

THE CHURCH TOWERS OF SOMERSET

By John H. Harvey

It is now one hundred years since the publication of the famous dictum of John Dando Sedding that 'the Perpendicular period is the crown and culmination of a long series of effort . . . the harvest-time of all our mediaeval endeavour.'¹ Sedding himself, a diocesan architect for Bath and Wells, was speaking a generation after the early studies of E. A. Freeman. Freeman, long before his fame as a mediaeval historian, had written a history of world architecture, a detailed typology of Gothic tracery and, by 1851-2, an appreciation of the Perpendicular churches of Somerset.² All research on the county's churches, and in particular their towers, stems from this pioneer work of Freeman, handicapped as it was by his slight acquaintance with the county at the time.

In the fifty years which followed Freeman's essay, it was realized that the more important of the Somerset towers formed a recognizable group, limited by the county boundaries. Though not unparalleled, this fact was sufficiently distinctive to call forth detailed studies of the great towers and attempts to classify their variations. It was noted that, in spite of the existence of regional groups within the shire, these individual types of design interpenetrated on the map and in some degree corresponded to a chronological sequence. Efforts were made to define the characteristics of the subdivisions of the county style and also to fix the towers in the time-scale. The problem is an example of the classic alliance between a strictly archaeological typology and an historical approach to dating based upon records of every kind.

Two separate factors render it difficult to reach a satisfactory answer. The first is the extreme paucity of documentary records for all but a few of the fifty or more first-class towers concerned. Apart from six or seven bequests to Somerset tower-building, of which only one (Mells in 1446) is for a major tower, there is no explicit record before 1450. Even for the second half of the fifteenth century, there is adequate evidence only for the tower of Taunton St. Mary Magdalene (1488—1505) among the great towers, and for three others: Yeovilton (1486), Hinton St. George (1486—94), and Tickenham (1497). More vaguely, Long Sutton church with its tower was entirely rebuilt before a consecration in 1493.³ Secondly, the important towers share a most unusual feature of style: a virtually static continuance of one single type of tracery for their belfry windows over a period of some three generations. Beyond these factors, too, there is a total lack of visible masons' marks.

A typological approach to the question was adopted by F.J. Allen and by R. P. Brereton, and their separate lectures were delivered in 1904.⁴ Brereton did not live to revise his essay, but Allen completed his work with comparative studies covering the

whole of the country, published as *The Great Church Towers of England* in 1932. Allen's classification is fundamental to subsequent research, and its main features were adopted by A.K. Wickham in his account of the churches of Somerset, published posthumously as an introductory survey.⁵ Though Allen had given some attention to chronology, it was Wickham who first brought together the principal documentary evidences for the churches as a whole and for their towers. His early death, however, deprived his monograph of a substantial amount of information which was accruing from individual investigations.

Some, but not all, of this historical information was used by Professor Pevsner in his parochial gazetteer to Somerset buildings.⁶ As was perhaps inevitable, the treatment is uneven and neither the descriptive nor the historical facts form a complete record. Far more significant, however, is the new classification of the major towers included in the introduction. Pevsner is concerned to classify the towers on morphological grounds—as they are actually seen and appreciated, with all their differences emphasized, rather than their points of similarity. He rightly stresses the fact that 'there is hardly one among the fifty or so best towers which has not also its individual touches . . . it is just the individuality of the mason . . . that is so fascinating to watch from place to place'.⁷

Writing as a leading art historian on an international level, Pevsner was fully aware of the immense widening of the scope of detailed knowledge of mediaeval architecture. The two generations that had elapsed since the studies of Allen and Brereton had, by 1958, entirely changed the framework of research. Artistic, including architectural, production of the Middle Ages was no longer regarded as a function, even a kind of involuntary automatism, derived from religious faith and the guild system. Church architecture was not any more envisaged as a form of Evolution, unconsciously or subconsciously part of the march of progress—towards the Renaissance or the Reformation or an aborted Perfect Gothic. The field of mediaeval research in the past quarter-century has seen further regional, local and individual studies filling in gaps in the successive works of Lethaby, Salzman, F.E.Howard, T.D. Atkinson and, in Somerset, of Frank Allen and of Kenneth Wickham.⁸ Furthermore, there has been substantial research into the Perpendicular style, its mouldings and detail, of individual architects and their influence, as well as of masons' marks and the part played by the town guilds and by the provincial and county assemblies of freemasons.⁹

Against this background it is surprising to find that a substantial new book¹⁰ devoted to Somerset church towers pays little attention to the results of modern research and returns to a

position not far removed from the evolutionary hypothesis, long ago exploded, of an instinctive mediaeval art. For we can make little else of an insistence upon the building of all towers by 'teams' of masons, moving on from one parish to another; or of a terminology which uses the loaded word 'generation' to describe a group of towers of related design. The work of Mr. Peter Poyntz Wright, this thesis proposes to show the sequence of related design, group by group; and to place an approximate date on every tower, correct to an estimated accuracy (p. 23) of ± 7 years, by a combination of computerized typology and analytical argument. There are eight so-called 'generations', as well as several groupings of anomalous, 'special', or representative smaller towers, totalling seventy-four in Somerset, with two others of exported Somerset style, one in Devon and one in Cornwall. Each of these towers is illustrated by a full-page plate, though in many cases the quality of photography and reproduction is inadequate for proper consideration of detail.¹¹

The fact that the end product is expressed as a specific date for each tower, admittedly within a range of fourteen years, is calculated to raise exaggerated hopes. It is implied that this degree of 'accuracy' has been reached by some inherent virtue in the use of a computer. Yet it has to be remembered that the output of a computer depends entirely upon the input. To provide dates it would be necessary to include dates, *certainly known and linked to specific builds*, among the data collected. *Such precise dates are unknown*. It has also to be considered what exactly is meant by the 'date' of a building, a question well analysed by the late H. V. Molesworth Roberts.¹² So far as form is concerned, the significant date is that of design rather than construction, but a basic design may have been revised substantially in the course of the work. Setting out the plan and laying the foundations may follow close upon design, in the same or the next year; but completion (if ever reached) may take any number of years.¹³

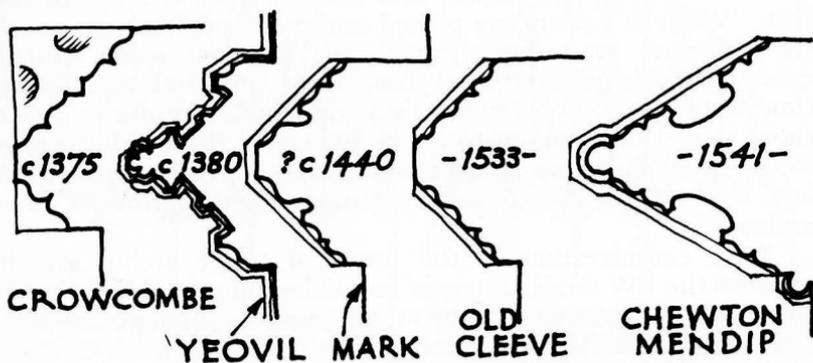
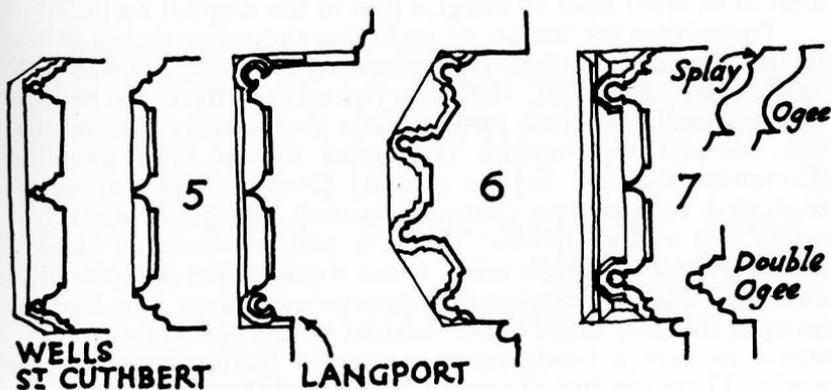
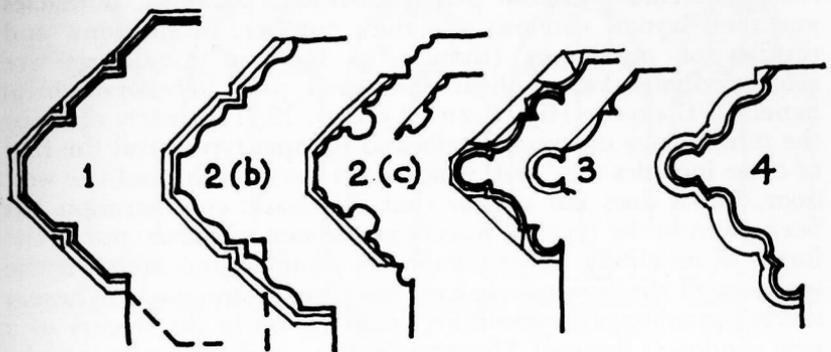
Mr. Poyntz Wright gratuitously assumes that 'each tower was built as a unit in a short space of time' (p. 19) and even suggests that 'a tower could be built in one season but is more likely to have taken two' (p. 9); 'the towers were only taking one or two years to build' (p. 65). Such speed in erection is contradicted by all mediaeval records of tower building. Quite apart from exceptionally large towers like Taunton St. Mary Magdalene (which it is admitted took from c. 1488 to 1514 to finish; p. 137),¹⁴ there is explicit evidence from documents that towers were built over a number of years. The contract of 1372 for Arlingham (Glos.) specifies 36 feet at 12 feet per year above part already built;¹⁵ that of Helmingham (Suffolk) in 1488 specified a height of 60 feet in ten years;¹⁶ and we know that in fact completion did not

come until 1543 (see below, notes 13, 25). The tower at Walberswick (Suffolk), about 90 feet high, was begun in 1426 but not finished until 1450;¹⁷ that of Hedon (Yorks.), rising some 90 feet above the earlier crossing, took ten years (1427—37).¹⁸ The average of twenty-one towers works out at twelve and a half years,¹⁹ and even so simple a belfry as that at New College, Oxford, about 100 feet high, took the ten seasons 1396—1405.²⁰ Modern master masons state that a rate of about ten feet per year is desirable, to allow for gradual settlement, and this roughly agrees with the mediaeval figures.

Now the Poyntz Wright theory (which for simplicity will hereafter be referred to as PW) depends for its dating on two main factors: first, that the towers of a given group were built successively by the same 'team';²¹ secondly, that the duration of a normal job was of the order of two to five years. Yet, to begin with, we must recall Wickham's warning: 'that there is no documentary evidence for the theory of groups of masons in Somerset'; or, indeed, anywhere else.²² When we take the first and last suggested dates for each of the eight 'generations' and divide by the number of towers in each, the PW duration per tower varies from three and a half to nine years. It seems obvious that no very accurate time-scale can be deduced from so variable a period, even were it based on direct evidence in one or more cases, which it is not.²³

This question of time-scale is dwelt upon because, in the form presented, PW is liable to serious misunderstanding. It would be regrettable if church guides quoted, even with a qualifying *circa*, such a date as '1417' for Banwell (p.53), when the estimated variation means that (according to the theory) Banwell was designed between 1410 and 1424, while it may have been in course of erection for an indefinite period of years. Yet even this possible variation is of relatively slight importance when compared with the far more serious discrepancies between the PW dating and the periods suggested by documentary and other (e.g. heraldic) evidence, and by stylistic analysis. It is expressly stated that written records were 'not applied until after the computer analysis was finished' (p. 2), and that the analysis of 37 variable factors in 74 towers was carried out 'on a purely common sense basis without applying any traditional architectural principles' (p. 21). Individual cases of discrepancy will be considered later.

The dangers of such methods appear to be so great, and their consequences for archaeology and architectural history so fraught with potentially serious error, that it is necessary to consider both the factors involved in and omitted from the analysis, and a number of individual towers. To begin with the '37 variables' (pp. 11,21), we are not told precisely what they are, but the main



SOMERSET: TYPES OF TOWER-ARCHES
 DIAGRAMS NOT TO SCALE J.H.H. 1981

Fig. 1

features include: ground plan, buttresses, parapets, pinnacles and their layout, windows and their number, proportions, and profiles of mouldings (though in fact no mouldings are illustrated, and their application is stated, p.19, to be 'of doubtful benefit'). Diagrams (figs. 1 and 2 on pp. 12, 14) clearly describe the terminology of tower details and parapet types, and the first of these includes the 'west' window (to the church) and the west door; but it does not appear that systematic consideration has been given to the types of tracery in the west windows, nor to the forms of moulding of west doors. A more serious defect is the omission of the tower-arch from the details analysed. Whereas there is a substantial possibility of alteration in the tracery of a west window (? Banwell; Shepton Mallet), or of later insertion of a west door (e.g. Bridgwater), it is almost impossible for the tower-arch to be other than an integral part of the original build.²⁴

To instance the impact of including the tower-arches in the factors for consideration, it is noteworthy that in the first PW 'generation' three of the four churches have arches of fundamentally different forms: shafts and hollows (Churchill), two unequal wave-moulds (Compton Bishop) and panelled (Compton Martin). In the second, Cheddar has two waves separated by a narrow channel; Banwell and Winscombe two waves and a deep hollow; Weare a pair of waves as distinct orders, Bleadon a single wave, Brent Knoll shafts and a hollow, and Mark a highly idiosyncratic series of mouldings. It is hard to imagine that any single master mason, or any continuing 'team', would so vary a fundamental structural feature in successive works. There are like discrepancies in the 'Mendip generation', where the five towers employ four distinct types of arch. In the fifth, 'Winford', group are placed ten towers of which six are of the two-wave type, one (Portishead) has two waves and a casement, another (Wellow) has shafts and hollows; Yeovil (impossibly dated at '1480') has unique mouldings utterly unlike those of any other major tower in Somerset. Similar diversity is found in all the other 'generations' proposed. (See Appendix A and Fig. 1 for a classification of towers by the forms of their arches).

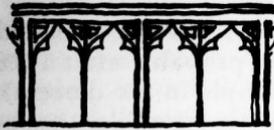
Such consideration of the forms of tower arches greatly weakens the PW thesis of 'teams', each designing and building in a recognizable manner. On the other hand, the facts are perfectly compatible with the individual designs of various masters, built by different contractors in what is essentially the modern way. It is possible that, at least in origin, the 'two-wave' arch or the use of shafts and hollows like those of arcade piers, were usages of particular builders, derived from the practice of a single master; later they may have become stereotyped and, through copying, general usage within certain districts.²⁵ It is far more significant

for the development of great art, that idiosyncratic forms appear, which do not agree with the usage of any school.

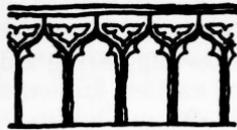
In point of fact, the irregular or 'rogue' towers are more numerous than is implied in the general statement of the PW thesis. Out of the 74 Somerset towers, 29 are outside the eight classified 'generations'; and of the 45 included, several more prove to be anomalous in some way: such are Bleadon, Compton Martin, Kilmersdon, Mark, Wells St. Cuthbert, Wellow and Yeovil. Not much more than half the total is accounted for in the 'generations' and, as has been remarked, these are far from uniform within themselves. When the differing types of tracery in the west windows, and the various designs of west doors, are also taken into account, individuality of design markedly predominates.

The 74 towers need first to be reduced to those of significant architectonic design, some fifty. Several minor towers which happen to be documented then have to be added as keys to chronology. There is also a large body of documented tracery and doorways which provides a firm scale of development within the county style (See Fig. 2). The tower at Bridgwater, part of the new work begun by 1337, was ready for the spire (1367-75) thirty years later;²⁶ the west tower of North Cadbury had been built before 1408;²⁷ the 'new tower' of Spaxton received a legacy in 1434;²⁸ and that of Compton Martin in 1443.²⁹ Funds were slowly being raised for the tower of the Temple Church in Redcliffe (Bristol), 'not yet' begun in 1397, 1413 and 1441, but finished about 1460.³⁰ Many later towers can be dated even more closely. Other bequests, lawsuits, and miscellaneous records throw light on the chronology of types of window tracery, doorways and battlements. Accounts for the building of parapets on Yatton church and its central tower in 1454-59,³¹ and on the chancel of North Curry *c.* 1506-12,³² as well as those on the south aisle of Meare and north aisle of East Brent within the vaguer period 1457-93,³³ provide specific evidence of great value for the currency of the triangular, quatrefoil and lozenge types.³⁴ (See Fig. 3).

Some of the PW dates, particularly for important towers, are so wide of the mark that they must be discussed in detail. The alleged first or 'Churchill' group of four minor towers, with a suggested range of '*c.* 1360 - *c.* 1395', must be rejected outright. The date is too early for their Perpendicular details; their style is not homogeneous; and no one of them can be regarded as pace-setting. It is, besides, contrary to the findings of all serious architectural historians to discover the beginnings of a style in small and apparently 'primitive' works. It is at royal palaces and chapels, great castles, cathedrals and monasteries, that the real changes in fashion take place.³⁵ The true genesis of the Somerset



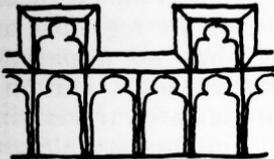
GLOUCESTER
1337



ARLINGHAM
1375



YEovil, WELLS, &c.
c 1385-1405
(WILLIAM WYNFORD)



B TICKENHAM
c 1500



C PUBLow
c 1480

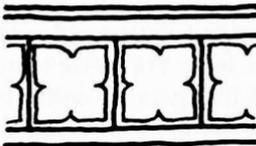


A WELLS
c 1320
TRIANGULAR

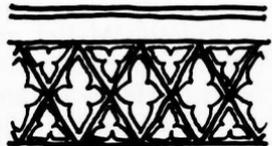
ARCADE



B YATTON
-1454-



WELLS CHAPTER HO
c 1310



LICHFIELD, SALISBURY
c 1320-30

LOZENGE



NORTH CURRY
1506-



A BRIDGWATER
c 1375

B DITCHEAT
c 1485

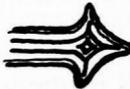
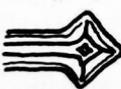
QUATREFOIL

PLAIN

PARAPETS



CHEDDAR BANWELL
c 1400-20 WINSOMBE



BRISTOL BATHEASTON
TEMPLE KILMERSDON
c 1445-60 PUBLow



BRUTON



CRANMORE
ILE ABBOTS
KINGSTON
LYDEARD
LYNG
MIDDLEZOY
TAUNTON ST
WESTON Z.

DIAMOND-STOP BARS

J.H.H.
1981

Fig. 3

tower will be demonstrated later (p.181 below).

Churchill, though early rather than late, has ogee-headed tracery in the west window suggesting a date probably after 1420 (Wells East Cloister, the earliest known example in the diocese); and the tower-arch of shafts and hollows closely resembles that at Spaxton, 'new' in 1434.³⁶ Compton Martin, a highly individual design, is regarded by PW (p.33) as a later 're-embellishment' of the tower; presumably, though this is not stated, at the time of the bequest of 1443. Yet there is no physical sign in the fabric of the massive alterations implied, and they must be regarded as illusory.³⁷ Kewstoke, a very small tower, has no apparent relationship to the emergence of the Somerset style. Hutton, assigned to '1403', has ogee heads and subreticulated tracery in the west window; the heads of the upper windows are almost semicircular. Building in two phases after a start *c.* 1430 is indicated by the details.³⁸

Among the 'Cheddar generation' (*c.* 1390—*c.* 1435'), Cheddar ('1423') has a tower-arch unlike any of the rest, though generically related to those of Banwell and Winscombe, and that of Shepton Mallet grouped elsewhere.³⁹ If the headstops on the Cheddar doorway have been correctly restored, they are portrait-types of Henry IV and his queen Joanna of Navarre, putting the date of the finishing of the ground stage between 1403 and 1413. The provision of squinches for a spire (as also at Banwell) in any case suggests a date not long after completion of the south-west tower of Wells Cathedral (1393—95; see below, p.170).⁴⁰ There are few common factors linking Bleadon, Brent Knoll, Mark or Weare with Cheddar, Banwell and Winscombe.

Diversity of building methods and details again subdivides the 'Mendip generation' of '*c.* 1423—*c.* 1464'. Mells (in progress in 1446) and the substantially later Leigh-on-Mendip are indeed closely related; but Leigh with its inverted cusping and quatrefoil parapet would be better dated *c.* 1475—90 than '1464'.⁴¹ West Cranmore has a completely different form of tower-arch. As Allen pointed out, it might be a century later than Shepton Mallet which, with several feet of a stone spire built, must on grounds of architectural detail be put earlier than Cheddar and Banwell.⁴² Bruton, on the other hand, though possibly designed near 1450, is not likely to have been completed, with its quatrefoil parapet, until after 1485. The square surround of its west door, and the inverted cusping and ogee heads of the great window, are also marks of late construction. The use of the 'diamond-stop' bar, however, shows that the third stage was built before *c.* 1490 (see Appendix B and Fig. 3 for the 'diamond-stop' and the related ornamental bar).

The 'Long Panel' towers do not form a group, but must be considered in relation to the admired designs at the Cathedral in

Wells. Wrington and Evercreech are closely related, but Evercreech must be later than '1462'. The detail of the spandrels of its west door, four-centered in a drop label, with double cusping, is probably after 1475; the exquisitely formed inverted cusps of the west window provide a conclusive link with the south transept of Weston Zoyland (between 1493 and 1524);⁴³ the ogee-heads with quatrefoils under the belfry transom, and the quatrefoil parapet, point to a date of completion for Evercreech after 1485 at the earliest.

These developments come long after the building of the west tower at St. Cuthbert's, Wells, put by PW at the impossible '1456'. Here there is a substantial consensus of documentary, heraldic and structural evidence. Records show that the bishop had given stones for the new tower by 1426,⁴⁴ when the town provided transport; and that gold rings had been contributed to the tower building fund before 1430.⁴⁵ On each side of the springing of the west window are the inset arms of Palton impaling Botreaux and Palton impaling Courtenay. These indicate major gifts by the Palton family at dates in the periods 1385—1400 and 1435—50 respectively.⁴⁶ This confirms the stylistic evidence of the tower-arch, with its roll-and-fillet mouldings of pear-shaped section; the west door of early Perpendicular character with slender shafts, bases and caps of Gloucester style, closely allied to those of the East Cloister at the Cathedral, begun *c.* 1420; and the tracery of the west window. The basic design for the tower was probably made before 1400, as was presumably the case with the Temple tower at Bristol (above, p. 164; see also below, p. 171).

From the PW 'Winford generation', put at '*c.* 1420—*c.* 1480', we must start by eliminating Kilmersdon, Wellow and Yeovil, which have no organic structural or stylistic relationship. Six⁴⁷ of the remaining seven towers are linked by the two-wave tower-arch, which they share also with Blagdon, Chew Stoke and Weare and, in slightly variant form, Compton Bishop and East Harptree, as well as with the west nave arcades at Frome (bequests of 1408, 1413). Portishead, which has a small casement joining the two wave-moulds, is less closely related, and its two upper stages are of a much later build with ogee-heads to the lights and a very different stringcourse moulding, suggesting a date after 1475.⁴⁸ So far as there is any evidence for a 'team', it is for this group using a two-wave tower arch and corresponding largely to Allen's 'North Somerset' group; it is ironic that, as Wickham noted, 'they are not markedly of a Somerset type.' Though their designs are relatively homogeneous, there are substantial differences: Publow and Dundry, both with ogee heads, must be much later than the rest, along with Batheaston with has the type of stringcourse also found in the upper stages of

Portishead. Dundry has, of course, a late 'Gloucester coronet', substituted for the crown originally intended.⁴⁹ Of the rejected towers, Kilmersdon too must be regarded as far later than its PW date of '1443'; the ogee heads throughout and inverted cusping suggest that it was built after 1475, but the use of the diamond-stop bar means before *c.* 1490. The case of Yeovil will be dealt with later (below, pp. 169—70).

The 'Langport generation' is placed too early by the PW date of '*c.* 1455—*c.* 1468'. In the first place, Long Sutton was consecrated in 1493 after a complete rebuilding, and the construction of the tower seems to be associated with that of the nave. Langport, Long Sutton and Weston Zoyland all have inverted cusping, an almost certain sign of detailing after *c.* 1475; Weston has a quatrefoil parapet which looks even later. Muchelney might well, on stylistic appearance, be the earliest of the four and close to the PW dating of '1468', though that has no authority.

The later groups, better grounded upon bequests and obvious stylistic relationships, need less revision. There is, all the same, serious confusion in the chronology for West Somerset. A distinction must be drawn between towers with quatrefoil decoration only in their parapets (whether or not these may be later additions), and those which incorporate bands of quatrefoil as an integral part of the design. Dated instances of the latter range from Taunton St. Mary Magdalene (1488—1505)⁵⁰ through Probus in Cornwall (*c.* 1517—23)⁵¹ to Ruiston (1530—35).⁵² The dates of this thoroughly Tudor Gothic type will be after 1485 and generally after 1500. North Petherton, Kingsbury Episcopi and Huish Episcopi may well have been designed very close to the PW dates '1508', '1515' and '1524'. But dates after 1500 cannot be accepted for the transitional style of Ile Abbots ('1517'), Kingston St. Mary (1507') and Staple Fitzpaine ('1513'). These all employ the diamond-stop bar,⁵³ and should be pushed back before 1490, along with Bishop's Lydeard ('1497') The two sub-groups are even more sharply distinguished by the supersession of the tower-arch of two-waves and casement by that of shafts and panels. Neglect of obvious stylistic evidence is more blatant in the case of Chard, put at '1505—1520'. The two-centred west door and heads to the lights of the west window show close affinity to Spaxton (1434); besides, the Chard south aisle (with a bequest of 1453) seems to be built after the tower and to take its plinth levels from it.⁵⁴

It has been shown that Mr. Poyntz Wright's theory cannot be accepted as a reliable guide to the dating of the greater Somerset towers and that its groups, miscalled 'generations', lack internal coherence. It is, nonetheless, not enough simply to reject the system without considering how real progress may be made. The subject is now beyond the scope of a single individual and,

ideally, every one of the fifty major towers should be carefully examined by a commission of at least three skilled members: an archaeologist accustomed to rigorous method; an architect experienced in work on ancient churches; and an art historian. Their field-work should begin only after extensive research into the graphic and other records of the towers as they were before modern alterations, and into all likely sources of documentary, heraldic and stylistic record, church by church. Much of the vitally important material for stylistic comparison exists elsewhere in the churches of Somerset, not merely in their towers.⁵⁵

For such a complex operation to succeed, it must take into account what is already known of the development of style, and relate major parochial works of Somerset to the great buildings of the county (conveniently conterminous with the diocese of Bath and Wells): Wells Cathedral; the abbeys of Bath, Glastonbury, Muchelney and Cleve; as well as to those on its borders at Bristol, Sherborne and Forde. It must also work within the established chronological frontiers, the limits of great stylistic periods. The well known phenomenon of 'time-lag', between the appearance of a new style at a chief source (e.g. London, Oxford, Winchester, Gloucester) and its derivatives at parochial level requires particular study, as well as those exceptional links of personal patronage which at times almost cancelled its effect.

Much of the framework of reference already exists, and will here be briefly recapitulated as it relates to dating the greater parish churches. Perpendicular began in London in 1332; made a tentative appearance at Gloucester by 1335, and before 1340 at Wells; but these glimpses did not constitute regional acceptance of the new style. As late as 1372-75 the tower of Arlingham Church, Glos., though built by a Gloucester mason, shows little sign of Perpendicular. On the other hand, the new style is present at Nunney Castle, begun in 1373, and fully developed before 1382 in the design for Yeovil church, of which the chancel and south chapel had certainly been roofed before 1400.⁵⁶ This leads directly to reconsideration of Yeovil tower, put at '1480' by the PW theory.

So exaggeratedly late a date is quite untenable on grounds of general character and of detail. Since the chancel had been started by 1380, the design for the great east window must have been made long before 1400. The west window, an integral part of the fabric of the tower, is to the same design. Moreover, the cinquefoil cusplings of their main lights show the wide central lobe characteristic of the work of William Wynford at Winchester and elsewhere. The tracery also exhibits a mark of the Bristol regional school in the 'sawtooth' effect of the heads of the main reticulations; this seems relevant to the probable origins and training of Wynford. The unusual west door, a two-centred

archway flanked by triangular (strictly square-ordinal) buttress-pinnacles, also comes from Bristol where the west doorway of St. Mary Redcliffe, whose early date is attested by its double-cusped septfoil, provides the model.⁵⁷ The Yeovil tower-arch is quite unlike that of any other major church in Somerset: its triple-shafting relates to the South-Western regional school and to the practice of the Royal Works, while the mouldings nearest the wall resemble Bristol details such as the Redcliffe doorway.

The Yeovil ground-plan differs from all others except those of Wells St. Cuthbert and (much later) Martock, in incorporating the stair between the north-west buttresses. Yeovil may be an ancestor of the Winford group of towers; it is certainly not their descendant. The early date of Yeovil is manifest in its stark simplicity; in the close similarity of its buttress scheme to those of Wynford's known works at Oxford and Winchester covering the years 1379—94; and in its parapet. This is a pure example of the Arcade type in its early form, found otherwise only on works associated with Wynford: at Winchester Cathedral; the south-west tower and other parts of Wells Cathedral; and St. Cuthbert's church (but not tower) at Wells; as well as the whole of Yeovil church including the tower. The arcade-parapet occurs also on the church and early crossing tower at Wedmore and, even if not detailed by Wynford himself, clearly relates that tower to his work at Wells and Yeovil.⁵⁸ Since Yeovil never made provision for a spire, construction was doubtless still in progress after 1395, when Wells Cathedral provided the earliest model for the English spireless tower. Building would begin soon after the chancel, if not simultaneously, and long before work on the nave, to allow maximum settlement of the heavy weight before making the junction. This was a normal precaution in erecting large towers, and forms an exception to the general (but not universal) rule of building from east to west.

Surprisingly, no mention is made in PW of the south-west tower of Wells Cathedral; this is indeed Hamlet without the Prince. For it is at the same time the source of the typical 'Somerset Tower', of the 'long panel' motive, and of the whole later concept of the spireless tower throughout this country. Wynford himself had designed a spired bell-tower for Winchester College, being completed in 1396.⁵⁹ In that same year his belfry for New College, Oxford, was begun. It was finished in the next ten years, without a spire or any provision for one. There is thus a clear and logical progression: after the design for the spired Winchester tower (1386) the decision that the Wells south-west tower should echo the horizontal cornice of the great west front; the building of that tower, in progress before 1388 and ready for the bells by 1395 if not by 1393; then the New College spireless belltower, designed by 1396.

The Wells *central* tower before the fire of 1439 bore little resemblance to the Perpendicular version we now have,⁶⁰ and cannot have affected design until after 1440–50. The present long-panel aspect derives from Wynford's south-west belfry, and from the careful copy made for the north side in the years almost immediately before the fire of 1439. Even after its transformation, the central tower presented no model for the main peculiarity of the great parish towers: the 45° twist of the upper buttress pinnacles, from Shepton Mallet and Cheddar onwards. This twist had in turn been derived by Wynford from the pre-Perpendicular eastern chapels and the flying-buttress added to the Lady Chapel.⁶¹ If, as seems likely, the general project for St. Cuthbert's parish church and its tower goes back before 1400, it must be presumed that Wynford was directly concerned. He lived until July 1405, several years after the scheme of work on the south transept envisaged in the will of Thomas Tanner, proved on 12 December 1401. Tanner's tomb was to be made, and above it the south window, with a bequest of £20; another sum of £3 was left to the church fabric.⁶²

A large contribution had presumably been made to the fund for the new tower of St. Cuthbert's by Robert Palton before his death in 1400 (see above, p.167), and the basic design may have been by Wynford himself, and have incorporated the long-panel motive from his own recent south-west tower at the cathedral. The execution of the upper part of the tower, to judge from minutiae of detail, seems to have been under the master responsible for the alterations of 1439–50 to the cathedral central tower. Since the second Palton donation must have come by 1450 at the latest, it is quite likely that the design for completion of the St. Cuthbert's tower came before the cathedral work.

Wynford's responsibility for the Arcade parapet has been mentioned already (See Fig. 3) The Lozenge form had been employed on the Wells Chapter House soon after 1300 and at Lichfield and Salisbury by *c.* 1320–30; and the Triangular was used on the whole of Wells Cathedral from *c.* 1320 onwards.⁶³ Both forms were developed from these pre-Perpendicular examples, and have little chronological significance within our period. The Quatrefoil parapet, however, is one of the chief marks of the onset of Tudor Gothic after *c.* 1485, and its employment at Bruton, Evercreech, Leigh-on-Mendip and Weston Zoyland proves that they were not finished until twenty or thirty years at least after their PW dates. The plain battlement in its second form, with a heavily moulded coping carried up and down the merlons, is also suggestive of a relatively late date of completion, perhaps long after the body of the tower (e.g. Cranmore, Glastonbury St. Benign, Mells).⁶⁴

As time goes on, the list of details critical for exact dating is steadily expanded by research. This serial correction of artistic chronology is unending, but each advance in real knowledge, once consolidated, must be used as the foundation for the next. The criteria of greatest utility tend to be minute and sometimes almost invisible quirks and variants, and it is these in particular which make up the personal style of an individual artist. They cannot be copied by another, any more than a bank signature, except by a clever and deliberate forger. It is precisely crucial facts of this sort which depend for recognition upon experience and flair: they cannot be fed into a computer, unable to distinguish between an original and a careful copy. For example, the mouldings of the four-centred west door of Weston Zoyland exactly imitate those of the two-centred doorway at Shepton Mallet; yet there is a gap of between fifty and one hundred years between the two designs. But another pair of identical door-mouldings, at Middlezoy and Lyng, supported by many other equivalences of detail, show that these two towers must be nearly contemporary. Further instances of the copying of door-moulds are Banwell, Chew Magna and Dundry (differing widely in other respects); and Winscombe and Blagdon. The late four-centred door at East Harptree took its mouldings from the two-centred doorway in the bottom stage of Portishead.

Future investigations will concern themselves with such matters as the proportions and geometrical setting-out of door- and window-arches, the precise shapes of cusps and crockets, the carving of head-stops and enrichments. Only when every aspect of design has been studied in depth will it be possible—if ever—to write a definitive history of the churches of Somerset and their towers.

Notes

The following abbreviations are used:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Allen 1932 | F.J. Allen, <i>The Great Church Towers of England</i> . |
| Ant J | <i>Antiquaries Journal</i> . |
| Arch J | <i>Archaeological Journal</i> . |
| EMA | J. H. Harvey, <i>English Mediaeval Architects: a Biographical Dictionary down to 1550</i> (1954). |
| Harvey 1944 | — <i>Henry Yevele, c. 1320 to 1400: The Life of an English Architect</i> . |
| Harvey 1947 | — <i>Gothic England: a Survey of National Culture, 1300—1550</i> (revised edition, 1948) |
| Harvey 1950 | — 'The Architects of English Parish Churches', <i>Arch J</i> , CV, 1950, 14-26. |
| Harvey 1972 | — <i>The Mediaeval Architect</i> . |
| Harvey 1978 | — <i>The Perpendicular Style</i> . |
| JBAA | <i>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</i> . |
| Leedy 1980 | W.C. Leedy, <i>Fan Vaulting</i> . |
| Pevsner 1958 | N. Pevsner, <i>The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol; South and West Somerset</i> , 2 vols. |

- Salzman 1952 L.F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540: a Documentary History* (revised ed. 1967).
- SRS Somerset Record Society.
- Wadley 1886 T.P. Wadley, *Notes or Abstracts of the Wills . . . in . . . The Great Orphan Book and Book of Wills at Bristol*.
- Wickham 1952 A.K. Wickham, *Churches of Somerset* (reprint. with a preface by B. Little, 1965).
- Woodforde 1946 C. Woodforde, *Stained Glass in Somerset, 1250-1830*.

1. *Transactions of the St. Paul's Ecclesiological Society*, I (1881-5), 31-44.
 2. E.A. Freeman, *A History of Architecture* (1849); *An Essay on the Origin and Development of Window Tracery in England* (1851); 'On the Perpendicular Style, as exhibited in the Churches of Somerset', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, II, III for 1851 and 1852 (1852, 1853). In vol. III, 47-60, there is also a paper by F. Warre, 'On the Perpendicular Towers of Somerset', correctly distinguishing the late ('Henry VII') towers such as Bishop's Lydeard and Taunton St. Mary Magdalene from strictly Perpendicular Gothic.
 3. The lack of testamentary evidence is not due to the destruction of Somerset probate records at Exeter in 1942. The wills of the Consistory and Archdeacon's Courts before 1528 had disappeared long ago, leaving no trace. All the Wells wills from 1528 to 1556 were printed in abstract and provide a wealth of information for the latest towers (F.W. Weaver, *Wells Wills*, 1890; *Somersetshire A. & N.H. S. Proc.*, LXI (1916), 54-104; SRS, XL (1925). Almost all of the earlier information comes from wills in the Archbishop's Registers at Lambeth and from those proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (printed in SRS, vols. XVI. XIX. XXI).
 4. F.J. Allen, 'The Classification of the Somerset Church Towers', *Proc. S.A. & N.H.S.*, L for 1904 (1905) and supplement in LI for 1905 (1906); R.P. Brereton, 'On the Characteristics and Classification of the Church Towers of Somerset', *Arch J*, LXII (1905).
 5. Wickham 1952.
 6. Pevsner 1958.
 7. Pevsner 1958, 34-44; the passage quoted is from *North Somerset*, p.35.
 8. W.R. Lethaby, *Westminster Abbey and the Kings' Craftsmen* (1906), especially pp. 220-1; and his study of Old St. Paul's, *The Builder*, CXXXIX (5 Sep 1930), 393 ff.; Salzman 1952; F.E. Howard, *The Mediaeval Styles of the English Parish Church* (1936); T.D. Atkinson, *Local Style in English Architecture* (1947), and his manuscript drafts for individual counties including Somerset, now in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Of great importance for the economic background is the work of the late Douglas Knoop and Dr. G.P. Jones, especially *The Mediaeval Mason* (1933; 3rd edition revised, 1967).
 9. On Perpendicular, see Joan Evans, *English Art 1307-1461* (1949); G. Webb, *Architecture in Britain: the Middle Ages* (1956); Harvey 1947; J.H. Harvey, 'The Origin of the Perpendicular Style' in E.M. Jope ed., *Studies in Building History* ('1961'; 1962); Harvey 1978.
- On mouldings and detail, see C.E. Power, *English Mediaeval Architecture* (3 vols., 1923/1937), III, 473-87; J.H. Harvey, 'Some Details and Mouldings used by Yevele', *Ant J*, XXVII (1947), 51-60; H. Forrester, *Medieval Gothic Mouldings* (1972); Eileen Roberts, 'Moulding Analysis and architectural research: the late Middle Ages', *Architectural History*, XX (1977), 5-13; R.K. Morris, 'The development of late Gothic mouldings in England, c. 1250-1400', *ibid.*, XXI (1978), 18-57; XXII (1979), 1-48.
- Masons' marks are studied by R.H.C. Davis, 'A Catalogue of masons' marks as an aid to architectural history', *JBAA*, 3 S., XVII (1954), 43-76, with bibliographical references; F.W. Brooks, *Masons' Marks* (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1961); G.A.A. Wright and W.A. Wheeler, *Masons' Marks on Wells Cathedral Church* (Friends of Wells Cathedral, 1970).
- Studies of individual masons and their output are: Harvey 1944; EMA; Eileen Roberts, 'Robert Stowell', *JBAA*, 3 S., XXXV (1972), 24-38; 'Thomas Wolvey, Mason', *Arch J*, CXXIX for 1972 (1973), 119-44.
- On mediaeval design and the guilds and assemblies of masons, see Harvey 1950;

- Harvey 1972; J.H. Harvey, *Mediaeval Craftsmen* (1975); L.R. Shelby, *Gothic Design Techniques: The Fifteenth-century Design Booklets of Mathes Roriczer and Hanns Schmuttermayer* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1977).
10. Peter Poyntz Wright, *The Parish Church Towers of Somerset: their construction, craftsmanship and chronology 1350-1550* (Avebury, 1981). 12" x 8½". Pp. xi, 217; 80 plates, 84 line illustrations. £18.95p.
 11. It should also be remarked that the photographs of buttress types on plates 11, 15, 21 and 50 are not identified. The block plans (e.g. Cranmore, p.59) are misleading in their failure to show the tower-arches and eastern buttresses. It must also be said that the Bibliography is extremely inaccurate and, for example, does not even mention Knoop and Jones, *The Mediaeval Mason*, or Pevsner's two volumes on Somerset. There, as well as several times in the text, Salzman 1952 appears mis-spelt as 'Saltzman'.
 12. H.V.M. Roberts, 'Recording dates of buildings', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XII part 3 (1953), 23-6; *Blackmansbury*, VII Nos. 1 & 2 (1970), 3-8; cf. W.A. Pantin, 'Monuments or Muniments? The Interrelation of Material Remains and Documentary Sources', *Medieval Archaeology*, II (1958), 158-68.
 13. Very great caution is needed in regard to parapets, battlements and pinnacles, whether on towers or elsewhere. It begs the question to include, as PW does, pinnacle plans or parapet types (Fig. 2 on p.14) among the basic variables of a tower. Taking the country as a whole, there is abundant evidence of the long delay which often took place before the parapet was added. Helmingham (Suffolk), a small tower begun in 1488 and due to be finished in ten years, was the subject of a bequest of 1538, £5 left to the battlement of the steeple if begun within four years after the death of the testator, John Wythe (Suffolk Wills 1533-43, abstracts from Ipswich Court, Will Book No. 13, Society of Genealogists Ac. 16120, No. 95); the parapet is in fact dated on the south-west corner 1543 (illustrated in Harvey 1947, pl. 100). The tower of St. Neots (Hunts.), seems from bequests to have been built mainly in 1489-94, and the belfry stage had been reached by 1493; yet money was still being left for work on the pinnacles in 1535 (Huntingdon Archdeaconry wills quoted in Victoria County History, *Huntingdonshire*, and kindly communicated by Dr. S.A. Cotton). The tower is illustrated in Allen 1932, pl. 46. Allen (p.20) noted that the parapet and pinnacles of Winscombe are a later addition (not remarked by PW); those at Compton Bishop are clearly of a different stone, along with the top few feet of the tower; the plain merlon parapets of Cranmore and Mells (and that of Spaxton) are probably instances of late completion. Dundry's 'Gloucester Coronet' is a manifest afterthought.
 14. The evidence for Taunton comes from numerous wills, which show bequests to the church (but not yet the tower) in 1486; specifically to the new tower from 1488 to 1499; to the pinnacles in 1502, to finishing the tower in 1504 and 1505, and to the 'katerynke' of the tower windows, i.e. the insertion of stone panels of pierced 'Somerset tracery', in 1514 (SRS, XVI, XIX). The tower is illustrated in all relevant works.
 15. Salzman 1952, 445-6. Arlingham tower is illustrated in Harvey 1978, pl. 37.
 16. Salzman 1952, 547-9; for illustration see above note 13.
 17. *Ibid.*, 499-500; for the date of completion see R.W.M. Lewis, *Walberswick Church-wardens' Accounts A.D. 1450-1499* (1949), iv, 1. Walberswick tower is illustrated in Allen 1932, p.189; Harvey 1947, pl. 101.
 18. J.R. Boyle, *History of Hedon* (1895), 119 ff.; for a scale drawing, see G.E. Street in *Archaeologia*, XLVIII (1884); illustrated in Allen 1932, pl. 33; Harvey 1947, pl. 18; Harvey 1978, pl. 84.
 19. The towers are Addington (Kent), Arlingham (Glos.), Bradninch (Devon), Bristol St. Stephen, Coventry St. Michael (Warwicks.), Eye (Suffolk), Hawton (Notts.), Hedon (Yorks.), Houghton Conquest (Beds.), Lydd (Kent), Oxford New College, Reading St. Lawrence (Berks.), St. Albans Clock Tower (Herts), Stoke-by-Nayland (Suffolk), Totnes (Devon), Walberswick (Suffolk), Westwick (Norfolk), Wimborne Minster west tower (Dorset), Winchester College (Hants.), Wymondham Abbey west tower (Norfolk), York St. Martin-le-Grand, Coney Street. Particulars of dating are given in Harvey 1978, 275-81. Besides illustrations noted in 13-18 above, there are photographs of Bradninch in Allen 1932, p.83; of Bristol St. Stephen in Allen, pl. 27 and Harvey 1978, pl. 168; Coventry St. Michael in Harvey 1947, pl. 13 and Harvey 1978, pl. 3; Eye in Allen, pl. 51 and Harvey 1978, pl. 182; Hawton in Allen, p.149;

- Houghton Conquest in Eileen Roberts, 'Totternhoe Stone and Flint . . .', *Medieval Archaeology*, XVIII for 1974 (1975), pl. XXIII A; Lydd in Harvey 1978, pl. 163; New College bell-tower in Harvey 1978, pl. 81; Reading: St. Lawrence in Allen, p. 140; the St. Albans clock-tower in Harvey 1978, pl. 82; Stoke-by-Nayland in Allen, p. 189 and Harvey 1978, pl. 160; Totnes in Allen, pl. 23, Harvey 1947, pl. 28 and Harvey 1978, pl. 161; Westwick in Harvey 1978, pl. 180; Wimborne in Allen, p. 139; Winchester College in J. Harvey, *Conservation of Buildings* (1972), pl. 14, 15; Wyomondham in Harvey 1978, pl. 28; York St. Martin in Harvey 1978, pl. 132.
20. The surviving accounts for the New College belfry are printed in J.E. Thorold Rogers, *Oxford City Documents* ((Oxford Historical Society, 1891), 306-14.
 21. No doubt many working masters did employ small gangs of regular employees, but we are here mainly concerned with outstanding towers of individual design, often involving the deliberate copying of details from existing towers elsewhere. This process of design was carried out either by a freemason acting as architect, *independently of the working master* (as Richard Pope in relation to John Marys in the Dunster contract of 1442) or by the working master; it was not a collaborative function of the team of men. See Harvey 1950 for details of method.
 22. Wickham 1952, 40. As seen in notes 13-20 above, and note 25 below, there is abundant evidence that many towers took a great deal longer than five years to build. Where accounts survive it is clear that the rate of progress varied greatly and depended largely on the supply of money for materials and labour. For the complete detail of building a spire over 15 years, 1500-1515, see R.C Dudding ed., *The First Churchwardens' Book of Louth 1500-1524* (1941).
 23. Logically, it might be objected to this calculation that it does not take into account lost or unknown towers built by some or all of the supposed 'teams'. In Somerset, however, one of the most striking facts is the survival of towers, often insignificant, at almost all the churches. There have not been losses of major Perpendicular towers, so that virtually the whole parochial output of Somerset masons of 1350-1550 is still before us. Contrary to the supposition of teams of tower-builders, there is much evidence in favour of the presumption that the available contractors spent much of their time on works other than towers. This in turn demolishes one of the basic premises of the theory of 'generations'.
 24. In a few cases the arch may have been inserted piece-meal into a pre-existing west wall after completion of the tower as a separate unit; but even so its design would normally be made by the architect of a great tower or the working master of a small one.
 25. The practice of basing the design of towers, as of other features, upon admired models already in existence is explicitly evidenced. At Totnes in Devon the tower was designed after journeys had been undertaken in 1450 to view the towers already built at Callington in Cornwall, Buckland (Monachorum), Tavistock and Ashburton. At Callington the church had been consecrated in 1438, so the tower was presumably recent and renowned, to justify a return journey from Totnes of 40 miles each way (H.R. Watkin, *History of Totnes Priory and Mediaeval Town*, 1914-17, I, 396, 407: II, 956-7). The Walberswick tower of 1426 was to follow the general design of Tunstall and the west door and windows of Halesworth (C. Chitty, 'Kessingland and Walberswick Church Towers', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, XXV, 1951, 164-70). Tunstall is some 15 miles from Walberswick. The Helmingham contract of 1488 specified that the dimensions should be taken from the tower at Framsdan, but that certain details should follow Brandeston, both nearby churches. In 1521 money was left to build the tower at Rushmere St. Andrew, Suffolk, like that at Tuddenham (St. Martin), only two miles away (*Ecclesiastical Topography of Suffolk*, 43). Legacies for building the Tuddenham tower date from 1452-60, and the lower stage at Rushmere dates from c. 1490. The only difference between the two towers is in the battlements, showing that a faithful copy might be made even as long as 60 years after its model (P.G.M. Dickinson, *Suffolk*, Little Guide, 1957, 293, 344).
 26. SRS, IV, 230-1; XLVIII, 159, 220.
 27. Record of a former inscription copied into the parish register, a reference which I owe to the kindness of Dr. R.W. Dunning.
 28. SRS, XIX, 334.
 29. SRS, XIX, 337.

30. Wadley 1886, 54, 91-2, 129-30; *Antiquities of Bristow . . .* by William Wyrcestre, ed. J. Dallaway (1834), 115.
31. SRS, IV, 86, 98, 100, 101.
32. Woodforde 1946, 150; Wickham 1952.
33. Wickham 1952, 33.
34. At Ditcheat there is heraldic evidence that the plain battlements of the chancel, of the later type with a moulded coping carried up and down the merlons, were built between 1473 and 1491 (E.T. Long, *The Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Ditcheat, Somerset*, n.d., c. 1967, 7).
35. Even before the First World War, Wilhelm Vöge had laid down the important principle: 'In the places where significant stylistic trends originate, the traces of important masters are recognizable. We may assume that it was they who gave the period its character'. (Translated by Mrs. Barbara Chabrowe in R. Branner, *Chartres Cathedral*, 1969, 209; from *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, N.F., XXV, 1914, 193-216, publishing Vöge's inaugural lecture of 1910 at the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau). This dictum has the highest relevance to the origins of Perpendicular in England, derived from the usage of William Ramsey, King's Chief Mason 1336-49, and his successors in the royal service Henry Yeveley and William Wynford.
36. It may be added that the plain shield beneath a niche above the west window is of fifteenth-century shape. The batter of the walls, alleged (PW, 31) as a sign of early date, is also noticeable in the tower of St. Catherine's near Bath, documented between 1490 and 1504 (SRS, XIX, 57; cf. Woodforde 1946, 28). The method of building with a slight batter is no more than a safety precaution when the work is done in rubble masonry at low cost, or by a builder unprepared to take risks.
37. It is remarked (PW, 33) that the walls are 'unusually thin' and of 'advanced construction', factors which amply demonstrate the relatively late date of Compton Martin.
38. The angel stops of the west door-label suggest the reign of Henry VI (1422-1461).
39. The arch has two broad wave-moulds linked by a narrow pipelike $\frac{3}{4}$ -hollow or channel.
40. It is highly significant that the building of spires in Somerset should have ceased at the onset of the Perpendicular period. Most of the surviving stone spires are on towers of little architectural importance. The exceptions are East Brent, Bridgwater, Congresbury, Croscombe and Yatton. Crowcombe, a Decorated-Perpendicular transitional design, had a spire which was struck by lightning and fell in 1725. The window-tracery there is transitional Curvilinear-Perpendicular and the tower-arch and west doorway have double-ogee mouldings.
Apart from East Brent, all these spired towers have diagonal buttresses, a type swept away in major Somerset Perpendicular, though not in Gloucestershire or Wiltshire. The three west towers of Bridgwater, Congresbury and Croscombe have tower-arches of three chamfers, and were all begun in the Decorated period, Bridgwater about 1337. The Yatton central spire was left unfinished at a date before 1446. East Brent, though it has pairs of angle-buttresses surmounted by diagonals at the fourth of its five stages, has a plain chamfered arch and is almost devoid of architectural detail; it cannot be regarded as having a place in the development of Somerset towers. Three towers, and as far as we know, three only, were designed in Perpendicular style and intended to bear spires: Shepton Mallet, which achieved the first eight feet; Cheddar, and Banwell.
41. Mells and Leigh have tower-arches with shafts and broad wave-moulds of the same character as the crossing arches which support the tower at Axbridge. Rather vague evidence suggests that the Axbridge tower was built with its fan-vault before the 1420's (Leedy 1980, 132).
42. Allen, 40. None of the major Perpendicular towers of Somerset looks stylistically earlier than Shepton Mallet except Yeovil, which may have been designed c. 1380. Shepton, with Cheddar and Banwell, may have been designed before completion of the Wells cathedral south-west tower c. 1395.
43. The Weston Zoyland transept is dated by the arms of Glastonbury Abbey and the initials R.B. for Abbot Richard Beere. The date is probably early in his abbacy, for the Glastonbury Tribunal, built for him before 1517, is in a very plain style.

44. Wells town accounts, quoted by T. Scott Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury* (1908), 126.
45. T. Serel, *Historical Notes on the Church of St. Cuthbert in Wells* (1875), 99.
46. Serel (1875) admirably illustrated and correctly identified the arms, but did not give a clear account of their chronological significance. Palton impaling Botreaux relates to the marriage of Robert de Palton with Elizabeth, sister of Sir William de Botreaux (1337-1391), before January 1385 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls 1381-85*, 542; SRS, XVII, 201); Robert died in 1400 (*Cal. Fine Rolls 1399-1405*, 80, 97). Palton impaling Courtenay records the marriage of Sir William de Palton (who died January 1450) to Anne, daughter of Sir Philip Courtenay (1404-1463) of Powderham, Devon. The marriage is not likely to have taken place before 1435 (E: Cleaveland, *A Genealogical History of the Family of Courtenay*, 1735; *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, LXXV (1943), 177; Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series XIII (1968), 71; cf. Victoria County History, *Hampshire*, IV, 551; *Wiltshire*, VI, 214). The Palton family, originally of Paulton, were seated at Croscombe and also held East Horrington in Wells, and Camerton, as well as large estates in several other counties. The family died out with Sir William in 1450, which puts a terminus to their patronage of the Wells tower.
47. Backwell, Batheaston, Chew Magna, Dundry, Publow, Winford.
48. See also Appendix A, B.
49. The date of Dundry may well be close to the traditional '1482' carved on a stone near the west door. The numerals, as carved, must certainly be of much later date, but it is known that there was a re-facing in 1828-30 (Pevsner, *North Somerset*, 185).
50. The evidence for Taunton comes from wills, but they are unusually explicit. Bequests to the church down to 1486 do not mention the new tower, but from 1488 there are frequent references until structural completion in 1504 and 1505; the insertion of the 'Somerset tracery' (*katerynke*, catering) into the tower windows did not follow until 1514 (SRS, XVI, XIX).
51. Allen 1932, 36; Wickham 1952, 47. The dating of Probus is of great importance as it shows that North Petherton, from which it was closely copied, was new and famous in 1514-17, when Probus was projected.
52. Wickham 1952, 33.
53. See Appendix B.
54. SRS, XIX, 355.
55. References for the dating of Somerset churches before 1550 refer to some 30 towers and about 50 other distinct builds. A tentative list of references has been deposited with the Somerset Local History Library at Taunton.
56. Canon Robert de Samborne was rector from 1362 for 20 years. On making his will in 1382, just before his death, he left the residue of his estate to 'the work of the church of Jevele begun by me, until it be finished'. Architecturally, the whole church is a unity, carried out in an early Perpendicular style markedly influenced by Wells Cathedral (paired oblique pinnacles above square angle-buttresses) and by the 'school of Bristol' (notably the east, west and transeptal windows). The parapets and various details conform to the practice of William Wynford, consultant architect to Wells Cathedral from February 1365. Samborne first appears as a prebendary (of Wedmore Secunda) in November 1366 (J. LeNeve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1300-1541*, ed. B. Jones, 1964, 70). The design for Yeovil church may have been produced at any time after 1366 and there is no stylistic reason why the foundations should not have been laid by c 1370. The roof-bosses of the chancel and south chapel show that these had been completed well before 1399; a head of the young king Richard II appears in the chancel, consistent with a date of c 1380-85.
57. Freeman pointed out as long ago as 1852 (*S.A. & N.H. S. Proc.*, III, 1853, part ii, 25) the likeness of Yeovil church both to St. Mary Redcliffe and to Bristol Cathedral.
58. The pre-Perpendicular sources of the arcade parapet need only be traced back to the south transept at Gloucester Cathedral (1331-37); the tower at Arlingham, Glos., built in 1372-75, has a level arcaded parapet of Curvilinear detail and provided for in the contract of 1372 (see Fig. 3). The level parapet of plain work, without arcading or pinnacles, was used by Wynford at Winchester College (1387-94), and occurs in Somerset at the collegiate church of North Cadbury in c. 1415-23 (illustrated in Harvey 1978, plates 8; 37; 79, 80; 125). Mr. Poyntz Wright's contention (p. 179) that the flat top of the Wedmore crossing tower dates from c. 1540 and 'would be far too

- early' at 1400, is entirely unjustified.
59. See J.H. Harvey, 'The Buildings of Winchester College' in *Winchester College 1382-1982*, ed. R. Custance (forthcoming), 77-127 (p.87).
 60. See the reconstruction by the late Sir Charles Nicholson in *R.I.B.A. Journal*, XIX (1912), 627-8.
 61. J.H. Harvey and L.S. Colchester, 'Wells Cathedral: Architecture and Conservation', *A.M.S. Trans.*, XXV (1981), 109-10; J.H. Harvey, 'Perpendicular at Wells' in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Wells and Glastonbury* (BAA, 1981), 37-8.
 62. Wadley 1886, 63.
 63. The suggestion (PW, 37) that the triangular tracery of the parapet at Hutton, assigned to 'c. 1403-05', 'was probably a forerunner of its appearance at Wells Cathedral' cannot possibly be sustained.
 64. In the case of Mells there is clear evidence of a long period of construction. Whereas the tower had been started by 1446, Leland in c. 1543 wrote that the whole church had been 'buildid in tyme of mynde . . . by the hole parochē' (*The Itinerary of John Leland*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1910/1964, V, 105). This must put completion at the earliest after c. 1485; in fact work on the vestry was still in progress in 1524 (cf. Leedy 1980, 184).

Appendix A. Classification of Tower-arches

The main clue to constructional relationships between towers is the form taken by the tower arch. Almost all the earlier towers of importance have orders of plain chamfers, one, two or three, but a few of these were built as late as the sixteenth century. After the insertion of the wave-moulded orders of the 'St. Andrew's Arches' beneath the central tower of Wells Cathedral (c. 1338-55) there developed the wave-moulded tower-arches of parish churches: one wave; two waves; two waves joined by a channel, a deep hollow or a casement; waves and shafts. Independently there was a tradition of shaft and wide hollow, taken from the standard type of arcade pier; and a series of panelled types: moulded panels; canted panels with projecting shafts; and finally the dominant method of Tudor Gothic, the fully developed shaft and panel. Apart from all these there were a few builds, some of importance, with quite unusual forms, probably brought from outside Somerset. The lists which follow are intended to be representative, but they include most of the greater towers discussed in the literature and smaller towers of interest including those of documented dates.

The tables indicate also: the shapes of west doors; the form of tracery-heads, 2-centred or ogee; the existence of inverted cusping; the type of parapet. In the right-hand columns are the classifications of Freeman (I: Taunton; II: Bristol; III: Wrington); of Allen (*Brislington; Devon; East Mendip; West Mendip; North Somerset; Quantock; South Somerset*); of Wickham (as variations from Allen); and of Poyntz Wright: (eight main groups, with additional related towers in (); and four minor groups).

Towers with angle-buttresses at right-angles are in CAPITALS; diagonal-buttressed towers in lower-case. Late towers, documented as after 1450 or with ogees, are in *italics*; in Class 7 this implies a date of design after c. 1485.

Wickham discounted Allen's 'Brislington' group, but enlarged his 'Cathedral' group (here marked W for Wells). Allen placed a number of important towers in a 'residual' class, here marked 'x'. Brereton's classification is omitted as immature, and that of Francis Bond (*An Introduction to English Church Architecture*, 1913, II, 887-90) is a mere outline; as, from a different standpoint, is Pevsner's.

I have visited all the towers mentioned, some on many occasions, but a few particulars are entered at second-hand because of difficulty in getting access to locked churches.

SOMERSET TOWER-ARCHES

Class 1—Chamfers and chamfered orders

Numbers in () indicate the number of chamfered orders.

			A.	W.	PW
EAST BRENT	(1)		—	—	—
Bridgwater	(3)	(1337-1366)	spired	—	—
North Cadbury	(1)	(shortly before 1408)	spired	—	—

Congresbury	(3)		spired	—	—	—
Croscombe	(3)		spired	Br	—	—
Freshford	(3)	(-1515-)		—	—	—
Locking	(3)			WM	—	(1)
Yeovilton	(2)	(-1486-)		—	—	—

With the marginal exception of East Brent, none of these are architecturally 'Somerset Towers'.

Class 2—Wave Mouldings as orders

(a) One wave

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
Bleadon	4c.	2c.	(4-foil)	II	WM	WM	2

(b) Two waves

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
BACKWELL	2c.	2c.	Triang. A	III	NS	NS	5
BATHEASTON	—	Og.	Arcade B		NS	NS	5
BLAGDON	2c.	2c.	Lozenge		NS	NS	3
Chelvey	2c.	2c.	Triang. B		—	—	—
CHEW MAGNA	2c.	2c.	Arcade A/C		NS	NS	5
Chew Stoke		2c.	Arcade B		Br	—	10
COMPTON BISHOP	2c.	2c.	Lozenge		—	—	1
(unequal waves)							
DUNDRY	2c.	Og.	Gloucester (? c. 1482)	II	NS	NS	5
East Harptree	4c.	Og. inv.			—	—	—
(unequal waves)		4-foil					
Hemington	4c.	Og.	Plain B		x	—	—
MINEHEAD	4c.	Og. inv.	Plain B	II	D	D	—
PUBLOW	2c.	2c.	Arcade C		NS	NS	5
Tickenham	2c.	Og.	Arcade B (-1497-)		Br	—	—
WEARE	2c.	2c.	Lozenge		WM	WM	2
WINFORD	2c.	(lost)	Arcade A/C		NS	NS	5

(c) Two waves and hollow etc.

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
H	BANWELL	2c.	?	Triang. B squinches	II	WM	WM 2
H + W	BRUTON	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil	I	EM	EM 3
	CHARD	2c.	2c.	Plain B		—	9
P	CHEDDAR	2c.	2c.	Lozenge squinches	II	WM	WM 2
C	Hutton	2c.	Og.	Triang. B	II	WM	(1)
C	ILE ABBOTS	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil	I	Q	Q 8
	Kewstoke	—	2c.	Lozenge		WM	1
C	KINGSTON ST. M.	4c.	Og.	4-foil		Q	Q 8
C	BISHOP'S						
	LYDEARD	4c.	Og.	4-foil	I	Q	Q 8
C	PORTISHEAD						
	(lower stages)	2c.	2c.				
	(upper stages)		Og.	Triang. B	II/III	NS	NS 5
C	SHEPTON MALLET	2c.	?	Lozenge spired		WM	WM 3
C	STAPLE FITZPAINE	4c.	2c.				
			Og.	4-foil		Q	Q 8
C	TAUNTON ST. J.	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil	I	Q	Q 8
H	WINScombe	2c.	2c.	Lozenge		WM	WM 2

In this class the linking member between the two waves varies; the forms are indicated in the left-hand margin as: C = casement mould; H = deep hollow; H + W = deep hollow and third wave towards nave; P = pipe-like channel.

Class 3—Shaft and Hollows

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
BRENT KNOLL	2c.	2c.	Lozenge	II	WM	WM	2
CANNINGTON	4c.	2c.	Plain B	II	D	—	—
Churchill	2c.	Og. inv.	Lozenge		—	—	1
Spaxton (1434-)	2c.	2c.	Plain B		—	—	—
Over Stowey	(4c.)	(Og.)	Plain B		—	—	—
WELLOW	4c.	2c.	Plain B		—	—	5

Class 4—Shaft and Waves

(AXBRIDGE (? c. 1400-20)				Lozenge crossing piers	WM	WM	—)
<i>LEIGH-ON-MENDIP</i>	2c.	Og. inv.	4-foil			EM	EM 3
<i>MELLS (-1446-)</i>	2c.	Og.(inv.)	Plain B			EM	EM 3

Class 5—Mouldings with Panels

D-Og.	<i>Compton Martin</i>	4c.	Og.	Lozenge (-1443-)		x	—	1
D-Og.	<i>WEST CRANMORE</i>	4c.	Og.	Plain B		EM	EM	3
Og.	<i>HINTON ST. G.</i>	4c.	(4c.)	4-foil (-1486-94-)		SS	SS	7
Og.*	<i>LANGPORT</i>	4c.	2c. inv.	Plain B	I	x	(Q)	6
R & F	<i>LYMPHAM</i>	2c.	Og.	Arcade A/C	III	NS	—	(3)
D-Og.	<i>MUDFORD</i>	2c.	Og.	Plain B	II	x	—	9
D-Og; Og.	<i>LONG SUTTON</i>	4c.	Og.inv.	Plain B (-1493)	I	x	(Q)	6
R & F; Og.	<i>WELLS ST. C.</i>	2c.	2c.(inv.)	Arcade B (1395-1449)	III	W	W	4

In this class the panels are flanked by a variety of moulds: D-Og. = double ogee; Og. = ogee; Og.* = with angle-shafts in nook; R & F = projecting roll-and-fillet of pear-shaped form, often found in work of the very end of the 14th and first years of the 15th century.

Class 6—Shafts and canted Panels

<i>EVERCREECH</i>	4c ^f	2c. inv.	4-foil			EM	W	4
<i>WRINGTON</i>	4c.	Og.	Triang. B	III		NS	W	4

Class 7—Shafts and Panels

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
Spl.	<i>BATCOMBE</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	Lozenge (-1539-43-)		EM	W 12
D-Og.	<i>BRISTOL TEMPLE</i>	—	2c.(inv.)	(Triang. B) (c1445-60)	II	NS	NS —
	<i>CHEDZOY</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil (-1539-)		Q	Q 11
	<i>GLASTONBURY</i>						
	ST. B.	2c.	2c.	Plain B		x	(Q) (4)
	— ST. JOHN B.	2c.	Og. inv.	Gloucester	III	x	? (4)
Spl	<i>HUISH EPISCOPI</i>	2c.	Og.	Lozenge	I	Q	Q 8
Spl	<i>KINGSBURY</i>						
	<i>EPISCOPI</i>	4c.	Og.	Lozenge	I	Q	Q 8
D-Og.	<i>LYNG</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil		Q	Q 8
	<i>MARTOCK</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil	II	x	Q 9
D-Og.	<i>MIDDLEZOY</i>	4c.	Og.	4-foil	I	EM	Q 8
	<i>MUCHELNEY*</i>	4c.	Og.	Plain B	II	x	(Q) 6
	<i>NORTON-SUB-</i>						
	<i>HAMDON</i>	2c.	Og.	Plain B		SS	SS 7
Spl	<i>NORTH</i>						
	<i>PETHERTON</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil (c 1510)	III	Q	Q 8
	<i>RUISHTON</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	— (-1530-35-)		Q	Q 11
	<i>SHEPTON</i>						
	<i>BEAUCHAMP*</i>	2c.	Og.	Plain B		SS	SS 7
	<i>TAUNTON ST.</i>						
	<i>MARY</i>						
	<i>MAGDALENE</i>	4c.	2c.	Gloucester (1488-1505)	I	Q	Q 8
	<i>WESTON</i>						
	<i>ZOYLAND</i>	4c.	Og. inv.	4-foil	I	EM	Q 6

All of this class (except Glastonbury St. Benign) flank the outer shafts with an ogee (or double-ogee where marked D-Og.); the ogee is splayed off in the cases marked Spl. With these Somerset towers should be compared that of Steeple Ashton, Wilts., approximately dated to 1480-1500, which had a tall spire struck by lightning in 1670. This was built by Thomas Lovell, freemason of Trowbridge; the mouldings of the tower-arch are almost identical with those of Norton-sub-Hamdon and those of Beaminster, Dorset (bequest of 1499), as well as Weston Zoyland.

* Muchelney and Shepton Beauchamp have fan-vaults dated between 1487 and 1507 by the arms of Giles, Lord Daubeney, K.G.; that at Muchelney may be an insertion rather later than the building of the tower (Leedy 1980, 187, 200).

Idiosyncratic Mouldings

These do not form a class, as they are of heterogeneous types

	Door	Window	Parapet	F.	A.	W.	PW
Bagborough*	4c.	Og. inv.	Plain B		—	—	—
CHEWTON MENDIP	4c.	Og. inv.	Arcade B (-1541-) (Gloucester)	I	x	EM	12
OLD CLEEVE	4c.	Og. inv.	Plain B (-1535-)		—	—	—
Cossington	4c.	Og. (in 4c.)	Plain B (c. 1500-05)		—	—	—
Crowcombe§	2c.	(Og. Curv.)	Plain A	I	—	—	—
MARK*	4c.	2c.	Lozenge	I	WM	WM	2
YEOVIL	2c.	2c.	Arcade A (c. 1380-1400)	II	NS	—	5

* Bagborough and Mark have mouldings which appear to be based on those used in the west nave of Gloucester Abbey (Cathedral) in (1421-37); a dated example of similar mouldings is the tower-arch at Castle Combe, Wilts., where the tower was begun in 1434.

§ Crowcombe, which carried a tall spire struck by lightning in 1725, is noteworthy as a work of transitional early-Perpendicular style, later than Bridgwater but probably preceding Yeovil in retaining diagonal buttresses and immature tracery.

Appendix B. The 'Diamond-stop' bar

An unusual feature of over twenty of the greater towers is a length of projecting stringcourse forming an ornamental sill beneath windows, commonly those of the second and third stages. This bar is sometimes plain, or slightly turned up at the ends, but is more frequently enriched with lozenges or diamond-shaped stops at each end. These stops exactly resemble label-stops of the same form, which are frequently found on the same towers and occasionally on towers which do not employ the bar.

Since many Somerset towers have no bars beneath sills, and there is little or no use of such bars outside the county, the feature cannot be regarded as functional, but is purely decorative. As might be expected, its distribution is not linked to any classification wholly or largely structural. Thus diamond-stop bars are found on towers of Allen's and Wickham's groups: Wells, East Mendip, West Mendip, North Somerset and Quantock; in the PW system in 'generations' 2, 3, 5 and 8; and in the categories of tower-arches in classes 2 (b), 2 (c), 5 and 7. Bars without the diamond-stop occur also in PW 6; and diamond-stops in PW 12.

Towers with diamond-stop bars are: Banwell, Batheaston, Bristol Temple (c. 1450-60), Bruton, Charlton Horethorne (W. face only); Cheddar (? c. 1410), West Cranmore, Ile Abbots, Kilmersdon (at stage 2; stage 3 has a bar with upturned trefoil stops), Kingston St. Mary, Bishop's Lydeard, Lyng, Middlezoy, Publow, Staple Fitzpaine (with head-stops on the west side), Taunton St. James, Weston Zoyland and Winscombe. Bars of simpler type occur at Backwell, Blagdon, Chew Magna, Dundry, Shepton Mallet, Winford and Wrington.

The diamond-stop bar ranges over most of the 15th century, but has not been found later than c. 1490. It is a feature of true Perpendicular which hardly survived into Tudor Gothic.

Appendix C. The Somerset Tower

The time has not yet come for a definitive study of the Somerset tower and its varieties, with their chronology, but enough is now known of the development of design and building methods in the later Middle Ages to make it possible to give a sketch of its origins. We begin with the fact that, in the West of England generally, towers of the 14th century carried spires and had diagonal buttresses. This remained true after the onset of Perpendicular, as at Crowcombe (note 40; above); and even after 1400 the diagonal buttress for long remained almost universal in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Quite suddenly, about 1400 or soon afterwards, towers of a very different type were being built in Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. These new towers, with pairs of angle buttresses, were at first designed to bear spires: East Brent was actually built; Shepton Mallet begun; Cheddar and Banwell carried as far as the squinches. Yet by the time that these steeples were designed, fashion had decreed that future towers were to be square-topped, with an ornamental parapet and pinnacles, or simple battlements. What had happened to cause this change?

Ever since Norman times there had been a tradition of building great crossing towers at the cathedrals and greater abbeys, as well as slighter towers on each side of the west fronts. From an early date three different traditions of design arose; plain towers without buttresses; towers with buttresses, either angled or diagonal; and towers with turrets at the corners forming a polygonal buttressing mass. The course of development of tower design was complex, derived from these three separate forms of tower (see diagram in J.H. Harvey, *Cathedrals of England and Wales*, 1974, 250). Apart from work at monasteries, now lost, the only relevant towers are those at Hereford (designed c. 1315) and Worcester, built in 1357-74. Both of these have angle-buttresses, though those at Worcester are nonobtrusive additions to angle-turrets.

At Wells was the plain, unbuttressed, central tower of 1315-22, with three tall double-lancet windows in each face. These elevations were influential in suggesting the long-panel design of the south-west tower, as well as the small-scale battlemented cresting of its parapet, but had no relevance to its Perpendicular style, which was brought direct from the King's Works by William Wynford after his appointment as consultant at Wells in 1365. It may be of some importance that John Clyve, a mason junior to Wynford at Windsor Castle in 1362-65, became master mason to Worcester Cathedral and was in charge there until 1392. It is at least probable that Wynford was well informed of the details of the great tower there, the most recent cathedral tower in England.

Unlike the plain central tower, the western towers at Wells, foreseen from the start early in the 13th century, were provided with massive angle-buttresses to support lofty spires which doubtless appeared upon a great parchment drawing preserved in the cathedral tracing house or lodge at the time of Wynford's arrival in 1365. We have already seen that in the next twenty years Wynford must have made the momentous decision to design modern towers finished off level to rhyme with the great horizontal cornice of the front, yet carrying up from the ground the vertical lines of the buttresses already built. Within the same period he must also have produced the design for Canon Samborne's new tower at Yeovil, working in his earlier idiom of plain expanses of masonry and massive square buttresses as seen in his Oxford and Winchester works of 1379-94. The Yeovil plan, though unable to conceal the staircase within the buttressing mass of the outer angle, was adapted from the pre-existing ground plan of the towers of the Wells front.

At Yeovil the buttresses were set back from the angles of the tower exactly as they were at the angles of the Muniment Tower at Winchester and emphasizing what had already been seen at the angles of the Antechapel at New College, Oxford, begun in 1380. Here is the immediate source of the set-back scheme of buttressing which rapidly spread over the whole of the south-western counties within the next fifty years. Allen was right in associating the Yeovil design with his North Somerset group, which in its single-windowed form derives directly from Yeovil. It is probably not without significance that one of the earlier towers of that group is at Winford, very likely the birthplace of the great architect; while the stylistic affiliation of these towers and of Yeovil church is to the Bristol school, in which Wynford may be supposed to have trained before his appointment at Windsor Castle in 1360 under the (? Gloucestershire) architect John Sponlee.

Once the new south-west tower at the cathedral had been built, by 1395 if not earlier, the austere scheme of Yeovil and the plainer North Somerset towers would begin to appear old-fashioned. The twin windows of the Wells tower were adopted to produce a richer version, corresponding in the main to Allen's second division of the North Somerset group. The towers of both divisions are likely to have been designed for the most part after Wynford's death in 1405. In the last ten years or so of his life, however, he seems to have sketched out the far richer and more complex scheme which was to give rise to the 'Somerset Tower' in the full sense. Presumptively the original sketch design reflected something of an intermediate scheme for a spired front for the cathedral in Wells, interpreting the old parchment design in the fresh Perpendicular idiom. Only in this way is the tower, with attempted spire, of Shepton Mallet fully intelligible. Its ground plan, with splay faces between the buttresses, comes directly from the cathedral, where splays at the outer corners had been provided from the start for the spiral staircases. On a parochial scale this would not allow space for a stair, so it was transformed into a polygonal turret inspired by those at Worcester, to provide a firm core for a buttressing mass which would be adequate to resist the stress set up by a tall spire. We must remember that until after 1395 it was expected that every tower, whether of a cathedral or a parish church, would bear a spire either of stone or of timber and lead.

Two further motives relate the primary design of Shepton Mallet tower to Wynford and his work at Wells. The top stage, consisting of three two-light windows of which only the central is pierced, was inspired by the old central tower, with its three twin-lancets.

The division by 'triangular' (square-ordinal) buttress-pinnacles comes from the treatment of the upper stage at Worcester, where there was room for two windows and three blanks. The second feature is the tracery of the windows, and blank panels. This consists of an early Perpendicular reticulation split by a slender supermullion: a form adopted by Wynford in 1387 for the hall windows of Winchester College, used in the Yeovil tower and, soon after Wynford's time, inserted in the Early English lancets throughout Wells Cathedral. It is this form of window that was to last on for as much as a century as the classic type for Somerset towers, a feature which greatly adds to the difficulty of chronological analysis. It may be regarded as some compensation that, in the towers as at Wells Cathedral, it serves as both signature and memorial of a great architect.

Acknowledgements

Over thirty-five years ago I had the good fortune to have many conversations with the late T.D. Atkinson at the time that he was writing his last book, *Local Style in English Architecture* (Batsford, 1947), and in particular compiling the map of 'Steeple of Somerset' which he included there (p.96). The map is based on the work of Allen, but illustrates Atkinson's own eager interest in the subject which encouraged me towards further study. Later I was to meet, all too briefly, Kenneth Wickham who showed me his amazing collection of superb photographs of Somerset churches taken by himself, only a few of which appeared in his posthumous book. My debt to Atkinson and to Wickham is immense.

More recently, I have had many opportunities to visit Somerset churches, and to discuss their details and towers, with my friends L.S. Colchester, Michael McGarvie and M.R. Petch, to all of whom I here offer my grateful thanks.