

Book Reviews

Fergusson, Peter, *Canterbury Cathedral Priory in the Age of Becket*, New Haven and London: Yale (2011), 190 pp., 150 ills, £50. ISBN 978-0-300-17569-1

This is an important book that deserves to be widely read: as a major contribution both to the history of Christ Church, Canterbury and, in its methodology, to the writing of architectural history. Hitherto, studies of the building work on the cathedral and monastery undertaken during the 12th century at Christ Church have been focussed largely on the completion of the eastern extension of the church under Priors Conrad and Ernulf, and on the reconstruction of that east end after the fire of 1174. A conspicuous absence has been any comprehensive study of the extensive building activity within the precinct in the 1150s and 60s, crucial decades in which new ideas were introduced from the continent that were to transform monumental architecture in England, Wales and Scotland. Most of this work was carried out under the leadership of Prior Wibert, who emerges from this study as a patron of exceptional importance in the period, to be seen alongside the better-known figures of Henry of Blois and Hugh of Le Puiset. The stated aim of this study is to explore a discreet period 'across time' rather than to follow a developmental history, thus enabling the author to avoid potentially sterile debates about relative chronology of individual buildings in favour of a thematic approach exploring the context and significance of the entire building programme.

In keeping with a commendable trend over the past twenty years or so, this study concentrates on the monastic buildings and gets away from the focus on the cathedral church that traditionally has dominated the literature on monastic churches, including Canterbury. It is salutary to note that the last comprehensive account of the monastic buildings constructed under Prior Wibert was by Professor Willis, published in 1868. Since then, there have been numerous archaeological studies of individual buildings within the precinct, including two major articles by the author, but none that has attempted to draw together research on all the buildings and the improvements that can be attributed to the priorate of Wibert. The architectural ambition and elaboration of the buildings themselves are sufficient to justify such a study, but they take on much greater significance when placed in a national and international context in which their form and iconography can be seen to

demonstrate close connections with major buildings in France and Italy and to constitute an important episode in the development of architecture in England. The author demonstrates convincingly that the transformation of the monastic buildings during the 1150s and 60s, graphically recorded in the famous drawing in the Eadwine Psalter, reveals much about changing concerns and priorities in Benedictine monastic life in the mid-12th century, and of the international connections of its community, which were actively pursued and facilitated by the close ties between the monastery and the papal curia (the period included the reign of the only English pope), and by the breadth of scholarly interest of the members of the curia of archbishops Theobald and Becket.

A comparable breadth of scholarly interests and knowledge make the author exceptionally well qualified to undertake this study, and to balance the detailed archaeological arguments that are required to establish the extent of our knowledge of each of these buildings with the wider discussion of their significance as a reflection of the mind-set and the conduct of monastic communities in the 12th century. Fergusson's interpretative approach is well exemplified in his sensitive and perceptive analysis and interpretation of the so-called waterworks drawing, which he situates within an 'exegetical and revelatory tradition' of drawings of architecture in psalters. He argues persuasively that the drawing, almost certainly datable to around 1158, is much more than an incomplete diagram of Wibert's impressive new water system and that it should be read in conjunction with Wibert's *obit* as a record of the extensive new works undertaken in the monastery by that date. Each of the key buildings is illustrated and annotated, and the conventions employed, notably the consistently interior viewpoint whereby elevations are laid out flat from a central viewpoint, show that the drawing is a conceptual realisation of the monastery from the perspective of the monks, intended for an audience within the precincts. As the author argues, it is 'multilayered, its purposes ranging from inventory to commentary, from record to prophetic symbol', 'a recognisable construct as well as an encompassing ideal'.

This assertion of monastic identity is also seen as a re-affirmation of the essential qualities of Benedictine monasticism in response to the challenge from the new reformed orders, most conspicuously the Cistercians. This provides an important context for the ambitious programme of

monastic buildings, comprehensively enhancing facilities for the monks: improved hygiene (the new water supply, the Bath building, the *Necessarium* with its very generous provision of fifty-three seats for about 130 monks, the *Piscina* and the five lavng fountains); the care of the sick and old (the Infirmary and Infirmary Cloister); hospitality (the Guest Hall); as well as appropriate accommodation for the important judicial functions of the community (the *Aula Nova* and Green Court Gatehouse). The high architectural profile and the iconography of these latter buildings Fergusson convincingly links to the contemporary interest in the works of Gratian and the codification of Canon Law that typified the curia of archbishops Theobald and Becket. This breadth of approach on the part of the author, whose awareness of the connotations and associations of building types and materials has characterised a number of his previous publications, is one of the great strengths of this book and makes it such an interesting contribution to the writing of architectural history.

This cultural dimension provides impressive breadth to a study that is securely based on careful archaeological analysis of the surviving buildings and an exploration of the varied stylistic sources of the architectural forms and decoration. Prior Wibert's obvious predilection for polishable stones to simulate marble, evident in the Infirmary Cloister and the west entrance to the undercroft to the Treasury, parallels a similar taste exhibited by Henry of Blois and is the context for, and very probably the inspiration for, the extensive use of Purbeck and other 'marbles' in the work of William of Sens. In fact, this use of 'marble', with its clear associations with Early Christian Rome as well as alluding more than figuratively to the Heavenly Jerusalem, is part of a tradition at Canterbury that pre-dates Wibert, as William of Malmesbury describes the use of marble in Anselm's choir. One of these polishable stones, sometimes described as onyx marble, has now been clearly identified as calc-sinter from a Roman aqueduct near Cologne. The origin and use of this material is the subject of a valuable Appendix to this book by Christopher Wilson, who makes the very plausible suggestion that the slabs of calc-sinter surviving in the floor of the presbytery may originally have formed screens around the 'glorious choir'.

Complementing the striking effects of these polishable stones was the employment of a rich and varied vocabulary of architectural ornament, most clearly demonstrated in the upper parts of the

towers attached to the eastern transepts, an addition to the cathedral that would have been much more conspicuous before the fire of 1174. These would have been matched by the heightening of the chapels of St Andrew and St Anselm to become tower-like structures dominating the east end of the church, and by the raising of the campanile adjacent to the monks' cemetery on the south side of the church. Equally dramatic was the addition of the *Vestiarium* to the north of St Andrew's chapel, a substantial 'gate' between the monastic enclosure and the monks' cemetery. The main floor has a splendid octopartite rib vault, while the rib-vaulted undercroft probably served rituals relating to the burial and commemoration of the dead. Overall, the architecture remains essentially late Romanesque in style, but with indications of changes taking place across the Channel, notably in the introduction of new building types. These show awareness of continental practice and reinforce the cosmopolitan nature of the culture of the monastery and the conscious resonances and associations that the architecture was intended to convey.

Taken as a whole, Wibert's programme of reconstruction of the monastery, including the installation of the quite exceptional system to provide fresh water and adequate sanitation, is hard to parallel, making its comparative neglect for so long all the more remarkable. Fergusson has made up for that neglect by giving us such a rich and nuanced account of Wibert's ambitious programme and setting it so convincingly within an international context. This is one of the most enlightening books on medieval architecture to have been published in recent years and it should be essential reading for all who wish to gain an insight into the nature and purposes of architecture in the medieval period.

PETER DRAPER

Schofield, John, *St Paul's Cathedral before Wren*, Swindon: English Heritage (2011), x + 386 pp., 275 ills, £100. Hardback ISBN 978-1-848020-56-6.

The importance of the predecessors of the present St Paul's Cathedral cannot be overestimated, particularly the great Romanesque and Gothic

church. As the cathedral of the capital it played a part in national events and parts of the medieval building ('Old St Paul's') influenced the development of both the Decorated and Perpendicular styles. Although it is better known than many lost medieval buildings, Old St Paul's remains overshadowed by its great successor, and the earlier versions even more so. Thus, this book, by the Cathedral Archaeologist, John Schofield, is a welcome addition to the literature on St Paul's.

The initial stated aim is to report on a group of eight excavations spanning 1969 to 2006. In the event, this work evolved into so much more and the excavations themselves are of limited significance compared with the whole.

The volume is set out like a standard archaeological report with a description and analysis of each phase from the Roman period to up to the Great Fire of London (with an additional short chapter on the archaeology of the Wren building, on which a further volume is in preparation). Schofield uses earlier archaeological observations, drawings and engravings (especially the famous set by Wenceslas Hollar), and antiquarian, cartographic and documentary evidence. The final chapter is a substantial collection of reports by numerous specialists. Other specialist reports are included in the main text, for instance Nicola Coldstream's and Nigel Llewellyn's valuable descriptions and analyses of the medieval and post-medieval monuments respectively, and an overview of the architecture by Richard Halsey. The volume ends with a useful gazetteer of excavations, observations and documented buildings and features within the medieval precincts.

The chronological chapters start with Roman and Anglo-Saxon. The Roman finds – principally two kilns and cremation urns, followed by residential buildings – fit well with our growing understanding of Roman London. The 7th- and 10th-century Anglo-Saxon foundations remain known principally in the documentary record and through a handful of objects including such well known pieces as the lead money-weight of Alfred and the Ringerike style grave-marker. In the final chapter there is also a section on the late Anglo-Saxon graveyard by David Stocker, a valuable addendum to the London *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* for south-east England.¹

The highlight and centrepiece of the book is the chapter of over 120 pages on the medieval cathedral, employing evidence from pre-fire plans, through Hollar's engravings, loose architectural

stones, archaeology and documentary sources. In places this leads to new reconstructions, for example the plans of the Romanesque and later medieval cathedrals and a tentative but important reconstruction of the late 13th-century rose window in the east arm by Mark Samuel. Given the quality of previous scholarship (notably Keene *et al* 2004, and Grant, ed., 1990),² which Schofield refers to throughout, these reconstructions are not startlingly new but do represent significant refinements. Mainly because of Hollar's engravings, the cathedral is reasonably well known, especially the Gothic choir (the 'New Work') for its part in the development of the English Decorated style, and the chapter house and cloister as the earliest known buildings in the Perpendicular style. A particularly useful section is that on the medieval precinct and Paternoster Row immediately to its north, where each building or area is considered in turn, whether it be the Pardon Churchyard, the bishop's palace or the folkmoot (an ancient assembly and court). This allows for brief consideration of such matters as the thriving book trade in the churchyard; the marbling and brass trades established in Paternoster Row; and early court meetings. Although much of the evidence here is from documentary sources, it is clear that an increasing proportion is archaeological, a matter that is revisited in chapter 7, which considers what we know and what might be left in the ground – to which the answer is quite a lot.

This broad approach enables us to see St Paul's in several different contexts: in the context of modern scholarship on cathedrals in England and on the continent; in the context of the development of London; and in the context of the cathedral's own busy, ever-changing precincts. Numerous recent publications by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on other London religious houses mean that St Paul's can also be seen in comparison to those, many of which, incidentally, were rather more successful at attracting elite burials than St Paul's.

Aside from the newly-presented archaeology, what sets this volume apart from the numerous previous studies of medieval and post-Reformation St Paul's is the almost forensic setting out and examination of every scrap of evidence of every variety. This does not always make for easy reading and Schofield does not always help his readers; for instance the Romanesque choir bays are numbered from west to east but the Gothic choir bays from east to west. This is more than compensated for by the high quality of the numerous illustrations (including all of the recorded monuments of importance), the

new plans and generous referencing. The style is deliberately like that of recent MOLA volumes and, indeed, includes much of their work, as they undertook all the recent excavations at the cathedral. This has much to recommend it, and the book will become the new standard reference work, but it is a shame that English Heritage did not also follow their pricing policy, since for most of us this volume, at £100, will be a library book.

JACKIE HALL

NOTES

- 1 D. Tweedle, M. Biddle and B. Kjøbye-Biddle, 1995, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture 4, South-East England* (Oxford 1995).
- 2 D. Keene, A. Burns and A. Saint, eds, *St Pauls: The Cathedral Church of London 6004-2004* (New Haven and London 2004); L. Grant, ed., *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in London*, British Archaeological Assn Conference Transactions, X (Leeds 1990).

Wooding, Jonathan M. and Yates, Nigel, eds, *A Guide to the Churches and Chapels of Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press (2011), 228 pp., 13 ills, 8 col. pls, no price given. ISBN 978-0-7083-2118-8.

Nash, Gerallt D., ed., *Saving St Teilo's: Bringing a Medieval Church to life*. Cardiff: Amgueddfa Cymru / National Museum Wales (2009), 144 pp. 103 ills, £14.99. ISBN 978-0-7200-0598-1

Two books relating to churches in Wales. The former is a guide to two hundred and fifty of the churches and chapels across Wales and the latter is an account of the rescue of one of Wales's medieval churches and its careful re-erection at the St Fagans National History Museum.

Sadly Nigel Yates never lived to see the *Guide* published because he died in 2009, and there is a fitting tribute to him on page 17. The *Guide* was edited by him and Jonathan Wooding, both academics at the University of Wales Trinity St David, and entries are also contributed by Peter Howell, Prys Morgan, Adam Voelcker and John Newman, all of whom are acknowledged specialists on Welsh buildings.

The first section provides an interesting overview of the history of the Church in Wales from the arrival of the first Christians through to Disestablishment in 1920. It would also have been good to have had a similar overview of church buildings commenting on regional styles or traditions. However the passing quote from a 12th-century source (p.8), that in the time of Gruffydd ap Cynan, Gwynedd was 'bespangled with lime-washed churches as the firmament is with stars' is an excellent reminder that medieval churches were indeed limewashed. Today it is a recurring source of conservation tension whether to limewash or not and for many it is too hard to believe that these churches started out limewashed, not bare stone. There is a glossary of terms at the end, though the definition of 'bosses' as 'knobs or similar projections' without explaining that this is typically at the intersection of vaulting ribs is potentially confusing and the inclusion of 'Ha-ha' is surprising as they are usually associated with designed landscapes not churches. A glossary of the most popular Welsh saints' names (e.g. Cadog, Dyfrig, Padarn, Teilo, etc.) would also have been useful.

The *Guide* is succinct and small enough not to weigh down the visitor yet it also identifies a great number of churches to see. And it is commendably ecumenical, including not just Church in Wales churches but also Roman Catholic, Non-conformist of various denominations and even a Greek Orthodox church. It is acknowledged (p.16) that the selection reflects a large element of personal choice by the authors and contributors. Brevity in some entries, though, has led to a lack of context and the feeling that the spirit of the place has not been captured. One wonders whether all entries would inspire the reader to want to visit? The entry for Pennant Melangell (Powys, p.49), for example, does not convey the spectacular remoteness of this place and that for Skenfrith (Monm., p.164) misses the pleasure that can be gained from visiting this largely 13th- and 14th-century church alongside the medieval castle. The guide would benefit from more comments such as is found in the entry for the incredibly special Llanrhychwyn (Conwy, p.106) which opens by saying that it gives the impression it has 'stood in its remote upland location since time immemorial'. Similarly St Hywyn, Aberdaron (Gwynedd, p.75) conveys well its stunning coastal location 'situated spectacularly, precipitously, overlooking the sea'.

As well as the major churches of Wales, the *Guide* includes lesser known but nevertheless

interesting places such as the Victorian church at Beulah (Powys), the Ann Griffiths Memorial Chapel at Dolanog (Powys), the remote and exquisitely untouched medieval church at Rhulen (Powys) and the extraordinary St Philip Caerleon (Gwynedd), to name but a few. Overall the *Guide* will appeal most to those with a particular interest in furnishings and Victorian restorations, and the entries for the set-piece Victorian churches are also especially informative, e.g. Bodelwyddan (Flints.) and Brithdir (Gwynedd).

The *Guide* needs more illustrations and the black and white photographs could be of better quality. For example, the one for Llangelynin (Conwy, p.103) would benefit from being in colour, maybe instead of the detailed colour plate 9 from Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd (Denb.), the significance of which is not explained in the entry for this church. It would have been helpful if the inclusion of colour plates towards the end of the *Guide* were noted in the text of the corresponding entries. Without referring to the list of illustrations at the beginning, the numbering system for the colour plates is potentially confusing.

Geographically the entries for North-West Wales and South Wales are the most consistently good in conveying a clear and informed overview of the character and interest of the churches. They also give the reader a hint as to what more they can discover when visiting. The entry for Dolwyddelan (Conwy, p.88) makes an important point, that treasures can be 'hidden behind a plain almost featureless exterior'. In terms of detailed entries some features are noted but not explained such as how unusual it is that the tower at Llanbister (Powys, p.33) is at the east end. At Llanrhaeadr Yng Nghinmeirch (Denb., p.66) 'a complete Jesse window' is mentioned only in passing without explaining that this window is dated 1533 and is amongst the finest examples of stained glass in Wales. Similarly the significance of the 15th-century Jesse at St Mary's, Abergavenny (Monm.) is underplayed here. The entry for Llanidloes (Powys, p.41), does not take account of modern tree-ring dating which has proved that the hammerbeam roof cannot have come from Abbey Cwmhir (Powys), as the trees were not felled until after the Dissolution. St Asaph Cathedral (p.71) was not 'largely rebuilt during Sir George Gilbert Scott's vigorous restoration' nor was it late medieval in origin. The visitor reading that entry might be surprised to find that much of the cathedral is still early 14th-century, and some Early English masonry survives as well

as fine 15th-century canopied choir stalls. The overt praise for the removal of the nave pews might concern some on diocesan advisory committees. St David's Cathedral (p.187) has a detailed entry, but it fails to mention the well regarded cloisters, designed by Caroe and Partners and opened in 2008. There are also a few surprising omissions. The entry for Gresford (Wrexham, p.58) has no mention of its bells which are one of the 'Seven Wonders of Wales', as are the ancient yew trees at St Mary's Overton (Wrexham), which has no entry at all. St Mary's, Mold (Flint.) is not included, yet it is an imposing late Perpendicular rebuild under the patronage of Margaret Stanley, restored by Gilbert Scott. In South Wales, the early non-conformist chapel Hen dy Cwrdd, Trecynon (Rhondda Cynon Taff, formerly mid-Glamorgan), built in 1751, might have warranted an entry as it was the first property to be taken into the care of the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust.

The *Guide* does include a reference to St Teilo's at St Fagans Museum, the subject of the other book reviewed here, describing it as 'an imaginative piece of reconstruction' (p.146). *Saving St Teilo's* is beautifully produced book and extensively illustrated in colour, as we have come to expect from the National Museum Wales; the text is edited by Senior Curator, Gerallt Nash, who led the St Teilo's project. An eminent list of contributors includes Eurwyn Wiliam, Mark Redknap and Madeleine Gray. The chapters are imaginatively titled 'Entrada', 'Genesis', 'Exodus', 'Revelation', 'Resurrection' and 'Amen', and indeed it would be hard for any reader not to exclaim 'Hallelujah', as the project was clearly a labour of love and care over many years.

The book starts by explaining why St Fagans had long wanted a typical parish church to complement the typical non-conformist chapel already on site, and why St Teilo's best fitted its criteria, in a way that none of the previously offered churches had. St Teilo's sat in a flood-plain of the River Loughor near Pontarddulais (Swansea) and close to the line of the M4 motorway, from where the site can still be spotted with its remaining churchyard walls. Archaeological investigation concluded that the Norman church was enlarged by a north and south transept in the 14th or early 15th century, the aisle was added in the late 15th century and finally the porch. In 1851 a new church was built in Pontarddulais but summer services continued to be held here until 1970. The church was at risk of being lost forever and as its

fittings had already been destroyed, it offered the museum the opportunity to interpret and recreate its medieval appearance. In 'Genesis' the reader's perception of what this might be is challenged by explaining how interiors of such churches would have been highly coloured, with candles and lamps burning all around: the 'razzle dazzle' (p.132) is so different to the church interiors we are used to today. There is an interesting discussion of how the medieval church would have been the centre of the community, used for a whole range of different secular functions as well as its religious ones, and we learn about not just the architecture and decoration of the church but also its liturgy.

For most readers the real interest of this book will be the story of how it was dismantled and re-erected at St Fagans, where it was opened in 2007. This project was painstakingly carried out, recording every detail of the church before moving it and, once at St Fagans, the interiors were recreated with the benefit of research into comparable churches. The result, whilst a shock to many modern eyes, is shown to be the best possible interpretation of what St Teilo's may have once looked like. Achieving this involved some finely balanced conservation and presentational decisions. For example, as described in 'Revelation', whether to reveal the 15th-century sequence of wall paintings or one of six layers that overlaid it. The reader learns that the early 16th-century Passion sequence was chosen partly because it was more accomplished but also because the Museum wanted to recreate the church as it would have been immediately pre-Reformation. It would have assisted the reader better to follow this decision and the subsequent recreation of new paintings to have included a few more illustrations of the fragments of wall paintings uncovered, especially as so few are on display in the museum galleries. Also some images of the scrolls of text would have been helpful as we are told that they are 'virtually unique'. Whilst a degree of interpretation was needed in some areas of fragmentary painting, they were all executed using traditional *secco* painting techniques. A combination of research and conjecture was also required for some key features, such as the design of the new east window and the new rood screen. With the window glass there was no evidence available on site so the glass installed is deliberately cautious and the Museum will take time to develop as authentic a scheme as possible. New furnishings, such as a silver chalice and figures of Mary and St Teilo, were made by craftsmen at the Museum and based on known

examples. Indeed each element of the reconstructed church is analysed with surviving evidence on site and other comparative examples used to support the decisions taken about materials and decoration. In this respect it offers a fascinating overview of church interiors in medieval Wales.

The absence of beaten earth floor is commented upon in the *Guide to the Churches and Chapels* – '... the beautifully stone-paved instead of earthen floors give a rather cleaned-up version of a replica medieval building' (p.146). The *Saving St Teilo's* book acknowledges that, at the pre-Reformation date represented, it would have been unlikely to have had a completely paved floor, but that this was necessary to make it serviceable today for a large number of visitors. In this respect the floor echoes the dilemma faced by many conservation professionals about how to retain authenticity yet allow proper 21st-century use. Although the book notes that a decision was taken early on not to install electric power 'but to copy medieval conditions' (p.120), it was noted on a recent visit that there are spotlights and electric heating in the building.

Overall, the project has developed a keen insight into the world of the original artists and builders of St Teilo's. The Museum has sought 'to explore the link between the scholarly discipline of conserving and displaying ancient objects with the altogether more lively process of designing, making and installing vibrant replicas' (p.130). The book sums up this approach very successfully and we are told it is the only stone-built church in Europe to have been re-erected and refurbished to its medieval appearance.

EDWARD HOLLAND

Guillery, Peter, ed., *Built from Below: British Architecture and the Vernacular*, London: Routledge (2011), 214pp, 85 ills, £29.99. ISBN 978-0-415-56533-5

This collection of essays is the result of a conference in 2008 organised jointly by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain and the Vernacular Architecture Group, bringing together different perspectives on the vernacular tradition and its connections with architectural history. The introduction by Peter Guillery provides a useful

overview of the relationships between the two methods of study. However, it ends with a summation of the two 'disciplines' with which I would not agree. Vernacular is elided with archaeological analysis and architectural history with documentary history. This is not what I have experienced as somebody who started at the vernacular end of the spectrum. I have never been able to divorce the need to integrate the documentary evidence with the observed fabric. Architectural history can be characterised (perhaps unfairly) as the art historical end of the discipline. Ultimately, however, it does not really matter how we label what investigators are doing, rather that we should strive to use as many as possible of the approaches that are available to us to understand the history of the built world, hence I think of the whole discipline as building history.

The first essay by Laurie Smith attempts to analyse structures from a geometrical design perspective, covering buildings from Ely Cathedral to excavated 17th-century houses in Jamestown, Virginia. This focuses on the use of the 'daisy wheel', the familiar six petal design that can be drawn just using a pair of compasses, which offers a useful geometric means of providing proportionality in structures. However, can there be any certainty as to the underlying geometry of the laying out of buildings? Where is the literature from the medieval or the post-medieval periods which sets out the use of geometry? Buildings probably were designed proportionally, because they were dependent on the size of the available components at a particular site (such as the length of a set of trees available to provide the roof span).

Paul Barnwell continues his perceptive analysis of the medieval church, which has been a theme in his work for some years, with the rather depressing reminder that there is only a very 'slight survival' of medieval written sources as to how the parish church functioned (as opposed to the evidence for large churches and cathedrals). He shows that they functioned in quite a different way from the processional needs of the great church. He makes some very interesting observations as to what the church fabric and its development has to offer on the desire of the congregation to observe the elevation of the host, perhaps the most significant moment in the mass.

Elizabeth McKellar discusses the villa as either an ideal type to be striven for or as a vernacular type, looking mainly at London. The concept of the villa as an 18th-century Palladian box in the countryside is quickly disposed of. One of

the major starting points in the account of the type is a neo-Palladian masterpiece, the Queen's House at Greenwich. From there she traces a wide variety of structures which can be defined as villas, essentially small country houses, in the London environment in the 17th and 18th centuries, through to a possibly more vernacular type in the later London suburbs. For me, however, we rather lose the usefulness of the term 'villa' when it is so broadly defined as 'a widespread but socially distinct dwelling type within the broader suburban vernacular'.

Ann-Marie Lakehurst offers an interesting perspective by taking two contrasting York institutions, the Lunatic Asylum provided by the local establishment and the York Retreat built by the Quakers. This develops the Quaker's discovery that this kind of institution could not be built without the need for rigorous professional design, and how this changed their attitude to architectural design, even whilst maintaining their traditional values with regard to the simple nature of the structures they erected.

The next chapter by Esme Whittaker picks up on the conscious tradition of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which involved deriving designs from the local idiom. She concentrates on a 'minor' architect, Dan Gibson. He was a part of the deliberate effort which carried on into the 1930s planning regime for the Lake District to use traditional materials and forms to inspire his clients, and to try and influence the mass house builders of the day.

Ballyntyne and Law consider the much derided Mock Tudor house, placing it in its context in the development of British housing. I was hoping that I might be able to love the suburban Tudoresque house. The chapter traces the use of timber framing in the context of architectural design from the late 19th century through to the inter-war period. Whilst the grander architectural statements are alluring to me, I am afraid that the illustrations of the later small houses just show how thin many of them are, often with a single gable of planted framing: how disappointing. The houses are only vernacular in the sense that they (almost) manage to look like the traditional forms of construction. However, like the most debased neo-Georgian buildings of later in the century, where the angle of the pediment is not quite right, they lack conviction. Nevertheless, they are an interesting subject of study, and I wonder how the market mechanisms were exerted that led to this being such a dominant style in the 1920s and 1930s. Were they easier to sell than Georgian and

Modernist houses, or were the developers building what they thought people wanted?

Erdem Erten looks at the attempt within modernist design to find an anonymous design aesthetic, particularly through the approach to the 'Functional Tradition.' It was defined by J. M. Richards and those evocative works of art, Eric de Maré's photographs, which appeared in book form in 1958. The argument which Richards was pursuing was that Modernism should be equated with anonymity of design. This was related to his view of the suburb as the creation of those who lived in it, in other words designed for the people. This is hardly a sustainable argument when they were built for the mass market.

Miles Glendinning looks for a modernist vernacular in post-Second World War council housing. This follows some similar themes to those traced in relation to Richards. I doubt that the buildings are in any sense of the word vernacular, except the small-scale housing using brick which was a part of neo-vernacular tradition in the 1970s. Certainly the large schemes, whether they are the series of tower blocks so rapidly vanishing from the landscape or the mega-structures such as the Park Hill flats, were created by different forces. They were designed with little or no involvement from those who were asked to live in them.

The final chapter explores the tradition of workplace and dwelling under one roof, in which Frances Holliss attempts an impossibly wide canvas from the medieval long house through to the contemporary live/work unit. This covers overtly vernacular buildings through to highly refined architecture. The long house cited is a rather 'open plan living' reconstruction of a Wharram Percy house. The complexity of medieval living and working arrangements is not represented here. There is evidence for the separation of work and living in the medieval period, whilst there was perhaps a predominance of combined buildings. There was a strong tradition, for example, of the detached kitchen: a clear separation of this domestic function from the rest of the house. A building type I have looked for is the pre-industrial weaver's house. In Worcester there is some evidence for detached workshops behind the main houses for looms (for broadcloth they could never have been upstairs as they were too massive). There is ample evidence that the medieval retail shop, often incorporated within a house, was a workshop as well. The essay moves swiftly from the medieval to the 18th- and 19th-century weaver's houses, which are well known

from many regions of England, with their ranges of large windows on upper floors. It then rapidly swings from those essentially vernacular structures to highly designed live/work units, such as the artists' studio houses of the later 19th century and onwards into the 20th century.

So where does this volume leave the debate on the connection between vernacular buildings and architecture? It leaves me with a plea for us to stop worrying about the definition of Vernacular versus Polite. These essays show that these are simplistic distinctions from within a continuum of built structures. Let us look for other and more interesting ways of categorising what we are looking at, and let's make sure it is informed by applying all the sources of evidence – from science and archaeology to construction history, documentary sources and art historical analysis, let alone economics, social history and anthropology. For instance, many of the 20th-century examples that are explored focus on the architectural ideas behind the buildings. The market forces that led to many of the very particular forms of development and design are not investigated here. Whatever the modernists thought they were doing, many of the buildings they made were for an elite market. Overall the book raises a great many interesting questions for building historians to examine, and emphasises the multi-dimensional approach that is needed to understand the history of our built environment.

NICHOLAS A. D. MOLYNEUX

Longstaffe-Gowan, Todd, *The London Square: Gardens in the Midst of Town*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2012), ix + 334 pp., 280 figs, £30. ISBN 978-0-300-15201-2.

This is the first modern book-length history of the London square, claimed here as 'England's greatest contribution to the development of European town planning and urban form'. It is also yet another beautifully illustrated book from Yale University Press. The generous format and ratio of image to text make it a visual joy, all the more so thanks to the author's superb and wide-ranging picture research. In the illustrations, many not at all well known, he gives us countless striking images, from

watercolours to photographs, often charming or humorous, as well as maps and aerial views that are more straightforwardly informative. The book is structured as a chronological survey. This carries obvious benefits in terms of historical narrative. An acknowledged drawback is that it means that this is not the place to find an up-and-down account of any particular square. For that the Buildings of England or the Survey of London, where appropriate, remain better starting points. In what is not a topographical or thematic account, there is no gazetteer. Fair enough, though some kind of simple tabulated list of squares and their start dates would have been a handy aide-memoire.

Longstaffe-Gowan insists that London's residential garden squares were not an accidental invention, yet the messy 17th-century histories of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Leicester Fields (only later Square) do suggest something serendipitous and distinctively English about the emergent character of these large rectangular enclosures in an increasingly sprawling city. His story takes a familiar detour back to the Place des Vosges and Covent Garden and then proceeds in stately fashion onwards to the establishment through the 18th century of the square as a standard speculatively planned and increasingly private space amid housing for the well-to-do if not aristocratic. John Fielding's policing priority for the newly established Bow Street Runners in the 1750s was to patrol Westminster's squares at night, to protect the rich. Even so, among this book's innumerable quotes (many of them rather long) is John Stewart's claim of 1771 that London's squares were 'public improvements that spring originally from the spirit of the people, and not from the will of the prince'. There is no contradiction in this in an 18th-century context, but it does foreshadow later tensions. The book says little about the houses of the squares – that is not its subject. Instead the author brings to bear his considerable horticultural knowledge to explain the evolution of the garden spaces themselves. As with other themes, this surfaces here and there, as in an account of 'dressed gaiety' and 'rude picturesqueness' as opposed approaches to the more self-consciously suburban squares of the early 19th century.

It might be supposed that the chronological narrative would tail off in interest after setting out the glories of London's Georgian squares. That, happily, is not at all the case. Despite a tendency to reportage, it becomes more and more engrossing. New Victorian squares, and there were many, if of a

lesser and duller nature, are given fairly short shrift in favour of emphasis on changing use and access. The saga of the enlightened struggle for better public access to London's squares from about 1860 through to the 1960s is both engaging and inspiring. The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, founded in 1882, played a critical role in forcing shuffling steps away from exclusivity, leading the way in pushing for the removal of gates, rails and posts. The building over of squares also had to be fiercely resisted – an arresting *Punch* cartoon of 1926 depicts a speculative builder as the Grim Reaper saying to an angelic figure representing London, 'It's your lungs I want'. Clough Williams-Ellis expressed his dislike of railings pithily in 1938: 'the Englishman's home is his cage'. The removal of railings from around squares during the Second World War was as much or more about open access as it was about the need for scrap metal.

This is a tale well told, but it has to be registered that there are disconcertingly numerous small mistakes that tend to undermine confidence in accuracy. Some of these are admittedly inconsequential – Horwood's map of the Paragon on the New Kent Road is captioned as depicting the Paragon at Blackheath; Milner Square is not built of red brick; and the Marquess of Northampton did not give up Percy Circus in 1885 (it was not his to give). Others less so – the misdating of a photograph of a bowling green on Holford Square in 1939 to c.1950 leads to misrepresentation of Tecton's post-war recasting of this badly bombed place. However, this is nit-picking about a book that is not just a beautiful thing and, overarchingly, a good history, but also, in the end, a galvanizing wake-up call.

Longstaffe-Gowan justly applauds recent achievements as regards improvements and access to squares, principally through the London Parks and Gardens Trust and the Open Garden Squares Weekend; but he equally rightly ends on a cautionary note. All is not green in the garden. He notes the (neo-Georgian) harshness of improvements in the 1990s, the cleansing of the homeless from Lincoln's Inn Fields and of gay cruising from Russell Square, and casts a sceptical eye on claims of a 'renaissance' in square building since 2000. New squares are poorly designed – he instances the Millennium Village in Greenwich (though without mentioning its improbable Oval Square) – or, even worse, gated communities. The book ends with a hearty denunciation of the scourge of the securitization of what we take to be, but often is not in fact, public open space. Recommended further reading here

is Anna Minton's excellent *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City* (Penguin, 2009, rev. edn 2012). At Paternoster Square and the new Granary Square at King's Cross, or during the Jubilee weekend and the Olympics, we are learning that public access is not what we thought it was. *Pace* the Occupy movement, there is a need for a revival of the conscience and campaigning indignation of earlier periods that saw to it that many of London's previously private squares were opened up. It is an achievement that about seventy squares take part in Open Garden Squares Weekend, pleasing until you realize that this means that all these spaces are closed to the public for 363 days a year. Many still residential squares are perhaps best kept as private communal gardens, and railings can be both attractive and necessary. However, aesthetic appreciation of railings would be easier if said railings were not still primarily used to keep people out. The all but permanent enclosure of central London spaces such as Bedford Square, Manchester Square, Portman Square and the Park Square and Crescent link between Portland Place and Regent's Park is a disgrace. If London can be proud to have given Europe the 'square', it should also be ashamed. In what other European city would such open spaces not be public?

PETER GUILLERY

Turner, Olivia Horsfall, ed., *The Mirror of Great Britain: National Identity in Seventeenth-Century British Architecture*, Reading: Spire Books (2012), 288 pp., 98 ills, £34.95. ISBN 978-1-904965-38-1.

This book contains papers given at a symposium organised by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain in 2010 on 'the geographies of seventeenth-century British architecture: historiography and new horizons', with the aim of addressing 'the problem of Anglocentrism in discussions of British architecture'. Three of the papers have Scottish themes, a further three look at Irish topics – albeit two of those are by the same author and consider complementary aspects of the same subject – and there is a single paper on a Welsh theme. Looking further afield are papers on architecture in Bermuda, on relationships between

English and American house design, and on the impact of emerging awareness of the Levant on British architectural consciousness.

The first paper, by Aonghus MacKechnie, builds on the work of John Dunbar to offer a persuasive case for the rehabilitation of Sir James Murray of Kilbaberton as a major architectural contributor in Scotland during the earlier 17th century. MacKechnie demonstrates how Murray's work, following the accession of James VI to the English throne in 1603, involved an element of rapprochement between the architecture of the two countries, reflecting the king's wish for the closer union of his two kingdoms. One may perhaps wonder, however, if all of MacKechnie's attributions to Murray are to be accepted, what the other architects known to have been active in Scotland were doing with their time. Approaching Scottish architecture of the later 17th century from a different perspective, Charles Wemyss demonstrates that for many of the great land-holding families, as represented by membership of the powerful Scottish Treasury Commission established by the earl of Lauderdale in 1667, the historic appearance of their ancestral seats was a matter of great significance. In parallel with what Wemyss suggests was the situation in the Netherlands and to some extent in France, for such magnates augmentation of their houses generally entailed the accentuation of existing characteristics as the most potent means of expressing lineage. By contrast, it was those men of affairs who acquired estates from the fruits of newly granted offices who chose to build compact classical houses to the designs of architects such as William Bruce and James Smith.

The third contribution on a Scottish theme, by Daniel Maudlin, ends the volume. It is in two parts, the first offering an overview of vernacular architecture in the 17th century, and the second considering the ways in which that architecture has been understood and responded to down to the present day. Maudlin gives an intriguing account of how, after being deeply disapproved of by 18th-century commentators for the conditions they imposed on their inhabitants, pre-improvement houses – and blackhouses in particular – came to be seen as culturally-authentic Scottish icons, however misunderstood those icons might be. Ironically, he reminds us that when making preparations for the highly romanticised vision of Scotland represented in the 1954 film *Brigadoon*, it proved impossible to find a Scottish township that matched up to the vision, and a suitably sanitised one had to be built

in Hollywood. Regrettably, the idea of Scotland as Brigadoon may not altogether have died out amongst members of the current nationalist government.

In his fine paper on 17th-century Welsh country houses, Mark Baker takes a theme that is in some ways related to that of Charles Wemyss, the importance of the architectural expression of ancestry, looking at how the Morgans of Ruperra and the Trevors of Plas Teg chose to house themselves. In the former case an outwardly traditional castle-like design was the choice, while in the latter case a more progressive design, with which the names of John Thorpe and John Webb have both been linked, was the end result. Both houses were built for cadets of old families who were fortunate to marry heiresses and to enjoy the patronage of great magnates, though it is not made altogether clear why such differing approaches should have been adopted.

Two of the three papers on Irish themes look at the architecture of the English and Scottish plantations in Ulster and the Irish Midlands. These closely argued contributions by Rolf Loeber, which together occupy 66 of the 266 pages of main text, are divided into considerations of the architecture of the areas before and after the initiation of the process of plantation in 1608. In the course of that draconian process, during which the indigenous population lost control of virtually all of their ancestral land in Ulster and varying proportions in the Midlands, he finds much evidence of English and Scottish craftsmen being employed to build the new houses in Ulster, albeit that the loss of many of the buildings makes it difficult to identify their specific contributions. Loeber's chapters are accompanied by a carefully chosen range of early views of the houses, but in a discussion that involves detailed analysis of plan types, it would have been helpful to have those plans illustrated as well. Brenda Collins' paper focuses on the building activities of the Conway family, who had estates in Warwickshire and Wales, and whose grants of land in Ireland began in 1609. She looks particularly at their early 17th-century house in Lisnagarvey (Lisburn), at the gardens they formed there in the mid-17th century, and at the stables they built on their country retreat at Portmore after 1661. In all cases her evidence has to be largely documentary or pictorial, since the house at Lisburn burnt down and was abandoned in 1707 and the Portmore stables were demolished in the 1750s. Nevertheless, she is able to present a convincing picture of the emerging desire to

follow English fashions by a family that was rising steadily through the English peerage, with the third viscount becoming earl of Conway in 1679, at the time that he was also rebuilding on a magnificent scale the family's Warwickshire seat of Ragley.

The two papers that look across the Atlantic take very different themes. Emily Mann considers the ten fortifications that were built in the strategically important colony of Bermuda between 1612 and the 1620s, the engineers of which, while taking some of their ideas from the Henrician coastal forts of 1539, had the advantage of the island's natural rock formations. The main function of the defences was to protect English expansionist interests, though she points out that the maintenance of order over the rather mixed body of settlers was also a significant factor. Stephen Hague's valuable paper considers a type of compact classical house that began to gain favour in both England and the American colonies from the mid-17th century onwards, these being typically of double-pile plan, and of five bays and two-and-a-half storeys below a hipped roof with dormers. This is not a new theme, but it is presented here with many fresh insights. Hague shows how in England these houses were built mainly for members of the lesser gentry and later for commercial and professional owners, a situation reflected in America as part of the process of 'international gentrification'. Since the parallels between the houses on the two sides of the Atlantic are so clear, it would be fascinating to analyse more closely quite why it is nevertheless still generally possible to identify which are American and which English.

The most exotic of the book's themes is Lydia Soo's examination of the impact of the Levant, and of Constantinople (Istanbul) in particular, on English architecture. English commercial interests in that area had taken firm shape with the chartering of the Levant Company in 1582, though it was in the 1660s and 1670s that recording of buildings began in earnest, with the strong support of the recently formed Royal Society. Awareness of the possible impact of Constantinopolitan architecture has been increasing in recent years, as exemplified for example in the work of Vaughan Hart on Nicholas Hawksmoor, but it is very useful now to have Soo's careful study of the individuals who collected and brought back the required information.

It is perhaps inevitable with a collection of symposium papers of this kind that there is relatively little common ground between them, beyond varying levels of acknowledgement of the English elephant in the room. In the case of some

conference proceedings that cover a comparably disparate range of themes, one can be left wondering if it was appropriate that such exchanges of ideas, however stimulating to further research they may have been at the time of their delivery, should have been given permanent printed form. But the present reviewer, who has spent much of his working life north of the border with England, is in no doubt that these papers together offer a thought-provoking – if inevitably somewhat diffuse – salvo that deserves to reach a wide readership, with the hope that it will be the catalyst for further work both by the authors themselves and by other toilers in the vineyard.

RICHARD FAWCETT

Peers, Anthony, *Birmingham Town Hall: An Architectural History*, London: Lund Humphries (2012), pp. xviii + 230, 289 ills, £30.00. ISBN: 978-1-84822-074--4

Anthony Peers has produced the scholarly history that Birmingham Town Hall deserves. This lavishly illustrated and handsomely produced book will undoubtedly remain the standard work on the Town Hall for a long time to come. For those unfamiliar with Birmingham, it would appear at first glance that the volume is devoted to the city's Council House. In fact the Town Hall and the Council House stand adjacent to one other, occupying two sides of the irregular-shaped Victoria Square at the top end of New Street. The Town Hall was erected in between 1832 and 1834 to a design by Joseph Hansom (1803-82) and Edward Welch (1806-68). It was modelled on the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum in Rome and was the country's first great civic concert hall.

The Town Hall occupies an important place in the history of musical performance. Seating 3,000 and with unrivalled acoustics for the time, it established an international reputation. The premieres of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (1846) and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900) were performed within its 'Great Room'. It continued to be used for musical performances and from the Second World War increasingly for jazz and rock concerts. It was also the home of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra until the orchestra was given a new in Symphony Hall in 1991. Despite valiant attempts

to keep it open, the inevitable closure took place in July 1996. Much treasured by its citizens, this iconic Birmingham building in its prominent position and with a Grade I listing could not be abandoned by the Council. As early as January 1995 £12 million had been allocated by the council's Arts, Culture and Economy sub-committee to overhaul and refurbish the building and find a new use.

In the summer of 1999 Anthony Peers, an architectural historian then working for the firm of Rodney Melville & Partners, prepared a report on the documentary history and fabric analysis of the building to guide and inform the restoration. Very soon he became the 'project historian', recording and analysing the historic fabric as it was exposed during the building works. These were finally completed in 2007 and Peers, clearly captivated by the architecture of the Town Hall and its history and in possession of a body of new information, resolved to publish his findings. Regardless of any understandable personal interest, this great public building deserved the effort, but it was no easy task to bring the idea to fruition. The author is to be congratulated, therefore, in seeking the highest standards of publication.

The book is no mere coffee table adornment, however. It is well-researched, full of new information and discoveries which are all appropriately referenced. His writing style graces the classic elegance of the building, mercifully free of the jargon that bedevils the modern professional and academic world. Peers is not satisfied with writing only an architectural and technical history, although for those interested there is plenty of substance and detail. The wider political, economic and architectural context is presented in the first chapter, 'Birmingham in the Nineteenth Century': the bustling workshop-based town with its well-established individuality, impatient for reform, combined with the tumultuous politics of the era to carve the foundation stone for the Town Hall. The author emphasises that the building should not be interpreted as simply a great assembly hall, embellished by classical architecture. The building had considerable symbolic meaning for the rapidly expanding industrial town. Only two county members represented Birmingham in Parliament and, dissatisfied with these medieval arrangements, the town had played a leading part in promoting the Great Reform Act of 1832. Within days of a massive rally taking place on the outskirts of the town, the Gathering of the Unions, royal assent was granted for the Act on 7 May 1832.

Birmingham was not blessed with many buildings of architectural distinction before the Town Hall appeared like 'an ocean-going liner moored up in a fishing village' (p. ix). New Street was its most elegant thoroughfare and it is no wonder that most of the proposed locations for the much desired 'commodious meeting place' were found in its vicinity, and particularly at its elevated western end. The final choice, as it turned out, was the most inspiring, as it formed an eye-catcher, helping to close in the view at the upper end of the street. It is most fortunate that this long perspective has not been obscured to the present day. In Chapter 2, Peers explores the circumstances that led to the decision to build the Town Hall. He identifies Joseph Moore as the single most active individual in the campaign to persuade the inefficient and unelected body responsible for public works, the Street Commissioners, into activity. Agitation finally became public at the end of 1827 with a petition, culminating in the Town Improvement Act of May 1828. The project was to be paid for by a new Town Hall Rate, despite opposition from many inhabitants. What emerged was a proposal for a massive space (140ft long, 65ft wide and 65ft high), 'appreciably larger than the best-respected concert halls on the continent' (p. 31). It took until August 1830 to choose what was considered to be the 'most desirable' site, already built over with housing on the corner of Paradise Street and Congreve Street. Peers notes that this site was 'not distinguished by a streetscape of remarkable quality' (p. 34). We are lucky that Samuel Lines drew the buildings in 1822 (Fig. 49), the main Paradise Street frontage occupied by a typical early 18th-century, two-storey terrace with a row of dormer windows, which, had it survived (most unlikely in this location), would have been statutorily listed. I would not agree that the buildings were 'of negligible architectural quality', but that they occupied a different league to that of the replacement Town Hall.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the architectural competition organised by the Street Commissioners, still a relatively rare method of obtaining designs for a building in the early 1830s, but very soon to become standard practice. It is always intriguing to see the competing architects' submissions, although most have not survived. The author's meticulous trawl through the documentary sources provides new insights into the dark arts and serendipity of the process, beset by the 'errors and mismanagement of the judges...and architects' abuse of the rules' (p.42). The task was not made easy with seventy entrants,

eventually whittled down to three by 9 April 1831, Charles Barry failing to make the short list. On 6 June it was announced that Hanson & Welch had won, a singular achievement for these young architects. The nationally renowned firm of Rickman & Hutchinson and the up-and-coming local architect, John Fallows, were eliminated. We now know, thanks to Peers, that this triumph was the more remarkable for the little time that the inexperienced partners had left themselves to prepare.

Peers recounts in some detail in Chapter 4 the development of Hanson and Welch's design, prefacing it with some useful national context on building types that preceded it – the assembly room and concert hall. The concert hall was favoured, strongly championed by Joseph Moore and the General Hospital's Musical Committee. Despite the loss of the original submissions and later contradictory recollections of the partners, the author has managed to illuminate some of the tangled creative process. The rivalry of the partners in the competition is surprising, who wasted energy on individual entries instead of collaborating. It is not unusual, however, for designers to fall out later over the division of intellectual responsibility. This is exactly what happened when an acrimonious dispute was played out in published form in 1834-5 after they had been removed from the project. According to Welch the original footprint submitted by Hanson was an inverted T-shape, but the Street Commissioners allowed a revision, radical as it turned out and claimed by Welch to be based on his Fishmongers' Hall in London (Fig. 79). There is no doubt that its 'crowning peripteral Corinthian temple' strongly resembles the Town Hall. On the balance of not absolutely convincing evidence, Peers eventually sides with Welch. This view strongly counterbalances the claim by Hanson that the design was his alone, the cause of an enduring sense of grievance felt by the Welch, his family and supporters. The matter was unsatisfactorily rectified in 1934 by the erection of a new plaque on the building acknowledging both partners, but in error inscribing the name of Edward Welch's younger brother, John (Fig. 82).

In the remainder of this chapter Peers thoroughly analyses the design that emerged, much compromised by the inadequate size of the site to accommodate a concert hall of hitherto unprecedented scale. The peripteral Corinthian columns standing on the podium could not initially be constructed on the north and west sides and the south portico had to encroach onto the public

footway of Paradise Street. The illustrative material selected greatly aids the detailed description of the external appearance and internal layout of the early building. Imagery is also well used in the section that follows, on the building that inspired the winning design – the temple of Castor and Pollux in Rome, previously known as Jupiter Stator. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 had opened Italy up again to visitors and the temple had only been excavated and surveyed during the French occupation. Peers has discovered that Hansom and Welch both visited John Soane at his London office, who convinced the young partners to discard the Forum exemplar and instead adopt the alternative Corinthian style of the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli. This modification necessitated considerable redrawing and re-specification but it was valuable time wasted. It is clear that for the exterior at least, the original Castor and Pollux Corinthian order was reinstated.

The fraught design stage was followed by an even more traumatic contract period. Hanson and Welch had already worked successfully with the firm of Thomas and Kendall and their tender of £16,648 for the building work was up to £6,000 less than submitted by other builders. It is not known whether the Street Commissioners openly suspected collusion, but they demanded that the partners stand as surety for any costs over £17,000. Chapter 5 examines the progress of the building work, the almost inevitable cost over-run and the consequent bankruptcy and dismissal of the architectural partners, who through inexperience had ended up as both designers and builders. Work began on clearing the site in early 1832 and the building contract proper commenced on 27 April. Peers gives credit to Hansom for masterminding the construction of the Town Hall, but it was an exhausting and demoralising task. Matters came to a head in March 1834 when both the architects and the contractors were relieved of their duties. John Foster, a Liverpool architect who had been brought in earlier to help at the design stage, was appointed to take over. Subsequently work progressed well (for which credit is given to Foster). The Town Hall was finally opened for the first Musical Festival in early October, the event made possible by the omission of expensive fit-out items and unfinished detail. There is nothing new about workers rushing about to finish off the day before a building is due to be handed over!

Peers justifiably devotes half of his main text to the genesis of the Town Hall, a necessarily detailed

chronicle. In a town where the average building was only two to three storeys in height it must have struck wonder in the same way that a medieval cathedral soared heavenwards above mud and timber-framed hovels. Delays and inadequate budgets were quickly forgiven in the knowledge that the town had created a noble monument of which its inhabitants could be proud. But we are reminded by Peers of the cost, both financial and mental, born by the ruined Hansom and Welch. Hansom somehow recovered and achieved national fame as the inventor of the Hansom cab but is less well-known as founder of the influential magazine, *The Builder*.

The remaining three chapters take the story from 1834 to the re-opening of the Town Hall in October 2007. They are characterised by the same lucid text, well-chosen and reproduced images backed up by sound documentary research and observation of the building during the recent £35 million scheme of restoration. There is much to sustain the interest of architectural and music historians, and anyone involved in the conservation of great English classical buildings. The Town Hall had suffered from being squeezed onto a cramped site: hemmed in by existing buildings on the west and north sides, the purity of the ideal plan and elevations in these directions were compromised as a result. In 1837 the massive organ was moved into a new recess on the north side, designed by Charles Edge, freeing up valuable space in the 'Great Room'. But it was not until 1848-50, with the laying out of new streets on the west and north sides, that the Birmingham temple became truly peripteral, again to designs by Charles Edge. Another two bays were added to the north side, allowing new columns to be erected in front of the organ bay and to support a reproduction of the south elevation pediment. Since that time forty-two Corinthian columns have marched around the building in an uninterrupted sequence.

In 2012 plans are being drawn up for the comprehensive redevelopment of the adjacent Paradise Circus area, following the demolition of the Central Library and its move to a new building between the Repertory Theatre and Baskerville in September 2013. It can only be hoped that the temptation to realise as much income from the site by building high does not overwhelm 'the fine old Grecian temple'. Anyone designing this scheme is well advised to have a copy of this magnificently researched book at hand.

GEORGE DEMIDOWICZ

Bellenger, Dom Aidan, ed., *Downside Abbey: An Architectural History*, London: Merrell Publishers (2011), 224 pp., 128 ills, £45. ISBN 978-1-8589-4542-2.

In 1966, in the foreword to his scholarly study *Catholic Churches since 1623*, the late Bryan Little wrote of 'the astonishing, but complete, lack of comprehensive books on the buildings concerned' and offered the observation that, in the 19th century, Catholic churches had become a significant but comparatively disregarded element in the nation's architectural history. This is no longer the case: the last two decades have seen the publication of a number of detailed studies, notably *A Glimpse of Heaven*, published by English Heritage in 2006, and the centenary volume on Westminster Cathedral from 2005.¹ Now follows this full, comprehensive, and beautifully produced and illustrated study of the architectural history of Downside Abbey and (somewhat more selectively) of the attached school.

The quality of the illustrations and its general presentation might appear to merit the slightly derogatory appellation 'coffee table', but while the book would grace any coffee table it is anything but that. It is a scholarly study by distinguished contributors, edited and clearly inspired by the present abbot, Dom Aidan Bellenger, who contributes a scene-setting introduction and a separate chapter on the work of Sir Ninian Comper and Frederick Walters. Other chapters deal more or less chronologically with the work of the various architects involved, from Henry Edmund Goodridge in the early 19th century to Francis Pollen in the 1960s, by way of Augustus Pugin, Dunn and Hansom, Thomas Garner, Leonard Stokes and Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

Unlike its sister monastery at Ampleforth, Downside retains the old house into which the community moved in 1814 and its first church and related wing, though the church, a rather thin Commissioners' Gothick work completed in 1823, has lost the four tall pinnacles of its facade. A robust Gothic Revival wing was added by Charles Hansom in 1854 and the piecemeal growth of the school buildings continued with very competent additions by Leonard Stokes in the early 20th century and further extensions by Giles Gilbert Scott between the two world wars. Stokes in fact produced an attractive but unrealised master plan, and similar plans had been produced by Dunn and Hansom in 1873 and A.W.N. Pugin in 1842. All three are

illustrated in the book with attractive birds-eye views: none of Pugin's design was realised but his proposal may have influenced later developments.

It is, however, the abbey church which is the glory of Downside. In 1958 Pevsner described it as 'unforgettable', although he was rude about Dunn and Hansom's monastery block, 'a dismal Victorian neo-Gothic, restless without being picturesque'.² The church like the school buildings was built piecemeal as funds became available, not in stages but as a series of interlocking parts, and the nave still lacks two additional bays and a finished west front. Dunn and Hansom built two separate bits in the early 1880s: the transepts which came to serve as the temporary abbey church, oriented north to south, and the eastern chapels. The task of filling the gap between them, and providing a fitting choir and chancel, then fell to Thomas Garner who rose brilliantly to the challenge. After the first world war Giles Gilbert Scott was given the difficult task of adding a nave which would be a worthy addition to the complex and in addition a war memorial; he also completed the tower.

Scott perhaps faced the most difficult challenge but, as Pevsner observed, both nave and tower are nobly conceived and 'if ever there was excuse for building in period forms in the C20, it is here'. He adds, 'The whole of the abbey church has become the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England'. As he also writes, 'the architectural style is not uniform, and that proves by no means a disadvantage ... The impression is one of cathedral splendour and at the same time a great earnestness and sobriety'.³ It is interesting to compare Scott's mastery of the Gothic here, combined with his humility in recognising the need to blend with the work of his predecessors, with his early Arts and Crafts parish churches, his consummate handling of space at Liverpool and the simple strength of Ampleforth.

Internally the church is enhanced by stained glass and furnishings of various periods by various hands: notably the Lady Chapel sanctuary and gates and the east window glass by Comper (most of whose work was for Anglicans), the sacristy fittings by Frederick Walters, and the organ screen and Cardinal Gasquet tomb by Scott. The tomb has a particularly fine effigy by Edward Carter Preston who had worked with Scott at Liverpool, and the stone carving of the arcades and vaults throughout is of a very high standard. For this reviewer, however, it is something of a disappointment that the fine ceramic work in the Sacred Heart chapel, by the

Polish artist Adam Kossowski, who did much work at Aylesford Priory in the 1950s, receives no more than a passing mention, while the glass by Geoffrey Webb is not mentioned at all.

Scott's humility was less in evidence in his comments on some of Comper's work and he described the figure of the saint in Saint Sebastian's Chapel as irreligious, fleshy, inartistic and feeble. Indeed, the often tense relationships between the various architects and their clients, and the need for financial stringency, is one of the interesting features of this volume. Writing in *The Downside Review* in 1914, Dom Roger Hudleston remarked that the monastic community had always disliked 'building for building's sake' and had been determined to get what it, rather than the architect, wanted; a later headmaster, Dom Aelred Watkin, agreed, and observed that the monks had always known better than their architects.

No review of this book would be complete without reference to the stunning photographs by Paul Barker, although they are singularly unpeopled, and more interesting still are the reproductions of old, mainly 19th-century monochrome photographs. Even more interesting are the beautiful drawings from the offices of the various architects involved, and perhaps best of all are the birds-eye views already mentioned, especially that by Leonard Stokes with its accompanying perspective. The Comper drawings are also of superlative quality: what a far cry they are from today's computer generated offerings.

In the post-1945 world Gothic was banished, but the monastic patronage, not only at Downside, of distinguished architects like Francis Pollen, is brave and encouraging. His modelled facade of the east walk of the cloister, containing refectory and guests' accommodation, is respectful and his internal planning of the monastery library ingenious and friendly, including the diffused natural light reminiscent of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, achieved there with translucent marble. Less successful perhaps is the external design of Pollen's library, like a pseudo chapter-house on a long stalk. Pollen also contributed to Downside's daughter house at Worth and his monastery church there, unlike that at Downside all of a piece with a centralised plan, is masterly in its relationship with its site, its handling of space, levels and light, its use of materials and its fittings (although some of the latter are recent and post-Pollen). Other Benedictine communities including Ampleforth have proved enlightened

patrons, but perhaps best of all for this reviewer is Michael Blee's completion of the abbey church at Douai, a daring and highly successful blend of modern design with early 20th-century Gothic, and a vision founded on 'confidence in the possibility of a truly contemporary witness to a living faith'.

There are asides in the book referring to Catholic parish churches under the patronage of Downside and two, at Stratton-on-the-Fosse and Midsomer Norton, are illustrated, while there is a hint from the editor, in a footnote, that such churches could usefully provide the basis for another study. Such a sequel would indeed be worth waiting for.

ANTHONY ROSSI

NOTES

- 1 C. Martin, *A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales* (Swindon 2006); reviewed in *TAMS* 52, 2008. J. Brown and T. Dean, *Westminster Cathedral: Building of Faith* (London 2005).
- 2 N. Pevsner, *North Somerset and Bristol, Buildings of England* (Harmondsworth 1958), 182-3.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 71.

Symondson, Anthony, *Stephen Dykes Bower*, London: RIBA Publishing (2011), xvii + 185 pp. 153 ills, £20. ISBN 978-1-85946-398-7.

The verb 'to Puginise' – to confuse political and theological speculations with architectural ones – had already been coined within Pugin's lifetime. Reading Anthony Symondson's new book on Stephen Dykes Bower (1903-1994) leads this reviewer to wonder whether history might not be repeating itself with the parallel phenomenon of 'Dykes-Bowdlerisation'.

This book is one of a series of illuminating architectural practice-studies being produced by RIBA publishing, and it has two significant aspects. The first is announced on the cover as a 'revelatory account of a largely unknown career', and in this it succeeds effectively. Indeed, no-one

is better equipped than Symondson to carry out the task, and he has written a touching tribute obviously born out of friendship and affection. It describes a life very like those of Dykes Bower's 19th-century architectural heroes: an artistic boy, carefully nurtured in a prosperous upper-middle class home, traditionally educated at Oxford and the Architectural Association, indelibly affected by the liturgy and music of early 20th-century Anglo-Catholicism, who developed an ecclesiastical practice of some distinction within a limited expressive range.

The book has been nicely produced (despite the glued binding of my copy falling apart within an hour of opening it) and the newly commissioned photographs are wonderful, although more drawings reproduced at a scale large enough to appreciate would have been useful. Similarly, the catalogue of works is valuable, but it seems a pity that 'many unexecuted commissions and minor works have been omitted' when the author is still in contact with the most authoritative sources, and it may be a long time before there is another opportunity to publish a complete list.

Eyebrows might legitimately be raised by Symondson's claim that Bentley's Westminster Cathedral is a climactic building of the Gothic Revival, just as they might by his unqualified statement that 'Gothic is the architecture of common-sense'. But parts of this book are useful in that they take a modest first step towards illustrating one highly specialised attitude to church building in an age when faith has been increasingly focussed on matters outside institutional Christianity, and by default it raises some important conservation issues.

However, the second – arguably far more significant – aspect of the architect's life and practice is only inadequately addressed by Symondson. Dykes Bower is an interesting minor designer, but he is of greater interest as an art-historical phenomenon whose life spanned the 20th century. Like Vincent Harris, Raymond Erith, Francis Johnson, Quinlan Terry and a number of other British architects in the rather more crowded Classical camp, he chose to work entirely in an historicist language and a revived style, outside the prevailing tenor of his times and in conscious emulation of selective aspects of the past. He was their chief Gothic representative on earth, which inevitably limited his client base, despite which he was extremely successful in a narrow and privileged field, working in Westminster Abbey, at least ten cathedrals, a great many parish churches and chapels, and several colleges and private schools. An apparently anachronistic emphasis on the

continuing validity of historical style is not only an architectural phenomenon. It has been a feature of serious music, poetry and the plastic arts throughout the last century, and at various times before that. Nor is it necessarily a negative impulse, as the broad sweep of modernist cultural commentary usually suggests. Style in itself is one of the least important aspects of a work of art, if the art in question has creative integrity in all other respects. The art may be less interesting, and more pathological, however, when style is self-consciously displayed without irony as the main point of the work.

Symondson lists what he considers the 'quintessence of the Modern Gothic School: nobility of scale; refinement of execution; powerful structure and aspiration; clarity of planning; beauty of materials and workmanship; fidelity to architectural literacy and tradition ...' (but not integrity, presumably because he might have to acknowledge the use of concrete and structural metalwork which Dykes Bower disguises under traditional materials). However, none of these qualities is specific to any style, leaving one to wonder what it is that attracts an architect to work in such a highly specific way. Is this perhaps a study of religious architecture as a rear-guard action against disquieting cultural change, and as a comforting, evocative way of avoiding unpalatable aspects of the world? It is hard to escape the thought that there is a deep element of disguise or wish-fulfillment in this architecture, or to see it as other than an expression of that nostalgic conservatism typical of the inter-War years whose finest apologist was John Betjeman, a man similarly committed to a changeless vision of Anglo-Catholicism. Ultimately this may be the most interesting thing about Dykes Bower. His work is essentially static, and must find patrons who take comfort from a traditionalism which tries to invent without growth or dynamism. It is the enemy of conservation and of any genuinely creative evolution from the past.

Thus a church like St Chad's, Middlesbrough, is dull and not even consistent as a design; it fails to be liturgically eloquent and is Gothic merely because Dykes Bower felt it should be. It has nothing to say and no positive reason to look as it does. His new west end of Felsted School chapel is incoherent as a design, and I cannot agree with Symonson's lavish praise for the centralised proposal for St Hilda's, Redcar, which is frankly horrible – a grotesquely inflated Soane-ish fragment, with an uncomfortably lumpen bell-cote refusing to speak the same language as the rest.

Probably the best of his original churches is St John's, Newbury (1950-57). It is a powerful and imaginative performance, owing a debt to the nave of Ely cathedral (although Symondson makes a misleading comparison with Bodley's church at Pendlebury) and sharing much with the contemporary work of Goodhart-Rendel. However, it is marred by curious, or curiously unexplained and unjustified, inconsistencies like the alternating pattern of wall-piers inside the nave which relate to no visible aspect of the structural system, or like the shapes, hierarchy and treatment of the window openings and roof-forms. By far the weakest element is the internal elevation of the west wall, which makes it a curious subject for the cover of the book. Surely a painted organ case was intended. Some of the windows contain stained glass partly composed of broken fragments as a kind of holy wallpaper; scenographic, but without much meaning.

As an historical record and the memorial of a friendship, this book is unique and invaluable. As a serious evaluation of Dykes Bower's achievement and as any kind of architectural analysis or commentary, it is of very limited interest. One of its most damaging weaknesses is the uniformly partial and uncritical tone, which is closer to hagiography than either monograph or biography. Too often, buildings and projects are merely described, which is hardly necessary in a book so handsomely illustrated, and are usually praised in terms of their non-architectural values. The style is waspish – intolerance and prejudice veiled by politeness, and a conviction that Dykes Bower always knew best – and the writing affects the wounded tone of the enthusiast-in-a-minority. Typically defensive are the repeated references to Dykes Bower's unmarried status (I counted three), and despite frequent complaints that he suffered almost continual rejection by the architectural establishment (always undeserved, naturally), one notes that he could afford to keep a considerable establishment, to drive a Rolls Royce, always travelled first class, had his suits made in Savile Row, and died a wealthy man. Clearly his sufferings were bravely borne.

Of course, since the book is actually a hymn to a particular taste more than a study with broader cultural significance, it inevitably fails to follow the logic of its own arguments when they point towards anything beyond its own liturgical and aesthetic obsessions. The use of the Gothic idiom of late 19th-century Anglicanism is justified by Symondson as part of an on-going, and presumably fertile tradition which can accommodate and celebrate

the often lovely, but sometimes questionable changes which Dykes Bower made to the buildings of other architects like Seddon and Micklethwaite. Unfortunately, he resists the idea that Dykes Bower's own buildings, and those to which he contributed, should continue to evolve and change in the hands of the men who followed him (lesser men, naturally) and his acid comments on Alan Rome's organ case at Lancing College are an easy match for the petulant foot-stamping of Violet Elizabeth Bott.

George Pace is singled out as a particular target of Dykes Bower's and Symondson's opprobrium, on one occasion for the strange misdemeanour of charging fees. Symondson reports with obvious glee Dean Milner-White's remark that we must 'keep Pace out of [York] Minster' because it suits his anti-modernist agenda, although it is hard now to see George Pace as any kind of mainstream modernist, strongly imbued as his work is with a Gothic spirit and a feeling based on the Arts & Crafts for materials and craftsmanship. Indeed, the work of Pace and Dykes Bower can occasionally be astonishingly similar, like the altar cross and candlesticks illustrated on page 121. Pace's great crime, of course, is that he built churches despite straying from the pilgrim path of canonical Gothic art and demonstrated that refreshment through re-invention in the Gothic spirit was every bit as valid as refinement through minor incremental change within the received and un-questioned orthodoxy of Bodley, G.G. Scott junior and Temple Moore (whom Dykes Bower flatters with imitation). Pace and his fellows were also sympathetic to the reforms of the Liturgical Movement, whilst Dykes Bower and his circle erected their passion for conservative Anglo-Catholic refinement into a moral principle, and made acceptance of its perceived perfection an article of faith in a world of otherwise shifting architectural and religious values. To work on Gothic buildings whilst not actually being Dykes Bower is to be naughtily presumptuous: hence "Dykes-Bowdlerisation".

Building a cathedral and filling the quietly dying churches of England with fine fabrics and (slightly gaudy) painted furniture could do nothing to solve the problems with which architecture was confronted in the post-industrial age. But then Dykes Bower was not trying to. He specialised in one exquisite aspect of the art of escape, and did it impressively on the whole. His successes are elegantly documented here.

PHIL THOMAS

Hall, Melanie, ed., *Towards World Heritage: International Origins of the Preservation Movement 1870-1930*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing (2011), 281 pp., 31 figs, £60.00. ISBN 978-1-409-40772-0

Let us start with the title. 'Towards World Heritage' implies that this book will show how, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, an appreciation grew that there is, as the World Heritage convention puts it, a cultural heritage of universal human value. In fact it is the sub-title, *International Origins of the Preservation Movement 1870-1930*, which more accurately describes the contents of this collection of papers given at a conference held at Boston University in 2006. The word 'preservation' in this context slightly grates on the British ear but is retained in this review partly because that is the word used by the various authors, partly because it would have been the word used by at least some of the protagonists of the time and because the alternatives – protection, restoration, conservation – are either anachronistic or loaded with other meanings.

The first five chapters are case studies of how and why people in one country became concerned about a particular heritage in another country, what they did about it and with what success. The story of the campaign to protect the surroundings of Niagara Falls from unsuitable development and to prevent the extraction of water upstream, which would have reduced the flow of water over the Falls themselves, is one I suspect not widely known to those whose main interest is cultural heritage. Melanie Hall describes how the impetus for protection came very much from the American side and that any reluctance came from the newly formed Dominion of Canada and the British Imperial Authorities. The reasons for this difference are not very thoroughly explored, but it perhaps might be assumed that the fast-developing industrial power to the south had an abundance of natural resources whereas eastern Canada was highly dependent on the St Lawrence as a potential source of energy and a vital means of transport. An insistence on the importance of an Anglophile sensibility amongst well-bred and well-educated New Yorkers strikes one as an odd motive for protecting the natural environment when such a sensibility could have been, and probably was, more strongly attuned to a shared cultural heritage.

Erik Goldstein writes about 19th-century moves to preserve Hagia Sophia (Istanbul); a story which appears to have more to do with re-establishing Christian rule, or at least the revelation of Christian

iconography, than it does with the conservation of a monument. Most Christian visitors and commentators appear to have been more concerned with the supposed desecration of a Christian church by an overlay of Muslim symbols than with its conservation problems. It was, after all, the Muslim Sultan Abdülmecid who called in Swiss architects in 1846 to advise on the conservation of the building. A remark from H.A.L. Fisher in a letter to his wife dated February 1919 betrays a certain scepticism about both the motives of would-be restorers and the condition of the building. '[Lord] Bryce [a former British ambassador to the U.S.] buttonholed me about S.Sophia. I'll try to get L[loyd] G[eorge]. to save it tomorrow.' It was not until 1920 that any of this concern translated into a consideration of the universal value of Hagia Sophia when the architect, Sidney Toy, suggested it should be offered to the League of Nations as 'a World's thanks offering for peace'. It was Atatürk, the founder of secular Turkey, who closed the mosque and turned it into a museum within which worship of any sort was prohibited. Ironically, from a present day perspective, it was American architects Atatürk turned to for advice as Americans were seen as politically more acceptable than the Europeans who over the centuries had declared war on the Ottoman Empire. One caveat, if I may. Goldstein quotes the view of Aylmer Vance that William Morris's whole nature revolted at the idea of Hagia Sophia being in the 'hands of the infidel'. It seems unlikely that Morris, who by the period in question was a committed Marxist, was deeply concerned with Christian issues but rather about the condition of a building at the heart of an Empire he abhorred for its inhumanity.

William Gregory, governor of Ceylon from 1872-1877, brings rather more sensitivity – at least to modern eyes – to the architecture of a colonised country. His antiquarian and aesthetic interests, as described in the paper by Anne M. Blackburn, led him to promote the recording and restoration of the Buddhist sites at Anuradhapura and the regal city of Kandy. Of no strong religious views, Gregory nonetheless saw Buddhism as second only to Christianity in the purity of its religion and undoubtedly superior to Hinduism. In a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies he said, 'Although it is highly desirable that Buddhists should become Christians, still it is not desirable that they should exchange a singularly pure religion for either entire disbelief in any religion whatsoever, or for the barbarous rites of devil dancing'. Gregory shared with others of the better sort of

colonial administrator the view that '... the duty of investigating, describing and protecting the ancient monuments of a country is one that is recognised and acted on by every civilised nation ...' (Viceroy of India, 1870). Antiquarianism, aesthetic sensibilities founded by public school and Oxbridge, a deep belief in the civilising rule of Empire, the British approach to imperial governance through pre-existing ruling structures (described elsewhere by David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, Penguin Books, 2002), combined to begin a process of protecting the local cultural heritage.

Raymond Cohen sums up the history of care of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem since at least the 12th century as '... an object lesson in the helplessness of governments and professional preservationists when confronted by the determined hindrance of contentious religious forces'. As a story of collaborative conservation it is an unmitigated disaster, as a story of relations between different branches of Christianity it is a farce only occasionally relieved by the violent clashes of opposing monks. Under Sharia Law repair of a structure constituted proof of ownership. The main objective of both Orthodox and Catholic authorities was therefore to ensure that their rivals did not carry out repairs. The stand-off between the two rites was even enshrined in international law by the Treaty of Berlin, which attempted to ensure that the 'ceasefire in place' was maintained indefinitely as the status quo. To give them credit, the British at the start of their mandate in 1918 made valiant attempts to get the building repaired but within months squabbles between the Greek, Armenian and Latin Churches brought those efforts to an end. One can only wish the Palestinian Authority well in its current attempts to find a solution. Recognition that the Church of the Nativity is World Heritage might be demonstrated if the various sects stopped trying to assert ownership and collaborated in the care of the building.

The claim that Sulgrave Manor is World Heritage is tenuous to say the least. Even if an association with George Washington can be seen to confer some sort of world heritage status, the fact that his great-grandfather sold the property in 1659 makes that association remote. The chief interest of the paper by T.G. Otte is in the state of diplomatic relations between Britain and the United States immediately prior to World War I and in a description of ideas prevalent at the time promoting the supposed supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon 'race'.

The case studies serve mainly to show how

little developed in practice the idea of a world heritage defined by universal value was well into the early years of the 20th century. It is with some relief then to turn to the papers categorised by the editor as 'Framing the Practice'.

The paper by Astrid Swenson comparing the development of preservation legislation in France, Germany and the United Kingdom is useful in showing how strongly legislative activity in one country was used to support the introduction of legislation in another, a practice the heritage movement continues to this day. Swenson is careful to explain that her choice in comparing the development of legislation in these three countries is not necessarily because they provide the best examples but because they were the most influential examples at the time. The pressure for legislation, and arguments against, were similar in all three countries but, as the author points out, the specific legislation as enacted differs as it is dependent on national context. In all cases the pressure of public opinion was in advance of the willingness of states to act. In all cases opposition came from those seeking to defend the rights of private property. It is significant that by the end of the 19th century it was accepted in nearly all of Europe that there was a national interest in preservation which outweighed, at least to a limited extent, property rights. In Germany the nature of legislation was affected by tensions between the various states federated under Prussian dominance, in the United Kingdom by antagonism to the land-owning aristocracy and in France by anti-clericalism. What does emerge is a feeling that the preservation of cultural heritage was seen as a mark of civilisation.

Chris Miele's chapter 'looks at the way one institution, the Church of England, used medieval parish churches to articulate ideas of community at local level.' All very interesting and perceptive as one might expect from this contributor, but it is hard to see the relevance to the overall theme of 'Towards World Heritage'. It is only in the closing pages, when discussing how William Morris put forward an alternative view that 'the public at large had a moral right to historic buildings as common cultural property', that an international perspective is awakened. Foreign casework was a significant activity of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in its early years, particularly in Italy, but also concerned with work to cathedrals in other European countries. Miele points to this activity as laying the groundwork for the idea of world heritage sites.

Michael Holleran is mainly concerned to describe the development of the preservation movement in the United States in the final decades of the 19th century. To some extent he contrasts this with what was already happening in Europe, particularly in England and France. He suggests that the development of these preservation movements was a two-way process but gives little evidence to support this view; indeed in his final paragraph he recognises that U.S. practice grew up often in isolation from European practice. Having said that, some of the contrasts he perceives are possibly not as strong as he imagines. For instance, his view that European practice was to a significant extent government led is somewhat contradicted by Astrid Swenson in her article. To an old SPAB hand, the constant reference to the Society for the 'Preservation' of Ancient Buildings jars, as do varying references to the British and English National Trusts. Tighter editing could have dealt with this as well as a number of grammatical oddities scattered throughout the book, and saved us from the horrors of having to try and discover what 'filiopietistic' might mean.

Who would have thought that in one country there would be a professional struggle to determine who should take responsibility for the preservation of historic buildings? But that is the situation in late 19th-century Sweden described by Ola Wetterberg – a tussle between antiquarians and architects. In some ways Sweden is different from other European countries, having had a law of monument protection since 1666. In thinking about how preservation should be organised in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, they turned to ideas from other countries but, in contrast to their Scandinavian neighbours, conservation departments to this day remain typically headed by archaeologists or art historians.

Peter Mandler makes a strong case for a more balanced view of the history of the preservation movement, one which takes far greater note than has been the case in the past of the social, economic and political context within which the debate between developers and preservationists took place. He makes the point that the early preservation movement came from the political left, but I have feeling that may be a particularly British phenomenon. After all, left-wing rhetoric, at least in the first half of the 20th century, made much of its claim to be 'progressive', and there was often a strong connection between left-wing politics and modernism. There is room for further study of international comparisons exploring the extent to which the conservation movement was

anti-aristocratic or even anti-capitalist, how much it was connected with a new appreciation of folk culture or whether it was essentially about the preservation of the existing social order. Possibly what might emerge is a realisation that the urge to preserve the past is something which touches people right across the political spectrum, rooted in some deep human need, and that various ideologies can be used to justify or promote something otherwise hard to explain or articulate.

So how to sum up this collection of essays? Is it petty to observe that the British editor of the collection may be unduly influenced by her time in American academic surroundings? Particularly in her Introduction, the vocabulary tends to obscure meaning rather than enlighten, and the copious use of footnotes obstructs the flow of the narrative. As implied in the opening sentence of this review, this book does not really set out how the idea of heritage having universal value developed, became accepted as the norm and was codified in treaties, charters and conventions. If we accept that the sub-title of the book is a more accurate description of its content than the main title, then possibly a justifiable criticism is that this collection leans on a presumption that the origins of the preservation movement are to be found mainly in Britain and the United States. There is no mention for instance of the founding of the Austrian Denkmalamt in 1850, or Hungarian legislation from 1881, or the founding in 1844 of the Norwegian Fortidsminneforeningen (the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments). What does emerge strongly from the case studies is the importance, in the late 19th century, of the way in which heritage preservation was developed to promote possibly mythical national identities. It would have been interesting to have explored more fully the significance of heritage in the foundation narratives of the new nation states of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and to have contrasted this with the role of heritage in multicultural and multi-national states such as Britain and the U.S.

What this collection does very effectively is to provoke thought about why heritage matters and possibly how it matters differently to different people, in different places at different times. Heritage is not neutral, it can be used to justify various world views but this book leaves the question as to whether it has universal human value hanging unanswered in the air.

JOHN SELL

Pevsner, Nikolaus, and Brooks, Alan, *Herefordshire*, The Buildings of England series, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2012), 768pp., 123 col. pls, £35. ISBN 978-0-300-12575-7.

This Pevsner revision succeeds in seamlessly marrying the findings of extensive new research with the best from the original edition of 1963. With much improved introductory texts, a greater number of sites considered and frequent embellishments to the existing entries, this a comprehensive reference work. The more generous layout also contributes to the fact that this volume has over twice as many pages as that compiled forty years ago by the illustrious Nikolaus Pevsner. Whilst the handy original could have been slipped into an overcoat pocket, Alan Brooks' generous revision (like all the new-format Pevsners since the 1980s) is one for the backpack. It is taller, wider and nearly twice the breadth – only the most capacious of glove compartments will have room to accommodate it. It is provided with excellent colour plates, including subjects not illustrated in the original edition, such as the south door at Kilpeck in its entirety and the circular drawing room at Moccas Court (of which more below).

This is a book well worth having for it provides a handsome account of the most delightful of counties. Herefordshire remains deeply rural – in great parts this, the county of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, is still sublimely picturesque. Financed on invariably meagre profits from beef cattle, sheep, hops and cider apples, the historic buildings of this English arcadia lie comfortably in the landscape's time-worn patchwork of hedge-lined fields. For this is a county with a longstanding tradition of timber framed construction: where these half-timbered buildings are found in their greatest profusion, for instance in the villages of Weobley and Pembridge, the spectacle is uncommonly agreeable. Herefordshire stands out for its rural charm and its understated and unspoilt vernacular buildings. However, as Brooks' revised edition amply elucidates, from its handsome cathedral (to which thirty-six pages are dedicated) to the dovecote at Garway (built in 1326 and the oldest in Britain), this county has a rich built heritage.

On the face of it, Herefordshire shares much with Shropshire, its neighbour to the north. Both are rural counties whose landscapes become yet more beautiful the further west you travel. Here, in the Welsh Marches, England's western frontier,

earthworks and castles abound. It is in the post-medieval history of these two border counties that the divergence commences. In its coal mines and the remarkable industrial advances made at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire had sources of income beyond agriculture. The wealth generated within the county was further supplemented in the 18th and 19th centuries by numerous successful manufacturers and tradesmen from Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, who lavished their newfound riches on the purchase of landed estates and the construction of country seats. Herefordshire missed out on such progress. With no great mineral resources and one county removed from burgeoning Birmingham, this county remained a relatively poor agricultural backwater. Thus handsome country houses are thin on the ground and buildings designed by household-name architects are few. This relative lack of wealth is reflected in the towns' streetscape frontages. Take, for instance, the historic facades of Leominster's Broad Street: these survive as a delightfully unspoilt group but they pale in comparison with the scale and grandeur of those seen over the border in nearby Ludlow.

So does this deeply rural county really merit a revised Pevsner which runs to 800 pages? The answer to this question is emphatically, 'Yes'. As the new edition so ably conveys, the architectural heritage of the county is far from impoverished. The Georgian highlights are Henry Holland's Berrington Hall (1778-1881) and Anthony Keck's coeval Moccas Court. The latter elicits an 'excellent' and two 'splendids' from Alan Brooks, the second for the Adam ceiling in the circular drawing room – 'undoubtedly the climax of the house'. The county's other exceptional 18th-century building is the church at Shobdon, where the 1752 interior – 'thoroughly Gothick with decided Rococo, even Chinoiserie, flourishes' – proves an enduring 'delight'.

The cathedral lost its Skidmore screen, designed by George Gilbert Scott, in 1967, some three years after Pevsner had pointedly written in the original edition, 'it is indeed a High Victorian monument of the first order ... long may it live'. Languishing for decades in packing cases, the screen is now a fully restored exhibit in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Key Victorian survivals in Herefordshire include J. P. Seddon's 'dramatic semi-Byzantine' church at Hoarwithy and W. R. Lethaby's equally stand-out but wholly different, and indeed groundbreaking, All Saints at Brockhampton-by-Ross (built 1901-2) which Pevsner described as 'one of the most

convincing and impressive churches of its date in any country'. In Colwall, at the county's eastern extremity, another Arts and Crafts gem survives: Perrycroft (built 1893-5), Voysey's 'earliest larger country house'. Here again Brooks retains Pevsner's original wording: Perrycroft is 'perfectly mature, easy, effortless, comfortable, unpretentious and without any of the period trim of the C19 ... a masterpiece' (p.62). Such architect-designed buildings of international significance are of course exceptional in Herefordshire. As might be expected a great proportion of the buildings and structures considered in this volume have their origins rooted in agriculture. The most noteworthy Victorian example is the silage clamp at Lulham Court, Madley, built in 1885 and thought to be the oldest such structure in the country.

In the book's excellent Introduction, we learn that Herefordshire enjoyed its heyday between the Conquest and the Black Death. In Keith Ray's section on the county's archaeology, we are told that at this time the county's 'very heavily farmed landscape' supported a 'substantial population'. The impact of the Black Death on the county's population and prosperity is reflected in the extent and quality of church building undertaken before and after this devastating pandemic. Before the mid-14th century, the fertile soil supported a healthy and relatively well-off population. The 'Herefordshire School' flourished in the 12th century (of which more anon) and the majority of the county's remarkable collection of detached church towers were constructed: Herefordshire has more detached towers than any other county in Britain, the finest being at Pembridge and Weobley. Brooks endorses Pevsner's assessment of the post-Black Death decline of the county's parish churches (p.32): 'With the coming of the Decorated style, Herefordshire fell back ... it is not a county of flowing tracery ... there are no Perpendicular buildings of the first order in Herefordshire'. The comment that in the 18th century 'the county was settling down into a retired existence' only hints at the early retirement in which Herefordshire had languished for the preceding three and a half centuries. 'Out of the way', Herefordians were slow to pick up on fashions – 'there are in fact no large Elizabethan or Jacobean mansions in the county' – and there appears to have been a lack of that "keeping up with the Joneses" competitiveness seen, for instance, in Shropshire. As Pevsner noted in the first edition, 'The majority of Herefordshire houses are much more unassuming ... symmetrical or nearly symmetrical compositions ... are rare; and

specifically, for example, on the exteriors of Holme Lacy (commenced 1674, demolished 1950s) – 'Here is deliberate understatement: reticence and a sense of never showing off to the outsider'.

Brooks certainly had more to occupy his attention in the way of outstanding secular architecture when compiling his revised Pevsner for the more urbane counties of Gloucestershire (2 vols, 1999, 2002) and Worcestershire (2007). However, Herefordshire has its compensations. It seems evident that Brooks shares Pevsner's enthusiasm for its medieval parish churches, and especially the output of the 'Herefordshire School' of Romanesque sculpture. The unrivalled mid-12th-century relief carvings on the fonts of Castle Frome and Eardisley, and the related carvings at Shobdon, Kilpeck, Fownhope, Rowlestone, Stretton Sugwas, and elsewhere, are described with a passion which is less evident in his accounts of secular buildings. The sculpture of this workshop is of 'outstanding interest'. At Kilpeck, gaze upon the sculpted charms of the corbel table and the peerlessly exquisite south door and see if you disagree with Pevsner's contention that, as small parish churches go, 'None in the whole country can be more thrilling than Kilpeck'.

In the 1963 edition, Pevsner made mention of Cottingham's 'competent and disciplined' restoration of Kilpeck church in 1848 and, in the same sentence, commented that the 'the red sandstone must have been selected with great acumen to have stood up so well to eight hundred years of wear and tear'. In fact, a porch served to protect the south doorway carvings from the elements, until its removal by Cottingham in 1848. Brooks repeats Pevsner's commentary about the quality of the stone but again (regrettably) omits to mention the former existence of the porch. This, in spite of the fact that he makes reference to G. R. Lewis's *Illustrations of Kilpeck Church*, a handsome volume published in 1842 in which the author provided two lithographic prospects showing the porch, and his opinion that this secondary appendage was unworthily 'sottish ... being in its whole appearance a public-house porch'. Lewis's lobbying evidently worked for within the decade the protective porch was gone. The doorway's hugely significant stone carvings have been at the mercy of the elements ever since. If the ongoing 3D survey does deliver firm evidence with regard to the stonework's decay, then perhaps by the time this *Herefordshire* Pevsner is revised there will be cause for the author to comment on a new form of protection for the south doorway. Perhaps the pre-Cottingham porch will receive a mention too.