

# Book Reviews

Potter, John F., *Searching for Early Welsh Churches: a Study in Ecclesiastical Geology*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series, 578, Oxford, Archaeopress (2013), xxxviii + 458pp., numerous ills, £64. ISBN 978-1-40731-098-5.

Over the past two decades or so Professor Potter has pursued the subject of ecclesiastical geology with dedication and tenacity, as two full columns in the bibliography of the present work attest. He has published on parts of England, from the London basin to West Sussex, on Scotland and on Ireland. His principal thesis is that stones in quoins and other features laid with their bedding planes vertical (BV) form a patterned sequence exclusively used in the Anglo-Saxon period in England and its equivalent elsewhere. Now the indefatigable Potter has turned his attention to Wales, where he has surveyed 410 churches, despite received archaeological opinion (which he cites) that there is a singular dearth of pre-Norman churches in the Principality. He has recorded 17 occurrences of the so-called patterned style – surely a technique rather than a style – and a further 18 examples with traces of former BV stonework, together 8% of the total surveyed. Given that the evidence is often by the author's own admission difficult to read, and that 'might' and 'possibly' figure frequently in the site descriptions, one begs leave to doubt whether the proportion is so great in reality. The naming of the technique is also perhaps rather inappropriate; if the diagnostic features are so difficult to detect, and may originally have been covered with rendering (which the author disputes, see below), the pattern can hardly have been the main motive for placing the stones in the way the author describes.

He refers in the text to his article in the *Archaeological Journal* for 2005, in which the hypothesis was set out. There a reasonable case was made out, but the study was based on churches regarded by the Taylors as possibly or probably Anglo-Saxon – without question and without taking into account subsequent research, which has tended to suggest Saxon-Norman or Romanesque origins in many cases, some like Stopham (West Sussex) at best unproven. The author's sole Welsh example of a double-splayed window, supposedly a uniquely Anglo-Saxon feature, at Llanbabo (Anglesey), illustrated at fig.4.8, is significant here. The window

is built of dressed stone, unlike the Anglo-Saxon example offered at Caversfield (Oxfordshire; fig.2.24), which is rubble-built. It is comparable with the *porticus* windows at Stoughton (West Sussex), on any account Saxon-Norman at the earliest, and those in the tower of Jarrow (Tyne and Wear), almost certainly of post-Conquest date. This type of window occurs in a few examples of 'Norman' buildings in Britain, such as Lewes Priory (East Sussex) and continues on the continent through the Romanesque, reappearing in the British Isles in different guise in Cistercian architecture. So there is good reason for suggesting that Llanbabo is later rather than 'early'. It does not appear that the hypothesis has been rigorously tested against proven Romanesque buildings, so as to exclude the use of the technique in churches of the full Norman period. In this survey the chancel at Llandrinio (Montgomery), has 'Patterned characteristics despite the fact that the [contiguous] wall includes a probably Norman window.' If the BV technique is diagnostic as claimed, this surely means that the window is pre-Norman; otherwise the co-existence of a Norman period window and a BV quoin must tell against the hypothesis that this is pre-Romanesque technique.

Nevertheless there are several Welsh examples which to some extent support the hypothesis. Llandeilo Fawr (Carmarthen) is more convincing than most; the lower part of the stair turret at the corner of the W tower appears to be the remnant of an earlier building (claimed to be the nave) trapped by the tower, which is variously dated 13th century and *c.* 1600 and by 19th century additions. The quoin includes vertically-bedded stones and the relative chronology is clear, but does not give an absolute date: in the context of this church the quoin is earlier, but not probably 'early' as defined by the author. Similarly, Llantwit Major (Glamorgan) has clear structural evidence of sequencing within the fabric: the vertically bedded stones of a blocked window surround are earlier in date than the arcade arches that impinge upon them, but can again only predate the 13th century.

The pictures accompanying this last example are not clear enough to show the evidence properly, and the illustrations in general have not been edited for sharpness or the correction of converging verticals. Their overall muddiness is no doubt the

result of conversion from colour photographs. Apparently the publisher recommended the inclusion of a large number of additional illustrations; the expenditure would have been better applied to ensuring the quality of the essential pictures and the wider use of colour, which is important for showing petrological characteristics.

Many side issues are explored, especially in Chapter Seven, 'Analyses, discussion and conclusions'. Elsewhere at several points the question of external rendering is pursued. The author bluntly states that rendering was not used in the pre-Norman period; granted that its survival on standing walling is rare, evidence is overlooked here. Warwick Rodwell, in *St Peter's Barton-upon-Humber* (2011), pp.327-8, cites Hadstock, Avebury, and especially Winterton (Lincolnshire), where west wall rendering has been found trapped beneath the secondary Saxon-Norman fabric of the tower. In the last quarter of the 11th century York Minster had render on the outer face of the transept walls, as revealed by Derek Phillips's excavations; despite the near-ashlar quality of the walling, render was applied above plinth level and lined out in red paint. Further excavation evidence can be found at Jarrow, where building B had a 'skim of whitish mortar on the external face' of the south wall according to Dame Rosemary Cramp's report (*Wearmouth and Jarrow Monastic Sites* (2005), vol.1, p.202). Evidence survived at Brixworth (Northamptonshire) that the Period I walling was partly covered by the construction mortar smeared over the surface; this was either the remains of a thicker coat of rendering or the foundation for a finer layer of covering material.

The tone of the discussion of rendering is regrettably characteristic of the text as a whole, which is wordy and idiosyncratic, with eccentric punctuation which often obscures the meaning (for example the caption to fig.4.33). The frequent use of the word 'emplacement' is tedious. The language of the text can be unfortunate: on p.428 'The forgoing [*sic*] paragraph may help archaeologists to understand why re-use of structural material is so common,' but this is already widely understood.

One feels that Professor Potter is on his own here. Despite acknowledgements to respected archaeologists, little real dialogue seems to have taken place, and significant omissions from the bibliography (and thus the text) indicate a passing over of the work of scholars such as Bernard Worsam, Tim Tatton-Brown, Diana Sutherland, and publications such as *English Medieval Industries*

and Tomás Ó Carragáin's *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland* (2010), where *inter alia* the definitive discussion of antae would have informed Professor Potter's text, and in the context of late Anglo-Saxon dressed stonework the most serious omission is any reference to the pioneering work of Martyn Jope.

DAVID PARSONS

Fernie, Eric, *Romanesque Architecture, The First Style of the European Age*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, Pelican History of Art (2014), pp. xxx + 292, 388 ills, £55.00. ISBN 978-0-300-20354-7.

The final illustration in Fernie's magnificent book is a photograph of four densely sculptured archivolts, which at first glance appear to belong to an Italian or even an English doorway. In fact they are from Vladimir, a location far beyond the conventional boundaries of Romanesque. The existence of this remote portal raises obvious questions about the geography and indeed meaning of Romanesque, issues that lie at the very forefront of Fernie's authoritative and discerning text. Students of medieval architecture will be familiar with the author's previous publications, not least his comprehensive study of English Romanesque. The preparation of this volume, however, must have been a far more daunting task, embracing as it does buildings erected throughout Latin Europe over a period of 400 years or more. The sheer scope of the work is breathtaking, something underlined at the very beginning, where there are no less than seventeen pages of maps.

The book forms part of the Pelican History of Art series and is designed as a successor to Kenneth Conant's, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture 800 to 1200*, published some sixty years ago. Although there are obvious debts to the earlier work, Fernie's task was in many ways more demanding. One has only to think of the literature that has appeared in the interim and the diverse languages in which that literature has appeared. In recent decades archaeology has transformed our understanding of familiar monuments and scientific methods of dating have brought precision where uncertainty was once the order of the day. Then there are the new theoretical approaches to the study of art history, which have cast doubt on the very notion

of style along with the validity of such terms as Romanesque and Gothic.

Fernie takes such matters in his stride and does so by structuring his book in a distinctive way. While the core of the volume, broadly following Conant, is devoted to historical narrative (thirteen chapters), it is preceded by a section entitled 'Definitions' (three chapters) in which theoretical and contextual issues are addressed. Towards the end there is a section devoted to 'Themes' (five chapters) and the book concludes with a chapter on 'Research Methods'. Romanesque architecture is thus approached from several different directions in the one volume, providing the reader with the equivalent of two or even three books for the price of one.

The author outlines his purpose succinctly at the start, namely 'to identify those characteristics which most clearly define the masonry architecture of the type known as Romanesque in style, and where, when, how and why they were developed'. The very use of the word style is, of course, anathema to *avant garde* historians, but Fernie argues convincingly that the analysis of styles is defensible if they are seen as 'concepts which we use to identify and group variations between objects and those variations are recognized as resulting from individual choices'. He then turns to the seemingly intractable subject of the origins of Romanesque, 'a cumulative quagmire of conflicting opinions'. While Conant was unsure whether Carolingian architecture should be regarded as Romanesque, Fernie has no doubts. He points out that Carolingian builders provided the essential framework of Romanesque design and thus rejects the notion that the origins of the style should be placed in the first half of the 11th century. This, he suggests, is the equivalent of dating the start of the Gothic to the middle of the 13th century. Nonetheless he recognizes the importance of developments that took place between 1000 and 1050, seeing them as the start of a new 'Middle Phase' of Romanesque. This is made clear in the analysis of Speyer Cathedral where 'for the first time in the lands of the empire north of the Alps, a case can be made that everything about the building fits the definition of the Romanesque style'.

Definitions inevitably lead to questions of origin. Here again Fernie does not shirk the issues, though it brings him to another potential quagmire, the long running disputes about the end of Antiquity. Considerable weight is given to the Pirenne thesis and a powerful case is made for seeing the Carolingian era as the first post Antique

age, in effect the start of the 'European Age'. In this scenario the significance of Ottonian architecture is somewhat diminished, the author stressing that 'there is a strong case for dating the origins of the new era to the catalyst of the Carolingian state rather than the Ottonian'. Whether or not one agrees with every comment, the breadth of vision is deeply impressive, so too the willingness to identify and articulate fundamental questions.

The historical narrative, which begins with chapter 4, moves at great pace, with concise accounts of individual buildings. For the period up to 1000 AD, Carolingian architecture provides the main touchstone, a means of assessing what was happening elsewhere, as in the Asturias. We then get to the 'Middle Phase' of the style from 1000-1150, where the chapters are devoted to a specific region or collections of regions. In each case Fernie is alive to the geographical and political context and is rightly critical of the simplistic way in which European architecture has been divided into regional 'schools'. He is adept at negotiating scholarly minefields (as with Lombard architecture) and there are sane observations about contentious topics such as the function of the rib vault or the so-called pilgrimage group of churches. When dealing with individual buildings, crisp descriptions are followed by suggested relationships with other buildings. The problem facing all scholars in this regard is that we know so little about the personalities involved and so little about their knowledge and experience of other buildings that analysis is far from an exact science. Many monuments, perhaps most, appear to be *sui generis* rather than representing a fixed position in some hypothetical determinist pattern, a point firmly underlined by Fernie's insistence that design was always a matter of choice.

The taut, analytical style of writing is direct and mercifully free of obfuscation; there are pertinent asides, as for example with a comment on the city of Rome: it is ironic, we are told, 'that the Latin Church, which was so closely bound up with the Romanesque style, had a centre which avoided it almost completely'. One of the most entertaining comments (about Speyer) is, alas, relegated to the footnotes, but it is worth digging deep to find it. The author observes that 'the scale of Speyer is matched by that of its monograph. Kubach and Haas, 1972, consists of three volumes - one of 1142 pages of text, another of 1699 plates, and a folio volume of drawings - which can justifiably be described as architectural, not only because of their content

but also because of their size. The dimensions of the text and plate volumes are similar to those of domestic bricks, while the folio volume ...resembles a sesquipedalian tile...; if this is a coincidence, it is a happy one'.

The 'History' section of the book contains a thoughtful and at times provocative chapter entitled 'Romanesque versus Gothic'; explanations for the development of Gothic are assessed and these include an examination of the role of Cluny and the Cistercians. While the author may be right to doubt the significance of Cluny, the abbey's flying buttresses may be more relevant than is suggested. Having repaired the vaults of the great church after a collapse in 1125, it is hard to believe that the monks then waited a few years before deciding to improve the buttressing as some sort of afterthought. In origin, at least, flyers are surely better seen as an act of desperation, rather than an 'invention'?

The climax of the book comes with five chapters devoted to themes. The first includes a brief summary of geometrical systems, a topic on which the author is a major authority. At this point we seem to be heading for comments on medieval metrology (another quagmire), but any apprehension the reader may feel is relieved by a neat side step in the form of a quotation from Attilio Stazio: 'metrology is not a science, it is a nightmare'. Subsequent chapters include observations about the effect of liturgy, where there is a welcome point that liturgical needs rarely dictated architectural design. There are also surveys of different building types, along with a wide-ranging analysis of architectural iconography.

The book concludes with a chapter modestly entitled 'Research Methods'. Such a title might suggest an innocuous appendix, but what follows is the author's reflections on his own approach to the discipline of art history, something he (rightly) insists represents a vital part of the book. It starts with a brief and witty discussion of post modernism and the nature of knowledge and goes on to demonstrate some of the positive results of post modernist thinking. Architectural historians – and particularly medieval architectural historians – have all too often been dismissed by advocates of the new art history as hopelessly *retardataire*. Fernie steers a judicious path between the extremes, rescuing and redefining the value of such words as 'period' and 'style'. Despite the fallacies associated with separate historical periods, he argues that they still have a role to play, quoting Wolfflin's wonderfully pragmatic view that 'the past is a seamless web

which we have to divide into periods in order to keep ourselves sane'.

Fernie's book is a veritable encyclopedia, the product of someone who has spent a lifetime studying and thinking about Romanesque buildings. The text is accompanied by 388 illustrations and plans, with photographs of an exceptionally high quality (a significant proportion of them taken by Malcolm Thurlby); the only complaint that one might make is that some of the plans are reproduced at a small scale, a minor price to pay for such a sumptuous production.

ROGER STALLEY

Weaver, Jeffrey and Caviness, Madeline H., *The Ancestors of Christ Windows at Canterbury Cathedral*, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum (2013) 104 pp., 65 colour ills, paperback, £18.99. ISBN: 978-1-606-06146-6.

In 2009 the discovery of serious structural problems in the masonry of the window of the south transept in Canterbury Cathedral resulted in the emergency removal of the medieval stained glass. Every cloud has a silver lining and, in the intervening years, panels of stained glass from this window have been on public display. The most important glass removed from the south transept was part of a sequence of monumental figures of the ancestors of Christ, created c. 1180-1220 for the clerestory of the choir and presbytery of the cathedral, removed and relocated to the south transept and the west window of the nave in the late 18th century. I was one of many grateful Cathedral visitors to see four of the ancestor figures face to face in the cathedral crypt. This book was occasioned by the remarkable decision of the Cathedral to allow the display of six figures and three sets of border designs in the United States; first at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles and, subsequently, at the Cloisters, part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Its authors are Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Professor Madeline H. Caviness, who hardly requires introduction, author of key studies of the Canterbury glass.<sup>1</sup>

Only forty-three out of a sequence of eighty-six figures, originally arranged two per lancet, one above the other, have survived from what was the

most extensive of a surprisingly large number of Romanesque genealogies of Christ. In addition to illustrating the Canterbury figures to perfection, this sumptuously illustrated book illustrates many of the other genealogies, found in England, France, Germany, Spain and even Armenia, and in glass, painted panel and illuminated manuscript. For its superb images alone, the book is worth buying.

The text is divided into three sections. The first chapter, by Jeffrey Weaver, provides an authoritative overview of the architectural context in which the ancestor figures were once located. This is followed by an excellent catalogue of the panels displayed at the Getty and the Cloisters, with associated comparable materials; the silk buskins of *c.* 1205 found in the tomb of Hubert Walter are compared to the silken stockings worn by the stylishly dressed figure of Abraham from Canterbury window NIV, for example. The third chapter, by Caviness, doyenne of Canterbury stained glass studies, addresses 'The Visual and Cognitive Impact of the Ancestors of Christ in Canterbury Cathedral and Elsewhere', allowing her to revisit and develop themes that she first explored in the late 1970s and early 1980s; an invaluable coda for those in possession of her earlier work on the Canterbury windows.

Weaver's introduction is a lively and well-paced summary of recent scholarship on the architectural context into which the ancestors fit. While both authors stress that a genealogy was probably a feature of the glazing of Anselm's church, terribly damaged in the fire of 1174, the new choir was considerably larger, requiring an extended cycle of figures to fill the windows. For this reason, the genealogical lists provided in both Matthew and Luke were called into play, with the Matthew list sandwiched into two sequences derived from Luke. Caviness long ago argued that the sequence actually reused at least four figures from Anselm's church and the stylistic comparisons with the wall-paintings of St Gabriel's chapel of *c.* 1155-60 are illustrated here to good effect. The typological windows in the aisles below actually occupy the window openings of Anselm's damaged building.<sup>2</sup> The selection of ancestors for inclusion in the new scheme was undertaken with care, so that the six ages of man were represented, with the seventh age – the Eternity to follow the Last Judgement – implicit in the Last Judgement imagery in the axial window. Weaver also reminds us of Anselm's preoccupation with Canterbury's relationship to Rome, and the likely influence of the decoration of the basilica

of St Peter's, where the upper levels of the arcade were decorated with large scale figures of prophets and patriarchs.

Apart from the reintegrated salvaged panels of the mid-12th century, the earliest figures in the genealogy, including those by the extraordinary Methuselah master, are those to the west on both north and south sides, as the windows were installed in step with the eastwards progression of the building. The later figures, including that of Hezekiah (originally in NV), have always been described as epitomising the transition from Romanesque monumentality to Gothic delicacy. While this transformation certainly cannot be discounted, Weaver also shows that there were architectural reasons for conceiving the figures in this part of the scheme in a new way, as the windows to the east grew narrower and the floor level of the Trinity Chapel rose, meaning that the architectural framework diminished in size just as the viewer came into much closer proximity to the figures.

In her wide-ranging and insightful essay, Caviness interprets the ancestors as the epitome 'of many of the changing societal and religious belief systems of the late twelfth century' in which agnatic inheritance and primogeniture was becoming the norm. She shows how the roll call of ancestors derived from Biblical authority was edited to ensure that windows endorsed the increasingly dominant patriarchal ideal in which inheritance favoured the eldest son, a practice familiar to many of the monks who worshipped below, younger sons of feudal families. While Matthew's genealogy includes five mothers, only in the image of the Virgin Mary, undoubtedly included in the Canterbury scheme, was a maternal presence acknowledged. Caviness also notes the scheme's apparent aversion to Christ's royal ancestors (Nathan preferred to Solomon, for example), in contrast to the otherwise comparable programme at Rheims. She also suggests that the impact of the windows' imagery was all the greater, because the main entrances into the church at Canterbury are not enhanced with sculptural programmes, and, unlike the choir of many other monastic churches, its cathedral status and the prestige of Becket's pilgrimage meant that the ancestor figures, with their astonishing affective power, were accessible to a far wider audience. The idea that the audience included Canterbury's Jews is an intriguing one, not least because the Jewishness of Christ's ancestors was signalled in their dress. In his 1939 study Michael Adler portrayed the monks of Christ Church as remarkably tolerant

in their dealings with the city's Jews, who by 1215 were required to wear distinguishing dress and in 1290 were expelled from the kingdom altogether. While this impression of medieval neighbourly co-existence is an appealing one to a 21st century readership, one wonders to what extent this image of English tolerance displayed a degree of wish-fulfilment, as German Jewry strove to secure a safe refuge in England.

Both authors stress the importance of the monastic libraries of Canterbury (both Christ Church and St Augustine's) in the formation of the genealogical programme in the glass and both see the influence of illuminated manuscripts as formative sources in the style and design of the windows. While the monastic library must have been an essential resource for the content of the programme in general and the content of Cotton Aelfric, an Anglo-Saxon Hexateuch of the second quarter of the 11th century, in particular, I was not convinced by many of the visual comparisons, nor by the underlying idea that the glazier follows rather than leads in matter of artistic creativity and originality. Indeed, the sheer cost of the ancestor programme and its high level of visibility argues for its potential as a formative influence on artists in other media. However, the extraordinary realisation that this 11th century manuscript was extensively annotated in the late 12th century, in Old English, with material on the genealogy of Christ from Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, sheds fascinating light on the mechanism by which the monk communicated with the artist. Not only did the Comestor add information critical to the evolution of the visual programme, but its translation into the vernacular opened the text to the creative imagination of those outside the educated Latinate monastic circle.<sup>3</sup> We get so few glimpses of how artists accessed their sources, that this is an exciting revelation.

This book is rich with erudition, fizzing with ideas and graced with beautiful photographs. It makes an elegant and welcome addition to the medievalist's library and its beautiful design will give it wide appeal.

SARAH BROWN

#### NOTES

- 1 Madeline H. Caviness, *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, circa 1175-1220*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977 and *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral*,

Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain 2. London, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1981.

- 2 That the late twelfth-century typological scheme there was replacing an earlier one devised by Anselm has been discussed most recently by T. A. Heslop, in 'St Anselm, Church Reform and the Politics of Art', *Anglo Norman Studies* XXXIII (2010), pp. 103-126
- 3 This subject is being pursued in the research of Dr George Younge, post-doctoral fellow in the department of English and Related Literature at the University of York.

Buchanan, Alexandrina, *Robert Willis (1800-1875) and the Foundation of Architectural History* (History of the University of Cambridge: Texts and Studies Vol.8), Woodbridge: The Boydell Press (2013), pp. 452, 82 ills, £60. ISBN 978-1-84383-800-5.

This is an outstanding book on a remarkable man to whom all those working in the field of architectural history are deeply indebted. It is also a book that will make many of us working in the field somewhat embarrassed that we did not take the trouble to find out more about the man on whose work we so often rely and whose analytical interpretation of so many major buildings we continue to accept after 150 years of subsequent investigation. While most of us think of Willis as the founder of the discipline of architectural history, the appearance of this book within a series on the history of the University of Cambridge is wholly appropriate, as becomes clear from the very full and perceptive discussion of the intellectual milieu from which Willis emerged and within which he worked. His appointment in 1831 as Jacksonian Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge placed him firmly within that intellectual world and was to lead to a very public profile, ranging from lectures at the Royal Institution to playing a key role in the commission set up to investigate the cause of the failure of the iron girders in the Dee bridge disaster of 1847.

The comprehensive nature of this account of Willis's life and influence, is succinctly demonstrated by the titles of the chapters: London and the Early Years; Cambridge and Scientific Work to 1841; *Remarks on the Architecture of the Middle Ages* and the Membrological Approach; Evidence and its Uses in Architectural History; The Cathedral

Studies: 'Landmarks of Architectural History'; Public Scientist, Private Man; The Practice of Architecture: Willis as Designer, Arbiter and Influence; 'Architectural and Social History': Canterbury and Cambridge. Within this framework the author deftly organises a mass of complex and inter-related material, demonstrating a very impressive breadth and depth of reading in the scientific and antiquarian literature of the nineteenth century. This, and thorough immersion in Willis's surviving notebooks, enables the author to write authoritatively on the origins and development of Willis's methods of historical analysis of architecture, his dissection of buildings into their constituent parts (for which new terminology had to be developed) and his application of problem-solving to the study of buildings. She shows that, in contrast with many of his contemporaries, Willis was not interested in the history of architecture as a succession of cohesive styles, but rather in architectural history, the understanding of the process of change, a process in which the constituent parts changed at different rates and at different times, driven by the desire for novelty and innovation. In fact, as the author points out, the account of Canterbury published in 1845 was the first book to be described as an architectural history.

In this rationalist approach Willis differed markedly from the moralising of Pugin and Ruskin in that he had no partisan view about the most appropriate style for the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, perhaps, a project for a History of Architecture never came to fruition, but his lectures ranged widely and included the stylistic phases of Egyptian temples, a comparison of Egyptian and Greek entablatures, a reconstruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and an interesting work on the Holy Sepulchre undertaken without having visited the building. The exclusive reliance on documentary and literary sources for the latter highlights an important aspect of Willis's approach. Buchanan shows how for Willis written sources provided the paramount evidence even, on occasions, at the expense of observation of the fabric. Yet it is for his brilliant interpretations of complex building histories that he is best known and those, too, have to be set in context, provoking, as they did, the antagonism of local antiquarians anxious to prove their buildings to be 'Saxon'.

For architectural historians and archaeologists of standing buildings, a particularly valuable aspect of Buchanan's book is the nuanced analysis of Willis's approaches to the writing of architectural history and the ways in which these changed over

time and, as importantly, according to the evidence surviving for the building under consideration. For example, at Canterbury Willis's account relies heavily on the contemporary account by the monk Gervase, whereas at Salisbury greater emphasis is given to the liturgical layout and the functions that the different parts of the building were designed to fulfil. This approach was taken much further in his book on the conventual buildings at Canterbury where, inspired by the so-called Waterworks Plan, Willis pioneered the exploration of the functions of the constituent parts of medieval monasteries and their accessibility to different members of the community. This interest in social use is also evident in his final great work *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge*, completed after his death and published by his nephew, Clark.

Although emerging from a 'scientific' background, Willis tended to keep his scientific and architectural interests separate even if the same caste of mind is evident at work. When considering medieval vaults, Willis did not bring his engineering knowledge to bear in his analysis of their construction as he felt that would be anachronistic; instead, he tried to understand the mind-set of the medieval mason and the primary concern with geometry and the final aesthetic appearance of the vault, conveyed through apparent structure.

Willis was evidently a gifted communicator, especially to audiences on site. So successful was he, according to a report in *The Athenaeum* in 1844, that 'Ladies were found to take an interest in stone bolsters, in corbels, in stringcourses; and some anxiety was expressed to be better acquainted with the distinguishing characteristics of our Gothic architecture. The fever was at its height when....' (see p.174). Well known for explaining scientific ideas through the construction of working models, Willis also devised new methods to communicate his ideas on paper, through plans that were carefully annotated and with historical phases coloured, devices that are easily taken for granted.

Willis is a dominating figure in the discipline and thoroughly deserves this very substantial book, which is well written and always engaging. Studies of specific aspects of Willis's life and work may add to our knowledge in the future, but it is hard to see how this magisterial study can be superseded.

PETER DRAPER

Chaney, Edward and Wilks, Timothy, *The Jacobean Grand Tour – Early Stuart Travellers in Europe*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris (2014), 318pp., 107 b&w ills and 11 colour pls, £25. ISBN 978-1-78076-783-3.

This is a *Who's Who* of early Stuart travellers in Europe; approximately 700 names and 300 places feature in the index. Is there anyone the authors do not know? Family trees and charts of connections would help the reader to map the way through a story of considerable complexity – ‘a tangle of itineraries and contacts’ – accompanying travellers through Northern Europe, France and Italy, avoiding or courting the Papal States, enlivened by numerous inter-weavings of journeys and digressions on those who came this way or that way before, what they saw when they got there, whether they were Catholic or Protestant in sympathy, mono- or multi-lingual, resourceful or feeble, robust or weak. It is a remarkable, illuminating and lucid piece of scholarship, completed in time for submission to the university-funding authorities as part of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) at the end of the last round, but the work on which it is based was begun long before this recent assessment, beginning life, as we are told in the Preface, in a review in 1988 (followed by conference papers in the 1990s). Yet even this date is too late, Edward Chaney having by that time been working on the Grand Tour for a decade: the REF process misunderstands or wilfully ignores the nature of long-gestating scholarship in the humanities in favour of the quick, often inelegant fix manoeuvred past the ubiquitous peer-reviewers for last-minute deposit in a learned journal.

The authors present a series of episodes with a thread running through drawn by the hero, Sir John Finet, the subject of a Venetian portrait by Domenico Tintoretto, the history of which is illuminated in the concluding chapter. It was the courtier Finet, deputy to the Master of Ceremonies at the court of James I, who having disembarked in Santander from the *Prince Royal*, rode by night ‘over the mountains in most darke, and Tempestuous weather’ to meet Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham as they returned in 1623 from their fruitless, frustrating negotiations over a Spanish match for the Prince during a sojourn of six months, the principal beneficial effect of which was to develop Charles’s taste for paintings of the highest quality. It is this episode which sets the scene for the authors’ exploration of England’s

welcome engagement with continental culture, a process which evolved ‘from cautiousness to decisive self-assurance’ as young gentlemen went in pursuit of ‘the attractions of the sensuous and the sacred [which] could sometimes combine to near-irresistible effect’.

Finet had earlier accompanied William Cecil, Viscount Cranborne (later 2nd Earl of Salisbury) on both of the Grand Tours which he carried out at the behest and with the remote direction of his immensely powerful statesman father the 1st Earl, who had never been south of Nantes. On the first of these tours, in 1609, which got as far as Provence, the party was accompanied also by Inigo Jones, who made observations on Nîmes, Arles, the Pont du Gard and Chambord. It is somewhat mischievous to suggest that Jones’s presence with Cranborne ‘will be argued’ here, as if for the first time, since Chaney, by his own account, first suggested it in 1985, but it is certainly true to say that the precise dating of this tour, some years before Jones accompanied the Earl and Countess of Arundel in 1613-14, is here explored in considerable, persuasive detail, allowing Chaney a characteristic sideswipe at the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, expressing here once again an entertaining animus towards that noble project which was first revealed in a lengthy critique in the *British Art Journal* (V/3, 2004), to which readers of this review are referred (but the font size is such that those of a certain age may require the aid of an Alex light and a magnifying glass).

Cranborne, enjoined by his father to keep a journal, is said to have produced the best account we have of any such early tour, notwithstanding its being ‘written in schoolboy French’: ‘it is, by English standards, remarkably perceptive’, though ‘un fort beau chateau’ does not set the bar very high. Inigo Jones is here given the credit for Cranborne’s more informed remarks, so when he says (authors’ translation) ‘the design [is] perhaps greater than it appears’, we are invited to consider Jones’s characteristic ‘probing through subjective impressions to the underlying design’. Indeed, ‘every reference to antiquity, architecture, ornament and setting, and occasionally to painting, that the eighteen year old Viscount makes, however cursory, may now be read in the context of Jones’s influence’ – is there no limit to the cultural-mediation skills of this protean genius? Cranborne is presented here as a conformist in religion and socially inadequate, the latter probably exacerbated by his wan looks and slight frame (although he seems to have recovered quite quickly from smallpox). Later, on the second



of his Grand Tours (this time without Jones, so no notes were made on Venice, where Ambassador Wotton was the prime enabler for English visitors), 'obdurate' in his desire to return home, he 'failed miserably to progress beyond Padua': 'his indolence might have been excused by his weak physical condition, but for the fact that he became his normal self as soon as he began to ride homeward'. For Chaney and Wilks, Cranborne simply does not measure up. He was perhaps relieved to be escaping the snares of Catholicism and the intolerable, brain-desiccating heat of Italy, about which he had been warned by his father: 'those that have bene in Italie in the summer for the most part are asured to fall into Agues in the fall of the leafe'. He might also have been aware of the injunction of his grandfather Lord Burghley: 'Suffer not thy sons to pass the Alpes, for they shall learn nothing there but pride, blasphemy and atheism. And if by travel they get a few broken languages, that shall profit them nothing more than to have one meat served on divers dishes'.

This is a thoroughly scholarly exploration of the early, uncertain years of what was to become an English love affair with Italy and classical culture. It is broad in scope and well illustrated. The description of Cranborne's tours provides opportunity for divagations on antiquities, gardens, herbs, masques, architectural designs, visitors both before and after, together with the occasional asperity on politics or religion. It is as if we have been button-holed by some ancient mariner of the Grand Tour and assailed by stories, each one ineluctably following the last. It is opinionated – there is no doubt that 'the Commonwealth was a disaster' – and much of it is perforce speculative, but, overtly political partiality notwithstanding, the speculation is well grounded and convincing, rooted in verifiable evidence and informed by a broad sympathy for cultural exploration. This makes it exciting to read, as if the reader too is participating along with the authors and the tourists on a journey of discovery. There is also an elegiac quality to the writing, as if, like Lord Arundel, we too were regretting that 'Italy was no more Italy', a sentiment reminding us that human beings are doomed to reinvent and reinterpret their own pasts in confirming the value of their own experience and its relationship to the present, from optimism to disillusion. This is a book with contemporary resonance: many of the xenophobic sentiments quoted by the authors bring to mind the embarrassingly absurd, often malign and frequently misinformed pronouncements of our current crop of

politicians and commentators, so I wonder whether we are now, flirting with a catastrophic rejection of Europe and European values, going full circle back to the dyspeptic certainties of Lord Burghley and the obduracy of his indolent grandson.

JOHN BOLD

Steane, John and Ayres, James, *Traditional Buildings in the Oxford Region c. 1300-1840*, Oxford and Oakville: Oxbow books (2013), 463 pp., 587 ills, £45. ISBN 978-1-84217-479-1.

One of the consequences of the publication of PPG 15 in September 1994 was the emergence of a new profession of historic building recorders to meet the requirements of the planning system. The result has been a vast explosion in grey literature of reports on historic buildings throughout the country. Regrettably the policy document gave no guidance on where these reports should be deposited and they are scattered over a variety of different repositories and private archives which makes them difficult to access in any consistent manner in order to understand the buildings of any particular region. Most of them have been commissioned for the specific purpose of securing listed building consent or to satisfy the curiosity of enlightened owners and are thus only concerned with individual buildings without the need to place them in a general context. Cumulatively they represent a remarkably rich resource of knowledge, but the difficulty remains of using this scholarship in order to realise its full potential.

The authors of this volume are two of the most active consultants providing such records in the Oxford region and they must be commended for placing in the public domain a substantial number of their reports compiled over the last decade and attempting a synthesis of regional building traditions based on their conclusions. They are both distinguished scholars in their own fields and this book has been eagerly anticipated ever since it was first announced. It is a sumptuously produced volume, with nearly 600 illustrations, including photographs, maps, plans and sketches, many of them in colour. After a short introductory chapter describing their methods and procedures, with particular emphasis on the importance of drawing as fundamental to understanding, there is a general

chapter on building materials before a sequence of chapters based on their fieldwork, which forms the bulk of the text. These are grouped under a number of topics, including primitive houses, cruck buildings, manorial buildings on moated sites, town houses, houses in the countryside, farm buildings, inns and public buildings such as almshouses, guildhalls and a late 19th-century magistrates' court, which strictly speaking falls outside the date range of the title. There is a rather curious chapter on two fire-damaged houses which might have been better integrated with a relevant topical chapter. Various details such as ferramenta, apotropaic marks, windows, staircases and so on are dealt with in ten separate appendices.

It is an impressive and catholic body of work for a small consultancy, but it must be emphasised that it is not the general history of the traditional buildings of the Oxford region that the casual reader might have expected from the title and the various chapter headings. It is rather a random selection of individual building reports, brought together by the accident of their commissioning, with very little in the way of a comprehensive linking narrative. Most of the text consists of lengthy descriptions of each building, concluding with a discussion of the phased development based on the physical evidence. In many cases the descriptions are not easy to follow. This is partly because they have adopted the archaeological convention of identifying each room with a letter and a number according to the floor rather than by their assumed function. That is all very well when the description is accompanied by an annotated plan of each floor, but in too many examples this essential information is either lacking altogether or is incomplete. Some of the descriptions, such as that for 32, Manor Road, South Hinksey, lack even a rough sketch plan to enable the reader to locate G6 or F4 or even the 'unheated parlour to the east'. In this particular example it might not matter too much. With the help of the photograph of the exterior and close scrutiny of the text it is possible to work out the general form of the house, but in the case of the enigmatic Small's House at Mackney it is much more important. We are given an excellently clear measured ground plan of this intriguing gentry house, but the room numbers and their functions are not supplied, so we have no idea where the 'surprisingly plain chimney piece' in F5 is located, other than somewhere on the first floor and their whimsical speculation that the plan is a tribute to Henry, Prince of Wales fails to convince.

Despite this basic shortcoming, there is much

to admire in this book, not least the many fine sketches by James Ayres of detailed features and the atmospheric watercolours of barn interiors by John Steane. It introduces the reader to an extraordinary range of interesting buildings. It is full of insights and judicious comments on craft traditions and methods of working. It is not afraid to draw comparisons with other buildings outside the strict confines of the Oxford region and will provide a handsome record for the many owners who commissioned the work. What was needed was a much stronger editorial hand to eliminate some of the case studies, which sit uncomfortably with the broad themes, to refine the descriptions in order that they strictly advance the arguments presented in the analysis and to impose a discipline on the conventions used in the plans. Nevertheless, as a means of bringing some of the grey literature of a discrete area of the country to a wider audience, it should be warmly welcomed and its contents will provide ample comparative evidence for others working in the field.

MALCOLM AIRS

Hill, Michael, *East Dorset Country Houses*, Reading: Spire Books (2013), 440 pp., 174 ills, £42. ISBN 978-1-904965-46-6.

Monographs on the country houses of a particular county have been a feature of publishing since at least the late 19th century, an offshoot of the much longer tradition of county histories, which charted the waxing and waning of county families. The earliest county-wide monographs devoted to country houses from an architectural point of view are probably the two by Arthur Oswald, the first on Kent (1933), the second on Dorset (1935, 2nd ed. 1959), both drawing on the illustrated articles which had by then been coming out weekly in *Country Life* for nearly forty years, and which pioneered a new approach concentrating on the physical evolution of houses and their decoration, and dwelling less on the ramifications of the families that built them.

Nicholas Kingsley's three volumes on the country houses of Gloucestershire (1989, 1992 and 2001) set a new standard of scholarship as well as scale. For the third volume Kingsley took as co-author Michael Hill and now we have the first of Hill's own planned two volumes on the houses

of Dorset. Hill has in many ways modelled his treatment on Kingsley's, but in two respects, in particular, they differ from one another.

First is the character of the illustrations. Those for Dorset are better in every way, doubtless in part the result of changing from a publisher, Phillimore, by tradition more interested in text than pictures, to Spire Books, for which high quality plates are an essential; the grants which Hill acknowledges, from the Paul Mellon Centre and the Marc Fitch Fund, have helped to make his dreams a reality. The choice of illustrations is surefooted, whether plans from the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, or archive photographs which document long-lost houses or significant changes in surviving ones, especially from John Pouncy's precocious *Dorsetshire Photographically Illustrated* of 1857, or early 20th century photographs from *Country Life* recording interiors now lost or inaccessible.

Secondly, the texts are similarly organized by Kingsley and by Hill; a substantial introduction, followed by essays on the major houses (36 in *East Dorset*) and shorter pieces on a similar number of 'other houses', but whereas the Gloucestershire houses are arranged in Kingsley's three volumes chronologically (1500-1600, 1660-1830 and 1830-2000), with a county-wide introduction to each covering only the relevant period, Hill has preferred a geographical division of the county into East and West. This has created problems.

Since so far only *East Dorset* has been published (and we are warned not to expect its companion any time soon), its introduction is made to cover the full chronological sweep for the entire county. It therefore discusses houses in both halves, even though the full treatments of houses in the western half are not yet available. Worse still, there is no indication in the introduction itself which houses are covered in detail in *East Dorset*, an irritation which could easily have been overcome by including cross references to the full essays which appear in this book.

The majority of Dorset's Tudor and Jacobean manor houses are in the western half of the county, so are not treated in detail in this book. The two best known, Cranborne Manor and Lulworth Castle, are covered here, but they are exceptional too in being hunting lodges for great courtiers, one new-built, the other a medieval lodge rebuilt. The master mason at Cranborne is known to have been William Arnold and his involvement at Lulworth is suspected. Hill argues convincingly that Arnold

was also the architect of Hanford House, which has stylistic connections with Montacute, across the border in Somerset, now accepted as Arnold's greatest work.

The Jonesian hipped-roofed house was introduced early to East Dorset and perfected here. Richard Ryder's wing was added to Cranborne Manor as early as 1647-50. Who designed St Giles House, begun in 1651, or Charborough Park, designed c. 1655, is unknown. Both were built for nationally prominent figures, who probably obtained designs in London. Both houses have been greatly altered. The latest of the group, Kingston Lacy, 1663-5, has also been considerably altered, yet retains much of its original character. As Michael Hill's account brings out, the history of the house is in many ways exceptional. It was designed for Sir Ralph Bankes, one of the county's largest landowners, by Sir Roger Pratt, whose surviving architectural notes throw precious light on the ideas of the most thoughtful and discriminating architect of his day. Pratt's exquisite elevation drawing for Kingston Lacy still exists among the family papers. In the 1830s a major modernization of the house was put in hand by William Bankes, an owner with strong architectural ideas, who nevertheless trusted his chosen architect, Sir Charles Barry, to enhance the Prattian, or as Bankes thought Jonesian, character of the house, while adding to its drama, inside and out.

Later houses of national significance in East Dorset are Thomas Archer's Chettle House (c. 1715); Vanbrugh's Eastbury (begun 1718), Blore's and Barry's Gothic Canford Manor (1826 and 1847-50); and Norman Shaw's rebuilding of Bryanston (1889-94), forerunner of Edwardian Baroque. They all survive, with the exception of Eastbury, reduced to two monumental fragments. Hill has much of interest to say about them all.

However, one's curiosity is also aroused by the now demolished Langton House, built in 1827-33 by C.R. Cockerell for the High Sheriff of the county, J.J. Farquharson, whose passion was foxhunting. Cockerell's diaries reveal his fastidious architectural thinking, and in this case his scorn for his client's inability to make decisions. Surprisingly the relationship endured over a full eight years, the family's vacillation presumably giving the architect the chance to make all the decisions and thus to erect one of his most original complexes. Stables and service buildings survive, and it is a pity that they are not illustrated, though the lost house is.

So *East Dorset Country Houses* contains much to

interest and enjoy, and one wishes the author the stamina to resume and complete his entire project, once he is done with his present preoccupation, revision of the Dorset Pevsner.

JOHN NEWMAN

Beecham, Peter and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *Cornwall*, Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England series, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2014), 789pp., 123 photographs, 39 text ills and building plans and 16 maps, £35. ISBN 978-0-300-12668-6.

The Pevsner Architectural Guides (hereafter 'the series') will be well known to readers, both in their original Penguin and the larger size format of the current publishers, Yale University Press. Less familiar to most, unless perhaps from their parents' bookshelves, will be the original brown coloured paperbacks in which the earliest volumes of the series, including *Cornwall*, first appeared. This is the latest, long awaited, revision in the series. Devon and *Cornwall*, as noted, were amongst the very first and Beecham worked with Bridget Cherry on the earliest of the updatings, her splendid and much cited *Devon* (1989). He continues with *Cornwall*, the original dating from 1951, although Enid Ratcliffe edited a lightly revised second edition in 1970.

The coverage of the county is substantially enhanced: 626 pages of *Gazetteer* (as opposed to 208 pages in the 1970 edition), themselves some 20% larger, as well as a lengthy Introduction, including a bibliographical essay, good Indices and a Glossary. The welcome and generous allocation of text figures and maps somewhat reduces the expansion of the text. A general Introduction is followed by the usual essay on geology and building stones (Sarah Buckingham), but alas, unlike in other recent revisions, none of Alec Clifton-Taylor's elegant prose from his short piece on building materials in the previous edition seems to survive. There follows Peter Herring's essay on the Cornish Landscape in the prehistoric to early medieval period. One notes with pleasure nearly a page on the Roman period, no longer an almost complete blank in the archaeology of *Cornwall*. Eric Berry writes on vernacular buildings 1400 to 1800 and John Stenglehofen on Industrial Archaeology of Cornish Mining and Transport; the author provides the rest

of the Introduction. All of these authors are credited with giving the benefit of their expertise to relevant entries in the *Gazetteer*. As usual in this series, the Introduction is solid and informative, soundly telling of the county's buildings and their historical context. It is, of course, quite possible to use the *Gazetteer* without consulting the Introduction, but the reader would lose something thereby.

As is signposted by that twelve page essay in the Introduction, the new edition greatly expands the coverage of the industrial remains that so mark the topography of *Cornwall*; this is reflected throughout. A nice example is the individual entry given to Kit Hill, whose chimney, towering over the Tamar Valley, is a signpost of your entry to the Celtic Realm on leaving resolutely English Devon; Pevsner's felicitously phrased description of it seen from Callington remains in the *Gazetteer* entry for that town. Railway building and remains gets their proper recognition in this revision. Beecham notes how the Royal Albert Bridge no longer looms over Saltash, as Pevsner so evocatively described it, and gives that great work of Victorian engineering a photograph of its own; previously it had to share one with a shot of the townscape of Saltash with a positively Victorian horse-drawn cart to the fore. Linked features such as the open-air preaching pit in Indian Queens also get their just recognition in this new edition. Nor are modern engineering achievements ignored; the Eden Project gets a full entry and is the subject of the last photograph. Goonhilly equally enjoys an entry and photograph. The former, of course, is a very recent work, but the latter failed to make its way into the revised 1970 edition, though the New County Hall in Truro (1963-6) was deemed to merit a lengthy entry in the latter, which is retained and expanded in this revision and even allocated a photograph. Perhaps not all readers will share Beecham's enthusiasm for this last edifice, though it doubtless rightly reflects Pevsner's own enthusiasm for Modernism.

One of the key features of the series is the perambulation provided for every town and village containing sufficient buildings of interest to merit such an exercise. Therefore, this reviewer set off to field-test the entry for Launceston, allocated and surely meriting eight of the photographs, a helpful map (another of the real gains of more recent volumes), plus a plan of the excavated site and a 'speculative reconstruction' of the largely lost priory. The small size and architectural richness of this town made it a perfect, as well as a most enjoyable, opportunity to make use of the new Guide.

The account starts with a substantial

introduction on the town as a whole, giving a good understanding of its historical background. Pevsner started with but sixteen lines, of which none remain; a shame, because they were evocative of Launceston's setting. The castle and the parish church (St Mary Magdalene) enjoy substantial entries. The entry on St Mary Magdalene's church, with its famous carvings on the south porch and aisle, rightly retains Pevsner's work, with many felicitous and helpful additions, such as accounting for the unattractive connection between the tower and the nave – a room of 1851 – because the original medieval intention to build a new tower at the end of the early 16th century nave was never achieved. One addition to Pevsner's text is that it is now, no doubt rightly, felt necessary to provide a translation (*O tempera O mores*) for the Latin text carved on the exterior and set out in both the 1951 and current texts. The interior gets more generous treatment, with the magnificent pulpit getting deserved attention (including a photograph).

Where the earlier edition gave only four lines to the ruins of the priory, perhaps not inappropriately in terms of what is actually there to be seen, there is now a significant, illustrated entry. This seems to reflect a tendency to make volumes in this series contain elements of the monograph on architectural history. AMS members who attended the 2014 AGM will doubtless recall that the now vanished stately home of the Duke of Chandos in Canons Park received similar treatment in the volume in the series on North West London, but then these are historical works, as well as current guides. A tiny point on which this reviewer disagrees with Beecham is his view that the best view of Launceston is from St Stephen. The view from the ruins of the priory is in many respects superior, with a wonderful view of the castle – like a textbook illustration of a motte and bailey. However, from wherever you choose to view it, the kindly citizens of Launceston have provided a bench, from which you may drink in the view at your leisure.

From the castle you can follow the perambulation. Launceston was a prosperous town in the early days, perhaps becoming less so later, though a plethora of public buildings makes it clear that not all prosperity was lost. A happy feature of its centre is that most of the shops, though sometimes with unlovely modern frontages, are placed into older buildings. In some cases the 19th century shopfronts are themselves attractive – Beecham rightly praises 20 Church Street, but others have pleasing shopfronts with elegant cast iron pillars e.g.

9 to 11 The Square. The charming Castle View in Castle Street is allocated photograph 17, but the text seems to put it in Northgate Street. It has a distinctive feature of an elongated window of an ecclesiastical nature rising through two stories, two more examples of which are to be seen in Tower Street. Was this a local architectural peculiarity? Still, space is short and the series is a miracle of compression. Certainly the wonderful examples of successive generations of building still surviving in this pleasing town are well described and you may miss some of Launceston's charm without this volume in hand to direct your eyes, e.g. the fine medieval doorway of the White Hart, probably taken from the priory.

Elsewhere in the county, there are many other examples where the additional space is put to valuable use. One such is in the account of the magnificent stained glass of St Neot's church, which the plan in this book makes it much easier to follow. Much of the best of Pevsner's description is retained, in particular 'one must have been inside St Neot in sunshine as well as dull weather to appreciate how the stone changes its hues as the colours of the windows are strongly or softly reflected on it', to which one can only add that the stained glass itself appears quite dramatically different depending on whether or not the sun is shining directly through it. Several visits are therefore called for to this lovely church, each of which will be enhanced if you have this volume in your hand. Another instance is the magnificent St Sampson in Golant. This expands and corrects the previous edition and unusually (for Pevsner was a master of the architectural or townscape pen portrait) better captures the wonderful setting of this church, perhaps best experienced when attending divine service there on a sunny Sunday.

On a more substantial scale, the entry for St Ives further shows what can be done. We have a substantial introduction to the town, with pen portrait and history, including of the development of the artists' colony. The Tate, the Hepworth Museum and the Leach Museum are all well described, with a Hepworth constituting the rear photo on the dustcover. A useful map, much better coverage of the non-conformist chapels and a full perambulation of this attractive town all offer much to the reader.

So we have another fine updating and expansion in the series, which gives so much to lovers of history and architecture; a book to be used, as well as consulted. The indices are good and user friendly, and the production quality is up to the usual high standards, with one caveat. The new style computer-generated Index Map on the

unnumbered pages following the title page seems ill-designed for a double-page spread and the print too small, so that the reference numbers round the margins are difficult to make out. This is clearly a design issue. The triangular shape of the county does not lend itself to a double page spread. The earlier editions avoided a continuous map and their example should have been followed. As it is, the significantly smaller pages of the 1970 edition had a map of greater size and clarity than that in this edition, where well over half of the two pages devoted to the map is wasted. A previous review in *TAMS* (Vol.58, p.195) has commented on the failure of these important maps, which are the way you navigate around each county, identifying the location of what you want to see. The editors, for this seems to be a production issue, need to address this.

GRAHAM KENT

Demidowicz, George, with Johnson, Stephen, *A History of Caludon Castle: the Lords of the Manor of Caludon*, Coventry: Century Public Relations (2013), 218pp., 110 ills, £24.95. ISBN 978-0-992-78540-6.

A solitary wall, set within a moated enclosure and standing in a municipal recreation area surrounded by 20th century housing and industrial estates, is all that remains visible of Caludon Castle. Its unpromising setting in the northern sprawl of Coventry and the paucity of its remains means that a proper study of the castle has been largely neglected until the appearance of this book, promoted and published by 'local boy made good', John Edward Clarke OBE. Full justice has now been done to the history of the castle by George Demidowicz (author and editor) and Stephen Johnson (co-author). Thanks to their enterprising research, the full extent of the medieval castle and Elizabethan courtier house are established, and the significance of this property for several notable families of the English aristocracy. In this achievement, they have been aided by the previous research of Myk Flitcroft, the only other recent scholar to make a study of the site, and his contribution is fully acknowledged. In 1985, he undertook the first geophysical survey of the moated site as part of his BA dissertation for the University of Durham.

The backbone of the book consists of six historical chapters on the great families who owned Caludon from c. 1200 to the early 19th century, each

chapter including an invaluable family tree. First up are the Segraves, important legal and military servants of the three King Edwards. The original Segrave house was probably a hunting lodge, but during the tenure of John de Segrave (1295-1325) a fortified house was built on a larger platform nearby (licence to crenellate, 1305). In 1335, his grandson (d. 1353) made a good marriage with Lady Margaret Brotherton, sole heir of the earl of Norfolk, and therefore it is suggested that 1335-53 is the most likely date of the fabric standing on site today (see further below).

In 1359, the Caludon estate passed through marriage to Sir John de Mowbray III and was to remain a possession of five generations of Mowbrays for almost 150 years. This chapter recounts various colourful episodes during this period – the story of Thomas I, duke of Norfolk, the overbearing courtier of Richard II, whose aborted joust against Bolingbroke at Coventry led to his banishment for life (see Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act I, scene one); or the raid of Sir Thomas Malory (he of *Mort d'Arthur* fame) on the Caludon deer park in 1451. However, the Mowbrays seldom resided at Caludon, giving priority to their land-holdings in East Anglia. Thus the administration of the estate was often in the hands of royal or local officials. From the resulting numerous surveys and inquisitions, a picture emerges of the estate (but not the castle itself) suggesting neglect and exploitation in the later 14th century, but apparently better administered in the 15th. With the death in 1481 of the last Mowbray heiress, Ann (first wife of King Richard III), the estate was eventually granted to Lord Maurice Berkeley in 1494. Under the Berkeleys (1494-1631), Caludon 'would witness its greatest days', and two chapters are devoted to their tenure.

The widowed Lady Anne Berkeley (d.1564) resided at Caludon in her later years, and her son, Henry (1534-1613), the future 7th Baron, was brought up there, creating an emotional attachment to the property which was to last for the rest of his life. In particular, the deer park fed Henry's passion for hunting. He married Katherine, daughter of Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, and in their time Caludon became an important courtier house, noted for its entertainment and hospitality – in the hinterland of the earl of Leicester's famous prodigy house at Kenilworth Castle. It has been suggested that Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* was first performed at Caludon at the marriage of Henry's son, Thomas (VII) to Elizabeth Carey in 1596. There is also enough evidence to indicate that Henry

and Thomas undertook substantial modernisation works to the fabric of the castle in the 1580s and 1590s, though precise details are lacking. However, a continuous run of household accounts for 1592-1605 have survived, which are a 'goldmine' of information on the day-to-day life at the castle, and are the subject of a separate chapter (Chapter 4).

Thomas VII continued the profligate lifestyle of his father – 'profuse in expence beyond his ordinary means' – and eventually in 1631 the castle and estate were sold to Thomas Morgan of Heyford (Northants.). Morgan bought it as a financial investment, and very soon the castle became no more than a home farm at the centre of a farming estate. However, there seems to be no truth that the castle was reduced to its present ruined state during the Civil War, as it is recorded as still inhabited long afterwards. The estate then descended through marriage to the Preston family and, more significantly, in 1685 to Hugh, 2nd Baron Clifford of Chudleigh in Devon. His pedigree was a cadet branch of the great Clifford lords who had arrived in England at the Norman Conquest, settling in Devon in the 14th century. Hugh's father was granted his title in 1672 as a loyal supporter and adviser of Charles II; both Hugh and his wife, Anne Preston, were Catholics, as were their descendants. As the family was well established at Ugbrooke House in Devon, the Caludon estate (like their other inherited Warwickshire properties) was tenanted for farming throughout their long ownership (1685-1822), and many of the estate records, together with older documents relating to Caludon, survive in the muniment room at Ugbrooke. It was the chance discovery of this resource, unknown to previous researchers, which has allowed the present authors to shed much new light on the history of Caludon. For example, the evidence from a rental of 1731 and a land tax roll of 1748 revealed that a new farmhouse had been built on the site and that the castle had been largely demolished between these dates.

In the early 19th century, the Cliffords decided to sell the Caludon estate in order to use the proceeds to consolidate their land-holdings in Devon. It was offered for sale by auction in lots in 1815, though Lot XVIII, the castle site – the farmhouse, 'Caludon House', with about 250 acres of land – was not purchased until 1822 by a local man, the Revd John Brown. For the next 100 years it passed through a series of different owners and tenants living in the farmhouse, until the rapid growth of Coventry in the inter-war years threatened to overwhelm the site. In a remarkably enlightened action for its time,

in 1939 Coventry City Council purchased about 20 acres centred on the castle remains to create a public park: the site had been scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1922.

The final chapter of the book is of particular interest to AMS members, as it assesses the evidence for the architectural development of the castle. The main evidence consists of the one surviving wall and the resistivity surveys. A few years ago, George Demidowicz (then head of Coventry Council's Conservation and Archaeology Team) consulted this reviewer – here described rather uncritically as 'the country's leading expert on medieval architecture' – about the style, date and function of the former building represented by the two-storey elevation of the wall. We agreed with Flitcroft's earlier conclusion that it was not 'the great hall', but a great chamber over a residential undercroft. Based on the style of the mouldings and the former tracery in the large chamber windows, I proposed a date-span of c. 1320-50, which is interpreted by the authors (p.30) as probably placing its construction during the tenure of John II de Segrave (1335-53), who had married an heiress. However, now that all the documentary evidence has been gathered together, I can see no reason why it should not in fact have been the work of his grandfather, John I, at some time after the licence to crenellate of 1305. The delicate ogee heads of the windows and their former tracery are reminiscent, for example, of Hugh Despenser the Younger's great hall at Caerphilly Castle, dated by a building account of 1326.<sup>1</sup> Thus, general comparisons made by the authors with the medieval chambers at Kenilworth Castle (pp.30, 190) would not be with John of Gaunt's time (post-1363), but with the works there of the Lancastrian lords in the earlier 14th century.<sup>2</sup>

The book is lavishly produced in full colour, with copious plans, drawings and photographs. The artist's reconstructions of the castle in c. 1550-70 by Pete Urmston are especially attractive. Also, the authors are to be congratulated on bringing together almost all the illustrations of the castle ruin from c. 1800 on, from which to judge the accuracy of features since lost, such as the medieval window tracery. There are a few minor lapses in copy editing – for example, John V de Mowbray's date of death should be 1432 (family tree, p.36); Framlingham Castle (p.50); Elizabeth Hodges, not Christine (p.115); Fig. 70, not Fig. 71 (p.146). However, these should not detract from a publication and a castle both of which deserve to be better known.

RICHARD K. MORRIS

## NOTES

- 1 A.J. Taylor, 'Building at Caerphilly in 1326', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 14.4 (1952), 299-300.
- 2 For which see R.K. Morris, 'Sidelights on the 14th-Century Architecture of Kenilworth Castle', in L. Monckton and R.K. Morris (eds), *Coventry: Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in the City and its Vicinity*, British Archaeological Assoc. Conference Transactions XXXIII (Leeds 2011), 344-62.

Armstrong, Barrie and Wendy, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the North East of England: A Handbook*, Wetherby: Oblong Creative (2013), xxxiv + 270pp, numerous ills, £21. ISBN 978-0-9575992-1-5.

Armstrong, Barrie and Wendy, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Yorkshire: A Handbook*, Wetherby: Oblong Creative (2013), li + 371pp, 535 ills, £25. ISBN 978-0-9575992-2-2.

Over the last twenty-five years I have become conditioned to approach with caution any book with the phrase 'Arts and Crafts' in its title. All too often it is used to evoke an undemanding image of aspects British architecture and the decorative arts between about 1880 and the Great War. There are even some quite respectable books and articles which unthinkingly use the phrase 'Arts and Crafts style' as though it meant anything – rather in the way that anything built between 1910 and 1950 with a squared-off profile and angular, stylised decoration is called Art Deco. Well, it doesn't mean anything.

The Arts and Crafts Movement is the creative expression of a philosophy, of a way of thinking and being and, most importantly, making. It is not a style, but a loosely-defined set of principles; broadly anti-academic, rooted in practicality and the importance of expert craft-skills, respectful of local traditions and materials used idiomatically and in depth, expressive of location and function, idealistic and individualistic yet collaborative.

Barrie and Wendy Armstrong tacitly acknowledge the potential risks of trying to catalogue a concept by giving the books in their developing series the title '*The Arts and Crafts Movement in...*'. Helpfully, they focus on the products of local architects or decorative artists, as much as on national figures, and in their introductions they explore the local educational, social and professional networks which connected

or supported them. This is useful in setting out the context for work, which should be local if it is to be really principled, yet they fail to show how local distinctiveness is demonstrated in the works they catalogue. Aware that their earlier companion volume, the un-indexed *The Arts and Crafts Movement in the North West of England: A Handbook* (Wetherby: Oblong Creative (2006), xxxi + 284. ISBN 0 9536574 6 9), had taken as its starting point certain personalities, rather than specific ideals, they have included a short 'synopsis' of the Arts and Crafts Movement in both recent volumes. Slightly uncomfortably, it refers to 'what became known as' the Arts and Crafts Movement and suggests that its social and philosophical elements may simply have been issues of taste. This comes close to denying that the Movement was anything more than a set of fashionable mannerisms.

The Armstrongs' conception of Arts and Crafts architecture and decorative art would seem to be very wide indeed; possibly a result of the enthusiastic authors encouraging each other to see connections which hardly exist or which are at best tenuous. They admit to taking 'a broad and pragmatic approach' and creating 'wriggle room' in the selection of work, to the extent that buildings from the 1840s to the 1940s are included – either, they suggest, as precursors to the Movement or influenced by its legacy. Yet much of the earlier work (and some of the later, like St Matthew, Owthorne, of the mid-1930s) is really mainstream Gothic revival, or in provincial varieties of the so-called Queen Anne or Old English idioms of Shaw and Nesfield. If John Birch's dull and conventional buildings for the Sledmere estate merit inclusion, why not the far more interesting ones built by F.C. Penrose for the Escrick estate, which occupy similar vernacular territory to that of W. Butterfield and Philip Webb?

A number of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* church ensembles by G.E. Street, J.L. Pearson and G.F. Bodley (but not G.G. Scott junior and Hodgson Fowler only grudgingly) have been included as prefiguring the Movement, yet they are hardly local in character and only rarely truly collaborative. A single creative imagination is clearly in charge of design and iconography and other craftspeople are being employed for what they can supply, rather than what they can invent (the thrilling early stained glass of Clayton & Bell always excepted, although their work of the 1880s and 90s can be more commercial in character). Such a broad attitude to design and collaboration might logically be



projected backwards to include the work of Robert Adam or James Wyatt, and probably should be projected forward to examine the mid-20th century churches of G.G.Pace, but the inclusion of several churches by E.B. Lamb and of the Royal York Hotel for its chunks of Burmantofts faience seems whimsically perverse.

Fundamentally, there seems to be some confusion between what 'Arts and Crafts' really means and what it merely looks like. Is it simply the artful and well-crafted, or the principled and idealistic, or just a matter of style? The best work in these books can be a revelation, but a lot of entries seem to be included on the basis of decorative mannerisms of the sort selectively promoted in magazines like *The Studio*, *The Art Journal* and later *Country Life*, rather than out of commitment to an ideal. Some of the work – half-timbered suburban houses, leaded plain-glazing, architectural metalwork and ceramics, the lesser mosaics – feels routine and commercial; parasitic upon the Movement, but not of it, and merely catching the flavour of the times.

This, together with indiscriminate and undefined use of phrases like 'Arts and Crafts style', 'in an Arts and Crafts manner', 'Arts and Crafts house', 'a variety of Arts and Crafts styles' and even, bizarrely, an 'Arts and Crafts cross', creates the impression that it was a popular fashion, rather than an artistic and intellectual Movement. The founding heroes of the Movement, and many of its most influential members, would have been dismayed to hear it labelled a style. Observations like 'some Arts and Crafts features including tile hanging, balustered porches and half-timbering' reduce the Movement to a catalogue of borrowings, unconnected with any ideological underpinning and, since the authors offer no definition of what they mean by Arts and Crafts, their rather self-congratulatory comment that 'Proto-Arts and Crafts seems a very good description' of Burges's Bewholme vicarage is actually no description at all.

Despite this, what the Armstrongs have to share is revealing and fascinating. Inevitably, there is a strong emphasis on those aspects of building and design which provided the Movement with its richest opportunities, but also limited its influence: housing and ecclesiastical art. The first is close to the heart of the mildly socialist and socially elevating mission of the Movement or at least it is when it concerns company housing or Garden City buildings, like new Earswick and Woodlands, perhaps less so when building 'artistic' villa-dom

in the suburbs. The second sits ironically, and slightly uncomfortably, with the atheistic or agnostic tendencies of many of the Movement's leading figures. Often they seem to secularise, symbolise or sweetly mythologise the Christian narrative into palatability, as their siblings in the New Sculpture Movement also did. Much of the ecclesiastical artwork retreats away from searing sacramental passion into some well-dressed, quasi-mediaeval Never Never land, where principle is reduced to pattern-making, albeit often of a high order. Of all metropolitan church architects, W.D.Caroe seems to be the one who most consistently tried to root his work in its setting, so it is sad that mention of his little church and lych-gate at Ellerburn and his masterly sensitivity at Saint Hilda's Whitby are missing from the Yorkshire volume.

There is much to be enjoyed in these crowded books, which represent an heroic feat of cataloguing and organisation by industrious authors, although a lot is based on the collation of previously published sources. The new ones are well-indexed, with biographical notes containing valuable information on little-known people who practiced in only a limited area. They are not academic books and do not pretend to be scholarly, but gazetteers should be accurate and, if dedicated craft-crawlers will be thrilled by them, they may also be misled about what the Movement actually achieved. Also, because the contents are organised geographically, some significant, but less site-specific art forms espoused by the Movement are hardly (if at all) touched on; book production and illustration, poetry and literature, and even music and masque.

One hopes that a few incorrect captions, quite a lot of mis-spellings, and some careless observations (Port Sunlight is called 'the North West's answer to Letchworth' despite having been begun fifteen years earlier) will be corrected in any future editions.

PHIL THOMAS

Mansfield, Nick, *B-uildings of the Labour Movement*, Swindon: English Heritage (2013) 164pp., 220 ills, £30.00. ISBN 978-1-84802-129-7.

In 1877, in response to plans for the restoration of Tewkesbury Abbey, William Morris set up the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. The

modern conservationist impulse was born and, at its inception, was the Labour movement.

For Morris, like John Ruskin, valued the truth, beauty and political philosophy which historic building entailed. For these leading aesthetes progress meant moving beyond the money-wage economy; it meant spurning mass production and specialization, rejecting machinery and the modern institutions of the state. Old buildings were signs of what freely given, unalienated labour could achieve, celebrations in stone of the pleasure of life as expressed in useful work, the very antithesis of a commodity.

Therefore protection was an act of defiance against capitalism, a defence of pleasure and humanity, a gesture of hope and possibly also of real practical value to generations to come. In Morris's socialist future historic buildings were the germs from which a Socialist art would spring.

Sadly, such a remarkable intellectual lineage failed to instil much of a heritage movement in British socialism. 'While the labour movement has often paid tribute to its long, heroic past, it has often paid only lip service to the preservation of its own material culture,' in Mansfield's doleful words. 'This seems markedly so of its built culture, especially if this is redolent of lost battles, repression, or industrial decline,' a trend only exacerbated by the often functional, cheap, and limited life-span of the sites.

Yet, thankfully, Mansfield's new book captures the remarkable history of those lost buildings and, in so doing, opens up a series of characteristically learned and sympathetic insights into the history of socialism. As the former director of The People's History Museum and one of Britain's finest social historians, Mansfield is a superb guide to this otherwise abandoned field of architectural and labour history.

Because the principles and politics of the Labour movement became embedded in the bricks right from the beginning, 'From the 1830s, meeting rooms and rural communities erected by Owenite socialist and Chartist movements began to reflect their social theories.' What is so enchanting about this study, is that, yes, there are the grand icons of the socialist past, but also an intimate guide to the smaller, more unknown edifices. The Sawyers Arms on Deansgate, Manchester, for example, dating from the 1760s and originally the meeting place of the Sawyers trade society; or the Huddersfield Hall of Science, a four-square, five-bay building in Bath Street, founded by Robert Owen in 1839; or

the Chartist cottages at Snigs End, Gloucestershire – with the accompanying 'Hall of the People', now converted into the Prince of Wales pub.

From the trade societies of the early 1800s, via the Owenites, trade unionists and onto the Labour Party itself, Mansfield deftly traces the architectural output of the Labour movement. Perhaps the hero of his history is the Co-operative Wholesale Society: 'In contrast to many labour movement buildings, the CWS's architectural output was grandiose, ambitious and costly. It was suffused, too, with what has been described as the "anti-capitalist" iconography of beehives, bundles of sticks, clasped hands and wheat sheaves.' As the *Co-operative News* put it in 1933: 'Every shop, like every picture, tells a story: and what is the story so far as the co-operative movement is concerned. Is it not that business can be combined with idealism, and that idealism in relation to business can be presented to the public in a bright and up-to-date fashion?' So the CWS Architecture Department designed a series of elegant society branches, stores and pharmacies. They embraced Art Deco and Modernism with particular flair.

By contrast, the Trade Unions, as Mansfield writes, 'sought to demonstrate their power, stability and longevity through muscular, ostentatious and flamboyant buildings.' Their aesthetic 'was based firmly on revivalism and pastiche, employing the backward-looking rhetoric or iconography inherited from the older trade societies,' in short, a riot of high Gothic, Tudor idiom, and baronial bluster. The enormous, brooding stately home that was the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Convalescent Home in Blackpool gives a brilliant insight into the confidence of the early 20th century trade union movement and its reflection in architectural chutzpah.

Indeed, Mansfield goes on to chart the architecture of socialist leisure in the early 1900s – the Norfolk holiday camps, Clarion cycling clubs and Labour Party social centres, but, by then, there is also a whiff of decline. Mansfield charts the ebbing power of the trade unions in British society during the latter half of the 20th century through their architectural cowardice and banality. The 'dismal' NUPE office of 1980 in Ashton under Lyne – a functional, bunker-like building – was testimony to the declining influence, self-confidence and prestige of the unions.

Mansfield ends his work with a call to arms; a heartfelt plea for the labour movement to move beyond just supporting the preservation of archives

and material culture. The built environment needs explanation and protection too, but with the new People's History Museum in Manchester and the Rochdale Pioneers Museum in Rochdale, there is much to be optimistic about. However, Mansfield quite rightly extends the remit of those involved in the practice of protection to all the readers of his work - 'who might feel inspired to contribute at a local level to the ongoing processes of researching, recording, preserving and even interpreting the built heritage of the working people.'

TRISTRAM HUNT

Willis, Anthony and Phillips, Tim, *British Seaside Piers*, English Heritage and the National Piers Society, Swindon (2014) 287pp, 200 ills, £25. ISBN 978-1-84802-264-5.

"You don't ever forget your first pier, do you?", observes Gyles Brandreth in one of four prefaces to this book. I certainly don't. Mine was Clevedon, Somerset, in 1963. Both pier and town had the winsome air of a genteel resort falling into decay. A future for either seemed difficult to imagine. As a young teenager I was struck by the Severn tide racing in over the sands; I had never witnessed the tide actually on the move like that. You could drop an old penny through the gaps between the planks of the pier deck, so a visit was mildly vertiginous.

Later, I rode my motorcycle to Hastings pier one winter day for a haircut in one of the two Hindu kiosks half way down the pier. This kiosk was fully glazed and had just enough space for the barber and his chair plus one customer. The glass rattled in the February winds and there was a discernible shuddering as the swell broke against Eugenius Birch's substructure. There were hardly any visitors, but a winter sun sparkled on the breakers. The barber wore a Mohican, blue in parts, but happily didn't expect customers to go for this look. It was quite my most memorable barbering.

Clevedon Pier partially collapsed during over-zealous load testing in 1970, but a band of conservationists fought for it throughout those decades, when to do so laid one open to unspoken suspicion of eccentricity and lack of common sense. Today it is a conservation *cause celebre* turned triumphant. Hastings, however, is a burned out ruin that diminishes with every storm and has eluded

successive attempts at regeneration, my haircut a memory of another era.

Piers have always been fragile. Stormy seas, driving rain and scouring tides repeatedly exert their toll. Piers are also susceptible to fire with many enduring multiple conflagrations and fire-fighting is challenging, going on hopeless, for brigades equipped for fire-fighting on land. Fires designated suspicious by the police have played their role. Moreover, most piers in this delightful book had a bay or two removed by the government in the Second World War as a slightly unconvincing precaution against invading forces (though there was post-war reparation). And, as if this was not enough, boats and ships regularly damage piers while docking or under way. Southend - at 1¼ miles long still the world's longest - has been a regular victim of collisions (as well as fires).

Economically, too, fragility is a central theme. Income for maintenance has depended on admissions, entertainment tickets sold and rents from concession booths and amusements. Pleasure piers evolved out of landing jetties and some have retained or have added landing stages to capitalise on increased footfall from ferry passengers and to maintain docking fees as an income stream. A few are today solely justified by such use; though the nicely recreated Victorian pavilion on Rothesay pier has suffered terribly from its over-bearing new neighbour, a gargantuan and clunky pedestrian gangway gantry for ferry passengers, even if the latter nevertheless guarantees the pier footfall. Rothesay will hopefully survive, unlike Birnbeck - one of two piers in Weston-super-Mare - where the business strategy focused on Welsh steamer trippers from across the Severn. It too had a landing stage, later three of them, and entertained the Welsh trippers to the point that setting foot in Weston-super-Mare was superfluous.

Generally, the fortunes of piers have had little to do with the government (in spite of the fact that the foreshore is mostly owned by the Crown Estate). Listing has come on the scene, though only one (Clevedon) makes it to Grade I. Its only fellow Grade I pier, West Pier Brighton, was saved neither by listing nor by a huge Heritage Lottery Fund grant offer. Indeed, the grant award led to protracted legal challenges by the private owners of the adjoining Palace Pier, who claimed such public subsidy was anti-competitive state aid. West Pier finally succumbed to storms and arson and has now disappeared beneath the sands, the most serious loss of a pleasure pier in recent years.

In most cases local authorities too have been at arm's length, though several have taken temporary ownership to rescue piers and a few were originally promoted by the local authority. The majority have always been privately owned and remain so. At best this has meant they have had the kind of entrepreneurial culture needed to move with times and keep abreast of the tastes of visitors. At worst it has led to some cynical moves, such as the recladding of Walton-on-the-Naze pier as a vast windowless box, which would look more at home in an industrial park than on the promenade. Private ownership also means National Lottery grants are not an option. In several cases cost-cutting has led to the pierhead being abandoned or demolished, so that only the landward buildings remain in use. You cannot browse this book long without realising that today, due to old risks and new leisure patterns, the British seaside pier is in deep crisis.

However, piers are crucial to the British seaside scene – just think of Llandudno, Brighton or Cromer without them. Today piers are more likely to be an adjunct to the promenade or an option for a day too cold for bathing. The pierhead entertainment itself is as likely to be bowling or a club night, as the variety or concert orchestras of the heyday.

*British Seaside Piers's* main focus is the British pleasure pier, launched, it is generally agreed, at Hastings in 1872, with a heyday that lasted until 1914, with a long tail since, but it is not overly concerned, thank goodness, with typology and takes an embracing view. Before Hastings were the jetties and landing stages that catered for the fashion for seaside holidays, originating with spa-style sea-bathing fashions in Scarborough and Margate. These too are included, but, with their eclectic architecture and rumbustuous entertainments, it is the structures of those heyday pleasure pier years that are the internationally recognized archetype. This book also includes quite a few that did not fully transition from landing stages to pleasure piers. Their inclusion is presumably justified by their charm and the fact that they are open to visitors (e.g. Totland Bay and Yarmouth, both IoW). There is a Navy pier (Gravesend), several sustained by the military, and one that is a transport interchange (Wemyss Bay), included surely for its architectural ambition. Other structures test the category, such as the Weymouth Bandstand, an interesting modern movement concrete structure of 1939 truncated by dynamite 50 years later; even at its fullest extent this

feels more like a bandstand and beach café rather than a pier and it turned as much inwards as to the sea, perhaps conscious of the business to be done in dull weather. Yet all are in some way connected to the British Seaside experience as it developed in the 19th century, either delivering the holiday-makers or entertaining them once there; or both. Happily too the book also embraces Scotland and Wales (thanks to English Heritage co-publishing with the National Piers Society who take a UK-wide remit). So, we are given the splendours of Llandudno and remote beauty of Tighnabruaich, Dunoon or Ramsey (Isle of Man) among other less well-known examples.

Established architects rarely worked on piers and many of the designers are unknown. Adshead and Ramsey did buildings at Worthing (though omitted from the index) and Oliver Hill designed the 1960 rebuild of the theatre at Weymouth (Hill is not credited and the theatre not illustrated). Allan Brodie provides a concise introduction to the type and explains the developments in piling and steelwork that made these more ambitious piers possible and economic. Eugenius Birch is the hero here, combining, in a very Victorian way, leading-edge engineering, entrepreneurship and a flair for design. His particular gift to piers was screw piles that were able to go deeper into the foreshore bedrock than driven piles. These were often splayed for further, lateral strength. Birch was not invincible, however; both his Eastbourne and Blackpool North piers experienced areas of failure due to miscalculations.

The above deck structures of piers often boast architecture of promiscuous style, but broadly orientalist; this book has numerous photos of these. So many have lost or been shorn of their embellishments. Comically, Skegness opted for a sober German gothic gateway that, as the authors correctly observe, would have been better suited to a cemetery. A more artistic Free Style makes an appearance at Wellington Pier Great Yarmouth in 1900, while, at Penarth, the Pavilion of 1929 (described in this book as Art Deco) is a design that Lutyens might have sketched in light-hearted doodle on the promenade.

The bulk of this book comprises an illustrated gazetteer and the many photographs show lost elements, as well as the very variable current condition of many piers in 2014. There is an extensive reading list, including serious study and valuable enthusiast publishing. There is an occasional lack of consistency in terminology (for

example, should one refer to the 'landward end' or 'root' of a pier?), but these are quibbles. The book is an embracing survey and as enjoyable as a walk on a good pier on a fine day. If it encourages more footfall on our piers it will also help their survival.

ROLAND JEFFERY

Clarke, Jonathan *Early Structural Steel in London Buildings: A Discreet Revolution*, Swindon: English Heritage (2014) 393pp, 357 ills, £75. ISBN 978-1-84802-103-7.

'Every building shall be enclosed with walls constructed of brick, stone or other hard and incombustible substances...'. Thus said the 1894 London Building Act; forty-four years after the building of the Crystal Palace, the richest city in the world was still banning the development of fully framed buildings in normal circumstances at a point when, as Jonathan Clarke shows in his masterly new book, steel had supplanted wrought iron in all major structural applications and was opening up major new possibilities. However, the regulatory environment was not allowed to lag behind progress for very long. A further Act of 1909 stated that:

'it shall be lawful to erect...buildings wherein the loads and stresses are transmitted through each storey to the foundations by a skeleton framework of metal, or partly by a skeleton framework of metal, and partly by a party wall or party walls.'

These two Acts, embodying such radically different approaches, framed a period of fast development, as Clarke demonstrates in his detailed and compelling study.

We have a fairly clear understanding of the rise of structural iron, from Ironbridge in 1779 to the Crystal Palace in 1850. After that, for most historians this fairly detailed narrative breaks down, to be followed by isolated episodes such as St Pancras Station, the Tay Bridge disaster, the Forth Bridge and the Ritz Hotel, traditionally understood to be Britain's first fully steel framed building.

The Institution of Civil Engineers' magnificent Biographical Dictionary, having now reached 1920, is opening up the understanding of this period, but as Clarke's bibliography shows, there are only a few recent studies of structural iron and steelwork in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The book takes the story forward to cover the supplanting of iron by

steel and most of what the author has to say is new.

The book is organised in two halves. Chapters 1 to 8 cover the deep background and context from the early 19th century on, which blend primary material with a synthesis of recent research. Chapters 9 to 14, which comprise about two-thirds of the book, present a series of studies in different building types and are almost entirely based on original research.

Chapters 1-8 are thematic in their organisation: a slight disadvantage of this is that the themes cut across the chronology, something the reader has to remain alert to. Chapter 1 considers the development of steel-production, making the point that the Bessemer method was not capable of producing steel of sufficient quality in sufficient quantities to effect any kind of structural revolution: it was the Siemens-Martin open hearth method, patented in 1861, that was the crucial step forward. Chapter 2 presents a masterly summary of the 'iron inheritance', showing how cast iron construction gave way to wrought iron between the 1840s and 1860 and documenting the rise of British steel production in the 1880s and 90s by a number of large and well-organised producers, typified by Dorman Long of Middlesbrough, the dominant producer in the 1890s. Here is a case in point of the book's organisation being sometimes at odds with chronology. Chapter 3, 'the Continental Dimension', steps back in time to recount how the triumphs of early 19th century iron construction, culminating in the Crystal Palace, were followed by a generation in which the large number, small scale, and enervating conservatism of most British ironfounders led to their being generally bested by larger and better-organised continental competitors, especially from Belgium, who took much of the market for structural ironwork, from the 1850s into the 1880s.

Chapter 4, on the London Building Regulations, which includes the quotations at the head of this review, demonstrates how schizophrenic official attitudes remained until the end of the century. Warehouses and mills had been built with iron columns carrying iron-framed or iron-supported floors since the early 1800s. Long-standing concerns about fire-resistance meant that such styles of internal construction were positively encouraged. By the 1850s there were examples, culminating in the Crystal Palace itself, to show how these principles might be extended to create fully-framed buildings: indeed, there were several ironfounders who specialised in the manufacture

of complete framed buildings. Yet so far as the domestic market was concerned, such things were deemed suitable for hothouses or market halls, but not for 'real' architecture, or not at home anyway; iron churches, and one-offs like Watson's Hotel in Bombay, were for the colonies. In Britain, full structural iron framing remained a rarity, confined to a few remarkable and probably little-known cases like Colonel Greene's boat store in the Sheerness dockyard of 1858-60. Up to the end of the century the official stance in London, as set out in the 1894 Act, continued to be that permanent structures required external walls of load-bearing masonry.

This touches on contemporary philosophical concerns of the kind raised by Pugin and Ruskin, set out here in chapter 5. There seems to have been a sense that a totally iron-framed building was somehow not a piece of architecture, regardless of what had been achieved to date or of any analogies with historic timber-framing. This also had to do with the architectural profession's primacy in the design process: putting the frame first would mean prejudging issues about a building's plan and shape that were regarded as the architect's preserve. Such concerns surfaced when tall steel-framed buildings began to rise in Chicago: was this architecture at all? As Clarke shows in chapters 7 and 8, the rise of all-framed buildings in Britain was, in large part, thanks to American influence. American, and also Mancunian: the author shows that the first major fully steel-framed buildings in Britain were the Westinghouse Company's vast new industrial premises at Trafford Park, to a design closely based on their buildings in Pittsburgh. The American construction engineer James Stewart organised a construction programme here, which in its speed and efficiency matched that of the Crystal Palace. This spectacular example inspired a generation of fully steel-framed buildings in Manchester, notably Charles Trubshaw's Midland Hotel of 1899-1903.

These chapters are very thought-provoking. They imply, rather than set out, an alternative reading of Victorian architectural history, in which the relative failings of the British iron industry after 1850 were paralleled by a reluctance on the part of the architectural establishment, under the influence of Pugin and Ruskin, to contemplate extending the implications and possibilities of the Crystal Palace to other building types. When the structural steel revolution came, as Clarke shows in part 2 of this book, it was indeed a discreet one, for the structural realities continued to be masked by the 'architecture' on the surface.

In Part 2 we see how different building-types in London presented needs and opportunities which until the 1880s were addressed by the use of structural ironwork. The rise of the domestic steel industry and the material's manifest superiority enabled architects to manipulate space and structure more daringly. Chapter 9 on theatres presents dramatic cases in point: the desire for wide and deep balconies with uninterrupted sight-lines called for increasing feats of ingenuity, culminating in Frank Matcham's Coliseum of 1902-4, a design which modern engineers would have great difficulty improving on. Matcham's collaborator, the engineer R.A. Briggs, manifestly deserves a full share in the credit; his relative obscurity is one measure of the inequality with which architects and engineers have often been treated by history hitherto.

Other building types, such as club-houses, hotels, banks and department stores, all discussed at length here, often presented demands for broad, open interiors at ground floor level, with more cellular accommodation above. The story which the author presents is one in which the architects generally remained in the lead, setting out the shapes which the engineers and fabricators were then expected to create. The 1894 Act came just in time to frustrate and delay the move towards full framing which was already implicit in a number of developments. The Ritz Hotel of 1904-5, which does indeed have a full steel frame, was obliged by the Act to have immensely thick, load-bearing outer walls, whose smooth French styling conceals what is going on inside. The 1909 Act responded to rising pressures from consultants and clients alike, to legalise fully-framed buildings and acknowledge the idea that outer walls could be treated as a cladding, whether suspended or supported. By this time several of the more progressive architects like Mewès & Davis, Belcher & Joass or Sir John Burnet were liaising closely with the engineers in the design process, rather than presenting a finished design for the engineer to construct. That architects continued, and often still continue, to receive the lion's share of credit for the result is undeniable and eloquent.

English Heritage have done the author proud and the book is a splendid object in itself, well designed and superbly illustrated. The 357 illustrations include many helpful diagrams and historic drawings and a remarkable range of contemporary photographs. Clarke writes clearly and well and sets out the technical issues with admirable clarity. His book will certainly

be required reading for anyone interested in construction history, but really it deserves to be read by anyone interested in 19th and 20th century architecture. It should, in particular, be essential reading for anyone in the conservation world who is engaged with late 19th and early 20th century buildings, a subject on which it throws so much new and fascinating light.

STEVEN BRINDLE

Saint, Andrew and Thom, Colin, eds, *Battersea*, Survey of London Vols 49 and 50, London, Yale University Press (2013) xx + 480pp., 469 ills, and xviii + 500pp., 446 ills, £75 each or £135 if bought together. ISBN 978-0-300-19616-0 and 978-0-300-19617-7.

The arrival of Volumes 49 and 50 in the parish series means that the *Survey of London* has reached a jubilee worth celebrating. Two handsome volumes, the best part of a thousand pages in all, with almost the same number of illustrations, mark yet another stage in this remarkable enterprise's progress around London. It is true that it has taken the *Survey* 120 years to get this far; those who live in parishes not yet covered may be impatient for their bit of the capital city to get the *Survey* treatment. However, the citizens of Battersea will have no doubt that their volumes have been worth waiting for and will be assured that in their lifetimes and for long after there will be nothing to equal this masterly account of an area more often passed through than visited. Differing pictures of the power station and nearby gasholders on the dustcovers of both volumes may illustrate a general and not inaccurate view that Battersea is a relic of London's now more or less lost industrial past, but the illustration on the front dustcover of Volume 50, of the 18th century St Mary's Battersea set against the Montevetro flats of the 1990s, shows that the parish has a history out of which grew its industrial history and what perhaps it is now in the process of becoming. On consulting these volumes those who pass through Battersea will find that there is much of interest to make them stop.

The obvious place to stop is Clapham Junction. The railways turned a parish, which had been a place with market gardens, a few villas and

a commercial riverside, into a hugely expanded Victorian suburb. It was from the railway line through Battersea that in 1893 Sherlock Holmes memorably described the London School Board's three-decker schools as 'beacons of the future' as they rose above the mainly two storey houses which surrounded them. These two volumes divide the parish not topographically, but by subject, with the second volume (Vol. 50) treating housing of all sorts and the first (Vol. 49) everything else. 100 pages of Vol. 49 are devoted to railways and industry; Battersea to 1835 needs only eleven pages. When compared with many other London parishes Battersea seems chaotic. The St John family and then the Earls Spencer were significant and influential early landowners. Spencer took the lead in the building of Battersea Bridge in 1771, just as the Cadogan Estate in Chelsea in the north side of the river began to be developed, but between 1835 and 1838 the Spencers sold up, Battersea lost the controlling influence of a great landowner and the parish was developed in many hundreds of small parcels. What overall control there was came eventually through an increasingly self-conscious and radical Vestry and, after 1900, Metropolitan Borough, the borough's progressive politics epitomised by John Burns, either the borough representative on the LCC or its MP (or both) from 1889 to 1918. If Battersea was chaotic, then the remedy has not been that suggested for the Wandsworth Road in the 1881 guide, *The Suburban Homes of London*: 'What it really needs is a Haussmann'.

It has to be said at once that the *Survey* has brought order out of chaos. The first volume (Vol. 49) divides itself thematically, so there are chapters on public buildings, churches, industry, entertainment, shopping and so on. Each chapter has its own short introduction. The volume includes such outstanding elements of London's landscape as Battersea Park and, of course, the power station, but alongside these there are many less well-known treasures: the old Battersea Town Hall (now Arts Centre) by E. W. Mountford, built 1892-3 or James Brooks' Church of the Ascension on Lavender Hill. There are some little known schemes which didn't get built. Soane's scheme for a gigantic National Penitentiary (which immediately precedes the entry for Battersea Dogs and Cats Home in the chapter on buildings for health and welfare) is the only surviving drawing from a competition of 1781-2, which Soane didn't win, for a site which didn't in the end get a prison

at all. This volume ends with a short chapter on heliports (Battersea's unique contribution to London building types) and a discussion of the recent development schemes at Nine Elms, an area to be characterised by a revived (we hope) Battersea Power Station and a new United States Embassy, now to be followed by a further embassy for the Netherlands. John Burns can never have imagined that Battersea would become London's new diplomatic quarter.

Perhaps too many of the buildings included in Volume 49 are described and illustrated, but then noted as demolished. Battersea has fared better in the survival of its domestic buildings included in Volume 50. An area once characterised as working class is rapidly being gentrified, no doubt encouraged by the presence of prestigious embassies and the eventual extension of the London tube to Nine Elms. This volume is more conventionally arranged, area by area, and is a masterpiece of description and interpretation. Apart from large country houses and very early buildings Battersea has something of everything. There are five fascinating pages on Old Battersea House, built in the late 1690s, its interest to some extent in the history of building preservation, for the use of the 1930 Housing Act by the Minister of Health (Arthur Greenwood) to secure its preservation, after the refusal of the Office of Works (George Lansbury) to use the 1913 Ancient Monuments Act. Yet most interest centres on the 19th and 20th century buildings, which include not only terrace houses, but mansion flats, philanthropic housing, cottage ('Tyneside') flats, council flats, prefabs and almost every other domestic building type it is possible to imagine. The introduction to this volume is an account of the epic struggles (and eventually corruption) to provide all these. It draws in recent research to show that architects (or perhaps in pre-registration days we should say architect/surveyors) were more concerned in speculative house development than has often been realised. This volume will be a rich quarry for housing historians for many years to come.

So where in the remarkable progress of the *Survey* have these volumes brought us to? It is easy to say that they now record the past and chart the present of a part of London which is rapidly changing, but that is no great novelty, for in part the *Survey* was established more than a century ago to do just that in the turmoil of late Victorian and Edwardian London. Presentation gets better and better and the almost inevitably high production

quality of Yale University Press shines through. Photographs have lost the formality (perhaps the colour helps) which marked earlier volumes and, like earlier topographical drawings, are often enlivened with staffage: an old photograph of Wandsworth Common has grazing sheep, a lonely figure crosses Clapham Common in snow, a man with dogs walks past the bandstand in Battersea Park and, discreetly and anonymously, a selfie of the *Survey of London* team adorns the steps of the Peace Pagoda in the same park. The endpapers of Volume 50 are taken from an 1873 photograph of the workmen on the Artizans', Labourers' & General Dwellings Company Ltd.'s estate at Lavender Hill. Especially the writing is lively; the size and comprehensiveness of the *Survey* means that these are not volumes to read cover to cover, but dipping is rewarding and pleasurable.

In its earliest years the *Survey* was largely a topographical record, drawings and photographs with historical notes added where information was available. From the 1950s, under the guidance of Francis Sheppard, the *Survey* took on a more scholarly academic rigour, adopting the new disciplines of urban history, architectural history, not just as the history of architecture, but as buildings as evidence of the society which produced them, and topography as the understanding of the sense of a place and not just its physical fabric. Founded as part of efforts to save important buildings, the *Survey*, except perhaps for its first monograph on Trinity Hospital in Mile End in 1896, has not produced openly campaigning volumes, but it would be difficult now, in areas covered by more recent volumes, to find a building thought worthy of preservation which is not included. Until recently the *Survey* has been associated with public authorities, which also had a role in building conservation. It has survived many difficulties - early disagreement between the private *Survey* committee and the London County Council, the eventual winding up of the *Survey* committee and then of the LCC and the Greater London Council, which had continued local government patronage, and then in the Royal Commission and English Heritage. It is ironic that these two volumes, with prefaces which note that the *Survey* 'plays a vital role in one of English Heritage's main purposes' should be published at a time when English Heritage has transferred its responsibility to University College, so severing the link between the *Survey*'s study of London's fabric and a sponsoring body responsible for its conservation. In that sense these two volumes are a triumphant swansong for a most enlightened



piece of public patronage. We must hope that under a new regime the *Survey of London* continues to prosper.

FRANK KELSALL

Airs, Malcolm and Whyte, William, eds, *Architectural History after Colvin*, Donington: Shaun Tyas (2013), 118 pp., 30 ills, £30. ISBN 978-1-907730-32-0.

Sir Howard Colvin, who died in 2007, was beyond dispute the doyen of British architectural historians. His greatest achievement was his *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, of which the fourth edition was published after his death. In 2011 a symposium was held at his college, St John's in Oxford, 'to pay tribute ... and to consider the future direction of our discipline'. The papers delivered then are a slightly odd bunch, which is perhaps a sign of the lack of confidence in the 'discipline', about which several contributors express anxiety.

Colvin started out as a medieval historian, with a thesis on the White Canons in England, which gained him his Fellowship at St John's. It was his passionate enthusiasm for architecture which led him to focus his attention in that direction, and he admitted that his concern with biographical study was prompted by his desire to know more about the architects responsible for the buildings he enjoyed visiting. A good example is his first written (though not first published) architectural article on William Scamp, designer of the Naval Bakery in Malta, whose work he had discovered while serving there in the RAF during the War. Rather charmingly, he included Scamp even in the last edition of the *Dictionary*, despite the fact that he failed to fit the chronological test. Enthusiasm was not enough: there was a need to establish the academic respectability of a pursuit which had long been the preserve of the amateur. Colvin's success was proved by the award of a Readership in Architectural History by the University of Oxford and by his knighthood.

Despite his introduction of architectural history into the undergraduate History syllabus, and the number of distinguished research students whom he supervised, he did not establish the subject on a permanent basis in Oxford, something for which contributors to this book express regret, even blame. Its chapters are by no means confined to

adulation. Anthony Geraghty's begins by describing Colvin's book on the Canterbury Quadrangle at St John's as 'a disappointing work', because it 'gives next to no consideration to the Quadrangle's place in the wider history of Caroline England'. Andrew Saint discusses 'The conundrum of "by"', likening the accumulation of biographical detail to stamp-collecting: while praising Colvin's achievement, he suggests that 'it's time to "move on"'. J. Mordaunt Crook's chapter, which is mainly about himself, looks like a lament for his own failure to succeed Colvin in the Oxford chair which was never established.

The other papers include a characteristically entertaining reminiscence by John Harris; a consideration by Frank Salmon of what a Cambridge equivalent to Colvin's fascinating (and most popular) book *Unbuilt Oxford* might be like; a piece on 'Modern History and Modern Architecture' by Alan Powers, which has little to do with Colvin; an interesting discussion of 'Colvin and the Conservation Movement' by Malcolm Airs, which shows that in his quiet way he achieved a good deal; and Simon Thurley on *The History of the King's Works*, that monumental five-volume account so superbly edited by Colvin.

The first paper in the book, 'The success of Sir Howard Colvin and the curious failure of architectural history', is by William Whyte, himself a 'straight' historian who mutated into an architectural one. He points out that, during Colvin's career, its practitioners moved from documentary, 'scientific' history to an approach which Lawrence Stone described in 1979 as the 'revival of narrative'. Whyte argues that 'if it is to survive, architectural history ... needs to re-engage with the architectural profession and to persuade other historians that it has something to teach them too'. The debate is an interesting one, but one is left with a slight dissonance in what is intended to be a 'tribute'.

PETER HOWELL

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