

# THE VICTORIAN RESTORATION OF WELLS CATHEDRAL CHURCH

(BARNARD MS)

By L. S. Colchester, B.A.

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AN eye-witness account of the nineteenth-century restoration of Wells Cathedral, entitled "Notes on the Progress of the Works of Refitting the Lady Chapel, Nave and Choir of the Cathedral Church, 1834-1854", was written by Canon H. W. Barnard, canon residentiary of the Cathedral. As only a single copy, in manuscript, is known to exist, it seems desirable that this should be made available to the public. It is therefore here reproduced, together with some complementary information from other sources.<sup>1</sup>

From time immemorial to the year 1843 the whole interior of our beautiful Cathedral, from East to West, from North to South, & from the floor to the ceiling presented an unbroken mass of whitewash, & yellow ochre;—not a trace of the natural stone could be seen;—the fine sculpture of the capitals, and other ornamental portions were scarcely to be distinguished under the accumulated layers of the odious wash; And even the polished Purbeck marble columns in the Presbytery, & Lady Chapel, had shared the same ruthless fate.—The Choir at this time was fitted with very plain Oak stalls, with canopies running in a line in front of the arches destroying their proportions, and hiding the columns and capitals. Above these were three galleries on each side with tabernacle work in front of blue pannel with gothic tracery in white and gold; they were approached by staircases from the north and south aisles, & were altogether very great disfigurements, & unsightly encumbrances.

The fourteenth-century stalls were apparently designed in 1325 when it was decreed that Prebendaries should each pay 30/- to the making of his own stall.<sup>2</sup> But it is apparent that by 1337 many of them had not paid anything.<sup>3</sup> It was at about this time that the Presbytery was completed and the Quire moved eastwards of the crossing; but the carving of many of the misericords is unfinished. The canopies of the stalls probably resembled those of Chichester (1335) or Hereford (1380), with a horizontal cresting of battlements or brattishing above the cornice. In 1590 galleries

<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my obligation to the Dean and Chapter and to the Chapter Clerk for their kindness in allowing me every facility to consult documents in their keeping.

<sup>2</sup> R.I. f. 173d. *Calendar of MSS of Dean & Chapter of Wells*, i. 213.

<sup>3</sup> R.I. f. 200. *Cal. MSS*, i. 238-9.

were placed on top.<sup>1</sup> The old stalls complete with galleries are best illustrated in Britton's *History and Antiquities of Wells Cathedral*, 1823, Plate XV and in *Archaeologia*, LV (1896), 339. Panels of the gothic tracery of conventional perpendicular pattern have been incorporated in the barrier to the North Transept and on the North side of S. John the Baptist's Chapel, and one panel untouched is in the Cathedral Library. Part of the balustrade of one of the staircases is in the Wells Museum. In their mutilated form the canopies were undeniably ill-proportioned and unsightly, but it might have been possible to restore them to their pre-1590 condition.

At this time the Chapter consisted of

Edmund Goodenough, D.D., Dean.

Frederick Beadon, M.A.—Chancellor of the Church.

Henry Watson Barnard, M.A.

Henry Law, M.A.—Archdeacon of Wells.

William Thomas Parr Brymer, M.A.—Archdeacon of Bath.

The disfigured & discreditable condition of the Cathedral had long been a subject of complaint & regret with all lovers of ecclesiastical architecture; but whether former members of the Capitular Body had been altogether indifferent;—or whether being sensible of, & lamenting the state of their Church they had viewed the evil as of too great magnitude to be encountered, certain it is that up to the above date no effort had been made to overcome it.

A restoration under Edward Blore, who was responsible for drastic restorations at Westminster and Peterborough, had been envisaged in 1830.<sup>2</sup> Quite extensive renovations had taken place in 1832, including the laying of 'new Pavement in the north and south Aisles adjoining the Choir', cleaning 'the inside of the Church throughout' and plastering the Cloisters afresh.<sup>3</sup> Edmund Goodenough became Dean in 1831.

To the honor of Dean Goodenough's memory be it recorded that he gave the first impetus to the great work of restoration.—With a large family, and limited private resources he made the most liberal offer on his own part, and by his active exertions promoted the contributions of others.—In this he was nobly supported by Archdeacon Brymer, a man of considerable taste and large private fortune, who helped forward the good work with a munificent offering of One Thousand Pounds.—Thus with a sum in hand sufficient to justify a beginning, attention was first directed to the Lady Chapel.

The preamble to the circular letter of appeal written by Dean Goodenough in 1842 reads as follows:—

"I feel it my duty to lay before you some facts relating to the present state of the Interior of our Choir, together with our Organ, & some other

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. MSS*, ii. 317. See also ii. 422, s.d. March 27th, 1640. The stalls were restored in 1664. *Cal. MSS*, ii. 433-4. One misericord (no. 62) of this date survives in the Cathedral Library. Galleries in the bay next to the Organ-screen were added on either side in 1740-1. *Cal. MSS*, ii. 537, 538.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Minutes, February 10th, 1848, quoted (below, p. 5 at note 13).

<sup>3</sup> Chapter Minutes, August 31st, 1832.

things appertaining to the Church of Wells: not doubting but that you will take much interest in the welfare & reputation of our ancient Foundation, & that you will do everything in your power to promote the more decorous Worship of Almighty God within our venerable Cathedral.

“From the date of the Restoration of Charles the Second, very little indeed has been done towards the Improvement of the Stalls, the Organ, the parts adjoining the Altar, together with many minor details, including also the general accommodation (*sic*) of the Congregation: & the greatest desire is now entertained for the perfect restoring of the whole in a style & age suitable to the Architecture of the Church . . .”

It is here necessary to observe that the beauty of this exquisite specimen of architectural taste and skill was grievously marred by the accumulation of monuments, and mural tablets;—in some instances partially blocking up the windows, & otherwise intersecting the mouldings, and defacing the walls.—It is not every one who has moral courage sufficient to grapple with an evil of so delicate a nature. Dean Goodenough was neither wanting in courtesy, nor in sympathy.—He respected the natural feelings of those who looked with pride and affection at the honorable memorials of their departed relatives;— but he felt that such disfigurements ought never to have been permitted;—that they were out of place, and remnants of bygone days of bad taste & ecclesiastical indifference;—and not willing that the Church over which he presided and which he so much admired & loved should pass to his successors without every legitimate effort on his part to clear it of its faults, and abuses, he boldly determined on the immediate removal of every monument & tablet,—And strange to say, he managed this difficult undertaking with so much tact and judgment, that although willing & general assent could hardly be anticipated, yet few & inconsiderable were the complaints & remonstrances which followed their expulsion.—They were all removed to the walls of the Cloisters with one exception, viz, the statue of Mr. Phelips by Chantrey;—and this had been so recently erected at the expense of the County Magistrates, and with the permission of the Dean and Chapter, that it seemed justly to claim at least a temporary exemption from the rigid operation of the general rule.

The Phelips memorial was not removed to the Cloisters till 1924 when S. John the Baptist's Chapel was furnished.

The walls of the Lady Chapel being thus happily cleared of these encumbrances, the good work of improvement went on till the whole space beyond the line of the Reredos, with all the columns, capitals, & arches, including the Chapels on the North & South, were entirely scraped, & cleaned, and the marble shafts polished.

The East window of the Lady Chapel had been from time to time so patched & mended, that it presented a chaos of coloured glass; and although the figures were extremely imperfect, enough of their forms & inscriptions remained to assist in unravelling the complete design.—The restoration was entrusted to Mr. Willement of London, and the expense, together with the carved altar screen beneath it, and the encaustic tiles on the floor, and the painting of the ceiling, was defrayed by Dean Goodenough privately, in addition to his public subscription of £500.

The extent to which Willement 'restored' this window is discussed in *Stained Glass in Wells Cathedral*, Friends of Wells Cathedral, 2nd ed. 1956, Appendix A, 43.

To judge from Carter's plan (c. 1794)<sup>1</sup> where all the niches of the reredos are shewn, and Garland's drawing in Winkles's *Cathedrals* (1936)<sup>2</sup> in which the side niches are plastered over but the others appear much as they are now, and from the fact that the top was left in its broken and mutilated state, it appears that the restoration of the reredos was not drastic. It is shewn in virtually its present form in John Coney's pencil drawing, dated 1813, in the possession of the Dean & Chapter. Plaster was removed from the side niches and the top, ribs of the vaults of the larger niches gilded, and doubtless some of the pinnacles replaced. This reredos is almost certainly in the position for which it was built, c. 1440. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was thought to be the one which was removed from behind the High Altar in 1758, and there was in 1905 a movement to transfer it to that position.

"The encaustic Tiles for the East end of the Lady Chapel" were the gift of Mrs. Goodenough, and the "beautiful Eagle lectern" was given by the Misses Goodenough.<sup>3</sup>

The design for the painting of the vault was executed by Thomas Willement. Five alternative designs by him are preserved in the Cathedral Library. Although the central boss owes its colour to this time there is no reason to suppose that it is not original.

The following is a description of the East window in the Lady Chapel :—  
In the top compartment appears the Saviour giving the blessing.

The rest of the head of the window is filled by figures of Angels bearing the instruments of Christ's Passion, & Emblems.—

In the upper series of full length figures are the following, beginning from the north side.—

1. Noah, with the text, with thee will I establish my covenant.
2. Abraham;—In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.
3. David the King.—A sceptre shall arise out of Jacob.
4. Isaiah.—Behold a Virgin shall conceive & bear a Son.—
5. Malachi.—The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.—

#### LOWER SERIES

1. Eve.—It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—
2. Serpent.—Temptation.—Ye shall not eat of it lest ye die.
3. The Virgin with the Infant Saviour.
4. Brazen Serpent.—Make thee a fiery serpent.
5. Moses.—When he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.—

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in part in *Archaeologia*, LXV (1914), Pl. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i, Plate 37, of which the Rev. W. H. Turner's water-colour, dated 1840 in the Victoria & Albert Museum (no. E.599-1918), is a copy.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter Minutes, December 1st, 1846.

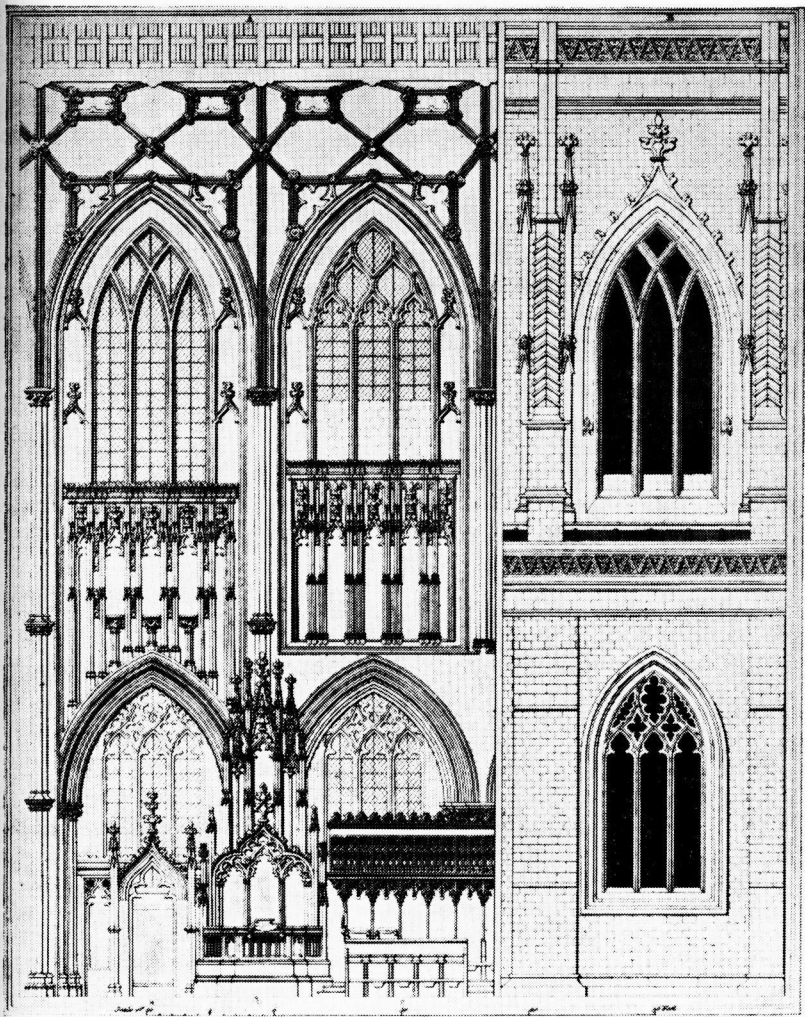


FIG. 1  
BISHOP'S THRONE AND STALL CANOPIES.  
(from *Britton*, Pl. xv, 1823).  
WELLS CATHEDRAL.

A description of the East window, together with the texts from the Vulgate as they appear in the glass (some of which differ considerably from those given here) is given in *Stained Glass in Wells Cathedral*, 28-29.

The encaustic tiles before mentioned were executed by Mr. Minton of Stoke upon Trent.—

In the meanwhile other subscriptions had flowed in.—A statement of the sums collected from the commencement of the work in 1843 to its completion in 185<sup>1</sup> together with the items of expenditure follows at the end of this record.—

The record breaks off without this statement being included. For the work under Dean Goodenough the sum of £3,442.16.0 was collected, and £2,201.6.10 expended. The more drastic work in the Quire under Dean Jenkyns starting with the balance of £1,241.9.4 actually cost £4,694.8.9, and there was in 1855 a deficit of well over £800. This was borrowed from the bank and repaid £100 annually out of income<sup>2</sup>.

In the year 1844 the process of scraping & repairing was commenced at the West end and went rapidly forward until every particle of the offensive white, & yellow daubing was removed throughout the length & breadth, & height of the Nave and transepts.—Bishop Bubwith's Chantry and that erected by the executors of Bishop Beckington<sup>3</sup> underwent considerable repair, and were completely cleaned, & restored.—

On removing the plaster from the ceiling of the Nave & transepts the remains of an ancient scroll were discovered, and as both the colors, and the pattern were clearly identified, the Dean, and Archdeacon Brymer wished them to be replaced. This was accordingly done with deference to those whose wishes were entitled to consideration;—but whether with good or bad effect, is a matter of opinion.

Thus much then was completed by the early part of the year 1845;—& the work was then suspended for want of funds.—

The period which intervened between the discontinuance of operations in 1845, & the resumption of them in 1847 was one of painful reminiscence.—The talented Head of the Chapter, the great promoter of, & liberal contributor to all that had already been accomplished, was called from the scene of his earthly labors.—Dean Goodenough was no more.—The commanding power of his superior mind had been partially weakened by a previous attack; and on the 2nd of May 1845 a still more violent seizure put an instantaneous termination to his valuable life.—His mortal remains rest in that part of the building, (the Lady Chapel) to the improvement and decoration of which he had so largely contributed. A handsome black marble slab inlaid with brass, marks the spot, which will long be associated with the memory of one, whose highly cultivated mind, and sound judgment, reflected dignity on every station which he was destined to fill.—

Most fortunately for the Chapter, indeed for all who take an interest in the goodly sustentation of such a splendid Fabric, Dean Goodenough was succeeded

<sup>1</sup> Left Blank in MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Minutes, May 25th, 1855.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Sugar Chantry.

by one equally anxious to see the entire restoration of the interior completed in the best taste & style, & not a whit behind him in liberality;—Richard Jenkyns DD, Prebendary of Dinder, and Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

The Choir was now the only portion untouched. Its wall & arches and sculptured capitals remained with their incrustations of plaster, & coats of dust, the accumulation of ages.—Although the space remaining to be completed was comparatively small in extent, yet the judgment and experience required for its becoming restoration were of no ordinary character.—Mr. Benjamin Ferrey, of London had hitherto been employed, and had directed the work to the entire satisfaction of the Chapter.—The Choir however presented difficulties, & involved considerations which made the Chapter doubly anxious to act with caution, and to secure the advice of the most competent judges;—and with this view Mr. Anthony Salvin, of London, was also consulted.

“Refitting of the Choir.—The subject of the restoration and refitting of the Choir was discussed and the monies received and disbursed on the former subscription 1842, having been examined,

“Agreed,

“That with the balance in hand and the promises of further assistance, hopes may be entertained of resuming the work which has been unavoidably suspended; that an appeal may be reasonably made to the public, and that The Dean and Archdeacon Brymer be requested to draw up a Document to that effect—and with an earnest wish on the part of the Dean and Chapter to execute the work in the best possible manner, the Services of Mr. Salvin, Architect, be engaged in addition to Mr. Ferrey’.<sup>1</sup>

“The reports designs and estimates of Messrs. Ferrey and Salvin, Architects, together with a report made by Mr. Blore in 1830, having been maturely considered:

“Agreed,

“That . . . preference be given, upon the whole, to the views suggested by Mr. Salvin for the restoration of the Choir . . .”<sup>2</sup>

It has been previously stated that there were three Galleries on each side over the stalls. These, it is true, were most objectionable in their construction & appearance but nevertheless, with all their faults, they possessed the merit of accommodating more than forty persons.—Now it was an important element of consideration, in removing these, to lose as little room as possible; and to gain some compensation by a different arrangement below.

This suggested the idea of placing the new stalls within the line of the arches; by which an additional row of seats was obtained;—and hence the origin of the Stone Canopies. Mr. Salvin had already seen the experiment tried with Oak in another Cathedral, and he pronounced it an utter failure, owing to the impossibility of producing becoming harmony & congruity between such different materials as wood and stone in juxta position.—The question was long discussed in Chapter, and ultimately decided in favor of Stone, a decision which has met with the almost unanimous approbation of the sightseeing Public.

<sup>1</sup> Chapter Minutes, August 13th, 1847.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Minutes, February 10th, 1848.

The choir stalls are placed between the pillars at Southwell where the return stalls and canopies are of stone, the remainder being of wood.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to substitute stone for wood was not taken hastily, as the following extracts from Chapter Minutes shew; indeed it was nearly a year before a final decision was reached. Even then only the return stalls under the pulpitum were put in hand.

2nd Oct. 1848:—"The 5 Canopies<sup>2</sup> in the Choir having been, according to an agreement, submitted to the inspection of the Chapter, agreed, That (with the exception of the necessary repairs and scraping) the work in the Choir be suspended, for the purpose of longer deliberation on the point of substituting Stone instead of Oak Canopies and that Tuesday the 31st of October be fixed for the Chapter Meeting to take this matter into further consideration.—"

31 Oct. 1848:—"In consequence of the absence of Mr. Beadon, the question . . . relative to the adoption of Stone instead of Oak Canopies, could not be decidedly determined and it was agreed,

"That this question should be further deferred".

17 July 1849:—"The restoration and refitting the Choir having been again taken into consideration and a statement made of the receipts and disbursements:

"Agreed

"That the material to be used for the Stalls and Canopies over them be Stone: and that Mr. Salvin, the Architect, be instructed to recommence the work without delay and according to certain points agreed upon this day, of which a Memorandum is to be kept by the Dean.—"

4 Dec. 1849:—"Agreed, That the work be continued by restoring and piercing the Screens on the North and South of the Choir, with similar Mouldings &c. on either side.—"

29 Jan. 1850—"It appearing that the Screen now in process of being erected between the Pillars on the W. (*sic*) & S. side of the Choir ill accords with the Ornamental character of the adjoining Stalls.

"Agreed,

"That the order of the work be suspended and that the Dean be requested to write to Mr. Salvin for his suggestions and advice on the matter.—"

12 Feb. 1850:—" . . . That Mr. Salvin be consulted on a Plan suggested for leaving the upper part open & fitting up the lower spaces between the Pillars in the Choir with the old Stalls".

<sup>1</sup> Other examples doubtless exist, but I cannot now recall any.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. models.



17 Dec. 1850:—" . . . The old Misereres<sup>1</sup> or Stalls to be put up as far as they will extend".

This knotty point being settled, the work of demolition was forthwith commenced in the Choir;—the Galleries and side walls were taken down, & all the seats removed;—and the Nave was temporarily fitted up for the celebration of divine service.

"It was at a subsequent meeting agreed, that the work of taking down the old Stalls & Pews, for the purpose of removing them to the Nave as a temporary place for Divine worship should commence on Monday the 21st Februry."<sup>2</sup>

The Pillars, Capitals, Arches & Walls above having been first cleaned of wash, & plaster, the ceiling next underwent the same renovating process, and the bosses were afterwards colored and gilded. The Bishop's throne which before was painted in very bad taste & style, and projected unnecessarily forward, was effectively divested of its wretched daubing & contracted within narrower, but not less convenient dimensions.

The decision to restore the Bishop's Throne and to erect the sedilia was taken on 9 April 1850. The original date of the Bishop's Throne is shown in Britton, Plate XV. Canon Church quotes a description of 1848: "The throne of the bishop was entirely painted over to represent green marble; on the panel at the back was a rude representation of a landscape. This paint, being in oil, was extremely tenacious, and gave much trouble in removal, and the effect produced by the change was extraordinary".<sup>3</sup>

The principle of Stone Canopies had been at this time long settled, yet the selection of a suitable design was no easy task.—Different models were prepared by Mr. Salvin, & submitted for inspection; and it was not until after several trials, & alterations that a final decision was obtained.

But now another, & more formidable obstacle presented itself.—"The children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth."—The plans were ready, but there was no money to defray the cost of execution;—the supplies were stopped;—the fund exhausted.

The difficulty however had scarcely arisen, before it was overcome.

Dean Jenkyns nobly came forward, & took the entire charge of the Canopies, to the amount of One Thousand pounds upon himself;—And this after a previous subscription of three hundred pounds, exclusive of two hundred from Mrs. Jenkyns. Nor did the liberality of these great benefactors stop here;—for they made a further present of the Stone Pulpit, at the cost of two hundred pounds.—

At the Chapter Meeting on December 17th, 1850, the Dean offered to pay at his own expense for Stalls and Canopies on the North and South sides, to conform with those already erected at the west and under the organ-loft.

It should here be mentioned that during the progress of the restorations, three

<sup>1</sup> Sixty of the mediaeval misericords are in the substalls. Three more are exhibited in the S. Quire Aisle, and one is in the Victoria & Albert Museum. (W.48—1912).

<sup>2</sup> MS note by Dean Jenkyns in Chapter Minutes, s.d. February 10th, 1848.

<sup>3</sup> C. M. Church: *Wells Cathedral*, London, 1897, 70-1.

stained glass windows had been presented to the Church.—The first the gift of the Principal, Revd. John Hothersal Pinder, Vice Principal, Revd. . . . .  
 . . . ,<sup>1</sup> and the Students, of the Wells Theological College.—It was executed by Mr. Clutterbuck of London, and it occupies the southern extremity of St. John's Chapel.<sup>2</sup>—Subject, the four Apostles, Peter, Andrew, James, & John.

This glass was removed without regrets in 1926, and is stored in the triforium, its place being taken by some of the Rouen glass which was in the great West window. See *Stained Glass in Wells Cathedral*, 23 ff.

The second window was presented by Francis Henry Dickenson Esqre of Kingweston.—It was the work of Mr. Willement of London, and is on the south, above the side entrance into the Choir.—Subject, the figures of St. Dunstan, St. Patrick, and St. Benignus; copied from an ancient seal used by the Abbots of Glastonbury.

The window was painted in 1846 and erected early in 1847. "In the Cathedral Library is Willement's first drawing for the window, prepared in 1844. It shows much smaller figures (of S. John, S. Augustine and S. Katharine), and spaces at top and bottom are filled with conventional patterns and grisaille. Dean Goodenough's 'Rationale' for the same window is also preserved. He advocated two tiers of figures, but 'if it is better to have only one Series of Figures of a larger size, the Second Series would form a Corresponding Window on the North side.' It is interesting to note that the figures represented in Willement's completed window—S. Patrick, S. Dunstan and S. Benignus—featured neither in his original scheme nor in Dean Goodenough's 'Rationale' of six figures".<sup>3</sup>

The third window was put up by subscriptions raised amongst certain Clergy of the Diocese, in testimony of their respect for Archdeacon Brymer, on whom the management of the Diocese chiefly devolved during the infirmities of Bishop Laws declining years;—and who in the discharge of so arduous, & responsible, & delicate a trust gained the admiration of all parties by his judicious, conciliatory, and straight forward conduct. The window occupies the position to the North in the Choir, opposite to that given by Mr. Dickenson.—It was executed by Mr. Bell<sup>4</sup> of Bristol,—subject, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Athanasius.—*August 1852.*

The above gratifying memorial had scarcely been erected when the deservedly honored subject of it was smitten with a sickness unto death.—His wife, long a great sufferer, had died rather suddenly, and unexpectedly a few weeks before; and the shock completely overpowered him;—his spirits never rallied, and a casual illness supervening his nervous system was unequal to the pressure, and in a few days he breathed his last.—Had he retained full possession of his mental powers there is reason to believe that his beloved Cathedral would have benefited by a further extension of his bounty;—but from the time when alarming symptoms

<sup>1</sup> Left blank in MS. The vice-principal at the time was Rev. W. Pedder.

<sup>2</sup> Now S. Katherine's Chapel.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from *Stained Glass in Wells Cathedral*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Bell, 1851.

threatened no rays of consciousness, sufficient for the intimation of his supposed wishes & intentions, shewed themselves.—

It was during 1851 that drastic repairs had to be undertaken on the West Front at the S.W. side, covering a number of years. The initial expense was borne by Archdeacon Brymer and T. H. Markland, Esq.<sup>1</sup> It must be borne in mind that during the period of the restoration routine repair work had to continue.

The beautiful floor of Encaustic tiles within the area appropriated to the Communion Service, was the gift of Mrs. Brymer.—

A rich crimson velvet Cloth with suitable emblems worked in gold for the Communion Table was presented by T. H. Markland Esqre of Bath.<sup>2</sup>—

Sept 1852

On the decease of Archdeacon Brymer, John Hathersol Pinder M.A. Precentor, & Principal of the Theological College, was elected to supply the vacant Canonry.

1854 Early this year the work in the Choir with the exception of furniture, & one or two minor matters of detail, was completed, and it was in contemplation to have a grand re-opening soon after Easter; . . . .

It may here be mentioned that as originally erected the Choir stalls encroached too much on the central passage. "On the completion of the Rows of Seats in the Choir, it being found that the general effect and appearance was injured by too wide a space being left between them, Mr. Salvin be instructed to correct the defect by carrying the Seats further back from the centre of the Choir"<sup>3</sup>. In a letter dated 1st February, 1854, Anthony Salvin wrote: "Therefore all that is to be done is to furnish the reredos, & as regards the latter I would rather see the furniture in first that the reredos should have sufficient, and not too much Colour, & the person I send down to paint it can at the same time label the stalls". But it was ten years before the stalls were labelled.

1 October 1861. "Resolved—That the Dean and Canons in residence should consider the best mode of decorating the backs of the stalls and adding the Scrolls". 21 January 1864.—"Lettering and Decoration of Stalls in the Cathedral.—The list of the Prebends as created and designated in the Charter was settled and approved". 2 January 1865: "Mr. Ferrey to advise on Decoration of Stalls".

The "reredos" referred to is no doubt the low Altar-screen, or feretory wall which is undoubtedly contemporary with the building, but not its decoration. "The restoration of this screen was the last work of Mr. Ferrey in the cathedral; it had been completely defaced, with the exception of a compartment on the return of the screen which

<sup>1</sup> Chapter Minutes, January 29th and April 21st, 1851.

<sup>2</sup>"The rich crimson velvet and gold cloth which covers the Communion Table and *fleur-de-lis* pattern of the cushion on the steps in front of the rail are in character with the sacred spot they adorn." *Tourist's Guide to Wells and the Cathedral*, n.d., 56.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter Minutes, August 26th, 1853.

served as a pattern for the elegant diaper work now ornamenting it".<sup>1</sup> The colouring with red and yellow ochre of a small section of the diaper work behind the High Altar has been tried at some time. Britton (Plate XVII) shews the feretory wall with a cresting of battlements.

... but a melancholy and unforeseen event thwarted these pleasing anticipations, & diverted the plan. It is a singular fact that the progress of the Restoration has been especially marked by intervals of sorrow. Already have we in these few pages recorded the premature & unexpected death of two principal Promoters of and contributors to the work, Dean Goodenough, and Archdeacon Brymer; and now have we to add the loss of one whose munificence even exceeded that of these his great Precursors in the goodly race of fame—Dean Jenkyns had, it is true, reached the age of 72; but his natural force was not abated, nor his activity in superintending the interests of the Cathedral diminished. He was not free from symptoms of physical weakness; but so little was any danger apprehended, that he had been requested to preach the Sermon on the projected occasion of reopening the Choir. But how uncertain are all the calculations and purposes of man! He had scarcely reached Oxford, (whither he had gone to fulfil his duties as Master of the College over which he had presided for 35 years, & which by the exercise of sound judgment, & strict discipline he had raised from comparative obscurity to the highest position of Academical honor) when the presence of alarming disease manifested itself, and on the 6th of March after a few days illness he resigned his breath in peace. His mortal remains were removed to Wells, and by the express desire of his Widow, the Burial Service was solemnised in that Choir which had been restored chiefly at his expense.

He was buried in the middle of S. Katharine's Chapel. The tomb was removed in 1923 to the south-east corner, next to that of Dean Gunthorpe, to enable the Chapel to be used for its rightful purpose. His tomb is inscribed *Multum ei debet ecclesia Wellensis*, which has been regarded as a piece of unconscious irony and which, Prof. Freeman unkindly observed, seemed to be taken from Lucan's verdict on Nero.

In making use of the Choir on this occasion no thought was at first entertained by the then resident Members of the Chapter, beyond the performance of the funeral obsequies; but on reflection many reasons suggested themselves for converting an accidental into a final movement and the daily service was resumed and continued in the Choir from that day, March 14th. On Sunday the 19th, the Stone Pulpit which was the joint gift of Dean Jenkyns & his wife, & in wch. he himself was to have been the first to preach, was used to record his death, and to pay that tribute to his memory to which the many virtues both of his public and private life, so justly entitled him.

It was not, however, till 1868 that the Dean and Chapter ordered that "the Steps and approach to the Pulpit be completed as soon as possible".<sup>2</sup>

Salvin's design shows wide steps leading to the pulpit from the east side, impeding the northern entrance to the Presbytery.

<sup>1</sup> *Tourist's Guide to Wells*, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Minutes, April 24th, 1868.

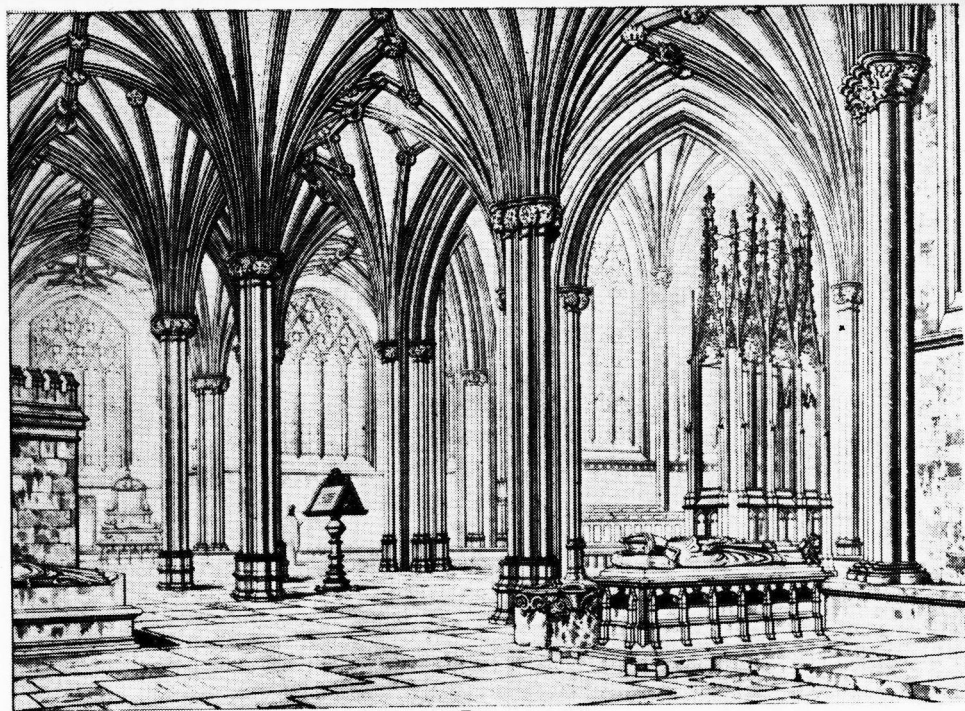


FIG. 2  
WALL BEHIND HIGH ALTAR.  
(from *Britton*, Pl. xvii, 1823).  
WELLS CATHEDRAL.

As yet no preparation had been made in the way of furnishing;—the old cushions, & other materials were made to answer the temporary purposes; and new & more suitable requisites to be supplied at leisure. However before the expiration of the year old things had passed away & all things had become new; The Choir which before exhibited a specimen of the worst taste of the 17th century, rendered doubly offensive, by faded drapery & worn out furniture & dusty walls, now presents a sight on which the eye can dwell with pleasure. Cleansed from wash & plaster, & cleared from all encumbrances, the columns & capitals stand out in all their beautiful proportions. Instead of incongruous materials, and rude workmanship, harmony and skill prevail throughout. St. Andrew's Cathedral always celebrated for the richness and grandeur of its West front, now challenges the admiration of every passing stranger by the development of its charms within;—and tho' small in dimensions as compared with the greater number of English Cathedrals, yet in the combination of its architectural attractions stands surpassed by none. Universal approbation bears testimony that the sums liberally intrusted to the Dean and Chapter have not been expended without due care and judgment,—while for the personal sacrifices made by the Members individually, they have been more than compensated by the satisfaction of having faithfully executed their trust as guardians of the Fabric, and of having conduced, through the medium of sensible objects, to a greater reverence for the Sanctuary, and the promotion of God's honor and glory.

1854 New Altar Service Books were given by Miss Henrietta Tudway and a Bible for the Brass-desk by Mrs. Jenkyns.

At this point the account breaks off. The author, Canon Barnard, died of cholera at Granada on 9 July, 1855. The restoration of S. Cuthbert's Church, of which he had also been Vicar, was begun in his memory. He was succeeded as Vicar by the new Dean, Dr. Sacheverell Johnson.

One major change was still to take place. This was the installation of the new organ, involving unspeakable damage to the west face of the pulpitum. The re-building of the organ, last rebuilt by Samuel Greene in 1760, had been long under consideration. It was, for instance, one of the items mentioned (twice) in Dean Goodenough's original appeal of 1842. In fact, an estimate submitted by William Hill for the removal of the organ from the screen and rebuilding it within the screen walls was actually "agreed upon by Dr. Goodenough Dean of Wells, July 29th, 1844". Nothing was done, however; and Mr. W. J. Welsh, of Beaumont, Wells, got into touch with Henry Willis, who wrote at the end of a lengthy letter dated 28 March, 1848: "In conclusion I have only to say that if the Dean and Chapter will permit me to carry out my views I will guarantee them the finest and most effective Instrument in England and for this any amount of security can be given". Mr. Welsh laid his proposal before the Dean and Chapter, who, however, said they must turn

it down as they had not enough money even to complete the work already undertaken in the Quire.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently Mr. Welsh formed a committee of laymen with the idea of presenting a new organ to the Dean and Chapter. Their idea at this stage was that the organ should be divided so as to allow a clear view from West to East through the centre.<sup>2</sup> This proposal was rejected. Salvin did not wish the old case of 1664 to be destroyed or the pulpitum tampered with.<sup>3</sup>

What actually happened is partially told in a note written apparently by Mr. Welsh himself at the back of Canon Barnard's MS:

"The proposal for a new Organ emanated from a Committee of the Citizens of Wells founded upon a resolution passed upon the 7th day of October 1853.

"The original arrangement was that the Committee should raise the sum of £1,000, of which £850 was to be applied to the purchase of a new Organ, and £150 was to be contributed towards the expense of a Case and Screen proposed by Mr. Salvin.

"Towards this Sum the Dean & Chapter voted a Subscription of £100 and also undertook to defray all further expense of the Case and Screen.

"In June, 1856, an Application was made by the Committee to the Dean and Chapter to guarantee their ascertained deficiency (estimated at £150) in the Sum to be raised by the Committee, and it was suggested, on this occasion to revert to Mr. Willis' plan, which involved considerably less outlay; but no arrangements could be made in consequence of Mr. Beadon's having (by virtue of the authority committed to him by the Dean and Chapter) already sanctioned Mr. Salvin's scheme".

"Mr. Salvin's scheme" had apparently been worked out after ascertaining Willis' requirements, although, as is quite plain, these were capable of modification. It involved the thrusting out of the middle portion of the West face of the pulpitum (at a cost of £300) and the erection on it (for a further £300) of what was little more than a wooden framework, subsequently described as the most hideous case in the country, surrounded by four carved angels. The work was entrusted to James Forsyth who had carved the stall canopies. The opening recital on the new organ was given by W. T. Best on 2 June, 1857. Further information about this organ is given in *Short History of the Organs of Wells Cathedral*, The Friends of Wells Cathedral, 2nd ed., 1953, 14-16.

Among the many unfortunate disturbances occasioned by the restoration of the Quire were the removal of the canopy of Bishop Beckington's

<sup>1</sup> Chapter Minutes, October 31st, 1848.

<sup>2</sup> Personal letter of 1854.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from Salvin to the Dean.

chantry to S. Calixtus' Chapel,<sup>1</sup> where a stove chimney pipe was subsequently driven through one end of it, and the removal of the effigies of the Saxon Bishops to the Undercroft and other parts of the church. These were restored as nearly as possible to their original positions by Dean Armitage Robinson in 1913.<sup>2</sup>

One further contemplated change failed to be effected. In the Cathedral Library there exists a drawing and estimate for re-opening the lantern of the central tower. This would have involved the removal not only of the fan-vault erected by William Smythe *c.* 1480, but also of the stone grids which had probably been inserted by William Joy, *c.* 1338, in order to stabilise the tower, at the same time as he put in the inverted arches below. As there was no suggestion of re-opening the great lancets filled in *c.* 1440, *tempore decasus alte turris*,<sup>3</sup> the effect would not have compensated for the loss of stability:

"Interior of the Tower—

"To fix Scaffolds and Centering and take down the Groined stone Ceiling, and make good the stone work where it may have been cut away to receive the groining—

"To repair and cleanse the interior stone work from the level where the Groin was placed, up to the Roof, and remove the square windows between the inside arches on the 3rd Story and make the stone work perfect—

"To form the underside of the Roof of the Tower into a proper Ceiling, with moulded Beams and other work—

"The cost of executing the foregoing works will be £550 os. od. Oct. 28 1848".

Minor innovations included the introduction in 1865 of gas in place of candles for lighting the Vicars' desks, followed exactly three years later by the use of gas throughout the Quire, and by the gift one year later of the two gas standards or candelabra in the Sanctuary by Canon Meade;<sup>4</sup> "they were executed at the Metal Works of Mr. Singer at Frome".<sup>5</sup> There was as yet no heating in the Cathedral, but in 1868 it was ordered that not more than four Gill Stoves of the type used at S. Cuthbert's Church should be purchased.<sup>6</sup>

In 1872 "It was ordered that the South Window near the Communion Table be examined and restored so as to prevent the Sun shining so strongly into the Cathedral".<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapter Minutes, December 4th, 1849. See *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, xvii, 123; E. A. Freeman, *History of the Cathedral Church of Wells*, London, 1870, 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Archaeologia*, LXV (1914), 95 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Communal's Accounts for 1449/50. cf. *Cal. MSS.* ii, 78, 70, 72.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter Minutes, January 2nd, 1865, January 2nd, 1868, January 2nd, 1869.

<sup>5</sup> *Tourist's Guide to Wells*, 56.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter Minutes, October 24th, 1868.

<sup>7</sup> Chapter Minutes, January 2nd, 1872.