthetic appearance that have also motivated Comper's choice of design and source material.

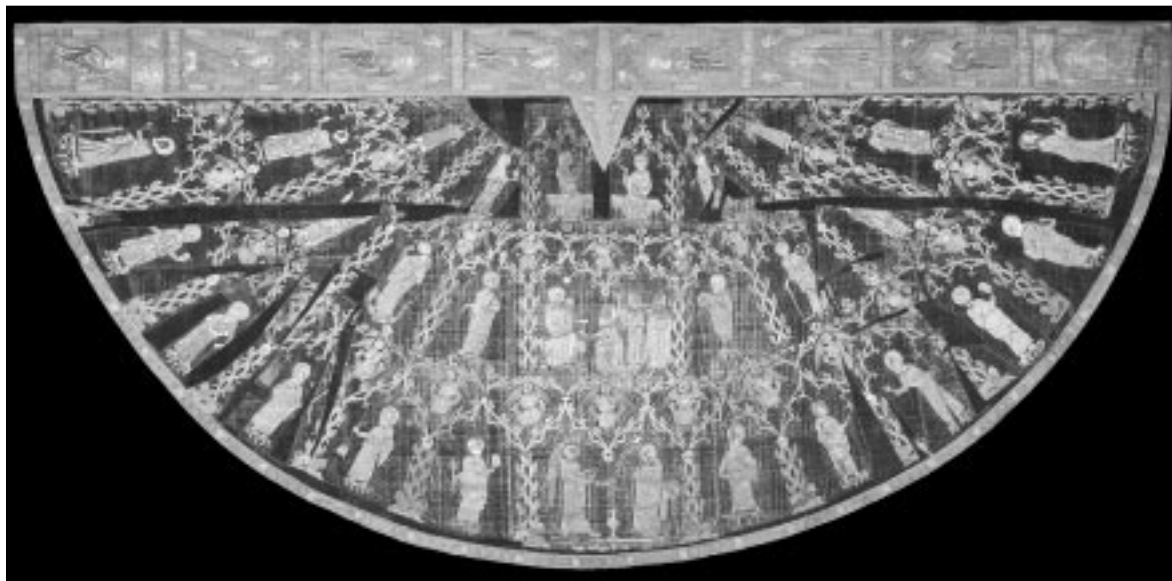


Fig. 6 Butler-Bowden Cope. By courtesy of V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum.

Likewise the designs of Comper's stained glass windows reflect diverse sources.²³ The *Majestas*, which portrays Christ as the eternal youth to stress his divine nature, dominates the east window of St Andrew's Cathedral, Aberdeen (Fig. 7). Comper states that his inspiration was the image of Christ enthroned that can be seen in the mosaics of twelfth-century churches in Sicily and on the chancel arches of English Parish churches before the Reformation.²⁴ He was also influenced by the softer Mediterranean colours, particularly, the blue and gold, which he adopted in his own work.²⁵ Below the *Majestas*, at the bottom of the window, a classical Roman triumphal arch is used to frame a scene of the Nativity (Fig. 8) alluding to the Word made flesh and Christ's triumph over death. It is evident in Comper's later decorative schemes that he is being influenced by different styles. Yet through his use of colour, pattern and design he manages to effectively combine these elements to produce a harmonious whole that reflects his resolute religious ideals. Comper's windows also allow more light to enter a church, unlike earlier Victorian stained glass windows. This shows the influence of Charles Eamer Kempe,²⁶ under whom he studied the art of stained glass painting in the early 1880s.²⁷ It is a testament to Comper's skill as an artist that he mastered these various styles and incorporated them in his work whilst still achieving his aim of glorifying God and conveying a sense of reverence and spirituality.

Apart from scholastic study in London, it was Comper's travels abroad that awakened him to the beauty inherent in styles other than Gothic. His later work is carried out under the principle of 'unity by inclusion' or, as Pevsner regarded it, pastiche. Comper



Fig. 7 Majestas, east window, St Andrew's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral, Aberdeen

justified this change in his stylistic approach by likening it to St. Peter's vision on the housetop at Joppa (Acts (10: 9-23)).²⁸ Comper recognised the integrity of other styles in their ability to convey religious meaning that contributed to the sanctity and spiritual atmosphere of churches. Thus, his opinion changed from believing that Gothic was the only true religious language. As Comper believed that God was the Creator of all things, then it was appropriate that these other styles should be used to God's glorification. This transformation yields an insight into Comper's artistic and personal development. Thereafter, his major commissions provided Comper with the opportunity to express these ideas. The use of a ciborium to cover altars instead of medieval riddel posts and a canopy becomes evident (Fig. 9). It poses an even more dominant structure than the 'English Altar' and emphasises the importance of the altar more powerfully. The origins of the design can be traced to the Greek temple and it is this statement of permanence and endurance that appealed to Comper.²⁹ In St. Andrew's Cathedral, both the gilt ciborium and the Majestas dominate the church by their scale and colour



Above:
Fig. 8 Detail of east window, St Andrew's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral, Aberdeen.



Left:
Fig. 9 Ciborium over high altar of St Andrew's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral, Aberdeen.

demanding the immediate attention of the worshipper to the sanctuary. The white interior walls and richly coloured east window are Gothic in spirit and evoke the sense of an airy and spacious interior whilst the light and colour from the east window festoons the altar. Comper provided a hanging pyx in the form of a tiara, the same design that he had produced for Cantley some 40 years earlier. The columns of the ciborium have the Greek entasis and Corinthian capitals.³⁰ Underneath the canopy, the altar is free-standing with the traditional altar frontal of silk damask, which is changed as appropriate for the liturgical season. The design and decoration of the altar and its surroundings are undoubtedly pastiche. It has a strong emotional impact on the worshipper, as Comper intended.

Furthermore, Comper firmly believed that the altar should be the focal point upon entering a church. His work was informed by a deep understanding of the liturgy and its rituals. The 'daily Sacrifice' that is entreated at the altar in complete unity with the belief in Christ as the Pantocrator is the reason for the building to exist.³¹ His vision of how the worshipper should engage with the space, altar and liturgy, however, underwent a transformation. This is apparent through the changes in his designs and planning.

The restoration work at Cantley was undertaken in 1893 in a church that was already laid out according to medieval religious beliefs. Comper was very aware of what was considered appropriate within the authority of the 'ornaments rubric', albeit that customs varied within parish churches at that time.³² Moreover, he had to accommodate the wishes of the patron in accordance with their religious beliefs. The patron was a Mrs Childers of Cantley Hall, a member of the Halifax family, and a staunch Anglo-Catholic.³³ Lord Halifax was president of the English Church Union, of which John Mason Neale, Comper's godfather, had also been a member. In fact, the writings of Neale had influenced Halifax's own churchmanship.³⁴ The society sought to promote the principles of the High Church within the Church of England and to support its clergy against accusations of Popery.³⁵ Moreover, Halifax personally ardently promoted a return to the Catholic doctrine and ceremonies of Pre-Reformation times.³⁶ The family's influence is evident in Comper's restoration, particularly, in relation to the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. A hanging pyx was suspended from the canopy for this purpose (Fig. 3), heralding a return to the practice of Pre-Reformation times. Comper considered that the pyx, suspended above the altar and in front of the east stained glass window, was 'the key to the whole arrangement of the English parish church'. The light and location alluded to Christ's triumph over death and evoked His divine nature.³⁷ This method of

reservation was allied with prejudices of Popery and, in 1899–1900, it was declared illegal by the two Archbishops of the Church of England.³⁸ Judging by Comper's innovative design for the secretion of the pyx in the canopy, it is likely that the Bishop of the Diocese was against the practice before it was illegalised. Comper's design reflects the desire to fulfil his patron's requirements coupled with an awareness of the liturgical issues within the Church at that time.

Comper also reduced the ornaments that were required to sit on the altar by incorporating a crucifixion scene into the central panel of the reredos thereby obviating the need for a free-standing crucifix (Fig.1). This emphasised the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. Moreover, as the reredos is low the altar is not diminished by it. Only two candles were to stand on the altar to represent the two natures of Christ, the divine and human. For the purposes of illumination, other candles were incorporated into the design of the angels surmounting the four riddel posts.³⁹ They also assisted in defining the holy space around the altar together with the riddel curtains and directed attention to it. This was most important as the chancel was separated from the nave by a screen. Thus the Eucharist was celebrated at a distance from the congregation. Visibility was an issue. By these simplifications Comper increased the overall impact of the altar and the Mass. It not only provided religious clarity but also reinforced the sanctity and mystery of the divine presence that was present in the existing architectural arrangement. Whilst he proved the historical precedents for his alterations, their combination and arrangement reveals his deep understanding of the ritualistic requirements of the liturgy.

This sensitivity to liturgical demands is apparent in Comper's planning of St. Philip's Church, Cosham, which he built between 1935 and 1937.⁴⁰ The free-standing altar is housed under a rich gilded ciborium that stands towards the centre of the church with the Lady Chapel behind it at the liturgical east end (Fig. 10). The altar is open on all four sides and the sanctuary space is marked by low cancelli. There is no barrier between the nave seating and the sanctuary. Thus the Eucharist has been brought forward to the congregation. It has transformed their involvement from passivity to activity. Visibility of the altar from all other areas of the church was crucial. This modern liturgical planning is in stark contrast to that of Cantley. It creates a far more intimate experience. The scale of the ciborium dominates the interior space proclaiming the purpose of worship. Its richness of decoration isolates the altar from the rest of the interior. The interior of the canopy is decorated with twelve roundels depicting the apostles that declare the liturgical belief in the 'one Catholick and Apostolick



Fig. 10 Ciborium and high altar viewed from the nave in St Philip's Church, Cosham.

Church'.⁴¹ In addition, the centre contains the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove held by four angels representing the company of Heaven as a reminder that it was through the descent of the Holy Ghost and receipt of its gifts that the apostles spread the Gospel.⁴² The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are declared in an inscription in the canopy arches. As at St Andrews Cathedral, the ciborium is surmounted by a statue of the Risen Christ alluding to the sacrament and salvation through Christ's triumph. The gilded eagles at the four corners reinforce the symbolism of Christ's ascension.⁴³ The light, white interior surrounding the ciborium with Gothic vaulting supported on Corinthian columns suggests the presence of awe-inspiring divinity. There is both unity in the design and flexibility for the ritual movement of worship. It still reflects the principles of the Oxford Movement, namely, that the high altar is essential to salvation and, therefore, should be the most richly decorated part of the church, dominating the space.⁴⁴

The liturgical planning at Cosham displays Comper's awareness of the challenge that the Church was facing in defining its role within a society that had experienced radical changes from

the nineteenth century in to the twentieth century through urbanisation, industrialisation and the aftermath of World War I.⁴⁵ It reveals that Comper was aware of the Liturgical Movement and its aims. It promoted the active participation of the congregation in worship and increased focus on the celebration of the Eucharist and its rituals.⁴⁶ Comper had already attempted to bring the high altar forward during his restoration work in the Grosvenor Chapel, London, in 1912 (Fig. 11).⁴⁷ The focus of the interior had been the pulpit. Comper erected a screen of Ionic columns that divided the interior space. It enclosed the original sanctuary, which was converted in to a Lady Chapel and formed a backdrop to the new narrow sanctuary immediately in front of the nave. The high altar was to be surmounted by a classical ciborium but this was not completed. It was declared illegal at a consistory court.⁴⁸ The aims of the Liturgical Movement were ratified by the Second Vatican Council in 1963.⁴⁹ This was some 50 years after Comper had first put in to practise this fresh liturgical thinking. It emphasises his innovation, foresightedness and clarity of planning. His concern is as much with the function of the

Fig. 11 Grosvenor Chapel, London.



building as with expressing faith and theology through its decoration.

Comper was very aware of the unique nature of the buildings that he designed. He believed that a church was 'the House of God and the Gate of Heaven'. The church exists for one purpose, that of worship, and specifically, the celebration of the Eucharist. Moreover, he believed that the artist was an instrument of God and, therefore, had an obligation to use that gift to create 'beauty' to the glory of God.⁵⁰ Thus, inherent in each aspect of a church, the religious function and ability to evoke a spiritual response in the beholder was paramount in order for them to be able to commune with God. He believed that it was wrong for an artist to display his own individuality above that of the greater 'Creator Spirit'.⁵¹ Comper applied the same religious associations to art that Vasari did in his first Preface to his *Lives of the Artists* but for a different purpose.⁵² In effect, Comper argued that there is a paradox between creating a unique work of art that is reflective of the style of a particular artist and creating an object for a church where it has a specific function to contribute to the experience of worship. There is a distinct difference between a work of art displayed in a museum or art gallery, a building designed specifically for that purpose, and one that is in a building that is itself symbolic. He believed that the expression of religious truth is paramount rather than the exposition of the subjective view of the individual artist. It is this religiosity that is overlooked in Pevsner's comments.

In Comper's churches, as the altar was the prime focus, it had the central place of honour by being more splendid and richer than the rest of the building. The precious metal antependium at St. Mary's Church, Wellingborough is distinctive by its design (Fig. 12). The church was built by Comper in stages between 1904 and 1931 and he spent the rest of his life decorating it.⁵³ The antependium was decorated in 1954, when Comper was 90 years old.⁵⁴ It is carved in high relief with a central scene of the Annunciation encompassed by a wreath of flowers and leaves. Classical fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals frame the whole design as befits an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The antependium is richly gilded. It is likely that gesso was used, which was then covered with gold leaf.⁵⁵ Mr Frank Knight, the ecclesiastical metalworker whom Comper employed for many years, also used the old method of mercurial gilding.⁵⁶ This demonstrates Comper's continuing appreciation of, and commitment to, craftsmanship. Yet the creation of the antependium is not modern in method or materials. Comper is concerned with aesthetic quality, function, and religious expression. The lavish decoration serves to emphasise the altar



Fig. 12 Precious metal antependium on the high altar, the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wellingborough.

whilst being an integral part of it and, through its beauty and quality of craftsmanship, it conveys dignity and elicits a sense of humility. The antependium expresses the beauty of God rather than the mood of contemporary society. It also reflected the spirituality of the original patrons, the Misses Sharman, devout Anglo-Catholics, and that of the people who worshipped at the church.⁵⁷ Pevsner regarded the antependium as one of the furnishings worth seeing and remarked about the church that ‘it glistens and reveals and conceals to one’s heart’s delight’.⁵⁸ Comper used precedents from the later Middle Ages and combined those with a strong design and Classical principles to create something new but with a similar atmosphere and that is enduring.⁵⁹ That is possibly why Pevsner appreciated it.

Pevsner’s comments reveal that the role of the church in society had changed by the 1960s, as had society itself following the two World Wars. In the nineteenth century, some clergy were of the opinion that the best way to relate to people on a spiritual level and to evince an emotional response was by providing surroundings and ritual that were richer than what they experienced in their everyday lives.⁶⁰ Whilst Comper used

modern materials of wire mesh and plaster to create the columns at Cosham, the decoration disguises the fact.⁶¹ Meaning is conveyed through form and decoration. He disputed the idea that art must express the 'spirit of the age' maintaining that its 'purpose is to move to worship' and to be spiritually and morally uplifting.⁶² In this respect, Comper was entrenched in the Victorian romantic ideal that through adherence to religious principles the Church could influence society to make a better world and overcome what he perceived as the bleak side of modernity.⁶³ He believed that his artistic representation of religious principles were more enduring than styles considered to be 'contemporary'.

Pevsner's priorities differed from Comper. Whilst a Medievalist, Pevsner was also a Modernist intent on promoting artists, methods and styles that reflected the culture and technological advances of the respective decade and that were not so obviously reflective of past traditions.⁶⁴ That was the motivation behind his remarks. Comper was very aware of advances being made and used them where he considered appropriate but was more conservative in his overall approach. Pevsner's opinion of Comper's work as 'pastiche' is, in the main, correct. Pevsner, however, meant it in a derogatory manner implying that there was no originality of style. Comper's early work was faithful to Gothic precedents and, in his later work, he created a unique style through the synthesis of Gothic and Classical styles with other influences. The quality of Comper's craftsmanship is undoubted. He proved his artistry through design and the use of a variety of media. He showed great skill in his use of colour and pattern. It was in his decorative approach that he remained faithful to the ethos of his early training and strongly held religious beliefs. He demonstrated originality in combining both modern construction and materials with traditional decorative symbolism in a harmonious manner that continues to impart spiritual ideals. He expressed the religious tenets that he believed are timeless and that his patrons also held. Comper's strong sense of spirituality pervades his art and that is what makes it distinctive. Throughout the turbulent first half of the twentieth century he remained faithful to his romantic expression of religion and ideal of beauty as more enduring and symbolising hope for the future. He eschewed modern styles for their own sake. He was sincere in his regard for producing an environment that he perceived to be conducive to worship and representative of the glory of God. Furthermore, he proved that he was not immersed in the atmosphere of one particular age but was absorbed by the expression of spirituality.

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Gothic space: the development of the conception of space in English mediaeval cathedral and collegiate architecture

John Lawson Baker

Synopsis

The mediaeval attitude of mind to the enclosure of space within buildings, and to the relationship between such spaces, underwent a continuous development between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries. This is evident not so much from literary sources (although these provide valuable insights) as from a detailed examination of the buildings themselves. These - and particularly the great cathedral and collegiate churches - show an evolution from an additive to an integrated approach, and from a perception of space as 'negative' to one as 'positive'.

Paper based on a History thesis written in 1961-62 by John Lawson Baker as part of his studies at the Architectural Association School in London.

GOTHIC SPACE: The development of the conception of space in English mediaeval cathedral and collegiate architecture.

The church building had to the mediaeval mind a symbolic importance far above that of a beautiful building in which God could be worshipped in pleasure or even in ecstasy. It was designed rather to be what von Simson calls *the intimation of ineffable truth*. The form of the building was seen as an expression of the form of the cosmos, and an image of the Heavenly City. Crucial to this were the two ideas of harmonious proportion and of luminosity. I intend to show, by detailed analysis of major ecclesiastical buildings in England, how these ideas influenced the character of these buildings from overall conception to the smallest details.

Very little has survived in written documents of the time on the subjects of proportion and luminosity, as far as building design is concerned, although there is plenty of theological speculation on these topics by Scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas. On the concept of space there is practically nothing. We are obliged to deduce what we can from an analysis of the buildings themselves.

To structure this analysis, I have divided spatial qualities into four categories, each dependent on the next for its effectiveness. Firstly there is the *Intention*, the 'policy decision' on the type of space to be created, whether finite or infinite, luminous or opaque, reposeful or active. This is conditioned by *Flow*, the relationship between spaces, which determines such factors as directionality, continuity, visual flow (the movement of the eye of the spectator) and actual flow (the movement of the spectator himself through the building). This in turn depends on *Delineation*, that is, the treatment of the boundaries of each spatial element,

particularly where they impinge on each other; and this, ultimately, is realised by *Elemental Interrelation*, the design of individual elements, down to the scale of shaft-rings and capitals, and how they relate to one another and to the whole.

For the thesis to be valid, each building chosen must be an important and consistently realised example of its period, designed by men fully conversant with the theories embodied in their work. The examples I have chosen range in date from the late eleventh to the early sixteenth centuries, from the time of the mature Romanesque style to the final flowering of the Gothic.

Durham Cathedral epitomises most completely the English Romanesque, being largely unaltered internally except for the later addition at the east end of the Chapel of Nine Altars in place of the original eastern apse: it also retains its original stone vaulting. Our first impressions are of the static nature of the spaces and the solidity of the enclosing elements. Each element of the structure is a simple geometrical shape – the semicircular arch, the cylindrical column – and these are assembled in an additive way; each bay of the nave is almost square in plan. The columns which separate them are incised with geometrical patterns, which change from bay to bay and emphasise their individuality; and they alternate with compound piers which break up any sense of spatial flow in the view down the nave. The crossing – the space under the central tower – is again self contained and static, relating equally to nave, quire and transepts, and open to the lantern tower above. The quire originally terminated in an apse, which enclosed the high altar; again a simple geometrical shape. All the positive elements of the building are its solid forms; the spaces are what remain after the assembly of these forms. In terms of our analysis, the spatial intention (inasmuch as it can be considered a positive thing at all) is finite, static and opaque; the spaces are simply juxtaposed, and do not flow into one another; and the individual elements, although stylistically consistent, are similarly self contained. The mouldings on the arches for instance bear no resemblance to the forms of the capitals or the decoration of the columns.

The eastern limb of Canterbury Cathedral is an important example of the transition between the Romanesque and the Gothic. Built during the years 1174 to 1178, it replaced an earlier Norman structure which had a typical apsidal end, with radiating chapels in the French manner. Two of these were retained in the rebuilding, resulting in a curious constriction of the space before the extended east end widens out again beyond. The result, in terms of spatial flow, is remarkable; the original apse is hinted at, but beyond, the arcades disappear from view to reappear at the new apse – an effect curiously apparitional, almost transcendental.

It is the first stage in the elimination of mass as a significant element, which was to become the preoccupation of the Gothic builders.

The most complete example of the earliest mature gothic style in England is Salisbury Cathedral, built in the thirteenth century. Here for the first time space becomes an ordered and rational entity, perfectly mirroring the systematising tendencies of the theological and philosophical thinking of the time. Scholasticism and mysticism were complementary aspects of this outlook; it could be said that they find their expression respectively in the rational organisation of form and the preoccupation with light. The units of construction, column shafts, capitals and arch mouldings, are all clearly related to one another as part of a consistent system; and they are used in a way which begins to break down the apparent mass of the structures to which they are applied - in other words to dematerialise them visually. The continuous string courses above the arcades, and the level ridge line of the vaulting without ponderous transverse arches, all help to tie the individual elements together as a coherent series of spaces with a sense of forward movement. Originally the spatial flow was interrupted at the lower level by the pulpitum or rood screen; significantly the design of triforium and clerestorey was identical in nave and quire, being seen together over the screen, whereas the arcade design, only visible separately, became more elaborate in the quire. In this way a subtle tension was established between the spaces at the different levels. At the east end there is no apse but a square termination; behind the high altar is a wide central arch flanked by two narrow ones, corresponding to the nave and aisles of the Trinity chapel beyond. This nave in turn is terminated in a group of three lancets, a progression of three within three within three, hinting at the infinite and the infinitesimal, unity and multiplicity - a summation of scholastic thought in stone.

The evolution of the simple lancet window, used singly or in groups, into the traceried window was the characteristic of the next stage of Gothic. It was a way of further dematerialising the walls, increasing the window sizes yet integrating them into the wall surfaces with a filigree of stone. As we move into the fourteenth century we see this tendency to soften the transitions between stone and glass extended to meld one space into another. The quire of Bristol Cathedral is perhaps the most inventive example of this trend. The aisles, by being the same height as the main body, become more clearly an extension of the same space; and at a more detailed level, the column mouldings run uninterrupted into the arches without capitals. Most spectacularly of all, there are internal flying buttresses like little bridges carrying their own vaults across the aisles, providing constantly changing

diagonal views as the spectator moves around the building. As Worringer says in his book *Form in Gothic*: Gothic space is unbridled activity, its not is not that of solemnity or repose; it is overwhelming. It does not receive the beholder with soft gestures, but carries him violently along, acting as a mystical compulsion to which the burdened soul deems it a delight unresistingly to yield.

As the fifteenth century is approached, the desire to weld the whole edifice into one integrated space becomes overwhelming; it finds its most characteristic expression in a building such as Kings College Chapel in Cambridge. Here nave and quire (antechapel and chapel in collegiate terms) become one single vessel; the rudimentary side aisles are hidden behind traceried screens and form no part of the spatial experience. Even where existing buildings were remodelled this tendency is evident: in the quire of Gloucester Cathedral (one of the earliest examples of the final Gothic style known as Perpendicular) the mullions of the huge traceried clerestorey windows are carried to ground level to mask completely the Romanesque arcade and the aisle beyond. And when Winchester Cathedral was remodelled in this period only the nave and quire were given the new look, unified into one space via the central tower. The Romanesque transepts, which could not be brought into this single-cell space, were pointedly left in their original state.

It is to Kings College Chapel, however, that we must return as the apogee of the Perpendicular style; the long narrow high single cell which was the fifteenth century ideal. Chapel and antechapel are still separated by a solid screen, and this gives a sense of movement to the space; but above it the magnificent fan vault sails unbroken for the entire length of the building. Here again is demonstrated the characteristic spatial tension between visual and actual movement in its most essential form.

There are indeed differences in bay design between antechapel and chapel at Kings, but they all occur below the mid point of the clerestorey windows. In the chapel the vault shafts no longer extend to the floor, but are supported on corbels higher up, giving a correspondingly more weightless effect. This is emphasised below sill level by the choirstalls, which give a visual weight combined with a constriction in width. Beyond the stalls the space expands again to the full width of the chapel, but the antechapel design with its insistent floor-to-ceiling verticals is not resumed; instead the whole edifice of vault and traceried windows rests on a plain ashlar wall pierced only by the doors to the vestries. Here, at the spatial climax of the building, the tension between upper and lower levels is made even more meaningful by being totally expressed by the structure rather than by 'furnishings' such as screen or stalls.

Here it is possible to see how progression and climax can still be achieved within a single spatial cell; and yet the cell is all-embracing - other equivalent interconnecting spaces are unimaginable, and only infinity is conceivable beyond its boundaries.

By the time the chapel was completed, the Renaissance had already taken hold in Italy. It was the antithesis, both architecturally and philosophically, of the Gothic outlook. Contrasts of light and shade, solid and void, replaced the mediaeval ideals of luminosity and the consonance of parts. Where Gothic space was defined by light, Renaissance space is enclosed by the deliberate opacity of solid elements. The Gothic expired in the change from faith to reason, metaphysics to physics, transcendentalism to humanism. Perhaps the question must be, is a resurrection either possible or desirable?

Low side windows: ventilating a 170-year old controversy

P S Barnwell

Under the second window from the east is a shallow square-headed recess, in which is an ogee-headed pierced spandrelled pannel [*sic*]. What this was is difficult to say: it is too near the ground to have been a stoup, and is too small for the doorway to a crypt, being only two and twenty inches wide and thirty-four in height. It may, however, have been the window of a crypt, or an opening through which to view and worship from the churchyard the reliques of some saint immured within the chancel; to which latter opinion we are most inclined, on account of there being also a monumental recess in the interior south wall, corresponding in situation with this exterior recess.¹

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Published in 1839, in a description of the church of St Mary, Hurley, in Berkshire, this is one of the earliest notices of what was to become known as a low side window. It came in the year in which the Cambridge Camden Society was founded, and in the period of the more general awakening of interest in the past which was to lead, a few years later, to the creation of what were to become the British Archaeological Association and the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. In that climate, puzzlement concerning the function of the apertures was taken up by others, and throughout the 1840s vigorous debate ensued, mainly in the pages of *The Ecclesiologist*, journal of the Cambridge Camden Society, and *The Archaeological Journal*, organ of the Archaeological Institute which boasted a large number of clergy amongst its members.² By 1847 no fewer than twelve theories were in circulation, and agreement was not in sight. Thirty years later, Cox, in his four volumes on the churches of Derbyshire, noted in despairing tones that, ‘There are few bones of contention that have been more persistently worried by archaeologists than this question of “low side windows”; and a respectable-sized volume might be compiled of all that has been written on the subject’, but pronounced that the function of all such openings was not necessarily the same.³ During the 1870s and 1880s, the debate continued, though less intensely, perhaps as it was associated with the kind of high church ritual revival investigated by the Ritual Commission (1867-70) and proscribed by the Public Worship Regulation Act (1874). In the 1890s, however, when the Act had fallen into disrepute and ritual revival was *de rigueur* in some quarters, a new generation of investigators took up the subject with an almost missionary fervour. Their energies exhausted, little real enlightenment having resulted, and the impetus of ritualism having slackened, interest waned during

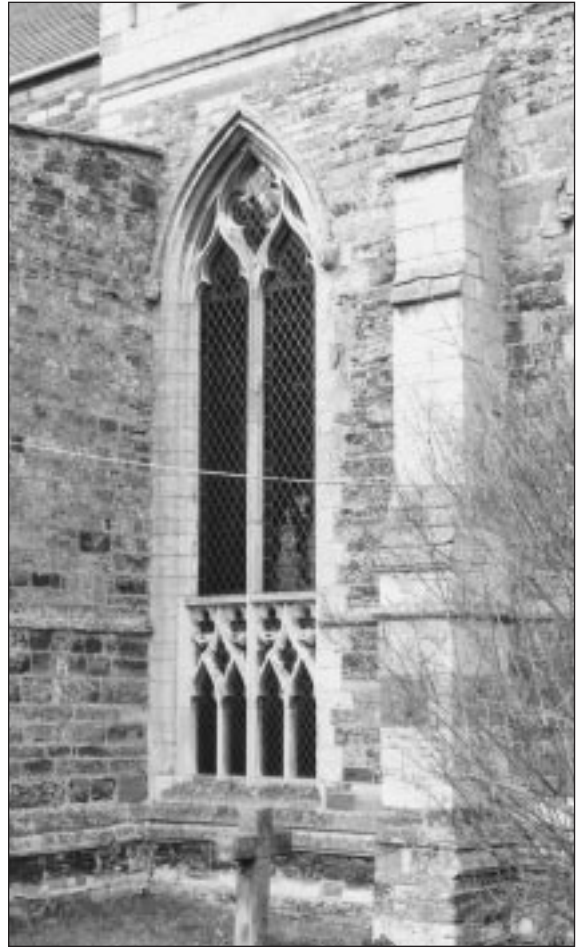
the 1920s. Subsequently, the matter has largely been written off as, at best, unprofitable for further enquiry, and, at worst, a field which serious scholars might wisely avoid.

The debate spawned a vast literature written primarily by clergy, ecclesiologists, liturgical controversialists and architects. It was pursued with the passion, polemic and, occasionally, intemperance associated with Victorian disputation, and resulted in some two dozen theories ranging from the serious to the starkly bizarre. A consequence of the liveliness and currency of the topic was that many who engaged with it, whether in correspondence or in scholarly papers, assumed that their readers knew the relevant literature. Combined with the fact that nineteenth-century scholarship did not demand the kind of referencing expected today, the result is that it is scarcely feasible to track down all the relevant literature, much of which is buried in descriptions of individual churches, and some of it probably only ever disseminated by oral means, including discussion held during the visits to churches made by members of bodies such as county architectural and archaeological societies.

The principal reason for reviewing and re-opening the investigation is to consider low side windows from an angle which seems not to have been pursued before, namely a contention that the form, function and chronology of low side windows should be seen in relation to the development of windows more generally, whether in parish churches, greater churches (cathedrals and monasteries), or domestic buildings including their chapels. This contrasts with the terms of the nineteenth-century debate, which focussed almost exclusively on parish churches and parochial chapels. The substance of the argument is prefaced by a brief description of the characteristics of the typical low side window, and a summary account of the historiography with more extended discussion of some of the principal theories in order to give a flavour of the debate and set it against the circumstances in which it took place.

Low side windows

Low side windows are generally found towards the west end of chancels, more commonly on the south than the north, but sometimes on both sides of the building. They consist of small window-like apertures set lower than the main windows (Fig. 1), or of downwards extensions of one or more of the lights of the westernmost of the ordinary chancel windows (Fig. 2). In the former case the openings may be square or rectangular, with heads which are either straight or arched as simple lancets or more elaborately cusped; very occasionally the opening is circular. Where the aperture is an extension to a principal window, it is



usually separated from the main part of the window by a transom. The actual opening of the low-side window has often been blocked, though many were re-opened during nineteenth-century restorations. None has a groove to hold glass or other definite evidence of having been glazed: rather, there is usually a rebate for an internal shutter, sometimes possibly a casement,⁴ the hinges and bolt-sockets for which often remain (Fig. 3). On the outside there is often an iron grille or evidence for its former existence. In a small number of cases the splays on the inside are fashioned into a seat, occasionally into a seat and reading desk.⁵

Not every church had a low side window, and the number possessed of them varied across the country. Working as best he could with published information, Houghton produced figures in 1916 suggesting that the proportion of churches with extant medieval chancels which contained a low side window varied from 7% in Derbyshire to 50% in Warwickshire and County Durham. The combined results of an investigation of low side

*Fig. 1 (left): St Andrew's, Harleston, Northamptonshire. Low side window.
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*Fig. 2 (above): St Peter's, Walgrave, Northamptonshire. Low side window.
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Fig. 3: a and b: Assumption of the BVM, Lillingstone Lovell, showing shutter and iron grille. c and d: St Bartholomew's, Furiho, Potterspurty, Northamptonshire, now blocked. There is also a low side window at the north of the chancel, likewise blocked. © Copyright P. S. Barnwell.



windows in Northamptonshire published in 1908,⁶ and a systematic survey of the medieval churches of the county undertaken by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in the 1980s, permit greater detail to be established for a county at the top end of the scale. Of 78 churches in which the medieval north and south walls of the chancel both survive and are external, 36% have no evidence for a low side window, 26% have evidence for low side windows in both walls, and 29% in the south wall only, compared to 9% on the north alone. In chancels with two low side windows the openings may be identical, or nearly so, but such is not necessarily the case even

when they appear to result from a single building phase (Fig. 4), while in other instances they may have been inserted at different dates. The variation in the position of low side windows is considerably greater than that related to the siting of strictly liturgical fixtures in the chancel, such as fixed piscinae, all 89 surviving Northamptonshire examples of which are to the south of the altar: this strongly suggests that, unlike piscinae, low side windows were not connected with formal liturgical rites.

A few openings of similar character can be found in other parts of the church. At Compton and Limpsfield in Surrey, for example, there appear to be such openings at the east end of the chancel, and at the latter there is another towards the east end of the south nave aisle.⁷ Among the small number of low side openings situated outside the chancel, the majority seem to be in south nave aisles east of the doorway, Northamptonshire containing at least three possible examples in such a position, one, at Stoke Albany, in a church with two low side windows in the chancel.⁸ Most of those which occur in aisles seem to have stood in a similar relationship to aisle altars as did those in chancels to the high altar.⁹

Fig. 4 St Mary's Grendon, Northamptonshire. Contemporary low side windows of differing form.
a: south: low side window in both lights.
b: north: low side window in one light.
 © Copyright English Heritage. NMR.



Although the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discussion was centred on parochial buildings, a few examples of low side windows in chapels of other types have been from time to time noted. The implications of the presence of the openings in domestic chapels, in particular, were not, however, considered relevant to the debate concerning function, and very little account was taken of the fact that many such chapels, and therefore, openings, were on the first floor, as at Little Wenham Hall, Suffolk, Prior Crauden's Chapel, Ely, and Leeds Castle, Kent, where it is above the moat.¹⁰

Low side windows were not constructed throughout the middle ages. There are few, if any, examples which can definitely be dated to before 1200, the majority (a little over half, in the case of Northamptonshire) are of the thirteenth century, a significant number (just under a third) in the fourteenth, but very few of the fifteenth, particularly its latter half. Alongside the absence of fifteenth-century examples, whether inserted into old chancels or as an original feature of new ones, is evidence that some low side windows were blocked long before the Reformation: at Blisworth, Northamptonshire, for example, both low side windows are blocked by late fifteenth-century choir stalls.¹¹ Although the broad chronological pattern has been recognised since the early years of the debate,¹² and the lack of twelfth-century examples played an important part in one of the leading theories concerning their use, neither the reasons for it nor its implications have so far been adequately investigated: these issues are further discussed below.

Historiography

As already noted, the initial 'discovery' of low side windows led to a flurry of speculation and the rapid positing of a dozen explanations, some of which quickly fell from favour. Thereafter, while new notions continued to arise, the pace slackened and the greater part of effort was directed to bringing forward examples of windows and other forms of evidence which illustrated the leading theories, and to debating their merits. In the 1890s a new kind of thematic literature began to appear, in which the issues were rehearsed but, rather than the author taking a firm position, he often admitted that they had not been resolved. The aim was to publish examples, usually more or less systematically within a county, which were described, measured and drawn, in the hope that patterns, and hence enlightenment, would emerge from the increased number of known examples.¹³ This partly arose from the fact that the debate had become bogged-down, but also reflected the more widespread late-Victorian and Edwardian scholarly culture of the inventory which led to the establishment of the

Royal Commissions on Historic Monuments for England, Scotland and Wales in 1908–9. It is salutary to note, however, that, while new ideas did continue to be advanced, the ‘archaeology’ thus amassed gave them no firmer roots than those of their predecessors.

The scope of the historic debate was not restricted to England. Although few low side windows exist in France and Italy, evidence from the Pyrenees and northern Italy was brought to bear on the debate as early as the 1840s.¹⁴ More systematic are a similarly early exploration of Danish examples, followed, half a century later, by studies of low side windows in Scandinavia and Ireland.¹⁵ Foreign material was, however, discussed within the same framework as those relating to England, and no new theories concerning the functions of the openings were derived from it.

In approximate order of their appearance, the explanations for low side windows advanced since about 1840 include the contentions that they were

1. lychscopes, or openings through which a tomb or the lights set up at the Easter Sepulchre for the Easter Vigil could be watched. This is the only theory which has ever been openly withdrawn by its authors as untenable, when it was discovered that not all low side windows provided a view of the Easter Sepulchre.¹⁶
2. confessionals, for someone inside to hear the confession of someone outside (see below).
3. to allow lepers, penitents, outlaws or others excluded from the body of the church to hear Mass, and/or to receive communion.¹⁷
4. symbolic of the wound made in Christ’s side as he hung on the cross (the so-called ‘vulne’ theory – see below).
5. places where lights were placed to scare demons away from the churchyard.¹⁸
6. for passing offerings or alms into the church, and/or for passing offerings to recluses living in anchorholds built adjacent to the church.¹⁹
7. to enable the thurible to be held outside the building to fan the coals before adding incense, or to provide a ledge where it could be cooled after use.²⁰
8. to enable someone inside to see the approach of the priest and ring a bell to alert others.²¹
9. to provide light for the reading of the lessons.²²
10. to light an area of the chancel used as a vestry.²³
11. to enable the sanctus bell, rung at the elevation of the Host, the high point of the Mass, to be rung outside the building to be heard in the neighbourhood (see below).
12. for ventilation (see below).
13. to enable people outside to see the rood, or in some other

- way connected with the rood loft.²⁴
14. for the display of relics or of the ciborium at night, when the church was locked.²⁵
 15. hagioscopes allowing lepers or others who could not enter the church to see the elevation of the Host, the central moment of the Mass, though perhaps at a secondary altar immediately inside, rather than the high altar which was often invisible from the window,²⁶ or to allow them to see the reserved Host or a light on the altar.²⁷
 16. for some purpose relating to the office of the dead during which the priest might need to see what was happening in the churchyard.²⁸
 17. for the blessing of pilgrims who did not enter the church.²⁹
 18. to provide a view of an image or light on a wall or pier within the church.³⁰
 19. to enable the priest to watch for miscreants in the churchyard while saying the office at his desk immediately inside.³¹
 20. for the defence of the church, as they enabled people within to fire arrows out of it.³²
 21. for communicating with and feeding those seeking sanctuary within.³³
 22. to provide an up-draught to make the lights on the rood loft burn more brightly.³⁴

Four of these ideas, including the two most widely espoused, are worth exploring more fully in order to understand the paradigm within which the debate was conducted.

One of the weakest of the early notions was the ‘vulne’ theory – that the low side window represented the wound made in Christ’s side as he hung on the cross. The real problem is not the symbolic interpretation of the building itself, for that was fairly mainstream in the 1840s. Pugin’s *Contrasts*, for example, the second edition of which appeared in 1841, argued that Gothic architecture was the direct product of the Roman Catholic faith, and that its fundamental elements (the cross shape of church plan, the triangular forms of arches and tracery, and the height and verticality of the buildings) were symbolic of the crucifixion, the Holy Trinity, and the resurrection.³⁵ Two years later, and perhaps a direct influence on the author of the ‘vulne’ theory, there appeared a translation of the first book of the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* of Durandus, a thirteenth-century bishop of Mende, which contains complex symbolic interpretations of parts of church buildings: it was produced by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, two of the founders of the Cambridge Camden Society, whose long introduction explained the logical basis of symbolism in church architecture.³⁶ While some contemporaries dismissed

the whole notion of the 'vulne' theory as 'fanciful',³⁷ the more serious difficulty was that the symbolism did not work. As explained by its authors, the idea was that the trefoiled west windows of the nave aisles represented the nails driven through Christ's feet, the transepts his outstretched hands, and the chancel his head. The fact that the 'head' was either straight or inclined to the south (right, from the viewers' perspective) rather than to the north (left), as it should have been, did not matter, as it was 'only symbolic'; it followed that the fact that the 'wound' was in the side of the 'head' rather than of the torso was equally immaterial.³⁸ This did not, however, satisfy many critics, who felt that, if the notion had any validity at all, the 'wound' should be represented by the south door of the nave or nave aisle.³⁹

Symbolism eventually came to play a part in the second theory explored here, which was that low side windows were created to allow the sanctus bell to be rung outside the building. This idea, first floated in 1848,⁴⁰ had the seeming merit of documentary proof, for, in his 1281 Constitutions, Archbishop Pecham commanded that at the elevation of the Host a bell should be rung 'on one side' ('in uno latere') so those not attending church could hear it and obtain an indulgence by genuflecting in veneration.⁴¹ The proximity of low side windows to internal squints, which enabled someone standing inside to see the elevation at a subsidiary altar as well as the high altar in the chancel, gave added weight to the suggestion. The theory seems not to have been greatly discussed immediately, though it received some support twenty years later,⁴² as well as criticism for the reason that the sanctus bell was often hung in a small external bell-cote at the east end of the nave.⁴³ In 1890 the matter was debated in *The Antiquary*. One supporter of the contention developed it by suggesting that the bell rung at the low side window was not the elevation bell, which was a small bell hung in the tower, but the sanctus bell proper, sounded at the start of the Canon of the Mass.⁴⁴ The criticisms were also repeated and elaborated, and it was further noted both that many low side windows were too low, high or narrow for the ringing of a bell through them to have been convenient or even possible, and that the presence of the external iron grille presented an additional obstacle.⁴⁵ Despite these objections the theory led later investigators systematically to record the position of low side windows in relation to the settlements in which the churches stood, to test a hypothesis that the opening faced the village so as to enable the bell to be heard there. A further serious objection was lodged in 1902, when Hodgson both argued that the sanctus bell was usually a small bell in the tower (a pattern confirmed by the inventories of church goods made in 1552 on the command

of Edward VI) and demonstrated that Peckham's injunction to ring the bell 'on one side'⁴⁶ had nothing to do with its location, but was an instruction to toll the bell, mouth down, with a gentle action in which the clapper struck the bell 'on one side'. Notwithstanding the existence of such serious objections the theory continued to attract adherents, including some who, perhaps influenced by the appearance in 1906 of a new (third) edition of the translation of the first book of Durandus' *Rationale*, ingeniously (or perhaps in desperation) suggested that the bell was rung inside the opening so as to enable those outside to hear it 'symbolically'.⁴⁷

If the misunderstanding of the documentary basis of the sanctus-bell theory does not appear to have emerged until half a century after the idea was first floated, the same cannot be said of the other most popular theory – that low side windows were for hearing confession, the priest standing or sitting inside the church, the parishioner kneeling without. This was often elaborated by the notion that the windows were specifically made to allow friars to enter parish churches to conduct confessions, a link being drawn between the emergence of low side windows from the 1220s and the arrival of the Franciscans in England in 1224.⁴⁸ Popular by the late 1840s, the idea seemed to be strengthened by a letter from Thomas Bedyll, visitor for the suppression of monasteries, to Thomas Cromwell concerning the suppression of the Bridgettine abbey of Syon in 1535.⁴⁹ According to it, the priests (wrongly characterised as 'friars') within the community used to 'hear outward confessions of all comers at certain times of the year': as the confidentiality of the confessional had been abused to spread treason, the place at which confessions had been heard was commanded to be 'walled up'. The 'outward confession', it was suggested, provided the explanation of confession through an opening in an external wall; the mis-appellation of the priests as 'friars' strengthened the perceived relationship between the coming of the friars and the origins of low side windows; the command to wall up the openings accounted for their later blocking.⁵⁰ It was quickly countered that there was nothing in the letter to suggest that the practice of 'outward confession' extended to parish churches, that the idea was built on a misconception of the role of friars in matters of confession, and that it broke the rule that confessors should both know and be able to see the person being shriven.⁵¹ Despite the difficulties, and notwithstanding the fact that a number of low-side windows were known to be in first-floor chapels (see above), so rendering kneeling outside impossible, the theory retained popularity,⁵² and at one stage support was sought from an examination of the chronological development of surviving medieval confessionals inside parish

churches.⁵³ Gradually, though, support waned, though perhaps as much because of decline in the ritual movement, of which interest in confession was a part,⁵⁴ as because of its inherent failings.

The last idea to be explored here – that low side windows were for ventilation – was, in some ways wrongly, not perceived as having a ritual significance and, perhaps because of that, failed to attract support, though its relevance was sometimes grudgingly admitted. The principal exponent of the idea was the Reverend F. P. Lowe, Rector of Saltfleetby in Lincolnshire. In the first volume of the *Reports and Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies* (1850), he followed a commentary on some of the other theories by making the suggestion that low side windows were a form of casement necessary not least because of the amount of incense burnt in the chancel during the course of the pre-Reformation liturgy. Further, and most startlingly, he reported that the hall of the manor house at Sutton Courtenay (Berkshire) had a low side window beneath one of its main windows, and drew the logical conclusion that the function of such openings could not be specifically related to the ‘rights and usages of the church’.⁵⁵ Lowe ended his contribution with the statement that he did ‘not expect’ that his views would ‘meet with unanimous or ready acceptance’. Even given the emotional charge which surrounded the subject, he may have been surprised at the immediate response from ‘An Ecclesiologist’:

It is to be feared that this is not likely to be the *last* groundless assumption in this matter. The controversy seems to have arrived just at that stage at which it is fair game, so to speak, for every ecclesiologist; and in no way is the young ecclesiologist to reap his laurels more readily than in the setting forth of some idea on this much vexed subject, which shall be novel and at the same time perhaps groundless. I do not mean this remark to apply to Mr Lowe at all; for whilst some explanations are distinguished [...] for their ideality, others, as Mr Lowe’s are more so for their practicality.⁵⁶

In more specific terms, the idea was crushed by asking how it squared with the blocking of so many low side windows in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, why the windows were usually in the same place within the church, and why they were so small.⁵⁷ The matter was never again systematically investigated, but the later literature does contain references to the idea, especially in the case of openings which were too high for any of the other main theories to be tenable, as at Milton Malsor in Northamptonshire,⁵⁸ and sometimes with reference to the need to overcome the effects of incense.⁵⁹ More usually it was argued that while low side windows certainly provided ventilation it was unthinkable that such was their main purpose,⁶⁰ not least because it was not understood why the need for fresh air was not felt before the thirteenth century or after the early-fifteenth.⁶¹

The power the ritual paradigm held over the debate is nowhere better illustrated than in the fate of Lowe's report of the low side window in the open hall at Sutton Courtenay: it was simply ignored. Reference was made to the window in 1853, in what was to become and for long remain the standard work on medieval domestic architecture, Turner and Parker's *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England*, which contained illustrations of both the interior and exterior of the window (Fig. 5), but the implications were not picked up either then or in the late nineteenth-century phase of the debate when the book was readily available in its second edition of 1882.⁶² Not the least startling aspect of the matter is that the account of the house was written by J. H. Parker, who despite both having written on low side windows in *The Archaeological Journal* for 1847, and recognising that the Sutton Courtenay opening was of similar type, does not appear to have drawn any conclusions from the find, even in a further communication on low side windows made to the Society of Antiquaries, of which a summary was published in 1861.⁶³ A second unexpected feature of the discussion is that

Fig. 5a: Sutton Courtenay Manor House, Berkshire. Low side window in domestic hall. Exterior of house, showing low side window under upper-end hall window. Reproduced from Turner and Parker (as n. 62).

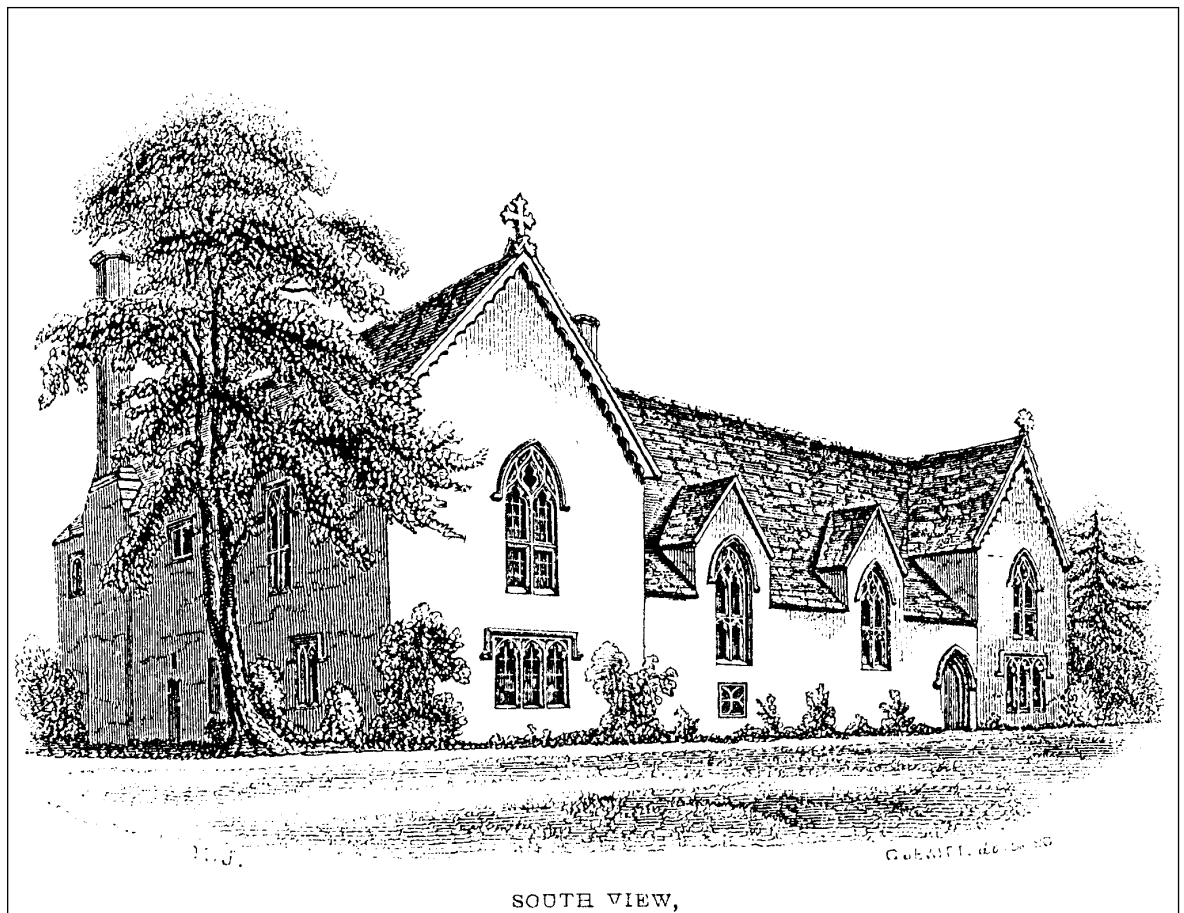
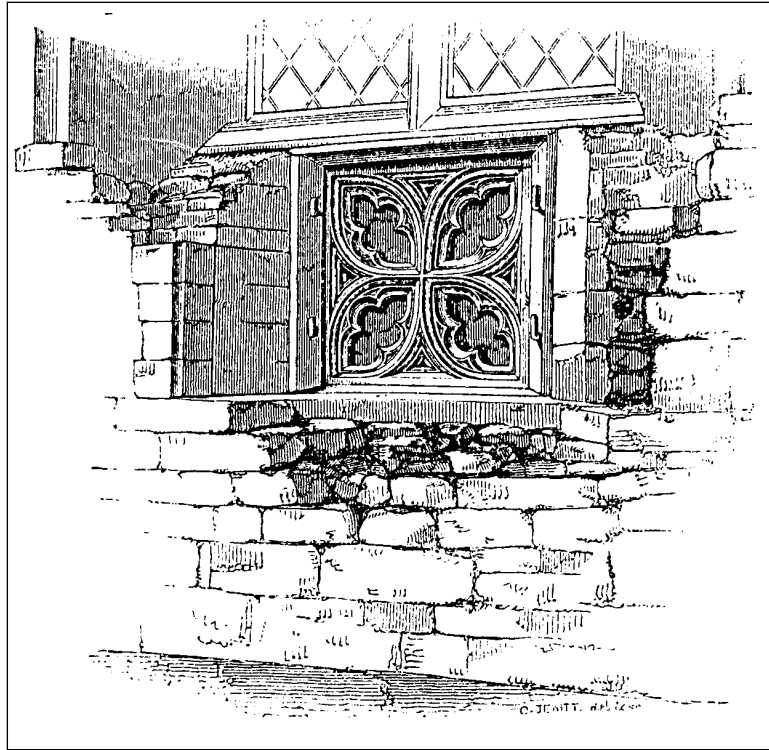


Fig. 5b: Sutton Courtenay Manor House, Berkshire. Low side window in domestic hall. Interior of low side window, showing hinges and rebate for shutter. Reproduced from Turner and Parker (as n. 62).



none of the participants, even in the years on either side of 1900 when incense was fashionable among Church of England ritual revivalists, systematically assessed the need for ventilation to remove the fumes, or, therefore, saw ventilation as connected to the ritual framework within which the debate was conducted.

Ventilation: Need and Provision

Lacking heating or modern measures against damp, the medieval church could be a dank and smelly place. When filled with people (sometimes also their dogs), who took baths infrequently and had only basic facilities for washing themselves and their clothes, it may have been distinctly unpleasant, particularly in summer. Although it served a variety of purposes, including chasing away demons from the altar⁶⁴ and the lifting of prayers heavenwards (particularly at Vespers),⁶⁵ the use of incense in the western church may initially have been related to refreshing the atmosphere, and certainly seems to have been so in fifteenth-century England, when the poet John Lydgate noted, ‘All infect airs it putteth under foot’.⁶⁶ During Mass in the churches of Rome, the main censing preceded the procession in which the Gospel book was carried from the altar towards the congregation, and served both to symbolise the purifying power of the Word of God and to cleanse the atmosphere in which it was read.⁶⁷ There

was a similar procedure in late medieval England: the Use of Sarum, the most widely adopted form of service, stipulated that on those feasts when the Gospel was read at the lectern the book was to be accompanied by lights and an incense-bearer, and Chaucer's story of the parish clerk who eyed the women while censuring them confirms the currency of the practice in parish churches.⁶⁸ More explicit is evidence for the burial service: the corpse was frequently censed during the Requiem Mass and the following Absolutions for the Dead,⁶⁹ echoing practice at early papal funerals at which censuring the corpse was seen as more important than censuring the altar.⁷⁰ The fifteenth-century English *Speculum Sacerdotale* explains that the grave itself was to be asperged to chase out demons, and censed 'for to put away evil savour of the dead that would haply be felt',⁷¹ a problem still commented upon five centuries later.⁷² Although it may have sweetened the atmosphere for a time, however, incense could become over-powering and, when stale, could add to the unpleasantness of the air, particularly when substances other than frankincense were used: even a wealthy foundation like Ripon Minster resorted to rosin in the fifteenth-century,⁷³ and poor rural parishes may have used less savoury substitutes. Although incense was not used every day, even in major churches,⁷⁴ it was normally used at weekly high Mass in parish churches, and there were enough baptisms, marriages, funerals, obits (commemorative recreations of funerals), and major festivals for it to have been regularly employed and for the after effects to be troublesome.

In addition to incense numerous candles and torches were burnt both for the practical purpose of providing light by which the Offices and Mass could be chanted, and for devotional reasons. The number of lights of all kinds increased dramatically during the thirteenth century and continued to rise thereafter. At Mass, as reverence for the Host grew in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the number of lights in the chancel increased,⁷⁵ particularly those held aloft to illuminate the elevation of the Host, encouraged by the promise of an indulgence for torch bearers.⁷⁶ At the same period, as the number of images in churches multiplied, so too did the lights placed before them to express devotion and to keep the presence of the donor or dedicatee in the presence of the saint, cross or reserved sacrament in order to secure prayers or other benefits.⁷⁷ At the end of the middle ages the number and scale of bequests to lights has been described as showing 'an almost morbid desire' for their increase,⁷⁸ and the administrative arrangements for their upkeep could be both considerable and complicated, with money and herds of livestock devoted to the purpose.⁷⁹ It is clear from the number of bequests for cleaning and repainting images that there must have been a

considerable amount of grease and smoke in the still atmosphere within the church, and the smell would also have been trapped in the garments with which the images were often clad.⁸⁰ The odour may have been compounded by the nature of the candles, for while candles used at Mass were supposed to be of beeswax, and bequests of materials for the making of candles are of wax, it may be that poorer folk, not wealthy enough to have made wills, could only afford lights of tallow or of tallow cased in wax.⁸¹ At particular services, there might be a vast number of lights additional to those routinely placed before images, as during the vigils of the dead, when candles burnt all night to ward off demons trying to capture the soul of the departed. That the atmosphere could become unbearable is apparent from an account of the funeral of John Paston in 1466, when a glazier was paid to take out two panes of glass 'for to let out the reek of the torches at the dirge'.⁸² Although that may have been an exceptional occasion, the routine nature of the problem is suggested by a record of a payment in 1442 for the amending of 'divers windows cased with iron' in Eton College Chapel, 'for the air to come into the church'.⁸³

Given that need for ventilation in parish churches seems established, and that it continued through the fifteenth century, the chronology of the provision of low side windows, which spans little more than the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, might initially suggest that they were not related to it. Consideration of the development of windows in general may, however, lead to a different conclusion.

Based on documentary evidence, Salzman concluded that few church windows were glazed before the second quarter of the twelfth century. In relatively poor rural parishes, for which documentary evidence hardly exists, glass may not have been common until even later. Most early windows were quite small, and might simply have been open, perhaps closed by wooden shutters when the church was not in use, or filled with wooden lattices (like trellis, with square or diamond apertures) or have oiled cloths stretched across their openings.⁸⁴ All these options are known to have been used in the well-documented royal palaces, where low-status rooms retained oiled cloths and lattices long after the twelfth century.⁸⁵

During the course of the thirteenth century, many of the windows of the principal rooms, including the chapels, of royal manors came to be glazed.⁸⁶ Written records indicate that glass was sometimes introduced specifically to reduce draught, as in the case of one of the queen's chambers at Westminster in 1237-8.⁸⁷ Several references to the making of new large (or upright) glazed windows demonstrate that glazing allowed windows to be larger,

to admit more light, without increasing draughtiness:⁸⁸ in 1249-50, for example, two windows flanking the choir in the chapel at Feckenham were lengthened, as was another over the altar.⁸⁹ While glazing windows may have reduced draughts, it also prevented the ventilation desirable, for example, in halls with open hearths and chambers with big fireplaces or those with close stools. As a result, it was quite common, in both the thirteenth and the fourteenth century, for only the tops of windows to be glazed, the lower parts, often below a transom, being closed by a shutter

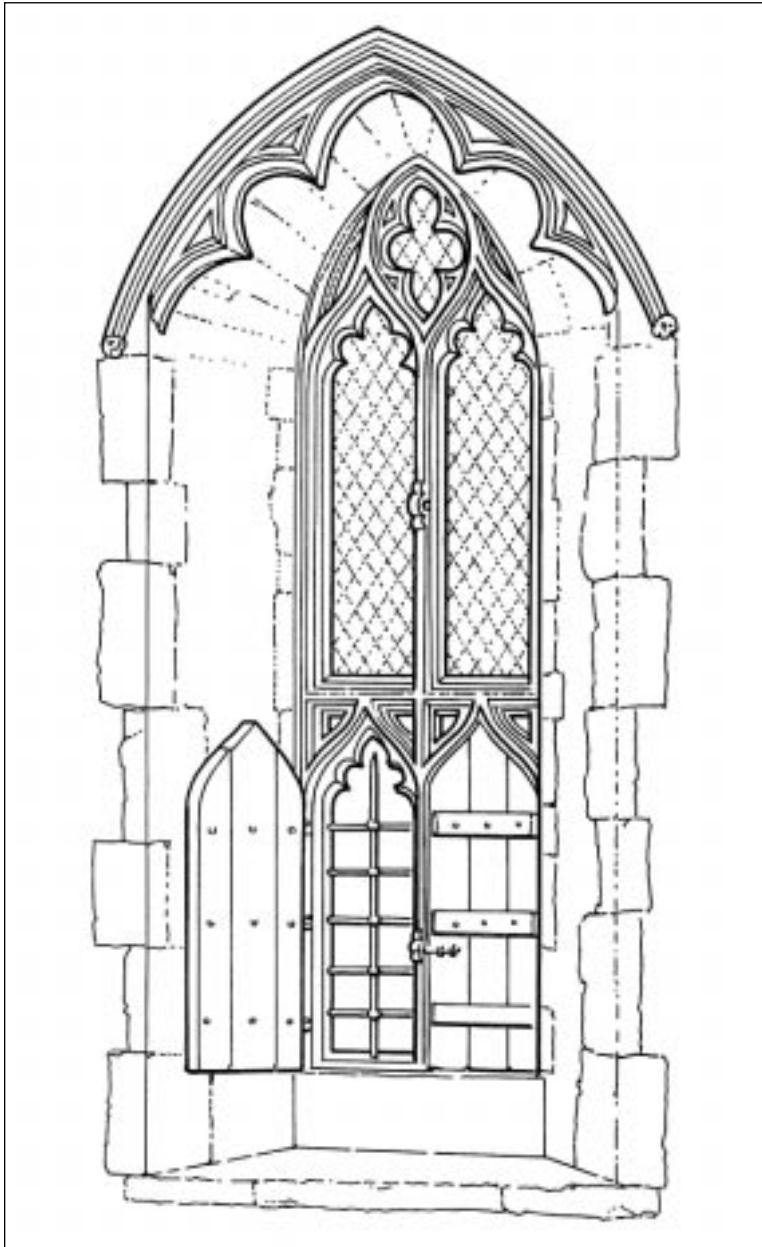
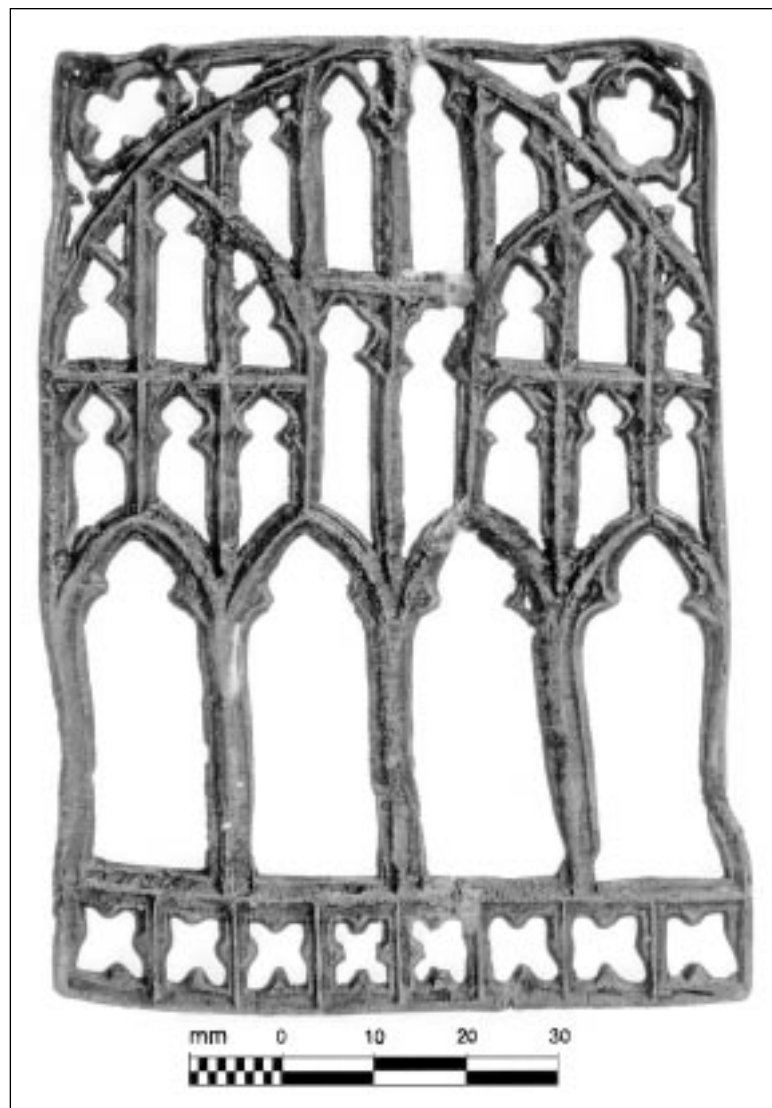


Fig. 6 Meare Manor House, Somerset. Partially glazed hall window of 1322-1335. After Wood (as n. 90, Fig. 111).

or 'wooden window', or by a glazed casement (Fig. 6):⁹⁰ the first is identical to that form of low side window which lies below the transom of a larger window, while the latter may strengthen the suggestion that some low side windows held casements. It is not a large step from creating an opening section of a window to placing the unglazed aperture in a separate small window, as in the second principal type of low side window. Moreover, a substantial proportion of the documentary evidence indicates that opening windows and parts of windows were created in the chapels of royal manors in the thirteenth century, suggesting a specific need for ventilation in them.⁹¹

The shutter, or wooden window, was not the only device found in the apertures through which air was admitted: lattices

*Fig. 7a: Lead Ventilator Panel.
Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire.
Fifteenth century. English Heritage
Collections (Accession no. 671449).*



continued to be used within unglazed openings, and it has been suggested that the fourteenth-century switch from square to diamond-shaped glazing quarries might have been in order to create the same 'trellis' pattern in the glazed as well as the unglazed parts of a single window.⁹² Another option for an unglazed aperture was a 'lead window', such as two in the nave of the king's chapel at Oxford which were replaced with glass in 1246-7.⁹³ It is not entirely clear what such 'lead windows' were, though they may simply have been perforated sheets of lead. They may also have been the ancestors of lead ventilator panels, a number of which have been found since the mid-nineteenth century in excavations, mainly of monastic sites.⁹⁴ The panels are square, rectangular or diamond-shaped, and the size of glazing quarries (Fig. 7); some are soldered together to form larger units, such as might be used to fill an opening like a low side window, thereby creating the same pattern as the glazing above, but others may have been used singly, dispersed within normal windows, their elaborate patterns, some imitating tracery, complementing those of the tracery and painted glass.

No lead vent is certainly earlier than the fourteenth century; most are late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century. It would therefore seem possible that they were developed later than the low side window, were perhaps used contemporaneously with it for a time, but gradually replaced it as the principal form of ventilation in parish churches, hence accounting for the tailing-off and even blocking of low side windows in the fifteenth century. Such a sequence of development would be roughly parallel to that at a



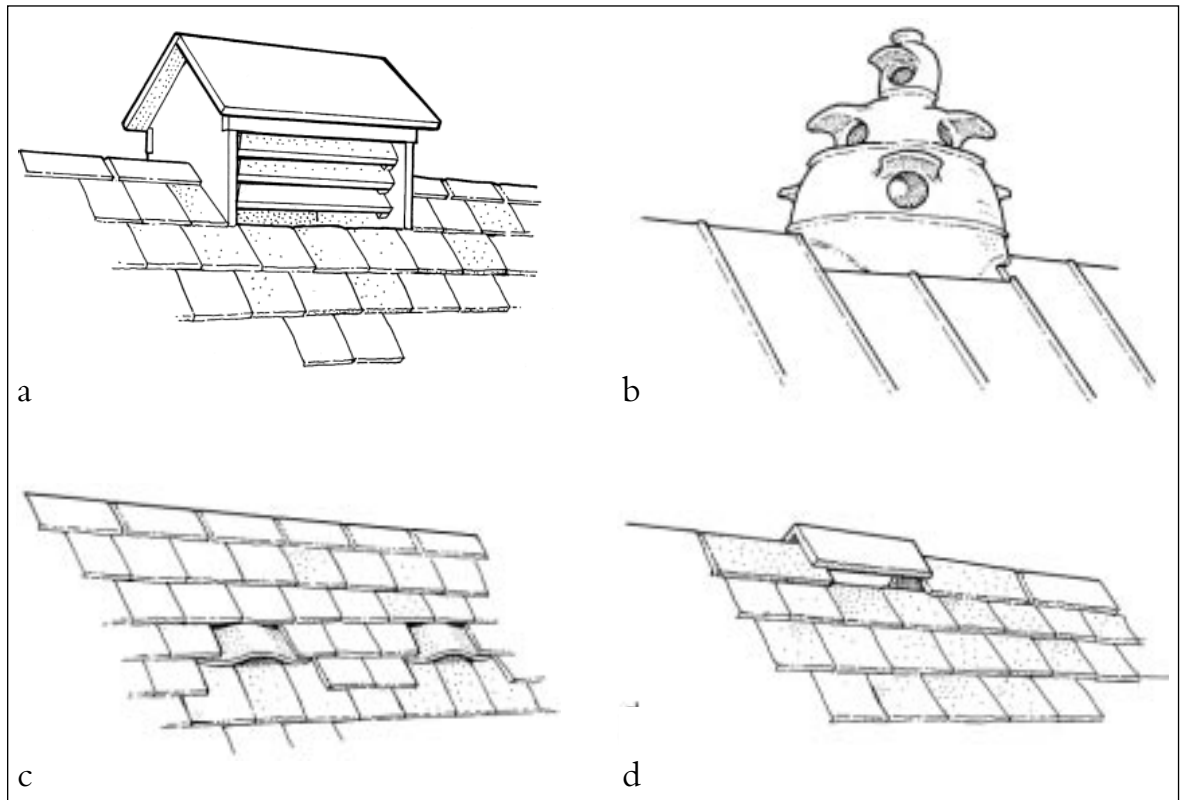
Fig. 7b: Lead Ventilator Panel. Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire. Fifteenth century. Two panels soldered together. English Heritage Collections (Accession no. 81065654.5)

later date in vernacular houses: during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when glass began to be used, lattices were gradually replaced with glazed windows and casements, and, in the late-sixteenth and the seventeenth century, lead ventilator panels were put into the glazing.⁹⁵ The fact that no lead vents are known from parish churches cannot be taken as evidence that they did not exist, for as windows were refurbished and replaced after the Reformation, when the need to remove smoke and incense was considerably reduced, the ventilators would have been melted down for re-use with the rest of the lead.

The efficiency of both low side windows and lead ventilators could legitimately be questioned, but is difficult to assess in detail. In the case of the former, the siting of the openings at the extreme west of the chancel may have been for no better reason than that the eastern part of the south wall was commonly occupied by a piscina, sedilia, priest's door, tomb recesses, or combination of them, while the north wall often had one or more tombs and/or a doorway to a vestry. If the position was more purposeful, it may have been to push smoke eastwards and upwards, in which case it may have been local climatic conditions which determined the side of the chancel in which windows were placed. A related purpose, which would account for the examples with built-in seats and reading desks, could have been to provide fresh air as near as possible to place in which the priest chanted the daily office: that was usually, though not invariably the south side of the chancel, unless there were two or more resident clergy in which case they sat on opposite sites, so perhaps accounting for some of the instances where there were two low-side windows. Elsewhere, the provision of two windows may have been an attempt to provide a through draught. The same kinds of explanatory logic can be applied to many of the low side windows found in other parts of the church, particularly those associated with aisle altars, where they may be indicative of particularly elaborate ceremonial, or of services requiring the prolonged presence of clergy or others. Lead ventilators, which could have been placed anywhere in the windows, allowed greater flexibility. They could, for example, have provided distributed ventilation, not only in a chancel or chapel but in the nave or aisle windows. This may have been particularly important in those numerous churches where, in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, the chancel came to be flanked, either wholly or in part, by one or more chapels which deprived the chancel of external side walls, particularly at the west where low side windows were situated. In addition, as they could be included in the window heads, ventilator panels may have permitted the rising fumes to find their way out as well as providing an ingress of air at a low level.

Both low side windows and ventilator panels may, however, have been combined with roof vents, which could also have been used on their own. One possibility was a timber louver at the ridge of the chancel roof, a smaller version of the kind used over the open hearths in the halls of medieval houses (Fig. 8a).⁹⁶ Unless substantial, such louvers need only have been nailed to the tops of the common rafters and would therefore have left no trace. Other kinds of roof vent, known from a handful of domestic buildings, include pottery ridge vents (Fig. 8b), which could be used with either lead or tiled roofs, or slightly curved roof tiles set in the slope of the roof (Fig. 8c); a simple vent could be made by leaving a gap between two ridge tiles and bridging it with another (Fig. 8d). Any kind of pottery or clay vent would have been destroyed in the first post-medieval re-tiling of the roof, so that survival would not be expected, and anything made of lead would long since have been melted down during routine repairs: even had they survived into the age of topographical illustration, all would have been so inconspicuous that they would not have shown on drawings. Given the nature of the possible roof vents, the absence of evidence for them cannot be taken to imply that they did not exist – they could even have been widespread.

Fig. 8. Possible types of roof vent.
a: small timber louver.
b: pottery vent
(based on an example of c. 1300 from
St Thomas Street, Winchester).
c: Curved roof tile
(based on an example from Durlock
Grange, Minster in Thanet, Kent).
d: vent made from ridge tiles.
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Conclusion

If the contention advanced here – that low side windows were for ventilation, and that their development and chronology is closely related to that of windows in high status secular buildings – is correct, the question arises as to why almost all the investigators of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries so relentlessly pursued a series of blind alleys. Most of them were to a greater or lesser extent interested in ritual revival, and that became the dominant paradigm within which discussion was conducted, steering participants away from thinking in terms of comparison with secular buildings. Even within the ritual revival framework, however, they were not dispassionate, for they were operating within a specifically Anglican context, and most were interested in showing that the Church of England derived its practices from the immediately pre-Reformation church. Against that background, interest in the sacring bell and confession is explicable, and the later revival of the use of incense may lie behind the increasing, though grudging, admission that ventilation may have been among the functions of low side windows, though not their main purpose. The participants in the debate would not, however, have been likely to consider anything related to images and their lights: in the early days of the debate there was little detailed evidence for them, as few wills had been printed, but a stronger and more lasting reason for the lack of discussion of images and lights in general, and of their implications for ventilation, may be that they were not part of the mainstream of Anglican ritual revival, many in the Church of England considering them signs of idolatry not to be imitated.

The longevity and heat of the debate concerning low side windows were exceptional, but the paradigm set by the specific circumstances in which it was conducted influenced much of the re-discovery of the English medieval parish church. While the lack of agreement concerning low side windows left that particular subject open, the reasons for it emphasise the need for caution before uncritically accepting the insights of nineteenth-century ecclesiologists even in matters for which consensus was achieved, for there is a danger that elements of such consensus might also have been influenced by a revivalist prism.

Acknowledgements

Many people have listened tolerantly to snippets of the tale of low side windows during the last year or more, and to all of them I am grateful for patience, comment and information. I am particularly indebted to Sarah Brown, not least for reading a draft text, to Trevor Cooper, and to Susan Harrison, who also introduced me to the English Heritage collection of lead

ventilator panels and at short notice provided photographs of them. I am grateful to Allan T. Adams for the drawings, and to both him and Kate Bould for assistance with the other illustrations. English Heritage kindly gave permission for the reproduction of Figs 1, 2, 4 and 7, and Allan T. Adams for that of Fig. 8.

Notes

- 1 Plantagenet, 'Hurley Church, Berkshire', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1839 part 1, p. 260.
- 2 D. Weatherall, 'From Canterbury to Winchester: The Foundation of the Institute', in B. Vyner (editor), *Building on the Past: Papers Celebrating 150 Years of the Royal Archaeological Institute* (London, 1994), p. 19.
- 3 J. C. Cox, *Notes on Derbyshire Churches*, 4 vols (Chesterfield, London and Derby, 1877), vol. 3 pp. 416-17.
- 4 P. M. Johnston, 'The Low Side Windows of Sussex Churches [Part 2]', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 42 (1899), pp. 132-3, 139-40.
- 5 F. T. S. Houghton, 'Worcestershire Low Side Windows', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 42 (1916), p. 21; cf. F. Bond, *English Church Architecture*, 2 vols (London, 1913), vol. 2 p. 676.
- 6 C. A. Markham, 'The Low Side Windows of Northamptonshire', *Associated Archaeological Societies' Reports and Papers*, 29 part 2 (1908), pp. 363-460.
- 7 P. M. Johnston, 'The Low Side Windows of Surrey Churches: To which are added some Remarks upon the Restoration of Warlingham Church', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 14 (1899), pp. 89, 102-5; cf. idem, 'Low Side Windows in Churches', *Transactions of the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, 4 (1900), p. 264.
- 8 Gogenhoe, Old (Wold), Stoke Albany: Markham, 'Low Side Windows', pp. 395, 437, 446. Markham lists various other possible examples in other positions within the nave aisles: none shares all the characteristics of the low side window, but their function could be similar. On the need for caution concerning what falls within the definition, see A. D. Sharp, 'Low-Side Windows: A New Theory', *Transactions of the St Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, 9 (1922-8), p. 79.
- 9 Cf. H. B. Pim, 'Some Notes on the Origin and Uses of Low-Side Windows in Ancient Churches', *Archaeological Journal*, 62 (1905), p. 28.
- 10 Little Wenham Hall: F. P. Lowe, 'On Low Side Windows', *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, vol. 1 part 1 (1850), pp. 112, 114-15; Ely: I. H. P. (J. H. Parker), 'Low Side Windows', *Archaeological Journal*, 4 (1847), pp. 320-1, cf. p. 323 on Winchester College; Leeds Castle: Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Sussex [Part 2]', pp. 169-71.
- 11 For interior fittings at Blisworth in the early-sixteenth century, see P. S. Barnwell, 'The Use of the Church: Blisworth, Northamptonshire, on the Eve of the Reformation', *Ecclesiology Today*, 35 (2005), pp. 43-62.
- 12 See, for example, Ecclesiological late Cambridge Camden Society, *A Handbook of English Ecclesiology* (London, 1847), pp. 201-2.
- 13 Examples include (in chronological order): P. M. Johnston, 'The Low Side Windows of Sussex Churches [Parts 1 and 2]', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 41 (1898), pp. 159-202, and 42 (1899), pp. 117-79; idem, 'The Low Side Windows of Surrey Churches: To which are added some Remarks upon the Restoration of Warlingham Church', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 14 (1899), pp. 83-133; F. T. S. Houghton, 'The Low Side Windows of Warwickshire Churches', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 32 (1906), pp. 62-99; C. A. Markham, 'The Low Side Windows of Northamptonshire', *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, 29 part 2 (1908), pp. 363-460; H. Gill, 'The Low Side Windows of Nottinghamshire', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 14 (1910), pp. 79-122; F. T. S. Houghton, 'Worcestershire Low Side Windows', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society*, 42 (1916), pp. 17-40; A. R. Green, 'The Low Side Windows of Hampshire Churches', *Papers and Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 10 (1929), pp. 127-77; G. R. Rigby, 'Low Side Openings with

- Special Reference to Staffordshire Churches', *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club*, 82 (1949), pp. 13-80.
- 14 G. E. Street, 'On "Lychnoscopes"', *The Ecclesiologist*, 9 (1849), pp. 113-17; S., 'Lychnoscopes', *ibid.*, p. 189
 - 15 J. M. Neale, 'On Some Danish Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 13 (1852), pp. 215-19; A. P. Boyson, 'On Low Set Openings in Danish and Other Scandinavian Churches', *Archaeological Journal*, 63 (1906), pp. 5-24; P. M. Johnston, 'Some Low Side Windows in Irish Churches', *ibid.*, 65 (1908), pp. 41-55.
 - 16 Posited in Cambridge Camden Society, *A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Architecture and Antiquities*, 3rd edn (London, 1842), p. 26, and withdrawn, with explanation, a year later in the 4th edn of the same work.
 - 17 This was first proposed by Rock in 1843: see Parker, 'Low Side Windows', p. 3. He later changed his view, perhaps as a result of the criticism that lepers were banished from the churchyard as well as the church, but alluded to it in D. Rock, *The Church of Our Fathers*, first published in 1849-52, but now most accessible in the 2nd edn, 4 vols (London, 1903-4), vol. 3 pp. 96-101. In different form the argument was taken up by G. E. Street, 'The Use of Lychnoscopes Suggested by the Paintings in Eton College Chapel', *The Ecclesiologist*, 8 (1849), pp. 288-90, who discovered paintings at Eton showing the son of a Jew being given communion through some kind of aperture rather than at the entrance to the chancel, and in 'On "Lychnoscopes"', where evidence relating to the Pyrenean Cagots was adduced. His ideas swiftly drew responses from H., 'Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 9 (1849), pp. 187-8, and F. H., 'Lychnoscopes', *ibid.*, pp. 252-3. Although Street immediately retorted, 'Mr Street, in Reply, upon Lychnoscopes', *ibid.*, pp. 348-52, claiming that the idea fitted the chronological incidence of leprosy, it was seldom resurrected thereafter. For use by outlaws, see R. A. Caley, 'Low Side Windows', *The Antiquary*, 23 (1891), pp. 135-6.
 - 18 The theory was current before 1847, as Parker, 'Low Side Windows', p. 324, refers to it in dismissive terms. It was defended in a report of correspondence by Rusticus in *Archaeological Journal*, 5 (1848), pp. 228-9, and commented upon in relation to French *lanternes des morts* by J. A. Yatman, 'The Fannal', *The Ecclesiologist*, 14 (1853), pp. 294-5. Half a century later, it was further explored in (the in places wild) J. F. Hodgson, 'On "Low Side Windows"', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 23 (1902), pp. 42-235.
 - 19 See F. A. Paley, *Manual of Gothic Architecture* (London, 1846), pp. 240-2; taken up by Rock, *Church of Our Fathers*, vol. 3 pp. 96-101. See also Parker, 'Low Side Windows', pp. 324-5, and J. Piggot, 'Low Side Windows', *Notes and Queries*, 4th ser. 1 (1868), p. 364. In 1858 there was an exchange concerning the idea that recluses lived next to the chancel: E. E., 'On Anker Windows or Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 19 (1858), pp. 86-8, adduced evidence from seventeenth-century Ireland to suggest that this was a common phenomenon; he was supported by W. H. C., 'Anker Windows', *ibid.*, pp. 152-3, who cited a 1233 enquiry concerning anchorites in the diocese of Lincoln; but the arguments were comprehensively demolished by G. E. Street, 'Anker Windows', *ibid.*, pp. 149-50, who pointed out that there is no evidence for anchorholds (even of timber) being built against chancels. The theory was still current at the end of the century, when it was propounded by, severally, E. Marshall, E. A. Fry and G. Galpin in *Notes and Queries*, 9th ser. 1 (1898), pp. 186, 392.
 - 20 Parker, 'Low Side Windows', p. 325.
 - 21 *ibid.*
 - 22 A theory which seems to have begun with the great French architect Viollet le Duc in relation to his restoration of La Sainte Chapelle in Paris, where a low window was the only one glazed with clear glass: Parker, 'Low Side Windows', p. 326. See also Sharp, 'Low Side Windows', p. 81.
 - 23 Report of correspondence from A. P. P. in *Archaeological Journal*, 5 (1848), p. 72. Immediately denounced as being based on no evidence by J. J. Cole (*ibid.*, pp. 70-2), the idea seems to have gone to ground, but was revived a century later in a lecture by F. D. Fox reported in, 'Low-Side Windows', *Transactions of the Ecclesiological Society*, n.s. 2 part 2 (1949), pp. 82-4.
 - 24 J. J. Rogers, 'Notices of Certain Lychnoscopes, or Low Side Windows, Existing in

- Churches in the West of England', *Archaeological Journal*, 11 (1854), pp. 33-7; E. E. Blencowe, 'On Anker Windows', *The Ecclesiologist*, 19 (1858), pp. 310-11; J. P. Pritchett, 'Low Side Windows', *The Antiquary*, 21 (1890), pp. 218-19.
- 25 The ciborium: H., 'Anker Windows', *The Ecclesiologist*, 19 (1858), pp. 153-4. Display of relics: reported in Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Surrey', pp. 124-5.
- 26 J. H. Parker, 'Communication', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 2nd ser. 1 (1859-61), p. 262.
- 27 Pim, 'Notes on the Origin and Uses of Low Side Windows', p. 29.
- 28 Reported in Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Surrey', p. 125, where it is noted that there is no evidence in liturgical texts to suggest why such a view of the churchyard might have been required; see also H. P. Feasey, 'Curiosities of and in our Ancient Churches: Part 3', *The Antiquary*, 36 (1900), pp. 23-4.
- 29 Reported in Johnston, 'Low Side Windows in Churches', p. 273
- 30 Pim, 'Notes on the Origin and Uses of Low Side Windows', pp. 28-9
- 31 Sharp, 'Low Side Windows', p. 81
- 32 Reported in E. C. Chancellor, 'The Mystery of the Low Side Window and a Possible Solution', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, 68 (1946), p. 38.
- 33 Chancellor, 'Mystery', pp. 38-42.
- 34 Unreferenced explanation in an online ecclesiastical glossary, www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/zlowsidewindow.htm.
- 35 A. W. Pugin, *Contrasts: Or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day*, 2nd edn (London, 1841), p. 3.
- 36 J. M. Neale, and B. Webb, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments. A Translation of the First Book of the Rationale Divionorum Written by William Durandus* (Leeds, London and Cambridge, 1843).
- 37 Paley, *Manual of Gothic Architecture*, p. 240.
- 38 Anon., 'A Suggested Explanation of "Pede Windows" and Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 5 (1846), pp. 164-5; Anon., 'Lychnoscopes, Or Vulne-Windows', *ibid.*, pp. 187-9.
- 39 Anon., 'On Vulne Symbolism', *The Ecclesiologist*, 8 (1848), pp. 166-71.
- 40 Report of correspondence by Cole (1848), pp. 70-2.
- 41 1281 Council at Lambeth, c. 1, in F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney (editors), *Councils and Synods, With Other Documents Relating to the English Church*. Volume 2, 1205-1313, 2 vols (Oxford, 1964), pp. 894-5: 'In elevatione vero ipsius corporis Domini pulsetur campana in uno latere, ut populares, quibus celebratione missarum non vacat cotidie interesse, ubicunque fuerit, seu in agris seu in domibus, flectant genua indulgentias concessas a pluribus episcopis habituri'.
- 42 J. Piggot, 'Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 29 (1868), pp. 80-1.
- 43 C. F. S. Warren, 'Low Side Windows and Sanctus Bells', *Notes and Queries*, 4th ser. 1 (1868), p. 543.
- 44 D. A. Walter, 'Low Side Windows', *The Antiquary*, 21 (1890), pp. 29-40; cf. C. E. Ponting and J. C. Cox, *ibid.*, pp. 122-4 and 126, respectively.
- 45 J. F. Hodgson, 'Low Side Windows', *The Antiquary*, 21 (1890), pp. 219-21; cf. N. Mant and H. A. Walker, *ibid.*, pp. 221 and 231, respectively. Cf. Johnston, 'Low Side Windows in Churches', p. 272.
- 46 Hodgson, 'On "Low Side Windows"', pp. 60-2.
- 47 Gill, 'Low Side Windows of Nottinghamshire', p. 94; cf. Bond, *English Church Architecture*, vol. 2 pp. 692-3, and Houghton, 'Worcestershire Low Side Windows', p. 18. The theory was still current in 1920, when there was correspondence by J. T. F. W. G. Harrison and others in *Notes and Queries*, 12th ser. 6 (1920), pp. 45-6 and 195-6.
- 48 The best exposition of the theory is Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Surrey', pp. 126-33.
- 49 The letter was often mis-dated to 1534; it is published in T. Wright (editor), *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries*, Camden Old Series 26 (London, 1843), p. xviii. The correct date is given in the discussion of the particularly contentious suppression of Syon in D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1948-59), vol. 3 pp. 212-21, at p. 219 n. 2.
- 50 E.g., E. I. C. [E. J. Carlos] in *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1846 part 2, pp. 380-3, referring

- back to I. R. in *ibid.*, 1844 part 1, pp. 375-7, and Plantagenet in *ibid.*, 1844 part 2, pp. 41-2.
- 51 Anon, 'On the Real Use of "Lychnoscopes" for External Confession', *The Ecclesiologist*, 7 (1847), pp. 65-75. E. J. Carlos defended and developed his theory in *ibid.*, pp. 141-2. For later criticism, see Hodgson, 'On "Low Side Windows"', pp. 62-7.
- 52 *E.g.*, in chronological order, H. B. Taylor, 'The Real Use of Lychnoscopes or Low Side-Windows', *The Sacristy*, 2 (1872), pp. 362-7; M. H. Bloxam, *The Principles of Gothic Architecture*, 11th edn, 2 vols (London, 1882), vol. 2 pp. 127-8; J. L. André, 'Low Side Windows', *The Antiquary*, 21 (1890), p. 124; Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Sussex [Part 1]', pp. 192-202; *idem*, acknowledging the difficulties, 'Low Side Windows of Sussex [Part 2]', pp. 169-71; *idem*, 'Low Side Windows of Surrey', pp. 119, 126-33; *idem*, 'Low Side Windows in Churches', p. 275; Boyson, 'On Low Set Openings'; Johnston, 'Low Side Windows in Irish Churches' (1908), p. 53; Markham, 'Low Side Windows of Northamptonshire', p. 369
- 53 J. L. André, 'Medieval Confessionals in England', *The Reliquary*, 24 (1883-4), pp. 129-32, not accepted by Sharp, 'Low Side Windows', pp. 79-80.
- 54 The association is clear from the inclusion of discussion of the theory in J. L. André, 'Notes on Ritualistic Ecclesiology in North-East Norfolk', *Archaeological Journal*, 46 (1889), pp. 136-55.
- 55 Lowe, 'On Low-Side Windows', pp. 113, 119-21.
- 56 An *Ecclesiologist*, 'Mr Lowe's Theory of Lychnoscopes', *The Ecclesiologist*, 11 (1850), p. 92.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.
- 58 Report of the Northampton Architectural Society for 1868, *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, 9 part 2 (1868), p. ci; Walker, 'Low Side-Windows', p. 231.
- 59 Cox, *Notes on Derbyshire Churches*, vol. 3 pp. 416-17;
- 60 *E.g.*, E. Trollope, 'Low Side Window in Dodington Church', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 9 (1874), p. 237; I. Gardener, 'What was the Primary Use of "Low Side Windows"?', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 43 (1921), pp. 225-6.
- 61 Johnston, 'Low Side Windows of Surrey'. p. 124.
- 62 T. H. Hudson and J. H. Parker, *Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England*, 4 vols (Oxford and London, 1853-59), vol. 2 pp. 272-4; the second volume, covering the period from Edward I to Richard II was by Parker and appeared in 1853, with a second edition in 1882.
- 63 Parker, 'Communication', pp. 260-2.
- 64 *E.g.*, Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio*, bk 2 cc. 16, 58, J. P. Migne (editor), *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, 221 vols (Paris, 1844-64) vol. 117; Durandus, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau (editors), *Corpus Christianorum continuatio medievalis* 140, 3 vols (Turnhout, 1995-2000), bk 3 c. 4, and bk 4 cc. 10.5, 31.1
- 65 For vespers (and matins) in the Use of Sarum, see *Consuetudinary of Sarum*, in W. H. Frere (editor), *The Use of Sarum*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1898), vol. 1 pp. 31-2; see also the discussion (and references to further literature) in E. G. C. F. Atchley, *A History of the Use of Incense in Divine Worship*, Alcuin Club Collections 13 (London, 1909), pp. 149-54, which also refers to some other symbolic uses, as does Durandus, *Rationale*, bk 1 c. 7.
- 66 Lydgate, 'A Procession of Corpus Christi', in H. N. MacCracken (editor), *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part 1: The Lydgate Canon, and Religious Poems*, Early English Text Society Extra Series 107 (London, 1910), ll. 105-12 (l. 111).
- 67 Atchley, *Use of Incense*, p. 209, cf. 204-5 for Thomas Aquinas on purifying the atmosphere in which the Host was received.
- 68 Customary of Sarum, in Frere, *Use of Sarum*, vol. 1 pp. 101-2; Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales: The Miller's Tale*, ll. 153-7.
- 69 See, for example, the rubrics in the later medieval Use of York, translated in P. S. Barnwell, A. B. Barton and A. Rycraft, 'The Requiem Mass: Text and Translation', in P. S. Barnwell, C. Cross and A. Rycraft (editors), *Mass and Parish in Late Medieval England: The Use of York* (Reading, 2005), pp. 145-72.

- 70 Atchley, *Use of Incense*, pp. 207-8.
- 71 *Speculum Sacerdotale*, E. H. Weatherley (editor), Early English Text Society Original Series 200 (London, 1936), p. 235. Characteristically, it is the demonifuge aspect which is stressed by Durandus, *Rationale*, bk 7 c. 35.
- 72 Atchley, *Use of Incense*, pp. 207-8.
- 73 *Memorials of the Church of SS. Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon*, J. T. Fowler (editor), Publications of the Surtees Society 74, 78, 81 and 115, 4 vols (1882-1908), vol. 3, pp. 209, 217, 222. Rosin is the solid residue which remains after the distillation of oil of turpentine.
- 74 Consuetudinary of Sarum, and Customary of Sarum, vol. 1 p. 97.
- 75 D. R. Dendy, *The Use of Lights in Christian Worship*, Alcuin Club Collections 41 (London, 1959), pp. 28-9, 67-9.
- 76 E.g., Synodal Statutes of Bishop Peter Quivel for the Diocese of Exeter 1287, c. 4, in Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods*, p. 996.
- 77 R. Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud, 2004), esp. pp. 84, 162.
- 78 Dendy, *Use of Lights*, p. 42.
- 79 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 169; Barnwell, 'Use of the Church', p. 46; E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven and London, 2001), pp. 24-32, 41-5.
- 80 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 242; K. L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 195.
- 81 Evidence from analysis of residues on cheap lead candlesticks from Fountains Abbey: J. Frith, R. Appleby, R. Stacey and C. Heron, 'Sweetness and Light: Chemical Evidence of Beeswax and Tallow Candles at Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire', *Medieval Archaeology*, 48 (2004), pp. 220-7.
- 82 Paston Letters, 549, J. Gairdner (editor), *The Paston Letters, 1422-1509*, 6 vols (London and Exeter, 1904), vol. 4 p. 228.
- 83 R. Willis and J. W. Clarke, *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1886), vol. 1 p. 388 n. 1.
- 84 Evidence relating to the parish church at Witney, Oxfordshire, in the thirteenth century: L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540: A Documentary History* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 173-5. For Westminster Abbey in the 1260s, see Turner and Parker, *Domestic Architecture*, vol. 1 p. xxx.
- 85 R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works: Volume 1, The Middle Ages*, 3 vols (London, 1963), vol. 1 p. 87, vol. 2 p. 1019. Lattices: J. A. Knowles, 'Leaded Lights and Ornamental Glazing [Part 1]', *Journal of the Society of Master Glass-Painters of Great Britain*, 7 part 3 (1938), pp. 134-7.
- 86 E.g., Guildford: Liberate Roll, 28 Henry III (1243-4), translated in Turner and Parker, *Domestic Architecture*, vol. 1 p. 206. Winchester: Liberate Roll, 30 Henry III (1245-6), p. 210; Bristol: Liberate Roll, 34 Henry III (1249-50), *ibid.*, p. 225; Marlborough Castle: Liberate Roll, 44 Henry III (1259-60), *ibid.*, p. 250.
- 87 Close Roll, 22 Henry III (1237-8), *ibid.*, p. 258.
- 88 E.g., at Oxford: Liberate Roll 30 Henry III (1245-6), *ibid.*, p. 208.
- 89 Liberate Roll, 34 Henry III (1249-50), *ibid.*, p. 226.
- 90 Glazing of the upper part of windows: Gloucester (two chambers; chapel): Liberate Roll 34 Henry III (1249-50), *ibid.*, p. 226. The practice continued through the fourteenth century (*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 37), and is found as late as 1448 at the Plesaunce at Greenwich (Salzman, *Building in England*, pp. 257-8). Cf. M. Wood, *The English Medieval House* (London, 1965), pp. 347-58.
- 91 Clarendon: Liberate Roll 34 Henry III (1249-50), Turner and Parker, *Domestic Architecture*, vol. 1 p. 224, and Liberate Roll 35 Henry III (1250-1), where 'bevils' are commanded, *ibid.*, p. 230.
- 92 J. A. Knowles, 'Leaded Lights and Ornamental Glazing [Part 3]', *Journal of the Society of Master Glass-Painters of Great Britain*, 8 part 1 (1939), p. 21.
- 93 Liberate Roll 31 Henry III, Turner and Parker, *Domestic Architecture*, vol. 1 p. 213.
- 94 A number of examples have been published individually in excavation reports, mainly of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; see W. Rodwell, *Wells Cathedral: Excavations and Structural Studies, 1978-93*, 2 vols (London, 2001), pp. 483-4, for a more recent excavation report. There are catalogues of the examples

known in the 1940s in C. Woodforde, 'Some Medieval Leaden Ventilating Panels at Wells and Glastonbury', *Journal of the Society of Master Glass-Painters of Great Britain*, 9 (1943-6), pp. 44-50, and, slightly more fully, *idem*, *Stained Glass in Somerset, 1150-1830* (London, 1946). English Heritage holds a large collection - possibly the largest in the country - from excavations on monastic sites in the north of England, which is currently under investigation by J. Frith (University of Bradford) and A. Morrison (Yorkshire Museum).

- 95 For the fifteenth century, see Turner and Parker, *Domestic Architecture*, vol. 3 p. 121, and, for the replacement of lattices in the sixteenth century, W. Harrison, *The Description of England* [1587], C. Edelen (editor) (Washington and New York, 1993), p. 197. An example of the late continuation of partly shuttered openings can be found in Willis and Clarke, *Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, vol. 1 p. 196, relating to 1589. For the later domestic lead vents, see Woodforde 'Medieval Leaden Ventilating Panels', and *idem*, *Stained Glass in Somerset*.
- 96 Wood, *English Medieval House*, pp. 277-80; P. S. Barnwell and A. T. Adams, *The House Within: Interpreting Medieval Houses in Kent* (Swindon, 1994), pp. 126-9.

Stone vault or painted wooden ceiling? The question of how to cover the nave of Peterborough Abbey Church

Malcolm Thurlby

Introduction

IN 1093 CONSTRUCTION commenced on Durham cathedral with the intention of building high vaults in the presbytery and probably in the transepts.¹ The presbytery vault was completed by 1104, and the north transept was vaulted by *ca* 1110. After some hesitation the south transept was also vaulted, and before 1128 it had been decided to extend the high vault to the nave.² Given the frequent association of the Durham cathedral vaults with the vaulted Romanesque churches of Normandy, and further with the early Gothic churches of the Île-de-France and environs, it may seem that the former Benedictine abbey church, now the cathedral, of Peterborough, commenced 25 years after Durham, is rather old fashioned in having a high vault planned only for the apse and forebay.³ While rib vaults are used throughout the aisles at Peterborough, the main spans were intended to be wood ceiled in the manner of the other great East Anglian cathedral and abbey churches of Ely, Bury St Edmunds and Norwich.⁴ A Darwinian approach to the evolution of church design from Durham through the Romanesque vaulted churches of Normandy to the early Gothic churches of the Île-de-France is now seriously challenged. In Britain, besides Durham, only Lindisfarne priory, a daughter house of Durham, is known to have been fully vaulted in the Romanesque period, although a good case can be made for the use of high vaults throughout the Benedictine abbey churches of Tewkesbury and Pershore, and the alien priory of Chepstow.⁵ Otherwise high vaults were used selectively, primarily in the sanctuary as a heavenly canopy over the liturgically most significant part of the building, while transepts and naves were usually wood ceiled. In the third quarter of the twelfth century high vaults gained popularity in England, not least through contacts with the early Gothic developments of the Île-de-France and northern France. Malmesbury abbey church had high vaults in the presbytery and transepts.⁶ Benedictine Bardney and the hospital church of St Cross at Winchester were fully vaulted as was Augustinian Lilleshall, Cistercian Roche, and it is likely that the Lincolnshire Cistercian houses of Kirkstead and Louth Park were also fully vaulted.⁷ A high vault was planned for the sanctuary of St Andrews cathedral-priory, presumably on the model of

Archbishop Roger of Pont l'Évêque's new eastern arm at York Minster, although it is likely that both were executed in wood in imitation of stone.⁸ The rebuilding of the choir of Canterbury cathedral with a high stone vault after the fire of 1174 and the start of the fully vaulted cathedral at Wells around 1175, established the high stone vault as the norm for the great church.⁹ Be that as it may, wooden vaults may be preferred to, or used alongside, stone vaults, as at Llanthony priory, Dore abbey and Lichfield cathedral, while wooden barrel vaults were favoured well into the thirteenth century in the north of England and Scotland.¹⁰ Clearly the decision was not a straightforward one. Earlier in the twelfth century the painted wooden ceiling of Conrad's choir of Canterbury cathedral received high praise from William of Malmesbury.¹¹ The destruction of that great monument in the 1174 fire and its replacement with the present high vault may be interpreted as a victory for the vault. However, at the same time it raises a number of problems especially in a building in which a vault might be contemplated as an addition to, or a modification of, an established design. The completion of the nave of Peterborough under Abbot Benedict (1177-94)), provides an excellent illustration of such considerations. A wooden roof was intended in the initial design but this was changed in favour of a high rib vault, the springers for which were built before being abandoned for the present wooden ceiling. This paper builds on evidence for the twelfth-century nave high vault discussed by Sir Charles Peers.¹² It illustrates the key features for the first time and considers the changes in design in the context of the appropriate articulation of liturgical spaces and the tension between stylistic uniformity and contemporary fashion.

The Archaeological Evidence

The eastern bay of the north nave clerestory is framed asymmetrically with a pointed wall arch, the right (east) springer of which cuts through the eastern minor arch to connect with the jamb that is adjacent to the jamb of the clerestory minor arch (fig. 1).¹³ At the west of this bay the wall arch is built a short distance to the west of the jamb of the clerestory minor arch with which it is not coursed. This indicates that when work was commenced on the eastern bay of the clerestory it was intended to follow the design of the presbytery and transepts complete with a wooden ceiling. The introduction of the wall arch marks a change of plan, one that involved building a high vault over the nave. The eastern bay of the south nave clerestory confirms this reading, although here the eastern jamb of the wall arch has actually replaced the former jamb of the clerestory minor arch and the arch itself has been filled in. As on the north side, the wall



Fig. 1 Peterborough Cathedral, N nave clerestory, E bay.

arch does not course with the masonry to the right (west) of the jamb of the western minor arch. In all the other bays of both the north and south clerestories, the wall arches are contiguous with the jambs of the minor arches and, with a few minor exceptions, the consistent coursing of the ashlar from wall arch to clerestory jamb indicates that they were built together (fig. 2). Concomitantly, the change from the wood-roofed design to the high vault was taken before work had commenced on bay 2 of the clerestory.

After bay 2 the extrados of each wall arch has a rough finish for an average of eight courses above the clerestory string (fig. 3). This results from the removal of the stone springers of the

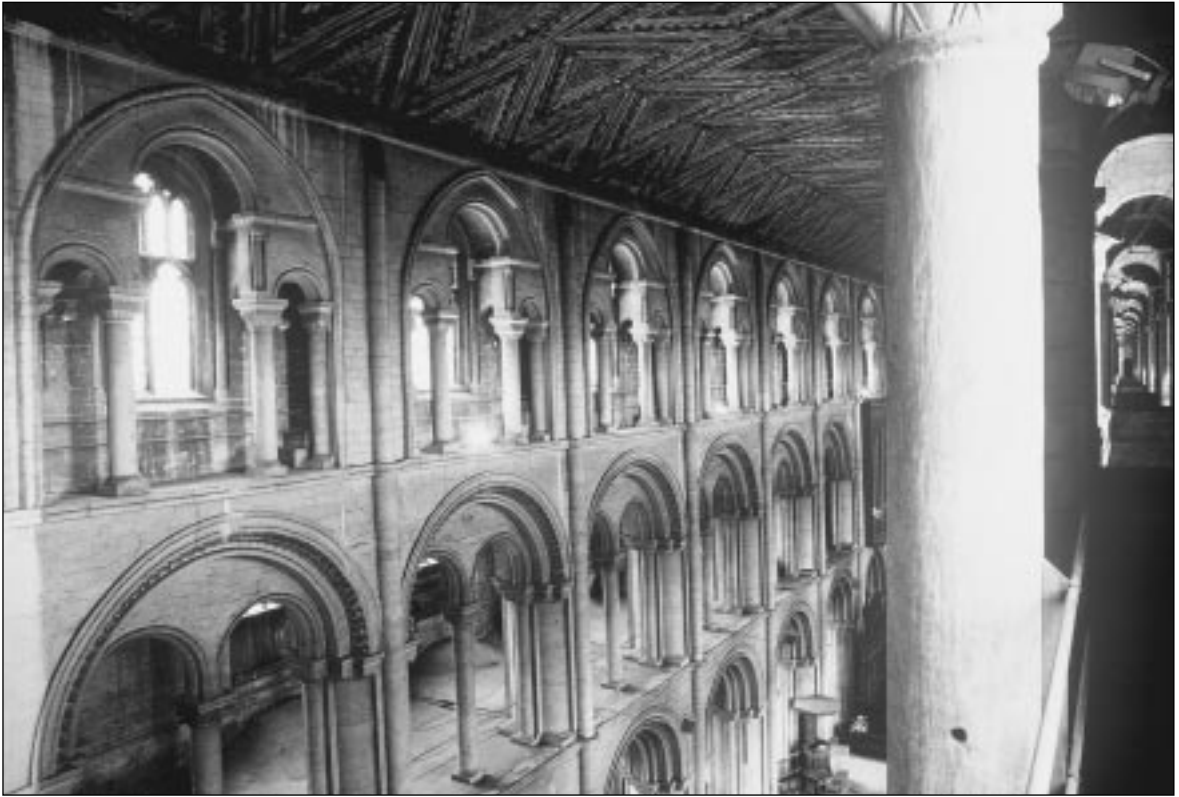


Fig. 2 Peterborough Cathedral, nave, interior to NE from S clerestory.

intended vault. At the north-west and south-west angles of the nave the rib springers are still extant (fig. 4). Below the former vault springers there are irregularities in the masonry. Immediately beneath the clerestory string course the first stone to either side of the half shaft does not course with the next stones in the wall (figs 1 and 3). Also, the somewhat irregular vertical tooling of these stones – which contrasts with the regular diagonal tooling of the squared ashlar of the rest of the wall – suggests that the surface was cut back *in situ*. Crude hacking back is even more evident in the third stone to either side of the half shaft below the clerestory string (fig. 3). Strangely, the second stone shows no sign of having been cut back. In addition to these observations on the tooling, it is significant that the third stone below the clerestory string is only half the length of the first stone. How are these observations to be interpreted? The stones immediately below the clerestory string represent cut-back capitals which were to have carried the ribs of the intended high vault. Whether they would have had a stepped plan, as in the former triumphal arch and the crossing arches, or have been semi-octagonal, as in the arch from the nave to the western transept, cannot be decided. Be that as it may, the present clerestory string beneath the intended vault springers would only have been introduced after the abandonment of the plan to vault.



Fig. 3 Peterborough Cathedral. N nave clerestory between bays 5 and 6.

At that time the half shaft that divides the bays would have been extended from the fourth stone below the string to the top of the wall. The third stone to either side of the half shaft below the clerestory string represents a cut-back corbel. An arrangement like the side corbels in the presbytery and nave aisle vault responds at Kirkstall Abbey may be imagined (fig. 5), although it is possible that the Peterborough corbels were carved with grotesque masks in the tradition of Durham Cathedral. This leaves the problem of the second stone which one would expect to show signs of having been cut back had coursed shafts been used as at Kirkstall. In the absence of such evidence one must imagine that a short detached shaft linked the corbel and capital as in the tower vault at St



*Fig. 4 Peterborough Cathedral, nave
NW vault springer.*

Michael at Blewbury (Berks.) (fig. 6). Behind the vault springers the thrust of the planned vault was to be resisted by a mass of masonry arranged as a set of three steep steps to facilitate access through the clerestory passage (fig. 7).

The complex profile of the ribs of the intended high vault, preserved in the south-west and north-west angles of the nave, is typologically far in advance of the aisle vault ribs (fig. 4). The profile is the same as the high vault of the western transept and clearly belongs in the early Gothic realm of the late twelfth century. At first sight it seems difficult to equate such detailing with the Romanesque form of the clerestory which conforms to the design established in the presbytery and transepts. Yet, it is recorded that Abbot Benedict (1177-94) “built the whole of the nave of the church in stone and wood from the tower of the choir up to the front.”¹⁴ While this is an exaggeration, there are details, not only in the clerestory but also in bay 3 of the north nave gallery and from bay 5 west in the north main arcade and north aisle, which clearly belong to Benedict’s time, as noted by Peers.¹⁵ For instance, in the main arcade water-holding bases are used for the large segments of the piers from N5 to the west and this is matched in the north aisle respond bases. The earliest water-holding bases are in the chapter house of Fountains abbey,

completed by 1170, after which they remain popular well into the thirteenth century. The capitals facing the nave and carrying the soffit rolls on pier 3 of the north nave gallery are of the French-inspired crocket type with a ring beneath the abacus (fig. 8). In England they are most closely paralleled in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral (1175-84). At clerestory level the westernmost capital of the second bay has a plain angle leaf with a large, fleshy volute. In the third bay the east free-standing capital is a moulded bell while the west capital has stylized waterleaf with big angle volutes on a stalk. Various waterleaf capitals appear in the dado arcade of bay N10 and atop the north-east nook shaft of bay N9. These are the only departures from the traditional scalloped



Fig. 5 Kirkstall Abbey, presbytery, S corbel of high vault.



Fig. 6 Blewbury (Berks), St Michael, tower vault to SE

capitals which are used elsewhere throughout the nave. Details of these capitals show greater complexity westward from N5 than in the south arcades and, along with the other details, demonstrate that Abbot Benedict built the north side of the nave westward from pier 5 of the main arcade, pier 3 of the gallery, and from bay 2 of the clerestory.

Aside from these details, the overwhelming impression of the Peterborough nave is one of uniformity. Even in spite of the change from the initially intended design with twin western towers, one is struck by the uniformity in the application of scalloped capitals, the consistency of the arch mouldings and the aisle rib profile, the pier forms and, of course, the adherence to the



Fig. 7 Peterborough Cathedral, N nave clerestory, E bay.

original elevation. In this context the introduction of the plan to build a high vault is unusual. On the one hand, the approach to the completion of the nave is conservative. On the other hand, Benedict was taken with the progressive idea of a high vault. How are we to account for this janus-like approach?

The Context

The inspiration for the intended nave high vault at Peterborough almost certainly came from the new work at Canterbury Cathedral, commenced in 1175 by William of Sens. Benedict had been a monk at Christ Church, Canterbury, and was prior there in 1175, before taking up office at Peterborough.¹⁶



Fig. 8 Peterborough Cathedral, N nave gallery, pier 3, detail of capitals from S.

Such a link also accounts for select Gothic details like water-holding bases, crocket capitals and pointed wall arches. The Canterbury source would not explain the use of corbels for the diagonal ribs and these may have been inspired by the vault added to the nave of Lincoln Cathedral by Bishop Alexander (1123-48).¹⁷ One remaining corbel in the form of a grotesque mask at the north-west angle of the penultimate bay of the nave of the Lincoln nave shows that it was based on Durham Cathedral and this corbelled arrangement may have been followed at Peterborough.¹⁸ However, the lunettes of the Lincoln vault were stilted semi-circles without wall arches rather than the pointed wall arches at Peterborough. We do not know whether the transverse arches at Lincoln were semi-circular or pointed but at Peterborough they were almost certainly intended to be pointed, given the pointed arch between the nave with the western transept. The use of pointed wall arches is typologically advanced and this is confirmed by the moulding of the wall arches which have a deep hollow outside an angle roll.

The decision to abandon the construction of the nave high vault and to erect the present painted ceiling was probably taken after Benedict's death in 1194. While there was no hesitation in building a high vault in the western transept, the situation there was different from that in the nave in that there was no earlier

fabric to take into account. While there are detail differences including architectural signifiers of liturgical function, the undeniable impression of the interior is one of unity. It was only when one moved into the functionally different western transept that the design could be changed.

This suggests that attitudes towards the covering of the main span of a great church in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in Britain were different to those in France. For the French Gothic cathedral the high stone vault was the norm. In England there are plenty of examples of high stone vaults that follow from the rebuilding of the Canterbury choir, including, Chichester Cathedral, Lincoln Cathedral, Salisbury Cathedral and Beverley Minster. But stone vaults did not enjoy universal popularity. In the early Gothic churches of the north of England and Scotland wooden coverings for the main spans were the norm, whether as rib or barrel vaults, flat ceilings or open roofs.¹⁹ It has been suggested that the form of the ceiling paintings at Peterborough belong to a Romanesque tradition. Be that as it may, the forms must have been highly regarded, like the painted ceiling of Conrad's choir at Canterbury Cathedral. Indeed, it is possible that we are dealing with a design already used in the Peterborough presbytery which was in turn inspired by Canterbury. In the final analysis, it was the continuity with Romanesque work that was deemed most important; the antiquarianism in Benedict's work in the nave elevation was eventually extended to the painted ceiling around 1230-40.²⁰ The case is analogous to that in the western bays of St Albans Abbey where the four early Gothic bays were planned for sexpartite vaults over single bays, but the plan was abandoned in favour of a wood-roofed scheme to conform with the earlier bays in the nave and transepts.²¹

Postscript on Methodology

In her monograph on Peterborough Cathedral, Lisa Reilly criticized Sir Charles Peers' account of the building for following the documents too closely. She announced that she would apply a 'new' approach and use the fabric as primary documentation.²² Reilly's 'new' approach had been established by Robert Willis as early as 1842 and continued in his many studies.²³ In the examination of English medieval architecture this archaeological approach has been brilliantly applied by John Bilson, Eric Fernie and Richard Gem, and most rigorously in the study of French Romanesque architecture by Edson Armi. Had Reilly been sufficiently thorough in her application of this methodology, she would have found that Peers was essentially correct in his careful reading of the fabric hand-in-hand with the documentation.

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank Canon Jack Higham for providing unlimited access to the upper parts of Peterborough Cathedral. He and Eric Fernie examined the fabric with me and offered helpful comments on this text. Paul Binski kindly supplied the text of his article, 'The Nave Ceiling of Peterborough Abbey', prior to publication.

Notes

- 1 John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: The Chronology of Its Vaults', *Archaeological Journal*, 79 (1922), 101-60. Bilson's chronology is it was challenged by Jean Bony, 'Le projet premier de Durham: voutement partiel ou voutement total?', in *Urbanisme et architecture: études écrites et publiées en honneur de Pierre Lavedan* (Paris 1954), 41-9, who suggested that a high vault was only initially intended for the eastern arm while the transepts were to be wood ceiled. In turn, Bilson's views have been supported by Malcolm Thurlby, 'The High Vaults of Durham Cathedral', in *Engineering a Cathedral*, ed. Michael J. Jackson (London 1993), 64-76, while Bony's sequence is forcefully argued by Eric Fernie, 'Design principles of early medieval architecture as exemplified at Durham Cathedral', in *Engineering a Cathedral*, ed. Michael J. Jackson (London 1993), 146-56 at 152-5, and idem, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford 2000), 135-7.
- 2 Bilson, 'Chronology'.
- 3 Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Romanesque Apse Vault of Peterborough Cathedral', in *Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture presented to Peter Lasko*, ed. David Buckton and T.A. Heslop (Stroud 1994), 171-186. The 1118 starting date for the church is given in relation to the laying of the foundation stone on 8 March 1118 (Sir Charles Peers, 'Peterborough Minster', *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Northamptonshire*, II [1906], 431-56 at 432). Lisa Reilly, *An Architectural History of Peterborough Cathedral* (Oxford 1997), attributes the start of construction of the church to Abbot Ernulf (1107-14) but this is unconvincing.
- 4 Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Influence of Norwich Cathedral on Romanesque Architecture in East Anglia', in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese 1096-1996*, ed. Ian Atherton, Eric Fernie, Christopher Harper-Bill and Hassell Smith (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 136-157; Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, 124-8, 144-8, with further bibliography.
- 5 Lawrence Hoey and Malcolm Thurlby, 'A Survey of Romanesque Vaulting in Great Britain and Ireland', *Antiquaries Journal*, 84 (2004), 117-184. John Bilson, 'The Beginnings of Gothic Architecture, II, Norman Vaulting in England', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 3rd ser., VI (1899), 289-319, at 308, believed that the Lindisfarne nave was rib-vaulted and this opinion was followed by A.H. Thompson, *Lindisfarne Priory*, London (1975), 12-14. J Philip McAleer, 'The Upper Nave Elevation and High Vaults of Lindisfarne Priory', *Durham Archaeological Journal*, 2 (1986), 43-53 and idem, 'Encore Lindisfarne Priory and the Problem of Its Nave Vaults', *Antiquaries Journal*, 74 (1994), 169-210, suggested, I believe unconvincingly, that the nave was groin-vaulted. Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Romanesque Elevations of Tewkesbury and Pershore', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XLIV (1985), 5-17; Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Elevations of the Romanesque Abbey Churches of St. Mary at Tewkesbury and St. Peter at Gloucester', *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester and Tewkesbury: The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, VII, ed. T.A. Heslop and Veronica Sekules (Leeds 1985), 36-51; Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Abbey Church, Pershore: An Architectural History', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 3rd Ser., 15 (1996), 146-209. Charles Lynam, 'Notes on the Nave of Chepstow Parish Church', *Archaeological Journal*, LXII (1905), 270-8.
- 6 Christopher Wilson, in Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Wiltshire*, 2nd edn, revised by Bridget Cherry (Harmondsworth 1975), 325n.
- 7 Harold Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey', *Archaeological Journal*, 79 (1922), 1-92. Yoshio Kusaba, *The Architectural History of the Church of the Hospital of St. Cross in Winchester*

- and its place in the development of English Gothic Architecture (Ann Arbor 1984). For the Cistercian houses, see Peter Fergusson, *Architecture of Solitude, Cistercian Abbeys in Twelfth-Century England*, (Princeton 1984), with full bibliography.
- 8 Malcolm Thurlby, 'St Andrews Cathedral-Priory and the Beginnings of Gothic Architecture in Northern Britain', in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of St Andrews: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, XIV, ed. John Higgett (Leeds 1994), 47-60; Malcolm Thurlby, 'Roger of Pont l'Évêque, Archbishop of York (1154-81), and French Sources for the beginnings of Gothic architecture in Northern Britain', *England and the Continent in the Middle Ages: Studies in Memory of Andrew Martindale*, ed. John Mitchell (Stamford 2000), 35-47; M.F. Hearn and Malcolm Thurlby, 'Previously Undetected Wooden Ribbed Vaults in Medieval Britain', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 150 (1997), 48-58.
 - 9 Robert Willis, *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London 1845), reprinted in *Architectural History of some English Cathedrals*, I (Chicheley 1972). For the documentation on Wells cathedral, see L.S. Colchester and J.H. Harvey, 'Wells Cathedral', *Archaeological Journal*, 131 (1974), 200-14 at 200-3; and further discussion in Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Elder Lady Chapel at St Augustine's, Bristol, and Wells Cathedral', in *'Almost the Richest City': Bristol in the Middle Ages: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, XIX, ed. Laurence Keen (1997), 31-40 at 31-2.
 - 10 Hearn and Thurlby, 'Wooden Ribbed Vaults'; Stuart Harrison and Malcolm Thurlby, 'An Architectural History', in *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey*, ed. Ron Shoesmith and Ruth Richardson (Logaston [Herefs.]1997), 45-62; Malcolm Thurlby, 'Glasgow Cathedral and the Wooden Barrel Vault in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Architecture in Scotland', in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the Diocese of Glasgow: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*, XXIII, ed. Richard Fawcett (Leeds 1999), 84-87.
 - 11 William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, Rolls Series, 52, ed. N.A.S.A. Hamilton (London 1870), 138.
 - 12 Peers, 'Peterborough Minster', 439.
 - 13 Canon Jack Higham informs me that the 18th-century longitudinal section of the nave drawn by Thomas Eayre (London, British Library, Add. MS 32467, No. 193), shows the eastern bay of the north clerestory with the wall arch framing, rather than cutting, the east arch. The present arrangement dates only from Pearson's restoration after the fall of the crossing tower (1883-6) but it is unlikely that it is Pearson invention. It is most plausible to suggest that Pearson simply rebuilt the bay in question according to the evidence he found in the medieval fabric, and that Eayre's represented this bay the same as all the others simply as a matter of convention.
 - 14 '...aedificavit totam navem ecclesiae, opere lapideo et ligneo, a turre chori usque ad frontem', *Book of Robert of Swaffham*, Peterborough Dean and Chapter, MS 1, fol. 19r. I owe this reference to Canon Jack Higham. Peers, 'Peterborough Minster', 433.
 - 15 Reilly, *Peterborough Cathedral*, 33-41, does not discuss these capitals and attributes the entire nave clerestory to Benedict.
 - 16 *Book of Robert of Swaffham*, fol. 19r. My thanks to Canon Jack Higham for this reference. Frank Barlow, Thomas Becket (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1986), 4.
 - 17 Peter Kidson, 'Architectural History', in *A History of Lincoln Minster*, ed. D Owen (Cambridge 1994), 14-46 at 22-24, suggests that Alexander's vault may date after a fire in 1124 recorded by Giraldus Cambrensis. For further discussion of the documentation, see Eric Fernie, 'Alexander's Frieze on Lincoln Minster', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 12 (1977), 19-28.
 - 18 George Zarnecki, *Romanesque Lincoln: The Sculpture of the Cathedral* (Lincoln 1988), fig. 20.
 - 19 Thurlby, 'Glasgow Cathedral and the Wooden Barrel Vault in Scotland'.
 - 20 Paul Binski, 'The Painted Nave Ceiling of Peterborough Abbey', *The English Medieval Cathedral: Paper in Honour of Pamela Tudor-Craig. Proceedings of the 1998 Harlaxton Symposium, Harlaxton Medieval Studies*, X, ed. Janet Backhouse (Donington 2003), 41-62.

- 21 Lawrence Hoey, 'The Gothic Reconstruction of the Nave and Presbytery of St Albans Abbey', in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archaeology, The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, XXIV*, ed. Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley (Leeds 2001), 182-203 at 189-91.
- 22 Reilly, *Peterborough Cathedral*, 3.
- 23 Robert Willis, *Architectural History of some English Cathedrals*, 2 vols (Chicheley 1972-3).

CHURCH CRAWLER WAS PREPARED FOR THE PRESS IN JANUARY, SO STORIES AFTER THAT DATE WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

Churches suffer post Da Vinci Code – and it will get worse

The novel by Dan Brown *The Da Vinci Code* is presenting churches which feature in the book with an unwelcome problem – too many tourists. And what's more, some of these tourists show little respect for the contents and architecture, as they too search for The Holy Grail. With the film due to be released this year the custodians of these historic sites fear it will get much worse. Already fans are removing stonework, stealing hymnbooks and other fittings, as well as attempting to carve initials into the ancient walls.

However the particular problem at **Rosslyn** (Roslin) in Midlothian is visitors' breath, or more accurately the raised humidity from many more tourists in the building, which the owners have been trying to dry out for many years. The Rosslyn Chapel Trust has allowed filming to take place at the chapel, but Judith Fiskien, an expert and former curator of Rosslyn Chapel, said: "The headache will not simply be crowd control and concern for footfall through the building. It will be souvenir hunters removing pieces of stone, taking rubbings, carving their initials and generally leaving litter." The Trust has also been forced to install a new entrance and triple the size of its car park as visitor numbers have boomed in the wake of the novel's success, now the best selling novel of all time.



Arson attacks

Around the country attacks on churches continue. In July Our Lady of Compassion in **Formby** (1863–4 by Henry Clutton) was badly damaged by smoke following a fire in

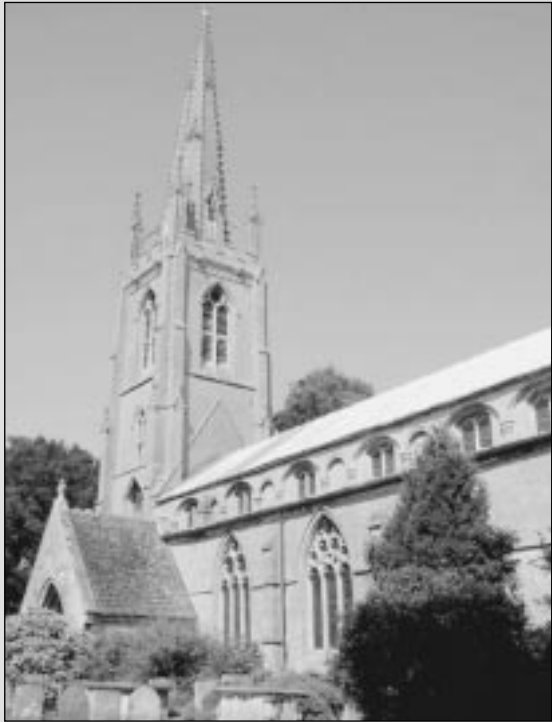
their piety store. In November St Barnabas at **Bexhill-on-Sea** in Sussex (1890–91 by Sir A Blomfield) had a similar fire which started in the library area. Dozens of valuable and irreplaceable books were destroyed along with ancient stained glass windows. Although the exterior of the building remained intact, architect Peter Pritchett said the interior, particularly the roof, had suffered badly. "The debris from the fire is very extensive... the damage has been done by smoke and water. Flames have also damaged some of the timbers." Although the north-west corner of the church was the worst-hit area, services will continue to be held in another area of the building. Police say their investigation points towards the blaze having been arson. In mid-January fire crews from six towns were called to St Peter's Church in **Cranbourne**,



Berkshire, see photo, where arson destroyed the organ and much of the roof. In total the fire is estimated to cost £1M in damage, much by smoke and water. Five people (three boys and a girl, all 17 and a 19-year-old man) were arrested the following day on suspicion of arson, burglary and criminal damage. The church was designed by Benjamin Ferrey and built in 1849. It contained much important stained glass by Morris, Maddox-Brown, Clayton & Bell and Kempe.

Freak weather (and bats)

The Birmingham Tornado in July last year seems to have cost the city the main church in the area: Christ Church in **Sparkbrook**. Following the tornado the diocese applied for a Section 18 instrument under the Care of Churches Measure, which is the church equivalent of a Dangerous Structure Notice. Andy Foster (author of the latest Pevsner Cities volume) reported the church was still standing in January three months after the instrument was granted, but it was expected not to survive for much longer. The church dates from 1867 by Medland, Maberly and Medland of Gloucester. Alan Brooks says that this is probably by James Medland the younger, a good Gothic revivalist, and his only complete church. The odd looking tower had already lost its spire some years ago. (The picture shows the church in October after a removal van was brought in to collect and transport away the organ.)



area in and east of Peterborough and a Grade-1 listed church stood in its path. All Saints, **Moulton**, Lincs, above, could see repair bills approaching £0.5M after 120mph winds ripped the lead from its roof, damaging timbers which allowed severe water damage. A tree also fell and damaged gravestones but thankfully missed the church. However specialist repair work has already begun with advice from English Heritage but has had to make special arrangements for local residents. Helen Weatherall, the architect orchestrating the project, said, “The scaffolding has been designed to ensure there are entry and exit points for the colonies of rare bats,

Although Birmingham grabbed the headlines, on the same day tornadoes hit the

and the contractors are all very aware of where the bats are likely to be found.” Now,

closely assisted by the Lincolnshire Bat Group, workers have just a few months to complete the project, working around the bats which have started the winter hibernation. Annette Faulkner, of the bat group said: "It is very important that the work is done by this time. Female bats only have one baby a year, and if construction is still going on at this time it could have a devastating effect on future numbers." An assessment study of the bats, done after the tornado struck, identified the church as one of the most important bat sites in the whole of Lincolnshire. It is home to four rare species of bat – pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and whiskered – all protected species. Sandra Cooper, claims handler at Ecclesiastical, said, "Restoring any listed building is a painstaking task, but the residents at All Saints are making this project even more challenging." (The photo is courtesy of Wendy Parkinson, <http://groups.msn.com/EnglishChurchPhotographs>.)

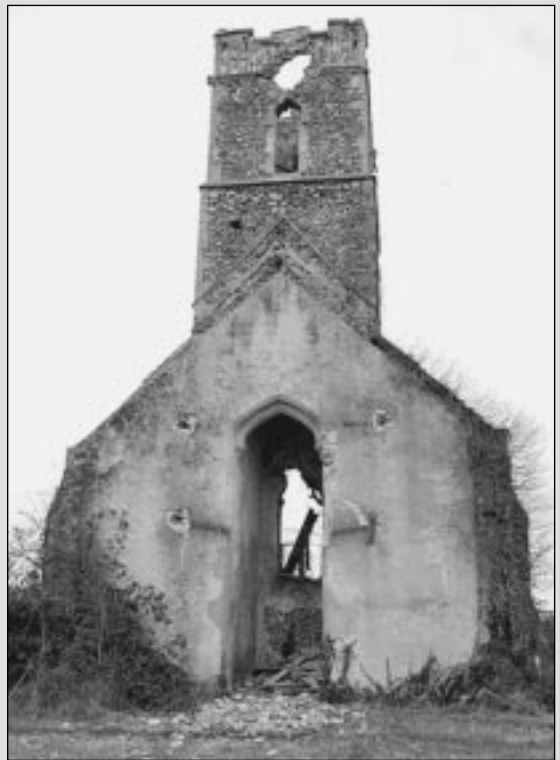
Not a tornado, but lightning has struck St Gregory & St George's Church in **Pentlow**, Essex, one of a small number of round tower churches in the county. Not only was the hole you see in these photos (courtesy of



John Whitworth, www.essexchurches.info) punched into the tower on 5 September, but inside the bells were rendered unringable.



Lightning may also be a contributing factor in the eventual collapse of the tower of All Saints Church at **Panxworth** in Norfolk – here the isolated December strike seems to have entered the east face of the tower and exited through the top of the west window. (Photo by JH Collinson.)



Spire is back after 40 years



Parishioners at St George's Church in the city centre of **Leeds** received an unexpected bonus when buildings close to the church were sold for redevelopment: planners only gave permission for new flats provided the company rebuilt the spire of the church. David Rose, contracts manager for David McLean, the property and construction company, said: "It's a unique project in my experience." The 66ft-high spire is made of a skeletal steel frame clad in plywood and finished off in rolled lead. The spire was transported in three sections from Flint, in North Wales. The Rector of St George's, the Rev Jonathan Clark, said: "The pinnacle of the spire was blown down by a huge gale in February, 1962, and went through the church roof. The whole spire was then declared unsafe and had to be taken down at a cost of £20,000. Our insurer classified the damage as an Act of God and refused to pay for repairs. But when Brampton Asset Management got permission for 90 apartments next to the church, the city council insisted that they replaced the spire." It cost £250,000 to replace, and work was completed over a single weekend in January. St George's Church dates from 1838. (Photo, by kind permission, from website www.stgeorgesleeds.org.uk, where you can also watch a video of the spire being put in place.)

Inspired!



The logo for the Inspired! campaign.

Inspired! is an English Heritage-led campaign to secure a future for church buildings, launched formally in May 2006. In the explanatory literature for the campaign, English Heritage explains that it has been undertaking a mixture of research, pilot projects, training and capacity building to identify how best to keep parish churches alive and thriving and to make a cast-iron case for greater Government support. More details can be found on the English Heritage website, for example by using the link from our website (www.ecclosoc.org). A copy of the campaign literature is enclosed with this issue.



Anglo-Saxon door



A door at Westminster Abbey has been confirmed as the oldest door in Britain, following a tree-ring-dating study funded by English Heritage with the support of the

Dean & Chapter. The timber for making the door was felled between 1032 and 1064 AD. This is the only surviving Anglo-Saxon door in the country, now acting as the entrance to the Chapter House outer vestibule. The door was covered with cow hide, probably on both sides, explaining why the horizontal battens which hold the vertical planks together have been let flush into the surface. One of the original iron straps survives. The door was originally nine feet high, though has now been cut back to something over six feet. All the signs are that this door linked two important spaces, perhaps even acting as the door to Edward the Confessor's own chapter house. (The images are by permission from the English Heritage website, which contains more details. It is easily linked to from our website, www.ecclsoc.org.)



Other News in brief

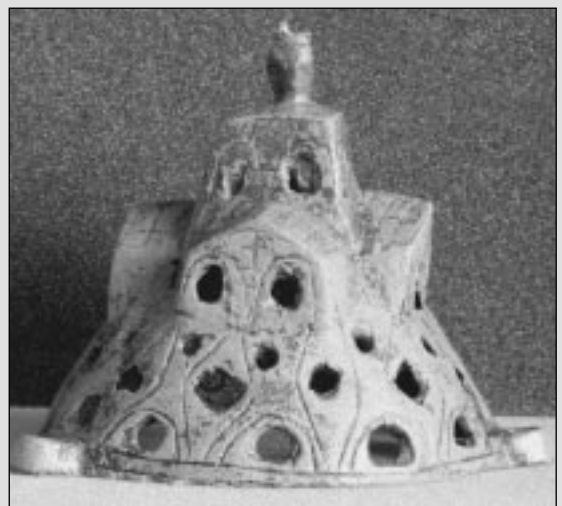
A campaign for churches was called for by the Bishop of London at the Synod debate in February. Amongst other things, he is calling on the government to pay for one half of the cost of repairs of historic churches. You can listen to the debate by following the link from our website (www.ecclsoc.org).

Blackpool's parish church has been given the all clear to proceed with an ambitious redevelopment when councillors agreed in June last year to allow changes inside St John's in Cedar Square. However the scheme to divide the worship area in the historic Grade II Listed building (1878 by Garlick Park & Sykes) must preserve the view of the nave which means that instead of a solid wall, the church must build in a fully glazed doorway and arch which will account for nearly a third of the new wall area.

St Anne's Roman Catholic Cathedral in **Leeds**, which celebrated its centenary in 2004, has closed for eight months while vital work is carried out which will cost an

estimated £1.2M. Unusually this means new life is breathed into the nearby seventeenth-century St John's Anglican Church (vested in the Churches Conservation Trust) which will be used for weekday services and Sunday masses until the restoration is completed this Easter. A row erupted at the cathedral four years ago when members feared the diocese was preparing to strip the building of historic features and at that time, English Heritage expressed 'serious reservations' about plans to move the organ. However, the new plans will instead see a complete restoration of the original pipe organ. Also closed last September is London's St George in **Borough** for work costing £3.6M which will see a complete restoration, a rebuilding of the organ, retuning of the bells and conversion of the crypt to include a possible restaurant.

A medieval **censer lid** was found in early 2004 in South Shropshire by a metal detectorist, who very responsibly reported it to the local Finds Liaison Officer. Details have now been published. Made of cast copper, and pierced with holes, it is circular and surmounted by the representation of a cruciform church. The round-headed windows of this building suggest a date of



*Medieval censer lid found in South Shropshire.
Photograph courtesy of Portable Antiquities Scheme.*

between 1050 and 1200. The bottom of the censer was not found. Rather few censers survive from this period, and this is an important addition. Further details are available on www.finds.org.uk, using find id HESH-8FC8F6.

The Grade II-listed New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborgian) at **Snodland** has been sold and is being converted into a house (our image is from an old postcard).



Certain features have to be kept *in situ* including the Ten Commandments painted on the chancel wall which is to become a kitchen. The altar area, font, pulpit, windows and the magnificent turquoise and gilt organ, which still works, are other things that must be kept.

Some concern is being expressed by the decision to sell the Victorian **Stanbrook Abbey** at Callow End in Worcestershire. The nuns (20 of them, average age 65) are divided in opinion but the abbess has decided the community will leave for a new house which will be built in North Yorkshire. At the time of going to press the asking price for the abbey was in the region of £6M and the purchaser will get a large vaulted abbey church (1871 by E W Pugin) among several other buildings. (Website at



<http://www.stanbrookabbey.org.uk> for further news and a virtual tour; see also the website of the estate agent Andrew Grant <http://www.andrew-grant.co.uk>.)



And finally....

This column welcomes contributions from its readers. I can be contacted at churchcrawler@blueyonder.co.uk or by conventional means – Phil Draper, 10 Lambley Rd, St George, Bristol, BS5 8JQ. Any views expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the Ecclesiological Society.