

Galleting: an Addendum

Publication of Dr W.R. Trotter's article 'Galleting' in Transactions volume 33 (1989) led to several correspondents sending him their comments. Their letters have provided a number of fresh insights into the nomenclature, distribution and significance of this rather mysterious practice. The author is grateful to them for the trouble they have taken, and also to the Editor of Transactions for the opportunity to embody their views in this brief note.

NOMENCLATURE

Galleting and garreting seem to have been used synonymously throughout the nineteenth century. The former term is generally employed nowadays, though *garreting* may well have a longer history. But recent correspondence has shown that I should also have given greater recognition to *garneting*. Lord Hamilton of Dalzell wrote to say that he had been brought up in Surrey in the 1920s and had been familiar with the practice under the name of 'garneting'. Similarly, Mr Derek Purcell, in the 1940s, had been shown examples of what was always called 'garneting' by his grandfather, who had lived his whole life in Surrey. He also pointed out—to my shame, for the book was in the shelf facing me as I wrote—that Gertrude Jekyll, in *Old West Surrey*, also called it 'garneting'; though she gave 'garoting' as a synonym, adding that 'there seems to be no general agreement as to the exact word'. It is also noteworthy that E.M. Nicholson, whom I quoted as commenting on Gilbert White's 'tenpenny nails', says specifically that the practice is 'called "garneting" in Surrey'. It seems, therefore, that *garneting* may be local to Surrey; but it should nevertheless be recognized as a valid synonym for galleting.

DISTRIBUTION

As regards the geographical distribution of galleting, I am indebted to Lady Kennet's sharp eye for noting galleted buildings in the Montparnasse district of Paris, and also on part of Gaudi's Dragon Gate in the Palazzo Güell in Barcelona. Coupled with the odd pieces of galleting mentioned in my paper (in Vienna and the Azores), Lady Kennet's observations confirm that scattered instances of galleting are likely to be found almost anywhere. These sporadic examples contrast with the endemic areas of galleting in the Weald and East Anglia, which do not seem to have been replicated anywhere else in the world.

The temporal distribution of galleting remains puzzling. Does it date from medieval times, or, as I am inclined to think, only from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries? A photocopy of the report of a paper read by F.T. Baggallay to the R.I.B.A. in 1885 (kindly sent to me by Mr Bob Kindred of Ipswich) showed that the question was being hotly debated at that time. Baggallay was convinced that galleting had originated in medieval times, quoting as evidence that it could be seen on the unrestored walls of Walberswick and other churches. But in the subsequent discussion an anonymous member of the audience, described as a 'great authority' totally rejected this view as 'a heresy'

This controversy is one of several topics discussed in a valuable letter from Mr

A.D.R. Caroë, containing recollections of his father, W.D. Caroë, the distinguished architect and restorer of churches who died in 1938. Caroë *père* took a great interest in galleting for over forty years (appropriately enough, the fourteenth-century west tower of St Mary's, Frensham, Surrey, which he restored in 1929, contains several small areas of galleting in places where the rubble sandstone walls have been repaired; though it is impossible to tell whether this was done on Caroë's instructions). He seems to have been opposed to the idea that galleting originated in the Middle Ages, for he distinguished it sharply from 'the medieval practice of laying oyster-shells in the bed joints of ashlar'.

W.D. Caroë was also interested in the later phases of the history of galleting. He was impressed by the way it had been adopted by the fashionable architects of the 1870 to 1914 period in the Godalming area, both in their restoration of churches, and in the numerous vernacular-style houses which they designed. Although I was familiar with galleting on many churches which had undergone restoration or repair at that time, the only galleted house of the period which I had noted was Lutyens' Tigbourne Court. Caroë disapproved of the use of galleting on modern houses, on the grounds that it introduced a harsh fussiness; I would not myself consider that this criticism could be applied to Tigbourne Court.

SIGNIFICANCE

W.D. Caroë also had views on the practical utility of galleting, maintaining that it helped to protect the mortar-joints against 'crazing'. The opinion of someone of such great experience must be respected, but I remain impressed by the general argument that if galleting was really of much practical use it would surely have been adopted more widely, instead of being restricted to two localized parts of the country.

I have had an interesting exchange of letters with my friend Eric Wood on the possible apotropaic significance of galleting. He had in mind the possibility that it might have been used, in medieval or even earlier times, as a protection against evil influences. I am not happy with these early dates, but I do now feel that I was unduly dismissive in suggesting that stories about galleting as a deterrent to witches 'should not perhaps be taken too seriously'. On several occasions, cottagers in the more remote areas have assured me that the galleting of their homes was intended to ward off evil spirits, and it would be presumptuous to suppose that their beliefs were not genuinely held. One need not go back to the Middle Ages to find analogous practices; in much more recent times, shoes have been hidden in chimneys, and horseshoes nailed to doors, in the hope of safeguarding the homestead.

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