

**THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL MOVEMENT  
AND ITS ANTECEDENTS IN DEVON**

A STUDY OF 19TH-CENTURY CHURCHES,  
CHURCH FURNISHINGS AND CHURCH RESTORATION  
IN AN ENGLISH COUNTY

Submitted by Richard William Parker to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology in February 2019.

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## **ABSTRACT**

‘But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first’ (*Matthew. 19:30*)

This thesis seeks to explore how the physical fabric of Devon churches reflects changing perceptions of the role of the Church in society during the 19th century; how churchmen, architects and craftsmen of the period employed architecture and liturgical planning to reflect a revived national Church with a new sense of its connection to the past, to the great ages of Christian civilisation, and a strong sense of its duty and mission to all members of society.

Nineteenth-century furnishings are not well understood as an archaeological resource: they are disappearing fast as more and more churches succumb to fashionable re-ordering schemes, yet many are of high artistic quality and even the least among these artefacts reveals much about the people and the society which created them.

Church interiors of all periods are precious resources in that they clearly reflect contemporary religious and social controversies. Church furnishings can powerfully embody and reveal the character of a place and people at the time of their creation. They may survive as complete period pieces, or may have accumulated incrementally, each alteration reflecting changing trends in churchmanship and the progress of archaeological and liturgical scholarship among architects, clergy and patrons. Above all, 19th-century church furnishings reveal a clear trend away from rigid social divisions towards a more egalitarian Church, inclusive of all people.

We know very little about why particular styles or layouts of furnishings were chosen, which of these are uncommon or unusual, what they signified to those who chose and used them, and which were fashionable at which period. My thesis seeks to explore the impact of Victorian ‘ecclesiology’ upon Anglican churches in Devon; to explore the huge variety of types and materials employed in their creation and to show how these embody a desire on the part of Victorian churchmen and women to replace a Church of clear social distinctions and privilege with a Church which embodied and showed forth a more open mission to all members of the community.

Out of 711 churches in existence in Devon during the 19th and early 20th centuries, 647 have been visited and photographically recorded by the author in person. The remaining 64 demolished or inaccessible churches have been studied, as far as possible, by documentary research and in photographic archives compiled by others.



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Richard Parker



## DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS SPECIFIC TO THIS WORK

### Archives and Collections

D19CP: The Devon 19th-Century Churches Project

D&EI: Devon and Exeter Institution.

ECL: Exeter Cathedral Library.

LPL: Lambeth Palace Library

ICBS: Incorporated Church Building Society (At LPL).

NMR: National Monuments Record

RAMM: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

RIBA: Royal Institute of British Architects

SPAB: Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

SWHC: South West Heritage Centre

WCSL: Westcountry Studies Library collections (At SWHC)

### Newspapers, Magazines and Periodicals

CIW: *The Church in The West*

EDAS: Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society

EFP: *Exeter Flying Post*

E&PG: *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*

E&PGDT: *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette Daily Telegrams.*

TCB: *The Church Builder*

TDA: *Transactions of the Devonshire Association.*

TEDAS: *Transactions of the EDAS*

WT: *The Western Times.*

WM: *The Western Mercury*

### Other Abbreviations

ICOMOS: International Council On Monuments (And) Sites



### **Definitions of Building types**

- Parish Church: A church with legal jurisdiction and responsibility for the people living in a particular geographical area or parish, which was usually defined in the high-medieval period but sometimes a modern subdivision of a larger ancient parish. Usually enjoying the rights of baptism and sepulture as well as being licensed for the Solemnisation of Matrimony.
- Daughter church: A subsidiary church of a larger and usually more ancient church enjoying most, but not necessarily all the legal rights and privileges of a parish church.
- Chapel: a smaller or subsidiary church within a parish, usually served from the parish church and usually open for public worship, but not enjoying the same rights as the parish church. Also, a detached or attached part of any one church containing (or originally containing), a separate altar. Also (sometimes) a non-conformist meeting house
- Chapel of ease: a church specially built to relieve difficulties of access to a distant parish church; its rights and privileges may vary.
- District church: an 18th-or 19th-century church building founded to serve a particular district within a larger parish. Usually served by its own clergy, and very often founded with the intention of becoming the parish church for a newly formed legal parish.
- Private chapel: a private foundation, staffed at the expense of a local family, religious community, military, medical, prison or educational establishment. Not necessarily open for public worship.
- Proprietary Chapel: a church, large or small, founded to increase church accommodation in an area, but without a specially assigned parish or district. Sometimes privately owned and rarely possessing the same rights as the parish church. Usually the great majority of the seats were appropriated, this being a major source of income for the church.
- Mission Church: a church specially provided for mission to a particular community, whether rural or urban poor, fishermen, or perhaps miners, but open for public worship. Usually founded from and within an older parish centre and served from there. Sometimes such buildings were Licensed, rather than Consecrated and they might therefore be used for various social and educational functions in addition to their religious use.

- School-Chapel: a 19th- or 20th-century multi-purpose building providing school accommodation in the body of the church, often with a separate transeptal classroom and church accommodation in the chancel, which was usually screened off during school use. These buildings were designed for flexible use and were therefore not originally Consecrated, but merely Licensed, allowing them to be used for secular events without the need for a faculty permitting the variation in use.

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Fig. 1 The seal of the Cambridge Camden Society, designed by A.W. N. Pugin in 1844.



Fig. 2 The seal of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, appearing in the first issue of their Transactions in 1843.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

‘He that heweth timber from the thick trees was known to bring it to an excellent work: but now they break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers’  
(Psalm 74)

‘Take an axe and hatchet the utterly awful kipper-coloured choir stalls and pews’.

(Sir Roy Strong, speaking at the Gresham College Special Lecture, St Paul's Cathedral, 30/05/2007).

### **Hypothesis and Aims of the Thesis.**

This research has been undertaken as a response to the need for an overview of the archaeological resource represented by 19th- and early 20th-century church interiors. The resource is fast being eroded, through church closures and reordering schemes across Britain, and remains imperfectly understood, to the extent that there is potential for catastrophic loss. The potential loss is, arguably, equivalent to the disruptions of the Reformation, during which period an entire way of life, deeply embedded in European culture — which at the time of its destruction remained a vital force (Duffy 2005) — was swept away, and with it the artistic, cultural and spiritual legacy of a thousand years of British Christianity.

The 19th century was a period of extraordinary growth and revival in popular religion and religious observance. Nearly all Christian denominations during the period sought to frame their liturgical practice with outstanding architecture and dignified furniture. Even the most austere sects, such as the Plymouth Brethren, built handsome meeting houses for public worship. As the outlook of congregations and their ministers changed in response to religious controversies and new priorities for mission, and as the economic circumstances and social status of a congregation improved, these buildings were refurbished and renewed by adding and overlaying new furnishings among the old. Many grand Victorian churches developed from humble origins, their first congregations meeting in a converted barn, a ‘tin tabernacle’<sup>1</sup> or a school-chapel designed for flexible use. These might form the germ of a great building, which was then furnished to the highest achievable levels of contemporary art.

The thesis explores the architectural legacy of Victorian Anglicanism in one English county, Devon. It examines the types of furnishings, architectural language and liturgical planning of Devon churches; how 19th- and early 20th-century churchmen and women responded to the spread of ideas promoted by contemporary church reformers such as the Cambridge Camden Society (later the Ecclesiological Society) and the local exponents of these ideas, the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society (Figs 1, 2); how they remodelled the fabric of their churches in accordance with these ideas to renew the life and focus of their Church and extend its mission. The thesis argues that the 19th century made a highly significant contribution to the life and artistic legacy of the church of England, transforming its physical fabric and liturgy, and its relationship to the people it aimed to serve.

Though the movement was led by wealthy, well-educated individuals, their focus was on the abolition of social segregation in the Church and the realisation of a more unified society where all could play their part in advancing Christianity. This programme was delivered through mass education, by the repair of ancient church buildings and reinvention of historic liturgies and by the development of new types of church buildings that would be able to reach out to the ‘unchurched’ poor. The movement produced a remarkable physical legacy of restored and new church buildings and furnishings and may reasonably be said to have transformed architecture and design as well as public worship, with unprecedented success.

This research hopes to demonstrate that Victorian architects, clergy and patrons used the language of the Gothic revival creatively, to express regional and community identity, developing an architectural vocabulary based on continuity, founded on authentic medieval regional sources, but also deeply pragmatic and practical. They recharged and reinvented Gothic as a modern

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<sup>1</sup> A popular term for a ‘temporary’ corrugated-iron building established as the nucleus of a new community.

architectural style that could serve contemporary social needs and they believed that monumental architecture and dignified liturgy was a gift in which all might participate.

### **The motivation for this research**

This research has been undertaken because it is evident to the author that the archaeological value and historic interest of Victorian and Edwardian churches is still underestimated. Victorian buildings remain at risk of wholesale loss; public prejudice against Victorian art remains at a high ebb and 19th-century artefacts are still routinely dismissed, especially if they are conceived of as standing in the way of some much-desired ‘improvement’, as inferior to artefacts from other, perhaps less immediately challenging, epochs. Victorian artefacts are more easily sacrificed to ‘progress’ as Diocesan officers, Parochial Church Councils and parish clergy respond to the perceived need for retrenchment in the Church and radical changes to re-present their ideology to an ‘unchurched’ society, through reordering and alteration — or wholesale replacement — of their buildings. The zealousness and apparent inflexibility of the Victorians, the thoroughness of their convictions and the inconsistencies in some of their theories have to a certain extent damaged their reputation and have cast some of their considerable achievements in a poor light. This has already resulted in significant losses to the archaeological legacy of the movement and this situation seems set to continue.

Our understanding of Victorian churches and their interiors is still strongly coloured by a 20th-century distaste for the use of historicist architectural styles in buildings erected in an industrial age. Much of this attitude is a product of modernist ideology attempting to construct an art-historical narrative of continuous artistic progress from the Renaissance, through the Enlightenment, to Modernism. The idea of progress may help justify modernist experiments in architecture and design, but in such narratives the Gothic revival and other expressions of historicism may easily be felt to strike a false note.

Many of the negative attitudes to Victorian ecclesiastical art are long-established and pervasive, having developed contemporaneously with the art itself. Writers and commentators in the 18th and 19th centuries were not afraid to excoriate the works of their fellow artists and architects; sometimes in very intemperate language. The reaction of John Carter, in the 18th-century, to the restorations of English cathedrals by James Wyatt, or to new buildings in the ‘Gothick’ manner, seem almost to prefigure Pugin in their vehemence (Mordaunt Crook 1995, 62). The tenor of the debate over Gothic architecture was therefore already heightened at the beginning of the 19th century and later 19th- and 20th-century writers, including William Morris, though

inspired by and participating in the movement were loud and unrelenting in their criticism of the way in which Victorians interacted with ancient buildings as well as the quality of their new designs.

The Victorians' contribution to ecclesiastical art is particularly qualified by the comprehensive nature of their restorations of ancient buildings. The much disparaged 'Victorian' approach to 'restoration', characterised (to paraphrase Eugene Viollet le Duc) as 'to reinstate a building in a condition of completeness which could never have existed at any given time', was, however, a theoretical ideal rather than a *fiat*. Whereas some 19th-century restoration may have been drastic, most was simply pragmatic and no more blameworthy than that of any other epoch.

'Destructive restoration' was a process which even the Victorians came to regard as insensitive. George Gilbert Scott articulated this as early as 1848 (Branfoot 2004, 65-72, but he is rarely given due credit for this. As Carter and Pugin had railed at Wyatt for his restorations of English cathedrals, so William Morris railed at Scott and John Ruskin railed at everyone, labelling the 'restoration' of ancient buildings in *The Lamp of Memory* XIX as 'A lie from beginning to end' (Ruskin 1849, 196).

The works of these powerful, articulate writers have been appropriated by modern theoreticians to attack the whole principle of exploring the past as a means of re-energising the present. The early polemicists of the Gothic revival, the champions of the rediscovery, revaluation and preservation of medieval art, are perhaps victims of their own success; they have 'sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind'. They have been judged, by their peers as much as by posterity, in the same hot-headed way as they judged others.

This prejudice has, to a large extent, obscured the fact that Victorian architects were often careful archaeologists in the context of their period, thoroughly researching and understanding ancient buildings with the aim of removing accretions that obscured their beauty. They engaged, perhaps for the first time, with some of the questions about conservation ethics which still trouble us today, debating whether to design new fittings which blend into their historic context or to produce works which are proudly modern in their appearance and use of materials. Their success in conserving buildings was so great that much of their achievement has been overlooked<sup>2</sup>. Their impact in the second respect was so widespread, and has been so controversial, that their work has been consistently and continually denigrated.

To both the romantically and the archaeologically minded, the Victorian restoration of churches and their subsequent appearance, typically filled with 19th-century wooden benches and

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<sup>2</sup>The present, tidy and seemly appearance of churches, and the ease of their use by all members of society, owes so much to Victorian ideals that the idea of an essentially privatised space, filled with a jumble of ostentatious or humble furnishings, which one was not free to use and visit without payment or direction by the churchwardens, seems utterly alien.

encaustic tiles and dimly-lit by neo-Gothic memorial windows to the daughters of stern-sounding parsons, can seem an affront to both their authenticity as ancient buildings, timeless sacred spaces and as archaeological documents. The last verse of Thomas Hardy's 1882 poem *The levelled churchyard* (a parody of a Litany, perhaps based on a folk memory of the Litany of the Saints) may still strike a chord with many modern visitors to churches:

‘From restorations of Thy fane,  
From smoothings of Thy sward,  
From zealous churchmen’s pick and plane,  
Deliver us O Lord! Amen!’

(Thomas Hardy 1882)

Many 20th- and 21st-century commentators still see Victorian churches and their furnishings as aberrations, interrupting the smooth flow of art-historical development and of no value in themselves. Even modern writers sympathetic to Victorian art and architecture read the Victorian restoration of churches and the introduction of new fittings as an intrusive event, an appropriation of the parish church from the hands of the community to whom it ‘naturally’ belonged to a new community, severed from the land and from traditional village society by economic and social factors springing from the Industrial Revolution:

‘Particularly telling was the conversion of such fittings into commemorative objects; lecterns, clergy desks and choir stalls, pulpits reredoses and, most of all, perhaps, stained glass windows – each object carefully accompanied by its memorial label, its tag of date or donor. Such a plethora of personal signs, each in effect appropriating a bit of the church fabric to a particular individual or family, connotes the appropriation of the church as a whole by the funding oligarchy.’

(Brooks 1995, 73)

Brooks sees these furnishings as indicators of the sickness of an industrial society divorced from, and desperately trying to reconnect with, its past (Brooks 1995, 76). He argues that the vision of an ideal country church was largely a late-Victorian reinvention by the middle and upper classes of the rural church as a ‘cultural icon’, part of the ‘national patrimony’ (*loc. cit.*) all the more precious for its remoteness from modern life:

'The little rural church, standing amid empty countryside in the light of the setting sun, is metamorphosed into the apocalyptic, for it is through the defence of the Temple that Jerusalem will be delivered. The bourgeois rural fantasy, the imagination's counter to the intolerable knowledge of urban reality, becomes an enactment of salvation; it is the rural church that will redeem the city. In appropriating the country church, in preserving and embellishing it, the middle-class oligarchies of late-Victorian and Edwardian England created and took into their keeping...-a cultural myth'

(Brooks 1995, 77).

It seems legitimate to qualify this interpretation: to argue that the chantry chapels of late-medieval English merchants and their wives; the immense pillared and canopied tomb chests or wall monuments of the Elizabethan and Jacobean gentry; the mourning Grecian maidens or Roman emperors of the 18th and early 19th centuries and the high, locked, box pews of the pre-Victorian church are no less an appropriation of the sacred space by a funding oligarchy, even if the sources of their funding may not have been quite so dreadfully low, vulgar and bourgeois as they are supposed to have become after the Industrial Revolution.

As 21st-century Anglicans grapple with new uncertainties and difficulties, with declining membership, shortfalls in the funding for their activities and shortages of staffing for their churches; as they recognise their loss of influence in the fields of education and social welfare and see disestablishment once more as a real possibility, the huge number of magnificent religious buildings provided by Victorian Christians may seem more of a burden than an advantage. It is as well to remember that the Church of England has been in a situation very like this before, and that the revitalisation of Church life in the 19th-century was achieved in very similar circumstances.

### **Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, its hypothesis, aims and structure

Chapter 2 considers the Victorian artistic and cultural legacy, to set the scene for the discussion. The protagonists are identified, and some of the challenges they, and the larger Church, had to face, at a time of considerable dissension and disruption in national religious life. The thesis then examines church interiors as an archaeological resource and the current threats to this resource as a result of financial pressures, redundancy and modern re-ordering schemes aimed at developing new functions and roles for historic churches as community buildings.

The ways in which churches were established and financed are then briefly examined and the Gothic revival is explored as an international phenomenon, but one that helped promote a sense of national identity for both Protestant and Roman Catholic peoples. Methods of mission to the poorest classes, through new systems of education and outreach in rural and urban slums and new types of buildings to enable such engagement are discussed. The continuation of these initiatives into the 20th century is examined and a plea is made for the re-evaluation of 20th-century churches as part of the ecclesiological legacy.

Chapter 3 discusses negative reactions in both the 19th and 20th century to the character and ethics of Victorian church art. Modern academic studies of 19th-century churches are reviewed to show how academics have engaged with the Victorian legacy, and how much more work remains to be done.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology, scope and sources of the thesis and gaps in the existing knowledge are identified.

Chapter 5 discusses the character of churches in Devon before the arrival of ecclesiological ideas in the county, aiming to establish the effects of the Reformation, the Civil Wars and Commonwealth periods on the fabric and furnishings of churches. Choices of architectural language, the appropriation of genuinely medieval fabric and new seating and furnishing schemes are explored, first in the period between the Reformation and the Civil wars and afterwards during the 'Long 18th century'. Examples of the restoration and rebuilding of ancient and new churches and chapels are given, and their furnishing types described.

The following section, Chapter 6, considers the character of churches following the arrival of ecclesiological ideas in the early 19th century and the way in which ecclesiological thinking was anticipated and accommodated by local architects and theoreticians. New buildings, the restoration and recommissioning of older buildings and the need for church expansion in rapidly developing urban areas such as the Three Towns are explored. New types of buildings and furnishings, including new forms of reredos, experimental forms of altar and some of the controversies that beset Victorian churchmen and women are described. Among these, particular attention is given to the forms of seating chosen for new and restored buildings and the ways in which the design of these was determined either by reference to existing medieval examples or Gothic 'principles'

allowing architects to develop their own designs, some of which are of extraordinary vigour and creativity.

The thesis concludes with a brief assessment of the importance of the research and the extent of the research that yet remains to be achieved. Two appendices follow, including a taxonomy of seating types and an outline only of the database.



Fig. 3 Little Nell taking refuge in a medieval church to escape the horrors of industrial England. Illustration by George Cattermole and Hablot K. Browne for the 1841 edition of Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*.

## CHAPTER 2: THE VICTORIAN ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL LEGACY

'Each Catholic parish church is the history of the adjacent county; the family chantry, with its baronial monuments and heraldic bearings, the churchman's brass, the crusader's tomb, the peasants cross, are all evidences of a long series of men and events; and valuable indeed are the national records furnished by many of even the humblest churches of this land...'

(A.W. N. Pugin 1841, 2)

In the following section I explore the broader historic and cultural background of church furnishing schemes before, during and after the Victorian period, the threats to this legacy, and some of the main themes apparent in modern academic and other writing on the subject. Although this study is limited to Devon the issue of church reordering and historic fabric affects churches worldwide; the following text therefore does not limit itself to the geographical area chosen for the study.

The church expansion of the 19th and early 20th centuries has been presented as ‘an enterprise of heroic proportions’ (Brooks 1995, 1). It affected almost every town and village in England and fundamentally changed the appearance and use of most religious buildings. Our churches still bear the unmistakable stamp of the 19th century not only in their fabric but also, significantly, in the way in which religion is ‘performed’. This may include the hymns we sing, the furniture we use and the vestments our clergy may (or may not) choose to wear. The near absence of social distinctions in church, where people of all social classes mix freely at public worship is itself a legacy of 19th-century reforms.

Even in a modern ‘Fresh Expression of Church’<sup>3</sup> meeting in a school hall with a freestanding altar table and a worship band, the focus of the main Sunday service — on the Eucharist, to which all are invited and all are welcome<sup>4</sup> — will be rooted in the religious idealism of the 19th century and its repositioning of the Sacraments at the centre of public worship. A crowded pentecostalist style service in a modern ‘mega church’ is not significantly different in content or intention from a great Victorian revivalist meeting. Some churchgoers still come to church in their ‘Sunday Best’, reflecting traditional attitudes to the ‘Sabbath Day’, and the more eccentric may choose to reflect the liturgical seasons by sporting pink socks or trousers on ‘Gaudete Sunday’ and ‘Refreshment Sunday’ in Advent and Lent. Most of these activities, from the use of liturgical colours to congregational hymn singing were either reintroduced or greatly popularised in the 19th century.

It is perhaps less well known that activities characteristic of the ‘modern’ church, such as the appropriation of schools, theatres and concert halls for the purposes of worship and mission also have their origin in the 18th and 19th centuries. Purpose-built ‘flexible’ spaces — the ‘school-chapel’ and the ‘mission church’ — were designed and built for a wider range of church activities than worship alone. Much of the debate about ‘flexible seating’ and the use of chairs instead of benches had already been thoroughly rehearsed, if not resolved, in the 1850s (Cooper 2011). Although ‘flexible worship’ may seem so foreign to our image of our stiff-collared Victorian forebears, they pioneered this idea, and much of the pattern of modern worship today developed through experiments they made.

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<sup>3</sup> This terminology is derived from modern missionary practice: a ‘fresh expression’ is a worship event which consciously rejects older liturgical forms with the aim of appealing to those unfamiliar with these. A ‘mega church’ would aim to present Christian worship using the imagery and performance values of a rock concert. Few seem to see the paradox that the very act of presenting ancient texts, theologies and even social values to modern people, fundamentally unchanged, through the ministry of performance by a priesthood, itself perpetuates ancient and thoroughly hierarchical religious practices, though they may be gift-wrapped in a modernist style.

<sup>4</sup> In theory, at least.

## The protagonists

This great period of church expansion and reinvention initially began as a Government initiative, with the Church Buildings Act of 1818 and the establishment of the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS). No further state aid for church building was forthcoming after 1824, yet the rate of church building did not significantly decrease as a result. Many thousands of new churches were constructed and nearly every existing building was restored, often several times. Church expansion, particularly in urban areas, was to continue well into the twentieth century.

No individual bishop or archbishop ordered this wholesale restoration and rebuilding and no single organisation officially co-ordinated it. Every parish acted independently, made its own arrangements and raised its own monies, assisted by grants from national and regional church-building charities. The results were consistent across the whole spectrum of Victorian Anglican churchmanship. Whether a parish was Catholic or Evangelical in its outlook, the trend was for the Sacramental emphasis of the church building to be placed upon the altar; for the pulpit to be moved aside to allow uninterrupted views from a re-fitted nave in which, in place of a miscellaneous jumble of seats facing in all directions, the congregation would now all face east, in the ancient manner, towards the new sacramental focus of the church.

The theories behind this medievalising approach to church reform had first been articulated in the late 18th century by polemicists such as John Carter and were current in the universities by the early 1800s, but they were articulated with particular skill in the publications of the Cambridge Camden Society, later the Ecclesiological Society (Webster 2000, 18,19; Bradley 2000, 32). This society, based initially in Cambridge, but later in London, was to exercise an enormous influence over church architecture, music, liturgy and over the whole architectural profession, especially for those engaged in the design and repair of churches.

### *The Cambridge Camden Society*

The Cambridge Camden Society was a pressure group founded in 1839. Initially intended as 'A High-Church Club' for the university, and named 'The Ecclesiological Society' [sic], they adopted the name The Cambridge Camden Society in November 1839 (Brandwood 2000, 48, 50). The Society sought to influence the way in which churches were designed and used, both in their architecture, their music and liturgy and in their accessibility to the poor.

The society's principal mouthpiece was its publication *The Ecclesiologist* (1841-1867) but it also produced cheap and accessible pamphlets providing advice to church builders, antiquarians, clergy and church wardens on the proper design, care and maintenance of church buildings (Webster 2003). Other journals soon took a similar line and publications such as *The Christian*

*Remembrancer* (1819-1868), *The Builder* (1843-1966) and *The Church Builder* (1862-1916) helped to spread the message. The transactions and proceedings of these societies were widely circulated, many eminent architects were members and their interests included antiquarian and archaeological subjects as well as the design, decoration and function of churches. Plans submitted to their committees were reviewed and advice offered. Their work was never less than controversial but, despite this, they succeeded to the extent that even their detractors took on board their ideas. Within a few decades they had fundamentally changed the image and model of a ‘typical’ church.

*The Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society*

Outside London, the message was reinforced by diocesan architectural societies like the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, (EDAS) founded in 1841. Like the Ecclesiological Society, EDAS encouraged their members to make field trips and record any observations they might make, submitting them either for publication as *Rough Notes, for Correction* or for inclusion in the society’s scrap books (Fig. 4). By this means ecclesiological principles were widely disseminated. Their interventions, though sometimes described as ‘interference’, were felt to be highly effective:

‘It appears also that the society (EDAS) has been mainly instrumental, by supporting the Archdeacon of Exeter, in preserving the beautiful rood screen at Bradninch: it has procured a design for a new altar screen at Ilfracombe; and brought about a thorough restoration of the chancel of Exminster. It was not able however to secure a chancel at Heavitree, where the church is rebuilding The committee have also successfully interfered at Tiverton, Exwick and Puddington’.

(*The Ecclesiologist* **I**, 1842, 178)

Already, by 1846, the ecclesiologists felt that they were making a satisfactory impact upon the design of churches across England and that their influence had been significant:

‘in taking a review of the progress of church architecture in this diocese, and of symptoms of the usefulness and stability of this society, your committee find grounds for congratulation and thankfulness. The testimony of new churches built in this diocese previous to the formation of its architectural society present such a contrast in their style and character to those erected subsequently, that we may venture to date the improvement in church building from the time of the society’s institution’

(*The Ecclesiologist* **VI**, 1846, 241)



Fig 4 Ecclesiological 'abominations': unsuitable fonts in Devon churches recorded in the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society Scrap books (DEI EDAS Box 2, Page 95).



Fig 5 Christchurch Istanbul (1858-68), by G. E. Street, bringing ecclesiological principles to the Ottoman Empire (RWP Istanbul Christchurch DSC06794).



Fig 6 The interior of Christchurch, Istanbul showing the ecclesiological layout, with roodscreen and liturgical chancel (RWP Istanbul Christchurch DSC06787).

Indeed, as the founder members of the EDAS, including the Revd. John Medley and the Revd. John Armstrong, rose to high office in the colonial church, ecclesiological principles were even exported to Canada, North America, Australia, New Zealand, India and the near east. Churches designed according to ecclesiological principles soon arose in every city and country where there was a sufficiently motivated English colony. By the early 20th century ecclesiological principles had become a global Anglican ‘brand’ which was recognised from Istanbul (Figs 5, 6) to Mumbai (Bremner, 2012).

‘Above the shrine of Artemis,  
The English church by G. E. Street,  
Proclaims, with Gothic emphasis,  
A faith which triumphs over heat’.

(Osbert Lancaster 1978,  
from ‘Levantine Afternoon’  
in *Afternoons with a Baedeker*.)

Even at the present time most of our churches and cathedrals are generally laid out and operated according to 19th-century concepts of an ideal church. Whether or not the ecclesiological movement could genuinely claim credit for this transformation of the design and furnishings of churches in the 19th century (and this thesis hopes to examine that claim) many modern writers have taken them at their word, arguing that: ‘a group of Cambridge undergraduates had succeeded in transforming the appearance of every Anglican church in the world’ (Mordaunt Crook 1987, 63). Others, more cautious, argue that:

‘if the change cannot be wholly credited to the Cambridge Camden Society, as the organisation would have wished us to think, it had indisputably been a major influence ... not only were almost all new churches built to these revised requirements but existing ones were modified or replaced to such an extent that only a tiny minority of Anglican churches have survived in their pre-Camdenian State complete with galleries, a triple-decker pulpit and other Georgian accoutrements’

(Webster & Elliott 2000, xii-xiii).

The sheer number of church and cathedral restorations undertaken during the 19th century, together with the establishment of new churches, church schools and mission chapels to meet changing social, economic and religious demands, might be expected to reflect a period of absolute confidence in the stability of church institutions and in the centrality of religion in national life (Stevens Curl 2002, 10), especially in a country with an established Church; an arm of the state, whose bishops sit in the House of Lords and whose principal form of local government was (until 1894) the parish vestry, chaired by the incumbent, who was very often also the local magistrate (Brooks 1995, 3). Yet, this huge expansion of church life and flourishing of ecclesiastical art took place at a time when the established Church was perceived to be facing severe threats and even possible extinction (Chadwick 1966, 47; Hall 2010, 48).

### **Challenges facing the 19th-century Church**

In the early 19th century the outlook for the Church of England may have seemed, to contemporary churchmen and women, quite as bleak and unpromising as it does now. Following the upheavals of the French and American revolutions, the spread of new ideas concerning the proper governance of society put the relationships between the Church and the people under ever stronger pressure. These concerns were exacerbated by the failure of the Church, particularly many of her bishops, to support the Reform Bill in 1831, leading to riots in many English towns, including Bristol and Exeter, and to calls for disestablishment (Chadwick 1966, 25-7).

#### *The Church and the State*

The threat to the Church of England in its character as a national Church was felt to proceed not just from its traditional rival Churches but also from the government itself. In addition to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828 (which removed restrictions on dissenters in Parliament) and Catholic Emancipation in the following year, government legislation aimed at reforming (and protecting) the established churches of the British Isles was to provoke some of the great religious controversies of the 19th century, bringing into question, in some circles, the nature of the Church, the propriety of its establishment and the right of a secular government to determine its structure and legislate for its doctrines and ceremonies (Brooks 1995, 6; Stevens Curl 2002, 27).

In some respects, the perceived ‘threat’ to the traditional structures of Anglicanism was real and its effects can still be felt today. It can be argued that 19th- and 20th-century reforms of tithes, endowments, church rates, pew rents, charities and educational provision have effectively stripped the Church of England of its historic assets, sources of income and administrative role,

reducing it from a national Church to the status of a sect among other sects, forced to compete with them for the allegiance of the people.

Brooks writes: ‘ironically, as the physical fabric of Victorian Christianity raised itself triumphant in every British shire and city, its ideological substance shook and then, in the twentieth century, failed’ (Brooks 1995, 22). He identifies the cause of this failure in the inability of institutional religion to compete with the state as a provider of social welfare and education and also, more damningly, as a result of its inherent incapacity ‘as the product of a class-structured and hierarchical society, and as a primary agent of social control within it’, to engage with the new urban and rural proletariat (Brooks 1995, 23).

Organised religion, Brooks argues, having lost its role in government and welfare, had become an upper- and middle-class enthusiasm imposed upon a working class who, ultimately, simply rejected it in favour of an alternative, home-grown culture of trade-unionism, fish and chips and football (Brooks 1995, 24).

It is arguable that it was precisely the perceived threats to the traditional structures of British religious life which provoked the fervour and zeal of 19th-century Christians to reform, and renew their churches. The impressive architectural rhetoric of Victorian churches might be presented as a cynical attempt to win back the hearts and minds of the masses, yet this argument belittles or ignores the sincerity and commitment of men and women of all social classes who were prepared to spend, suffer and sacrifice themselves in the cause of their religion.

Non-conformist congregations, through their constitutional arrangements, were freer than Anglicans to express any differences of churchmanship and theological outlook by forming breakaway congregations in cases of irreconcilable disagreement. Religious controversy was always a significant motive for the erection of new churches and Nonconformist congregations have always tended to respond to doctrinal differences by schism (Stevens Curl 2002, 18). Almost every town in Britain can show a succession of handsome Nonconformist chapels founded by breakaway groups from older dissenting congregations.<sup>5</sup> These churches and their buildings were, of course, self-supporting, financed by their own congregations and not by the wider community. Although such disagreements may have been distressing, the commitment to freedom of conscience and the independence from central control of each congregation meant that such schisms among non-conformist groups were perhaps inevitable, and at least the *diaspora* might start a new meeting in any convenient place without the need for formal consecration or architecture.

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<sup>5</sup> Both the Independent Chapel in Little Castle Street, Exeter, and the Baptist Chapel in Bartholomew Street were formed by groups seceding from existing congregations: the former from Bow Meeting in 1794-6 and the latter from South Street in 1817 (Stell, 1991, 81, 82).

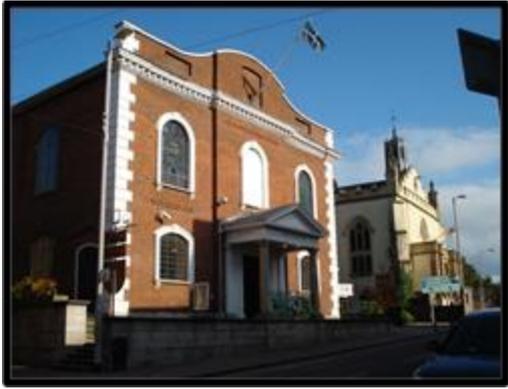


Fig 7 George's Meeting, Exeter (1760) built for a Presbyterian congregation. The rectangular form was characteristic of buildings of all denominations (RWP Exeter, George's Meeting DSC03304).

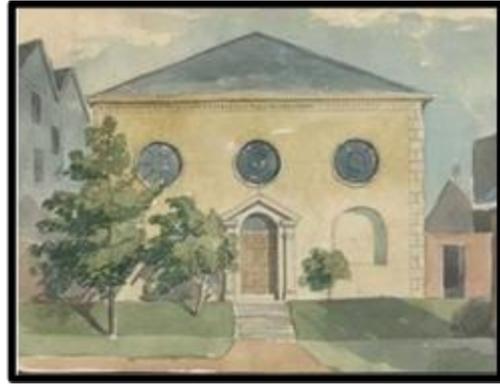


Fig 8 Undated painting by Edward Ashworth c. 1855, showing the Roman Catholic Chapel, The Mint, Exeter, a building little different from a meeting house (SWHC WSL P&D 05802).

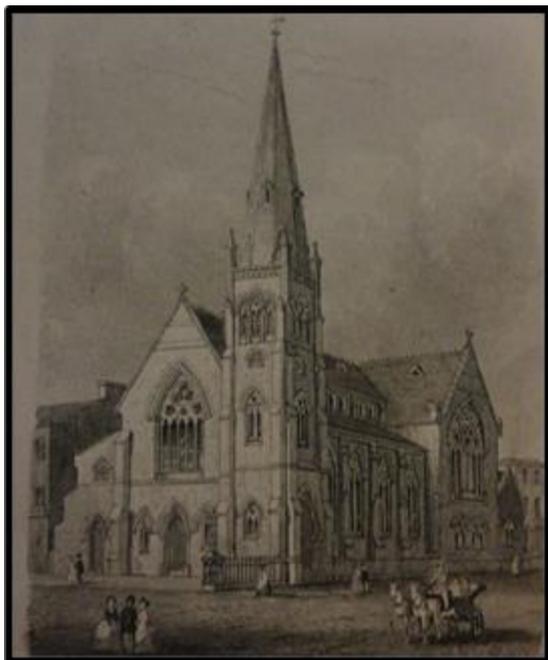


Fig 9 The Congregational Church in Southernhay, Exeter (J. C. Tarring, 1868), showing Gothic adopted by nonconformists following the influence of the Ecclesiologists (engraving by Rock & Co of London, 1876).



Fig 10 The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Sidwell Street, Exeter (Frederick Commin, 1905), built in reinforced concrete on the 'Cottancin System' in the Roman Baroque style (RWP Exeter St Sidwell's Methodist DSC03210).

Nevertheless, many non-conformist congregations invested in substantial buildings. Initially these were simple structures in the Georgian vernacular Classical tradition (Figs 7, 8), no different in their architectural detail from contemporary Anglican churches, though without towers or bells. It is a measure of the influence of the Ecclesiologists that even non-conformist congregations were later to adopt the Gothic style (Figs. 9, 161, 162) and, ultimately — perhaps in reaction to ecclesiological Gothic — a bombastic form of Roman Baroque (Fig 10).

By contrast, the Established Church, with its requirement for ordained clergy obligated to adhere to the Articles of Religion and the rubrics of the Prayer Book, was not so free to express such differences, neither could formal, public worship be offered by Anglicans on a permanent basis, at least officially, in any place or context. The expectation was that a place where the Sacraments were regularly administered, or the dead were buried, would be formally consecrated or at least licensed for public worship. Anglican clergy were also expected to be licensed and were subject to scrutiny and discipline by their bishop and his archdeacons. Anglican churches and chapels and their fittings were also controlled and monitored by a system of regular inspections on the part of bishops, archdeacons and deans rural and by Faculty Jurisdiction; effectively<sup>6</sup> a ‘planning’ system which was supposed to prevent unsuitable or illegal alterations to churches and their fabric. Any transgressions were subject to determination by the Ecclesiastical Courts.

Faculty Jurisdiction gives individuals an opportunity to submit objections to any proposed works at their church, which must be advertised in advance and submitted for approval as a Faculty Petition. An ecclesiastical court (consistory court) acting under the authority of the diocesan bishop considers these submissions and rules upon them. Judgements are made by the chancellor of the diocese, who is appointed by, but independent of, the bishop. The bishop can have an interest in proposals coming before the court and can reserve the right to sit and hear cases in person. The bishop or chancellor thus exercise ‘ordinary jurisdiction’. The bishop and the chancellor may not appeal against each other. Appeal must take place through higher authorities including the provincial court and beyond them the Privy Council. Archdeacons have an advisory rôle and may carry out approved works if the other applicants fail to. They have their own court but this ‘was rarely convened in the 19th century on faculty matters, its jurisdiction being almost entirely parallel to that of the consistory court’ (Baty, 1989, 20, 21).

The appearance and appropriate furnishing of Anglican churches was thus subject to scrutiny and open to legal challenge by the whole community, including non-Anglicans, in a far more formal way than those of the non-conformists. Nevertheless, despite this institutional standardisation, the worship practices of Church of England parishes were to vary dramatically

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<sup>6</sup> Or, arguably, ‘ineffectively’.

during the 19th century and the way in which Anglican church communities signified their liturgical preferences and ecclesiological outlook was, inevitably, expressed through the manipulation of the architectural setting and furnishings of their church.

*The Oxford Movement and the Tractarians*

Among the most significant reactions to state legislation for the church were the writings of the ‘Tractarians’. In 1833 a group of clergymen and laymen associated with the University of Oxford, alarmed at what they perceived to be ‘national apostasy’ in the proposed reorganisation, by the British government, of Irish bishoprics, began to privately circulate a series of tracts, known as *Tracts for the Times*. These proclaimed a renewed theology of Anglicanism, in which they emphasised the importance of the Sacraments, the continuity of the Church of England with the universal Church and their ‘refusal to accept the right of a mere parliament to interfere in the dispositions of a body that was ultimately Catholic and divine’ (Brooks 1995, 6). Although never formally constituted as a society, they were soon irreverently nicknamed ‘Tractarians’ or ‘Puseyites’, after one of their leaders, and are now regarded as the progenitors of the ‘Oxford Movement’.

Following the thinking of earlier Anglican divines, who had ‘seen the Reformation as ‘re-establishing the independence of the English Church and its proper relationship with the Crown, which had been effectively destroyed by “the co-operative usurpation of Pope and King” which had followed the Norman Conquest’ (Yates 1999, 41), the radical, yet conservative, theology of the Oxford Movement understood the Church of England as one of the world-wide expressions of the universal Christian Church, equal in stature to the Roman and Orthodox Churches and with the same direct descent from Christ and the Apostles. The Church of England to Victorian Anglicans, with its unique and edifying liturgy, its theological rigour and Sacramental validity was a Catholic Church, an integral part of global Christianity. Contrary to popular myth, it had not been ‘founded’ in the 16th century, but had existed since Apostolic times and, though conforming to the pattern of western Christendom during most of the Middle Ages in its acknowledgement of the Bishop of Rome, it had yet, demonstrably, shown itself on repeated occasions to have been self-determining; a Church which had opted to conform rather than having been coerced into conformity and, therefore, a Church which might decide to withdraw or qualify its allegiance at will, according to its corporate ‘conscience’ (Bowden 1833, Tract 5).

The Oxford Movement was informed from its birth by scholarly medievalism and a respect for tradition; the tracts concentrated on the restoration of an understanding of the nature of the Church and of its ancient liturgical practices, both from the pre-Reformation period and from the 16th and 17th centuries. Concern for correct liturgy and theology inevitably led to an interest in

the correct liturgical setting, including the form and furniture of churches. High-churchmen began to explore the use of Catholic liturgies and interpreted the rubrics of the Prayer Book in a way which sometimes surprised and alarmed their bishops, their Low-Church contemporaries and many of their parishioners.

The ensuing decades were fraught with controversy, unrest, and prosecutions for ‘ritual offences’ (Chadwick 1966, 220, 302; Stevens Curl 2002, 112-113). Yet, despite all efforts to control the progress of ritualism, amid accusations of Erastianism, crypto-Papalism, a minor schism<sup>7</sup> and high-profile secessions to Rome, the movement succeeded in awakening interest in the origins and liturgies of the Church and of its architectural setting. The religious revival that the reformers spear-headed and which transformed the life of the Church was not achieved by radical pruning, retrenchment, and by rejection of the historic fabric, ideologies and identities of the Church (as seems to be the policy today), but rather by a deep engagement with the identity of their Church, its history, its nature and its potential to bring about societal change.

Tractarianism continues to influence the pattern of worship in the Church of England and to a certain extent in the Methodist, Roman Catholic and other churches in England today, especially since the Beatification in 2010 — and the forthcoming canonisation in October 2019 — of John Henry Newman, one of the leaders of the movement.

The Anglican Church thus awoke in the first decades of the 19th century to a consciousness of itself as a part of a wider global Church, with a living tradition of worship, expressed both in liturgical practices, sacred offices, architectural settings and physical accoutrements whose origins lay in the distant past, extending beyond the sixth-century Gregorian mission to the earliest church of the Apostles and beyond that to the worship of the Temple.

Clergy and lay patrons, architects, craftsmen and theoreticians, reflecting the contemporary interest in medievalism, sought to emphasise and ‘materialise’ this continuity and catholicity of the Church through the design and layout of buildings, liturgical furniture and patterns of worship. Anglican churchmen and women also seem to have become newly conscious of both their duty to their fellow countrymen, as an Established Church, and to the extent of their historic failure to act upon this duty. They set out to address this by a programme of church renewal and reform which resulted in the provision of many thousands of new churches in both rural and urban areas, the complete refurbishment and refitting of most existing church buildings and a diversification of religious practice to accommodate people of all economic and social backgrounds.

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<sup>7</sup>The first congregations of the ‘Free Church of England’ began to meet in 1844 in protest at ‘popery’ in the Church of England. This Church remains ‘Anglican’ in character and has bishops, but is separated from the established Church. The Exeter Free Church of England was founded in 1846 and still survives (though now in a modern building).

Attempts by the church hierarchy and the government to restrict the development and diversification of popular religion during the 19th century seem to have consistently backfired. Donovan notes that a proposal to widen lay participation in church government in the 1880s (to include non-communicants, with the aim of controlling High-Church practices), ultimately led to the setting up of church councils and electoral rolls which, in fact, tended to reinforce the ability of church communities to resist external interference. He quotes Bishop Gore: “even the Catholic movement in the Church of England which makes its special appeal to authority has in fact maintained itself and spread largely by an appeal to the rights of congregations to worship as they please” (Donovan 1933, 157).

Victorian churches could flourish in the teeth of opposition from diocesan bishops, neighbouring clergy and ratepayers (Saint 1995, 42), and this dilution of traditional forms of hierarchical control may in fact have freed the churches to act upon their impulse to mission more effectively. The way churches were designed, their liturgical practices and community activities, their accessibility to the poorer classes and the character and inclusivity of their government were all transformed during the century. Many were to develop distinctive liturgical traditions which enabled them to attract support from a wider, extra-parochial area, a diversification in religious practice which has continued to the present day and has come to be regarded as characteristic of the Church of England — a ‘Broad’ Church.

### **Church interiors as an archaeological resource**

Church interiors have always developed incrementally, through a series of accretions over very long periods of time. They thus provide an important resource for understanding the people that built and used them. Church furnishings survive from very early periods of English medieval history and include a wide range of objects, from the most expensive and durable, such as fonts or marble monuments to the most fragile and ephemeral, such as the maidens’ garlands hung above the chancel in the old church at Robin Hood’s Bay, Yorkshire.

Throughout the history of the Church, furnishings have been altered, removed, repaired, used and abused by people from all sections of society. The layouts, physical fabric, and imagery of churches have been modified to reflect attempts by medieval liturgists and post-Reformation theologians to create an orthodox model of the Kingdom of Heaven or embody a particular ideal of a Christian community. The clergy and the gentry have remodelled churches to reflect their understanding of the relationship between God and Man, priest and people, or landlord and tenants. Individual parishioners have also staked their claim to possession of the sacred space, through donations of money, furniture and vestments or through the erection of family memorials

and private pews reflecting their wealth and social status. Even the poorest and most disenfranchised elements of society have had opportunities to participate in the furnishing of churches, through gifts of candles to burn before shrines, or flowers to decorate altars; or even by non-participation, since church worship is corporate worship on the part of the entire Christian community, and dissent from its customary forms and practices is a potent and provocative tool.

For this reason church furnishings could be controversial, and could excite strong feelings and provoke intemperate behaviour, sometimes resulting in legal action, iconoclasm or rioting. Accounts of the officially sanctioned destruction of churches and their furnishings at the Dissolution of the Monasteries, or the Edwardian inventories of the contents of English parish churches, compiled on the eve of yet another wave of destruction (Cresswell 1916), horrify modern readers at the scale of the cultural loss. These inventories were not deliberately compiled to evoke feelings of regret and anger, but stories of the mob violence of the Commonwealth period, the anti-papal riots of the late 18th and 19th centuries and the Kensitite attacks on churches in the early 20th century, which were circulated to excite feelings of outrage, remain emotionally charged to this day. Parish churches are powerful symbols and any attacks upon them are perceived as attacks on something timeless, peaceful and precious.

‘Peeping through one of the low lattice windows into the church, with its worm-eaten books upon the desks and baize of whitened-green mouldering from the pew sides and leaving the naked wood to view. There were the seats where the poor old people sat, worn, spare and yellow like themselves; the rugged font where the children had their names, the homely altar, where they knelt in after life, the plain black tressels [sic] that bore their weight on their last visit to the cool old shady church. Everything told of long use and quiet, slow decay. The very bell rope in the porch was frayed into a fringe, and hoary with age’

(Dickens, 1841 ‘The Old Curiosity shop’, Chapter 17)

The essentially romantic appreciation of ancient churches is held by some to stand in contrast to the archaeological and art-historical appreciation of these buildings that has been for some the dominant approach of the 20th century, and which is perhaps typified for most people by the entries for churches in the ‘Buildings of England’ series, produced by Nikolaus Pevsner and others between the 1950s and the present day. Yet, for both approaches, the church building is understood as a collaborative work of art which has been created as much by a process of ‘organic’ change

led by the laity as by the sudden shocks of iconoclasm or liturgical innovations. Popular 20th-century studies of parish churches, such as the *Shell Guides*, have generally presented their subjects in this way: ‘Many are the oldest surviving buildings in the village by far, and keep a haphazard record of all the intervening centuries’ (Harbison 1992, ix).

The parish church is both an archaeological artefact and an ancient building, hallowed and sanctified by its antiquity. Even if it is no longer really perceived by the majority as the ‘House of God and Gate of Heaven’ (Genesis 28:17) it can still be a repository of folk-art and a place set aside for quiet contemplation of past glories and the inevitable end of all these triumphs or failures in the grave or the funerary urn. A village church bears in its fabric the scars of the responses of its parishioners both to national upheavals, such as the plague, the Reformation and the Civil War and also to more intimate and personal events in ordinary life such as baptisms, churchings, confirmations, marriages, deaths and burials and, of course regular worship, week by week and year by year, for centuries.

‘They (Churches) are without exception the creation of their own congregations in a way the manor house never was. But this is only rarely brought out in guides to churches with their plans and shaded areas of Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular. Seldom are we ever given a glimpse of the building as the historic microcosm of a community. Their very fabric tells of prosperity and depression, of war and peace; extensions in size reflect rise in population; the names on headstones reveal the families who for generations moulded the life pattern of the land around’.

(Strong 1976, 9)

As with medieval churches, liturgical change over time has affected the furnishings of Victorian buildings. New objects and imagery have been introduced and parts of the building repurposed to reflect new ideas and liturgies. Many of these changes are still traceable, archaeologically, by detailed examination of the fabric. The variety of fixtures and fittings provided for use in the liturgy directly reflects the liturgical progressiveness or conservatism of the congregation, but all except the most austere congregations will have seen dramatic changes in the pattern of their worship and its setting in the century between 1800 and 1900.

*Current threats to the archaeological resource*

Although institutional poverty, underuse, neglect, fire, theft, pastoral reorganisation and redundancy continue to make serious inroads upon the archaeological resource, the threat from success and prosperity looms equally large. Even those churches that remain economically stable and well supported are facing changes in their use which might fundamentally affect their character and their artistic quality. Historic church buildings are under increasingly strong pressure as a result of church re-ordering schemes aimed at making older buildings fit for the ‘liturgical mission needs of the 21st century’ (Chadwick 2008, 3).

This approach almost invariably fails to understand the incremental way in which church buildings have traditionally changed and been remade and makes an assumption in favour of a ‘clean sweep’, which often amounts to the rejection and removal of vast quantities of existing furnishings. Because of the perceived status of Victorian, Georgian and Medieval furnishings on a sliding scale from ‘dull’ to ‘interesting’ and ‘very interesting’, very often the reordering will result in the wholesale destruction of the work of one period, usually the Victorian period, often without any attempt to understand how these furnishings and their interaction with those of earlier periods might embody and reflect the changing mind and fortunes of the church and its congregations.

Because they are under-valued, 19th- and 20th-century buildings are thus more vulnerable to gradual erosion through successive small alterations, or wholesale and drastic loss. Often, the principal evidence for changing liturgical practice in any one church lies in these furnishings alone, and there are no surviving documentary references to the dates of changes and reforms in the life of the congregation. Although in some high-profile cases (such as the ‘Exeter Reredos Case’) alterations to churches and their furnishings caused national controversy, for the most part, clergy and congregations, for obvious reasons, have sought to avoid this kind of notoriety and make their interventions as quietly as possible. The evidence for changing liturgical practice in most churches is therefore subtler, more fragile, and more easily overlooked, since it is rarely overtly stated, but rather suggested. A dramatic change in churchmanship can be signalled by the reconfiguration of the seating with (or without) a central aisle (either to allow for the possibility of processions or to consciously prevent them). The configuration of the furnishings at the east end to accommodate a cathedral-style robed choir and full catholic ceremonial, or the retention of private pews in the chancel, with an organ and choir seated in a western gallery (in defiance of ecclesiological orthodoxy) and a prominent pulpit and unassuming altar are all indications of battles fought within the fabric of the church for which no other form of evidence may remain.



Fig. 11 St Mary Magdalen, Upton, Torquay (1843-49), by Anthony Salvin, showing the nave with its simple furnishings (RWP Upton, Torquay, St Mary Magdalen DSC08713).



Fig. 12 The Chancel of St Mary Magdalen, Upton, with opulent chancel furnishings added by G. G. Scott in the 1880s (RWP Upton, Torquay, St Mary Magdalen DSC08699).



Fig. 13 Reset box pew material at Cheriton Fitzpaine, retained for use as open benches following the restoration of 1883-5 by James Crocker of Exeter (RWP Cheriton Fitzpaine DSC04679).

In some churches change was very gradual and took place in a series of small, incremental steps, most of which will have left some impression in the configuration, order and date of the furnishings. In other churches the contrast between the chancel and sanctuary furnishings and those of the nave is so dramatic that they might easily belong to different buildings (Figs. 11, 12). Many congregations, short of funds for the restoration of their church, reused earlier material to save money, so that what may appear initially to be a dreary wasteland of ‘utterly awful kipper coloured choir stalls’ (Strong 2007) can prove, on closer examination, to preserve much of the fabric of the 17th and 18th-century box pews which once filled the church (Fig. 13). cut down, deprived of doors and numbering, but essentially intact. Assessments of ‘Victorian’ seating schemes by professional furniture historians in advance of re-ordering schemes have often revealed that historic material was often lovingly preserved and, if necessary replicated ‘as far as contemporary tools would allow.... One could describe this factor as “Historical integrity”’. (Tracy 2009, citing St Mary Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, St Andrew’s, Kildwick, west Yorkshire, and St Mary the Virgin, Deane, Lancashire). At Deane, Tracy identified 19th-century benches replicating earlier open benches which could be dated (by comparison with dated examples in another church, made by the same workshop) to 1638, thus: ‘an attractive, though not aesthetically outstanding , set of furniture is found to contain an unexpected historical significance’ (ibid.).

The most apparently homogenous and non-descript 19th-century interior can reveal, upon close examination, through painted numbers, names or letters, the survival of seat allocation systems which may have remained in use well into the modern age. Even where no markings are visible, evidence of alterations to the seating, changes of form or material, the substitution of new bench ends or the truncation of older ones, the removal of doors, hinges and numbering plates, and the reuse of earlier wainscot preserves a wealth of information about the way in which our churches were furnished at different periods. Pews and benches, having become perceived as the ‘property’ of individuals, families and social groups, were tenacious of existence, and were a contentious issue, not only in Victorian church re-ordering, but in the centuries prior to this when arguments over whose ‘right’ to sit where might erupt into violence (Gray 2012, 80). This may be another reason why Victorian clergy were so keen to be rid of the appropriated pew.

Perhaps because of the visual inconsistency of their furnishings, churches where incomplete or altered furnishing schemes survive are particularly vulnerable to ‘tidying up’ in line with modern tastes. The more ephemeral forms of evidence are exceptionally vulnerable to loss. In the author’s experience (based on thirty years of working in commercial archaeology, including numerous church-reordering projects), the significance of the furnishings is rarely understood by parish officers and clergy, or by their architects, many of whom are seeking to make a personal

impact on the appearance and life of the church, usually with the best of intentions. Very often the instigators of a re-ordering scheme — reminded by the process of compiling Statements of Significance and Statements of Need at the request of Diocesan Advisory Committees, that they are custodians of a developing historic resource — come to see themselves as merely the latest in a long line of enlightened innovators making necessary changes to the arrangements of the furnishings and sweeping away, for the public benefit and the service of God, evidence of centuries of social restrictions, injustice and social control (Doll 2011). Few PCCs understand that, in clearing away the ‘constraints’ of historic seating schemes in favour of stacking chairs, they are often destroying the only remaining physical evidence of the occupancy of the ordinary members of their historic community, the tenacity of this community in the face of change, and the fierce resistance of ordinary churchmen and women to clerical and upper-class meddling in a place they considered their own.

Even the amenity societies, Diocesan Advisory Committees and Historic England, in seeking to preserve the ‘best’ quality work of the past, stand in danger of permitting the ‘normal’, the ‘ordinary’ and therefore the more archaeologically representative (if less obviously exciting) church interiors to disappear. Examples of machine-carved furniture, for example, are valued less than hand-carved work despite their rarity and their closer reflection of the capabilities of contemporary carving technology — which is, to date, little understood. Benches which are assumed to have been supplied ‘off-the-peg’ from the catalogues of ecclesiastical furnishers are also often discounted as of less value than site-specific architect-designed work. In these attitudes we perpetuate the prejudices of the Arts and Crafts movement, of William Morris and the SPAB, towards the work of 19th- and 20th-century commercial church furnishers and we fail to recognise the contribution these church-furnishing firms made to our churches, despite the careful design, durability and high quality of much of their craftsmanship.

To prioritise hand-crafted and individually-designed pieces from the corpus of manufacture of an industrial age is an unacceptable solecism for modern art-historians and archaeologists. This thesis seeks to demonstrate how even the most ‘ordinary’ furnishings of 19th-century churches have their roots in the archaeology and antiquarianism of the early Gothic revival, and that they are a much under-valued form of evidence for measuring the effects of the Ecclesiological movement on the life of church communities at all economic and social levels.

The architecture and furnishings of churches thus provide a palimpsest which can reveal the changing life of a particular community (Ditchfield 1914, 1). Interpretation of the way in which church interiors were modified and adapted reveals patterns of change in social and liturgical fashions, and economic which might otherwise go unremarked. Nineteenth-century churches, like

those of earlier periods, should also be understood and read as archaeological palimpsests, in which the progress and development of Victorian and modern ideas are physically embodied. In their fabric we can understand how men and women, at one of the most extraordinary epochs in human history, in the face of almost unprecedented political and social challenges, sought to understand their position and their duty to each other and to God through an active engagement in their past. They explored it, reinterpreted it, reinvented it and attempted to establish a better and fairer society on this basis.

### **Establishing and financing new churches**

Impressive architecture and vitality in the expression of religious life requires a huge investment of time and energy and represents an enormous financial commitment. Government money had been made available for the erection of new churches through acts of parliament in 1803 (amended in 1811) and 1818. In the latter year the Church Building Commission was set up, with a million pounds from which to make grants to provide new churches in the metropolis and in other large manufacturing towns, where a want of church accommodation was felt and where a sufficiently large population existed to support the new church. Applications for new churches had to come from the parishes themselves and to be backed by local support for the scheme. The Commissioners might provide a grant for the whole cost of a church, or for only a part of it, the balance being made up by the levying of a church rate or by subscriptions. The government granted further funds to the Commission in 1824 and, by 1856-7, when the Church Building Commission was absorbed into the Ecclesiastical Commission, 214 new churches had been provided (Whiffen 1948, 83).

These government initiatives for church expansion have been interpreted by many writers as attempts at social control in the wake of the French Revolutionary and American Revolutionary wars (Stevens Curl 2002, 20). Yet not all of the motivation and funding for the foundation of new churches came from the establishment. Whatever the motives behind such mission, a very large proportion of the many thousands of new churches erected in the 19th century were erected without any significant state aid, being paid for and maintained entirely by voluntary effort on the part of their congregations and by private benefactors. This is especially true of the buildings of Nonconformist groups.

The situation for Anglicans was more complex due to the parish system, tithing and church rates. A parish was a civil unit as well as an ecclesiastical one. Until 1843 an Act of Parliament was required to establish a new parish (Whiffen 1948, 82) and, until the abolition of compulsory church rates in 1868, all parishioners, whatever their religious allegiance, were required to contribute to

the maintenance of their parish church and its churchyard. This inevitably raised tensions about whether and how any money should be spent. Although provision for the subdivision of existing parishes or the creation of new ecclesiastical districts served by district churches had been made in 1818, new churches were often resisted by local ratepayers and parish clergy for fear that they might impinge upon the income of existing churches or represent an additional unwelcome financial burden upon the community. Proprietary chapels in affluent areas might be maintained entirely by pew rents and subscriptions, but this was unlikely to succeed in poorer areas, where the population might resist the levying of a church rate and either could not or would not rent pews or subscribe to support the church and its clergy.

Many early 19th-century attempts to subdivide existing parishes, reopen redundant churches and provide chapels-of-ease for remote settlements thus failed for lack of political and financial support.<sup>8</sup> This may have had a significant impact on church fabric since, as creating new churches was problematic, the only realistic alternative was to enlarge the existing parish church to accommodate larger numbers. This was often achieved through the addition of new aisles, or galleries within the existing walls, and the removal of arcades to increase space and improve sightlines. A similar problem appears to have existed in the post-Reformation period, when increased emphasis on the sermon and compulsory attendance at church necessitated a massive increase in church accommodation (See chapter 3). Enlargement of the existing building was not without its legal difficulties and impracticalities, of course, and did not solve the problem of location; an enlarged church might still be too far from centres of population to be effective. Enlarging the building might also have serious structural and aesthetic implications for the building and perhaps hastened the decline of many ancient structures (Fig. 14).

Anglican church expansion in the early 19th century was thus prey to a range of political, legal and sectarian restrictions which could completely stifle mission to the ‘unchurched’ poor. Nevertheless, some of the largest and most impressive buildings of the 19th-century Anglican Church were built and furnished in poor districts, often with little support from the state or the church hierarchy (Saint 1995, 40-41). Much of this was due to the availability of other sources of funding including subscriptions, charitable grants or private benefaction. In 1818 the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS) was founded as a voluntary society dedicated to raising funds for Anglican church building and restoration. Many English dioceses subsequently founded societies on similar lines, the Exeter Diocesan Church Building Society, founded in 1825, being the first.

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<sup>8</sup> An Act in Parliament for the division of Lydford parish, for example, to provide a new chapel of ease for Dartmoor at Two Bridges failed in 1791. A new church in the parish, at Princetown, was not provided until 1815, and this was achieved at the expense of the Board responsible for the war prison rather than the parishioners (Stanbrook 2002, 77).

From 1818 to 1982 the ICBS provided grant aid for the construction of new churches, and the enlargement of existing ones, and exercised an enormous degree of influence over the size, appearance and furnishings of English churches. One of their requirements, as with the Church Commissioners, was the provision of the largest possible number of sittings, a generous proportion of which were to be free and unappropriated, to accommodate those unable to pay pew rents. Church building was to be undertaken with the greatest possible economy; their interest in the architecture of the buildings was (initially) secondary. The early churches funded by the Church Commissioners and the ICBS were thus, characteristically, huge, bare and crammed almost to the eaves with high pews and galleries which often ran across the window openings in total disregard for the architecture (Fig. 15). If they were not erected in the simple classical style characteristic of the domestic architecture of the time, or in the severely and more overtly archaeological 'Greek revival' (Fig. 16), they might be built in a simplified form of Gothic which owed more to economy than to the serious, archaeological study of medieval monuments (Fig. 17). Whiffen notes that 'The necessity of designing every church to hold as large a congregation as possible was a part of the programme not conducive to good architecture' (Whiffen 1948, 83).

At a time when the medieval world was becoming an ever-stronger source of inspiration and when even classical architecture was expected to be archaeologically correct, such churches were unlikely to please. Before long the call for beauty as well as utility in church architecture became impossible to ignore and the early churches funded by the Church Commissioners and the ICBS were regarded as unsatisfactory. In a pamphlet written in 1841 for the Cambridge Camden Society, J. M. Neale urged church builders that 'care must be taken that the beauty of the building be not sacrificed to the accommodation of worshippers, a fault into which that great society (the ICBS) is - I say it with grief - too apt to fall' (Neale 1841, 4).

Not all of the motivation and funding for the foundation of new churches came from the establishment. Whatever the motives behind such mission, a very large proportion of the many thousands of new churches erected in the 19th century was erected without any significant state aid, being paid for and maintained entirely by voluntary effort on the part of their congregations or private benefactors, supplemented, in some cases, with grant aid. Almost all 19th century church building appears to have been led by the enthusiasm of the clergy, churchwardens and local congregations, This is especially true of Nonconformist groups, which experienced a similar proliferation of church building, but, for Anglicans, the movement may be said to have been dominated and shaped by 'ecclesiological principles', which were disseminated and popularised by groups such as the Ecclesiological Society (formerly the Cambridge Camden Society), The Oxford Archaeological Society and the diocesan architectural societies in the provinces.



Fig 14 The interior of Bideford Church in c.1865, drawn by Edward Ashworth before rebuilding, showing the impact of inserting additional galleries within a medieval structure (SWHC WSL P&D 05509).



Fig 15 The interior of James Green's St David's Church, Exeter (1816) showing an interior resembling that of a Commissioners' Church (Reed 1931, 276).

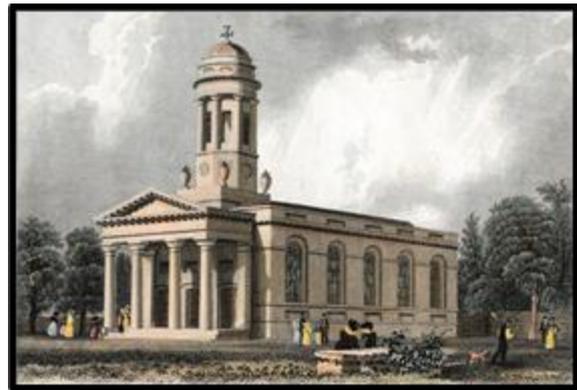


Fig 16 The exterior of St David's Church, showing no acknowledgement on the exterior of the galleries (Engraving by W. H. Bond after W. H. Bartlett, 1830/2. Author's collection).



Fig. 17 The simple pre-ecclesiological Gothic church at Countess Wear (1838), designed by Henry Lloyd in the 'lancet style' showing the most basic form of a Gothic-revival church. The cupola for the bell has been removed, the chancel (left) is a later addition (RWP Exeter Countess Wear DSC00325).



Fig.18 The Gothic church as a symbol of national unity; Karl Friedrich Schinkel's *A Medieval City on a River*, 1815 (Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin).

### **Gothic churches for a free Gothic people**

The vast majority of this programme of church renewal, particularly after 1840, was realised in the language of the Gothic revival. The whimsical ‘Gothick’ architecture of the 18th century was now transformed, from a picturesque ‘Garden Gothic’ of plaster vaults and pinnacles, to an archaeologically-based Gothic with an integrity and seriousness of purpose suitable for use in churches. Theoreticians were clear that the architecture of a church building, where possible, should have a clear association with Christianity and that Gothic lent itself better to creating the ideal conditions for prayer than classicism. The classical style was already being identified as ‘Heathen’ by the polemicist John Carter (1748-1814) as early as 1795 (Mordaunt Crook 1995, 33) and this objection seems to have been common soon afterwards in university circles. When the Revd. Jonas Dennis, of Exeter College Oxford published his *Architectura Sacra* in 1818, he described classicism as:

‘ill adapted to the purpose of ecclesiastical structures’....‘The most skilful architect can never produce the “dim religious light” and solemn gloom so conducive to exciting devout impressions, by means of open windows without mullions nor tracery, columns without arches’...‘or pediments of Heathen temples, whether in the most florid or the chastest style’

(Dennis 1818, 9).

Gothic was appropriate in its lighting and sublime in its effects and easily associated with Christianity. It could also evoke the continuity of the Church with a time before schisms and divisions had fractured the unity of the Christian people. For many 19th-century Anglicans this ancient Christian unity was embodied by the Middle Ages — a romanticised, idealised version of the Middle Ages — an ‘Age of Faith’ in which religion was believed to have existed in a state of purity and innocence, uncorrupted by political tyranny, pagan philosophy or sectarianism. Both Christian and national values could be expressed and promoted through the rediscovery and adoption of Gothic architecture, which embodied for some 19th-century people the best periods of national life and the highest achievements of art (Fig. 18).

Gothic and classical architectural forms had already been invested with political and social meanings by the early 17th century (Brooks 1999, 23) but these meanings remained curiously mutable. Gothic might be used in one context to associate a building and its users with the traditional seats of power and authority, such as monarchies, aristocracies and Roman Catholicism but, in another context, it could also be used as a statement of Saxon freedom from foreign

despotism and rebellion against royal and papal tyranny (Ibid., 55). For polemicists like John Carter or poets such as Gilbert White (1790-1723) Gothic was imbued with national pride; it was the architecture of those ancient free peoples who stood up against and humiliated the arrogant power of Rome and whose spirit would, of course, have just as firmly opposed the contemporary tyranny of French Imperialism (Mordaunt Crook 1995, 8). To men like Carter, Gothic architecture was an authentically English, northern European and Christian Art, a refutation of the classical pomp of Imperial Rome, Papal Rome, and of the neoclassical ideals of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

This understanding of Gothic was not merely a local phenomenon but part of an international movement which aimed to reunite nations following the appalling conflicts of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. One of the most significant projects to be undertaken with this aim was the completion of Cologne Cathedral, which had been left in an unfinished state in the Middle Ages. The building was recommenced and finally completed between 1842 and 1880 as a proud statement of German nationalism. The project at Cologne embodies the rediscovery of Gothic Architecture as a means of expressing the unity of nations despite religious differences; although the Cathedral was Roman Catholic it was completed with a substantial gift from the Lutheran, Prussian monarch as a symbol of national unity and artistic achievement and became one of the most significant ideological exercises of the international Gothic revival (Brooks 1999, 261-2). Similar projects to complete and restore great medieval buildings as national symbols took place at St Vitus, Prague, between 1859 and 1929 (Fig. 19) and at Wawel Castle and Cathedral, Krakow, in the early 20th century. In England, the specification of the 'Gothic or Elizabethan style' for the New Palace of Westminster, following the fire of 1834, reveals the power of Gothic to embody British national values. This aspect of Gothic remained potent throughout the century, as is evidenced by proposals in 1890 for colossal 'Memorial Halls' at Westminster to house the monuments of national heroes (Fig. 20). Had this been executed Westminster might have become a kind of Gothic Valhalla for the British people (Physick & Darby 1973, 51-2).

National and regional styles of Gothic, or even sometimes 'Elizabethan', might therefore be utilised to signify a new, confident, British nation, secure both in the knowledge of its freedom and independence from continental tyrannies, and also confident in the Orthodoxy, Catholicity and authenticity of its religion, continuing unbroken into the 19th century from the time of the Apostles. The architecture of the Middle Ages was believed to be the best way for buildings to express these ideas. The association of Gothic buildings with medieval Roman Catholicism (which were to loom uncomfortably large in the middle of the century) were not necessarily an obstacle to early 19th-century writers. The Anglican curate of North Bovey, Devon, the Revd. J. P. Jones

(writing as ‘*Devoniensis*’) regularly collaborated with his friend, Dr George Oliver, the Roman Catholic priest at St Nicholas, Exeter (who wrote as ‘*Curiosus*’) on a series of articles entitled the *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Devon*, published in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* during the 1820s and bound together as a collection in 1828. Jones dismissed sectarian rivalries, and focussed upon the need for the appropriate repair and beautification of the surviving buildings:

‘We are now fortunately living in more enlightened times, where sectarian feelings are gradually dying away and a Protestant may be allowed to look with satisfaction on an edifice erected by his Roman Catholic ancestors, without any danger of having his faith perverted; at least it is now generally allowed that the architectural remains we still possess should be carefully preserved, and that the necessary restorations should be in union with the original fabric’.

(Jones 1828, viii)

With few exceptions, nearly all the ancient churches and cathedrals of Britain were Gothic, but not all were resplendent in their Gothicism. It became imperative therefore that those churches which were in poor repair should be made resplendent once more so that they should make tangible a new commitment to the revival of the religious life of the entire nation.

Churches took on a greater importance architecturally at this period than almost any other form of building (Saint 2011, 7) and enormous effort was put into making them seemly and befitting the House of God. Where church buildings had formerly been subject to *ad hoc* repairs, now they were to be maintained by architectural professionals and furnished by well-informed and competent artists. Clergy were expected to understand the history and development of the liturgy of their Church and how it was embodied, revealed and served by buildings and their furnishings. All church users and contributors, lay or ordained, were expected to respect and honour the sacred purpose of the building as a place where man might encounter the Divine. As an institution, ‘the Church was considered not as a glorified Board of Health but in all its Catholic glory, founded purely on the rock of Christ with the saints and the “*pauperes Christi*” as its main pillars’ (Rowlands 1986, 271).

### *Mission Through Mass Education*

Concern for the welfare of the poor was manifested not only in improved church accommodation, but also in the provision, by church groups, of new schools in almost every parish in the country. The drive to make basic levels of education available to the poorest classes did not initially come from the government, either locally or nationally, because of a fear that it was unnecessary and potentially dangerous to educate the lower classes, since to do so would increase their dissatisfaction and foment crime and public disorder (Newton 1968, 71).

The churches therefore took the initiative in the provision of schools; the non-conformists first, with the foundation of the *British and Foreign School Society for the Promotion of the Lancasterian System for the Education of the Poor* in 1808 and the Anglicans later with the *National Society (Church of England) for Promoting Christian Education* in 1811. The *British Society* was consciously non-sectarian and inter-denominational, perhaps because it had to encompass the many different shades and complexions of contemporary Nonconformity as well as the 'evangelical' wing of the established Church. The *National Society* was inclusive by virtue of its affiliation to that church. Both societies were motivated by a desire that the poor would learn to read their Bible and understand basic Christian doctrine (Parker 2004, 6). Their schools were funded by private subscriptions and by small fees, allowing running costs to be kept to a minimum.

The expansion of church life in both urban and rural areas was often spear-headed by parish schools associated with existing or brand-new churches. The alliance between the church and the school was usually attested physically by the proximity of these buildings, and by their architectural character as closely related and highly picturesque groups (Fig. 21). Many of these architectural groups of school and church remain in villages and suburban areas across England, often augmented by a Gothic or Tudor parsonage to further emphasise the relationship.

Nineteenth-century church and educational expansion was in some cases, still more dramatically, embodied in the same structure: the school-chapel, a multi-purpose building designed to function for the education of children and adults during the week and as a church on Sundays and feast days. These buildings were established as missions in both urban and rural areas and their architectural character might range from a corrugated-iron shed (Fig. 22) or a converted barn, to a fully-developed Gothic building with a hierarchy of ornament and furnishings carefully distinguishing its sacred and secular functions (Figs 23, 26, 234, 235) The flexible use of these buildings demanded the development of convertible furnishings to ease the transition from sacred to secular use and back again. These were devised and manufactured by firms such as Wippell & Co (Fig. 24) School-chapels could be richly furnished with fixtures little different from conventional



Fig 19 Sv Vítus Cathedral in the Hrad at Prague; the nave and western towers (left) were completed between 1859 and 1929 as a symbol of Czech nationalism (RWP Prague Sv Vítus DSC00211).



Fig 20 A National Valhalla. Proposals for the 'Monumental halls' at Westminster by J.P. Seddon, 1890, showing the power of Gothic as a style for national monuments even at the very end of the century (Watercolour in the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects).



Fig. 21 Rose Ash, Devon; the proximity of the ancient parish church and the schools. Two school buildings survive, both adjoining entrances to the churchyard. The National School founded in 1848 was later succeeded by a Board School in 1877, but proximity to the church clearly remained important (RWP Rose Ash DSC04450).



Fig. 22 The corrugated iron Mission Chapel at Wheatley in the parish of Alphington, Devon, the base of the spirelet remains on the roof (RWP Wheatley DSC04966).

churches (Parker 2009, 7). Few school-chapels now remain in use as they were intended; they are an under-rated and poorly understood aspect of 19th-century church life.

The development of mission rooms, parish institutes and school-chapels for both youth and adult education was a significant feature of late 19th-century church life and remained so well into the 20th century. Many buildings still survive, though rarely now in use by the churches which built them. These community facilities continued the tradition of church philanthropy into the period after the state had begun to take responsibility for social welfare and education, and may have gone far to reconcile disaffected members of the working class to the Church, though disaffected Marxist academics have been harder to convince (Brooks 1995, quoted above).

### *Mission in the slums*

By the late 19th century many parishes had created mission churches or chapels of ease in areas of urban or rural deprivation (Fig. 26) . Some of these churches were to gain the status of independent parishes and, in time, the original temporary iron church or mission chapel was replaced by a new building, often a magnificent structure planned on a scale more ambitious than the congregation could really afford (Saint 1995, 36). These new congregations now began to carve out new identities for themselves, a process not without the potential for tension and ideological conflict between new churches and their parent parishes.

In slum areas many churches developed an Anglo-Catholic character and became famous for their welfare work in times of epidemics and economic hardship (Clifton Kelway 1905, 48). Evangelical congregations and Nonconformists could be just as selfless and devoted (Chadwick 1966, 443). Many Anglo-Catholic 'slum priests' lived, among their people, in conditions of extreme poverty. These priests sometimes achieved legendary status among their communities and were persecuted by fellow churchmen or by Protestant groups. This phenomenon has been explored in a thesis by Timothy Richard Stratford: *Urban Liturgy in the Church of England: A Historical, Theological and Anthropological Analysis of the Mid-Victorian Slum Priest Ritualists and their Legacy*. Stratford argues that working class resentment of the established Church, resentment of the Established Church, and of missionaries from other churches, which was an obstacle for urban mission in the early part of the century (Stratford 2008, 109-111) was changed through the consciousness of shared suffering and of state persecution of ritualist clergy by the establishment. Anglo-Catholic slum priests gained for themselves (and, to an extent, created) an Incarnational or Christ-like character which won over the working classes to their version of Anglicanism (Stratford 2008, 65-6).

Although Stratford does not deal at any length or specifically with church furnishings, he does identify one, presumably rare, type of furnishing in a Portsmouth church which was

particularly aimed at the poorer classes: the ‘Third Altar’. This was a requiem chapel, additional to the High Altar and the Lady Chapel, with a reredos on which the names of the deceased poor of the parish might be remembered. Prayers for the dead were controversial at the time, but after the cataclysm of the First World War of 1914-18, memorial chapels and prayers for the dead became acceptable in Anglican worship and there are many fine examples of memorial chapels in Devon, such as that at East Teignmouth (Fig. 27) and the extraordinary side chapel at St Mary Magdalene, Upton, Torquay (Fig. 28). No Devon church now has a surviving ‘Third Altar’, but the losses in Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport, through blitz, closures and demolition, have been so great that further research may conceivably discover examples we have lost.

Another ideal of both the ICBS and the Ecclesiologists was that all worshippers should have, as far as possible, a clear view of the altar. This was, arguably, harder to reconcile with the revival of medieval styles of architecture and furnishings, a particular problem being the use of aisles and the obstructions to a clear view provided by pillars, arcades and rood screens. Similar computer technology as that used by Simon Roffey (see below) in investigating sight lines in medieval churches has recently been used by Anthony Edwards in ‘*The churches of E.B. Lamb: An Exercise in Central Planning*’ (2010) to explore work of Edward Buckton Lamb, whose exercises in centralised planning can be shown to have been remarkably successful in providing uninterrupted sight lines between members of the congregation and the preacher in the pulpit.

Edwards’ viewshed analysis of the churches concentrates on the relationship of the congregation with the preacher, rather than the altar, on the grounds that Lamb’s churches were designed for ‘Low Church’ clients. Nevertheless, all of Lamb’s churches bring the altar into prominence, admittedly by the unorthodox method of shortening the chancel, which seems to be his only real departure from contemporary ecclesiology. Lamb’s churches are provided with low, open benches, most of which faced east, and many had structurally separate chancels and low chancel screens defining the sanctuary, they often had rood beams supporting a plain cross. In Devon, the unusual planning of the church, by John Hayward, at Harbertonford near Totnes (1860), with its apsidal east end and transepts extending from a broad sub-octagonal central volume (Fig. 219), may reflect these experiments in planning and reveal similar concerns for the inclusion of the congregation in worship.

The ‘High-Church’ response to the same problem of visibility in new churches, particularly in urban areas after 1860, was to retain the great length of the nave, together with raised chancels, chancel screens, choirs and mysterious sanctuaries, but to bring most of the seating into the body of the church, reducing the aisles to passages for access. Alternatively, in older



Fig. 23 The rural school-chapel at Knowle, in Down St Mary, a mixed-use building combining an architecturally distinct chancel and schoolroom, to serve as a nave when the building was used for worship (RWP Knowle, Down St Mary DSC02964)



Fig. 24 The adjustable school desks, convertible into benches, desks or tables, manufactured by Wippell & Co of Exeter, at the Beacon school-chapel at Sandford (RWP Beacon Chapel, Sandford DSC 08353).



Fig. 25 The interior of Knowle school-chapel showing a screen to separate the chancel during school use and imported furniture including an 18th-century pulpit (RWP Knowle, Down St Mary DSC02981).

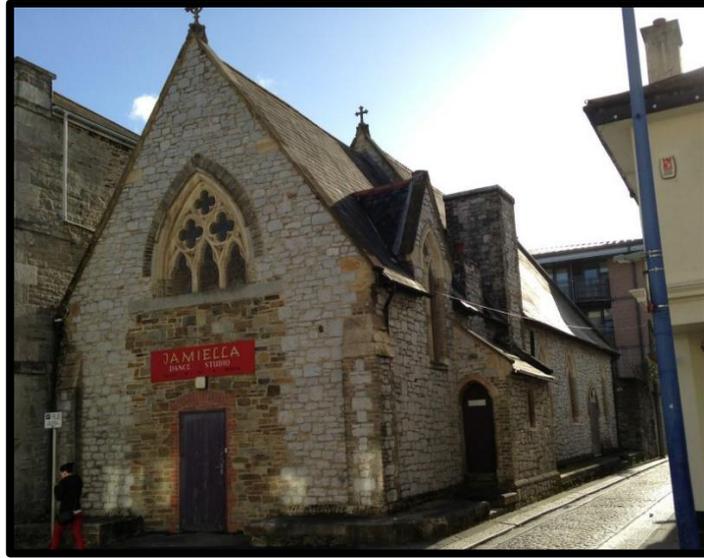


Fig. 26 The Mission Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Stonehouse, attached to St Peter, Plymouth (RWP Stonehouse Mission Chapel of the Good Shepherd DSC095).



Fig. 27 The memorial chapel and screen, with a monument to the war dead, at St Michael's, East Teignmouth. (RWP Teignmouth St Michael DSC 00274).



Fig. 28 The memorial chapel at St Mary Magdalen, Upton, furnished in 1927 (RWP Upton, Torquay; St Mary Magdalen DSC 08692).

buildings, transepts, aisles and other extrusions with restricted visibility of the main volume might be utilised for additional seating for distinct groups, such as school children, for Catechism classes, or as a 'Morning Chapel' for more intimate weekday services, when a smaller attendance made the use of the entire church unnecessary. Ultimately, aisles and transepts and even Morning Chapels were to be reborn as Lady Chapels, Mother's Union Chapels or Children's Corners, depending on Churchmanship, but nonetheless restoring a sense of a sacred purpose to the remoter parts of the church building. Late 19th-century Church Expansion Schemes in the great urban centres, such as the Three Towns Church Expansion Society in Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport, provided opportunities for architects, church furnishers and clergy to experiment with new designs for buildings and furniture and new types of the liturgy aimed at engaging the poor.

Principles for the design of 'Town Churches' aimed at the urban poor were set out in 1850 in an important paper; 'On the proper characteristics of a town church' by G.E. Street in *The Ecclesiologist* in 1850. The idea was to create, through awesome architecture, rich decoration and a glorious liturgy, a vision of heavenly order which would contrast with the miseries of contemporary life for the poorest classes and provide them with an ideal to aim for (Street, 1850). The importance of great height and unbroken vistas was emphasised, and the chancel arch suppressed so that the nave and chancel became one volume, though there was almost invariably a distinct change in level from nave to chancel. In many cases the aisles were suppressed into mere passages piercing internal buttresses. This type of planning is well known in the large London Churches of J.L. Pearson and J. Brooks, and also in the works of Bodley and Garner at St Augustine, Pendlebury and elsewhere.

Many writers have assumed that this plan was derived from Albi Cathedral in Southern France (Brooks 1999, 384; Symondson, 1995, 201) although it is more likely that it was derived from the Dominican Church in Ghent, the plan and elevations of which, prepared by Buckler, were published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1862, and also by 'JHP' in *The Church Builder*, a journal published in association with the ICBS, in October 1862. Unusually, J.H.P suggested that the aisles might be used for family pews, since they were not required (in an Anglican context) for chapels and that the walls, being of no importance might be of iron and glass (*The Church Builder* IV 1862, 135). These latter suggestions are unlikely to have been acceptable to the 19th-century ecclesiologists and were not to the editors of the journal, who recommended in a footnote that such aisles might well be occupied as passages; a suggestion which seems to have been adopted wherever this plan form was utilised. In Exeter, St David's Church (1897-1901) is of the internally buttressed type, and St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham (1864-8) features passage aisles.

Liturgy in these mighty churches, especially the Anglo-Catholic ‘slum minsters’, was more inclusive than might initially appear, given the apparently authoritarian architecture and traditional Catholic imagery. Their services allowed for large choirs and complex ceremonial requiring large numbers of servers and acolytes, who would be drawn from the congregation and local schools. Processions and special mission services, charitable societies such as ‘Dorcas groups’, blanket societies and men’s and women’s guilds, together with devotional societies and many other activities, provided outreach to the poorest groups in the community and were often led by the laity, both male and female. Furnishing such churches with altar cloths, vestments and carved woodwork required the mobilisation of the whole community, both through fundraising and also, in some cases in rural Devon, the actual manufacture of such furnishings by the parishioners. The restoration and refurnishing of Clawton church in west Devon in 1893 was undertaken by the parishioners, coordinated by their Rector the Rev. Preb. Mr Melhuish (Blaylock & Parker 2000, 2). The rood screen at Down St Mary was, likewise, very skilfully restored by a group of parishioners, described as ‘local talent, in 1848. They then went on to restore other screens in the county, including that at Berry Pomeroy (Stabb 1908, 52; 12).

The suburbs and working-class areas of many large towns are still, today, dominated by impressive churches designed as ‘Slum Minsters’ specifically for the accommodation of the urban poor, richly-furnished, seated with open seats and consciously devoid of references to social segregation and class division. Some are rivalled by equally impressive churches erected to supply, in direct competition, services of a different flavour of churchmanship. In many outlying areas of large rural parishes, smaller, but often no less impressively appointed churches were established to provide a religious focus for communities too remote from their ancient parish churches.

Chadwick writes: ‘Free competition in religion is so repellent to religious instinct that we shrink from an evident truth of history, that the age of religious equality encouraged every Christian body to strive; if not to be more devout, at least to be better organized, more liberal, more popular, and open-minded’ (Chadwick 1966, 4). Study of the surviving buildings and furnishings of the Anglican Church does show that there had been significant diversification in religious practice during the 19th century and that the churchgoers of the early 20th century were being offered a wider range of experiences, services and benefits by the established Church than their forebears of the 1800s. It could be argued that a Church which could encompass both the extremes of Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic practice and such a wide range of other religious, educational, charitable and social activities, was a Church which was at least attempting to reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the whole nation.



Fig. 29 St Luke, Plymouth, or Charles Chapel (1828) showing the centrally-planned interior focussed on the pulpit (David King collection).



Fig. 30 The Methodist church in Sidwell Street, Exeter, showing the centrally-planned interior (RWP Exeter St Sidwell's Methodist DSC06142).

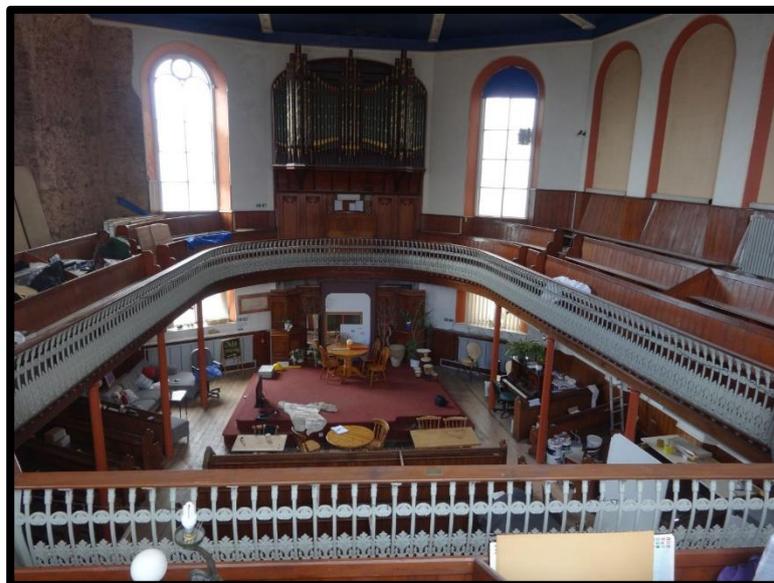


Fig. 31 The former Congregational Church in Tiverton (1831) showing angled benches (1870s) in the aisles focussed on the dais for the Communion table (RWP Tiverton URC DSC06549)



Fig. 32 St Luke's Church, Milber, Newton Abbot, known as 'the dream church'. A rare pre-war example of a centrally-planned church, with three radiating volumes corresponding to nave and side aisles focussed on a shallow chancel (RWP Milber DSC05447).



Fig. 33 Aerial view of the 'Dream Church' at Milber, Newton Abbot (chancel to the east of the central crossing tower) showing the unusual plan form (Google Earth)

In this movement Devon was not a rural backwater, but seems to have been an early and important centre for the dissemination of ecclesiological ideas. Local clergy, patrons and architects took a particular interest in the movement. Many architects of national importance undertook church projects in the county, including Benjamin Ferrey (1810-1880), William Butterfield (1814-1900), John Loughborough Pearson (1817-1897), George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) and William Douglas Caröe (1857-1938). Much of their work took place in the rapidly growing Devon resort and port towns of Torquay, Paignton, Plymouth and Devonport, but all carried out restorations in rural parishes alongside the locally-based practitioners such as John Hayward (1807-1891), Edward Ashworth (1814-1896), and Robert Medley Fulford (1845-1910).

These 'local' architects were well trained and widely travelled; Hayward had trained under Sir Charles Barry, relocating to Exeter in 1834 (Cherry 1995, 176). Through the connections he established while working in Exeter he produced work for clients across the county and beyond, from Oxfordshire to Jedburgh in Scotland (*ibid.*). Edward Ashworth trained under Robert Cornish, Surveyor to Exeter Cathedral, and under Charles Fowler. Ashworth travelled widely in New Zealand and the Far East before returning to Devon in 1846 to set up his practice (Cowell 2014). The professional careers of these local architects spanned the whole period of the Gothic revival and their influence continued into the early 20th century. Although Cowell describes the county as 'bucolic' (*ibid.*), its architectural theorists and practitioners seem, in fact, to have been dynamic by comparison with those of other counties such as Leicestershire (Cherry 1995, 186), though even there 'only a handful of churches escaped major activity between 1800 and 1914' (Brandwood 1984, 8)

It would be difficult to deny the superb architectural quality and Gothic-revival inspiration of the churches of Walter Tapper (1861-1935), or his eminence as an architect in the early part of the 20th century. Tapper was born in Bovey Tracey, Devon, and trained in Newton Abbot under the firm of J. W. Rowell (1828-1902), one of the most prolific but least known Devon architects of the 19th century. Tapper, like other Devon-born architects such as William Lethaby (1857-1931) and George Fellowes Prynne (1853-1927) rose to national prominence and worked with some of the leading architectural firms of the late 19th century, having a considerable personal impact on church architecture and design until well into the 20th century.

#### *Later Victorian and modern churches*

The trajectory of the Church during the later 19th and early 20th century is often presented as one of continual decline and loss of influence, matched by an apparent diminution in the aesthetic quality and importance of her buildings and, ultimately, her complete irrelevance to modern

society (Hall 2010, 48). This narrative seems to fly in the face of direct evidence. The very high quality of some modern churches — and their debt to the ecclesiologists— is evident in many surviving buildings and seems to me to show no loss of vitality.

Early ‘modernists’ such as Nugent Francis Cachemaille-Day (1896-1976) are well represented in Devon but, despite their pioneering use of modern materials and Art-Deco forms in their big, blocky, suburban churches (Fig. 34), their contributions to ecclesiastical architecture are not widely known. The publications of the Incorporated Church Building Society such as *Fifty Modern Churches* (1947), with their lists of literally hundreds of churches, mission churches and school-chapels erected in the years between and after the wars, many of which are carefully illustrated with black and white photographs, clearly reveal that, even in the years after the Second World War the ‘ecclesiological church’, showing a strong debt to the Gothic revival in its layout and arrangements was still a living entity and that modernist architects continued to respond to its challenges.

Modern liturgical theories (which developed in Europe, usually in Roman Catholic contexts, in the years before the Second World War) seem to have favoured a rejection of the traditionally-planned ecclesiological church in favour of ‘centrally planned’, churches where the pews or benches are arranged on a semi-circular or polygonal plan centred on the altar, where Mass would be celebrated *versus populum*<sup>9</sup>. Although this plan may have been novel in Roman and Anglican contexts during the pre- and post-war years, and remains very popular today<sup>10</sup>, it is no less 19th-century in origin. Early 19th-century Anglican churches, focused on the word rather than the Sacrament, were often planned with pews or benches on three sides of the church facing inwards (Fig. 29), and many Victorian non-conformist churches used this plan, with seats radiating from the pulpit, where the elders and minister would sit facing the congregation, with the Communion table between them and the people (Figs 30, 31).

Although centrally-planned churches do exist in Devon, they mostly serve non-Anglican denominations<sup>11</sup>. There is one highly unusual exception, the so-called ‘Dream Church’ at Milber, Newton Abbot, which consists of a nave and aisles converging on a relatively shallow chancel flanked by a Lady chapel and vestry radiating from this (Figs 32, 33). The plan was apparently revealed in a dream to the then vicar, J. Keble Martin, and realised by his architect brother, Arthur Martin, from 1936 (Figs 29,30).

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<sup>9</sup> Famous examples being the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Christ the King at Liverpool, or the Cathedral at Clifton, Bristol.

<sup>10</sup> For example, in the new church of St Luke at Buckfastleigh (1999-2002).

<sup>11</sup> The Central Methodist Church in Torbay (1970) for example.



Fig. 34 St Martin, Barton, Torquay (1938-9). A modernist church By Nugent Francis Cachemaille-Day, betraying ecclesiological principles in its liturgical focus on the altar and sanctuary (RWP Barton St Martin DSC01537).



Fig. 35 St Aidan, Ernesettle, Plymouth (now demolished), a post-war suburban church in the monumental tradition (David King collection).



Fig. 36 The interior of St Chad, Whiteleigh Green, Plymouth, (now demolished), an ambitiously scaled post-war building (David King collection).

Many such buildings are now under threat. Their architectural qualities are often underestimated and their contribution to the long tradition of monumental religious architecture in Europe seems almost to be deliberately ignored and rejected. In Plymouth alone, three large post-war churches have been demolished in recent years, several of which contained notable examples of post-war art, including 'Dalle de Verre' windows by Father Norris of Buckfast Abbey, as well as furnishings salvaged from older, demolished city churches.<sup>12</sup> With these demolitions, a whole epoch of ambitious post-war architecture, uniquely representative of the ambitions and hopes of the post-war city, has been irretrievably lost.

The issue seems to be that churches designed in traditional styles and on traditional plans are not perceived as being in the mainstream of art-historical progress and, for those interested in identifying a 'modern movement' in architecture as a developing thread towards the perfection of human civilisation there are richer pickings to be found in the fields of domestic, municipal and particularly industrial architecture (Brooks 1999, 402). The restored or new-built ecclesiologically-correct church is somehow outside modern culture, either because it has been compromised by historicism or because it was 'reactionary' however beautiful or useful it might be (Symondson 2011, 85). To some writers, perhaps, churches themselves are an archaic survivor in a modern world.

Some celebrated buildings have perhaps escaped this stigma because of their famous designers, but they remain exceptions. Le Corbusier's chapel at Ronchamp is by no means typical or representative of modern church buildings in Europe, though some have indeed tried to imitate it, and the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral by Basil Spence is not the only building, nor even the first, which sought to reconcile modern styles and materials in architecture with a high level of artistic quality and craft. As with Victorian churches, it is high time the great legacy of early 'modernist' church buildings was reappraised and these buildings recognised and acknowledged for their ambition and their creative brilliance, before they all disappear. This project, however, lies outside the scope of this thesis.

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<sup>12</sup> St Pauls, Efford (1964), St Chad's, Whitleigh Green (1954-6) and St Aidan's Ernesettle (1954) have all recently been demolished and replaced with modern buildings, using the same rather uninspiring design.



Fig. 37 Anglo-Papalist Baroque. The interior of St James-the-Less, Plymouth, after 1910 showing an 1870s church 'improved' with Baroque ornaments (David King collection).



Fig. 38 The Rococo altar at Langtree in north Devon, possibly a continental import of the 1840s? (RWP Langtree DSC03872).



Fig. 39 The Pulpit at Langtree (RWP Langtree DSC03895).



### CHAPTER 3: LATE 19th- AND 20th-CENTURY REACTIONS TO VICTORIAN ART

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries the contribution of 19th-century architects, designers and church furnishers to the furnishing and design of churches sank to a very low level of popular esteem, especially among those whose devotion to the progress of the ‘modern movement’ led them to be suspicious of historicism. Although manufacturers of ecclesiastical furnishings continued to design in the revived medieval idiom scholarly taste was changing. A growing reaction to medievalism developed among architects dissatisfied with, or perhaps embarrassed by, the perceived excesses of Victorian ‘development’ of Gothic, the ‘vulgarity’ of commercial church furnishings and the destructive aspect of church restoration. Many late Victorian architects, including some who had trained with eminent Gothic revivalists now developed a ‘revulsion’ against Gothic (Stannard 2010, 123) and began a trend towards the use of classical designs, or wholly original designs reflecting the craft-based ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement or the eclecticism of the ‘Queen Anne Style’.

Although the basic ecclesiastical layout of churches remained unchallenged at this stage, designers began to seek around for alternative models for church interiors. There were three obvious choices: Italian Renaissance; Continental Baroque; or English Renaissance (which could encompass both ‘Wrenaissance’ and ‘Elizabethan’). The London churches of Hugh Thackeray Turner, especially the demolished church of St Anselm Mayfair (1893-6) and Crown Court Church (1906-9), are examples, both featuring elaborate furnishings (ibid., 137; 143).

The fashion for Baroque furnishings in Anglican churches was promoted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by Anglo-Catholic (or Anglo-Papalist) groups such as the Society of St Peter and Paul, which flourished in direct reaction to the archaeological reconstructions of late medieval English church furniture and Sarum rite vestments and liturgy popularised by the Alcuin Club, Percy Dearmer and others. Many genuine Wren churches and some High-Victorian Gothic ones were refurnished in Baroque style at this period (Anson 1960, 318-319). One of the earliest of these Baroque transformations was St James the Less, West Hoe, in Plymouth, a fine Gothic church by the prolific local architect James Piers St Aubyn, which was refurnished in *c.*1910 with the highly unusual feature of twin pulpits on either side of the chancel arch (Fig. 37) and several Baroque altarpieces (ibid., 320). This church perished in the Plymouth blitz, but other examples of 19th- and 20th-century Baroque furnishings survive elsewhere in the county. A small number of churches feature imported continental material such as the pulpit, altar and altar chairs at

Langtree (Figs 52, 53). There appears to have been no attempt in late 19th-century Devon to build Anglican churches in classical styles, though classical furnishings, such as screens, pulpits and reading desks do occur, such as the screen formerly at St Paul's, Exeter, now at St Paul's, Honiton, which may have been designed in the late 19th or early 20th century to reflect the character of the late 17th-century building. In Devon the first reaction to Gothic seems to have been a Byzantine revival, though the Roman Catholics adopted this with greater enthusiasm than the Anglicans, perhaps to better distinguish their churches.<sup>13</sup>

A new understanding of Wren's ideas of liturgical planning and 17th-century churches may have been aided by the campaigns on the part of early conservationists, including William Morris, Thomas Carlyle and George Birch, to save Wren's London churches, so many of which were to perish through commercial redevelopment and, subsequently, the London Blitz (Cobb 1977, 128). With this came, inevitably, condemnation of the way in which these churches had been altered by the Victorians (*ibid.*, 81).

*The perceived break with tradition*

Studies such as Reginald Turnor's *Nineteenth Century Architecture in Britain* (1950) and John Gloag's *Victorian Taste* (1962) reveal that the problem with 19th-century architecture and design was a perceived break with an 'organic' tradition which was perceived as 'natural' to the English character (Gloag 1962, xvi). Turnor identified three great 'revolutions' in the history of English architecture since the Middle Ages: First, the coming of the Renaissance, with its climax in the 17th and 18th centuries; secondly, the eclipse and overthrow of this tradition by romanticism, eclecticism and the Gothic revival; and thirdly, the rise of a new art typified by the buildings of the Industrial Revolution, the bridges and railway stations of the engineers (Turnor 1950, 1), which some modern commentators have identified as the 'authentic architecture of the period' (Gloag 1962, 135). Some 19th-century buildings, such as Butterfield's churches were still admired for their qualities of vigour and originality or for their high-quality craftsmanship, but Stevens Curl sees a snare even here:

Some writers, seeking the origins of Modernism (one suspects in order to make it respectable by identifying spurious architectural precedents for it), saw mid-Victorian Gothic as original and pioneering, and somehow connected with an inevitable seamless Hegelian progression leading to the International

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<sup>13</sup> The chapel of ease at Instow (1936) is one of the few Anglican churches in Devon to adopt Byzantine styling. There are good Roman Catholic churches in this style at Paignton and Sidmouth, and an Italianate chapel at Lynton.

Modern Style (and style it was): such a distortion of truth would have astounded architects working in the 1860s and 70s'

(Stevens Curl 2002, 10)

Generally, Gothic revival buildings and their furnishings suffered the greatest opprobrium. Late 18th- and 19th-century classicism, despite its obvious reliance on historic precedent and exact reproduction of past forms, is still understood as a continuation of the Renaissance tradition, and thus a natural growth, rather than a Romantic perversion like the Gothic revival (Turnor 1950, 4-5; Gloag 1962, 101). For some modern writers 19th-century ecclesiology had also introduced unnatural liturgical practices, as though the Low Church liturgies of the 18th century had a legitimacy in England that other forms of liturgy do not.

*'Catholic' and 'Anglican' liturgical planning and furnishings and Ecclesiological 'betrayal'*

One of the principal issues in modern analyses of church planning and furniture has been the inclusion and participation of the laity in acts of corporate worship. This inclusion could either be encouraged or inhibited by the position of the furniture and the sacred ministers. Many modern analyses, such as G. Addleshaw's and F. Etchells' *The Architectural Setting of Anglican Worship* (1948) postulate that the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches had completely different requirements for worship, and that these requirements were integral to the character of their liturgy, determining fundamental differences in the planning and furnishing of their buildings.

Addleshaw and Etchells explore in detail the 'experiments of the Edwardian reformers' and show how the state, through the rubrics of the Prayer Books of 1549, 1552 and 1559, tried to legislate for the position of the furnishings and the minister during the morning and evening offices and at celebration of Holy Communion, in order to ensure the participation of the whole congregation in worship. By the late 16th century, they argue, a suitable compromise had been reached and medieval buildings were replanned to reflect the new liturgy, generally by the removal of the Communion table and the priest's stall or reading desk from the chancel into the midst of the congregation, allowing all to hear and see clearly. They argue that the Ecclesiological movement, by reviving medieval forms of ecclesiastical planning, betrayed something integral to Anglicanism and thus produced churches quite unsuitable for Reformed worship (Addleshaw & Etchells 1948, 36; 229).

The same sense of a departure from a wise, sensible and fundamentally Anglican model of church planning, in favour of something either obsolete, exotic and inherently alien, pervades Mark Chatfield's *Churches the Victorians Forgot* (1979), a study of those churches which, whether for reasons of conservative churchmanship or poverty, retain pre-Victorian furnishings. Tellingly,

these ‘unrestored’ churches are described as having ‘Prayer Book interiors’ and being ‘truly Anglican’ (Chatfield 1979, 9). The Victorian contribution to church design is described in aggressive or cataclysmic language, beginning with the ‘first Salvo’...‘fired by Pugin’ (loc. cit.) and swelling to a ‘flood of restoration’ (ibid., 7) which ‘swept away the majority of Prayer Book interiors’ (ibid., 9). In fact, many of the churches admired by Chatfield were restored by Victorian architects. In Devon, the celebrated ‘unrestored’ church at Honeychurch, was completely restored in 1907 by George Fellowes Prynne (Parker 2001, 2). What matters is that he did so unobtrusively.

The argument that Anglican churches require a distinct type of planning to reflect a wholly different and inclusive approach to liturgy is based on distinguished and ancient precedent. Sir Christopher Wren was one of the earliest to expound this view, in a much-quoted letter written in response to an Act of Parliament commanding the erection of fifty new churches in London in 1708. Wren noted that:

‘The Romanists, indeed, may build larger churches, it is enough that they should hear the Murmur of the Mass, and see the Elevation of the Host, but ours are to be fitted for Auditories. I can hardly think it practicable to make a single Room so capacious, with Pews and Galleries, as to hold above 2,000 persons, and all to hear the Service, and both to hear distinctly, and to see the preacher’.

(Wren ‘*Parentalia*’ pp 319-21, quoted in Addleshaw & Etchells 1948, Appendix I; 247-50).

This argument implies that all that was required of the congregation before the Reformation was that they gathered to see the liturgy performed by the clergy, without any other real involvement. The medieval church is conceived of by many modern writers as a series of compartments divided by screens, by which the laity and the clergy were separated; a ‘mysterious succession of self-contained rooms, seemingly stretching away into infinity; there is a gradual unveiling of its character till at last the high altar is reached at the east end’ (Addleshaw & Etchells 1948, 15-16). Chancels were ‘built to house the clergy; their grandeur and magnificence were an outward sign of the importance of the clergy in medieval polity. They were only occasionally used by the laity’ (ibid., 16). Addleshaw and Etchells understate the importance of ‘Hearing Mass’ (the usual term in the Middle Ages, and ever since), perhaps because of a perception that the laity would not understand any of the Latin service. The Post-Reformation church, by contrast, they argue, required the full participation of the congregation in the service; the people were now expected to participate with discernment and understanding (ibid., 23).

This interpretation of the medieval church service, especially the passive rôle of the congregation during worship, has been challenged in recent years. Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992) and *The Voices of Morebath* (2001) have both demonstrated, through exhaustive recourse to primary evidence, that the pre-Reformation church had involved the whole community actively in worship during church services and that the laity, even during the days of the Latin rite, approached both corporate and private worship with discernment and understanding.

A medieval church building had many liturgical centres: multiple altars, shrines of saints, and devotional images. The whole church, the churchyard and its environs was utilised liturgically, for processions. Porches, lofts, fonts, screens and Easter Sepulchres all had specific liturgical uses and might be the focus of public or private devotion. Church government included roles for lay men and women (Duffy 2001, 26; 29). It is apparent that the laity were involved in almost every aspect of the life of the church, and Duffy argues that this involvement declined rather than increased after the Reformation (Duffy 2001, 185; Strong 2007, 80; 83).

Simon Roffey has shown in his paper *Constructing a vision of salvation* (2006) that the design of medieval parish churches was guided by the principle of participation, rather than exclusion. Roffey uses 'viewshed analysis' to explore sight lines in medieval churches and explores the rôle of squints and hagioscopes in making parts of the church accessible to groups of worshippers or clergy located in awkward positions within the building (Roffey 2006).

It is a moot point whether a medieval congregation were not more able to intelligently engage in a personal religion before they were dominated by a protestant minister, frowning over them from a high pulpit, reading an approved homily or a printed prayer book in the shadow of the Royal Arms. However, one must always be conscious of the potential for religious bias in scholarship. Duffy, as a practising Roman Catholic, may be no less susceptible to partisan feeling than Addleshaw, an Anglican Canon Residentiary of York Minster, or, indeed, the present writer.

A post-Reformation church had only three formal liturgical centres: the font, the altar and the pulpit. Until the work of the Victorian ecclesiologists the pulpit was by far the most important piece of furniture in the building. In many provincial Georgian churches, and especially in towns, the three-decker pulpit might be placed in the central aisle, entirely dominating the interior. This was not the case in the London churches. Addleshaw points out that Wren, as a high-churchman and nephew of the Bishop of Ely, did not seek to depreciate the altar in favour of the pulpit (Addleshaw & Etchells 1948, 56).

Wren's magnificent churches were noted for their Baroque altarpieces and Communion tables set 'altar wise' hard against the (liturgical) east wall without a significant chancel recess (Cobb 1977, figs 59; 72-6). In this Wren was surprisingly close to the planning of contemporary Roman

Catholic churches on the Continent, which had experimented with this one-room type of liturgical planning since the Renaissance. Reformed churches could lend themselves just as admirably to elaborate liturgical ceremonial, as is evident today during worship at St Magnus Martyr, London Bridge. To argue that the compact, chancel-less church with galleries and without screens was somehow specifically and specially 'Anglican' does not stand up to scrutiny when the vast majority of smaller continental churches from the 16th to the 19th centuries are considered, let alone the English Roman Catholic churches of the 18th century, which took precisely this form (Martin 2006, 45, 46, 51).

Both Chatfield and Addleshaw and Etchells overlook the fact that the Ecclesiological church interior was intended as a return to the principles of the Prayer Book and that Ecclesiological worship was not a pantomime of the medieval church, but a conscientious attempt to reconcile the pre-Reformation and post-Reformation churches in accordance with English Church law. This position is outlined by Anthony Symondson in his paper 'Theology, Worship and the Late-Victorian Church' in *The Victorian Church* (Brooks & Saint 1995, 192-222). The legal furnishings and proper vestments of Anglican clergy had been defined in the Ornaments Rubric, which was first inserted in the Book of Common Prayer in 1549 and remained in place through the subsequent revisions of 1552, 1559 and finally 1662, having been 're-enacted by Parliament' in 1604 (Symondson 1995, 196). The 'Ornaments Rubric' stated that 'Chancels shall remain as they have in times past' and that 'such ornaments of the church, and of the ministers thereof, shall be retained and be in use as were in the Church of England, by the Authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward the VI'.

This rubric was appealed to on countless occasions by Victorian church reformers, perhaps to counteract the accusation that their alleged 'innovations' in church design, furnishings, vestments and ceremonial were tantamount to 'Popery'. In 1860 the bishop of Exeter, Henry Philpotts spoke in the House of Lords to the effect that the use of vestments during Anglican services was 'Strictly legal' (Chadwick 1966, 500). Symondson points out, it is true, that there were those whose interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric was rather too generous, and who borrowed from Roman Catholic ceremonial to enhance the authenticity of Anglian ritualism by reference to a living source rather than the dead letter (Symondson 1995, 197), but High altars, credence tables, altar candlesticks, altar crosses and vestments now became firmly established as legal ornaments and, subsequently, in the face of highly vociferous opposition (Chadwick 1966, 497) Anglican churches and Anglican clergy were furnished after 'good' medieval models adapted for use with the Prayer Book rite. This approach remained the basis of worship in all but the most extreme Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical churches in England until the last quarter of the 20th century.

The medieval parish church was believed by Victorian theoreticians to be honest, moral and beautiful and adaptable to modern worship, if purged of improper excrescences and rendered open and welcoming to all members of society. The standard of taste established by *The Ecclesiologist* in the 1840s was the 14th-century Decorated style, but the majority of the furnishings provided for these buildings were based on late-medieval models and their arrangement was determined by a pragmatic approach based upon English Church law and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.

*Colour and the use of materials*

Another aspect of Victorian church art which has been severely criticised was their use of colour and alleged insensitivity to materials. Medieval ecclesiastical buildings displayed a richness of colour and intensity of decoration which strongly appealed to Victorian designers, but which has often proved unacceptable to modern taste. Attempts by 19th-century artists to restore this quality of rich colouring to churches, through archaeological reconstruction of medieval painted schemes (as at Notre Dame le Grand at Poitiers or Saint Paul at Issoire) have not been admired by 20th-century writers. Alec Clifton-Taylor claimed that the French painted schemes ‘fill one with dismay’ (Clifton Taylor 1974, 192), and also that the encaustic tiled floors (based on medieval patterns) and mural decorations in the chancels of many English churches, the ‘gaudy metalwork’, polished marbles and alabasters in reredoses and pulpits showed ‘insensitivity’ (ibid., 11). In 1934 the authors of the Batsford guide to English Cathedrals wrote:

‘It is difficult to write adequately of the tortured ‘art metalwork’ of the screen installed by Scott (at Hereford). To its making went 11,200 lb. of iron, 5000 lb. of copper and brass, 50,000 pieces of mosaic and 300 cut stones. The result, slightly ravaged by over half a century’s wear, tear and oxidisation, is a melancholy commentary on the transience of even the most eminent taste’

(Batsford & Fry, 1938, 50).

Medieval accounts of church interiors, such as William of Malmesbury’s descriptions of Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals in the 12th century suggest that 12th-century people were impressed by size and by the costliness of the materials employed, as well as by ‘cunning workmanship’, shiny surfaces, gem stones and beautiful colours (Schapiro 1977, 14). Taste may well be transient, but Scott and Skidmore’s screen at Hereford might have been gaudy and costly enough to appeal to the medieval mind.

Whether Victorian or medieval, people often fear excess or innovation. Two contrasting accounts of medieval roods might illustrate this: poets writing of the Golden Rood of Brecon in the 15th century admired it for its enormous size and beauty as well as for its miraculous qualities and found it ‘gracious in its restfulness’ (Vallance 1947, 6). By contrast, those who visited the *crux horribilis* of Coneyhoop in London in 1305 were appalled by a newly-made rood which was so horrifying or unorthodox in appearance that it had to be removed under cover of darkness. T. A. Heslop suggests that this may have been a Gabelkreuz, a form of crucifix with upward curving arms which was popular in Italy and Germany but was evidently too much for the English (Heslop 1988, 26). Something of the same horror at apparently deliberate ugliness and ‘sadistic hatred of beauty’ appears to have stricken late 19th- and 20th-century commentators on the church architecture and furniture of William Butterfield (Clark 1928, 191). Eastlake notes a similar reaction on the part of Butterfield’s contemporaries at the construction of All Saints, Margaret Street in the 1850s:

‘Again, the tower and spire were of a shape and proportions which puzzled the antiquaries, scandalised the architects, and sent unprofessional critics to their wits end with amazement. Passers-by gazed at the iron-work of the entrance gateway, at the gables and dormers of the parsonage, at the black brick voussoirs and string courses, and asked what manner of architecture this might be, which was neither Early English, Decorated, nor Tudor, and which could properly be referred to no century but the nineteenth’.

(Eastlake 1872, 252)

The answer is, probably ‘19th-century architecture’. Taste, like everything else in human experience is mutable. Many still find Butterfield’s churches distressing because, like many artists confident in their own artistic vision and creative power, his work has an uncompromising quality that can still surprise and astonish.

#### *Developing designs: copying in Medieval and Victorian Art*

Episcopal registers, records of visitation tours and surviving correspondence between the country clergy and those in high office reveal that the way in which medieval and Victorian people sourced their designs had not significantly changed. The voice of ordinary people in the Middle Ages was not easily ‘heard’ until Wardens’ accounts were transcribed and published in sufficient quantity by the Cambridge Camden Society, diocesan architectural and record societies, or in journals such as *Notes & Queries*. These documents provide a vital source for understanding how churches were

furnished and how designs were chosen and perpetuated (Cornelius 1959, 46-7). The visitation records suggest that there were accepted standards for the furniture and equipment of parish churches. Some dioceses, like that of Exeter under Bishop Quivil, provided careful lists of the ornaments which every church should possess (Moorman 1945 229) although these do not prescribe precisely what form or appearance new furnishings should have. Nevertheless, anyone familiar with the furnishings of late-medieval churches in East Anglia or the South West will be aware of an element of standardisation in their design. It certainly appears that, by the late-medieval period, a strong perception of what a church should look like and how it should be furnished had developed.

The author is aware of no document which demonstrates that this apparent uniformity was ever formally dictated or enforced. It is most likely it was achieved simply through the exercise of taste on the part of the commissioning body. Early Wardens' accounts often show that the standard of design was established by direct reference to local examples. The craftsmen responsible for the construction of new chancel screens at Great St Mary's, Cambridge in 1523, for example, were instructed to model their work partly on the screen at Tripplow and partly on that at Gasseley, while at Stratton in Cornwall the screen and rood under construction in 1531 were to be modelled on those at no less than three local churches, St Kew, Liskeard and Week St Mary (Bond 1908, 41).

The methods by which medieval artists developed their designs were well known to 19th-century designers and were of crucial importance in determining the layout and appearance of the churches of the period. Developing designs by copying from particularly admirable examples in other churches, whether medieval or modern, was a strong characteristic of both medieval and 19th-century architectural practice but the 19th-century has been particularly criticised for this practice. The great majority of 19th-century art and architecture, whether Gothic or classic, has often been dismissed as mere copyism. In the words of Alec Clifton Taylor:

‘An example, much admired, is Sledmere in Yorkshire, built about 1898 by Temple Moore. This church...is a faultless pastiche of the Decorated style, with every detail of the finest quality. But it is a building with no life of its own: its light is the borrowed light of the fourteenth century, and it is not enough...’

(Clifton-Taylor 1974, 16).

The meticulous, archaeological study of ancient examples as an inspiration for modern design was standard practice in the 18th and 19th century, whether one was working in the Gothic or classic tradition. Books of examples of Gothic ornament such as Augustus Charles Pugin's *Specimens of*

*Gothic Architecture Selected from Various Antient Edifices in England* (1821-3) and John Henry Parker's *Introduction to Gothic Architecture* (1849) popularised the Gothic styles and illustrated their architectural development in accordance with Thomas Rickman's terminology of 'Early English', 'Decorated' and 'Perpendicular', or alternatives such as 'Early', 'Middle' and 'Late Pointed'. The study of Gothic buildings had become enormously popular, both with professionals and amateurs: Kenneth Clark commented that '...from 1800 to 1820 a flood of pamphlets shows that Gothic archaeology was a craze as widespread as relativity and far more sustained' (Clark 1972, 72).

Early Victorian architects, following Pugin's advice, learnt to design in Gothic by drawing Gothic architecture just as their classicist colleagues drew Doric temples and contemporary artists copied Old Masters. The early products of the Gothic revival were generally inspired by celebrated monuments such as Salisbury Cathedral, Eleanor crosses, and ancient mansions. Although the Old-English-picturesque approach was briefly eclipsed in the middle of the century by the excitement of continental styles, careful reference to local and regional forms of Gothic architecture returned in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the work of architects such as Bodley and Garner, Temple Moore and Ninian Comper. To describe Comper's St Cyprian's, Clarence Gate or Bodley & Garner's church of the Holy Angels at Hoar Cross as 'faultless pastiches' would be to misunderstand them completely, yet James Stevens Curl complains that many late 19th-century churches are still perceived as 'the products of copyists suffering from a terminal decline of creativity':

'Victorian churches are not, for the most part, mere copies (inaccurately referred to as 'Pastiches' by some) of medieval styles; they are often marvellously original buildings; some are frequently sublime in their scale and breathtakingly moving in their impact on the eyes and the mind'

(Stevens Curl 2002,10.).

In Devon the carefully observed regional character of late 19th- and early 20th-century church furnishings by artists like Herbert Read and Harry Hems is much admired and, in a church like Chagford, enhanced by further additions and colour by Stephen Dykes-Bower, can be the principal attraction; yet the archaeological element in early Victorian Church furniture and design is less well understood and needs further research. Many Victorian churches have collections of 19th-century furnishings modelled on medieval work either from the site, or sourced from elsewhere.

Local Architects in Devon, such as Edward Ashworth, never entirely succumbed to the orthodoxy that Perpendicular Gothic was 'debased':



Fig 40 The font at Martinhoe, derived from that at All Saints or St Mary's Leicester (RWP Martinhoe DSC0292).



Fig 41 The font at Marwood also derived from one of the two at Leicester (RWP Marwood DSC01409)..



Fig 42 The two medieval fonts from Leicester depicted on an antique print.



Fig. 43 The font at Barnstaple by Simon Rowe, 1840s, based on that at St Mary's Church, Beverley (RWP Barnstaple; St Peter DSC01884).



Fig. 44 The font at St Thomas, Exeter, By Simon Rowe, c.1842, based on the same font at Beverley (RWP Exeter; St Thomas DSC00302).



Fig. 45 Bishop Stapledon's lectern at Exeter Cathedral (RWP Exeter Cathedral; Stapledon furnishings DSC06085).



Fig. 46 H. Windsor's version of Stapledon's lectern, (1846), at Heavitree (RWP Exeter; Heavitree DSC00384).

‘The Perpendicular style is, notwithstanding the formality of its upright traceries, a good Gothic and, in comparison with Decorated.....we see nothing to despise in these windows’

(Ashworth 1848, 3; Cox, forthcoming)

Although there are interesting examples of copied designs in Devon, particularly of church furniture, none proves to be an ‘exact’ copy and it is plain that the craftsman or woman used the general design as the basis for but of their own invention. A number of baptismal fonts, for example, are ‘copies’ of famous medieval examples from Leicester (Figs 40, 41, 42) and from Beverley (Figs 43, 44). Bishop Stapledon’s eagle lectern (Fig. 45), which had been acquired by the Rev. John Medley for St Thomas’ Church, Exeter at an unknown date in the 1840s, was the inspiration for at least two Victorian lecterns, that by H Windsor at Heavitree, dated 1846 (Fig 46) and another version, subtly different, at Dunsford.

#### *Church Restoration and Conservation in the 19th century*

The derivation of new designs from authentic models and a certain degree of ‘copying’ is, of course, necessary and desirable if a church is to be honestly and ‘archaeologically’ restored, or to reflect regional styles and building methods in new buildings. The ‘humility’ of Victorian architects and their sensitivity to local context has often been overlooked (Clifton-Taylor 1974, 11). Few modern commentators have believed the claims of G.G. Scott, J.L. Pearson and others to be careful and conscientious conservation architects, yet the evidence is that the 19th-century architectural establishment had already developed high standards of conservation, admittedly in reaction to early mistakes, long before the vociferous and, some might argue, hypocritical, campaign against architectural professionals and commercial church furnishers led from 1877 by William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (Branfoot, 2004).

Two papers by Chris Miele, ‘Their interest and habit’: professionalism and the restoration of medieval churches, 1837-77’ in *The Victorian Church* (Brooks & Saint 1995, 134-172) and ‘Re-Presenting the Church Militant: The Camden Society, Church Restoration and the Gothic Sign’ in *A Church as it Should Be* (Webster & Elliott 2000, 257-294) explore the development of Victorian architectural conservation and the foundation in 1862, by the Royal Institute of British Architects, of ‘The Committee on the Conservation of Ancient Monuments’. Given that the architectural establishment had already founded such a body by 1862, Ruskin’s refusal of the RIBA gold medal in 1874 in protest against Restoration seems petulant. Miele’s papers also explore the tendency of

SPAB-style conservation to arrest the development of a building, completely, and forever, transforming a living and evolving fabric unequivocally into a monument (Miele 1995, 170).

*Symbolism and Morality in Gothic architecture*

One medieval document of crucial importance for 19th-century ecclesiologists, but perhaps of less significance for the design and furnishing of medieval churches, was the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* of Bishop William Durandus of Mende, a 13th-century work which sought to outline the symbolism inherent in the fabric of churches and their furnishings. A translation of the first part of this work, brought out for the Ecclesiological Society by J.M. Neale and B. Webb in 1843, is reported to have set the clergy and laity in a rage to interpret the secret meanings of their churches:

‘enthusiastic amateurs took to counting the piers of the nave and measuring the chancel floor, involved themselves in wonderful calculations as to the ancient use of the mystic numbers 3 and 7 and, figuratively speaking, when they wanted an inch they not unfrequently [sic] took an ell’

(Eastlake 1872, 233).

Whether medieval churches really embodied such specific symbolic meanings may have been doubted by Eastlake, but he and almost all other Victorian architectural theorists were convinced of the inherent morality of medieval art, and that this made medievalism the most appropriate framework for Christian worship. The arguments set out by theoreticians such as Augustus Welby Pugin in *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) and John Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) need not be repeated here, but it is important to remember that the quality of ‘truth’ in Gothic architecture was important to the Victorians in a way it no longer is to us.

**Modern Academic Studies of 19th-century Churches and their furniture**

Twentieth-century reassessment and reappraisal of Victorian art and architecture, in works such as Kenneth Clark’s *The Gothic revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (1928) and Chris Brooks’ *The Gothic revival*, has sought to set 19th-century Gothic in its broader historical and artistic context as an expression of Romanticism. Brooks explores the origin of the Gothic revival in 17th- and 18th-century concepts of freedom from tyranny (Brooks 1999, 38, 53) and also the character of 18th-

and early 19th-century Gothic as a reaction against the republican virtues and civic order of classicism (ibid., 110). He explores the world of sublime unreason and terror created by 18th and early 19th-century 'Gothic novelists' as though this was integral with medievalism and points out that, as the architectural revival declined towards the end of the 19th century, there was a second flourishing of 'Gothic' literature in the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, Montague Rhodes James and others. Brooks identifies a continuation of this 'Gothic' genre into the 20th century in horror movies and punk rock (ibid., 410-419).

Modern writers have tended to emphasise the sublime rather than the radical and utopian character of Gothic. Even for some of its apologists, Gothic architecture remains unavoidably associated with ruins, screech owls, tombs, chaos, madness and melancholy. It is therefore regarded as inherently countercultural, perverse, or at least less rational than other forms of architecture. It is the present writer's contention that the themes of 'Gothic horror' identified by 20th-century writers are irrelevant to the Victorian revival of medieval art. There is little evidence that 19th-century architects and theoreticians were interested in these lurid associations; on the contrary, they seem to have sought to build an architecture characterised by honesty and integrity and a society based on social responsibility and justice.

One of the earliest serious academic studies of 19th-century church furniture was Peter F. Anson's *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840-1940* (1960), which remains the seminal work on the subject. Anson's survey of the controversies and achievements of 19th-century ecclesiastical art crosses denominational boundaries and sets the subject in its human context with line drawings inhabited by clergy and laymen and women in contemporary costume. Clergy in fiddleback chasubles are shown celebrating High Mass before immense Baroque altars (Anson 1960, 321); a Presbyterian preaching platform is depicted crowded with a huddle of bentwood or straw-bottomed chairs (ibid., 358). Anson concludes with a plea for understanding and tolerance of unfashionable church furnishings which should be repeated today:

'Looking back over a hundred years of the ecclesiastical décor dealt with in these pages, let us treat its many phases with the respect they deserve. We have no right to dismiss the taste of our parents and grandparents, even if we cannot help being amused at it sometimes. Our grandchildren are likely to be equally ribald about our supposed 'good taste' and enlightened ideas.'

(Anson 1965, 366-7).

During the 1970s and 80s academic research on Victorian church architecture and restoration began to be undertaken on a regional basis. Among the first initiatives of this kind was the ‘Devon 19th-Century Churches Project’ undertaken by Chris Brooks, Martin Cherry and Jo Cox between 1976 and 2000.

A similar survey was undertaken in Leicestershire and Rutland by Geoff Brandwood, entitled *Church Building and Restoration in Leicestershire 1800-1914* and submitted as a PhD thesis at the University of Leicester in 1984. Brandwood examined the condition of churches in the area prior to their 19th-century restoration, using churchwardens’ accounts and records of rural deans’ visitations to show that the traditionally accepted picture of Georgian neglect and decay was overstated, probably as a result of 19th-century ecclesiological propaganda. Brandwood examined the layout of church interiors to show how the positions and styles of their furnishings changed during the period and researched how architects were chosen and how money was raised for the restorations and church expansion programmes of the period in both urban and rural areas. Brandwood concluded that Leicestershire was in most respects an ‘average’ county in terms of wealth and churchmanship. He argues that the pattern of church building and restoration identified in his thesis, with a blossoming of church projects in the heyday of the Gothic revival between 1840 and 1870 and then a gradual decline in the last quarter of the century, during which period a greater variety of architectural styles were employed, may accurately reflect the national picture. Brandwood’s survey was the first of its kind to be undertaken and has been published as *Bringing Them to their Knees: Church Building and Restoration in Leicestershire 1800-1914* (2002). Brandwood argued that comparable projects would need to be undertaken in other regions to confirm his conclusions.

Since Brandwood’s survey three similar projects have been undertaken and submitted as PhD theses at British Universities: *Victorian Church Building and Restoration in the Diocese of Norwich* by E. Baty (1987); *Victorian Church Building and Restoration in the Diocese of York, With Special Reference to the Archdeaconry of Cleveland* by G.R. Drewery (1993) and *Church Building and Restoration in Victorian Glamorgan* by G. R. Orrin (1999). A project with a broader remit, the Southwell and Nottinghamshire Churches Project, undertaken by John Beckett, Janice Avery and Andrew Abbott of the University of Nottingham is currently still in progress as at July 2019. This project has already produced a website with interactive maps and a database of information about local churches. (<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/main/habout.php> Accessed July 18, 2019).

In 2005 English Heritage held a Conference at Lydiard Tregoze, Wiltshire, with the title ‘To Pew or Not to Pew - Is this the Question?’ Six speakers addressed the delegates on the subject

of church seating and the current trend for church reordering. A report of the proceedings written by Stuart Blaylock for the Devon Buildings Group noted that English Heritage and Diocesan Advisory Committees assume that there will be a presumption against the loss or significant alteration of medieval or pre-ecclesiastical furnishing schemes, but that Victorian furnishing schemes may be far more easily sacrificed. The basic criteria for establishing significance of 19th-century seating schemes include the following: whether they are integral with the building, whether they form part of a comprehensive scheme or are of a distinctive type, whether the craftsmen or designers are known and whether they make a significant contribution to the quality of the interior. Blaylock summed up the current situation as follows:

‘there is no national overview on or detailed knowledge of pews and their development; and none of the following is accurately known: the date and distribution of the main types; the popularity of given types at different dates and their use by different designers, the distribution of restorations by date on a national basis; the rate, scale and pattern of loss.

Geoff Brandwood’s study of pews in Leicestershire and Rutland only served to highlight the potential, and the dangers of error, by extrapolating from this one (relatively well understood) part of the country to others, where the situation is unknown or poorly understood. What Brandwood has done for Leicestershire and Rutland needs doing for the whole country and there is not really any useful short cut. In the meantime, decisions are being made without an accurate basis for determining scarcity (or, for that matter, ubiquity) and therefore on the basis of ignorance and assumption, rather than of knowledge’

(Blaylock 2005, 25)

Since 2005 many re-ordering schemes have been proposed in Devon and elsewhere. A number of archaeological assessments of church seating have been carried out by Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants, including surveys of 19th-century seating schemes in Somerset at Bridgwater (Keystone K742, 2006) and Wiveliscombe (Keystone K737, 2006); and in Devon at Bratton Fleming (Keystone K767, 2009) and Whimble (Cox 2009, 6-15). These reports reflect another criterion for judging significance: completeness. It is easier to justify the retention of a furnishing scheme if it remains essentially as designed. If, on the other hand, it has been compromised by later alterations, it is easy to argue that further alteration or total refurnishing is justifiable. But, where now is the place of the palimpsest, the church which has organically changed over time?

Keystone's four reports reveal the surprising extent to which even Victorian interiors have been altered and reconfigured in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to accommodate side chapels, organs, enlarged choir stalls, all without significant visual disturbance to the 19th-century appearance and atmosphere of the church. In the writer's experience, modern re-ordering schemes do not promise to be so sensitive.

Three recent schemes in Devon have proposed reordering of churches with complete, numbered sets of late-medieval or early Renaissance benches<sup>14</sup>. In East Devon one church proposes the removal of a 19th-century stone rood screen and all its seating<sup>15</sup>. Another church near Exeter is currently discussing the removal of a medieval rood screen and a complex 19th-century seating scheme with more than three phases of distinctive and high-quality carved furniture<sup>16</sup>. In Dartmouth a complete 19th-century interior by a distinguished local architect has been entirely removed<sup>17</sup>, and the parish are now fundraising for a modern altar and choir stalls to replace the discarded Victorian furniture, though this had been in use up to the time of their reordering and might conceivably have remained in use afterwards had it been retained as part of the new scheme, while continuing to contribute historic value and continuity to the interior.

These examples are only a few of many. It is clear that not even the strongest and most conservation minded Diocesan Advisory Committee will be able to, or perhaps even desire to, resist this level of pressure for change for long.

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<sup>14</sup> East Budleigh, Stoke-by-Hartland and Braunton. The latter scheme was only partially achieved after a fire. Benches removed from Stoke-by-Hartland are currently kept in storage.

<sup>15</sup> Since this passage was written all the benches and parts of the choir stalls at this church, Uplyme, have indeed been removed, and the raising of the floor levels in the gallery, which was occupied as a creche, have rendered this area almost unusable as the parapets are now too low for safety. The church now seek to spend more money raising the gallery fronts to compensate for their previous works: a good illustration of how change can be cumulative and have unexpectedly awkward consequences

<sup>16</sup> The historic seating at Alphington has now been removed, but the rood screen and choir stalls have, for the moment, been suffered to remain.

<sup>17</sup> St Clement's, Townstall, restored in 1881-5 by Edward Ashworth.



Fig. 47 The rood screen at Sandford, a Great War memorial, as removed out of its historic and liturgical context to the east end of the chancel, creating an awkward and unusable space which is now used for storing lumber (RWP Sandford DSC09380).

The wholesale removal of church furnishings as a consequence of well-meant modern re-ordering, is often based on assumptions as to the ‘historical significance’ or not of the furnishings in question. These values may vary from site to site and over time, and what is relatively ordinary or insignificant now may very well become extremely rare in future. Every building tells its own story, and too often, re-ordering can accidentally remove the last remaining evidence of older seating and craft techniques, preserved in an apparently commonplace interior, and thus obscure the historic development of a church and the changing liturgical interests and practice of its people.

In the author’s experience, many churchgoers today are ambivalent about the Victorian and Edwardian legacy - either taking it completely for granted, or perhaps in deliberate flight from it. Nevertheless, much of their experience of church life will still be framed and shaped by the achievements, ideals and controversies of the 19th century, not least because so much of the physical legacy of 19th-century religious life still surrounds us. Traditional forms of religion, perhaps best characterised as Philip Larkin’s ‘vast moth-eaten musical brocade, created to pretend we didn’t die’ (Larkin 1977, *Aubade*) are still a powerful influence on our daily lives whether or not we accept or reject them and, as times change and the monumental edifice of ‘traditional religion’ is perhaps perceived to be faltering, failing and passing away, its sudden absence from our lives — the re-purposing of its all too solid fabric as coffee shops, karate halls and antique centres — may be disconcerting even for those who have never participated in it. As we become, inevitably, more remote from and less familiar with the attitudes and behaviours of our ancestors and the foundations they tried to lay for a future society, the time and energy they invested in these things becomes perplexing.

The failure to understand the meaning and significance of historic fabric is one of the main factors in the continuing loss of important buildings and furnishings. Changing religious attitudes can easily lead to iconoclasm. This is clearly shown in some early 19th-century examples where objects that had survived through the Reformation and the Commonwealth through either indifference or ignorance were suddenly discovered to have Sacramental functions that were either unacceptable or horrific to their contemporary users. Wall paintings, piscinae and credence tables were sometimes removed — or their insertion in new churches resisted — as unsuitable for a Protestant church (EFP 27.04.1854; 18.05.1854). This endowment of inanimate objects with negative qualities, when those objects are medieval, seems outrageous today, but Victorian buildings and their furnishings remain subject to these kinds of prejudice.

Rood Screens in particular are highly controversial objects which are often regarded as an unacceptable encumbrance to modern worship. The idea of a ‘barrier’ between the clergy and the people is particularly difficult today. The prevalence of ‘nave altars’, in accordance with modern

Roman practice, to the west of chancel screens, and the removal of the screens to the west end (as is currently proposed at Seaton, and has already been undertaken at St Michael's Honiton) or to the extreme east end (as at Sandford (Fig 34), or as recently proposed at Alphington) show a degree of discomfort with the 'traditional' layout of churches in the modern age, which seems to be rooted in perceptions of 'social order' as well as access to the Sacraments. Because the liturgical and didactic functions of the rood screen have been side-lined by modern liturgies which seek to be inclusive, they have been forgotten, and furnishings that were intended to emphasise the sacredness of the chancel and the importance of preparation before receiving the Sacrament, are now seen as an encumbrance, a relic of a social division between the people and the clergy. They have been allowed to lose their liturgical meaning and therefore they have become lumber, to be repositioned as ornaments, draught screens, or dispensed with altogether, where the Diocesan Advisory Committee will allow.

These negative attitudes are having a detrimental effect on the archaeological resource. It is evident from faculty petitions and requests for advice from the Diocesan Advisory Committees that many church committees and clergy regard their historic buildings and their furnishings as a hindrance to mission and as an embarrassing legacy of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. This is particularly true of Victorian churches. Although unrestored medieval or Georgian churches are often highly valued and cherished, buildings with an overtly 'Victorian' character are regarded as 'spoiled', or inherently riddled with unnatural social divisions and inequality. They must therefore be purged or, de-Victorianised in order to make the Church appealing and accessible to new generations. This is a complete misunderstanding of the aims and intentions of the Victorian religious revival, and this new 'Reformation' is likely to be as destructive of significant artefacts and intangible values as that of the 16th century.

For an institution which bases its philosophy and its practice on Scriptures first recorded in the 1st century and before, and which were forged into Canon in the dying days of the Roman Empire — for an institution which still attempts to enforce the logic of late-Antique and Medieval Theology on 21st-century people— to fail to understand or deliberately reject the physical evidence of its interactions with its people, both good and bad, over two millennia, is a wiffully ignorant and philistine stance for the Church to adopt.



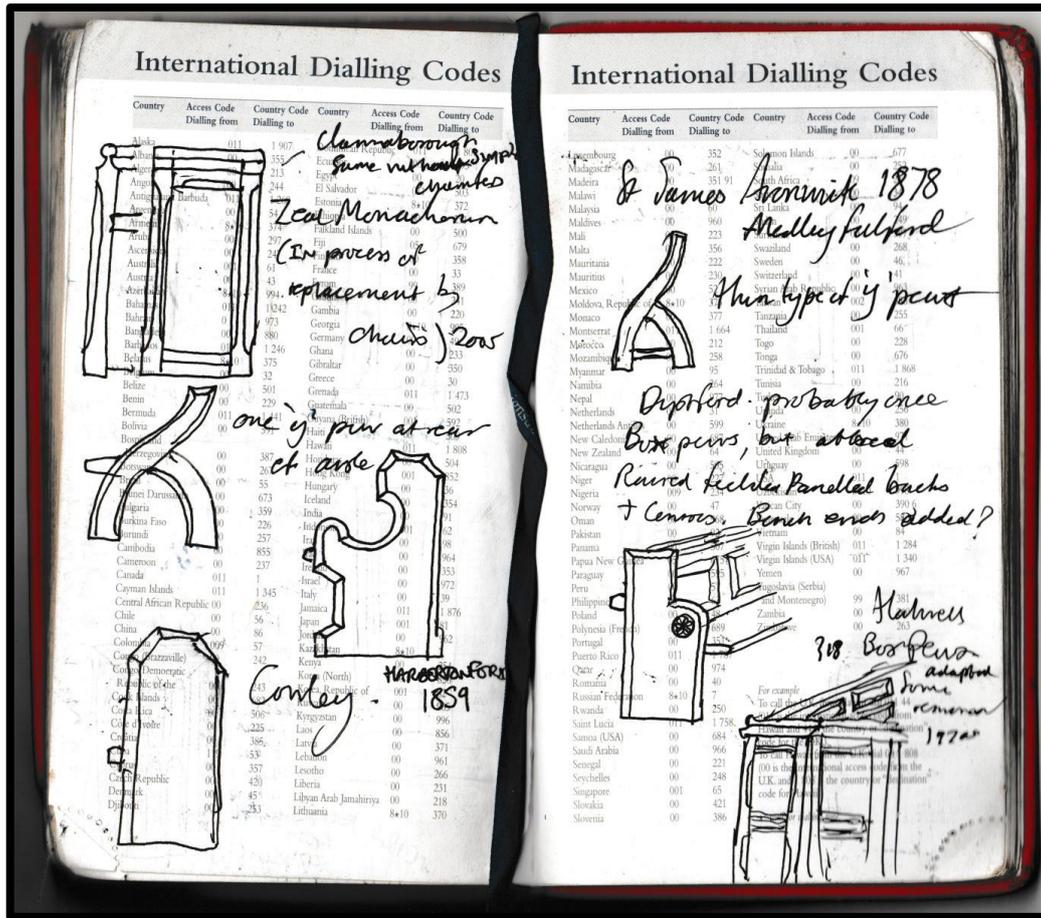


Fig. 48 Extract from the author’s 2005 diary showing sketch drawings of benches and seating material in Devon churches made at the very beginning of the project.

**CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

‘Further progress has been made in the preparation of the Society’s “Rough Notes” and another sheet is to be laid on the table today, and is ready for distribution to members’

(TEDAS Quarterly Report, July 8, 1848).

*‘Cultural significance’*

This ‘cultural myth’ of the parish church that has survived so long and so well is now regarded as a fragile thing and one very much at risk. Like the apparently timeless, but now almost unrecognisable, life of the rural community, historic churches are under pressure for change, and this change is seen in many circles as inevitable and even desirable. The atmosphere of ‘long use and quiet, slow decay’ is no longer enough; churches must find new rôles and new functions if they are to survive and must adapt themselves to the perceived ‘liturgical and mission needs of the

21st century' (Chadwick 2008, 2). Ironically, justification for change is found in an appeal to history. The church must be changed because it always has changed:

'Government policy in relation to historic buildings has long been that the best use for any historic building is that for which it is designed. This is perhaps especially true of church buildings, which are so obviously designed for a specific purpose. But the needs of worshipping communities inevitably change over years and centuries. Most bodies dealing with conservation, however, from DACs (Diocesan Advisory Committees) to the National Amenity Societies, recognise that it is far better for a building to be kept in use, loved and maintained, if necessary, with some adaptation, than to be unchanged but unable to fulfil its function.'

(The Church of England Church Care website:  
'Balancing Conservation and Mission')

Alteration and adaptation of historic churches is thus to be undertaken within certain limits aimed at preserving the cultural myth of the church intact, thus allowing us to have our cake and eat it. Unfortunately, the stated aim of many modern re-ordering teams is 'to...speak of light and beauty, simplicity and space' (Chadwick 2008, 2); these are minimalist ideals which, it may safely be assumed, are in direct conflict with the character of most Victorian interiors and, perhaps, with the character of a typical English Church in almost any historic period. Preserving any of the traditional furnishings and atmosphere of a church in this context seems improbable.

As a result of this pressure to reorder churches to accommodate a wider range of activities, church furnishings, particularly seating, are now at serious risk of wholesale destruction. Victorian furnishings are particularly vulnerable. The threat has perhaps been most clearly expressed by Sir Roy Strong, speaking at the Gresham College Special Lecture, at St Paul's Cathedral on the 30th of May 2007. Strong expressed a desire to 'Take an axe and hatchet the utterly awful kipper-coloured choir stalls and pews' in order to free church interiors for more flexible forms of worship and for community use. This aggression towards Victorian furnishings might be understood as a legitimate development in the long history of change and community involvement in the creation of the parish church, but it is also, perhaps, a risky policy when so little is known in detail of 19th-century church furnishing schemes, of their typologies, the sources of their design, their manufacturers and the meanings they had for those who commissioned them and used them and also, perhaps, of those parishioners who continue, week in and week out, to maintain, clean and use them.

Understanding the character and significance of an archaeological resource is an essential preliminary for its preservation and future management. The concept of ‘Cultural Significance’ has been a major consideration in the determination of approaches to the management of heritage sites and monuments since it was identified by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in the Venice Charter (1964). Its centrality to the conservation process has been recognised worldwide since the publication of the ICOMOS Burra Charter (1979; revised 1999) which defined the concept of cultural significance as the ‘aesthetic, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations’ embodied within a place, not only in its physical fabric, but in its use, associations and meanings (Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999). The charter introduced the principle that the significance of a site should be identified by, and informed by, the views of those groups directly involved in its use and management, to whom these associations and meanings would, or should, be evident (Zancheti *et al.* 2009, 47).

The significance of a place can only be assessed, and its meanings and values perpetuated for the future if the circumstances of and motives for its creation and transformation over time are fully understood and placed within the wider context of similar places. It is manifest that the determination of the meanings, aesthetic, social and spiritual values of a place are subjective; that these qualities are attributed, rather than inherent in a site, and that they will be interpreted differently by different sections of a community. They are also likely to change over time. Critiques of the Burra Charter have argued that it is necessary not only to constantly upgrade or review assessments of cultural significance in order to accommodate potentially changing values but also to recognise values from the past which are no longer understood by the current stakeholders (Zancheti *et al.* 2009, 49, 50).

For some prehistoric or undocumented sites, or those for which perceived values and meanings may overlap or conflict, this may be considered a serious problem. Without knowledge of a place at the same time both wide-ranging and highly detailed, it is easy to see that those responsible for defining its significance might fail to acknowledge meanings and values which are no longer current, or those held by other groups, such as casual visitors, whose associations with the place are intangible and rarely recorded (Halsey 2012, 44-5).

#### *Determining the significance of churches*

Since January 2001 Faculty Jurisdiction Rules determined by British Government and approved by the General Synod of the Church of England have required that churches seeking to make changes to a listed building in their care should submit a ‘Statement of Significance’ as part of their application for a faculty (Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000. Part II, Section 3.3(a)). This document is

expected to summarise the development of the building and identify the importance of those features which contribute to its character. Significance is to be assessed, by the applicant, on a suggested scale ranging through ‘High’, ‘Moderate-High’, ‘Moderate’ and ‘Low-Moderate’ to ‘Low’ (Church Buildings Council 2011, *Statements of Significance — Guidance for Parishes*). The applicant is also required by the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules to submit a ‘Statement of Need’, explaining the necessity for any proposed changes (*ibid.*, 2011, *Statements of Need — Guidance for Parishes*). Statements of Significance and Need are recognised as inadequate for that group of churches identified as ‘Major Churches’. Major Churches are defined through their ancient status, architectural importance (recognised by their Grade I or II\* Listed status), their relationship to archaeological sites and the extent of their outreach and mission to different and wider communities ‘which may potentially be a source of conflict’. Those responsible for these places are required to produce ‘Conservation Management Plans’ (Church Buildings Council 2012 *Conservation Management Plans — Guidance for Major Churches*).

These documents are intended as an essential tool for informing consultation, to help both the applicant parish, the Chancellor of the Diocese, Diocesan Advisory Committees and others involved in the faculty process to understand an historic place as an ‘heritage asset’ and balance the perceived need for changes against the potential impact of the proposed alterations upon the character of that asset.

#### *Problems with this process*

Ideally the statement of significance or management plan would be prepared objectively, by a professional consultant with no agenda for or against change. In reality, in the author’s experience, these documents tend to be prepared by the parishes and, perhaps understandably, too often the Statement of Significance is coloured by the Statement of Need and driven by desire for change. The Diocesan Advisory Committee may feel obliged to bow to the pressure from parishes and the Chancellor for change as a matter of pastoral need, which is often presented as a matter of ‘life or death’ for the parish.

Continuity of use for Christian worship and a wealth of surviving physical and documentary evidence might be assumed to provide a firm basis for understanding the significance of churches. It is arguable, however, that without more detailed knowledge of comparable places Parochial Church Committees and diocesan officers will find it difficult to be truly objective in their conclusions. Given the scale of prejudice against 19th-century furnishings it is not difficult to see how the work of architects, patrons, craftsmen and congregations of this period could easily

be sacrificed without a proper understanding of the values and meanings they were intended to convey.

The Burra Charter argued that cultural significance was ‘best understood by a sequence of collecting and analysing information, before making decisions’ (Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999, article 6.1). In the appended guidelines, it is observed that the collected information should include ‘the rarity and/or technical interest of all or any part of a place’, the ‘cultural influences which have affected the form and fabric of a place’, the ways ‘in which its fabric has been influenced by historical forces’, and also ‘the relationship of the place to other places, for example in respect of design, technology, use, locality or origin’ (Burra Charter Guidelines, section 3.2: c, f, h, j). The current state of knowledge of the development, typologies, meanings and values of 19th-century church interiors is demonstrably inadequate in this respect. Until sufficient background information is available to enable useful comparisons between one church and another, it is unlikely that any body, professional or otherwise, can be expected to arrive at an objective assessment of the significance of a church and its furnishings.

### **How does the research methodology address these issues?**

This thesis attempts to address this inadequacy through a comparative study of the physical fabric and furnishings in Devon. The work examines the ways in which churches in Devon were remodelled and reinvented during the 19th and early 20th centuries to reflect changing social and economic factors, the popularity (or otherwise) of contemporary architectural theories and the effects of an increased interest in archaeology and ancient liturgies upon a large diocese characterised by diverse economies and contrasted urban and rural environments.

This research has been focussed on the primary archaeological resource, the physical fabric of churches, through direct observation of the buildings and their furnishings. The research involved extensive fieldwork; as far as possible, every extant Anglican church in Devon which was in existence before 1940 has been visited and photographed to create a detailed pictorial inventory of the archaeological resource. This archive was then complemented by documentary research and the production of a database recording and presenting basic information about each church.

Although intended to be wide-ranging, the research is far from exhaustive; the aim is the collection of a sufficient level of data to show which architectural forms and layouts are unusual in the area, which are commonplace, and how church provision was promoted, implemented and realised in the county.

The work is intended as a contribution to the field of research begun by Brandwood (Brandwood 1984, *Church Building and Restoration in Leicestershire 1800-1914*) and others and aims to build towards a better understanding of the national picture of change and activity during the century. It is also hoped that the findings of this research, if further disseminated, might assist those engaged in managing churches to make better-informed decisions about the future of church buildings in the diocese, both as archaeological resources and as ‘plant’ enabling future worship and mission.

### **Scope of the thesis**

#### *Date range (1800-1939)*

The date range of the study extends from c.1800 to the beginning of the Second World War. This allows comparison of church-building and restoration schemes characteristic of the 17th and 18th centuries with those produced following the Acts of Parliament of 1803 and 1818. Early buildings can then be instructively contrasted with churches built under the influence of the Cambridge Camden Society after the 1830s and 40s. After the Second World War modernist ideologies and liturgical fashions introduced by the ‘Liturgical Movement’ in the Roman Catholic Church, and more informal styles of worship based on those of Pentecostal churches, began to influence Anglican liturgical planning and changed the focus of contemporary liturgy. These new forms are not to the same extent inspired by the archaeology, historic fabric and liturgical traditions of English churches and thus lie outside the scope of this study.

#### *Geographical extent*

Previous studies in this research field have covered either whole counties or whole dioceses. Brandwood’s 1984 thesis covered Leicestershire and Rutland; Orrin’s 1999 thesis, Glamorganshire; Baty’s 1987 thesis covered the Diocese of Norwich and Drewery’s 1993 thesis the Diocese of York and the Archdeaconry of Cleveland. A diocese remains the principal administrative body of the Church of England in any particular locality and its officers develop policies, both fiscal and procedural, which can affect all the churches under its government. Each English diocese is divided into Archdeaconries and Deaneries, and both Archdeacons and Deans Rural are required to make regular ‘visitations’ to inspect the fabric and furnishings of churches to ensure they are properly maintained and served.

Alterations to churches have historically been controlled by the Faculty System administered by the Chancellor of the diocese. The influence of an Archdeacon or Rural dean

over the churches under his or her authority remains one of the most likely ways in which the tastes, convictions and prejudices common in the wider Church might be imposed upon or a larger group of parishes with, perhaps, very different ideas of appropriate furniture and maintenance. The system of Clerical Freehold having been largely replaced since 2011 with Common Tenure seems to have had the effect that clergy move from parish to parish rather faster than they did when they had the freehold, with the beneficial effect, perhaps, that churches no longer stagnate, but with the disadvantage that clergy sometimes feel pressed to make changes quickly without awareness of, or perhaps in spite of, local sensitivities.

Pastoral reorganisations of church provision devised on a diocesan level can have consequences for all the churches of a region, leading to church closures and regroupings which, though designed to reflect modern patterns of mission, more often reflect temporal economic difficulties. As an example of the potential for diocesan policy to have unanticipated negative results for future mission, Richard Halsey cites a document devised by the diocese of Lincoln in 1968, entitled *Into Tomorrow*, which, when implemented ‘shut so many churches in villages that have now expanded’ (Halsey 2012, 54).

An example of diocesan policy which seems consciously devised as an attack on historic interiors is the ‘Take-a-Pew’ scheme formerly operating in the diocese of Hereford; a collaboration between the diocese, the County Council and a charity named ‘EnviroAbility’ (Fig. 50). This scheme removes historic seating from churches for sale to private individuals, boasting that: ‘If you are looking for a unique piece of antique furniture, adapted to fit your home, we have many styles to offer you, each one a little bit of history!’ (‘Take a Pew - From His House to Yours’ <http://www.enviroability.org.uk>). This officially-sanctioned redistribution of church furnishings clearly comes at considerable cost to the historic integrity of the individual churches and has the potential to obscure the pattern of development of Herefordshire churches as a whole.

Since policies affecting churches and their furnishings are made at diocesan level it is felt appropriate that this study of Devon churches and their furnishings should cover, as far as possible, the modern diocese of Exeter. The diocese is very nearly co-terminous with the County of Devon, representing only a part of the area of the ancient diocese, which formerly included Devon, Cornwall and Scilly, plus some areas now within Dorset and Somerset. Large parts of the ancient diocese were annexed to the diocese of Truro at its foundation in 1876, and other, smaller areas have since been transferred to neighbouring dioceses. To cover the whole of the ancient diocese would have been impracticable and it has been decided to restrict the study to the general area of the existing diocese and those parishes which, though no longer in the diocese of Exeter, remain within the county of Devon. Even with this restriction, the area is still a very large one.

(Fig. 49). In 2008 the diocese of Exeter had 618 functioning churches, the vast majority of which occupy ancient church buildings of either medieval or post-medieval origin. Several churches have since closed due to parish reorganisation and a few, numbering less than thirty, are 20th-century foundations whose buildings and furnishings lie outside the date range of this study. Many rural and urban churches are now under serious threat of closure and it is unlikely that this image of continuity can be much longer sustained. There have already been significant losses in the towns, particularly in Exeter and Plymouth, where wartime bombing and the relocation of church provision to the suburbs has taken a considerable toll of historic churches. These lost or closed buildings (approximately 70 in number) are nonetheless essential to the broader picture and they should not be omitted from this study if a full picture of activity in the area is to be achieved.

### *Omissions*

In order to restrict the scale of the study to a manageable size, not only areas of the historic diocese have to be omitted, but also the churches of non-conformist groups, including Methodists, Baptists, Brethren and Roman Catholics. Although these groups are of vital importance in the study of 19th-century religious life and will be mentioned and illustrated where appropriate, the sheer range and number of non-conformist buildings would inevitably preclude their inclusion as part of this study.

Stained glass is also omitted from the study, both on the grounds of space and because a detailed study aiming to record and interpret every 19th-century stained glass window in Devon is currently being undertaken by David Cook (Cook, forthcoming).

Monuments also tend to be added to church interiors on an ad hoc basis, as private initiatives, and though there are many early Gothic-revival monuments of exceptional interest the design and positioning of which is highly important in the development of the Gothic vocabulary by craftsmen and women, they cannot be studied in much detail here for reasons of space.

A study of historic organs and organ builders also exists for the county (Browne 2015). Their significance for this thesis lies in their association singing galleries, or with chancel-based choirs patterned on those of English cathedrals. Therefore, although it is important to record the position of the organ within the building, the specifications and other details of the instrument are not significant for the purposes of this thesis.

Bells in Devon have also been subject to a separate study by the late John Scott (Scott, *et al.* 2007). These fixtures were not so subject to reinvention as a result of ecclesiological reform or archaeological influence in the 19th century. The increasing use of national rather than local bell founders during the period and advances in bell technology such as the introduction of metal bell

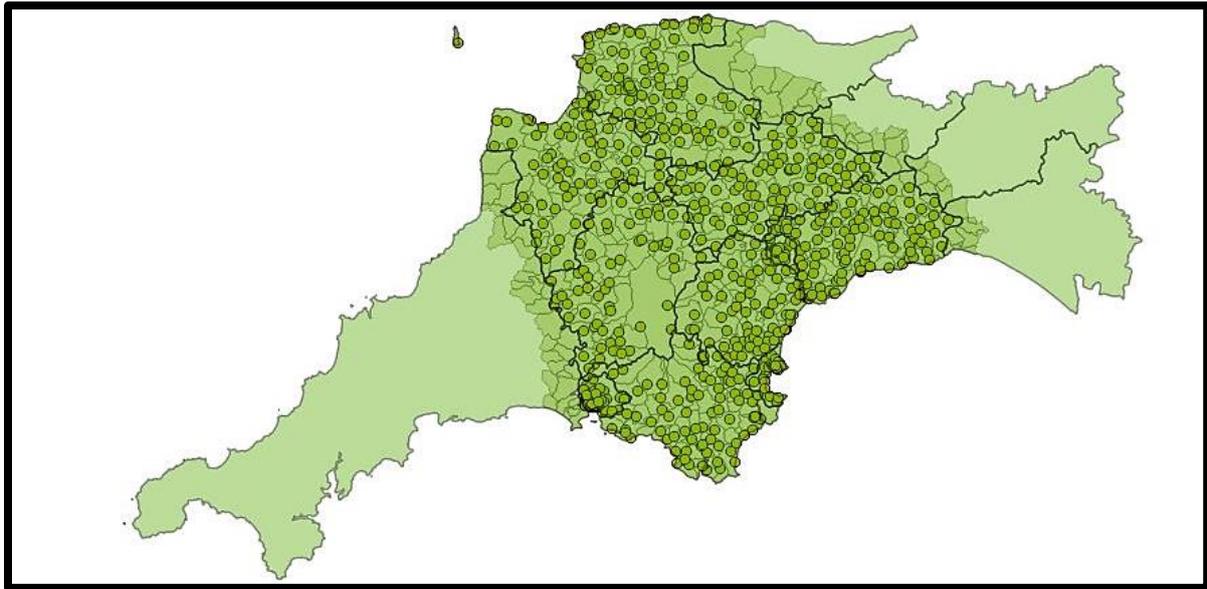


Fig. 49 The county of Devon, showing the positions of the churches surveyed during the project, the historic parish boundaries and the modern administrative areas. Map devised by Guy Collins (see appendix II, page 381).

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

- ▼ **EnviroAbility**
- ▼ **Book Swap Shop**
- ▼ **Kyrle Enterprises**
- ▼ **Shop Mobility**
- ▶ **Take-A-Pew**
  - About
  - News
  - Churches
  - Customers
  - Pews For Sale
  - Contact Us
- ▼ **The Can Do Crew**
- ▼ **Ecominds**
- ▼ **Sir Grow-A-Lot**
- ▼ **Completed Projects**

[Links to Other Sites](#)

***Take-A-Pew*** is a unique church pew recycling service based in Herefordshire. If you represent a church looking to dispose of redundant pews, we can help you, and raise some cash too. If you are looking for a unique piece of antique furniture, adapted to fit your home, we have many styles to offer you, each one a little bit of history!

The ***Take-A-Pew*** scheme was established as a Partnership between The Diocese of Herefordshire Churches, Herefordshire Council Social Services, and ***EnviroAbility*** which manages and facilitates the scheme.

The workforce includes adults from disadvantaged groups and people with disabilities who are trained and competent in the skills required to process pews.

The basis of the Partnership is that of mutual benefit for the three parties based on:

- Work experience and paid work activities for people with learning difficulties and skilled support for these service users,
- The donor Church receiving a fair financial return for their pews, and benefiting from the work carried out on their behalf by the other partners,
- The ***Take-A-Pew*** scheme itself receiving a fair financial return for their involvement: all ***EnviroAbility*** revenues from the scheme are used for this and other projects allowing us to help more disadvantaged groups.

Fig. 50 Extract from the Enviroability website advertising the Take a Pew Scheme for recycling 'redundant' or unwanted church furniture: 'Take a Pew- From His House to Yours!' (<http://www.enviroability.org.uk> Accessed 25.04.2013).



frames, are noted by Scott (*ibid.*, 36). Bells are also difficult of access and cannot normally be inspected on a casual visit to a church. Clocks and church plate are also omitted from this study for this reason.

### **Provenance of the methodology**

The method for data collection used in this thesis is based upon two main procedures, one antique and the other very modern. The first is the recording and presentation of data on standardised recording forms with the aim of producing a database allowing the analysis of the data. The second is the rapid capture of a detailed visual record of the churches using modern digital photography.

#### *The use of church recording forms for data capture*

The use of standardised recording forms for the recording and comparative study of churches probably originates with the ‘Church Schemes’ promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society from the middle of the 19th century (Fig. 51). Their use is explained in *A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Architecture and Antiquities* (Neale, 1839). These ‘schemes’ encouraged the rapid recording of churches by volunteers, using a check-list to show the presence or absence of features, the dimensions of parts of the building and brief descriptions of the character of the church, its furnishings and its condition. The schemes were intended to ‘assist and corroborate’ the recording of churches in sketches, and to encourage the description of the ‘less valuable’ details of churches which might otherwise escape notice (Webster 2003, 86). This kind of recording scheme has the advantage of ensuring, as far as possible, a relatively comprehensive coverage of the church interior.

Similar recording sheets were used by the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society. These, entitled *Rough Notes (for Correction)*, were intended to complement sketches held by the Society in their scrapbook (now in the Devon and Exeter Institution). They were published and distributed as large single sheets, featuring many churches, indexed by Deanery, no doubt in the hope of attracting further information and feedback from enthusiasts. Both of these types of record were utilised as much to record neglect or liturgical impropriety as the details and suggested dating of buildings; they have formed an important source for this study.

Rodwell cites modern church recording schemes undertaken by this method in Essex, part of Yorkshire and the dioceses of Wakefield, Bradford and Southwell from the 1970s (Rodwell 1989, 52-5). He also cites the Council for British Archaeology ‘Urban Churches Survey’ and similar

surveys by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. This latter organisation later moved away from the use of a *pro forma* for church recording, towards the production of a ‘structured narrative account’ of each church (Rodwell 1989, 60). Brandwood also employed specially devised church recording forms during his research on the churches of Leicestershire and Rutland in the 1980s. (Brandwood 1984, 6; Appendix 9). The front of the form allowed the recording, in a standardised form, of the details of a church and the presence or absence of features. The back of the form was used for general discussion of the church. As with the 19th-century ‘church schemes’, Brandwood’s recording form ensured a measure of standardisation in data capture and guarded against the accidental omission of elements whose importance might not be obvious until the later stage of processing and analysis of the data. This seemed adequate precedent for the use of similar, specially devised recording forms for this thesis, though in practice, the sheer volume of material which required recording proved impractical and the completion of these forms remains an ongoing task for the author.

*Digital photography as a means of data capture*

One of the original premises for this thesis was that the vast majority of 19th-century church furnishings and also general interiors were almost wholly unrecorded. Existing records of Devon churches generally consist either of general ‘postcard-views’ of interiors and exteriors, which provide a general impression of the appearance and condition of the fabric, or more intensely-focused studies of individual furnishings, such as medieval fonts, pulpits, Renaissance bench ends, monuments or ancient rood screens. These historic objects — often presented as the principal reason for visiting a church in the first place — are frequently photographed with a curiously ‘blinkered’ vision, wholly excluding their context, whether accidentally or deliberately. This may distort one’s vision of the character of a church and allows no assessment of how the later furnishings were chosen or designed to accommodate and to respect the distinguished object they surround.

With the exception of a few exceptionally famous or eccentric objects, such as Butterfield’s fonts, and a few carefully restored or wholly new rood screens, most of the literature on historic churches omits completely any reference to or images of the range of ‘typical’ furnishings introduced into earlier churches by the Victorians. Very often, as in W. G. Hoskins’ outstanding survey of Devon through history (Hoskins, 1954), the contribution of the 19th century to churches is presented as almost wholly negative and regrettable, and there is little attempt to understand the motives behind church restoration. This situation is perpetuated by the inclusion of unexpurgated extracts from such sources on genealogical, parish and county websites

which, by repetition, reinforce the idea that Victorian furnishings and fabric are valueless and regrettable — an aberration and imposition on the natural course of history.

Despite their dominance in the interior of so many churches there is no general or comparative study of 19th-century church benches and choir stalls. Since these less obviously ‘significant’ furnishings are highly vulnerable to removal, it was decided to compile a ‘pictorial inventory’ through the rapid photographic recording of a large number of churches. Digital photography has advanced to a stage where memory cards capable of holding large amounts of digital imagery are readily affordable. Internet-based storage of digital imagery is also now highly developed, to the extent that fears about the obsolescence of technology and loss of data can reasonably be allayed. Digital photographic coverage of a church also has the advantage of providing dated images which can add up to a ‘point-in-time’ record of a building and its furnishings. Not all images need be of publication standard, since a general record of the building is the intention. Images can be stored easily either on CDs, remote drives or on ‘the Cloud’, providing a record of a church which can be further interrogated through documentary research and comparative analysis, even if the building has subsequently been reordered.

#### *Documentary Research*

Experience has shown that researching the documentary history of a church in any detail through primary documents might easily result in a thesis of more than 100,000 words for each building. It is evident that in an area the size of Devon the sheer number of churches would preclude research of each church to this level within a reasonable time frame for a PhD, if not also within a lifetime. It is further considered that although such a detailed level of research might be appropriate for those preparing statements of significance and need, or a full archaeological assessment of a particular church, it would be unnecessary to answer the research needs of this thesis.

#### *The Devon 19th-Century Churches Project*

Fortunately, many primary documents and accounts of churches in 19th-century journals or newspapers such as *The Ecclesiologist*, *The Builder* and the *Transactions of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society* have already been examined and transcribed by the originators of the Devon 19th-century Churches Project (hereafter the D19CP). This was a privately-funded research project, undertaken by Chris Brooks, Martin Cherry and Jo Cox between 1976 and 2000. The authors recognised the importance of Devon and its church buildings in the history of the Gothic revival and sought to collate as much relevant material as possible through primary and secondary research., including

photographic records, transcriptions of documentary references and information about the designers and manufacturers of furnishings and stained glass. The data in this private archive, includes manuscript notes, church guides and photographic prints and slides.

The aim of the project was to examine and reappraise 19th-century church building and restoration in the county and, ultimately, to produce a definitive publication (J. Cox, pers. comm.). This was sadly abandoned after the unexpected death of Dr Brooks in 2000. The D19CP remains unfinished and unpublished and is currently held by Dr Cox at her home in Exeter. Although its original aim has not been achieved, the project archives have usefully informed the 1989 revision of *The Buildings of England: Devon* (Cherry & Pevsner, 1989) and the project represents an essential resource for the rapid and selective recovery of the information necessary for the analysis of the buildings featured in this thesis.

Research with primary documents in archive centres could be thus restricted to a manageable level, concentrating on those areas in which the coverage of the D19CP was felt to be incomplete.

#### *Online research*

Many early documents relating to the history and development of churches have recently been made available online. These documents include hundreds of 19th-century plans and proposed layouts of churches which were submitted to the ICBS as part of applications for grant aid. These were accessible through online resources such as the online archive of the ICBS now held at Lambeth Palace Library, accessible at [www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/content/searchcollections](http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/content/searchcollections). This is a vital resource which allows the rapid comparison of the proposed and existing layouts of churches and should help to confirm details of dates, architects, contractors and artists recorded in the D19CP.

#### *Other sources*

Many fine buildings, particularly in Plymouth, have been destroyed, so, where necessary, historic records held at local archive centres such as the SWHC, postcards and the photographic collections of Francis Frith, John Stabb and David King<sup>18</sup> have been utilised as a source of information on the structures and furnishings of these places to complete the picture.

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<sup>18</sup> Mr King is a private individual whose interest in 19th-century churches initially centred on historic organs but who has made an invaluable collection of photographs, postcards and other images of churches across England, including several Devon churches which were demolished before the present author could record them. Mr King has kindly permitted the use of some of his collection in this thesis.

The difficulty with many of these documentary sources is that many proposed layouts and furnishing schemes were not carried out as planned, and might be radically changed during the progress of the work. There are, for example, two very different plans for the 1835 rebuilding of Stoke Canon Church (LPL ICBS 01796 folios 33ff, Figs 85, 86) and it is not clear which of these was actually carried out. In this case two later 19th-century phases of reseating had superseded the late Georgian one, though much early material, including box pew panels from 1835 and both medieval and 19th-century bench ends were reused, reset within the later 19th-century seating scheme (Fig. 310). This might have enabled a reconstruction of the Georgian layout through careful study of the surviving fabric and comparison with the submitted drawings. The church has since been reordered again, and the Georgian material largely sacrificed, though much of the medieval and Victorian work was incorporated into the new scheme, largely in response to the findings of the archaeological works (undertaken by the author and John Allan, for Exeter Archaeology).

In some cases, topographical illustrations show elements such as towers, reredoses, pulpits and seating schemes which, for one reason or another, were never built or installed. The most important and reliable source for the purposes of this thesis, therefore, remains the physical fabric of the buildings and the fieldwork record.

## **Method**

### *Fieldwork*

The fieldwork for this research was undertaken entirely by the author, sometimes in company with other individuals such as David Cook (19th-century stained glass) and Todd Gray (medieval and Renaissance bench ends). This collaboration allowed for constructive feedback and debate. The research began on an informal basis in 2005 and, since that time, the emphasis of the project has changed and broadened. Each church requires a different approach and time span for recording. The churches could not be visited systematically by deanery, archdeaconry or even by region. Sometimes no key-holder was identifiable, and the church had to be revisited. Military and school chapels have proved too difficult of access and these, together with a few churches now in private hands or in use by other denominations, have been omitted.

Generally, it was found useful to contact the churchwardens or incumbent the day before to establish if a church was normally open, or to make an appointment to view the church. For this the current Diocesan Directory was an essential tool. From 2008 *The Pilgrims' Guide to Devon Churches*, a guide to local churches produced by the diocese of Exeter in 2008, was employed as a

checklist of functioning Anglican churches. The visits initially targeted those churches which had been overlooked by the D19CP, and those relevant to the research interests of the above individuals. To date (July 2019), every functioning Anglican Church in the County which pre-dates 1940 has been visited and recorded by the author. To date 647 functioning churches have been visited and 64 disused or demolished buildings have either been visited or studied through documentary sources. There may be yet more.

#### *The initial recording project*

The original focus of this research was 19th-century benches, and in its earliest stages the project did not involve extensive photography, partly because of the cost of materials and problems of storage. The early recording took the form of manuscript notes and sketches of typical benches (Fig. 48) with observations on the variety of types of furnishings, their likely date and the relative 'completeness' of the church interior. This process sought to identify to what extent the church represented significantly the work of a single designer or furnisher, or whether it was a palimpsest of successive interventions. Evidence of the retention of earlier furnishings, such as sections of earlier panelling from box pews was noted and also the extent to which the Victorian seating respected any surviving historic seating within the building. The dates of historic interventions were established, where possible, by documentary research, utilising both primary and secondary sources, in order to build up a picture of the changing patterns of activity across the county, and to arrive at a picture of rarity or ubiquity.

#### *Photographic recording*

As it became apparent that a broader and more general study of furnishings was necessary, photographic recording replaced sketches as the main visual record. Initially a hand-held Sony DSC-W55 digital camera was employed, later a Sony DSC-W210. The earliest photos have dimensions of 2304 x 3072 pixels, but this was later increased to 3000 x 4000 or 3240 x 4320 pixels. Perspective correction lenses, tripods and additional lighting were not employed as this would be time consuming and would limit the possible coverage of each church. Images are currently stored as jpeg images on a remote drive, but it is hoped a 'Cloud-based' internet storage may eventually be adopted, to allow wider use of the archive.

Individual buildings were recorded in as systematic a fashion as circumstances would permit, usually beginning with general shots at the approach to the church, recording lych gates and the general setting. Exterior shots would follow, moving (usually anticlockwise) around the building, in order to identify and record any building breaks, blocked openings, signs of accretions

or contractions and any other significant features which might help interpret the development of the church. The main entrance doorway and porch would follow, then general shots of the interior, details of the west end, font and tower arch, followed by records of particular features in the nave, such as the lectern, pulpit, screen etc. and, where possible, any inscriptions upon these which might help to date them. The chancel and side chapels would then be recorded, with particular attention to the choir stalls and the sanctuary furnishings. Latterly, a record of monuments, individually or in groups and stained glass has been added for the sake of completeness.

Owing to the presence of carpets and matting, records of floor slabs and floor surfaces have been less well covered, and this is unfortunate, since historic floors are highly vulnerable to loss during reordering schemes. The current fashion for replacing Victorian or Edwardian heating systems with underfloor heating and the replacement of whole floor surfaces with new slate-flagged flooring has taken a heavy toll of Victorian tiled floors and ancient floor monuments. It is to be hoped, however that diocesan advisory committees will continue to insist on proper recording and excavation of churches which are to be treated in this way.

In addition to recording historic furniture, attention was paid to evidence of recent alterations, such as the removal of sections of seating and the neglect or abuse of furnishings. Unfortunately, some areas, such as vestries, tower rooms, ringing chambers and meeting rooms were not accessible, and many important furnishings may have been missed.

At the beginning of the project, owing to the large size of digital images, between five or ten images might be captured for an average church; however, it is now possible to record up to ten churches in a day, capturing between fifty and one hundred and fifty images of each church. This level of recording is considered sufficient for the purposes of this thesis.

#### *The pilot project: testing the methodology*

In 2010 a pilot project covering the churches of the Hundred of Wonford was undertaken. Wonford is an ancient royal estate and administrative area encompassing and extending to the west of Exeter. This area was chosen because it allowed the study of churches in a wide range of geographical and economic contexts, from new urban churches in areas of growth and prosperity to rural ones in depopulated and declining settlements. Investigation of census returns showed that populations, even in rural areas, grew during the first third of the century and declined in the second half. Every church had had at least one major restoration between 1800 and 1940, and many churches had several significant interventions. These had left traces in the fabric and fittings of the building which could be identified in transcriptions of documentary sources in the D19CP. The archive of that project was found to give excellent coverage, with only four or five of over

sixty churches omitted. While it is true that this ratio is likely to vary across Devon, it is considered that the existence of the D19CP as a resource makes the large area covered by this thesis a viable proposition. The results of the pilot study have been assimilated into this thesis.

### *Interrogating the data*

In order to allow rapid comparisons between church buildings, their furnishings and structural histories, a fully searchable database was devised, using a digital mapping programme, allowing the data to be scrutinised in a variety of ways, allowing patterns to be recognised which were determined by factors specific to one area and time, such as, for example, a particularly active rural dean or archdeacon intent on improving the churches of all the parishes in his care.

In addition to recording the components of each individual church and thus fixing the locations of specific furnishings within the liturgical space, the database aimed to show the dates of particular furnishings, as far as it was possible to determine these. The sheer scale of the work precluded the completion of the database which remains unfinished and must be seen as a work in progress. Ultimately it is hoped that a typical data collection form for each church might be supplemented by a series of separate graphs, for specific types of furnishings, such as replacement fonts, pulpits, indexed alphabetically by church and plotted by date, in order to show at a glance, the main periods of activity. Given the large number of churches covered by this work it is considered no surprise that the database was not complete by the time of submission of this thesis but it is hoped that it will continue to grow. In this respect the research follows the footsteps of the Victorian ecclesiologists, whose 'Rough Notes' were intended as an ongoing project, based on community involvement in the recording of buildings, and providing a regularly updated source for those interested in the study of churches. The database for this project might be reinvented, perhaps online, as just such a resource.



Fig. 52 The interior of the church at Sidbury in the early 19th century, showing a relatively sympathetic post-medieval interior (Lithotint by W. Spreat, 1842).

## CHAPTER 5: DEVON BEFORE THE ECCLESIOLOGISTS

‘The church...consists of a nave and one aisle, with two galleries, one at the west end and another over the aisle, extending the whole length of it, so that notwithstanding the smallness of the fabric it is capable of holding a large congregation’

(St Edmund’s, Exeter, described by Alexander Jenkins in 1806;  
Jenkins 1806, 402).

In this chapter I explore the types of furnishings common in Devon after the Reformation but before the theories propagated by the ecclesiological movement became current. It is argued that the Gothic style was a conscious and preferred choice for Anglican church architecture in Devon throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, even during the years of the Commonwealth, though church furnishings such as screens, pulpits, altar tables and monuments, were freely and fluently using the motifs and language of the classical style. Interestingly, even some leading Non-conformist buildings used overtly medievalising architectural forms. Many elements of existing churches which are currently presumed to be medieval, including aisles and towers, may in fact be of late 16th-, 17th- or even 18th-century date. Typical post-Reformation furnishings are explored,

including Renaissance bench seating, private pews and the position of the new, wooden Communion tables within the church.

From about 1700 new forms of church planning inspired by metropolitan churches began to be adopted, in the form of galleried rectangular boxes, usually axially planned and centred on the pulpit. These forms were probably dictated by the need to maximise the available seating and were mainly used for urban churches. In rural areas Gothic (though rather diluted in character) remained the norm for additions and alterations to existing buildings and also for picturesque new buildings designed to enhance gardens and landscapes. Although medieval buildings were increasingly subjected to *ad hoc* additions and alterations, including the removal of arcades and the addition of galleries and transeptal ‘ailes’ for additional seating, Gothic had never lost and, indeed was steadily recovering, its ideological and symbolic power.

### **Church buildings and furnishings in the 16th and early 17th centuries**

It used to be assumed that the Reformation brought about a virtual cessation in church building in England and that only a few exceptional church buildings were erected during the 16th and 17th centuries. Alec Clifton Taylor states that, after the Reformation:

‘in the country at large few new churches were required; and indeed, the problem more often was how to maintain those that were already there. The Middle Ages had bequeathed an enormous legacy of parish churches...and in some parts of England, in this age of somewhat lukewarm piety, the supply considerably exceeded the demand’

(Clifton Taylor 1974, 129).

Existing worshipping communities were thus faced with the problem of adapting buildings designed for an (apparently) wholly different style of worship<sup>19</sup>, no longer centred around multiple altars and sacred images, but around the public reading of the Scriptures and the exposition of their meaning through sermons. This inevitably led to changes in the furnishings and layout of church buildings. At the same time the traditional elements of church decoration; stories of saints’ lives, the boyhood and Passion of Christ and the life of the Blessed Virgin, were superseded with new and less controversial — perhaps less meaningful — forms of decoration.

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<sup>19</sup> An interesting parallel might be drawn with the challenges facing churches today.

Although Classical motifs were increasingly employed as decoration, Gothic never seems to have been entirely abandoned as an architectural style and many post-Reformation buildings, both sacred and secular, continued to employ Gothic motifs. The architectural expression of these buildings, such as the churches of St Catherine Cree in London and Staunton Harold in Leicestershire was Gothic, it is true, but only in a few cases has the choice of architectural style been recognised as conscious or deliberate. Most 16th- or 17th-century buildings utilising a Gothic architectural vocabulary outside London or the ancient University cities have been understood as a form of ‘Gothic Survival’ representing a conservative, almost unconscious, vernacular tradition of building rather than any deliberate attempt to use Gothic architectural forms as an ideological tool (Whiffen 1948, 9). Whiffen writes: ‘The desire of the High-Church party to symbolise the continuity of ecclesiastical tradition may have resulted in the conscious choice of medieval forms in one or two instances. But in out of the way places Gothic was still, after all, the natural way of building’ (Ibid.).

Whiffen argues that those new churches which were constructed during the 17th century, in ‘out of the way places’ were not so much ‘designed’ as developed through relatively informal discussions between the patron and the builder, and that church building in the 1630s was not properly architectural, but an ‘act of piety rather than an exercise in taste’ (Ibid., 9, 12). Such acts of piety are presented as rare instances in a country which was both rapidly secularising and seriously over-churched.

In fact, it can be argued that the later 16th century was a period of intense activity in church building and furnishing which should surely not be characterised as one of ‘lukewarm piety’. In the author’s view, the stylistic choices made by patrons and congregations were deliberate, and the circumstances of this flurry of activity bear a remarkable similarity to the situation in the 19th century. In the period immediately following the Reformation, as in the early 19th century, we see a national Church committing itself to renewal, to the promotion of its own ideology in the face of fierce opposition at home and from foreign powers and also attempting outreach to the common people through making the printed and spoken Word more widely available.

A very large amount of church building and furnishing was undertaken in the wake of the Reformation, much of which has gone unrecognised, because it is Gothic. The use of this style for almost all church buildings from the Reformation until the late 17th century should be understood as a deliberate choice rather than an accidental survival or simply a ‘way of building’. That classical designs were well known to 16th- and early 17th-century church builders is evident from the huge number of classical monuments which survive from the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These monuments, though perhaps rather wayward in their use of strapwork, broken

pediments, obelisks and putti, reveal a willingness to use and experiment with the classical language which we do not find in contemporary church buildings.

In part this 16th-century church expansion may have been necessitated by the requirement for everyone to attend their parish church on a regular basis and at the time of set services. Common Worship as intended by the 16th century reformers, demanded attendance at the whole service rather than simply 'hearing the Mass' by informally trickling in and out of the building during the celebration of chantry, guild or parish Masses throughout the day, though it is abundantly clear that the level of participation of medieval people in worship before the Reformation has been understated (Duffy 1992, 4). This requirement for the whole community to gather at the same time for acts of worship inevitably necessitated an increase in church accommodation, particularly seating. In many places this was achieved simply by the insertion of galleries, or by the conversion of former chantries and side chapels into additional seating areas; however, sometimes the need for more space was so great that far more ambitious additions were made.

A very large amount of church building and furnishing was undertaken in the wake of the Reformation, much of which has gone unrecognised, because it is Gothic. The use of this style for almost all church buildings from the Reformation until the late 17th century should be understood as a deliberate choice rather than an accidental survival or simply a 'way of building'. That classical designs were well known to 16th- and early 17th-century church builders is evident from the huge number of classical monuments which survive from the late 16th and early 17th centuries. These monuments, though perhaps rather wayward in their use of strapwork, broken pediments, obelisks and putti, reveal a willingness to use and experiment with the classical language which we do not find in contemporary church buildings.

The very uncertain religious and spiritual circumstances of a period of great sectarian and political controversy seem to have demanded, in both the 16th and the 19th centuries, a restatement of the nature of the English Church through church buildings. In both the Reformation and Victorian periods the architectural expression of this movement was achieved through the creative reinterpretation of Gothic architecture. In fact, Gothic, rather than the new classicism, can be shown to be the deliberate choice of most 16th and 17th-century church builders, however promiscuously it may have been interwoven at that time with fashionable Italian Renaissance details and ornament.

*New buildings and additions to older churches*

Research by Howard Colvin in the South Hams area of Devon has demonstrated that a great many local church buildings were enlarged after the Reformation by the addition of completely new aisles, some of which may be recognised by the distinctive forms of the window tracery—identified as ‘South Hams windows’—featuring groups of uncusped circular-headed lancets clustered within a single wider opening (Fig. 53). Although these are effectively groups of graduated lancets, they are not in the medieval tradition of tracery forms (Colvin 1999, 30). These new aisles, where they can be identified, are ambitious, Gothic structures which in many cases nearly doubled the size of the churches and which may easily be mistaken for pre-Reformation work. Colvin speculates that many of these aisles (formerly identified as late medieval) may be connected with the new emphasis on the sermon, and on the necessity for the whole community to attend public worship. These buildings may, in fact, be of late 16th- or 17th-century date and could reflect these pressures (*ibid.*, 217-244).

The north aisle of the church at Northam in north Devon, for example, bears an inscription claiming that ‘This yeke was made anno 1593’. This enormous building of five bays, covered by a traditional west-country ribbed wagon or cradle roof decorated with clasping bosses and supported by angel corbels, has had its window tracery renewed in the 19th century and might very easily be mistaken both in its structural and architectural character for a medieval building (Fig. 54). It is now impossible to say whether or not the tracery of the windows would have been authentically ‘Gothic’ (that is, in a ‘living’ architectural tradition continuous with the Middle Ages)<sup>20</sup> or whether it would have in some way betrayed such a late 16th-century date. Nevertheless, the architectural ambition and scale of the new work cannot be doubted, and it is highly likely that the medievalising architectural style, here as elsewhere, was a conscious choice of its builders rather than simply a case of ‘Gothic survival’. Such large post-medieval additions to churches could probably be identified all over the country.

Entirely new churches of the period are rare; but there are a few buildings in which the liturgical planning might suggest an entirely post-Reformation building whereas the architectural style is comfortably and confidently Gothic. At St Budeaux, near Plymouth, the church, constructed in 1563 (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 643) is almost square in plan, divided into three broad aisles of equal length separated by depressed pointed arches on monolithic granite columns. There is no evidence whatsoever for a rood stair or rood screen, and the elevation to the south has an unusual pattern of windows; two square-headed three-light windows flanking one with a

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<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the concept of a ‘living’ tradition should be regarded as a modern construct which is no longer admissible? The concept was certainly current in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, however, and cannot be disregarded in any discussion of early modern architectural theory.

higher pointed head (Fig. 55). Opposite, the north elevation has three identical square-headed windows. There are two porches; at the south-western and north-western corners of the church, and two smaller doorways with granite dressings at the south-eastern and north-eastern corners. All the doorways appear to be primary. The two eastern doorways are unlikely to have been priests' doors and their position so close to the east wall must presumably preclude there having been altars at the east end of the north and south aisles. They must instead have given access to private pews flanking the Communion table at the east end of the central aisle. There is no chancel and no special treatment of the east end at all. The focus of the building seems to have been on the pulpit, whose position may be indicated by the one larger window at the centre of the south aisle. Although the building is Gothic, the square plan with doorways at each corner might perhaps represent the first attempt at classical planning in a Devon church.

*'Appropriation' and reuse of authentic Gothic fabric*

In some places architectural reference to and acknowledgement of the Gothic past was even more overt. Many cases are recorded of the reuse in parish churches of architectural elements from dissolved monasteries. At Morebath in north Devon, an entire window removed from the dissolved Barlynch Priory was reused by the parish in their north aisle (Duffy 2001, 90). A further window from the same source may be seen at the east end of the north aisle at Huish Champflower in Somerset. A most remarkable example of this is at Hilton, in Dorset, where an entire range of cloisters, probably taken from Milton Abbey, were re-erected as a new north aisle after the Dissolution, and a further section of fan vaulting was reused as the vault of the porch (Fig. 56).

In several northern churches furnishings from dissolved monasteries are known to have been transferred to the parishes, such as the rood screen from Jervaulx Abbey, now at Aysgarth in Yorkshire and the choir stalls from Whalley Abbey, Lancashire, now at the parish church of St Mary, Whalley. At Buckerell and at Plymtree in Devon (Fig. 57) the medieval rood screens do not fit their present locations and may well have been brought from elsewhere, perhaps from the dissolved priories of Kerswell or Canonsleigh, nearby. This reuse of monastic fabric in the context of the 16th century might be seen as the deliberate cultural appropriation of former monastic fabric by the reformed, yet still Catholic Church of England: a conscious and deliberate statement of continuity reclaiming and repurposing the Gothic past for contemporary use. There may be many other unrecorded examples of such architectural *spoila*, continuing well into the later 16th century as the appropriators of monastic property became more confident in their ability to dispose of their new wealth without fear of reprisals from a restored Papal supremacy over the English Church.



Fig 53 The south aisle at Churchstow, showing typical 'South-Hams windows' of the 16th or early 17th centuries (RWP Churchstow DSC01238).

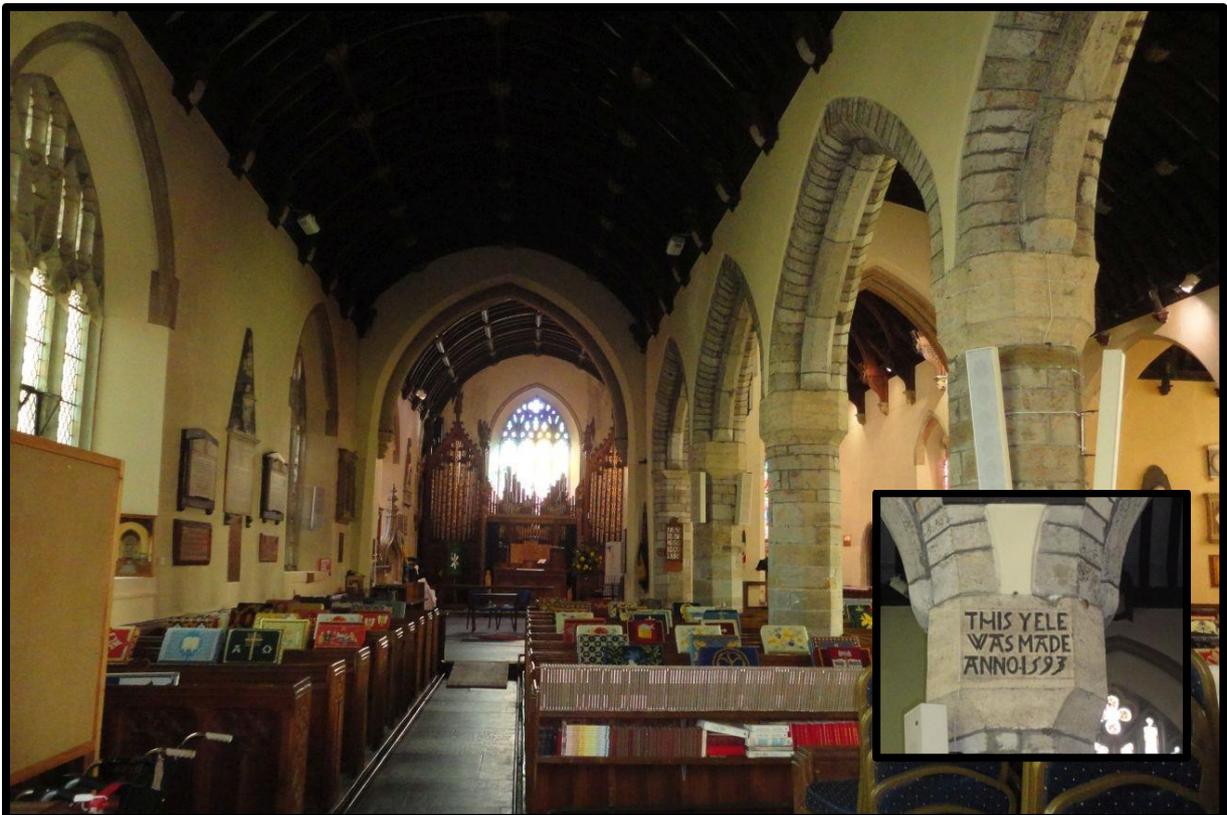


Fig 54 The north aisle at Northam, built in 1593 and almost indistinguishable from a medieval building, including angel ornaments in the roof. Inset, the date plaque on one of the capitals (RWP Northam DSC01427 and DSC01453).



Fig. 55 The late 16th-century church at St Budeaux, near Plymouth, showing the south aisle. The church has three equal aisles, with doorways at all four corners (RWP St Budeaux DSC09510).



Fig. 56 The north aisle at Hilton in Dorset, probably representing an entire cloister walk moved from Milton Abbey at the Dissolution of the monasteries (RWP Dorset churches, Hilton DSC04383).

This taste for the use of Gothic motifs and fabric in church building and furnishings continued well into the 17th century. The church of St Thomas, Exeter, rebuilt after being gutted by fire in the Civil Wars is Gothic in style, with wagon roofs of traditional medieval character and a most unclassical plan, originally of a nave, north transeptal chapel and south aisle, presumably referencing or incorporating parts of the damaged medieval building (Fig. 58). The trend is, however, perhaps embodied most dramatically at Charles Church in Plymouth, an entirely new building designed to serve a new parish established by Letters Patent of Charles 1st in 1640 but only completed in c.1658 after the close of the Civil War. This building is overtly Gothic in character, with a central nave, two aisles and a western tower and enormous windows referencing Exeter Cathedral in the richness of their decorated-style tracery (Fig. 59).

It is possible that the more overtly Gothic elements of this building were added to the design following the interruption of the war, at its completion during the Commonwealth period. The dressings of the eastern windows, for example, are of granite to the point at which the tracery springs, and above this both dressings and tracery are fashioned in a less intractable free stone, perhaps Beer. This may simply be a requirement of the richer pattern of tracery and it certainly appears consistently in the windows of the north and south aisles. There are, however, round-headed arches built into the western parts of the church which appear to have been replaced with pointed windows in a design revision during construction, and it is possible to envisage Charles Church as having been first intended with round-headed windows in a much less obviously 'archaeological' form of Gothic (Figs 60, 61).

There can be no question that the church is merely an example of 'Gothic Survival'; neither is its design and realisation, whether before or after the war a vernacular 'accident'. It must be surely recognised that the puritan city fathers in Commonwealth-period Plymouth were also keen to employ Gothic design, either 'to symbolise the continuity of ecclesiastical tradition' (Whiffen 1948, 9), or to emphasise their freedom from Royal and (potentially) Papal tyranny through the adoption of a style redolent of 'Saxon' liberty and freedom (Brooks 1999, 38; 45). A proposal in 1601 to amalgamate the small parish churches of Exeter and provide an enormous new church seating two thousand is recorded in a letter by Harbottle Reed to the Devon and Exeter Gazette (D&EG 27.01.1931, 2a David Cook pers. comm). It is interesting to speculate what the architectural language of this building might have been, but it was surely a form of Gothic.

*Medieval and Reformation-period seating*

Pressure to increase church accommodation, and the reformed liturgy in which the sermon played a greater part than previously, may also have encouraged the provision of fully-seated church interiors, or the replacement of earlier open forms and stools with fixed seating schemes. A very large number of early seating schemes remain, for which west-country churches are justly famous. Some seat ends are dated by inscriptions, ranging from the late 15th century at Lifton to the early 17th century at Braunton and Stoke-by-Hartland (Gray 2012, 41-2). Whether medieval or post-medieval, all these early seating schemes employed square-ended benches with carved ends cut from solid blocks of timber, decorated either with simple tracery patterns or figurative subjects. Although some of these may be pre-Reformation, particularly those featuring the Instruments of the Passion, it is equally possible that those of Renaissance character, but incorporating religious symbolism, are Marian.

The survival of so much late-Medieval and early-Renaissance seating in Devon churches, together with many references to seating in early churchwardens' accounts (Gray 2012), shows that many Devon parish churches were already seated by the Reformation period, and indeed that many may have been seated for some centuries before. References to seating in early documents, such as the proceedings of a Synod held at Exeter in 1287, suggest that disputes over the allocation of seating in church were already commonplace. The synod, held under Bishop Peter Quivil, decreed that no parishioner could claim private use of a seat, apart from members of the aristocracy or the patrons of the church (Oliver 1860, 48). The implication is that there was already seating in the churches of the Diocese; that it was expected that seats would be provided by the church authorities and that these would be available for the free use of the congregation on a first-come-first-served basis, with the exception of certain special seats set aside for the nobility and the patrons of the living. Clearly the ruling was directed against a perceived common abuse, and this abuse may well have been the appropriation of seats, either in the form of occupation by customary 'right',<sup>21</sup> the construction of seats by private individuals for their own use, or the sale and purchase of existing seats by members of the church community with the collusion of the parish wardens.

The absence of any known examples of seats dating from the 13th or 14th centuries in Devon (though some are believed to have been identified in Somerset, Oxfordshire and Herefordshire)<sup>22</sup> is perhaps explained by their replacement with new comprehensive seating

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<sup>21</sup> Any churchgoer or parish warden today will be familiar with the unofficial appropriation of particular seats by strong-willed individuals. Ownership is usually signified by a large cushion, a box of tissues and a particularly battered hymnal. Trespassers beware.

<sup>22</sup> As discussed by P.S. Barnwell in Cooper & Brown (eds.) 2011, 69-86.



Fig 57 The rood Screen at Plymtree, showing the northern bay crudely adapted around an earlier image niche, suggesting that the screen was brought here in the 16th century, from elsewhere (RWP Plymtree DSC09645).



Fig 58 The north side of St Thomas' Church by Exeter before early 19th-century alterations, showing 17th-century Gothic details (Anonymous drawing dated 1765, possibly by Matthew Blackmore?, now held in the Church vestry at St Thomas'; RWP Exeter St Thomas, DSC00308).



Fig. 59 The ruins of Charles Church at Plymouth (1640-58), showing highly-developed 17th-century Gothic detail (RWP Plymouth; Charles DSC06795).



Fig. 60 Anomalous round-headed arches in the north-western part of the nave at Charles, Plymouth, possibly for an earlier fenestration scheme (RWP Plymouth; Charles DSC06747).

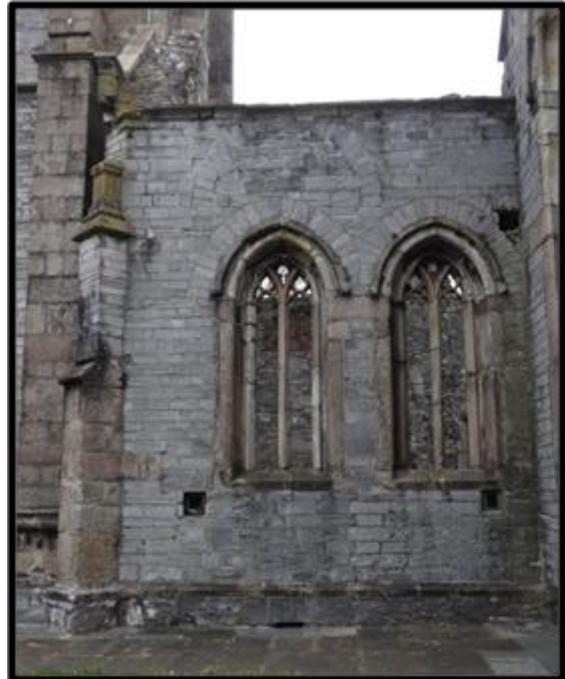


Fig. 61 Anomalous round-headed arch in the south-western part of the nave at Charles, Plymouth, possibly for an earlier fenestration scheme (RWP Plymouth; Charles DSC06764).

schemes in the 15th and 16th centuries. Comprehensive schemes may have been intended to provide an income from pew rentals or annual church rates, though the evidence for this from documents is unclear; Devon churchwardens' accounts from the late Middle Ages provide many examples of payments for seating, but whether these were for the purchase or rent of existing seats, or for the construction of new seats for private use is not always specified. Bennet has identified clear examples of the rental or 'hyryng of Setys' at St Edmund's, Salisbury in the 1490s and in St Stephen Walbrook, London, in the 1500s (Bennet 2011, 44).

The complete replacement of earlier seating arrangements with new comprehensive schemes might have enabled the wardens to regularise any earlier *ad hoc* arrangements for rents or ownership which might have become difficult to administer or productive of bad feeling. Alternatively, the wholesale replacement of seats may have been motivated simply by aesthetic considerations and the desire for the homogenous appearance of the building. In the churchwarden's accounts of St Petrock's, Exeter, an agreement of 1519 between the wardens and the joiner, that the seating of the newly-constructed Jesus Aisle should match the design of the existing seats in the body of the church (Cresswell 1908), shows that in this case the church authorities were responsible both for the provision of the seats and for determining their design. Although the desire to control and rationalise rents for seating was no doubt a strong incentive to renew seating schemes during the 18th and 19th centuries, aesthetic considerations may have been equally pressing, as remains the case today.

*Types of seating: The bench.*

The ways in which seating might develop varied from parish to parish and thus the forms of the seating might vary, but the almost ubiquitous pattern for a Devon church bench of the 15th to the early 17th centuries is a long, low oaken bench with a relatively low, almost vertical, framed and panelled back, with a projecting elbow rest to the rear in the form of a very substantial rectangular timber fitted just behind the moulded top rail. The seat was usually a single plank, of heavy scantling, set horizontally, which might project slightly to the east of the bench end and was usually straight cut, rather than moulded, to the front under the knee. There was frequently a shaped stiffener or prop fitted under the centre of the seat. The bench ends were generally also square, each consisting of a single substantial rectangular slab carved all in one piece, rising to the same height as, or slightly above, the back rail, and decorated with mouldings or carvings on all three edges, often with substantial stops just above the floor, the seat and the elbow rest. The central field of the bench end towards the aisle was either left plain or, in many cases, was elaborately carved with tracery patterns, sacred emblems or with grotesque ornaments, sometimes including

dates and initials representing the wardens, donors, owners or occupants of the seats (Fig. 62). The square-headed bench end was the commonest form of bench end in medieval and post-medieval Devon and was frequently replicated by Victorian artists and craftsmen and women, the more expensive varieties being carved from a solid slab, like their medieval progenitors. This kind of open seat, without fitted doors and set at regular intervals one behind the other throughout the nave or aisles of a church is usually described as a ‘bench’ in 19th-century documents, to distinguish it from a fully-enclosed ‘pew’ and this usage will be adopted here.

A great number of new seating schemes consisting of open benches appear to have been installed across the county in the later 16th century, much of which can be identified by its carved Renaissance imagery, usually grotesque ornaments including profile heads within circular frames, dolphins, scrolling foliage and large, leathery leaves. Some examples are dated. The absence of specifically religious imagery among these decorations is particularly noticeable. Many of these seating schemes may have been installed post-Reformation to provide extra seating for the larger numbers now required by law to attend their parish church or be identified as non-conforming. It is uncertain whether these new seats were freely available to churchgoers, or whether there were already systems of pew rents in place.

#### *Variant forms of bench end*

Medieval ‘poppy-head’ bench ends carved with a high foliate finial, and asymmetrical benches with a ‘shoulder’ or ‘knee’ masking the projecting DSC05842 seat are extremely rare in Devon, apart from the splendid set of benches in the nave at Atherington in north Devon, which may be imported from a manorial chapel at Umberleigh (Fig. 64). A single fragment of a possible poppy-head bench survives at Drewsteignton. Some very crude examples remain, no longer in situ, at Welcombe on the north west coast<sup>23</sup> and there are a few unusual shouldered ends of late-medieval date at Cookbury in west Devon (Fig. 65). Only very rarely was the top of a Devon bench end extended above the back rail and decorated with battlements, animal forms or foliage, though examples survive at Combeinteignhead, Weare Giffard and Upton Hellions.<sup>24</sup> In many of these cases of elaboration of the top of the bench end, the decoration appears to be associated with a sloping desk top, as at Ilsington and Combeinteignhead, suggesting that these ends may have been designed as readers’ or choir desks. They may also perhaps have adorned the pew frontals of the benches at the head of the nave, as today at High Bickington<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> RWP Welcombe DSC08175, DSC08230.

<sup>24</sup> RWP Combeinteignhead DSC05842, DSC05843, DSC05844; RWP Weare Giffard DSC01450 and RWP Upton Hellions IMG1847.

<sup>25</sup> RWP High Bickington DSC012918.



Fig. 62 A 16th-century inscribed bench end reading 'George C' at Rewe (RWP Rewe DSC01539).



Fig. 63 One of the asymmetrical medieval bench ends at Cookbury (RWP Cookbury DSC02229).



Fig. 64 Medieval poppy-headed bench ends, possibly from Umberleigh, now at Atherington (RWP Atherington DSC04252).



Fig. 65 The remains of a 16th-century private pew reset as a tower screen at Bideford (RWP Bideford; St Mary DSC03667).



Fig. 66 The remains of a 16th-century private pew at Peter Tavy (RWP PeterTavy DSC08395).

Apart from these unusual medieval examples almost all Devon benches appear to have been square ended. Asymmetrical forms and poppy-heads, which are common in much of the rest of the country, particularly in East Anglia, are thus almost entirely a 19th-century innovation in Devon and are not here based on local archaeological precedent, except at Bishop's Tawton, where the Atherington bench ends were copied for four rows of grander seats, with a frontal, at the east end of the nave<sup>26</sup>, possibly as seating for a local gentry family. Although poppy heads were briefly popular among 19th-century church architects, and remained an option in the catalogues of church furnishers, they appear to have passed out of fashion in Devon by the 1860s. Bench ends decorated with animal forms and poppy-heads remained popular for reading desks, clergy and choir seating and for distinguishing the pews of the gentry<sup>27</sup>, but they were rarely found among the common seating of the nave after that time.

The pattern of survival of early bench seating since the Reformation is perhaps more obviously subject to economic or administrative considerations. The more-or-less complete absence of medieval seating from the area around Tiverton, Honiton and Axminster must surely be connected with the economic prosperity of this area in the post-medieval period or is perhaps due to the activities of highly-effective rural deans or archdeacons in the 18th or early 19th century. A similar near total absence of medieval seating in the South Hams has been noted by Gray and similar considerations may have prevailed there (Gray 2012). Gray has also shown that Gothic traceried bench ends are almost entirely confined to south and east Devon, particularly the area east of Dartmoor (Gray 2012, 122), whereas the Instruments of the Passion and other Sacred emblems occur almost exclusively to the north and west of Dartmoor. The reasons for this distribution is uncertain; it seems unlikely that there was a significant difference in religious affiliations between the north east and south east of the county; rather that local fashion and the tendency for churches to copy their neighbour's furnishings determined the regional use and longevity of certain patterns and designs. These anomalies of distribution might be explored by examining ecclesiastical patronage and administration in these areas. Hopefully the data gathered during the research for this thesis will help explore and determine the answers to these questions.

The later 16th century and early 17th century thus contributed far more than is usually realised to the decoration and furnishing of churches and these additions were not necessarily characterised by their austerity. The effect of an entire church filled with richly-carved bench ends can be experienced in many west-country churches and is particularly overwhelming in places like High Bickington, Braunton and Germansweek. Early seating schemes of this type were to become

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<sup>26</sup> RWP Bishop's Tawton DSC02173

<sup>27</sup> At St Thomas, Exeter, the benches set aside for the great houses of Cleve and Franklyn are distinguished with poppyheads.

a focus of interest for those late-Georgian and early-Victorian architects seeking authentic models for the furnishing of new and restored churches. Colour in churches was not abandoned either; monuments continued to be brightly painted and many churches were enriched with painted texts in decorative borders, examples of which may still be seen in places like Bratton Clovelly. Despite the negative effects of the loss of images and the rood lofts, the abandonment of vestments and guild altars, the century immediately following the Reformation may therefore have been almost as active and effective in the enriching and enlarging of churches as were the Victorian ecclesiologists, and very probably for the same reasons.

*Post-Medieval 'pews' in the Westcountry*

The earliest private pews for the gentry in Devon do not usually survive in situ, and most of the more famous examples, such as the Bluett pew at Holcombe Rogus are heavily restored or reset. The Portledge pew at Alwington (Fig. 67) is assumed to have been made up in the 19th century of woodwork taken from the mansion house (though it looks authentic to the author). The best-preserved private pew is an unusual late 17th-century example at Tawstock; a two-seater of about twice the size of a large sedan chair, with a canopy containing a ribbed timber ceiling. The pew is enclosed upon two sides by high panelling and open on the two other sides towards west and south. This example seems to have lost the grilles or balustrades across the lower part of the open sides, which would have rendered the occupants invisible during use. These seem to confirm its function as a private pew rather than a liturgical fitting. Other examples of panelling probably derived from elaborately carved private pews have been made up into tower screens at Bideford and Warkleigh, or are simply mounted on the wall, as at Peter Tavy (Figs. 65, 66) These seem to have been expensive, private furnishings, probably paid for by the local gentry, and must always have been exceptional. Most churchgoers would have sat on open benches which, however, they were not necessarily allowed to use freely, but which would have been allocated to them by the churchwardens.

The earliest seat allocation plans to survive from the period, such as the plan of 1613 for the allocation of still-surviving seating at St Nectan, Stoke by Hartland appear to show segregation by sex and social rank alone, and make no reference to pew-rents (Kelly 2011, 153), perhaps because the seating was paid for by other means. Some churches levied a special rate for seating; Halberton claimed in the early 17th century that their 'siedge rate' was an ancient custom. Other parishes appear to have introduced 'siedge rates' anew in the late 16th century (Gray 2012, 72). It might be argued that the development of pew rents and siedge rates in churches would have been encouraged, if not necessitated, by the need to recoup losses to income caused by the abolition of



Fig. 67 The Portledge pew at Alwington (RWP Alwington DSC00206).



Fig. 68 The Bluett pew at Holcombe Rogus (RWP Holcombe Rogus DSC09822).

the traditional ‘guilds’ and ‘stores’ which had been such significant income generators for the pre-Reformation Church (Duffy 2005, 147).

At Puddletown in Dorset documentary evidence relating to a proposed re-seating scheme of 1635 can be directly related to the existing furniture and reveals how an early 17th-century re-seating scheme was organised and delivered. The congregation were informed one evening after the evening service that the entire church was to be re-seated. The catalyst for the work was a structural repair to the chancel arch, and this excuse was used (as so often in reordering schemes today) to justify the complete refurnishing of the building and the disposal of its entire existing contents on the grounds of making the rest of the church worthy of the new work. The scheme was paid for by levying a rate of five shillings on the 240 persons who were to be seated in the body of the church. Those who paid the rate were thus allocated priority seats according to rank. Those who did not, or could not pay, had to sit where they could; ‘wheare they shall not offend others’. The labouring poor, cottagers and undertenants ‘that contribut not to the worke’ were expected to stand in the tower ‘as is the like is in other parrishes’, and to venture no further in, contrary to their previous habit (Machin 2011, 174-5).

All the new seats at Puddletown, excepting those in the new galleries, were box pews closed with doors rising to the same height as the seat backs and bench ends, which were

considerably higher than the backs and ends of the medieval benches characteristic of the county. The seats of the local gentry were crowned by balustrades, but even they were segregated by sex; husbands, wives, unmarried sons and daughters being provided with their own distinct pews in widely separated areas. At this date, at Puddletown at least, the seating of the church was still the property of the church and was allocated by the wardens on the basis of wealth and status. Entitlement to a seat depended on one's payment of the church rate. Renting one's allocated pew to another party was strictly forbidden (Ibid., 178).

The tendency, therefore, was for different areas of a church to be seated in different ways, usually with clear distinctions between the types of seating and the social classes. Seating in churches attended by large numbers of prosperous families, each with an interest in affirming their status, might thus grow up in an *ad-hoc* manner with pews of different types and materials, very often with little attention to the visual effect of the interior or the convenience of other members of the community.

The chancel and east end of the church tended to be dominated by the interests and tastes of the clergy and gentry, and many former eastern chapels were appropriated after the Reformation by gentry families as private pews, as at Powderham, Holcombe Rogus and Alwington (Figs 67, 68). The vicarage family were also generally accommodated in a place of relative honour, perhaps in the chancel or close to the pulpit, but the body of the church was also parcelled out into areas of private or semi-private space, for the occupation of particular families. It is not surprising that the principal stake in the church building of ordinary lay members of the Church of England lay within the body of the church, where they habitually sat and where, very often, they were buried. Seating schemes, more than any other form of church furnishing, were created and 'consecrated' by regular and habitual use by certain families and individuals. The arrangements varied in each parish across the country but, generally, the physical forms of seating and their arrangement tended to reinforce perceptions of social order in favour of the wealthier and longest established families at the expense of the poor.

Certain pews within a church were regarded as the private property of those who sat in them, not least because these individuals had often paid for their construction of the seats from their own resources (Gray 2012, 21) or because the same family, or the occupants of a particular house, had occupied the same seats by long custom. Such families or individuals might distinguish their seats by the addition of painted, inlaid or carved Coats of Arms, as at Molland, or by their initials, as at Dowland. Frequently, 'ownership' of a pew was also signified by the provision of higher-sided seats with a distinct architectural treatment, either of ramped ends, raised-fielded panels or richer materials. Such pews were often sited in prominent positions at the east end of

the nave or near the pulpit. Attempts to move, change or reconfigure such seats to accommodate liturgical reforms or even simply for repairs were often strongly resisted by the 'owners' of the seats, leading, in many cases, to court proceedings (Gray 2012).

Seats might be traditionally allocated to particular farms, as at Cruwys Morchard in north Devon, where the names of the farms remain painted on the surviving furniture. Servants, the poor, and casual visitors not sufficiently well dressed or able to tip well, might be expected to occupy long backless forms arranged in the central aisles, seats in out of the way galleries or, in the worst cases, to stand throughout the service for want of any accommodation at all (Webster 2011, 198).

Needless to say, the allocation of seating by parish officials often led to disputes. Many early seating plans were produced in attempts to resolve these disputes and reinforce the decisions of the wardens (Gray 2012, 80). That disputes might not be resolved even after the adoption of a seating plan is witnessed by comments added to the seating plan, dated 1773, hung in the tower at Buckerell church in East Devon and noted in the Listing description (5/96, dated 22.2.1955). The allocation of seats by the wardens was thus an extremely difficult matter which required either great sensitivity to local sensibilities and perceptions of status, or a certain vigour, if not brutality in ignoring them. Re-seating churches was thus one of the most controversial activities which could be undertaken in the drive to improve church accommodation during the 19th century, not least because the encouragement of church attendance among the poor brought the rich and the poor into closer contact than they had perhaps been used to.

The classic 17th-century and 18th-century form of seat, as at Puddletown, is the box pew which, as described above, is entirely unlike an open bench, having a high panelled back and sides formed of panelling or wainscoting, the whole forming an enclosure which could be shut up, and sometimes locked up, by a door of the same material and appearance as the wainscot sides and front of the rest of the pew, rising to the same height and usually, designed, when closed, to form a continuous barrier of panelling towards the aisles of alleys providing access from seat to seat. Box pews might contain single seats facing in one direction or, in the case of the 'horse boxes' so despised by the Victorian reformers, might be square enclosures containing seats facing in four different directions. They seem to have been designed to accommodate family units in privacy and sometimes had sides so high that when seated, the occupants were invisible except from the galleries and the pulpit.

Box pews might be arranged in any position within the church and were often a cause of disputes. The Dyer pew in the chancel at Woodland, near Ashburton, for example, was shaped like a carpenter's square and stood around two sides of the Communion table in a position one might

expect to be reserved for the communicants. The seat may have dated from the latter part of the 17th century, because in 1701 Richard Dyer petitioned the bishop for the right to ‘continue to enjoy his seat’, on the grounds that he had ‘erected another for the use of the parish and given a Communion cloth’ (Evans 1960, 192, 202). By the end of the 18th century it seems many churches had begun to accept the construction of private seats within any part of the church and were presumably making a regular income out of charging for these and other seats in their churches. Strictly speaking, charging pew rents required an Act of Parliament naming the specific parish church in which the rents were to be charged, but very few Acts of Parliament were in fact sought, and Victorian commentators complained that the vast majority of pew-rent arrangements had no legal authority at all (Bennett 2011, 53). Nevertheless, by the end of the 17th century box pews seem to have become the standard form of seating in most newly re-ordered parish churches and from the middle of the 18th century until around 1840 they were almost ubiquitous. Many fragments remain today, even in churches which were subject to 19th century restoration.

Among the earliest box pews to survive in Devon is the private pew at the east end of Hittisleigh church. This is dated by an inscription claiming: ‘This was built at the cost of Thomas Furse of East Church, 1619’. The pew is formed of large-field panelling with scratch-moulded rails and stiles typical of the period and is identified on late 19th-century and 20th-century plans as a ‘Faculty Pew’ which presumably means it was installed by means of a faculty and was therefore legal. It was certainly allowed to remain in successive restorations of the church. Similar scratch-moulded panelling of 17th-century style forms the basis of a set of box pews at Halwell in the South Hams, near Dartmouth, although these pews appear to have been replicated and extended to fill the nave and aisle in the 19th century in a rare example of contextual restoration. The rebuilt seating has typical rotating latch plates but incorporates a very large quantity of raised-fielded panelling from rather grander late 17th- or 18th-century seats (Fig. 311). Raised fielded panelling of this type appears to have been common into the late 18th century, at which time flatter wainscoting with plain panels and more delicate mouldings became fashionable.

### **Church buildings in the later 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries**

#### *Gothic churches*

The Gothic tradition in Devon remained the most popular architectural style for churches until the late 17th century, and the rebuilding of churches such as St Michael’s, Great Torrington, which had been damaged by an explosion during the Civil Wars, or St Stephen’s Exeter, which was damaged by fire in 1662 and was rebuilt by c.1664, both employed the Gothic style (Fig. 69). At St



Fig. 69 The late 17th-century Gothic church of St Stephen, Exeter (RWP Exeter, St Stephen DSC03341)



Fig. 70 The south side of St Stephen after the blitz, showing the 17th-century window tracery, now removed (EA War-cat-500).

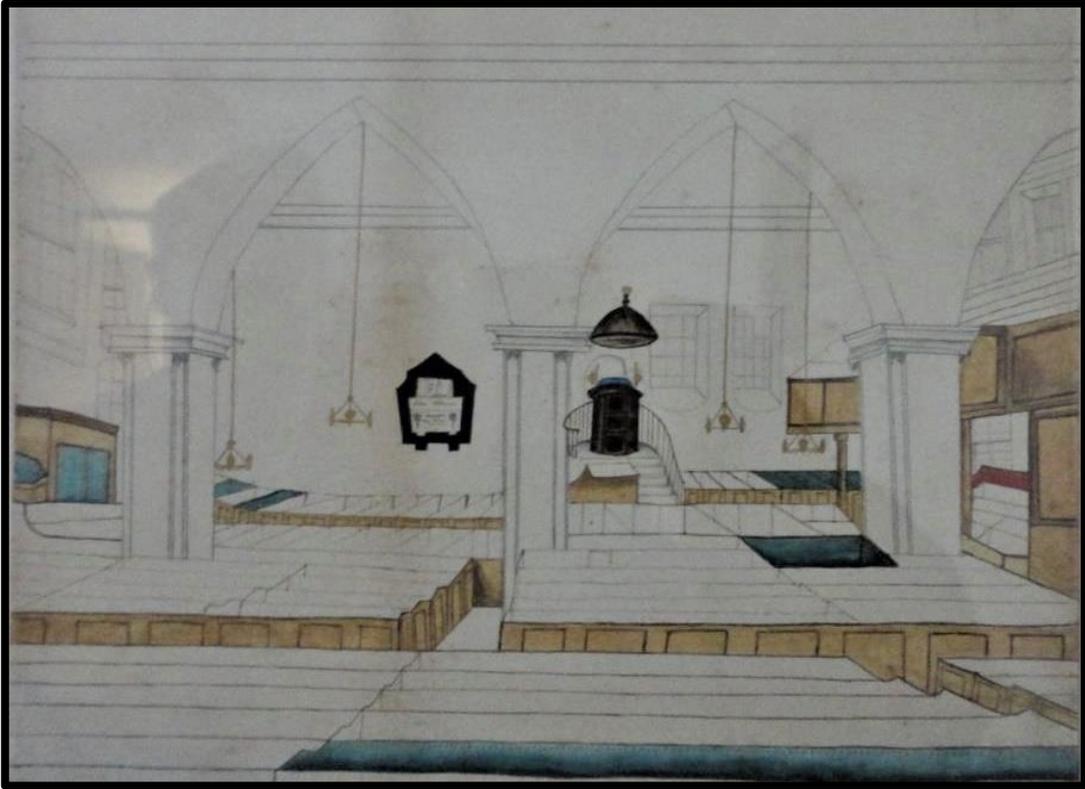


Fig. 71 The Great Meeting of 1696 at Bideford, now demolished, showing Gothic arches dividing the building into aisles (Watercolour painting of c.1840 held in the present chapel).



Fig.72 The Unitarian Chapel at Crediton, now demolished, showing an architecturally ambitious non-conformist exterior of c.1690 (National Monuments Record).

Stephen's, most unusually, the building had richer tracery on the side facing the High Street than it did to the south, where the windows overlooked domestic property and were a late example of 'South Hams windows' (Fig. 70). These windows are recorded in photographs taken after the Exeter Blitz of 1942<sup>28</sup>, but they have since been replaced with modern versions of those in the north side of the church — though with more pronounced cusping to make them more authentically Gothic. The 17th-century building was thus asymmetrical in appearance from within and quite unclassical in its planning. It appears to have had a broad nave and a narrower south aisle under separate pitched roofs, again referencing medieval churches rather than the single volume under a broad roof which might be expected by this date.

Few early non-conformist churches have survived in the county, and the best known are atmospheric, rustic buildings such as the Loughwood Meeting house at Dalwood, which resembles a thatched farm building and, arguably, gives no reliable impression of the architectural ideals of the dissenting congregations of the period. The most ambitious of the urban chapels was probably the Great Meeting at Bideford, built in 1696 (later rebuilt and renamed the Lavington Chapel). This building is known from 19th-century drawings. Externally, it was perhaps deliberately unremarkable, with a plain double gabled front towards Bridgeland Street with two storeys of rectangular sash windows. Within, the two naves were divided by a Gothic arcade of immense square piers with angle shafts and moulded impost, supporting pointed arches. This building was clearly intended to reference medieval architecture to its congregation, if not to those who passed it in the street (Fig 71). At Crediton, the superb Unitarian Chapel of c.1690 was perhaps more characteristic of architecturally ambitious nonconformist architecture of the period. This building eschewed any form of reference to medieval architecture, with a broad, classical front with arched windows under an acutely-pointed pediment (Fig. 72). Its interior was a single volume with a coved ceiling supported by two tall, octagonal timber posts. This magnificent building survived completely intact, with all its original furnishings, until the late 20th century. It has, sadly, now been demolished. More modest examples of chapels of the same period remain at Chulmleigh and at Ottery St Mary, the former retaining many of its original fittings.

### *Classical churches*

The earliest classical churches in the county began to appear in the later 17th century. Among the earliest of these was the private chapel at Great Potheridge in Merton, near Great Torrington, erected for General Monk and his family in c.1670 as part of an enormous and ambitious classical house, after Monk was created Duke of Albermarle. The chapel was visited by Richard Polwhele

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<sup>28</sup> Formerly held in the digital archives of Exeter Archaeology.

while it was in ruins in the 1770s and he describes a lavishly-decorated building in the Corinthian style. It is uncertain whether the chapel had any influence at all on the design of local churches during its existence and it was abandoned and demolished after a very short life. Nothing now remains except an enigmatic fragment of the mansion (Parker 2011).

A very few significant churches were erected in Devon in the late 17th or early 18th centuries which did employ the Classical style. St Paul's church in Exeter was a medieval structure which was completely remodelled in 1680-93. This church had round-headed windows and a single, broad internal volume covered with a single-span roof and a plaster ceiling. It was entered from the west under the tower and by a side entrance at the centre of the north wall, so there was an attempt at symmetry on two axes. The interior had a western gallery, a contemporary font of black marble on a white marble base and a Corinthian altarpiece crowned by statues of angels (Cresswell 1908 138). The church remained substantially unaltered until it was unfortunately demolished in 1936. A fine classical chancel screen, possibly added in the 1890s, was transferred to St Paul's church in Honiton, but apart from a few monuments, none of the other furnishings of this important building are known to have survived.

The original parish church of Stoke Damarel near Plymouth was completely rebuilt in *c.*1700 to serve the growing town of Plymouth Dock, which had been established under William and Mary in the 1680s. Only the medieval tower, part of the north porch and a short transept to the north of the medieval church were retained. The exterior of this building resembles a contemporary non-conformist church and its interior, divided into three equal naves by round-headed arches on Tuscan columns was wholly filled with box pews, the altar being crammed into a tiny recess between enormous, numbered and appropriated pews (Fig. 74).

Four monolithic stone columns from the medieval arcades of the building were repositioned in pairs on either side of the new southern entrance to the church, within a low porch. Although the church interior may have been entirely classical, these reused columns standing on either side of its principal entrance may be a late example of the appropriation of genuinely medieval fabric to either announce the Gothic credentials of—or hallow—a reconstructed church building (Fig. 75).

Perhaps in response to new developments in London, though, architectural referencing of medieval fabric was about to go out of fashion for almost three-quarters of a century and an entirely new type of church building was developed which bore no relation to medieval buildings. In around 1700 a chapel was built to serve the new dockyard at Plymouth Dock (after 1824 renamed Devonport). Sadly, this building, dedicated to St Lo, no longer survives, having been rebuilt in 1816 and destroyed in the Plymouth Blitz of 1941. Its appearance at the time of its

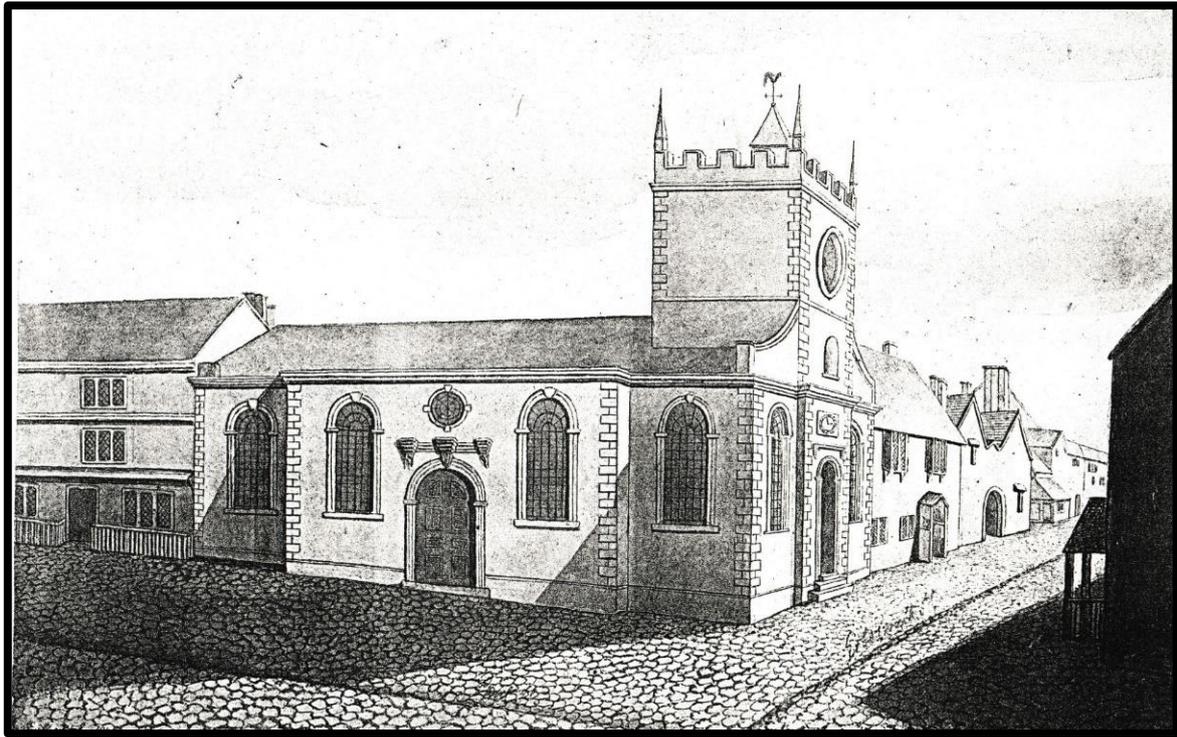


Fig. 73 St Paul's Church in Exeter (1680-1693), drawn by Thomas Shapter in 1798, showing what may be the earliest classical church in the county (SWHC WCSL drawings large B/EX ca-ce)



Fig. 74 19th-century drawing of the sanctuary at Stoke Damarel while it was still furnished with high pews (Watercolour painting in Stoke Damarel church).



Fig. 75 Reused monolithic pillars from the medieval arcades at Stoke Damarel (RWP Devonport Stoke Damarel DSC00058).



Fig. 76 The late 17th- and 18th-century interior at Stoke Damarel showing Tuscan arcades and, in the background, the surviving transept of the medieval church. The furnishings are modern (RWP Devonport Stoke Damarel DSC00066).



Fig. 77 The church of St George at Tiverton by the London Architect John James (1714-33, showing the new classical form of church with a two-storey exterior reflecting internal galleries (RWP Tiverton: St George DSC03267).

destruction was that of a classic English Baroque church, a vast rectangular box divided into two storeys by internal galleries on three sides and with a tall western tower and a shallow eastern apse. Until the arrival of ecclesiological Gothic in the 1830s and 1840s this rectangular form of church with galleries on three sides and a western entrance was the standard pattern for new churches in both the classical and Gothic styles. Churches of this type were still being erected in Exeter, Plymouth and other large towns in the 1830s and 40s.

The best surviving Georgian Baroque church in the county is now represented by the enormous church of St George built in 1714 in the prosperous cloth manufacturing town of Tiverton (Fig. 77). The building was probably built to designs by the London architect John James, but it was not completed until the 1730s (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 810). In this building and in the dockyard chapel there is no evidence of any attempt to express continuity with older Anglican traditions or the Gothic past; no 'Wren-style' references to Gothic steeples or any other concession to medievalism. Both churches had a railed eastern sanctuary enclosure for a Communion table and, apart from their towers or bell turrets, in this respect alone they differ from contemporary nonconformist chapels. Needless to say, both churches were entirely seated with high box pews.

One of the most attractive classical buildings in the county was the small Greek-revival church of St David at Exeter (1817), by James Green, which featured an enormous tetrastyle portico and a domed tower resembling a piece of Georgian silverware (Fig. 16). Similar classical temples were erected at St Leonard's in the same city in 1833 and at St John's, Torquay in 1823, but most of the churches of this type were built for the expanding towns of Stonehouse and Plymouth Dock.

These towns, within the medieval parishes of Stoke Damarel and St Andrew's, Plymouth, grew rapidly in size and prosperity during the century and, as they grew, their spiritual needs were met by the erection of new proprietary chapels. The new churches of St Aubyn (1771) and St John the Baptist (1779), Devonport (Figs 78, 79) and St George's Church (1789) in Stonehouse were all plain rectangular boxes under broad, pitched roofs, with three-sided galleries and western towers. Their architecture was not ambitious, though St Aubyn's had a tetrastyle portico sheltering its western door until this was removed for road widening. These churches subsisted entirely on the income from pew rents. St John the Baptist contained 1500 appropriated seats, St Aubyn's around 900 and St George's 700. Most of these seats were private property (White 1850, 690; 700). Only St Aubyn's now survives, St George's was bombed and the ruins demolished and St John the Baptist was sadly pulled down in the 1950s along with many of the town's finest 18th- and 19th-century buildings, when Devonport's unique architectural heritage was not valued as it should have been.

Although these classical buildings were anathema to ecclesiologists, the way in which they were later adapted to enlarge and improve them is particularly interesting, as it shows that 19th-century architects were committed to respecting the character of the buildings they altered, even if their architectural style was unfashionable. St George's, Stonehouse and St David's, Exeter both received new chancels in the mid-19th century. Both these additions were in the same, classical style, in keeping with the earlier building.

### *Garden Gothic*

In the countryside picturesque 'Garden Gothic' was still employed during the 18th century, usually for churches built as picturesque adjuncts to country estates. Both the churches of Filleigh, in north Devon (c.1732) and Werrington (c.1742) formerly in Devon (but transferred to Cornwall in the 1970s) were reconstructed in the early 18th century as eyecatchers to improve the view from the neighbouring mansions. Filleigh has been greatly altered in the 19th century, in the Romanesque style; however, some elements of the original building remain. These include the western tower, which features a reset late-Gothic window, and a curious tower-like structure on the north side of the church with diagonal buttresses and two storeys of small round-headed, blind windows (Fig 80). This proves to be a mere façade extending beyond the end of the northern transept and now masking a later vestry. It is presumed that before the addition of the south chancel aisle in the 19th century there was a corresponding transept and turret extending to the south, creating a symmetrical composition when viewed from the mansion to the east.

At Werrington the church appears to have been intended to be viewed from the park rather than from the mansion, which lies to the south east of the church. The western façade of the church features a pair of flanking turrets on either side of the western tower, and these are crowned with remarkable pinnacles and have unusual ogee-headed niches featuring rather vigorous statuary (Fig. 81). Like Filleigh the church was originally cruciform with vestries on the north answering to a porch on the south. The 'Gothic' detail of the building is ludicrous but appealing, featuring round-headed arches with broad, flat architraves extending into ogees with coffin-shaped keystones. The church was extended in 1891 with a fine new chancel designed by James Piers St Aubyn. Cherry and Pevsner describe the restoration of this building as 'disastrously thorough' (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 897) but this seems unfair. St Aubyn left the more unusual features of the building alone and incorporated four of the bizarre statues, complete with their round-headed niches, into his new chancel. The Victorian chancel is a highly satisfying piece of work in its own right with the unusual feature of a pair of squints, one from the lectern and one from the pulpit. Their function in a 19th-century church is not entirely clear.



Fig 78 St Aubyn's Church , Devonport (1771) (RWP Devonport; St Aubyn 087).

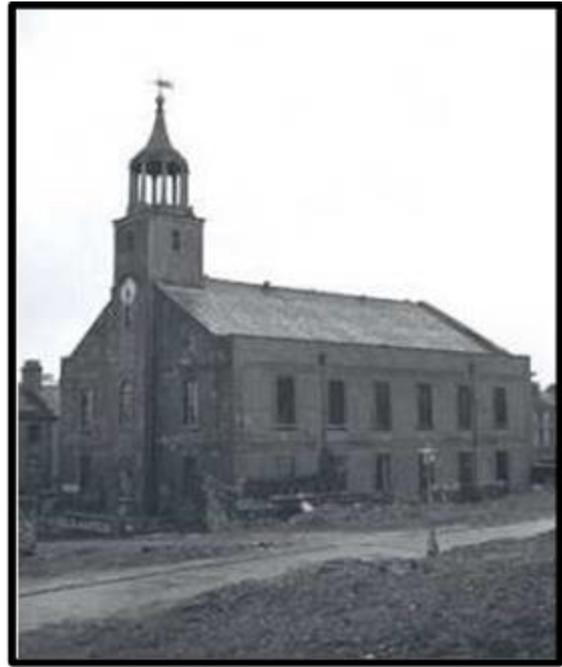


Fig 79 St John The Baptist, Devonport (1779) (David King)



Fig 80 Part of the church at Filleigh (1732) showing one of the former towers of the false façade (RWP Filleigh DSC00355).



Fig 81 The false façade and towers (1732) flanking the tower of the church at Werrington (RWP Werrington DSC08982).

A few other rural churches of the 18th and early 19th century may be mentioned. The two earliest have a cruciform plan with short arms forming transepts and chancel and a short western tower and also appear to be examples of 'garden Gothic'. The church at Teigngrace, rebuilt by the Templer family of Stover in 1786, might almost be centrally planned, with a stubby eastern apse and a central domed ceiling. It has domestic 'Gothick' windows with intersecting 'Y'-tracery and the west door is cribbed directly from Batty Langley's *Gothic Architecture Improved by Rules and Proportions* of 1747 (Langley & Langley 1747, Plate IV). The other church, at Buckland-Tout-Saints, dating from 1799, has a very similar plan but far cruder detail. Both churches are associated with large country estates and were constructed to replace dilapidated medieval buildings. Their 'Gothic' though superficial, seems still intended to communicate continuity, rather than novelty, though it has quite evidently been pressed into the service of the Landed Interest rather than serving 'Gothic Liberty' (Brooks 1999, 102).

*Hunting parsons, ecclesiological propaganda and the rural church*

The myth remains common that clergy during 'the long 18th century' were either lax or absent, deputising their duties to poorly-paid and under-educated curates who droned through the offices while the Rector thundered over the landscape in pursuit of foxes, or sank beneath the dining table under the influence of overmuch port. The churches are supposed to have been decayed and tottering to ruin while their congregations declined and, apart from the introduction of monuments to local gentry and towering three-decker pulpits, reflecting (and here is inconsistency!) the ruthless social control of the peasantry by the 'Squarson', few signs of true religion remained in the established Church, leaving the field open for the incursions of pious Nonconformists less corrupted with worldly wealth and power.

Andrews successfully challenges these myths, which he argues are based upon a strain of propaganda emanating from 19th-century Nonconformist groups who aimed by this to attract the allegiance of discontented Anglicans (Andrews 1964, 147-8).

The same myths were perpetuated in Tractarian propaganda aimed at discrediting the habits and mores of the Georgian church in order to spur the clergy and laity on to more and better missionary effort (Webster, 2000, 2). Andrews points out that 'Almost every writer' takes an adverse view of the Georgian clergy; 'the one finds it hard to believe that there was any life in the Church prior to and apart from the Evangelical Revival, and the other assumes there was no true church life before the Oxford Movement' (Andrews 1966, 156). Non-residence was indeed common at the beginning of the century: Brooks notes that:

‘in 1810 an astonishing 47 % of the Anglican clergy did not reside or do duty in their parishes; that this figure had been cut to 10 per cent by 1850 is a measure of the organisational effort that went into the early Victorian Anglican revival’

(Brooks, 1995, 55)

Non-residence on the part of the Rector does not necessarily mean that 18th-century rural churches were not served, or that they were served badly. Rural churches might be served by perfectly competent curates acting vicariously on the part of the absentee incumbent. Andrews examines the lives of some of the most famously scandalous clergy and finds that there is little evidence for their alleged crimes or for their neglect of their duties. Even the notorious John Froude is shown to have taken not less than two and sometimes three services every Sunday in the parishes in his care (Andrews 1964, 153), which is more than most clergy manage today. The parish vestry was a unit of local government, raising rates, administering poor relief and education and repairing roads and bridges. For the most part the parish vestries seem to have functioned and we can only conclude that the parlous state of the rural Church in the early 19th century has been somewhat overstated.

Brooks’ study of church building in the rural parishes south and east of Exeter demonstrates that the population of rural communities rose steadily between 1810 and 1840 before declining at a similar rate in the second half of the century (Brooks 1995, Fig 10). Rural poverty and unrest was certainly a problem; ‘Agricultural capitalism and demographic pressure had produced widespread distress and, intermittently, violence’ (Brooks, 1995, 66). The development of agricultural machinery brought unemployment to the casual labourer. Riots exploded in rural areas and, in some places, prosperous farmers were besieged in their own homes by hungry mobs, as at Gornhay, near Tiverton in 1847 (WT, 22.05.1847; EFP, 20.05.1847; Parker, forthcoming). As in the towns, large numbers of increasingly disaffected men and women living on the borderline of poverty were a very visible problem and rural church expansion may have been aimed at addressing this, if only to ensure that ‘the poor have the gospel preached to them’ (Matthew 11:5).

Brooks notes that the ‘response to the rapidly increasing populations of the first half of the century was slow in coming’, and that ‘most church building and restoration took place in the second half of the century....by which time parish populations were everywhere in steep decline’ (Brooks 1995, 56), yet the physical and documentary evidence recovered during this research shows that there were high levels of activity in the rural church during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Later 19th-century restoration has tended to distort this picture through the removal of 18th and early 19th century furnishings, yet many churches in rural areas were enlarged and improved to meet this perceived need. The expansion of and re-establishment of church schools in rural areas in affiliation with the National Society in the early part of the century is perhaps also an indication of greater vitality and social engagement of the Church with the poor in rural communities than is widely accepted (Bovett 1989).

Historians of the 19th-century Church have tended to concentrate on the effects of rural depopulation and the consequent pressure upon church accommodation and social welfare systems in large towns and cities. It is less well understood that the rural church was also prolific in the addition of extra church accommodation and that this provision increased in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. New accommodation was generally provided through the erection of galleries and aisles. These interventions were in some respects more dramatic than anything wrought by later Victorian restorations, involving the insertion of enormous structures into the shells of small medieval churches, often with scant regard for their appearance and structural stability. The removal of so many galleries and pews during mid- to late-Victorian restorations has made it difficult to get an impression of the sheer complexity and confusion of the interior of an ordinary church of the early 19th century. Galleries might extend around the western, northern and southern sides of a church, and sometimes, as at Combeinteignhead, across the chancel arch too, in the place of the ancient rood loft (Thorne 1982, 35). These galleries might be reserved for specific groups or activities, such as charity-school children or singing groups and might be painted or marbled in different colours to reflect the status of different groups or railed off by curtains. They tended to have their own entrances, approached either by internal or external stairs and often locked against interlopers from other sections of the community. Other sections of the church, such as the base of the tower and the transepts might be screened off to form family pews, vestries or parish schools. Lighting and heating such places was problematic and in addition to the fireplaces in private pews, many 19th-century churches had stove pipes looping through the interior before vanishing either through the roof or windows, in many cases presenting a very severe fire risk.

Few churches in Devon now retain interiors of this type. The most celebrated Georgian interiors, such as Parracombe or Molland in North Devon are positively rational compared to the layouts of churches known from early Victorian plans or drawings or from the few surviving examples nationally, such as St Mary's Whitby in Yorkshire, or Minstead in Hampshire; this is, possibly, one of the reasons why they survive. Some impression of the effect of a galleried interior

can still be felt in William Spreat's engravings of the churches of Sidbury (Fig. 52) and Dartmouth St Saviour (Fig. 134).

The removal of galleries by Victorian restorers is taken so much for granted that we sometimes forget to inquire when and why they were first installed. The pilot survey of the rural churches in the Hundred of Wonford, undertaken for this thesis, revealed that, although some churches, such as Alphington, St Thomas and Whitestone already had Elizabethan or Jacobean galleries (parts of which remain), a very large number of galleries were newly inserted in the late 18th or early 19th centuries. For example, new galleries were installed in the north aisle at Heavitree in 1823 (EFP 24.04.1823), at Chagford in c.1824 (Faculty Causes: Chagford 1829; LPL ICBS 00585), at Drewsteignton in 1826 (LPL ICBS 00644 Folios 9ff), at Topsham in 1826-8 (LPL ICBS 00794 Folios 32ff), at Cheriton Bishop in 1832 (DHC WSL Cheriton Bishop Vestry minutes 22.09.1831), at Pinhoe in 1833 (LPL ICBS 01534, 01534a) and 'recently' at South Tawton in 1840 (EDAS SB I, 8 entry c 1843). Aisles, Transepts or other substantial additions to the earlier buildings to provide further accommodation are recorded at Topsham in 1791-2 (EFP 28.07.1791), St Thomas in 1828 (LPL ICBS 00322 folios 12ff), Brampford Speke in 1832 (EFP 26.06.1834) and Upton Pyne in 1833-8 (White 1850, 215). The gallery at Drewsteignton bore a placard, which still survives, announcing that it provided free seats for 70 persons 'to remain free and unappropriated for ever'.

#### *An Antiquarian Restoration of the early 19th century*

Not all early 19th-century refurbishments were undertaken in the *ad hoc* way described above, without attention to the aesthetic qualities of the building and its antiquities. Even galleries could be regarded as a sympathetic addition to medieval buildings and in many cases great care was taken to provide an attractive interior which reflected something of the antiquity of the medieval building. The parish church of Bridford, on the eastern edge of Dartmoor, was repaired and refurnished in the c.1810-15 by the Rev. Mr Carrington, incumbent from 1805-50, who left a description of his work in a manuscript 'Parochial History of Bridford' (unpaginated typescript by R. Waterfield held at the D19CP). This provides a fascinating account of the way in which a medieval church and genuine medieval artefacts were adapted to fit early 19th-century liturgical requirements.

Mr Carrington lamented the removal in the 18th century of the old bench seating, which had been replaced in stages between 1756 and 1788. The new seating seems to have risen in tiers at the west end of the church (which were, confusingly, also described as 'galleries'). Carrington hoped 'to live long enough to induce my parishioners to do away with...raised seats and...galleries

and to build a gallery of a character to suit the interior'. He seems to have intended a raised, western gallery, since he remarks that the font had 'an old cover of wood and of an ogee shape and of no beauty, [which] will, I hope, be replaced by a better if the gallery is ever built, under which and at the end of the ambulatory it would be proper to station the font'... 'I wish I may live to see the gallery supersede those vile raised seats' (ibid.). The gallery seems never to have been built and the 18th-century pews still survive in part, reset as a dado around the walls of the aisles and featuring very handsome raised-fielded panels (Fig 82)

Carrington was interested in the ancient woodwork in which his church abounded, though he was not above moving sections of it about and reconfiguring it to suit his purposes. He writes that the pulpit 'which was then a semi-hexagon' was moved in about 1813 'from south of the skreen [sic], where it stood at foot of the rood stair'. It was necessary to add two compartments to it, which was 'executed under my inspection', by cannibalising parts of the screen then covered by pews. 'A canopy to the pulpit was formed also by carved work and tracery taken from places where they were not seen [sic], especially some, beautifully cut, which covered the coping beam of the lattice work which separates the chancel of the north sittings' (ibid.). This probably describes the repositioning of the pulpit at the head of the central aisle and the provision of a tester or sounding board over it. Carrington, for all his antiquarian interests, was utilising the ancient woodwork to form a perfectly standard late-Georgian auditory church of the period.

'An old carved oak chest with figures in the monkish habits on the corners...The cover was sloped as for writing on' was remodelled by Carrington to form a 'fine oak chair...which stands on the south side of the Communion table. This seems to have been an 'altar chair' for the celebrant to sit in, in place of medieval sedilia. Altar chairs were often supplied in pairs to be positioned on either side of the altar, facing west, and are commonly decorated with naïve Gothic ornament (Fig 103). They continued to be supplied for the decoration of chancels into the 20th century and many still survive, though rarely now *in situ*. Carrington continues: 'The kneeling stool on the north side of the table was formed out of old church carving at the same time. The back of the chair was formerly the cover of the chest and in its centre the emblems of the crucifix are carved. I remember some very old decayed benches with carved ends at the back of the rectory seats in the chancel. The upright end of one represented an old woman with a broom pursuing a fox carrying a goose. These were so decayed as to defy attempts to restore them'. 'There are also some curious figures in the front of the reading desk which always stood where it now does but alterations in size have been made'(ibid.). The 'fine oak chair' remains in the chancel (Fig 83), but the reading desk and kneeling stool are no longer in the church, and the pulpit has been returned to a semi-



Fig. 82 The remains of the box pews at Bridford, reset as a dado around the walls (RWP Bridford DSC09662).

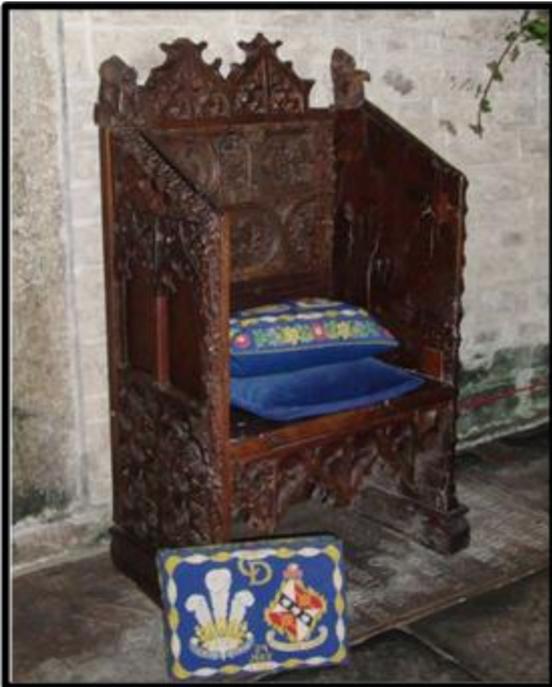


Fig. 83 The 'fine ok chair' made of reclaimed materials at Bridford (RWP Bridford DSC09680).

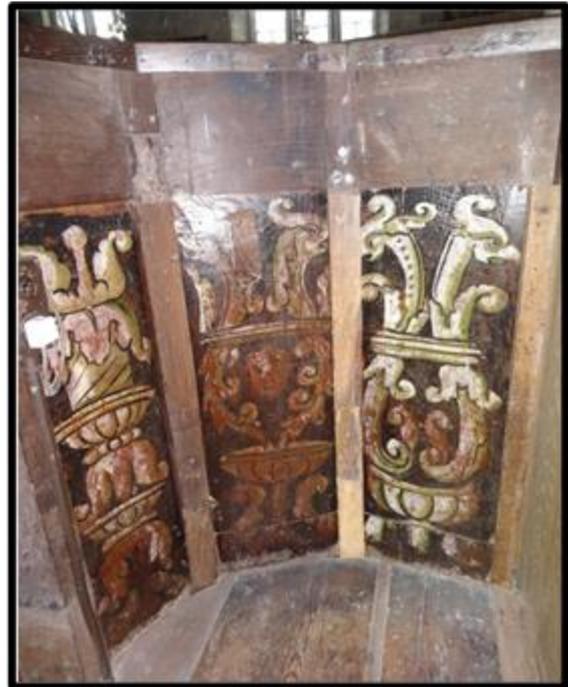


Fig. 84 Reclaimed material incorporated into the pulpit at Bridford (RWP Bridford DSC08815).

hexagonal form and re-sited in its original position at the foot of the rood stair. It still shows evidence of Carrington's reuse of old material in the form of painted panels of Italian grotesque work (Fig. 84).

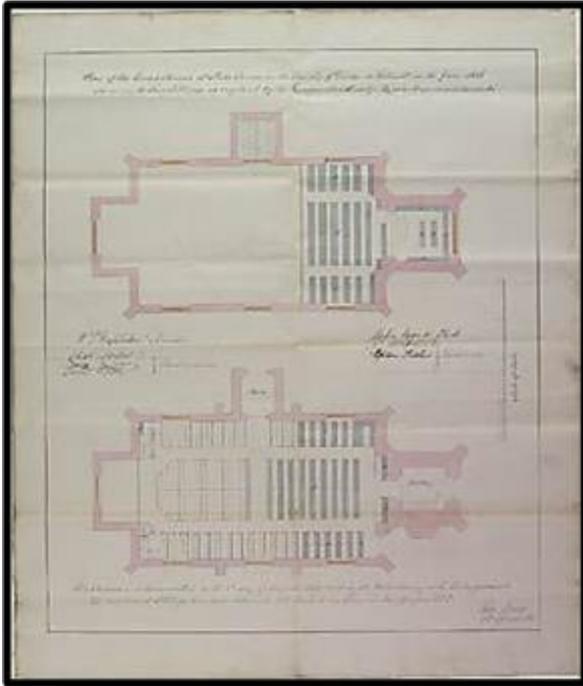


Fig. 85 One of the seating plans for the new church at Stoke Canon (LPL ICBS 01796).

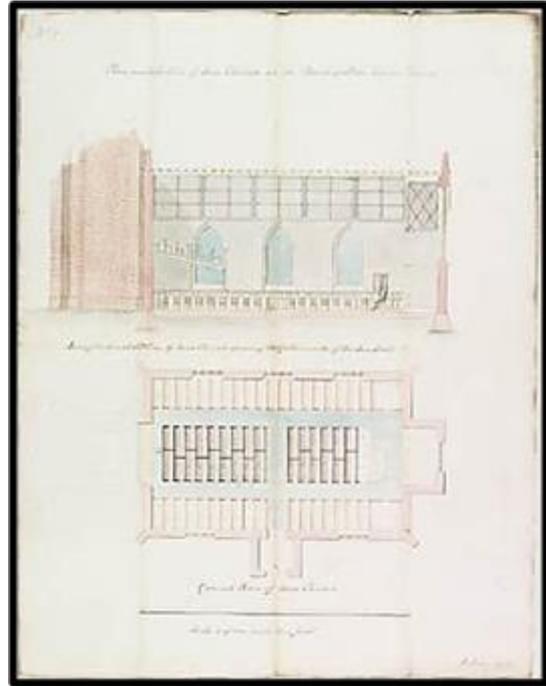


Fig. 86 An alternative plan for the seating at Stoke Canon (LPL ICBS 01796d).



Fig. 87 Stoke Canon: the rebuilt church of 1835 showing the broad nave spanned by an un-archaeological Gothic queen-post roof but with carefully replicated perpendicular window tracery (RWP Stoke Canon DSC00230).

*A new rural church: Stoke Canon*

Even an almost complete rebuilding of a church of the period might retain some elements of the medieval building, self-consciously displayed as artefacts. When the parish church of Stoke Canon, a rural parish on the northern edge of Exeter was found to be too small and too dilapidated to repair (EFP 19.02.1835), it was decided to completely rebuild it, on a much larger scale than the original. The architect was John Mason of Derby, and his drawings survive in the ICBS archives (LPL ICBS 01796). These include plans of the old church, showing the old layout of the box pews, and plans and sections of the new church, showing how the surviving medieval fabric was to be displayed. Monies for the rebuilding were raised through an ICBS grant and by public subscription. The benefactors' names were featured in a public notice of subscribers to the rebuilding; the Dean and Chapter, being patrons of the Living, gave £150, Rev. W. J. Napleton, the incumbent, £50, plus other donations from local worthies totalling a few shillings less than £500 (EFP 04.08.1835). Rebuilding was in progress from 1835-7. Needless to say, the cost of building was far in excess of subscriptions and the consecration of the church took place in 1836 when it was still unfinished and with the debt still outstanding (EFP 11.08.1836).

The plan of the proposed church shows that large open 'horse box' pews occupied the middle and east end of the pew blocks on the north and south sides of the church and there were ordinary east-facing pews in the rest of the church. The free seats were accommodated in a large gallery and towards the rear of the church. An alternative plan, perhaps as originally proposed, shows the pulpit and reading desks in the central aisle and fewer 'horse boxes' (LPL ICBS 01796 folios 33ff).

The church was enlarged under a wide-span roof without columns or piers, supported by queen-post trusses whose un-archaeological character was disguised by plaster mouldings and cusping (Fig 87). There was a shallow chancel recess at the east end and the medieval tower was retained on the west. The central block of seating was formed from the remains of the medieval bench seating, the varied patterns of the different bench ends being shown in the drawings. These richly-carved seats were, perhaps surprisingly, of lower status than the box pews along the side walls, which had plain, wainscot panels, some fragments of which survived until a recent reordering. The barbarously magnificent Norman font was also retained, as was the Jacobean pulpit, which was to be sited on the north, balanced by two reading desks on the south side of the church against the east wall. These inclusions of historic furniture were clearly intended to show visible continuity with the ancient building. Although no other early fabric was preserved, the church was carefully detailed; the window tracery was designed in the perpendicular style and might well have been modelled upon the original medieval tracery.

The finest features of the church are the chancel fittings, including an arcade of cusped stone panelling to the altar recess in a very rich Gothic style, with four panels to contain the Creed and Decalogue boards and a central panel for a large oil painting (Fig. 88). This panelling was the work of ‘our talented architect... John Hayward, of this city’ and ‘though still in an unfinished state reflects the highest credit on that gentleman’s professional skill’ (EFP 11.08.1836). Hayward appears already by this time to have been leading the field in the design of Gothic revival furnishings and it is fair to say that his contribution is far in advance of the design of the rest of the church. This is abundantly demonstrated by the remarkable Communion table, now relegated to service as a coffee table at the west end, decorated with naïve Gothic ornament and bearing the incumbent’s initials in place of the sacred monogram (Fig. 89). No incongruity between these two expressions of the Gothic revival seems to have been noticed at the time. Indeed, the rebuilt church was featured with pride as the frontispiece of W. Spreat’s *Picturesque Sketches of the Churches of Devon* in 1842.

The foundation stone was laid at a service featuring considerable ceremonial, which demonstrates the potential of late-Georgian worship to incorporate the community and utilise forms of religious symbolism. A procession of men was formed carrying staves and banners, followed by the children of the Sunday Schools, girls carrying nosegays, and three girls bearing corn and two silver flagons; the churchwardens and clergymen ‘in full canonicals’, while gentlemen, visitors, yeomanry, tradesmen, husbandmen and aged inhabitants brought up the rear. The 100th psalm was sung by the united choirs of neighbouring parishes accompanied by a band (EFP 30.04.1835). At the church’s consecration in 1836, the musical performances were ‘executed with much taste and ability under the direction of Mr Stone of Poltimore, assisted by several vocalists from this city’ (EFP 11.08.1836). Although these two services were admittedly special occasions and were celebrated with extraordinary pomp, it is evident from these accounts that many of the local churches had some form of musical tradition which directly involved the community in worship, and that vestments, ceremonial and symbolism were utilised when appropriate, perhaps as long as it were not too overtly ‘Catholic’. The corn and flagons, after all, are relatively discreet and uncontroversial symbols of the Holy Eucharist. These accounts provide an image of the Church in a rural parish, before the reforms of the Oxford Movement, as far from moribund and might be used to challenge later Victorian perceptions of lifeless and perfunctory worship in the Georgian Church. The Gothic detail of the building, though very far from convincing was nevertheless a sign that architects were increasingly treating Gothic as a style to be taken seriously, a style that was governed by principles, even though it lacked ‘proportion’.



Fig 88 The sanctuary at Stoke Canon, a shallow recess rather than a fully developed chancel, but lined with highly competent Gothic panelling in stone, an early work of John Hayward (RWP Stoke Canon DSC00170).



Fig 89 The former Communion table at Stoke Canon is probably contemporary with Hayward's sanctuary panelling and bears the incumbent's initials. This would have been wholly unacceptable to ecclesiologists! (RWP Stoke Canon DSC00207).



Fig. 90 W. Spreat's 1845 engraving of the rebuilt church of Stoke Canon from the east, showing the shallow chancel projection and the un-medieval roofline typical of the buildings of the period.



Fig. 91 Holy Trinity, Exeter, (1819), showing attempts at archaeological detail derived from the west front of Exeter Cathedral (inset) The pinnacles on the west screen are here restored (RWP Exeter; Holy Trinity DSC03306).

*'Archaeological' Gothic in the early 19th century*

The new parish church of the Holy Trinity (1819-20) in Exeter was one of the most carefully detailed Gothic buildings of the early 19th century. The church replaced a medieval church, which stood close to the South Gate, with its tower projecting into the road. The medieval building appears to have been unpopular both because it was so close to the gate that it caused traffic congestion, because of its alleged structural condition and also because the floor of the church was so densely filled with interments that they came to 'no great depth beneath its surface' (EFP, 29.05.1817). The Head of the Exeter Dispensary, S. J. Milford, a wealthy member of the congregation, campaigned for the demolition of the building and its replacement with a new church, even bringing a bill of indictment against his own parish on account of the dilapidated state of the building (EFP, 17.07.1817). A letter in the same paper a fortnight or so later pointed out that there was some disagreement as to how dangerous the building had actually become, and questioned the need for rebuilding (EFP, 31.07.1817).

In November 1818 Milford again proposed rebuilding and lamented how the 'burthen must in no small degree, be felt by the lower classes of the payers towards parochial expenses'. He then proposed a subscription list to which he donated £100 (D19CP, Holy Trinity Exeter, index card 3). The published subscription list stressed the heavy burden of the project on the parish, which contained large numbers of people in 'low circumstances' as a result of the 'decay of its staple trade' (EFP, 25.05.1819). Nevertheless, the project continued: a competition was announced in December 1818, with a first prize of 10 Guineas and a second prize of 5 Guineas (EFP, 17.12.1818).

The church was completely demolished and rebuilt in 1819-20. The replacement building survives, though no longer in ecclesiastical use, and the original plans, designed by Robert Cornish (1760-1844) and his son Robert Stribling Cornish (1788-1871) also survive (LPLICBS 00171 folios 19ff). Their application for grant aid was rejected, and a second subscription list was necessary to defray the cost of the building (EFP, 15.07.1819). Milford was clearly proud of his achievement and believed in its beneficial effects upon society; he gave a long speech at the ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone, in which he remarked 'is there not reason to believe, if our churches had long since been enlarged, or new ones built adequate to the increased population... that our goals would not be, as we now see them..., disgustingly and portentously full' (EFP, 01.07.1819). The Flying Post also believed in the health benefits of the demolition of the church: 'By the removal of the obstruction to the free circulation of air from the south the whole neighbourhood will be drier, cleaner and more salubrious' (ibid., 22.04.1819).

Brooks, in his *'Critical Notes'* held at the Devon 19th-century Churches Project, was not enthusiastic about Holy Trinity. He writes: 'None of the details, none of the structure, convey any kind of conviction, nor any kind of authentic Gothic identity' (D19CP, Brooks, manuscript notes dated 25.09.1979); this seems unfair. Compared with the new church of 20 years later at Countess Wear (Fig 17) which was constructed in 1837-9 to designs by Henry Lloyd of Bristol (1812-1887). Holy Trinity is remarkable for its attempt at archaeologically correct details (Fig 91) admittedly these are grafted on to a plain rectangular box not unlike that of Countess Wear.

The west front of Holy Trinity clearly references the west façade of Exeter Cathedral, with an 'image screen' masking the lower part, originally surmounted with four gabled and crocketed pinnacles. Above this a blind west window is surmounted by a battlemented parapet, flanked by similar large pinnacles, above which the gable of the church peers in very much the manner of the uppermost gable of the Cathedral (Fig 91 inset). The sides of the church are less architectural, though the use of spherical triangles in the tracery of the windows may be a reference to Thomas of Witney's work in the nave of the Cathedral. The use of brattished horizontal transoms to express the position of the internal galleries compares favourably in terms of architectural honesty with the rebuilt church of St Edmund on the Bridge, Exeter (1832-4), by Andrew Patey (d.1834), in which the northern and southern galleries cut across the inner faces of tall, perpendicular-style windows without any architectural expression on the exterior.

The east window at Holy Trinity was flanked by crocketed ogee canopies (Fig 92), probably original, which at the time of the closure of the church housed full length images of Moses and Aaron but may originally have featured the Decalogue. These show a distinct advance in knowledge and understanding of Gothic detail (photographs by A. Dean, copies in the Author's Collection). The same is undoubtedly true of the chancel screen and reredos provided in 1822 for the rural church of Haccombe, at the expense of Sir Henry Carew, Bart (Figs 93, 94). These were designed by John Kendal, architect to Exeter Cathedral and show similar careful attention to authenticity (TEDAS 1ss (1867) p 63; See also Lysons *Magna Britannia* VI 2 (1822), 2500).

The Gothic detail of Holy Trinity is important because the source and inspiration was not the genuine medieval building which previously occupied the site, but the Cathedral. Although the architect appears to have been archaeologically inclined, he did not see the existing medieval building as an archaeological artefact to be respected, and chose instead to import his detail from another source.



Fig. 92 The interior of Holy Trinity, Exeter, (photographed by Austin Dean).



Fig. 93 The Altarpiece by John Kendall at Haccombe (RWP Haccombe DSC03817).



Fig. 94 The chancel screen at Haccombe designed by John Kendall and installed in 1822 (RWP Haccombe DSC03847).



Fig. 95 The exterior of the extraordinary octagonal church of St James (1817-21) at West Teignmouth, from a postcard in the author's collection.



Fig. 96 St James, West Teignmouth, the interior (RWP Teignmouth; St James DSC00330).

Similar late-Georgian referencing of medieval architecture can be explored in two highly eccentric churches in the fishing and resort town of East and West Teignmouth. St James, West Teignmouth (1817-21), attributed by Pevsner and Cherry to the London architect W. E. Rolfe (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 796), but built under Andrew Patey's supervision, is loosely modelled upon the octagon of Ely Cathedral (Figs 95, 96), whereas St Michael East Teignmouth (1823), designed by Patey, replaced a notable Romanesque building. At both churches Patey retained the medieval tower but rebuilt the body of the church entirely. It is unlikely that the octagonal form or strange detailing of St James' was inspired by any part of the demolished church. Patey's later church of St Michael, however, features corbel tables with grotesques modelled in Roman cement and at least one impressively 'Norman' doorway (Fig. 98). The interior has cushion capitals surmounting the absurdly elongated wooden arcade posts (Fig. 99). Although these features do not convince, it is not unlikely that Patey was trying to demonstrate an awakening sense of the historic character of this church and that he aimed, to a degree, to perpetuate and preserve this character in the new building. The planning of the rebuilt St Michael's was also unusual, with the pulpit placed in the tower arch at the opposite end from the chancel. This suggests that the pews were laid out collegiate-fashion, facing north and south, an arrangement which seems to have been rare in Devon.

*Liturgical planning in the early 19th century*

The careful replication of medieval detail at Holy Trinity, Exeter did not extend to the plan and layout of the furnishings. Cornish and Son's plans of the interior (Fig. 100) show seating in the form of large private 'horse box' pews arranged to face north and south and a central three-decker pulpit standing in front of the altar. At the west end a narthex or western vestibule was created by a screen, with a central vestry. Free benches were aligned facing north-south down the central aisle, but the majority of the free seating was in the galleries (LPL ICBS 00171 folios 19ff). The layout was thus very much that of a typical 'preaching box', in which the altar and font were subordinated to the pulpit, which dominated the interior and, because of the presence of galleries, could rise to a considerable height, entirely blocking the view of the altar.

This type of liturgical planning was loathed by Victorian ecclesiologists, who understood it to owe nothing to medieval precedent and generally preferred church seating to face east. The source for this type of plan was, however, undoubtedly 'medieval', being derived from the traditional collegiate arrangement of cathedral choirs or college chapels, where north- and south-facing ranks of seating, often utilising medieval choir stalls, allowed for a broad, central aisle which could be occupied by moveable benches facing in either direction according to the liturgical focus

of the church. These broad aisles or alleys provided a natural position for free and unappropriated seats. Clergy would have been familiar with this type of planning from their own college chapels, and it is not surprising to find it adopted in parish churches. Few examples of collegiate liturgical planning survive today in Devon, though the private chapel on the Killerton Estate, near Exeter (1838-41) by C.R. Cockerell, is a notable exception (Fig. 101). The chapel of Wynards Almshouses, Exeter, as restored for the Kennaway family in 1863-4, also had seats for the almsmen arranged in collegiate fashion within the western part of the church, and the plan formerly existed at Harberton (LPL ICBS 00703 and 00703 a, b).

The reconstruction in 1826 of St Stephen's Church, Exeter, probably by Joseph Rowe of Exeter (D19CP Vestry Minutes BDBA, St Stephen's Exeter, Card 2), provided a completely un-archaeological interior of spindly timber quatrefoil columns and depressed pointed arches forming a nave and two aisles. Recent archaeological works (Brown, forthcoming) have shown that the interior of the church was entirely replanned with a layout featuring three separate blocks of box pews divided by two alleys aligned within the rows of new columns. This shows little sensitivity to the historic structure, even though the whole outer envelope of the late 17th-century Gothic building was preserved and must, externally, have seemed little changed. The new interior includes columns built across the medieval chancel arch, the southern jamb of which was chopped away to provide access to a centrally-placed pulpit which formed the focus of the interior.

The chancel remained in its medieval position in the bow, arching over St Stephen's Street and, when James Davidson visited in 1834, a 'large altar screen of wood, formed by Corinthian pilasters and a pediment' remained in place (Davidson 1834, 185; Collings 2006, 2). This classical reredos perhaps suggests that earlier chancel furnishings had also been retained when the church was rebuilt. The reuse of these furnishings and the reredos perhaps reflects limited availability of funds. This, rather than an inability to accurately reproduce Gothic detail, may have determined the un-archaeological character of the building.

There is evidence that, when desired late-Georgian craftsmen could accurately reproduce medieval detail. When the wealthy parish of St Petrock, Exeter, remodelled and repaired their medieval church in 1828-9, they were able to fund the almost exact replication of the late-medieval south arcade in an extension of an existing aisle to the south west (Dymond, 1882, 2) and also a less convincing but nonetheless accomplished reredos in freestone by Mr Davey, Statuary (EFP 12.11.1829; Fig. 103). St Petrock's also has a dado representing the remains of a box-pewed interior. This dado appears to represent the box pews of 1828 still *in situ*; triangular nicks in the top rail show the positions of the pew partitions and the seating layout of at least part of the early 19th-century interior could probably be reliably reconstructed from this evidence.



Fig. 97 St Michael, East Teignmouth, the extraordinary neo-Norman church of 1823, The tower and chancel are later additions (RWP Teignmouth; St Michael DSC00266).



Fig. 98 The southern doorway, in the Romanesque style, of the rebuilt church of St Michael, East Teignmouth, by Andrew Patey (1823) (RWP Teignmouth St Michael DSC00314).

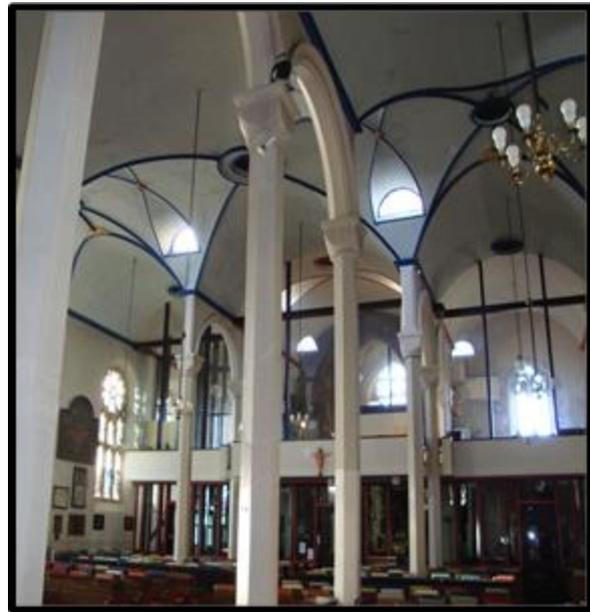


Fig. 99 The remarkably un-archaeological interior of St Michael's, with timber columns crowned with cushion capitals (RWP Teignmouth St Michael DSC00293).

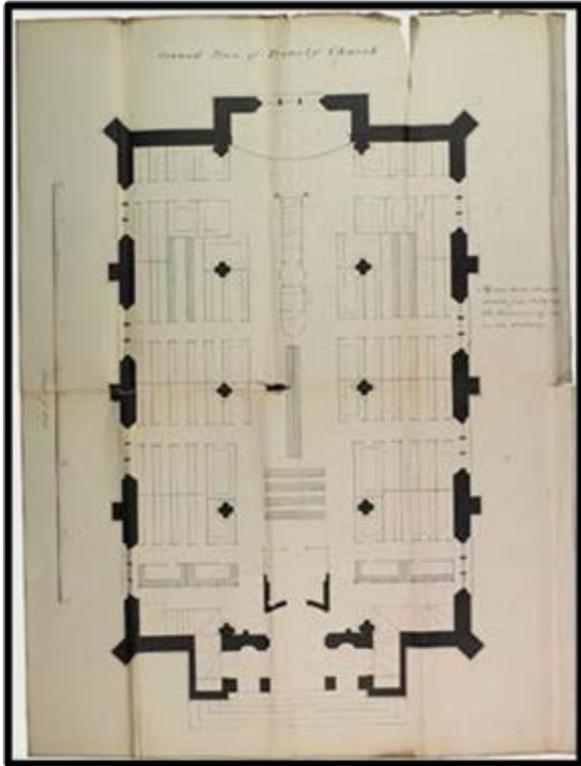


Fig. 100 The seating plans for the new church of the Holy Trinity, Exeter (LPL ICBS 00171a).

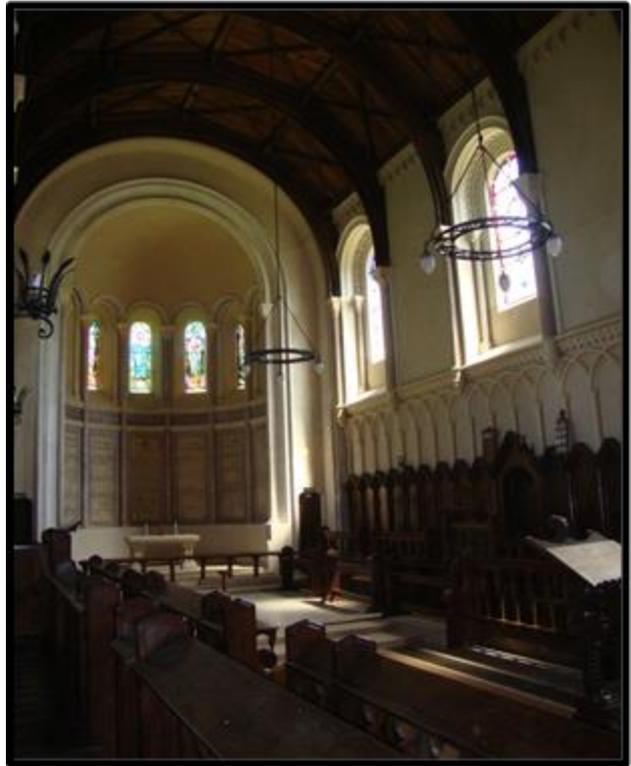


Fig. 101 The chapel at Killerton (1838-41), laid out on a collegiate plan (RWP Killerton DSC05031).



Fig. 102 The interior of St Stephens, Exeter, showing the spindly Gothic interior focussed on the pulpit. The seats are 19th century, but arranged in the same pattern as the former box pews (Photograph kept in the church).

*Reuse of old material in new buildings*

At Holy Trinity, despite the concerns over cost, no original architectural features were retained or reused in the building. This appears to have been unusual for the period. The church of St Sidwell, on the outskirts of Exeter (Fig. 104, 105), was completely rebuilt in 1812-13 under the direction of the architect William Burgess of Exeter, who was to utilise large parts of the medieval fabric, including the nave arcades, bosses from the original roof and also some of the furniture (Davidson, Church Notes, E, 15. 09.1840, 225). At Dawlish, Andrew Patey's rebuilt church of St Gregory (1824) also reused and extended the arcades and other elements of the demolished medieval church, and at Heavitree the new church by David Mackintosh (1844) also incorporated the arcades and even the window tracery of the demolished medieval building.

The medieval church of St Sidwell is described by Jenkins in 1806 as retaining many early furnishings, including a medieval chancel screen which Jenkins informs us formerly supported a rood loft 'in the Papal times' and had been recently re-painted and gilt (Jenkins 1841, 336-7). The galleries of this church had also recently been enlarged under the direction of the Surveyor J. Dean, of Northernhay Exeter (EFP, 29.12.1803), but evidently the structure of the building was beginning to give cause for concern, since in the spring of 1812 public notice was given of application to Parliament for an Act for repairing the church (*ibid.*, 02.04. 1812). The funding situation soon became desperate: a public notice was published with an appeal for further subscriptions, pointing out that owing to circumstances 'impossible for the trustees to foresee or provide against', a further £3000 was needed. They could not impose a further rate as the population were too poor and it would 'press particularly heavy upon many of the parishioners' (EFP 29. 07 .1813). After the Church was reopened in 1813 the first collection was devoted to defraying the cost of the rebuilding (EFP, 30. 09. 1813) and the parish had to apply for a further Act of Parliament to borrow a further £3200 on the credit of the rates in 1814. Shares and annuities were invited as before, though this time the shares were advertised at not less than £25 each (EFP, 14. 07. 1814).

In 1817 William Burgess made a public statement defending his reputation. He stated that the original proposals had envisaged a cost of £4,300 for the provision of a new roof, the rebuilding of part of the walls, the reinstatement of the old gallery and pews; the old materials to be reused. In fact the fabric was so entirely decayed as to render total rebuilding 'indispensably necessary' and this was subsequently ordered by the Trustees. The floor of the old church, which



Fig. 103 The early 19th-century altarpiece at St Petrock, Exeter, dating from 1827, with a pair of Gothic altar chairs dating from 1845 and remains of box pewing forming a dado (RWP Exeter St Petrock DSC01718).

The financial difficulties consequent upon rebuilding were well recorded in the local papers and provide a good indication of the process a church community might have to undergo if they chose to rebuild their church without the benefit of a wealthy patron. The Trustees were empowered under the Act to borrow £5000 'on the credit of the rates' and 'take up the sum of £3000 in shares, of not less than £50 each, on the mortgage and assignment of the said rates'. The interest was to stand at 5% per annum, the sum borrowed to be cleared out of the rates. The Trustees were also prepared to agree to annuities for lives on sums of not less than £100 (EFP, 04. 06. 1812). A further appeal for funds followed in February 1813, when it was noted that £3200 had already been raised by loans, but that a further £1800 was required. It is evident that the church had been entirely closed during the period, since the trustees announced that they were 'anxious to shorten as much as possible the period of having no divine service in so large a parish, the evil consequences of which are too apparent' (EFP, 01. 02. 1813). was 'excavated in every part for interments' had to be arched over and raised above the level of the adjoining ground. Labour and materials were then at the highest prices ever known. He gave the cost of new church as £7,398 12s, 2d; the cost of the enlargement of the burial ground, demolition of the old building, raising

the site etc. as £782, 8s, 2d; the architect's commission as £418, 9s. He claimed the full approbation of the Trustees for his work (EFP, 02. 12. 1817).

The enormous and rapidly-increasing population of St Sidwell's parish soon necessitated further enlargement of the church accommodation. In 1829-30 an application to the ICBS for the enlargement of the galleries by William Hooper, Architect, was rejected (LPL ICBS 01142 Folios 8ff). Soon afterwards the parish, undaunted by the outstanding debt for the rebuilding of the parish church embarked upon a project for a new proprietary chapel in the north-eastern part of the parish.

*Building New Proprietary chapels for Rich and Poor Congregations*

The project for a new proprietary chapel in St Sidwell's was mooted in 1835 when a large majority of those present at a public meeting voted in favour of pursuing subscriptions for a new church on land at St Ann's Almshouses, Old Tiverton Road. The clergy preferred a site further from the highway as 'preferable for devotional purposes' and also because this site had already been acquired from Lady Clifford (EFP, 30. 04. 1835). An application for grant aid to the ICBS was approved, and plans prepared by Henry Hooper of Exeter, Surveyor, survive (Fig 106). These show the ground plan and gallery of the church, the former with seats facing east and the galleries with north and south facing seats. Of these seats 282 in the gallery and 378 in the body of the church were to be free (LPL ICBS 01853 folios 35ff). The free sittings were situated towards the back in the galleries, and at the back, sides and, unusually, close under the pulpit and reading desk at ground-floor level. Evidence of the form of the seating survives in the former National Schools at the rear of the site, where plain panelled wainscoting derived from box pews may still be seen lining the walls, having been rejected from the church in a later Victorian phase of rebuilding (Fig 108)

The papers reported their satisfaction with the designs of the Messrs Hooper, builders, (they are never described as architects) and announced that: 'nothing more appropriate to the sacred purpose for which it is intended or the spot of ground on which it is proposed to erect it can well be conceived'. The buildings were to be in the Gothic style 'and will provide 1300 sittings, 630 of which will be free'. The chapel was on an ambitious scale; 35 feet high in the clear inside and with a spire at the west end rising to 116-117 feet, without the vane (this being taller than many of the city churches). The writer called for subscriptions in support of the project, which he felt would serve to beautify the city (EFP 28.05.1835). A subsequent Vestry meeting, in July 1835, reported that subscriptions had been insufficient, and resolved to apply to Bishop and Dean and Chapter for help (EFP, 09.07.1835). A public notice was therefore published, aiming to raise more

funds, and pointing out that ‘the parishioners are still burdened with a heavy rate to pay off a debt, of which £4000 still remains, contracted many years since in the extension of the parish church’ (EFP, 12.11. 1835). The money had still not been fully raised at the time of the consecration of the new church. Apart from a £500 grant from the Church Building Society, the entire cost was to be met by subscriptions (EFP, 01.12.1836). A subsequent appeal from the committee to clear the outstanding debt of £400-£500 reminded potential donors that the church was supported solely by the funds arising from pew rents ‘paid on the lowest possible scale’ (EFP, 20.04.1837). The Surveyors Charges were waived by Messrs Hooper but the Committee was still £700 short of the total cost (EFP, 12.04.1838) at the time of the consecration of the church. Although the Account of consecration described the new building as ‘handsome and spacious’ and the pulpit was an elaborate piece of late 17th-century carving donated by the Dean and Chapter, there was ‘no other ornament in the whole church but a small and very handsome King’s Arms in the front of the western gallery (EFP 01.12.1836). Indeed, despite hopes that the church would beautify the neighbourhood, it was never made the subject of an engraving or drawing. It was subsequently replaced by a late-Victorian building and no visual record of its external appearance is known.

By contrast, Bedford Chapel, a Proprietary chapel constructed as part of a fashionable housing development in Bedford Circus, is known only by its exterior. The building had a pedimented main elevation divided into two storeys, with a Doric portico masking the lower part and a small domed bell turret above. The classical detail of the building may have been intended to reflect the context of the building in a crescent of Regency houses, which were constructed in the 1830s to mirror an earlier 18th-century crescent. This was one of the most fashionable addresses in Exeter and the presence of the church within it was no doubt, as elsewhere, intended to add a certain *cachet*.

Bedford Chapel was erected by subscription in 1832. It was a galleried structure somewhat resembling a Georgian theatre, with vestries on the basement storey and an apsed recess for the altar to the west. Decorations were sumptuous: ‘the roof is very lofty and arched, decorated with gilded ornaments and wreaths of gilded laurels adorn the walls’... ‘a considerable amount of money has been spent at various times in decorating, or trying to decorate the place’ (Cresswell 1908, 15-16). The Creed and Commandments were displayed at the altar with the Royal Arms above. The stone pulpit and brass eagle lectern were later additions, presumably representing a late Victorian attempt to refurbish the church along more ecclesiastical lines (ibid.).

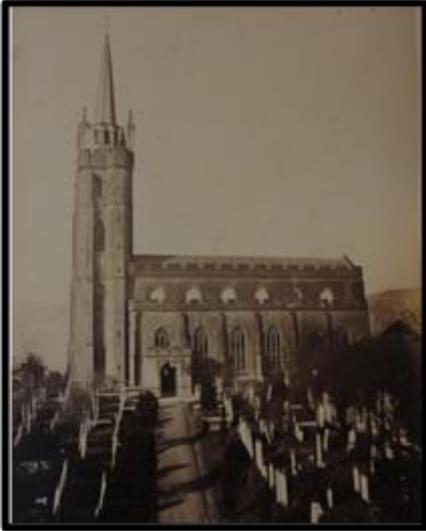


Fig 104 The rebuilt St Sidwell, Exeter (1812-13) by the local builder William Burgess (D&EI 1870 ROG).



Fig 105 The interior of St Sidwell before its destruction in 1942, showing the reused medieval arcades and the careful accommodation of the galleries as subordinate to them. The chancel is a later addition (D&EI 1870 ROG).

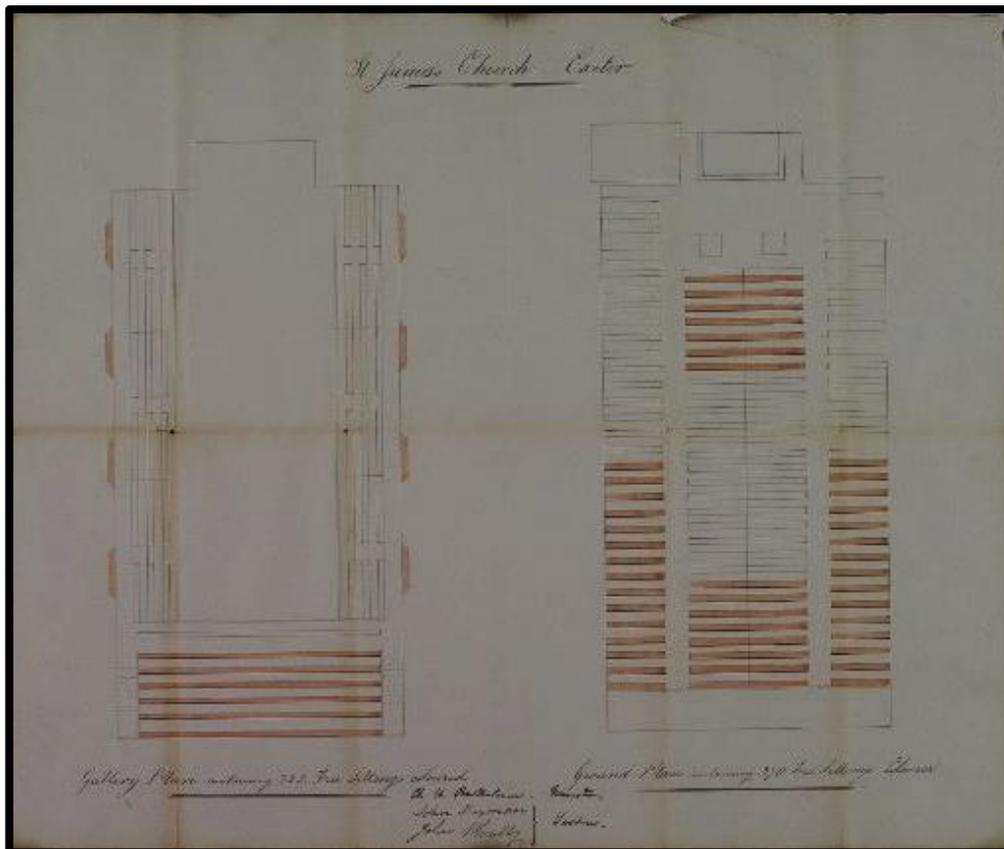


Fig 106 The new proprietary chapel of St James in Exeter (1835-8) by the local builder Henry Hooper, showing the layout of the free seats (LPL ICBS 01853).



Fig. 107 The interior of the proprietary chapel of St James, Exeter (1835), shortly before its rebuilding in the 1870s and 80s, showing a typical early Victorian church building. The church would originally have been seated with box pews, rather than chairs, and the fine 17th-century pulpit would originally have been centrally positioned (St James Archives).



Fig. 108 Remains of box pews of 1835 from the old St James, Exeter, ejected from the building in the 1870s and relocated into the former National Schools next door. Although the church building might be Gothic in style, the internal furnishings at this period tended not to be consistent with it (RWP Exeter; St James DSC06974)

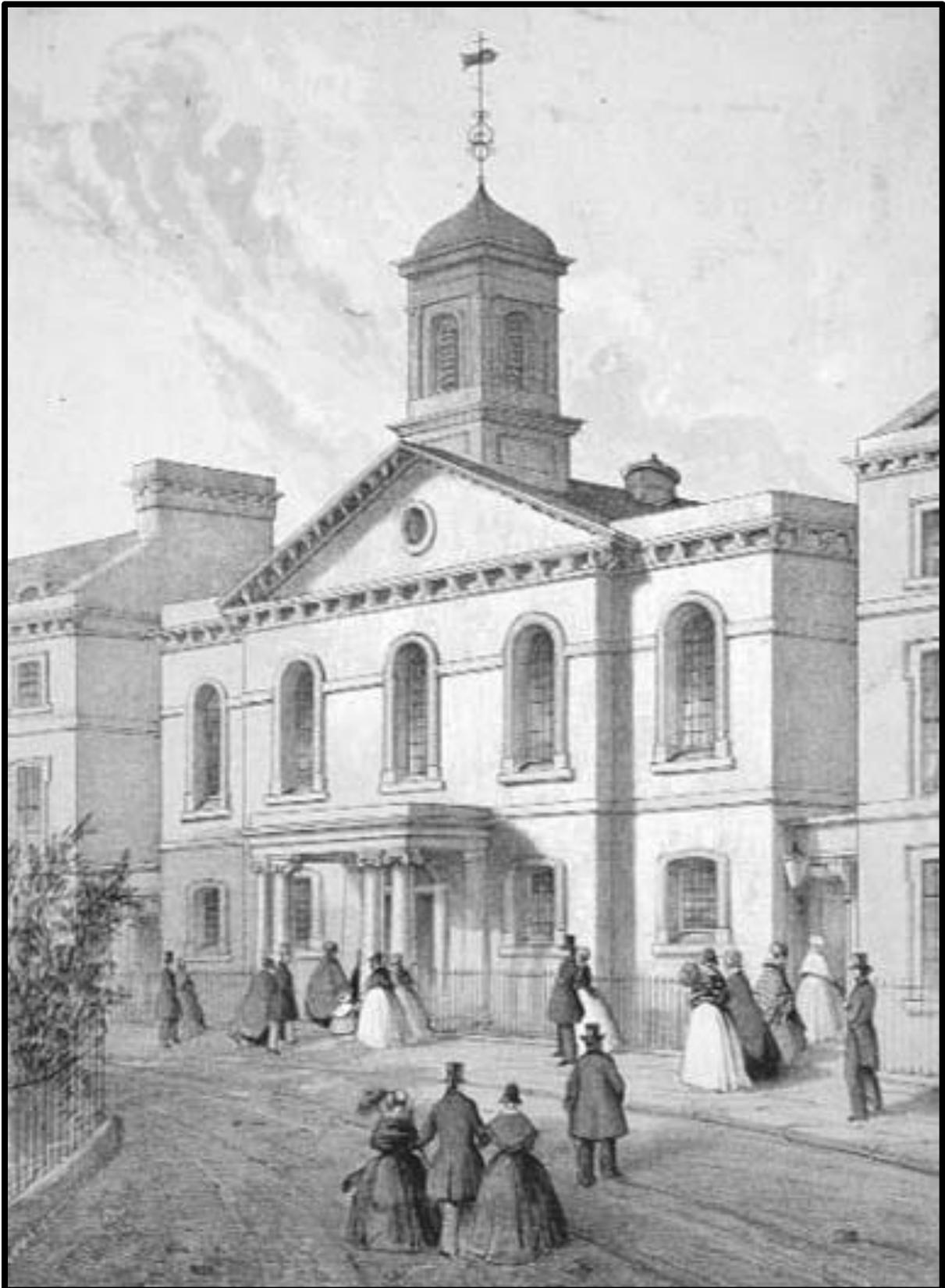


Fig. 109 Exeter, Bedford Chapel (1832) a proprietary chapel in the classical style, built by subscription in a fashionable district of the city (Lithograph by G. Townsend, 1860 (SWHC WCSL SC0889)).

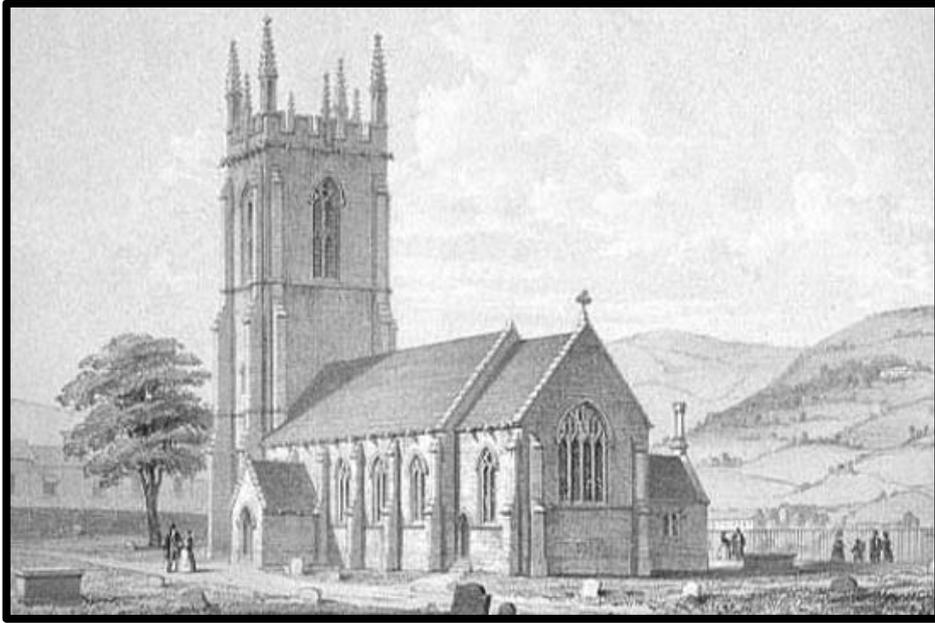


Fig. 110 Exeter, Allhallows on the Walls, the church as rebuilt in 1843-5 by John Hayward, in a perpendicular style (Lithograph by R.K. Thomas, c.1850).

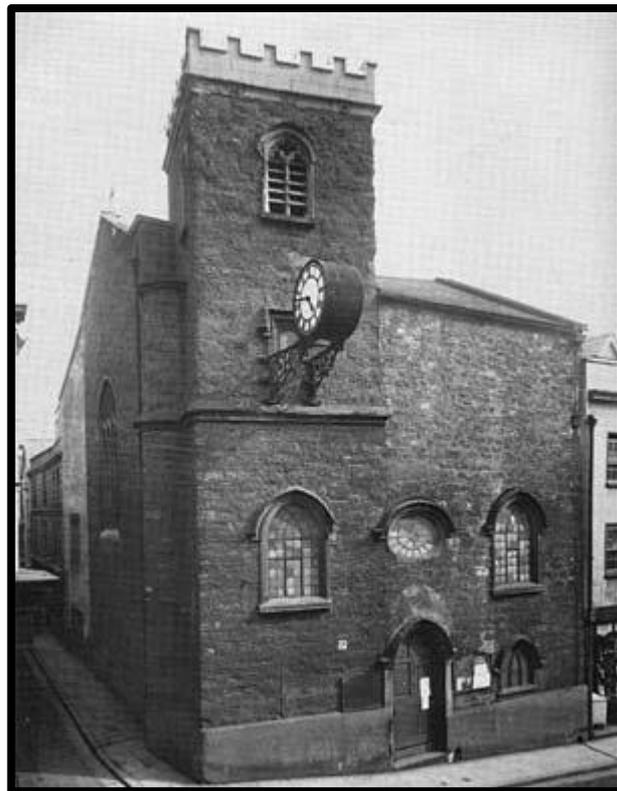


Fig. 111 Exeter, St John's Church Fore Street Hill rebuilt in 1843 either in ignorance of, or rejection of, ecclesiological fashions (Postcard in the Author's collection).

*Summary*

It is possible to show that, despite its declining wealth and industries, Exeter was active in the provision of new churches and the repair and restoration of historic churches during the early 19th century. Between 1810 and 1819, the suburban churches of St Sidwell and St David and the city church of Holy Trinity were wholly rebuilt, while the ancient church of St Olave's was reopened for public worship. Work intensified in the city during the decade from 1820-29, when Allhallows Goldsmith Street, St Stephen's and St Petrock's were all repaired and refurnished and the tower of St Sidwell's was restored. In the same decade there were proposals to enlarge St Mary Steps and St Mary Major, to add new galleries at St Sidwell's and to reopen St Kerrian's. Although these last four projects were unsuccessful, they show that church provision was very much on the agenda even before the arrival of the formidable new reforming bishop, Henry Philpotts, in 1831.

In the following decade, between 1830 and 40, St Pancras' was reopened, St Edmund's was rebuilt, Bedford Chapel, and St James' were constructed, St David's was enlarged, and the tiny medieval church of St Leonard's was replaced with a new, classical structure. In the 1840s St John's and St Lawrence's were restored, Allhallows on the Walls was provided with a new church and St Leonards was enlarged again.

It is instructive to compare the new Allhallows (Fig. 110) with St John's (Fig. 111), to see the difference the ecclesiological movement, even in its early stages, could make in the appearance and planning of churches. Prior to the 1840s Gothic features and furnishings could be archaeologically correct, and genuine medieval structures could be retained and reinstated, out of respect for their antiquity as much as for reasons of economy, yet these medieval features were used in association with liturgical layouts which owed nothing to medievalism, and which simply continued the pattern of Stuart and Georgian practice.

Nobody seems to have felt the incongruity of Gothic interiors filled with high, classically detailed box pews and galleries crossing the windows, since perhaps this was what they were used to. All of these churches, apart from Allhallows and St John's, were seated with box pews and all of them contained private pews for rent. This situation was anathema to the ecclesiologists and, through their activities, attitudes to the image and the archaeology of the parish church were to change rapidly, and permanently, within the next few decades.

### Sanctuary furniture in post-Reformation Devon

As the layout of the post-Reformation church and much of its furniture remained in general use until well into the 19th century, it is perhaps useful to outline the principal structures and features here, in order to assess how ecclesiological thinking after the 1840s may have changed them or assimilated them to realise their vision of an English church.

Although chantries and side altars had disappeared in the reforms of the mid 16th century, and galleries, new aisles and extra seating may have been added, there appears to have been no immediate and drastic change to the basic layout of a medieval church until the 18th century. Chantry chapels, transepts and other anomalous parts of the church might be acquired by local families for use as private pews, particularly if these chapels had previously been used for private burials pertaining to that family. Thus, the northern transept at Alwington seems to have functioned as the Yeo Vale Pew and remains enclosed today with box pew panelling, whereas the east end of the south aisle contains both the enormous canopied private pew of the Coffin family of Portledge and the seats of their servants (Fig 67).

Apart from these private seating areas it appears that most 16th- and early 17th-century seating schemes in Devon initially preserved their focus on the chancel to the east. Many such early seating schemes remain, including some of the most celebrated church interiors in the county, such as East Budleigh and Stoke-by-Hartland, showing that congregations were still assembled to face east, towards a distinct chancel which was in most cases still defined by the presence of a rood screen.

#### *Rood or chancel screens and the function of the chancel*

Although the Edwardian and Elizabethan reformers were hostile to the existence of rood lofts and roods, culminating in a royal order for their demolition dating from the 10th of October 1561, rood screens were not necessarily affected and the order specifically encouraged the retention of a 'comely partition' between the nave and the chancel (Williams 2008, 91, 93). As some destruction of screens had probably already occurred with the removal of images, the order went still further in that it required that 'Where no partition is standing there to be one appointed' (Ibid. 102). Screens were therefore not only to be retained, but also erected in new and repaired churches as one of the essential furnishings of a church.

One of the reasons for the retention of the rood screen after the Reformation was that responsibility for the maintenance for the fabric to the east of the screen fell upon the holders of the rectorial tithes and sometimes upon the incumbent, whereas to the west of the screen assimilated into the main seating area. Not only were existing screens preserved, though denuded

of their lofts and coving, but new screens were certainly erected and continued to be provided until a surprisingly late date in the 18th century<sup>29</sup>. Although many of these new screens utilise classical ornament, they clearly perpetuate the medieval arrangement of the church interior and in most cases, of course, the medieval screen was retained.

Examples of post-Reformation screens in Devon survive at Ermington (Fig. 113 and Branscombe (Fig. 115) in the south, and at Washfield (Fig. 112), Rose Ash (Fig. 114) and Cruwys Morchard (Fig. 116) near Tiverton, the latter erected as late as 1690-1700 (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 302). Although now configured as a private pew, the 17th-century screens of the Bluett pew at Holcombe Rogus (Fig. 68) have clearly been much altered and could conceivably also represent the remains of a post-Reformation chancel screen reset in its present position. Later 18th-century chancel screens also survive at Parracombe (incorporating some medieval fragments), Molland, Countisbury, Georgeham (Fig. 117) and Cheldon (Fig. 118), the latter assembled from a group of iron mace racks, of 18th-century date. This may be one of the later instances of a chancel screen prior to their revival by the ecclesiologists.

The provision of new screens was not, however, restricted to remote rural areas, and should not be seen merely as a product of rural conservatism; modern chancel screens were also provided in cities, at least up until the beginning of the 18th century, and older screens were repaired and recoloured, showing that they were still objects of admiration and importance. The pulpitum screen at the cathedral was enriched with new paintings in the 17th century, probably in 1638, to replace 14th-century sculptures which had been destroyed in an earlier period of iconoclasm (Brooks 1991, 219). At St Lawrence's Church in Exeter the chancel was screened off during the Commonwealth period with the remains of medieval stallwork ejected from the cathedral (Stabb 1908, 74; Cresswell 1908, 75) and the east end of the same church was panelled with reused material from the chapel of the Holy Ghost in the cathedral cloisters (*ibid.*). The screen formerly at St Kerrian's church in Exeter was described by Sir Stephen Glynne in the 19th century as a 'of once gaudy Italian work, but now rapidly perishing' (Cann-Hughes 1932). This may also have been a post-Reformation screen, perhaps dating from 1687, installed when the church was embellished with a new western gallery with painted armorial bearings. It is uncertain whether or not Charles Church in Plymouth was provided with a chancel screen; if so, this did not survive into the 19th century and no illustration is known of the church before it was refurnished in 1824; however, the remarkably ornate Gothic style of the building may well suggest that the interior also had consciously medievalising furniture.

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<sup>29</sup> The chancel screen at Zeal Monachorum, now removed, was installed in c. 1703 (Adams 2002, 53).



Fig. 112 The chancel screen of 1624 at Washfield (RWP Washfield DSC01067).



Fig. 113 The 17th-century chancel screen at Ermington (RWP Ermington DSC05665).



Fig. 114 The screen of 1618 at Rose Ash, enclosing the side chapel (RWP Rose Ash DSC04607 DSC03015).



Fig. 115 The 17th-century chancel screen at Branscombe (RWP Branscombe DSC02841).



Fig. 116 The chancel screen of  $\approx$ 1690 at Cruwys Morchard (RWP Cruwys Morchard DSC01330)



Fig. 117 The screen of  $\approx$ 1762 at Georgeham (RWP Georgeham DSC03015).



Fig. 118 The  $\approx$ 19th-century screen at Cheldon reusing 18th-century mace racks (RWP Cheldon DSC09216).

This evidence suggests that in post-Reformation Devon, before the late 18th century, the sanctuary was still maintained as a distinct space, set aside for the celebration of Holy Communion, whereas the nave became the principal place for the daily offices: matins and evensong. Church buildings retaining a screen were therefore effectively divided into two liturgical rooms, providing spaces for very different activities. The nave of the church would be dominated by the pulpit, reading desk and clerk's desk at which the daily offices would be celebrated. The chancel was retained as a secondary space for the far less frequent celebrations of Holy Communion.

The survival in Devon of numerous post-Reformation furnishings for chancels, including architectural reredoses and other furnishings of great dignity and beauty, show that the chancels were not entirely forsaken before the arrival of the ecclesiologists. Many of the more architecturally interesting fittings, though generally superseded by Victorian ecclesiologists with new fittings in an 'appropriate' Gothic style, were nevertheless retained in the churches either as ornaments, or physically incorporated into the new work, as though to emphasise the continuity of the Church not only with its pre-Reformation, but also with its post-Reformation past.

#### *Communicants benches and rails*

On Sacrament Sundays, when Holy Communion was to be celebrated after matins, those wishing to receive the Sacrament might pass through the screen to take their places around the altar and 'Tarry in the quire, or in some convenient place near the quire', whereas those 'that mind not to receive the said Holy Communion shall depart out of the quire'.<sup>31</sup> In several Devon churches (Figs 119, 120) communicants' benches remain. These were set against the north and south walls of the chancel in the immediate vicinity of the altar rails and the communicants sat on these benches during the Consecration in order to be 'conveniently placed for the receiving of the Holy Sacrament'<sup>32</sup> and then 'drew near' to receive the Sacrament at the altar rails 'all meekly kneeling'<sup>33</sup>. Communicants benches in the sanctuary, having no medieval precedent, were not generally tolerated to remain after Victorian restorations of churches, and the vast majority were removed. Examples of communicants' benches remain *in situ* at Satterleigh in north Devon and at St Martin's, Exeter. Communicant's benches are also recorded in an 18th-century drawing of the sanctuary at Pinhoe (Fig. 121), but no longer survive. Where such benches were not provided, the communicants may have sat in benches corresponding with modern choir stalls, 'in the quire' and this seems in some places to have allowed the preservation of medieval choirseats, some of which, as at Bovey Tracey, preserve medieval misericords.

<sup>31</sup> In accordance with the rubrics of the prayer book as proposed under Edward VI in 1549.

<sup>32</sup> In accordance with the prayer book rubrics of 1662.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

*Communion tables*

A great many 16th- and 17th-century Communion tables survive in Devon, although most are now disused, operating instead as side tables for church notices or perhaps as vestry tables. More than a hundred examples have been identified in the field research, though it is likely that many more remain but could not be inspected as they are currently locked in vestries. Some identifications are, of course questionable, as gifts of antique furniture to churches in recent years have often supplied early tables which may have been of secular origin or may have been derived from other contexts. At St Michael's Church, Mount Dinham in Exeter, the old Communion table from the former parish church of the Holy Trinity in Exeter was brought there upon the closure of that church in the 1970s; so, this Victorian church contains among its furnishings a rather handsome Communion table of *c.*1700.

Communion tables of 16th- or 17th-century date can be usually recognised by their turned legs either of baluster or columnar form, often with stretchers on four sides linking the feet and very often carved frieze work below the table top (Fig. 122). Sometimes Communion tables can be dated by inscriptions or feature the churchwardens' initials or names, as at Ide and at St Stephen's in Exeter (Fig. 122, 123). Examples for the 1620s and 30s generally seem to have columnar legs but some feature elaborately carved cup and cover ornaments, very richly carved, such as the superb and very large example of Elizabethan date at Pilton, near Barnstaple, still in use as the high altar (Fig. 125).

There seems to be relatively little evidence in Devon that these tables were ever used outside the chancel. Examination of surviving early Communion tables shows that many have three decorated sides and one plain side as though they were meant to stand close against the east wall in the ancient place of the altar. Others have more richly decorated legs on one side than the other, again suggesting they were used altar-wise, standing with their short ends facing north and south, rather than table-wise in the body of the church, aligned east-to-west with the nave or central alley. One example of this type may be found at Bishop's Tawton, in use as a nave altar although this does have a Victorian inscription on its eastern side, and it has clearly been heavily restored. A better-preserved example with only the front cup and cover legs fully carved and the rear legs left plain may be found at Axminster, dated 1639 (Fig. 124). These tables seem certain to have been used altar-wise, in whatever position they were placed.



Fig 119 Communicants benches and rails of the late 17th century at St Martin, Exeter (RWP Exeter; St Martin DSC03365).



Fig 120 Communicants benches and Victorian rails at Satterleigh, preserving an 18th-century arrangement of the chancel (RWP Satterleigh .DSC09454).

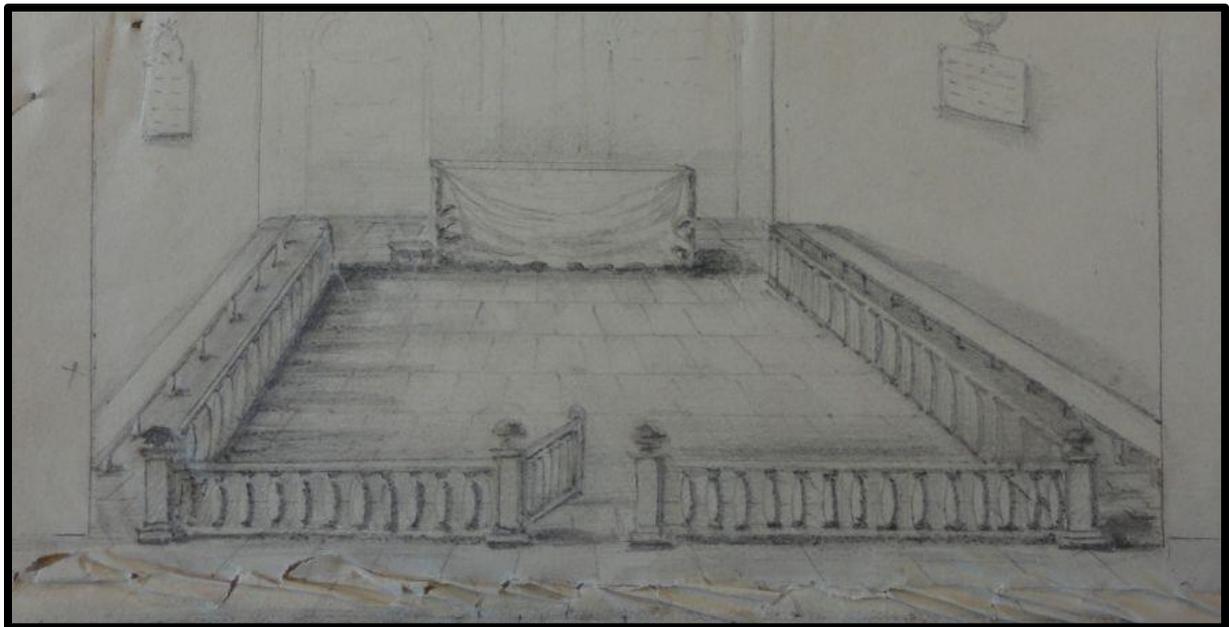


Fig 121 The 18th-century arrangement of altar rails and Communion benches at Pinhoe (undated drawing *c.*1800 SWHC WCSL P&D 01876).



Fig 122 A disused Communion table dated 1637 with columnar legs at Ide (RWP Ide DSC03716).



Fig 123 A Communion table of *c.*1664 with columnar legs and an inscription at Exeter (RWP Exeter; St Stephen DSC01586).



Fig 124 A richly-carved Communion table dated 1619 with cup-and-cover legs, still in use at Axminster (RWP Axminster DSC09412).



Fig 125 The Elizabethan Communion table at Pilton, still in use as the high altar (RWP Pilton DSC02682).

At Ide, near Exeter, the ancient Communion table (Fig. 122) is almost square and very small, with carved strapwork decoration to the frieze and pyramidal 'jewels' at the tops of its legs, except on one of the (slightly) shorter ends, which bears the inscription 'IE : 1637 : IE:'. It is possible that this table was brought into the body of the church and used with its shorter inscribed face facing west, particularly since a secondary inscription has been added below the frieze on this side, reading 'I.H.E 1837 I.H.E', presumably commemorating the rebuilding of the church in 1835-7 (and quite possibly by an ancestor of the warden commemorated in the original inscription).

At Braunton, near Barnstaple, the surviving ancient Communion table is exceptionally long and narrow with four identical turned legs. It is possible this table was brought into the central nave alley between the benches but, since all of the nave benches remained fixed facing east, it seems more likely that the table remained in the chancel, beyond the surviving medieval rood screen, perhaps with its shorter ends to east and west.

There may well have been examples in Devon of the custom where the Communion table was carried into the body of the church however, the surviving church interiors with pre-Reformation or late 16th-century seating schemes surviving in anything like their original condition, as at East Budleigh, Braunton or Stoke-by-Hartland, leave no obvious space where the Communion table might be accommodated within the nave, especially if the communicants were to gather and kneel around it. The custom may, of course, have been introduced later in the 17th or 18th centuries after such seating schemes were commonly replaced by box pews, but even here the evidence is slight. One would expect to find evidence of seats arranged around a sufficiently spacious area to accommodate the Communion table had this custom had been common.

While it is perfectly possible that examples have been destroyed in later re-orderings of churches, none of the early seating plans identified by Todd Gray show any such arrangement of the Communion table (Gray 2012) and neither do any of the plans submitted to the ICBS, either 'as existing' or 'as proposed'. Where churches with 'collegiate' seating, facing north and south were proposed in the early 19th century, as at Exeter Holy Trinity (LPL ICBS 00171a), or Harberton (LPL ICBS 00703a) the Communion table is always shown in an enclosure close to the east wall of the church corresponding with the traditional medieval sanctuary. North- and south-facing seats in the nave, such as those in side galleries or, as at Cruwys Morchard, forming rising ranks of box pews in the south aisle, were therefore clearly designed to facilitate listening to the sermon and cannot be regarded as evidence of the use of 'nave altars'. Their focus was the pulpit, rather than the Communion table, and this focus was one which the Victorian reformers were to actively seek to change.

In most churches the provision of permanent altar rails, which seems to have been more-or-less universal in Devon from the middle of the 17th century, may show that, if the custom of moving the table had ever been adopted, it had by this time been discontinued. Those tables which are decorated on four sides may therefore not be designed to be used in the nave, as modern custom prefers to imagine, but may also have stood in the chancel whether altar-wise or table-wise. Their decorations suggest that they stood a short distance away from the east wall of the church and the reredos, within an oblong or square enclosure of altar rails, fencing in the table on either three or four sides. Examples of this arrangement are recorded in 18th-century drawings of the sanctuary at Pinhoe where the table is also shown swathed in an exceptionally full frontal which may have been left in place when the altar was not in use (Fig. 121). A red velvet altar cover, possibly of 18th-century date, survives today at South Brent (Fig. 126). Another instance is recorded at an unknown church in Devon in a satirical drawing included in the scrapbook of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society where the medieval chancel has become disused and the place of the altar has been taken by an iron heating stove still standing within a square enclosure of 17th-century altar rails, a situation that was clearly felt to be both idolatrous, improper but also perhaps amusing (Fig. 127). This presumably must be evidence that the Communion table at this church had indeed been re-sited in the nave, but sadly there is no information on the identity of the church, and it may be that the drawing was made simply as a piece of ecclesiological propaganda designed to shock and prove a point.

Examples of the free-standing altar within the chancel, which it must be clearly understood was never intended for westward facing celebration in the modern manner (a practice which seems to have been unknown before the 20th century), survive today at Parracombe, at St Martin's Exeter and at Branscombe (Fig. 128), where a modern altar is still enclosed on four sides by 17th-century altar rails—presumably allowing the communicants to receive from the east side of the table also. At Satterleigh, the arrangement also survives in use, though both the altar rails and the small, square Communion table have been superseded by Victorian Gothic equivalents! (Fig. 120) This is perhaps the closest our ancestors got to celebration 'in the round' and may explain the presence of decoration on all four sides of many early Communion tables. As they did not stand against the wall, they could be enriched on all four sides. There is a great deal of evidence to show that this arrangement of the Communion table was far more common formerly than at present. It presumably satisfied the desire of the reformers to make a break with the fixed 'altars' of the medieval church while still giving the Communion table, dignity and significance.

Because of the perhaps restricted space in many medieval chancels, where the reformed rite was to be celebrated with the communicants gathering around the altar, the Communion table



Fig. 126 The Altar cover attributed to the early 18th century at South Brent

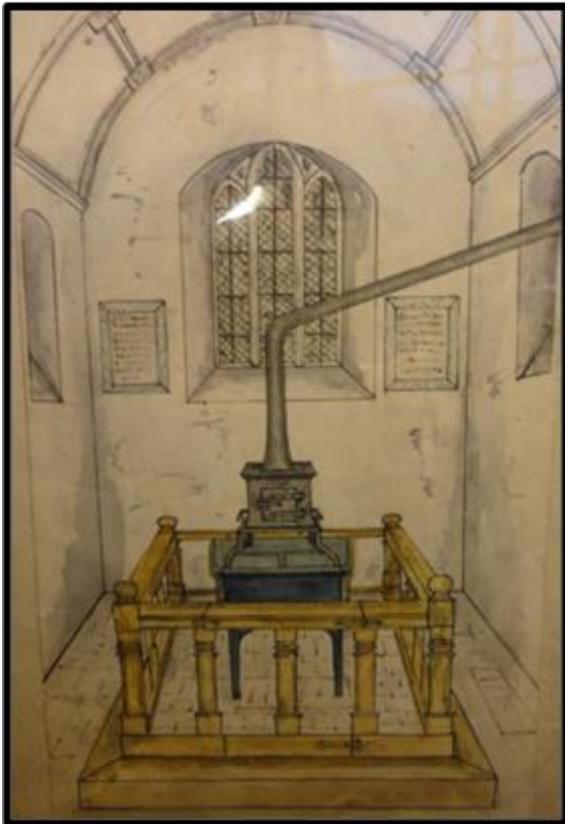


Fig. 127 A disused Sanctuary featuring an heating stove surrounded by 17th-century rails (DEI EDAS Scrapbooks).



Fig. 128 Altar rails on all four sides of the altar at Branscombe. The original Communion table is to right (RWP Branscombe DSC02842).



Fig 129 Photograph held in the church at Sampford Courtenay showing the interior before restoration in 1889, with box pews, a diminutive Communion table and a pulpit with a sounding board.

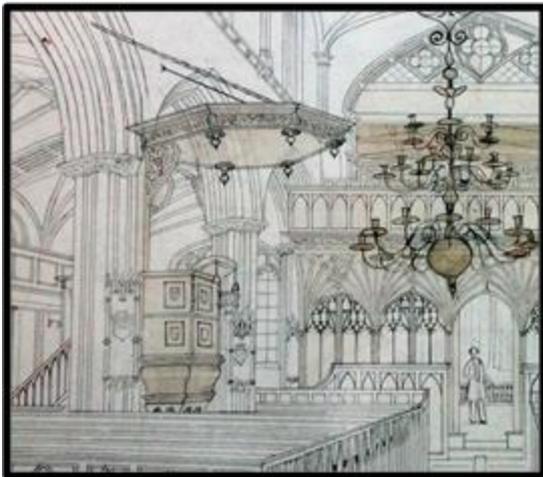


Fig 130 Extract from a drawing by Edward Ashworth held at Tiverton church showing the Pulpit and sounding board in position.



Fig 131 The sounding board of an 18th-century pulpit now inverted and serving as a vestry table at Tiverton (RWP Tiverton; St Peter DSC09997).

For post-Reformation use was often very small, perhaps less than a metre square, allowing the celebrant to manoeuvre qaround all four sides of the table, within the rails, to administer the Sacrament. Several examples survive today, though rarely as the principal altar.

A very interesting photograph of Sampford Courtenay showing the east end of the church before the restoration of 1889 by George Fellowes-Prynne, shows a small square table *in situ* behind 17th-century rails in a church otherwise completely filled with high box pews (Fig. 129). The table survives in the church today, in use as a side altar, and the altar rails are also preserved, though the box pews remain only as a dado fitted against the lower parts of the church walls. The 18th-century pulpit also survives, though without its ogee sounding board, which may have been inverted and converted into a table— a surprisingly common Victorian repurposing of these handsome furnishings. A number of these tables remain in churches, with a particularly fine example at St Peter's church in Tiverton (Fig. 131) and another, from a long-lost 17th-century nave pulpit, in the Deanery house at Exeter.

By the later 17th and early 18th century the classic baluster or barley-sugar forms seen in architectural elements such as staircases seem to have been employed for church furnishings and trends in the design of altar tables and altar rails might conceivably be compared with these rather than contemporary domestic furniture. Later 18th-century Communion tables succumbed to the delicacy of carving and rangy construction of contemporary neo-classical or neo-Gothic furnishings. Outstanding examples in Devon are the 18th-century Communion table at Hittisleigh, with four carved console legs, which seems to have replaced a 17th-century table still preserved in the building (though either table might perhaps have been brought from elsewhere) and the superb example at Stoke Canon in an elaborate 'Gothick' style with a wholly classical central flourish of palm leaves terminating in a cherub's head (Fig 89). Most new Communion tables in the early 19th century seem to have been very plain and sturdy, though they were perhaps increasingly Gothic or muscular in character, with immensely solid, octagonal or square legs sometimes decorated with thin incised tracery panels. These furnishings are more difficult to confidently identify as Communion tables, particularly as such tables could vary greatly in size and in height, a small square table being often employed regardless of the size and importance of the church. The issue is further confused by later 19th-century antiquarian assemblages such as the Communion table at Witheridge which, though of 17th-century style, is so richly carved and so incoherent in its design that it seems likely to have been made up from parts of a four-poster bed (Fig. 132).

*The Reredos*

One of the principal architectural elements of any church would always have been the reredos attached to the eastern wall of the building, which provided a ceremonial focus for the Communion table and for the celebration of the most holy rite of the Church. Much evidence for the use of free-standing Communion tables and altars is found in the design of early reredoses. These include many that appear to have been designed in the 1840s at the very beginning of the ecclesiological movement in Devon, when, presumably, old-fashioned arrangements of furniture, and particularly those arrangements that might be identified as ‘Laudian’, remained popular as an acknowledgement of the reformed nature of Anglicanism.

In many of these cases the design of the reredos contains architectural elements that continue to the floor across the entire east wall including the text of the Creed and Decalogue in architectural panels or aedicules. Some of these texts still continue today behind the modern altars and are partially obscured by them, rendering the texts impossible to read (Fig. 133). Either their presence on the east wall was entirely symbolic and totemic, or they were originally legible, because the Holy table was not formerly set hard against the east wall, but stood free from it, the communicants gathering on all four sides to receive the Sacrament as described above, but in a place marked out and sanctified for this purpose by ancient use and by the altar rails and the reredos. This may be the compromise reached in post-Reformation England between a reformed church with a table standing ‘in the body of the church, or in the chancel, where morning and evening prayer are appointed to be said’<sup>34</sup> and the traditional form of church interior where the high altar was the culmination of the architecture of the building and set in a space set aside for it.

Because of its architectural and focal dominance of the sanctuary the reredos was generally one of the most impressive furnishings in the building and could often be renewed and updated to reflect the image of Christianity which the congregation wished to project—whether an austere one based on the Word, in the form of texts and architectural panelling, or a rich one incorporating sculptured ornaments, paintings, sacred symbols or figurative images.

Although carved images were rare before the 1870s, as they were regarded at that time (before the decision of the Privy Council in favour of such features of February 1875; the culminating decision of the so-called ‘Exeter Reredos case’) as potentially idolatrous, paintings were permitted and often formed the centrepiece of an architectural reredos. Enormous canvasses such as the oil painting of *The raising of the widow’s son at Nain* at St Saviour’s, Dartmouth, formerly filled the

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<sup>34</sup> In accordance with the prayer book rubrics of 1662.



Fig. 132 The Communion table at Witheridge, probably assembled in the 19th century from components of a four-poster bed (RWP Witheridge DSC02715).

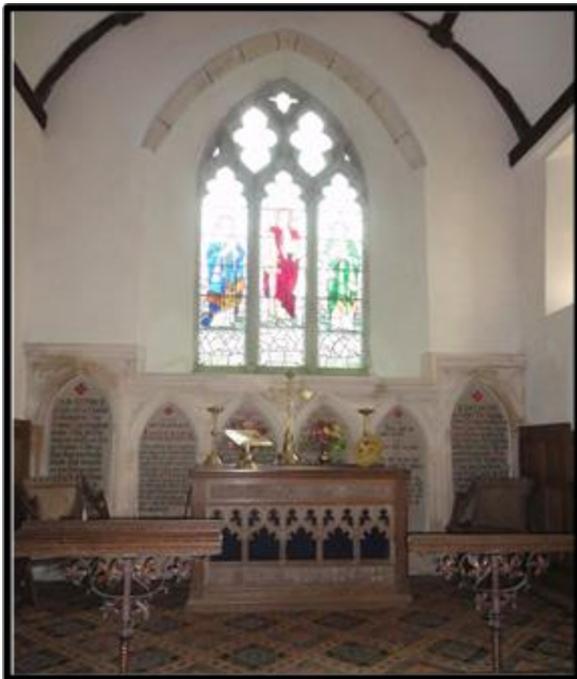


Fig. 133 The reredos at Harford extending to the ground behind a later altar, suggesting that a free-standing altar table was formerly used (RWP Harford DSC07184).



Fig. 134 Lithograph by W. Spreat showing the church of St Saviour at Dartmouth in c.1840. Aa large oil painting serves as a reredos, and the sanctuary is completely enclosed by pulpit, screen and reading desks.



Fig. 135 The reredos of c.1690 at St Mary Arches Church, Exeter, (RWP Exeter St Mary Arches DSC01380).



Fig. 136 The 17th-century reredos at St Martin, Exeter, as recently restored (RWP Exeter St Martin DSC00874).

entire east wall of the chancel, blocking the lower part of the east window, and may be seen in position in William Spret's engraving of the church interior (Fig. 134). Many churches retain large paintings on biblical themes which may formerly have formed part of a Georgian reredos, Although very few such paintings are now *in situ* there are many surviving examples of post-Reformation architectural reredoses. Again, it seems the Victorians preferred to relocate them rather than to dispose of them and the greatest losses of post-Reformation and early Victorian reredoses appear to have occurred in the later 19th and early 20th centuries rather than as a result of ecclesiological reforms.

The outstanding example of a 17th-century reredos in the county today is probably that of about 1690 at St Mary Arches in Exeter which remains *in situ* (Fig. 135). This is an English Baroque composition of Corinthian columns framing panels for the Creed and Decalogue, these latter texts unfortunately now painted out. After damage during the blitz in 1942, when some of the panels in this reredos were destroyed, it was evident that an earlier 17th-century reredos with the Decalogue intact survives behind the present structure. Another 17th-century reredos survives at St Martins in Exeter, where the Decalogue texts and Creed have recently been restored by the Churches Conservation Trust (Fig. 136).

The most impressive survivor of a post-Reformation reredos outside Exeter, until recently, was the enormous timber structure at Bampton near Tiverton. This featured Tuscan columns framing the Decalogue and a painting of *Christ carrying the Cross*, now framed and hung separately. The reredos supported a pediment with a semi-circular lenticle designed to allow light from the east window to shine through a painted glass panel, possibly representing the eye of God or the dove of the Holy Spirit (which unfortunately does not survive). Unfortunately, this reredos has been dismantled during the recent reordering of the chancel. A complete example of a wooden reredos with an lenticle containing its original glazed element survives *ex-situ* at South Milton (fig 138). This latter reredos features paintings of Moses and Aaron standing at either side of the Decalogue and has recently been cleaned and conserved. It is now mounted against the south wall of the church. One of the grandest lost classical reredoses utilising these curiously Baroque lighting effects was recorded in 19th-century architectural drawings of Totnes. This reredos necessitated the blocking of the entire east window of the church, leaving only a semi-circular opening through which the light shone, presumably also through a painting of the eye of God, the Holy Spirit or a sacred monogram (Fig. 137). Despite efforts to preserve it it was in such poor condition that it could not be salvaged when the east window was reopened (Baker King, 1904). These structures, with their use of theatrical lighting effects are perhaps poor relations of continental Baroque altarpieces such as '*Il Transparente*' in Toledo. It is a pity that none now remains.

Other examples of large 17th- and 18th-century architectural reredoses survive at Kingsnympton, with a giant order framing the east window (Fig. 140), and a more modest example in the Ionic order remains at Morchard Bishop (Fig. 141). Fragments of a very large classical altar piece remain at Black Torrington in use as a vestry screen, though this has lost its upper section at some period, perhaps being cut short to increase the lighting through the east window. One of the finest lost Baroque altarpieces was recorded in photographs of St John in The Wilderness, Withycombe Raleigh (Stabb, 1908, 88). Only the Decalogue panels now remain in the church.

Most reredoses of the period were without such rich painted and architectural ornaments and simply consisted of between four or six panels containing the Decalogue and Creed. At St Giles on the Heath, close to the Cornish border, a slate reredos featuring the Creed and Decalogue and of very old-fashioned form was erected as late as 1840, at the very beginning of the ecclesiological movement but has since been removed and is preserved in the tower (Fig. 142). Other historic reredoses probably of early 19th-century date remain at Powderham (Fig. 143) at Blackawton, at Bradworthy and at St Petrock's Dartmouth. All were repositioned in the 19th-century to preserve their fabric while allowing for the refurbishment of the sanctuary on ecclesiological lines.

### **Georgian and early Victorian church seating**

There seem to have been at least two main impulses behind the reordering of churches prior to the early 19th-century drive for an increase in church accommodation, as spear-headed by the government and the Incorporated Church Buildings Society. Although reordering could be a traumatic process, it was potentially lucrative and, if reviewing and formalising pew rents and church rates could be achieved without too much controversy, it might help secure a regular and steady income for the church. Rebuilding and refitting the church may also have been seen a way for the wardens to reassert their authority and jurisdiction over the whole of the church interior, replacing vague, possibly illegal and certainly restrictive arrangements of private interests and local agreements with a more formal system under their direct control.

Another advantage would have been the visual effect. The random growth of furnishings, which modern commentators regard as so charming and typical of the pre-Victorian church, seems in many places to have been viewed as an affront to contemporary concepts of neatness and order. Many late 18th- and early 19th-century descriptions of church interiors, such as Alexander Jenkins' descriptions of the churches of Exeter in the early 1800s, note that the most admirable churches were 'neat and well seated' or 'well-kept and in good repair' (Jenkins, 1806).



Fig 137 The reredos at Bampton before removal, showing the semi-circular lunette in the pediment (RWP Bampton DSC01423).



Fig 138 The reredos at South Milton, mounted against a wall, showing the glazed lenticle at centre marked IHS (RWP South Milton DSC07423).

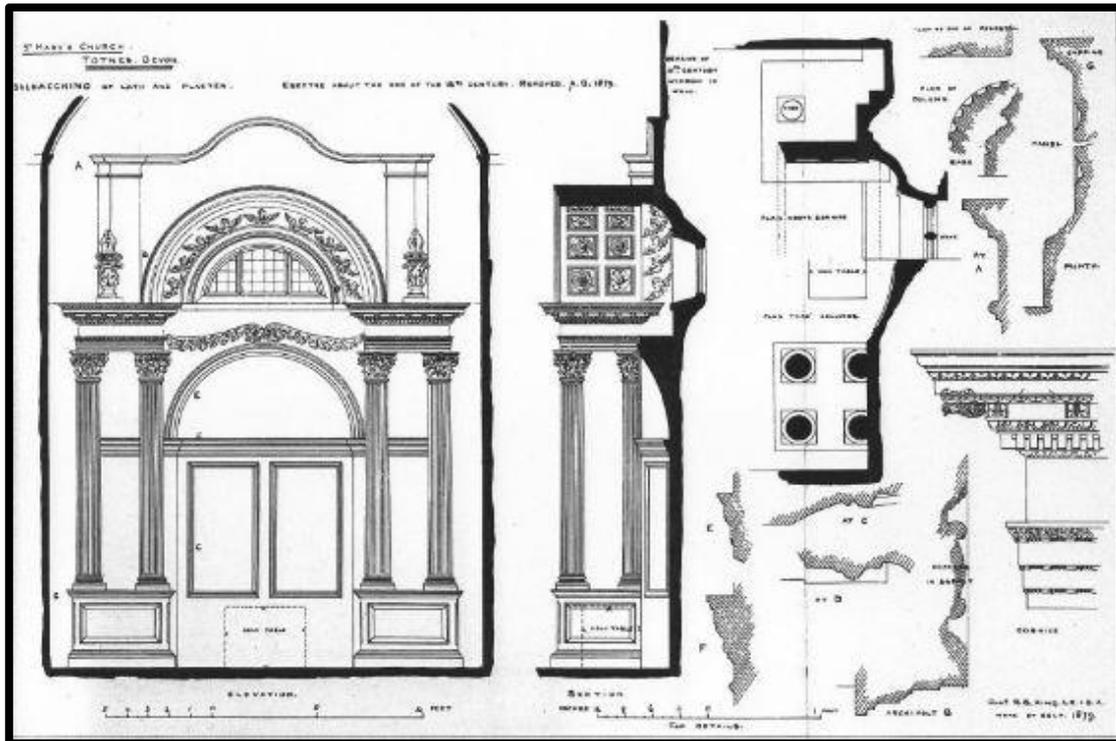


Fig. 139 The altarpiece or 'baldachin' formerly at St Mary's Totnes, featuring an arched lunette. Measured drawings by Charles R. Baker King 1904.



Fig. 140 The reredos at Kingsnympton featuring a giant order (RWP Kingsnympton DSC01865).



Fig. 141 The Ionic reredos at Morchard Bishop (RWP Morchard Bishop DSC02986).

Changing attitudes to such furnishings can be measured in the reports of rural dean's visitations during the 1840s, where a church which is noted as 'well-seated' or 'neat' in one decade is suddenly described as 'cluttered with high pews'. It is noticeable that most of the surviving pre-ecclesiological seating schemes in Devon churches, such as those at Molland, Parracombe and Kingsnympton, Cornworthy (Fig. 146) and Gittisham, show few signs of the sort of organic development one sees at Whitby or Minstead, but rather a consistency of detail and completeness in the arrangement of box pews as though the seating had been renewed in one phase.

### *The Georgian box pew*

From the 17th-century until well in the middle of the 19th, the default form of seating installed in the nave of any English parish church, assuming older seats were not already in existence, would have been the box pew. These seem to have been installed as much for fashion as for their draught-excluding properties, as in some cases in Devon, as in the church of Torbryan, in the South Hams, the box pews simply encase earlier, late-medieval benches, presumably because these open benches were customarily allocated to certain groups and families and this was perpetuated when the new seating was provided.

Less organised parishes, the ones in which the wardens were perhaps less conscientious or more open to payments by individuals for better forms of seats for their own use, often resulted in interiors where the high pewing in different materials and of different heights (and sometimes fitted with elaborate canopies and curtains) produced interiors of chaotic appearance and form. This situation might be exacerbated when a growth in population for some reason or, for example, the foundation of a charity school in the town or village, necessitated the enlargement of the seating accommodation. Such expansion might be accomplished at the least expense by the addition of gallery structures resting on the existing columns of the nave and of the aisles or inserted within the volumes of transepts and side chapels. These invariably cut across the existing windows of the church and massively restricted light to the central volume.

Very few of these interiors survive because they were specifically targeted by the Victorians and their predecessors, the late Georgians, for reordering in order to create seemly and coherent interiors. Nevertheless, a few very notable examples remain (though not in Devon), for example Minstead in Hampshire and St Mary's Whitby in Yorkshire. Some Devon churches furnished in this way were recorded by artists such as William Spreat (Sidbury).

A good example would be Edward Ashworth's drawings of the chancel at St Gregory's, Seaton prior to his restoration of 1868 (Fig. 145). These drawings show the chancel encumbered by congregational seating and the nave dominated by a high western gallery, part of the medieval arcades having been removed to accommodate this.

Ashworth frequently recorded buildings he worked on before and after restoration, producing a notable and invaluable series of drawings of the interior St Peter's Church in Tiverton, showing the extent to which the interior was dominated by early 19th-century galleries and rented seating (Fig. 148). Other buildings are recorded in plans created by local architects and surveyors for application for grant aid to institutions like The Incorporated Church Building Society. This organisation strove to maximise the number of available seats with the greatest degree of economy and consequently architects or surveyors proposing alterations to the seating in churches were encouraged to submit as-existing and as-proposed plans showing how they intended to increase the seating by the reduction of wasted space or the introduction of elements such as galleries and new aisles or transepts. The ICBS remained a significant force in the funding of new churches and the restoration of old ones from their foundation in 1818 until the 1950s. Their archives, now held at Lambeth Palace Library and published online as part of the library collections, record many instances of chaotically planned church interiors that would not otherwise be known.

As many as 37 parish churches in Devon today remain seated either entirely or partially with box pews, and a great many more retain evidence of box pews in the form of dado panelling, around the base of the walls, or incorporated into the later benches and other furniture such as choir stalls. At least 51 churches in the county preserve the remains of reused box pews and the likelihood is that with further investigation many more might be identified. The remains include raised-fielded panels in oak and in deal, often with evidence of ramping, and also in the same churches, the remains of more modest seating, some of which, with scratch-moulded rails, might date from the middle of the 17th century. A particularly good collection of old box pew material of many different types remains in the gallery at Ide (Fig. 147). As this church also retains original box pews *in situ*, contemporary with its rebuilding in 1838, the panels in the gallery are likely to have come from the medieval church, demolished at that time. In the absence of any plans or illustrations of the older church this collection of miscellaneous panelled material is the only indication of the appearance and character of the lost medieval church and, as such, it is particularly precious.

At St Stephen's in Exeter, which had been rebuilt in 1826 and has recently been completely reordered, remains of the panelling of old box pews may be traced around the walls. At intervals, small 'V'-shaped cuts in the moulded top rail, now plugged with later material, show



Fig. 142 The reredos at St Giles on the Heath (RWP St Giles on the Heath DSC07602).



Fig. 143 The reredos at Powderham (RWP Powderham DSC04703).



Fig. 144 John Stabb's 1911 photograph of the Baroque reredos at the then disused church of St John in the Wilderness, Withycombe Raliegh (Stabb 1911, Plate 142).

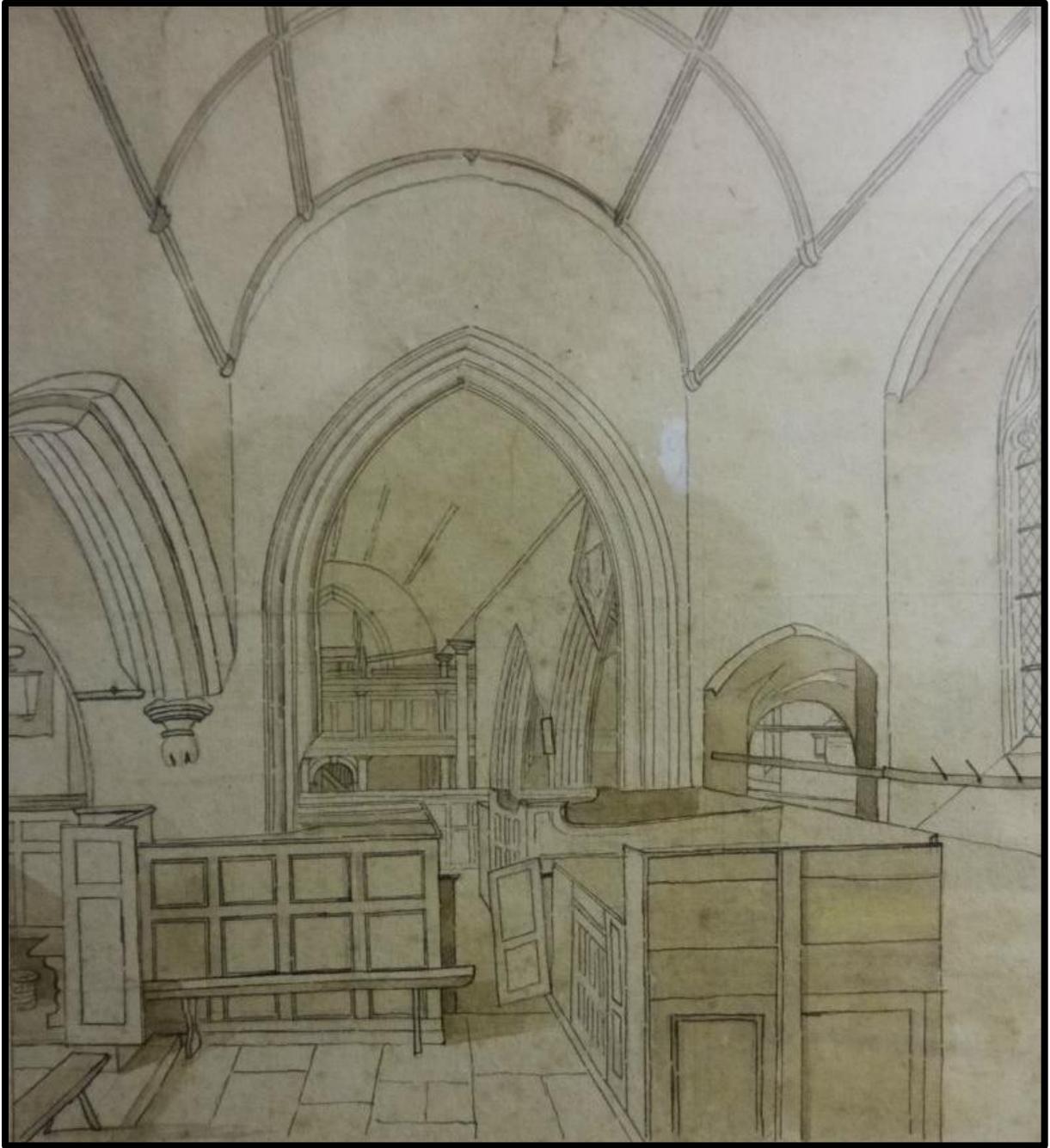


Fig. 145 Edward Ashworth's 1850 pen and wash drawing of the chancel and nave at Seaton, showing an informal church interior with box pews of many styles and periods. Note the removal of the arcades and the substitution of iron columns at the west end of the church. (Drawing held at St Gregory's Church, Seaton)

where the vertical sections of the pew backs extended out into the church. From this detail; from the surviving evidence of flagged alleys (recovered during the recent works) and from a seating plan of 1838, now held by the church, it is possible to reconstruct the layout of the seating as it was installed in 1826. More remarkably, however, is that the dado also shows evidence of ramped corners to the pews which are truncated by the moulded rail of the 1826 seating, therefore it is evident that the panelled material now forming the dado had been previously used in another context. It may conceivably date from the reconstruction of the church after the late 17th-century fire, or from a refitting of the church at an unknown period in the 18th century. Since the refurbishment of St Pancras' church, Exeter, in the 1970s, when dado panelling which had previously been at Allhallows Church in Goldsmith Street was removed, no potentially 17th-century seating material has been known to survive in Exeter. The Allhallows seating had been installed in 1680. A comparison between the reused carpentry at St Pancras and at St Stephen might have been instructive.

The best surviving examples of fully box-pewed interiors in the county show less variety and more consistency in the materials and appearance of the seating. This suggests that these churches, such as Kingsnympton and Parracombe, had already been subject to wholesale reordering in the late 18th century and that they should not be regarded as survivals of some form of organic, natural, pre-Victorian golden age, but rather as late 18th-century interventions as thorough and drastic as any Victorian or modern re-ordering. The survival of these particular seating schemes into the early 20th century (when they began to be appreciated in their own right) is perhaps as much due to their neatness, seamliness and usefulness in raising revenues as to the laziness or rustic conservatism of their incumbents and wardens. Because they were seemly and worked, their congregations successfully resisted their removal and replacement with Victorian bench seats. In the case of Parracombe, of course, the church had been replaced in 1878 with another, closer to the village, which was not seated with box pews and which may have better answered the parishioners' needs. The old church was preserved as a monument with only occasional use, for which those who love old buildings may well be grateful.

The same consideration may have led to the preservation in the 18th century of many of the ornately-carved late-medieval and early-Renaissance bench ends which are such a feature of the western counties. These could just as easily be allocated to certain families as box pews, and in many cases, they were already marked with the initials or arms of their occupants or might be identified by distinctive carvings. In the 1835 rebuilding of Stoke Canon church, the medieval bench seats were retained as free pews for the poor, despite their richer ornament, while the rented pews occupied plain wainscoted boxes on the north and south sides. In some churches, such as

East Budleigh or Braunton, the survival of complete seating schemes of richly-decorated benches may have been due to local pride, or association with great families or individuals such as the Raleigh family at East Budleigh. Nonetheless, very few medieval benches remain entirely undisturbed, in the positions and layouts they had attained before 1800; most have been reset as part of modern seating schemes and many (as at Stoke Canon, prior to the recent reordering) have been augmented by the addition of replica bench ends in later Victorian re-orderings.

*Galleries, lofts, organs and choir seats.*

Before the Ecclesiological movement it was highly unusual for any English church below cathedral rank to have a robed choir singing the services. Such choirs as did exist were generally accommodated at the west end of the church within raised ranks of seating set aside for their use or in a western gallery crossing the tower arch roughly at first-floor level. These singing galleries began to be inserted at the Reformation though there are records of earlier western galleries which seem to have been put to a variety of uses. At St Olave's Church in Exeter the medieval west gallery seems to have incorporated a house for the priest (Cresswell 1908, 130), but the majority of western galleries after the Reformation were either used for additional seating, or as a platform (in the later part of the period) for choir and organ. The tradition that western galleries were created by removing the rood loft front from the top of the chancel screen to the west end does not seem to be borne out in Devon by any surviving fabric, with the possible exception of Churchstanton, now in Somerset, where a gallery survives with a richly carved front of 15th or 16th-century panelling. This is sometimes interpreted as an assemblage of reset bench ends and its association with rood lofts may be spurious.

A surprisingly large number of Devon churches are known to have had pairs of organs before the Reformation. In Exeter the Edwardian inventories of the city churches, made in 1552 reveal that St Lawrence, St Stephen, St Mary Arches, St Olave, St Paul and the Holy Trinity, in addition to the cathedral, all had organs (Browne 2015, 8). After the Reformation Browne cites the survival of instruments into the late 16th and early 17th centuries at Braunton, Chudleigh, Chagford, Ottery St Mary, Ashburton, Tiverton, Yealmpton and St Petrock's, Exeter, and at Barnstaple, Buckland Brewer, Bideford and Ilfracombe (*ibid.*, 10, 11). Most of these organs were, however, being dismantled and sold, and whether any had been recently functioning and supporting choirs and liturgical music at the time of their demolition is uncertain. Some may have become derelict years before and, with them, the need for special seating for a choir may also have vanished.



Fig 146 Box pews at Cornworthy, typifying the 'neat and well-seated' Georgian interior (RWP Cornworthy DSC04844).



Fig. 147 The remains of reused box pews in the gallery at Ide, incorporating raised-fielded (foreground) large-fielded and smaller-fielded panels, reused from a complex interior with many phases of Georgian intervention (RWP Ide DSC04827)

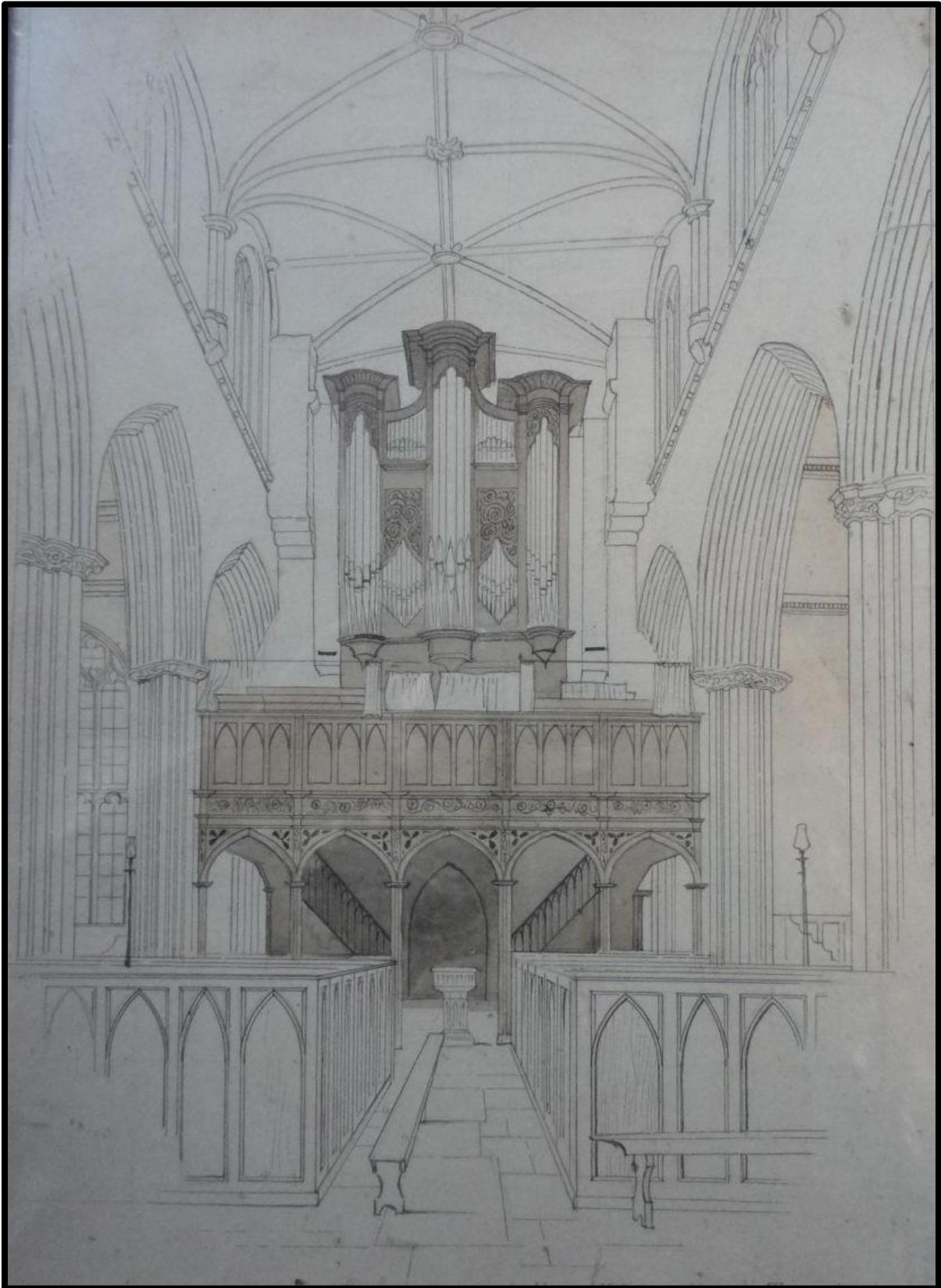


Fig. 148 Edward Ashworth's drawing of the organ and music gallery at Tiverton, installed in the 1820s, and removed in his restoration of the church in 1853-6 (pen and wash drawing held at St Peter's Tiverton).

The organ at St Petrock in Exeter is known to have occupied part of the rood loft (*ibid.*, 10) but presumably any choir the average Devon parish church might have possessed must have sung in the chancel, rather than in the loft, if only because of the space and light even a small choir would need to sing plainsong creditably, let alone Renaissance polyphony. Even if the church possessed a clerestory (which was unusual in Devon), the light available up among the roof timbers, with the added complications of roods, organs and tympana cutting out light and space, would surely be inadequate for playing and singing music of any complexity. Close examination of the roof structures of churches, both at the west end and in the region of the rood screen, might yet reveal evidence of the blocking in and patching of rooflights or dormers which were intended to provide light for an organist or a small liturgical choir in these locations. At Seaton, in east Devon, the western gallery is still lit by a dormer window to serve a post-Reformation gallery choir, and at Swimbridge a dormer appears on the south side, just west of and above the rood screen. Although this is possibly a modern restoration, it may perpetuate an older arrangement. Although its purpose may well have been to light the rood, it is also possible that it existed to serve a small liturgical choir in the rood loft.

### **Conclusion to this chapter**

The late 18th century and early 19th century is often presented as a period when the Church in the Westcountry was in a near moribund condition and many villages in Devon and Cornwall were held to have been ‘in almost complete ignorance of the Gospel’ (Andrews 1964, 148). Andrews points out that, although ‘the low state of the church at this time is so much an accepted “fact” that it is commonly held to need no verification’ (Andrews 1964, 147). This view has very little basis in truth and stems largely from 19th-century Nonconformist writers anxious to present a picture of Devon, prior to the influence of Methodism and the Bible Christians, as a ‘One of England’s Moral Wastes’ (Andrews 1963, 149).

Similar propaganda, presenting a caricature of the ‘wretched’ and ‘depraved’ state of the Church and its worship in the late-Georgian period, has been shown by Brandwood to have been exaggerated by the Ecclesiologists as a tool to promote their own ideology and to force their agenda of liturgical and architectural change upon English churches. Brandwood’s study of churches in Leicestershire and Rutland examined the archdeacons’ visitation records for the area to show that only a relatively small percentage of the parish churches in the Archdeaconry of Leicester, 10% of the total, ‘were in urgent need of rebuilding or thorough repair’ in the years between 1773-9. The condition of the interiors of the churches in the area was less satisfactory,

largely because of the depredations of damp; however, ‘the general conclusion is that in the 1770s genuine efforts are being made to keep Leicestershire’s church fabrics in decent condition’ (Brandwood 2002, 3).

A similar exercise has been undertaken for the county of Devon at the author’s request, as part of the research for this thesis. The work was undertaken for the author by Dr Nigel Browne in 2018-19. As Devon is so much larger than Leicestershire and contains at least four times as many churches in three historic Archdeacons, it has not been possible at this stage to complete the work for the entire county. Dr Browne has examined the archdeacons’ and rural deans’ visitation records for around 73 churches in the deaneries of Kenn, Totnes, Shirwell, South Molton, Aylesbeare, Christianity, Cadbury, Woodleigh, Barnstaple and Okehampton. Although incomplete, this gives a fair coverage of churches across the county, and samples from all three historic archdeacons. As in the Leicestershire churches, the general picture is not one of dilapidation and decay except in a few extreme cases, such as Churston Ferrers, where a visitation of 1824 recorded that:

‘due to the long-continued neglect of successive churchwardens the seats have been suffered to go to decay.... As the Archdeacon perceives that very little attention has been paid to his former orders or those of the Dean Rural, he now requires peremptorily that they be obeyed, and gives warning to the Churchwardens that any further neglect will be followed up by a process in the ecclesiastical courts’.

(Browne, N. 2019 Archdeacons’ visitation reports, Churston Ferrers 12.08.1824. DHC, 1235A/1/PW/1).

Some archdeacons reacted to aesthetic issues with a degree of fierceness one might find surprising: ‘The seat occupied by Mrs Wheaton must be painted of a more sober plain colour or she will be removed from it’ (Browne, N. 2019, Archdeacons’ visitation reports, Brixham, St Mary 12/8/1821. DHC 2203A/1/PW/1).

In fact, most of the entries for the 1820s and 30s, concern minor repairs to seats, including the cutting down of high seats to the same level as the others and painting of seating in a uniform colour. This activity of ‘cutting down’ seats seems to imply the levelling of the wainscot walls of 17th- and 18th-century box pews of varied heights rather than the removal of medieval bench seats, and reveals that the previous generations had also been active in refurbishing their churches. Examination of surviving churchwardens accounts might help establish in detail when 18th-

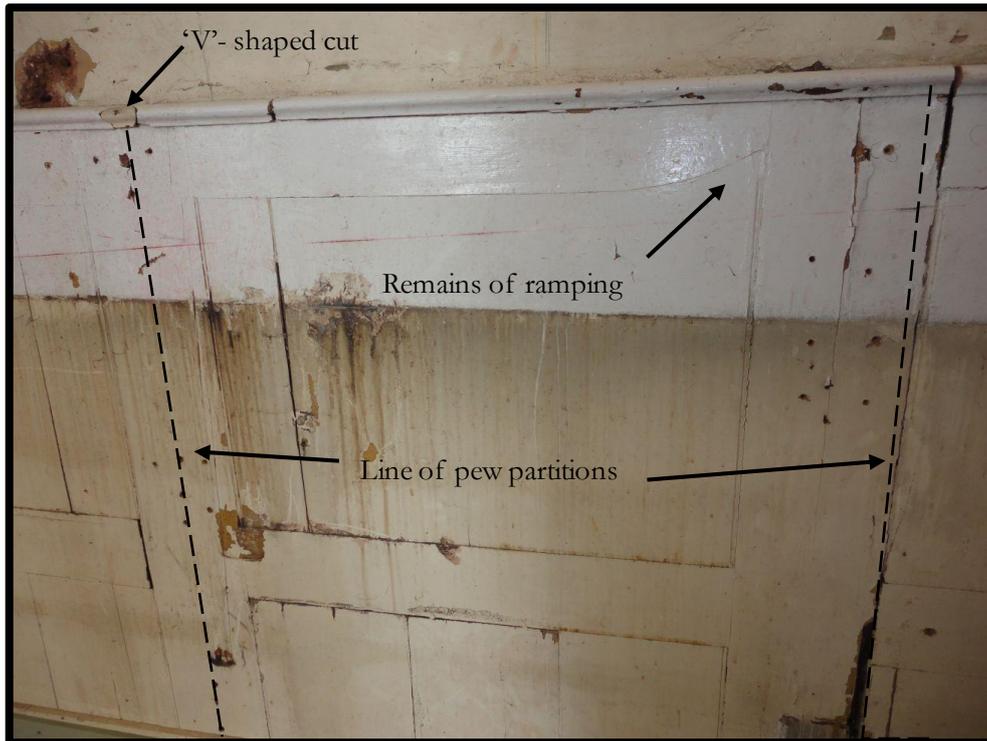


Fig. 149 The remains of 18th-century box pewing at St Stephens, Exeter, showing evidence of ramped elements cut down in 1826 (RWP Exeter St Stephen DSC01522).



Fig. 150 The interior of the church at Highampton, showing the replacement of the arcades in the Georgian period to create an auditory space (RWP Highampton DSC05488).



Fig. 151 The interior of the church at Alverdiscott, showing the replacement of the arcades (RWP Alverdiscott DSC09035).



Fig. 152 The interior of the church at Seaton, showing the removal of the arcades and substitution of iron columns. Ashworth's proposal to reinstate the arcades was never carried out (RWP Seaton DSC02900).

century reseating was at its height. For the most part, archdeacons and rural deans in the 1820s and 30s seem to have been happy with condition of the churches they visited, recommending only that the tables of kindred and affinity were displayed and that pews be kept in repair and of uniform height and colour.

Where more drastic work was required, the archdeacon was not afraid to insist upon it and even to recommend that the work be undertaken in a sensitive manner. A number of entries transcribed by Browne require that medieval painted glass be reset in windows as before, and in one case, at Blackawton in the South Hams, in the Archdeaconry of Totnes, the advice offered would not be out of place today:

I have found the seats of this church in good order and the whole of the interior clean. But as much expence [sic] must be incurred before the church can be considered in a proper state I require the immediate attention of the Churchwardens to the following observations ...The pavement of every aisle requires to be newly laid and stone of a good quality must be provided where wanted to make good deficiencies. As the stonework of the windows with little exception is imperfect, I shall require, that beginning at the south side of the church, two of the windows shall be put into complete repair every year, until the whole be restored. Wood must not be substituted instead of stone, but the mullions and heads [tracery crossed out] must be restored, where necessary, in the original form and with the same description of material as now exists.'

(Browne, N. 2019 Archdeacons' visitation reports  
Blackawton 1824 DHC 995A/PW/2/c/1).

The Archdeacon of Totnes at this period was, of course, Robert Hurrell Froude, a noted antiquarian, of whom, more below. Those churches which escaped the attentions of a conscientious archdeacon like Froude might still suffer unsympathetic alterations. At Ugborough and at Rattery the churches today retain just the sort of wooden replacement windows with elementary 'Y'-tracery that Froude refused to countenance at Blackawton. These churches had presumably already suffered this alteration before Froude was instituted as Archdeacon of Totnes in 1820 (Oliver 1861, 292).

The impression we may draw from this evidence is that late-Georgian archdeacons and deans rural were not lax in their duties, that they were making aesthetic decisions about the way they wished churches to look; that they sought homogeneity, neatness and sobriety in their church

interiors. They also expected to be obeyed. The impression one gets of the Georgian Church and her housekeeping is therefore not one of disuse, decay, carelessness and neglect, but of the imposition of an aesthetic standard (perhaps a rather bland one, but an aesthetic standard nonetheless) upon church fabric.

This research for this project has shown that late-Georgian church was very far from moribund in its treatment of its buildings. A very large number of churches in the county were completely refurnished in the late 18th century, even before the availability of grant aid from the ICBS and other bodies. Much of this involved the replacement of ancient furniture with new and homogenous seating schemes of box pews, provision of new pulpits and the addition of galleries. The plans for alterations to local churches in the ICBS archives at Lambeth Palace Library show that where major rebuilding was required in the early 19th century it was undertaken in earnest. In many cases this involved substantial loss of medieval fabric.

Although this project has not attempted to cover the latter years of the 18th century in any detail it is almost certain that the vast majority of churches which the Victorians later re-seated had already been substantially remodelled in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and were now completely filled with 18th-century box pews. The plans submitted to the ICBS in hope of grant aid often show the situation 'before' and 'after', presumably because the charity required clear information as to how the proposals were to improve the situation, both by increasing the accommodation and by rationalising the layout of the church interior. Most of the early 19th-century plans show the replacement of 'Horse-boxes' or square pews, with new box pews facing in an uniform direction.

Another striking detail of the late-Georgian plans is the extent to which churches were to be rebuilt. At Lynton, for example, the proposals attributed to Nicholas Jones of Lynton (LPL ICBS 01535d) show that he proposed the complete demolition and replacement of more than two thirds of the medieval building (Fig. 153). The later addition of a chancel and east end by Edwin Dolby in 1874 thus replaced not medieval fabric, but late Georgian fabric which was no more than 40 years old (Fig. 154). John Dando Sedding's later addition of a north aisle in 1891 removed yet more of Jones' work, but left Dolby's chancel intact until 1904-5 when a new and remarkably odd Romanesque style east end was constructed and Dolby's earlier chancel was simply dismantled, moved and rebuilt as a north chapel to make way for it (Fig. 155). Lynton is not an essentially late-Victorian church today because Victorian architects destroyed medieval fabric, but because a Georgian architect had already done so. What medieval fabric survived Jones seems, remarkably, to have survived both Dolby and Sedding & Wilson and remains in place today.

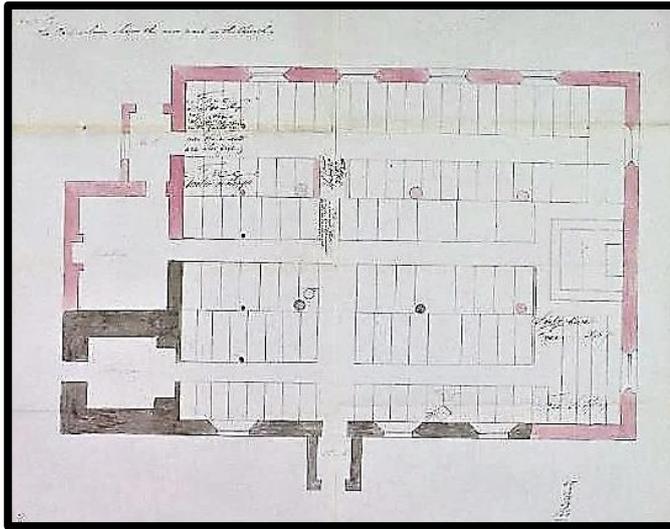


Fig. 153 Plan for enlarging Lynton church dated 1833 with the rebuilding of the north aisle shown in Pink, possibly by Nicholas Jones of Lynton (LPL ICBS 01535d).

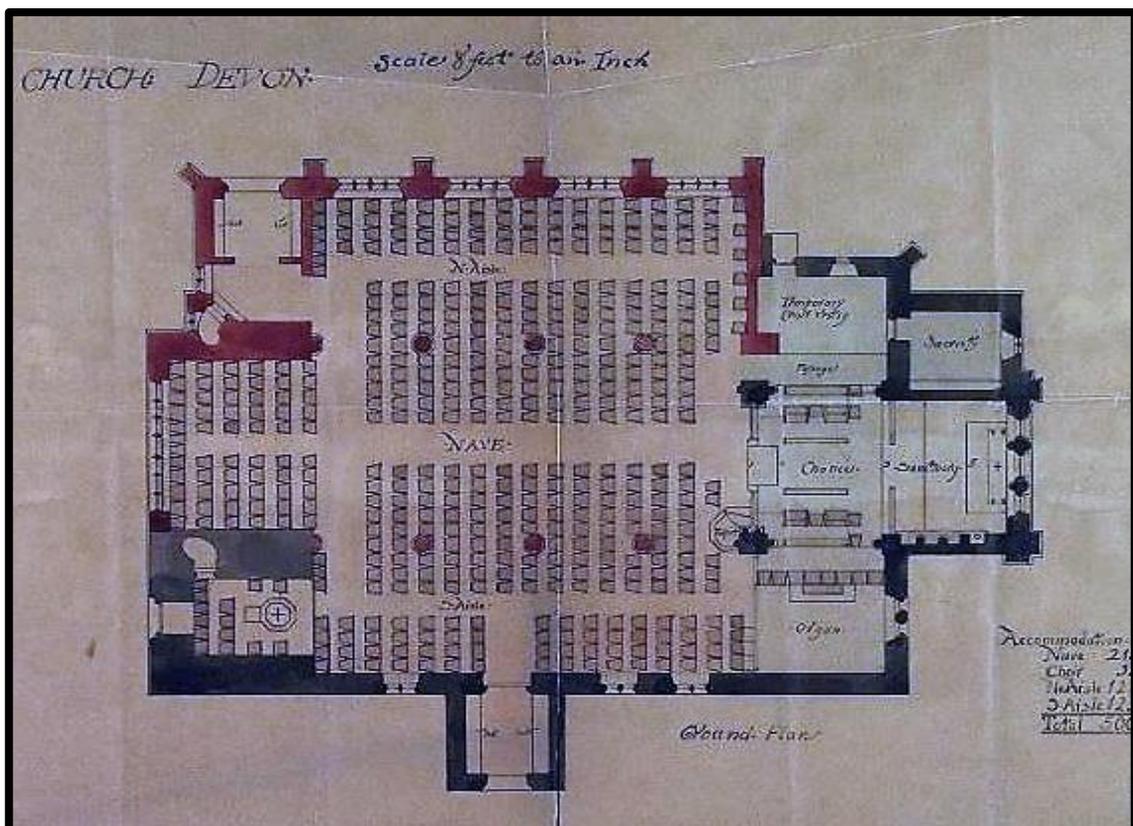


Fig. 154 Plan of Lynton church showing the enlarged east end of 1869 by Edward Dolby(right) and the proposed new north aisle, top, by J. D. Sedding and H. Wilson of 1891, in pink (LPL ICBS 09554).

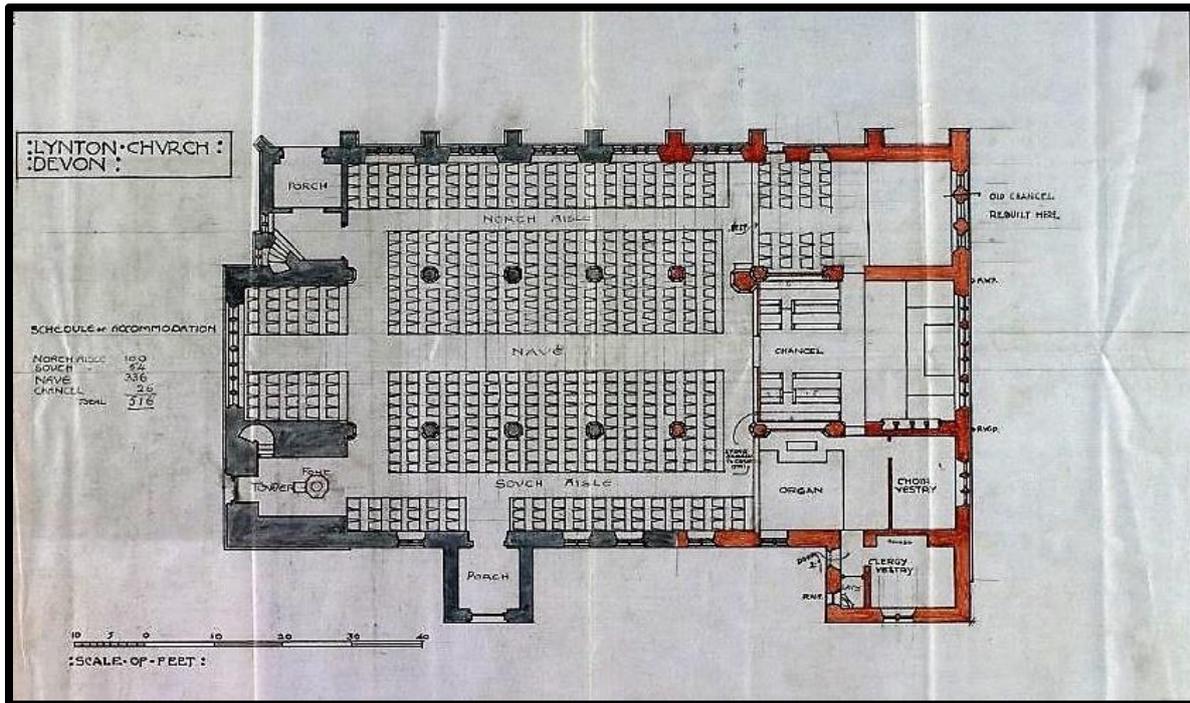


Fig. 155 Plan of Lynton church showing the Dolby's chancel re-erected as a north chapel, and a new east end by J. D. Sedding and H. Wilson of 1904 in orange. All the medieval fabric preserved by Jones remains in the new fabric (LPL ICBS 10503).

Georgian church building in urban areas produced a number of admirable buildings, particularly in Plymouth and Devonport which, had they survived, would no doubt be much cherished today, though it is not hard to see that they would not have appealed to Victorian Gothicists. These buildings were relatively few in number because of the difficulties in funding them and providing ministers to serve them. Between 1810 and 1820 only four new church buildings were erected in the county. After 1818, however, with the availability of Grant aid, six new buildings were provided and, between 1830 and 1840 no less than 26 entirely new churches were constructed. The Late-Georgian period was also far from idle in church restoration, though, unfortunately, much physical evidence of this activity has since disappeared in later Victorian waves of restoration. Many 18th and early 19th-century refurbishments are not recorded, but evidence of reseating schemes affecting more than 55 medieval churches have been identified by the present research between 1800 and 1838. Further research is likely to show that there were significant 18th- and early 19th-century interventions at many more places. After the foundation of the ICBS in 1818, 22 medieval churches received grant aid from the society between 1820 and 1830 and 25 between 1830 and 1840.— and this activity all took place before the foundation of the Camden Society or the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society.

Georgian re-buildings were rarely sympathetic to medieval fabric. Very often, perhaps because they had been destabilised by burials, the medieval arcades were simply removed and a new, full-span roof substituted. At Highampton, and at Alverdiscott (Figs 150, 151) the arcades were replaced by new, rather classicising granite piers (which later restorers retained) At Seaton part of the arcade was demolished to make way for a western gallery and it is likely that the rest of the arcade would have followed had funds permitted. At Bideford (Fig 14) the arcades were entirely demolished, and a huge new transept was constructed, leaving little of the medieval building intact. Kilmington and St Stephen's Exeter were both gutted to their outer walls and new structures built within the shell.

To conclude; late-Georgian churchmen and women were already active in making improvements to their churches, replacing *ad hoc* assemblages of private pews and galleries with the kind of seemly interiors we enjoy today at Parracombe and Molland. These operations did, however, do some violence to the character and fabric of medieval buildings and probably made them difficult to use for any other purpose but preaching. If more of these types of building had survived, it is probable that we would better comprehend the reasons for the choices made by the Victorians.

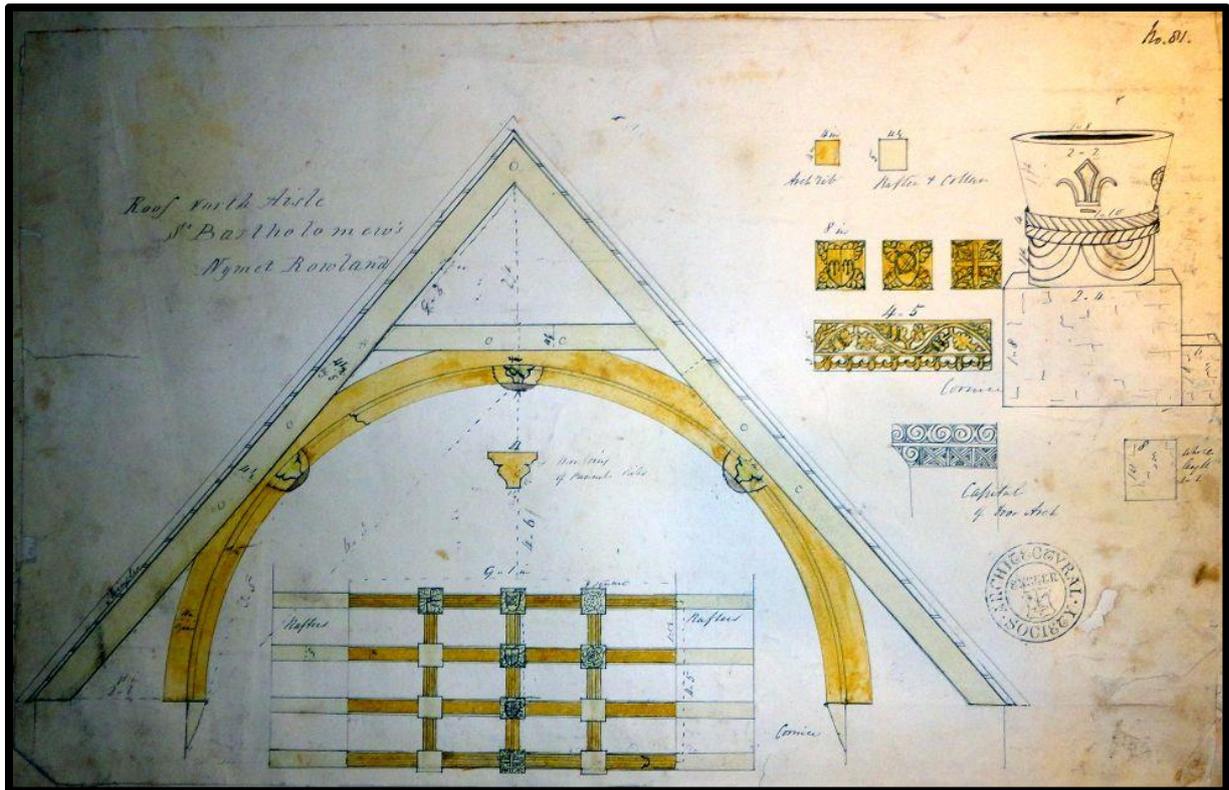


Fig 156 Survey drawings of the roof structure at Nymet Rowland, Devon with details of the font, bosses and impost (D&EI EDAS Scrapbooks No 81).

## CHAPTER 6: DEVON UNDER THE ECCLESIOLOGISTS

‘Architectural societies happily stand so high in general opinion, and their labours are now so appreciated, that no one word of defence is needed from your committee; though a somewhat scanty report may induce them to express the wish, that the work of restoration was somewhat less tardy, while so large an amount is still needed (in few parts of England perhaps more needed than) in our own county’.

(EDAS Quarterly Report, July 8, 1848).

### The beginnings of Ecclesiology in Devon

Within two years of the foundation of the Cambridge Camden Society, in May 1839, it had already acquired huge influence and a rapidly expanding membership. By 1841 this undergraduate society had the patronage of the two primates of England and Ireland and twelve other bishops

(Brandwood 2000, 56). By 1843 there were sixteen bishops, thirty-one peers, seven deans and diocesan chancellors and twenty-one archdeacons and rural deans. By 1845, despite some high-profile resignations, including that of the bishop of Exeter, the Society claimed more than 850 members (Ibid., 58). Membership was to fall sharply after 1845, partly due to a number of secessions to Rome and the scandals that followed, but the influence of the Society upon church design and furnishing continued unabated.

*Ecclesiological publications and pronouncements*

The society propagated its ideas through *The Ecclesiologist*, and through a series of pamphlets aimed at educating churchmen and the public about the history, development and symbolism of medieval architecture. From the start, the ecclesiologists were concerned with the preservation and recording of ancient fabric and in the recovery of archaeological evidence for the form and development of ancient churches. The Society encouraged its members to travel around the country recording buildings, though sketches, measured drawings of plans, profiles of mouldings and rubbings of brasses. They were asked to complete specially-designed record forms, entitled 'Church Schemes' which allowed a large amount of data to be recorded very rapidly, and these were then sent to the society headquarters for deposition and for future reference (Webster 2003, 65). The Society distributed the 'Church Schemes' free to members, by which they were empowered to go out and do their own research, and thus feel fully involved at the cutting edge of the movement. The early publications of the society were produced at prices which made them attractive even to the poorer classes and were carefully designed to be accessible to different groups, from the clergyman or church patron to the ordinary parish sexton or clerk (ibid. 2003, 25).

The ecclesiologists called for changed attitudes towards the use of church buildings. Churches were to be Holy sanctuaries in which nothing untrue or unworthy should be permitted. Good materials should be employed in all church work and all 'falsehood' in the form of plaster ornament, faux-marbling, wood-graining or cast-iron in imitation of stone or woodwork should be utterly banished. They recommended that those in charge of churches should ensure that workmen refrain from profanities when repairing them, that gentlemen should remove their hats when entering (Neale 1841, 16) and that bell ringers should not be suffered to drink beer in the belfry, or ring for controversial events such as elections, since this might alienate those on the losing side (ibid. 1841, 13).

As well as strongly disapproving of the architectural style of late-Georgian and early-Victorian churches for their lack of architectural honesty, absence of overtly Christian symbolism,

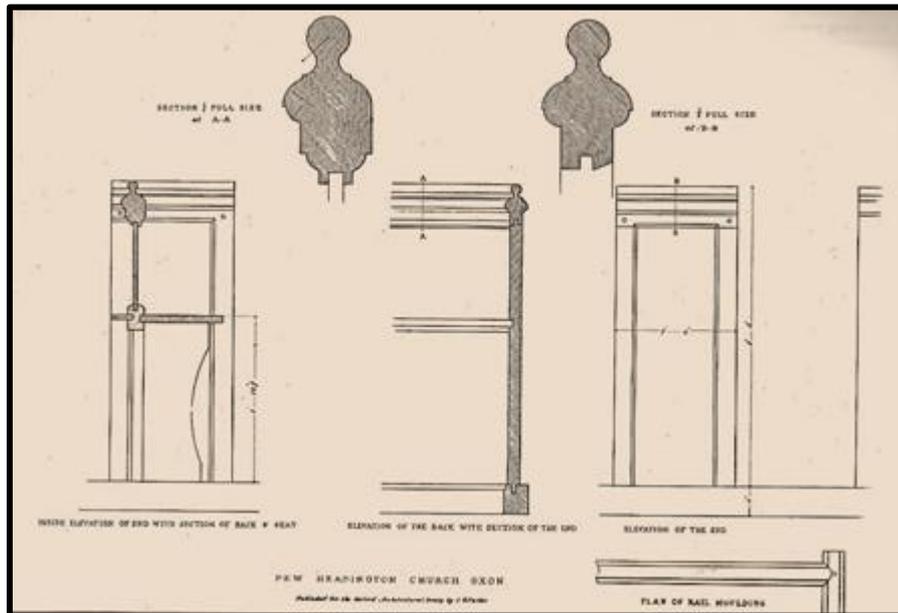


Fig. 157 Extract from a series of undated 1840s pamphlets produced for the Oxford Architectural Society, showing examples of medieval seating from Headington, Oxon. (D&EI, EDAS scrapbooks Box IV Sheet 40).

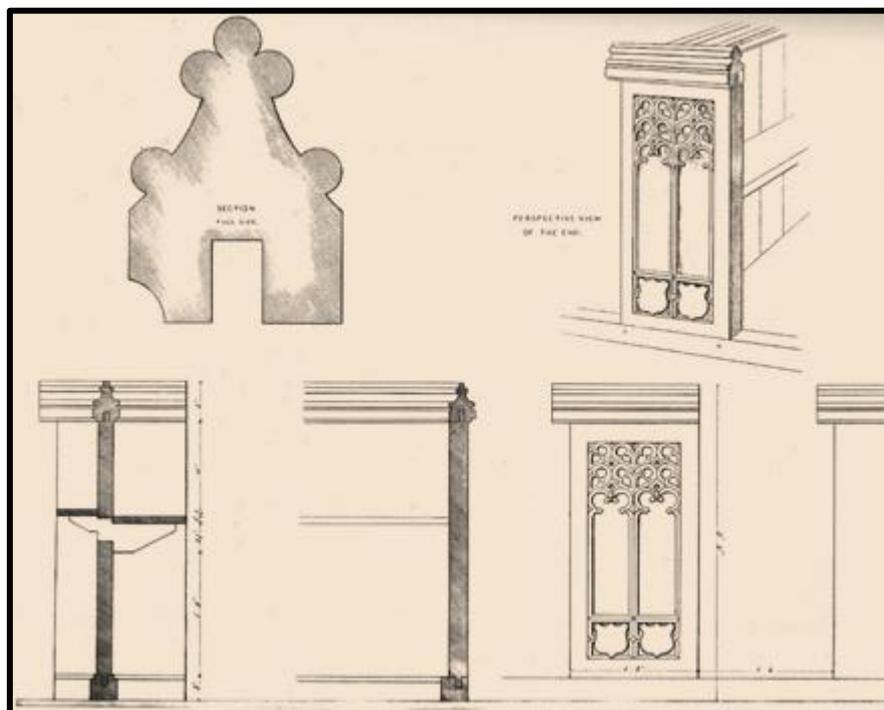


Fig. 158 Medieval seating from Steeple Aston, Oxon. (D&EI, EDAS scrapbooks Box IV Sheet 42).

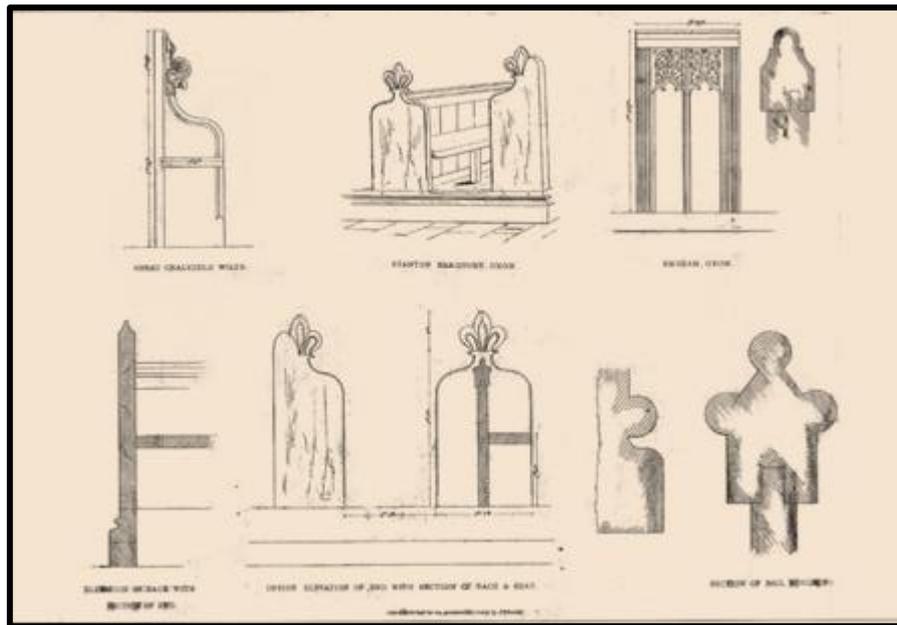


Fig. 159 Medieval seating from Eynsham, Stanton Harcourt, and Great Chalfield (D&EI, EDAS scrapbooks Box II Sheet 125).

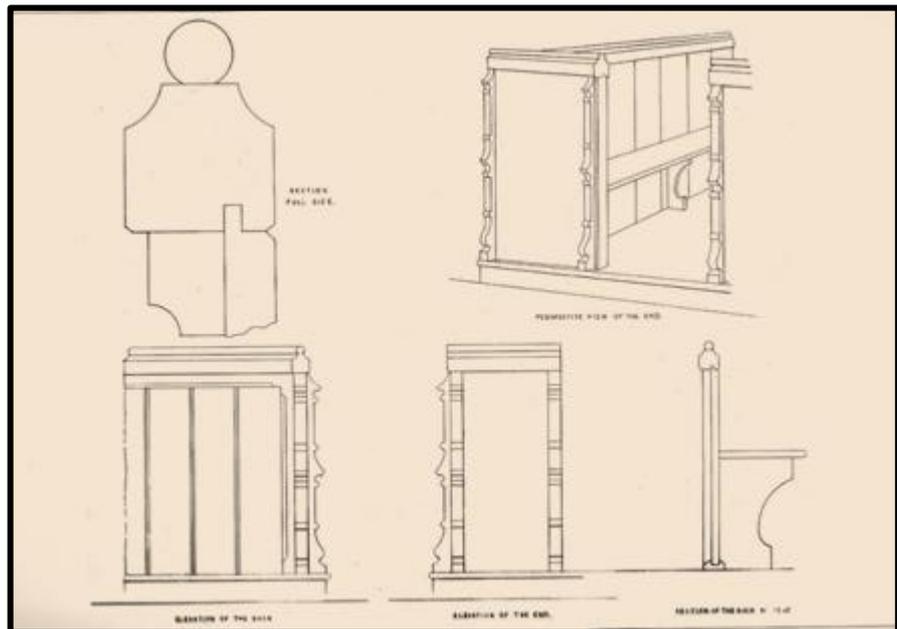


Fig. 159 Medieval seating from Great Hasely, Oxon. (EDAS Scrapbooks Box IV Sheet 42).

and poor (or dishonest) use of materials, Victorian ecclesiologists castigated the Georgian and early Victorian Church for the way in which it enforced social divisions through the system of appropriated seats and pew rents. These represented for them an improper intrusion of private space, pomp and pride in the house of God and could only serve to alienate the poorer classes (Webster 2000, 7). The ecclesiologists therefore mounted a campaign to improve churches by the adoption of free and open seats for all attending public worship. One of the early and most popular publications was J.M. Neale's *History of Pews* (1841), the spelling being later changed, for the second and third editions, to 'Pues' to make it sound more repellent and loathsome (Brandwood 2000, 52).

The forms of seating in churches now became a major concern of the society. Their commitment to liberating the interiors of churches from enclaves of private ownership and social distinctions was regularly expounded in articles in *The Ecclesiologist*. In order to provide templates for better forms of church seating based on authentic medieval precedent the Oxford Architectural Society now produced a series of pamphlets in which scale or measured drawings of typical forms of seating which were believed at the time to be medieval (or at least to be of good character) were collected and produced for distribution by John Henry Parker of Oxford from 1843 (D&EI, EDAS scrapbooks Box IV Sheet 40, 42, 44 and Box II sheet 125). Parker's examples include benches from Headington, Great Haseley and Steeple Aston and other villages in the Midlands (Figs 157, 158, 159, 160).

By the early 1840s the ICBS had also begun to promote ecclesiological ideas, probably through the influence of its advisor, Joseph Good. They began to insist on the use of reputable architects as a condition of grant aid for church projects (Miele 1995, 166-7) and revised their rules to reflect the new ideas about church design (Cooper 2010, 213-4) They also began to provide models for emulation. In the early 1840s the ICBS issued engravings illustrating examples of medieval bench seating from Oxfordshire and Wiltshire churches. These were almost identical with the drawings produced for the Oxford Architectural Society by John Henry Parker.

The ICBS' commitment to medievalism only went so far, however, and it remained insistent that modern churches should be designed to meet modern, rather than medieval needs, among the first of which was to maximize the amount of seating. In its quarterly journal *The Church Builder* (produced from 1862), for example, it was argued that returned stalls in chancels were 'inapplicable today' and that in modern church planning 'a dwarf wall or screen usually takes the place of the old *Cancelli* (rood screen)' (*The Church Builder* X, 1864, 73-4). Their approach was still dominated by the need for adequate seating and the audibility of the officiant, but none of these aims were actually incompatible with Gothic architecture.

Although the use of the Gothic style by G.G. Scott for a Lutheran congregation at the Nickolaikirche, Hamburg was criticized by *The Ecclesiologist* in 1845 (Brooks 1999, 268), the success of the ecclesiologists was such that, by the middle of the century, Gothic architecture had almost become a kind of *Lingua Franca* for 19th-century Christianity. Soon, Evangelical and Nonconformist congregations were commissioning Gothic-revival buildings which were virtually indistinguishable from those of the High-Church Ritualists (Stell 2000, 321). Methodist examples survive in Devon at Ivybridge (1874) by Norman & Hine (WDM 16 July 1874) and Topsham (1869) by J. R. N. Haswell (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 820), and in the Congregational chapel (now URC) at Muddiford in north Devon (1846), by R. D. Gould of Barnstaple (WT 19 Sept 1846; Figs 161, 162, 163).

Ivybridge still has statues of the twelve apostles, Moses, Aaron, musical angels and saint Paul standing at the base of each roof truss (Fig. 163) and still possesses an Anglican-style stone font and pulpit. Topsham Methodist Church (1867) went so far as to be actually dedicated to St Nicholas. It had an apsed chancel compete with an altar, altar rails, stained glass windows with images of the apostles and a working piscina (Fig. 164). Such furnishings would have been unthinkable in a non-conformist church only a few decades before.

After the outstanding success of the Cambridge Camden society, similar societies were formed in the regions. The first provincial society outside the university cities being the 'Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society' (EDAS), founded in 1841. At more-or-less the same period the Northampton Architectural Society was founded and, soon afterwards, provincial architectural societies were established across the country. These societies not only carried out important work of recording and disseminating information of antiquarian interest within their areas, but popularised a way of life for their members, who could feel that they were contributing to a wider world and an important social mission. Their learned papers, read in the 14th-century College Hall at Exeter, and published in their transactions, were enlivened by dry wit and an uncompromising commitment to their ideals which members must surely have enjoyed. If the Exeter Diocesan Society may be regarded as typical — and this is arguable — not only were their learned papers scholarly, but they were also beautifully illustrated with colour plates of stained glass, wall paintings and monuments, not only of buildings in the region, but also as far afield as France, Italy and Ireland. This group was to play a crucial role in the promotion of archaeologically-correct Gothic architecture in the south-west peninsula. The EDAS formed an important point of contact between architects and clients in the region and, like *The Ecclesiologist*, was a waspish critic of poor design (Cherry 1995, 178-9).



Fig 161 The Methodist Church at Topsham (1867), by J. R. N. Haswell. The church is dedicated to St Nicholas and shows a fully-developed chancel with working piscina (RWP Topsham Methodist Church DSC07633).



Fig 162 The Methodist Church at Ivybridge (1874) by Norman & Hine, showing developed Gothic details and asymmetrical planning (RWP Ivybridge Methodist Church DSC093).



Fig. 163 Images of the apostles in the roof of the Methodist Church at Ivybridge (RWP Ivybridge Methodists DSC09250).



Fig. 164 The working piscina in the chancel at Topsham Methodist Church (RWP Topsham Methodist Church DSC07619).



Fig. 165 The Congregational Chapel at Muddiford (1846) Designed by Gould of Barnstaple, in full ecclesiological Gothic (RWP Muddiford URC DSC06673).

The Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society also kept a scrap-book of drawings, plans and engravings, sent by local architects and antiquarians (D&EIEDAS Boxes I-V); these were not only intended as a record, but also as a resource to help architects and designers understand the character of ancient fabric and assist them with making alterations to churches or designs for new buildings. Like the Church Schemes of the Ecclesiological Society, the Exeter Diocesan Society circulated church recording forms to its members, entitled 'Rough notes, for Correction' in which any observations of historic fabric, or the abuse of historic fabric, might be recorded for posterity. As the title suggests, these were to be updated regularly to include the latest research. Both the Rough Notes and the scrap books encouraged their volunteers to record 'abominations', such as neglect, ill-sited stove pipes and hat pegs banged into capitals. These descriptions and illustrations, though perhaps sometimes exaggerated, now often provide among the only records of the kind of casual treatment churches could be subjected to in pre-Victorian days.

These, then, were the ideas disseminated by the ecclesiologists through their writings, lectures and illustrations. Their success, however, seems not to lie solely with the brilliance of their ideas and their powerful way of expressing them, but possibly because the world was ready for a change and had been preparing for it for some time.

#### *Pre-Ecclesiological Writers Theoreticians and Practitioners*

The arrival of the ecclesiological movement in Devon is often supposed to be identical with the foundation of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society in 1841 and its subsequent work to promote the ideals of the Cambridge Camden Society. It is generally assumed that this was the route by which the ideas of Gothic-revival polemicists such as Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1810-1852) were introduced into the county (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 99). This change is believed to have manifested itself in the rejection of the pre-ecclesiological type of church with galleries, as previously described, and the adoption, instead, of long chancels, asymmetrical, picturesque compositions and archaeologically-correct Gothic detail, usually in the Decorated style of the 14th century.

In fact, research into the early Gothic revival in Devon has demonstrated that many of the ideas that we now regard as 'Ecclesiological', 'Camdenian' or 'Puginian', and which have been outlined above, were in fact already current in church circles in Devon by the late 18th century. Many of these ideas, including the inherent Paganism of classicism, its fundamental 'immorality' and its alien nature in the context of the English parish church, had already been articulated by late-Georgian writers in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and other antiquarian periodicals such as those of the Society of Antiquaries.

John Carter, for example, had railed against the ‘depravity’ of classical statuary and Baroque additions to the Gothic buildings of Oxford, and described the western towers of Westminster Abbey as ‘a truly ridiculous jumble of Roman and Grecian decorations’ and its monuments as ‘Roman-dressed secretaries of state, heathen gods and goddesses, poets and stage players’ (Mordaunt Crook, 1995, 45, 64, 66).<sup>35</sup> Although Carter was a vociferous polemicist who may have seen himself as ‘a voice crying in the wilderness’ (Anson 1965, 21), he does not seem to have been a lone voice, though other writers and antiquarians were perhaps less intransigent than him and have therefore managed to draw less attention from modern architectural historians. John Carter’s surveys of English cathedrals for the Society of Antiquaries, and the equally superb draughtsmanship of John Britton (Fig. 166) in *Cathedral Antiquities* (1814-25) reached a wide audience and helped to popularise and promote interest in Gothic buildings and Gothic ornament.

Richard Polwhele, a Cornish clergyman, antiquarian and historian, sometime curate of Kenton (one of Devon’s best and most complete examples of a 15th-century parish church), may perhaps be taken to represent the perspective of the more usual, antiquarian-minded provincial clergyman towards Gothic remains. In his *History of Devonshire* (1793-1806) he described the Elizabethan and Jacobean monuments which fill the eastern parts of such churches as Broadclyst, Bovey Tracey and Tawstock as being in:

‘a style of building, which men seem somehow constituted either, very much to admire, or very much to detest: let us shun both extremes, but still endeavour to expel these piles of illegitimate Italian architecture out of our churches, although the dreary nakedness of neglected aisles is sometimes relieved even by these extraordinary designs’.

(Richard Polwhele, quoted in Ashworth 1848, 60).

Both the Pagan nature of classical ornaments, their inappropriateness in an ecclesiastical context and the desire for homogeneity of style in the furnishings of parish churches were articulated here before Pugin was even born.

By the early 19th century, then, Gothic was already considered a particularly appropriate style for churches. It was frequently utilised in new church building, though often in association with interior furnishings planned on models which owed nothing to medieval precedent and which were almost indistinguishable from those of contemporary Nonconformist chapels. Although

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<sup>35</sup> It is possible that Carter intends moral condemnation of the gods, goddesses poets and stage players, in an early attempt to contrast the degenerate nature of modern civilisation and classical art with the high morality of Gothic.

there had been earlier attempts to interpret and define Gothic architecture in terms of ‘Orders’ equivalent to the five Classical orders, a reliable analysis of the styles and periods of Gothic architecture was unavailable until the publication of Thomas Rickman’s *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England, from the Conquest to the Reformation* in 1817. Rickman’s interpretation of the development of medieval architecture in five phases from ‘Saxon’ and ‘Norman’, through ‘Early English’ and ‘Decorated’ to ‘Perpendicular’ was popular and widely adopted, though terms such as ‘First Pointed’, ‘Middle’ and ‘Third Pointed’ were often substituted and two other periods, ‘Transitional’ and ‘Debased’, were added. Gothic having now been properly analysed and categorised, it could be applied to modern buildings and restored fabric.

The use of the term ‘Debased’ to describe late Gothic buildings also reveals that Gothic architecture was being invested with moral value. Later in the century Gothic was strenuously promoted as ‘Christian Architecture’ by polemicists such as A.W.N. Pugin and John Ruskin. Late-medieval and post-medieval buildings were perceived to be ‘tainted’ by the Renaissance, which was famously described by Ruskin, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) as a ‘foul torrent’ (Ruskin 1849, 55) and identified with paganism, while the earlier medieval styles were regarded as undeveloped or immature. These ideas were also articulated in Devon at an early date.

The Rev. Jonas Dennis, of Exeter College Oxford, but resident in Exeter, published his *Architectura Sacra* in 1818. The book was printed and bound in Exeter by P. Hedgeland, High Street, and was ‘also sold through Rivingtons and Hatchard in London, Parker in Oxford and Deighton in Cambridge’, ensuring it reached the right metropolitan and university audience. Dennis cannot really be categorised as medievalist, since his suggestions for the design of churches, which in the main are concerned with the ‘reverberation of sound,’ explore churches of circular, oval or parabolic form, with graduated seats. Yet he was adamant that the classical style for churches should be rejected, on the grounds that ‘Gothic or, as it is now termed, ‘English Architecture’ (Dennis 1818, 8) was the only means of creating the correct devotional atmosphere, and his appreciation of Gothic was expressed in richly romantic language. Notwithstanding St Peter’s, Rome, St Paul’s and the Wren Churches, the classical style was, to Dennis, ‘ill-adapted to the purpose of ecclesiastical structures’, because:

‘the most skilful architect can never produce the ‘dim religious light’ and solemn gloom so conducive to exciting devout impressions, by means of open windows without mullions nor tracery, columns without arches ... or by pediments of Heathen temples, whether in the most florid or the chastest style’.

(Dennis 1818, 9)

Dennis insisted that there was no substitute in ‘solemn effect’ for:

‘vaulted roofs rising to a point high above the level of the windows and painted of a deep blue colour, studded with gilded stars and relieved by gilded groinings and bosses; the richly-painted screen, and the wrought hangings of tapestry surrounding the ambit of the choir, the shadows reflected from the clustered pillars, with the double quatrefoil balustrade obscuring the lower part of the windows, the lofty rood loft intersecting the area (which) combined to soften the light and to preclude that inappropriate glare, which is admitted into ecclesiastical structures of Grecian Architecture....’

(ibid.)

Dennis argued for the reinstatement of chancels, rood screens, credence tables, piscinae, the separation of the sexes during public worship ‘as an ancient use and to prevent levity or indecorum’ and for the use of the surplice throughout the entire service, not only by the priest, but also by the clerk. This remarkable book, contemporary with Rickman’s, shows an understanding of the emotional appeal of Gothic. The furnishings of Anglican churches, especially rood screens, were to Dennis not only the creators of the requisite atmosphere for worship, but also a means by which a visitor might distinguish a church from a Meeting House —buildings which might otherwise only be distinguished ‘by the tolling or silence of a bell’ (ibid.). Gothic buildings and medievalising furniture were thus an architectural language which he saw as essential to the identity of Anglicanism.

The Rev. J. P. Jones, curate of North Bovey in north-eastern Dartmoor may also be considered a ‘prophet’ of Ecclesiology (See Chapter 1). Jones and his friend the Roman Catholic priest the Rev. Dr. Oliver, wrote a series of articles in the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* under the pseudonyms ‘Devoniensis’ and ‘Curiosus’, which were later bound together and published in 1828 as *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Devon, Being Observations on Many Churches in Devonshire, Originally Published in the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette, with a Letter on the Preservation and Restoration of our Churches*. In the preface to this volume Jones criticises the current fashion classicising ancient buildings and lays the responsibility for permitting such inappropriate additions upon the parish clergy. He blamed this unthinking vandalism upon their ignorance of the Gothic style:

‘the clergy are themselves too frequently unacquainted with the principles of Gothic architecture, and they sanction many of the tasteless alterations which are continually disfiguring our churches; the screens are pulled down, the painted glass

removed from the windows, and galleries supported by Grecian pillars are erected under the fostering sanction of a well-meaning clergyman'

(Jones & Oliver 1828, vi).

Jones also articulated the perfection of 14th-century Gothic as the fulfilment of the earlier stage (Early English or First-Pointed) before its decline into the 'florid style' (Perpendicular or Third-Pointed) in the periods of Henry VI to Henry VIII. For Jones 'The splendid reign of Edward III':

'was the golden age of pointed architecture; it had then arrived at its greatest beauty and perfection; the elegant simplicity of the former age, though improved, had not been abandoned, and the gorgeous ornaments which marked the decline of true taste in the succeeding age were unknown.'

(Ibid., iii).

This idea of the perfection of the 'Decorated style' or 'Second-Pointed' has been held as one of the principal innovations of Pugin and of the Cambridge Camden Society, yet here we see it articulated by the curate of a remote country parish a decade before that society was founded and when Pugin, (however precocious he may have been) was only 16.

In fact, even a decade later Pugin was still designing churches in the Romanesque style at St James' Reading; the crypt of St Chad's, Birmingham (both 1837) and at St Michael's, Gorey, Co Wexford (1839-43). He also used the Perpendicular style at St Marie's, Derby in 1838 (Hill 2007, 193). Although it is perhaps unfair to refine too much on Pugin's early flexibility or inflexibility in the use of architectural styles it does seem that he was not the first to recognise the perfection of Decorated Gothic. Whether Pugin was familiar with the writings of Dennis, Kendall or Jones remains unclear.

Jones anticipated the ecclesiologists in other ways, perhaps more immediately practical. He goes on to offer advice to churchwardens and clergymen on the management of their buildings including 'digging drains around the walls, the removal of earth and the prevention of burials close to the walls' and thoroughly ventilating the church: 'A free current of air, by means of open casements in the opposite windows, tends to keep the walls dry, and during the greater part of the year the windows should be open' (Jones & Oliver 1828, v). In this advice he anticipates the short pamphlets produced by the Cambridge Camden Society under the titles '*A few words to Church Builders*' (Neale, 1841), and also their publications '*A few words to Churchwardens on churches and church ornaments*' Nos 1 and 2 (Neale, 1841), aimed at country and urban parishes respectively, and '*A few words to the Parish Clerks and Sextons of Country Parishes*' (Neale, 1843). These publications 'may be

taken to represent the closest the society came to producing a formal set of ideals to be incorporated in the design of arrangement of churches' (Webster 2003, 127)

Jones was a sworn enemy of the high, private pew, on the grounds that they were 'a great deformity' and that they excluded the public. He advocated open benches as 'best fitted to display the beauties of the church as well as to accommodate the public' (Jones & Oliver 1828, x). He also outlined principles of restoration, based on careful observation and exact replication of the medieval fabric, on the grounds that the building provided a record of its own development which could be read and understood by persons 'versed in Gothic Architecture' (ibid., iv). He was thus an early exponent of an archaeological approach to the restoration of church buildings. His advice on restoration, as on the management of historic buildings, would be admirable at any period:

'The reparation of the windows is a point of great consequence; the original form of the mullions, drip-stones, buttresses &c should be carefully preserved, and if a window is in such a state of decay, as to render it necessary to be removed altogether, it should be restored with every possible exactness'.

(ibid., viii).

Jones was not alone in Devon in his advocacy of what can only be characterised as proto-ecclesiological ideas, citing the activities of the Rev. R. H. Froude, archdeacon of Totnes, for having worked unwearingly to 'preserve our churches from decay, and to restore them with taste and elegance... he has, through his influence, prevented many tasteless alterations and has given every assistance when applied to on the subject' (Ibid., x). Jones recommends that those interested in the reparation of churches according to authentic forms should study 'an excellent work by Mr John Kendall, of Exeter', which he considered to be 'the best introduction ever presented to the public in illustration of Gothic architecture as applied to practice ... The plates are beautifully executed, and the specimens are selected from the cathedral at Exeter' (ibid., vii).

Kendall's Volume, '*An Elucidation of the Principles of English Architecture Usually denominated Gothic*' was brought out in 1818. Kendall's use of the word 'principles' again seems to anticipate Pugin's '*The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*' (1841) and, though Kendall's principles are not as clearly articulated as Pugin's, or quite as revolutionary, it is clear that Kendall understood the development of the Gothic style more clearly than many of his contemporaries. He also grasped that Gothic was probably French rather than English in origin, though he preferred to use the term 'English Architecture' because the word 'Gothic' was insufficiently accurate, conveying 'A silly contempt', and because the art had been 'practised by the English' (Kendall 1818, 12).

Kendall seems to have understood that Gothic was defined more by its structural principles than its decoration, though this is perhaps rather disguised by his prose. Kendall's 'Principles' were divided into two groups, the primary principles, and the secondary principles. The Primary Principles may be summarised as:

- I: The pyramidal form, observable both in the general fabric and in all its ornaments and decorations such as canopies.
- II: The importance of the projection and diminution of buttresses. He seems to understand the relationship between window size, wall thickness and the depth of external supports. He also understood the role of pinnacles in adding strength to the building by their weight.
- III: The pointed arch; 'The most correct' being based on centres drawn from an equilateral triangle—less correct arches, therefore being the depressed type, or four-centred type typical of later forms of Gothic.
- IV: The clustered column, 'with no restriction as to thickness or height', either a cylinder or composed of cylinders. The emphasis being on the vertical and on the unity of wall shafts and vault ribs. He understood and stressed the connection between the shafts and the vault ribs, providing a unity to walls and roof which is completely absent in classicism.

So, for Kendall (as for many modern theoreticians), vaulting is integral with the Gothic system and the decoration of the building and its structural integrity are all unified by being based on the same 'pyramidal' emphasis which pervades the building from its basic geometry to its smallest detail. The structure and weight of the building is also to be expressed clearly in the disposition and projection of its structural elements.

Kendall's 'Secondary Principles' were perhaps still less clearly expressed, but seem to deal with the subjugation of ornament to the structure of the building, its effectiveness depending upon its position in relation to the eye of the viewer, and also on the superiority of Gothic design in allowing the artist freedom to exercise their own taste in the use of natural ornaments.

The Secondary Principles involve:

- 1 The proper disposition of 'Clusters of mouldings or ribs'. In this principle he seems to understand the relation of mouldings to the eye of the viewer (perhaps anticipating Pugin's plate from *True principles* (p 16), showing the different perspectives of a modern and an ancient clergyman viewing well and ill-designed buttresses).

- 2 Corbels or supports ‘formed according to the taste or caprice of the artist’, placed ‘as required’. In this principle he restates the necessity for the expression of the visual logic of the building and ‘honest’ construction, rather than the duplication of entirely ornamental pilasters. He is also perhaps stressing the freedom of the individual artist from the ‘tyranny’ of exactly replicating classical mouldings and detail, perhaps anticipating Ruskin’s identification of classicism with ‘Slavery’.
- 3 Peculiar forms and combinations of mouldings. He urged scrupulous attention to mouldings and deep undercutting, with fillets, to create shadow and lightness.
- 4 The diverging from the horizontal and perpendicular lines of ‘the lower mouldings’ (He seems to mean the subdivisions of cusping and tracery, and perhaps also the increased enrichment of the building with height, but it is not entirely clear).
- 5 Weather or crown mouldings. This appears to anticipate Pugin’s plate in *True Principles*, p 15- 16, showing Gothic mouldings throwing off rainwater.
- 6 Tracery or openwork, subdivision by larger, and simpler elements and enrichment by lesser elements, the lesser giving ‘all the exuberance’ so- a gradation of elements from the severe to the ornate. ‘This principle, deriving from the 4th.’
- 7 The introduction of foliage or flowers, by which he seems to mean crockets.

It is uncertain how well Kendall was known to early 19th-century architects and architectural theoreticians outside Devon, where he worked as one of the surveyors to Exeter Cathedral, but it is striking to see other architects in the county, equally obscure and little known, working in the same archaeologically informed ways to produce buildings, and restoration schemes, that again seem to anticipate the ecclesiologists.

#### *Local architects in the 1830s*

By the 1830s many local architects had absorbed the idea of attempting to accurately reflect authentic Gothic detail in their buildings, but they were still applying these details to an essentially 18th-century classical framework. One of the characteristic features of the church building of this period was the short chancel, a shallow recess, usually no deeper than was necessary to contain the Communion table within its rails., which nevertheless might be provided with rich Perpendicular window tracery based on close observation of medieval sources. The churches of Stoke Canon (1835), by Henry Mason of Derby and Ide (1837-8), by Henry Hooper of Exeter (Figs 169, 170)

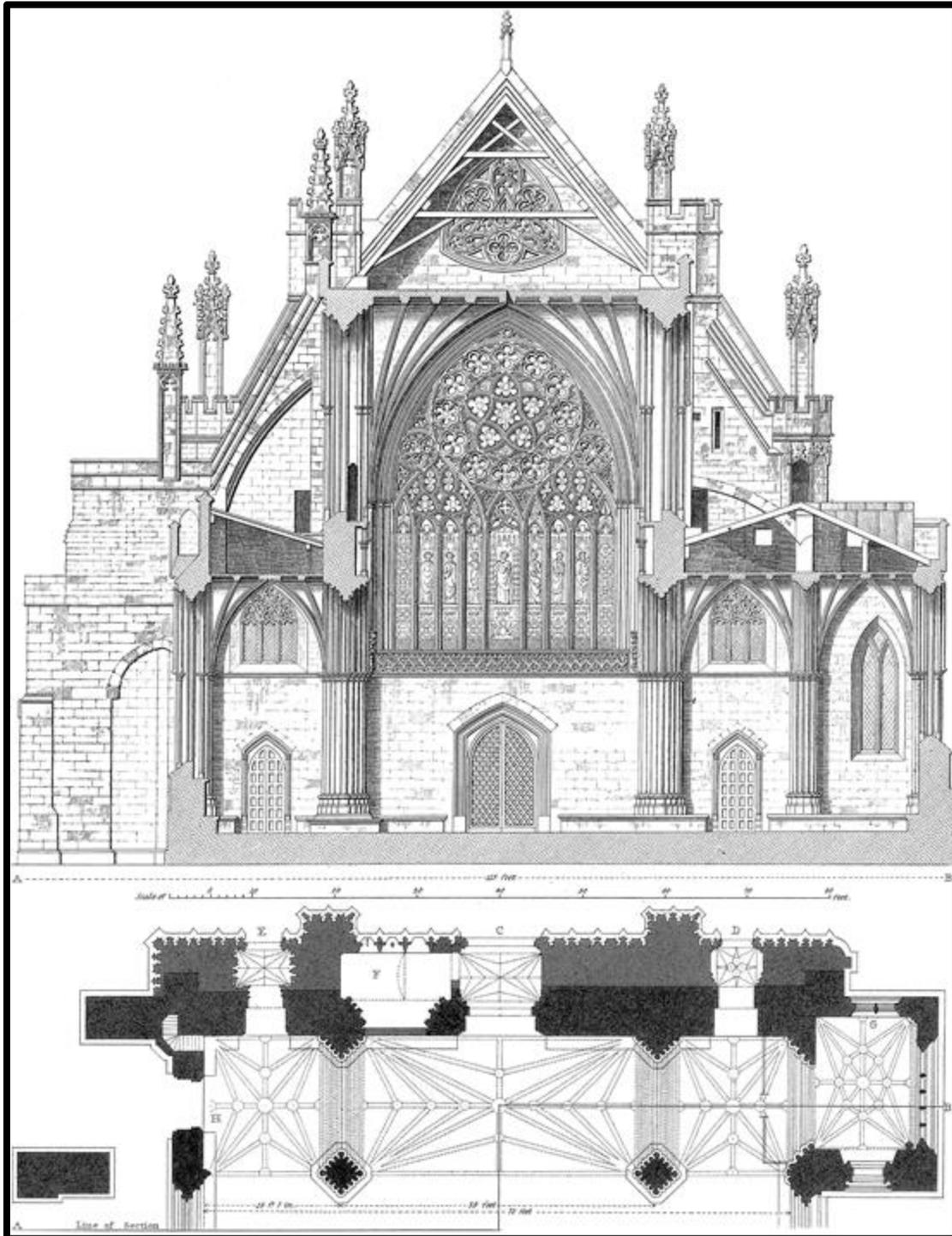


Fig. 166 Plate 12 from Britton's *The History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Exeter*, (1836) showing the high quality of draughtsmanship in the popular antiquarian publications of the early 19th century.

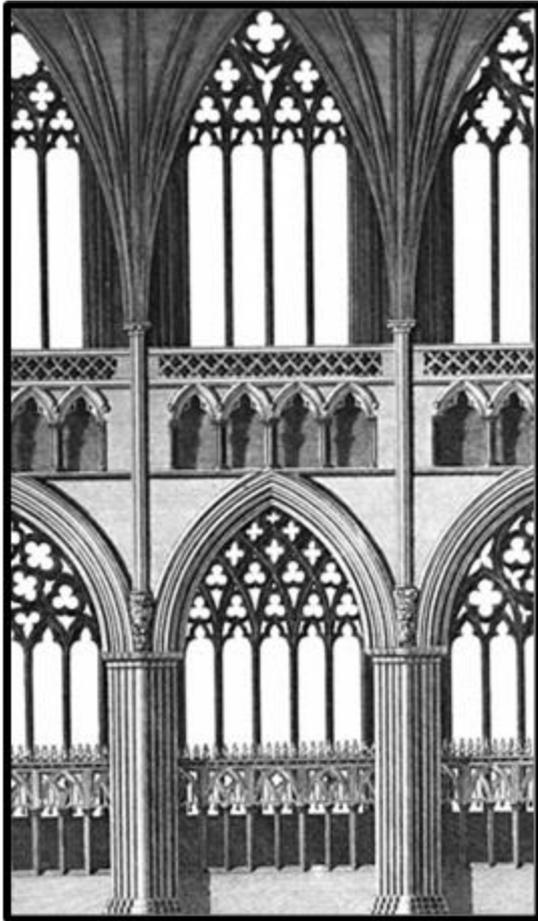


Fig. 167 Plate XV from John Kendall's *An Elucidation of the Principles of English Architecture* (1818)

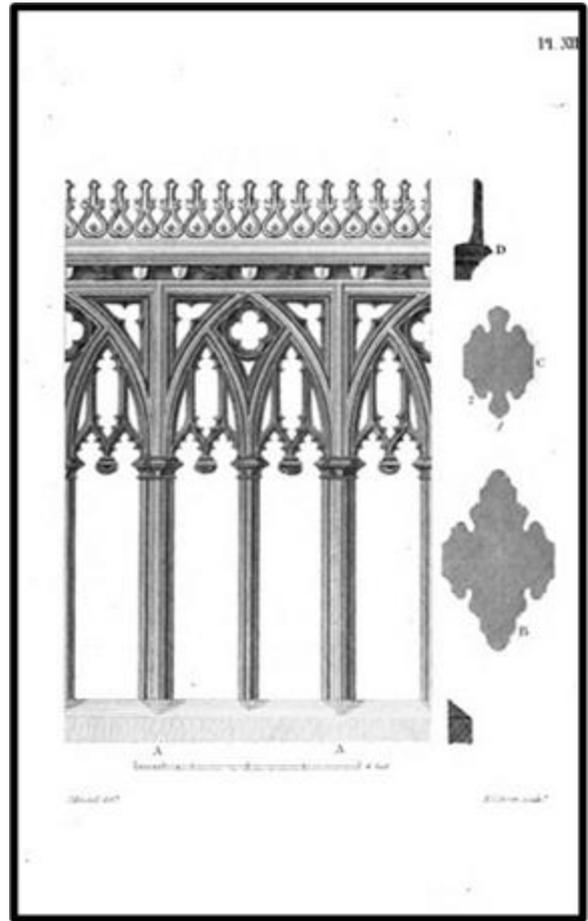


Fig. 168 Plate XII from John Kendall's *An Elucidation* (1818). Compare with his chancel screen at Haccombe (Fig. 94).



Fig. 169 The church at Stoke Canon from the east, showing relatively accurate details applied to an inappropriate bulk (RWP Stoke Canon DSC00142).



Fig. 170 The church at Ide from the east, showing perpendicular tracery mixed with Georgian false ashlar-work (RWP Ide DSC04798).



Fig. 171 The church at Oakford, showing groups of Early-English style lancets possibly inspired by Salisbury Cathedral, but more probably by economy (RWP Oakford DSC01515).

are of this type. Other churches employed a reduced form of Early-English, which was perhaps prompted by economy. Oakford (1837-40), in north Devon by Richard Shackleton Pope of Bristol (Fig. 171) and two early churches in east Devon by John Hayward; Blackborough (1837-8) and Tipton St John (1839-40) are examples of this type (Figs 179, 180).

One of the most remarkable precursors of both ecclesiological ideas and restoration was the Tiverton architect and surveyor Gideon Acland Boyce (1797-1861). Boyce was well connected, being a relation of the Acland family of Killerton and the Acland/Troytes of Huntsham, who were active in High-Church circles and who commissioned several new churches and chapels, including the Romanesque-style estate chapel at Killerton, by C. R. Cockerell (1838-41). Like many other architects of the period, Boyce worked in the Gothic, Romanesque and Classical styles, but it seems that he reserved Gothic and Romanesque for work on churches and preferred to use a version of 'Tudor' style for his domestic work.

Boyce had been responsible for the restoration of the Greenway Aisle at St Peter's Church in Tiverton, which was a pioneering work of archaeologically-based church restoration.

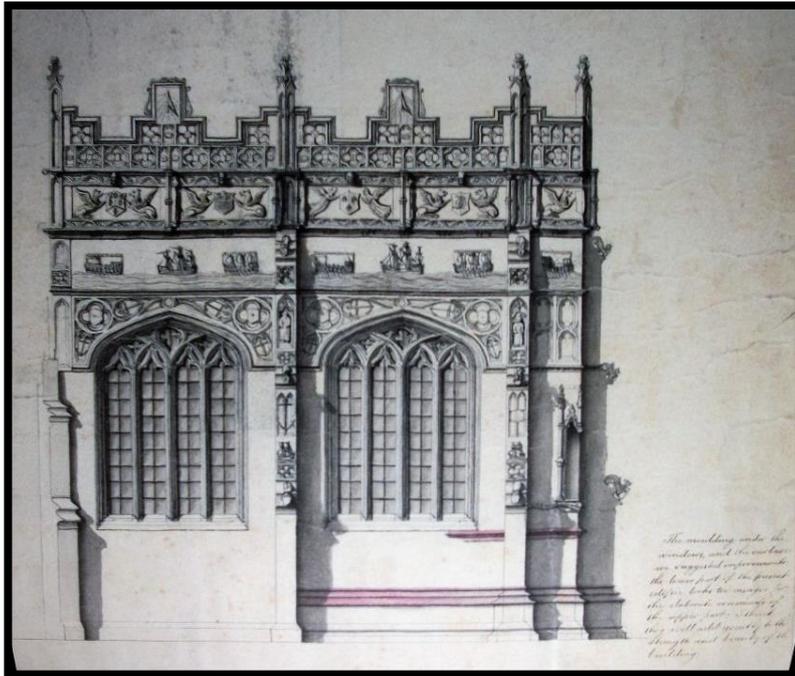


Fig 172 South elevation of the Greenway chapel drawn by Gideon Boyce of Tiverton c.1829 (EDAS Scrapbooks at the D&EI, Exeter).

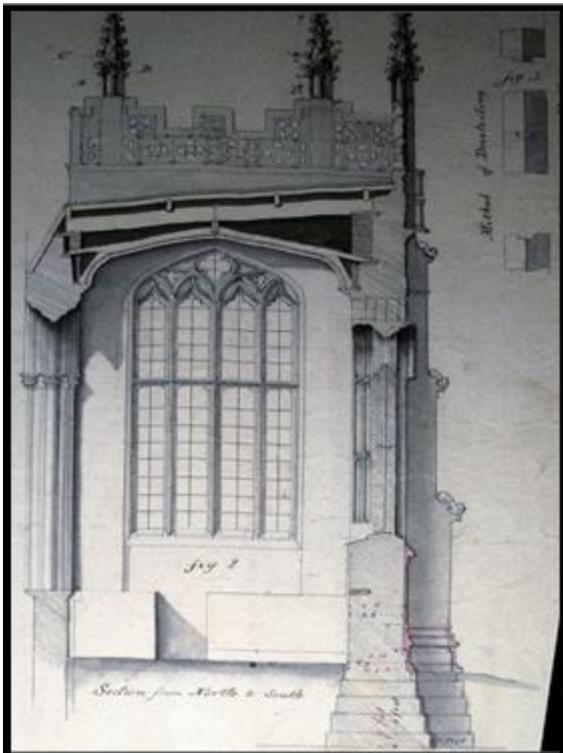


Fig 173 Boyce's section through the chapel, looking east (EDAS Scrapbooks at the D&EI).

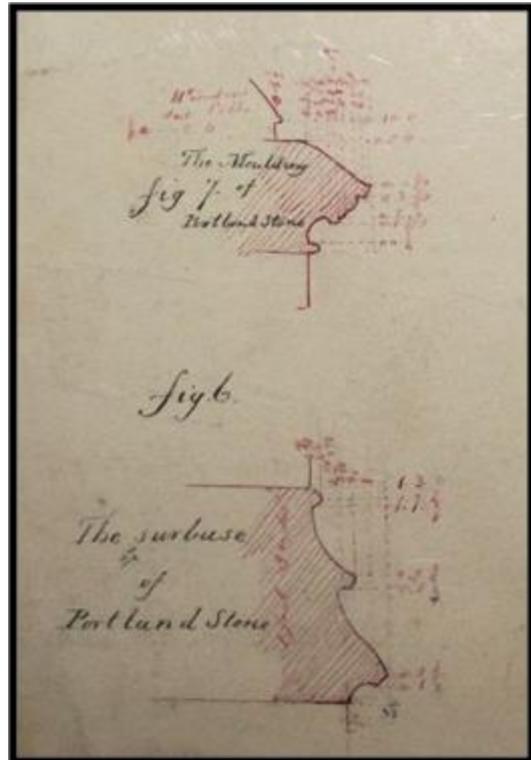


Fig 174 Details of the mouldings added below the windows by Boyce (EDAS Scrapbooks at the D&EI).

The enormous church of St Peter was famous for this magnificent late-medieval chantry chapel and porch, added to its southern side by the Merchant John Greenway in *c.*1517. The interior of the church had previously been restored by an unknown architect in 1819-22, during which it was provided with a false plaster vault and several medieval features, including the screen dividing the Greenway chapel from the south aisle of the church, had been removed to allow the conversion of the chapel into private pews (Harding 1845, 10). In 1825 Greenway's porch adjacent to the chapel was taken down and rebuilt, probably under Boyce's direction (Blaylock 1986, 94). These restorations were not noticeable for their archaeological sensitivity. By comparison the restoration of the Greenway chapel in 1829 seems to have been a more careful and archaeologically sensitive effort. Boyce produced careful measured drawings of the building which show a greater degree of awareness of the building as an artefact. For example, Boyce records the 17th-century alterations, including sundials built into the battlements, which he intended to remove and replace. For all his careful observation, Boyce was very much a man of his time in that he sought to improve the building by aesthetically-motivated alterations; strengthening the base of the building by refacing it with two levels of moulding to form a stronger (more classical?) plinth and elongating its originally rather stumpy pinnacles to help it aspire Heavenwards. He seems also to have moved sculptural elements about, possibly to display them better, though this aspect of his work remains uncertain (Parker 2016, 18). Nevertheless, for all his artistic improvements (for which he may perhaps be justly criticised) Boyce responded to the fabric of this building in a way that Patey, at West and East Teignmouth, had not. Boyce respected the building as an artistic achievement and, though he sought to 'improve' it and display it, he did not randomly introduce elements culled from Salisbury or Ely Cathedrals.

In 1836-9 Gideon Boyce was responsible for the design of 'St John's Roman Catholic Church in Tiverton, a little known but important building which shows that Boyce was already fully informed of the latest ideas as to the appearance of an authentically medieval church (Fig 175). St John's is now disused and its interior was not accessible, but the building remains in existence. It has a deep chancel, structurally separate from the nave, pronounced external buttresses, a steeply pitched roof and large windows with decorated Gothic tracery. The building is constructed of local red stone with buff freestone dressings. Unlike most of its contemporaries, such as the parish churches at Ide, near Exeter (Fig. 170) and Strete, near Dartmouth (1836) by Joseph Lidstone and John Emmet (Fig. 176) which were covered in stucco lined-out in imitation of stone ashlar, St John's displays its fabric and its Decorated Gothic style is agreeably contrasted with the domestic Tudor details of the adjacent presbytery.

Boyce's other works of the period are known to include the Roman Catholic church of the Immaculate Conception (1842-45) in Barnstaple (Fig. 177) and the Chapel at Petton (1846-8), near Tiverton (Fig. 178), both of which are apsed structures in the Romanesque style. The design of the Immaculate Conception (now derelict and under threat of demolition) has been attributed to Augustus Welby Pugin on the basis of a 19th-century newspaper account in the *North Devon Journal* for the 25th October 1855, in which it is stated that 'the original designs were furnished, it is understood, by that distinguished ecclesiastical architect, Mr Pugin' (Green 2014, 2). Both the Pugin scholars Rosemary Hill (Hill 2007, 502) and Gerard Hyland (Hyland 2014, 88), reject this attribution to Pugin; on stylistic grounds, because of the lack of documentary evidence, and because an earlier report in *The Tablet* of 1844 names Boyce as 'the architect' (ibid.). Whatever the truth of this Pugin is known to have visited Tiverton in 1844 (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 152) and although this visit is clearly too late for us to construe from it any influence of Pugin upon Boyce or Boyce upon Pugin it is conceivable that they had met previously, particularly if Boyce was known in Roman Catholic circles as the architect of St John's; such a highly unusual building for an unknown provincial architect to produce at a time when even the famous Pugin had not yet produced a major building in his own right.

From this we must conclude that, even if the main protagonists of Puginian and Ecclesiological ideas were yet to speak, the ideas they were to espouse with such authority and to such remarkable effect from c.1840 were already in existence and had already spread to some of the remotest parts of England. In Devon, at least, the ground had clearly been well prepared and was about to yield its harvest.

### **Church buildings in the mid 19th century**

#### *New buildings and additions to older churches*

The contrast between the work of a local architect before and after the foundation of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society may perhaps be illustrated by a comparison between the churches of Blackborough (1837-8), Tipton St John (1839-40) and St Andrew, Exwick, (1841) all designed by John Hayward. The church at Blackborough has previously been attributed to James Knowles, the architect of the nearby mansion designed for the Earl of Egremont and more-or-less contemporary with the church. During the research for this thesis, however, letters from the incumbent the Rev. John Clarke to Ralph Barnes, then the deputy registrar of the diocese of Exeter, clearly identify 'Mr Hayward' as 'the architect of Blackborough church':



Fig. 174 St John's RC Church (1836-9 in Tiverton, Boyce's essay in Decorated Gothic (RWP Tiverton RC DSC05808).



Fig. 175 St Michael, Strete (1836), by Joseph Lidstone, showing less convincing detail (RWP Strete DSC02061).



Fig.176 The Immaculate Conception RC Chapel at Barnstaple (1842-5) An accomplished essay in Romanesque, whoever its architect (RWP Barnstaple Immaculate Conception DSC01720).



Fig.177 The Chapel at Petton (1846-8) by Gideon Boyce (RWP Petton DSC01059).



Fig. 179 All Saints Blackborough (1837-8), by John Hayward photographed by P. Lee before demolition in 1994.



Fig. 180 The church at Tipton St John (1839-40), by John Hayward, showing Early English details and a shallow chancel (RWP Tipton St John DSC01556).



Fig. 181 Salisbury Cathedral, detail of the aisles (RWP Salisbury DSC01651).



Fig. 182 St Andrew, Exwick (1841), by John Hayward, a fully ecclesiastical chapel (RWP Exwick DSC03142).

‘and if you will have the kindness to call on this Hayward, who lives in the Cathedral Yard, he will give you every information’ (October 15th 1838)  
 ‘it is with unfeigned regret that I am obliged to inform you that on the Saturday after I had the gratification of meeting you at the Grange I received a letter from Mr Hayward, the architect, stating that owing to some neglect between the builder and the joiner the church of Blackborough would not be ready for consecration until the latter end of November’

(October 27th 1838).

(SWHC Diocesan (Pr 337-338) Rebuilding Of Churches  
 (1 Box A-S And Oversize File Exeter)

This is of critical importance since John Hayward was shortly afterwards to become the architect to the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society and presumably espoused its ideas as thoroughly as he was able. His next church, Saint Andrew in Exwick (1841), for the Rev. John Medley, incumbent of Saint Thomas’, was to be described by the Ecclesiological Society in *The Ecclesiologist* as ‘the best specimen of a modern church we have yet seen’ (Cox 2019, 36), but it is clear from his earlier works that he must have been on a steep learning curve.

All Saints, Blackborough (now demolished) was a large church set in remote country in the Blackdown Hills, serving a small community whose medieval church seems to have fallen into ruin during the Commonwealth period. A new church was built in 1838 at the instigation of the Earl of Egremont, whose mansion stood nearby. The building was designed in the Early English style (Fig. 179), though with a Romanesque style font, possibly in Coade Stone.<sup>36</sup> This may have been intended to signal the antiquity of the parish which, since the loss of its own church, had been held with Kentisbeare (Peskett 1979, 155). The building seems to have been relatively expensive for the period, costing £1,900, the expense being defrayed by the Earl (White 1850, 282). It had a tall tower with a landmark broach spire (later rebuilt) and elevations of plain lancets punctuated at the corners by spirelets. Though a relatively ambitious building the Gothic detail was minimal. The interior was dominated by a tall, narrow chancel arch framing a Gothic reredos with four foliate-headed panels and a small, chest-like altar. Unlike most churches of the period the church appears not to have been seated with box pews, but with open, poppy-headed benches without doors. It is unknown whether these were free or appropriated.

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<sup>36</sup> Several other possible Coade Stone fonts have been identified during this project, including the fonts at Chevithorne and Wembury. Further advice is needed to establish whether other Coade Stone fonts or furnishings exist. The material is notoriously difficult to identify.

Hayward's next church, and his earliest surviving building in the county is the small church of Tipton St John (Fig. 180). With its short chancel, thinly-detailed Early English style and its curious eastern porch on the north side exactly balancing a small vestry on the south, this church may look nearly as unconvincing as Blackborough; however, it clearly represents a step forward in the attempt to design a church in a correct, archaeological Gothic style. The architectural inspiration for this building (to take a generous view) seems to have been Salisbury Cathedral — particularly the paired lancets of the nave aisles and the Trinity Chapel (Fig. 181). The interior of the church, on the other hand, is entirely in the earlier tradition of church design, with a western gallery, flimsy open roof structure and three blocks of box pews defining two alleys with no central aisle. The tall chancel arch is reminiscent of Blackborough. Although the box pews have been replaced most of the original furnishings survive including the reredos, which remains in situ behind a much later early 20th-century oak reredos and appears to consist of a series of tall lancet panels divided by shafts; this too may echo Blackborough.

By comparison with Tipton St John, St Andrew's Exwick, a Chapel of Ease in an industrial suburb within the parish of St Thomas, Exeter, was an extraordinary departure for the architect. The building is constructed of local volcanic stone with buff dressings to the windows, in an understated Decorated Gothic style (Fig. 182). Originally, the building consisted only of a nave and a short chancel with a south porch but it was richly furnished with open bench seats, a stone altar and a richly-decorated reredos. The clear differences between these two buildings do seem to suggest an apparently seismic moment in the life and practice of their architect.

It may perhaps be true that Hayward experienced a Damascene conversion to ecclesiological Gothic at this stage, but its effect on his architectural practice has perhaps been overstated. Hayward continued to design buildings in the classical style and to furnish his churches according to the wishes of his clients, with box pews and open seats, despite his holding the position of architect to the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society. It is also clear that affiliation to the Cambridge Camden or the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society was no indication of one's personal views either about architecture or churchmanship. It did not, at this stage, indicate an affiliation to either the High Church or the Low Church party and many buildings designed to serve committed evangelical congregations used almost exactly the same language as their High—Church brothers and sisters.

Holy Trinity Woodbury Salterton (1843-4) by the Exeter Architect David Macintosh, is a remarkable building, almost indistinguishable from an orthodox 'ecclesiological' church, but intended for a staunchly evangelical congregation (Fig. 183). The building has a long chancel, an open roof and is archaeologically correct in every respect except in its benches with fitted doors,



Fig. 183 Holy Trinity, Woodbury Salterton (1853-4) by David Macintosh, designed for a low-church congregation (RWP Woodbury Salterton DSC09034).



Fig. 184 The interior of Holy Trinity showing benches with doors (RWP Woodbury Salterton DSC09086).



Fig. 185 The parish church at Bramford Speke (1852-3), by L. G. Butcher, restored for the Revd Mr Gorham, a notorious low churchman, in an ecclesiological style virtually indistinguishable from a contemporary Tractarian church (RWP Bramford Speke DSC02827).

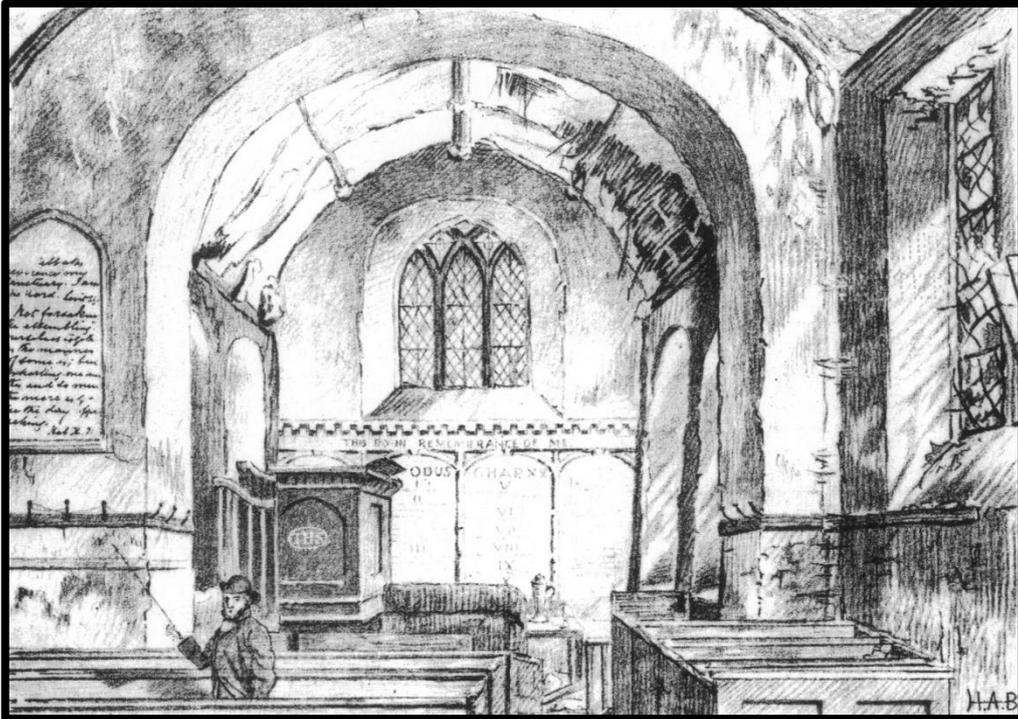


Fig. 186 A disused parish church in Exeter. St Pancras in decay in 1860, showing high box pews, a simple Gothic reredos and pulpit, possibly installed by Cornish & Julian in 1830. Note the hat pegs on the wall, indicated by the visitor, perhaps with disapproval (Drawing by H.A.B, c.1860)

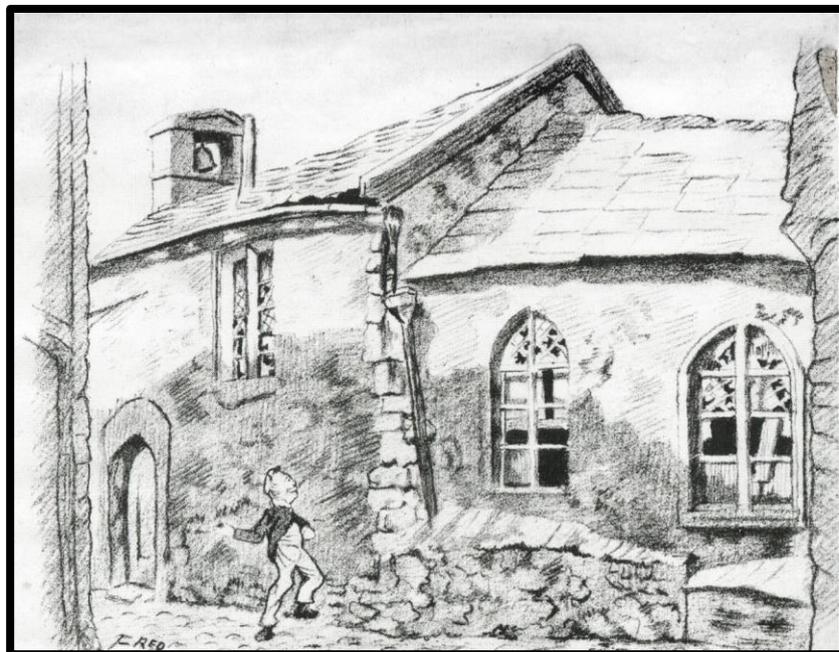


Fig 187 Lithograph by 'Fred' showing St Pancras before its Victorian restoration (SWHC WCSLP&D 6433).

its western gallery and in its chancel arch so tall and pointed that it conveys a slight whiff of Fonthill Abbey.

This church was restricted by the will of its foundress, Marianne Pidsley of Greendale, to be served only by ministers of sound evangelical opinions (Cherry 2014, 31). This is in no way communicated by the architecture (except perhaps in the inscriptions on the buttresses which indicate that this church is founded, literally, on Scripture: *Sola Scriptura*).

It should be remembered that even the Rev. Mr Gorham, Rector of Brampford Speke, whose institution to that parish was overshadowed by a fierce theological row with Bishop Philpotts about Baptismal regeneration and who was perhaps the exemplar of the low—churchman, had his church restored after his institution in 1852-3 in a decent and archaeologically-correct Gothic style by the architect L. G. Butcher of Ilfracombe. Gorham then invited the Rev. Francis Close, the fiercely uncompromising vicar of St Mary's in Cheltenham, and a known antagonist to ecclesiology and church restoration, to preach at the opening ceremony (DHC Vestry Records and Parochial memoranda 1853-1922 PV1). The only other indication of bad feeling and an un-ecclesiological scorn for decent medieval arrangements was a Cundy Stove, paid for at the vicar's own expense 'by the aid of private funds unconnected with this parish', which was situated right in the middle of the crossing, in a place where it would undoubtedly have drawn down the opprobrium of any visiting ecclesiologist filling out a Camdenian Church Scheme (Minutes of a Vestry meeting 28.3.1853).

It is easy to forget, because of subsequent controversies, that to men and women of that period, 'Puginian' Gothic was not necessarily 'High-Church' and that 'Catholicism' to many orthodox Anglicans of the time, was what they already were, rather than what they aspired to be. Gothic architecture in the mid-19th century was not necessarily allied to Ritualism, but rather a statement of the orthodoxy of Anglicanism and was widely accepted as appropriate for a modern, 'protestant' religion.

#### *Church Restoration in Exeter in the 1840s*

The economic progress of the City of Exeter during the 19th century has been characterised as one of 'decline and slow adjustment' (Newton 1968, xv). The traditional industry of the city, cloth weaving and dyeing, had been damaged by the loss of its traditional continental markets during the Napoleonic wars and virtually ceased in the face of competition from the industrial towns of northern England. Late-Victorian writers, quoted by Newton, noted the failure of the city to increase in size in parallel with other urban centres, blaming this on the character of the city as 'no new centre of industry' or on the agricultural depression and the 'financial decadence of the

County Families' (ibid., xiv). The city remained a small one, although its population had grown from 18,000 in 1801 to around 40,000 in 1850. By comparison, the 'Three Towns' of Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse, with Morice Town and Stoke, had massively increased in size, with a population in 1850 of around 90,000 (White 1850, 49; 633).

Much of the population of Exeter still lived in the ancient urban centre, though there were large areas of new housing in the traditionally working-class suburb of St Sidwell, and much new gentry housing in St Leonards and Heavitree. There was a distinguished if sometimes vociferous local press, including the radical *Western Times*, the *Exeter Flying Post* and the more conservative *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*. Church issues were widely discussed, with some acrimony, in these papers, and fears of 'popery' were to erupt into rioting in 1845 and 1848 (Bhanji, 2001, 149-150; Ingle 1848). The life of the City was dominated to a considerable degree by the cathedral establishment, particularly by two outstanding bishops, Henry Philpotts and Frederick Temple. Church politics and sectarian controversies were thus at the centre of city life, particularly with respect to mass education. A diocesan training college was founded in the city in 1839 (Brooks 1995, 7). A diocesan church building society had been founded in 1825 and the city was also the base, from 1841, of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society.

#### *The condition of the City Churches*

Exeter in the 1800s still retained almost its full complement of medieval parish churches and might have been considered over-churched for a city of its size. The city churches were small in comparison to the churches of cities like Norwich, York and Bristol. All but two of them (St Pauls and St Stephens, which had been rebuilt in the late 17th century) were medieval buildings. Few medieval furnishings seem to have survived in these churches, possibly due to the destructive period during the Civil War and Commonwealth, when all but four of the churches were closed or sold, during which time their original fittings may have been cleared (Cresswell 1908, 4).

When Alexander Jenkins compiled his *Civil and Ecclesiastical History of the City of Exeter* in 1806, most of the churches were in regular use. He described them as 'neat and well seated' (presumably with box pews, of which evidence survives in all but two of the churches today) and mentions many other typical furnishings, such as galleries and pulpits with sounding boards crowned with trumpeting angels. Several of the churches (unusually for so early a date) were provided with organs. St Mary Arches may have had a particularly distinguished musical tradition under the organist Hugh Bond (d.1792) who published *Twelve Hymns and Four Anthems for Four Voices, Proper to be used in all Places of Public Worship and for Private Devotion* in c. 1776.

On the other hand a number of the churches were completely derelict, and may have been disused for parochial worship for the greater part of the 18th century or, indeed, from the time of the Commonwealth. These abandoned churches were often held *in commendam* with other, more prosperous churches nearby and included St Pancras, Allhallows Goldsmith Street, St Olave and St Kerrian (Jenkins 1806, 319, 313, 390). St Kerrian's, in North Street, was described by a visitor (signing himself as 'Quilibet') in newspaper article in 1837. The church was 'greatly neglected...its carved pulpit, gallery, and rude seats in a state of dilapidation; and the whole in such a maze of damp and darkness, that it is almost surprising...Tradition seems to say that regular service has not been performed there for nearly a century and a half... this little charnel house with its places of sepulture "thick hung with mouldy damps and ropery slime" is still the dormitory of many families' (SWHC WCSL Church Cuttings: Exeter, St Kerrian, Unatt. Cutt. 14. 01.1837). Disuse, in this case, appears to have preserved ancient furnishings to an extent not found in the other city churches

Despite the necessity of finding accommodation elsewhere, the parishioners resisted any attempt to restore their church to use for fear of creating for themselves an unacceptable financial burden. In 1821 a deputation waited on the bishop to protest at high cost of re-opening the church, since the repairs would inevitably have necessitated the levying of a church rate and 'the whole of the property in the parish belongs to 25 persons' (EFP, 20.12.1821). It is likely that it was only its use as a cemetery that kept the building from demolition, and this use was to entirely cease in the later 19th century as a result of concern about public health and the better provision of cemeteries (see below). The practice of burials in city churches having been discontinued, St Kerrian's lost its sole remaining function and finally fell to road widening in 1878.

#### *The reinvigoration of urban church life*

That corporate life of a kind could continue in moribund parishes is remarkably demonstrated by the case of Allhallows on the Walls, Exeter, a populous parish in a poor district of the city, whose church had been employed as a battery during the Civil War, extensively ruined and never rebuilt. Since that time the parish had been without a church, the ruins having been cleared away in 1770, yet churchwardens continued to be elected and the plate and 'a very curious Bible' were delivered annually by the incumbent wardens to their successors in office (Jenkins 1841, 399).

Attempts to remedy the situation by pastoral reorganization had failed: a proposal in 1830 to erect a church for the joint parishes of Allhallows on the Walls, St Edmund on the Bridge and St Mary Steps was rejected (somewhat snootily) by the congregation of St Mary Steps, who wrote that 'the majority of the ratepayers... (of St Mary's)...demur to being mixed with the parishioners

of Allhallows on the Walls and St Edmund in the project for the erection of a church for the joint use of the three parishes' (EFP 11.11.1830). Perhaps as a result of the enthusiasm of the bishop, Henry Philpotts,<sup>37</sup> the project for a new church was not abandoned. In 1837, following the opening of a new cemetery on the hill slopes to the north of the city, a new church for Allhallows parish was again proposed, which it was intended should double as a parish church and as a cemetery chapel. The unsatisfactory pastoral situation in the area was described thus:

'Of the present population a proportion provide for themselves, with much inconvenience and expense, sittings in the churches of the adjoining parishes'... 'Another portion seek out in a dissenting chapel 'recently built in the heart of the parish, a supply for those spiritual wants for which there exists no provision in connection with the established Church, while a third, and, it is feared, the largest portion... abstain altogether from public worship'.

The committee also recorded that:

'it will be their more especial object to afford to their poorer and indigent brethren (and these constitute a large majority of the parish) an opportunity of attending their parish church free of expense, and thus joining with their more wealthy neighbours in common worship of their common God'... 'it is also proposed (should the funds permit) to provide additional free sittings for a large surplus population in the immediate vicinity of the parish, for whom there is at present no church accommodation'

(EFP 14.09.1837).

This extract reveals with great clarity the mixture of philanthropic, egalitarian and sectarian motives for church expansion at the time.

Allhallows on the Walls was finally rebuilt in Bartholomew Yard in 1843-8, at the instigation of the bishop, by John Hayward, with funding from the ICBS, from public subscriptions and from the Improvement Commissioners (Fig. 188). The church survived until its closure shortly before the Second World War, the building being finally demolished in 1950. The building was an early example of correct ecclesiastical Gothic and forms an interesting contrast

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<sup>37</sup> A man much maligned and overdue for a new and more understanding biography.



Fig. 188 Allhallows on the walls, Exeter (1843-8) by John Hayward  
(Lithograph by R. K. Thomas).



Fig. 189 The interior of St John's on Fore Street Hill, Exeter, re-ordered in 1843 to accommodate the congregation of St George the Martyr (demolished for road widening). St John's had two storeys of galleries and seems almost a deliberate rejection of ecclesiological principles (EA Topographical Print Files, Fore Street, St John).



Fig 190 Exeter, St Thomas, the early ecclesiological sanctuary furnishings (c.1841) including a stone altar, reredos and sanctuary panelling



Fig 191 The stone altar and reredos at Exwick (1841), retained and repositioned in the enlarged church in 1875 (RWP Exwick DSC01316).



Fig 192 The unusual stone altar shelf at Oldridge (1841-2) (RWP Oldridge DSC00945).

with the nearby Church of St John, in Fore Street Hill, which had been rebuilt and enlarged in 1843 by the local surveyor Mr Whitaker following the demolition of the church of St George the Martyr in South Street (Fig. 189). Although exactly contemporary with Allhallows on the Walls, the rebuilt St Johns showed very little influence of ecclesiology except in that it was seated with open benches. These were of a singularly un-medieval type, with panelled ends rising to pointy ‘Gothick’ terminals, wholly in the tradition of Georgian Gothic. This church, in fact, may even have embodied a conscious rejection of ecclesiological principles.

The plans of the new Allhallows church (LPL ICBS 02801 Folios 47ff) show that there were originally no choir stalls in the chancel and that there was a gallery in the tower for children from the nearby National School, which had been founded in 1835. The pulpit and reading desk were sited on either side of chancel arch, allowing an uninterrupted view of the altar. The nave had a central aisle flanked by rows of open benches; altogether there were 239 free sittings, and 106 appropriated seats, all of which were equal in size, with plain bench ends of panelled construction. The architectural style of the church was an accomplished English late Gothic which was already old-fashioned for the period, but which was novel in the city at the time for its archaeological accuracy. The church must also have been striking at for its use of grey Plymouth Limestone as a building material rather than the local red or purple sandstones and volcanic rocks usually employed locally. Most churches at this period were still rendered externally and the exposed stonework was perhaps in itself a statement of honest construction.

St Thomas’ church was completed in the early 1840s with very important Gothic revival sanctuary furnishings, possibly designed by the incumbent, The Revd. John Medley, in collaboration with John Hayward (Brooks, manuscript notes, n.d.; D19CP card index). These include stone panelling to the side walls of the chancel recess and a reredos behind the altar. The altar is remarkable, being of stone, with a panelled front, one of only a few stone altars in Devon to survive controversies as to their legality (Fig. 190). In 1842 a recumbent effigy of Christina Medley (Fig. 193) was added, designed by John Bacon, Christina’s father, and possibly carved by Simon Rowe of Exeter (*ibid.*).

John Medley was the instigator of the new church at Exwick, designed by Hayward in 1841, and the restoration of the ancient chapel at Oldridge in the same year. Both these buildings were fully ecclesiological in character. Exwick was entirely seated with free, open benches and also featured a stone altar (Fig. 191). At Oldridge, the altar is highly unusual, being a slab of reclaimed marble, rescued from the cathedral, supported by a pair of free-stone brackets (Fig. 192). It is thus neither of altar nor table form. The reason for this is unknown; however, it seems to be unrelated to the controversy over stone altars, which at this stage had not yet occurred.

Such highly-developed ecclesiological liturgical furnishings are perhaps not surprising in churches restored for an incumbent who was also the instigator of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, but it is clear that furnishings of this type had already begun to excite suspicion even amongst those broadly sympathetic to the cause. The antiquarian James Davidson visited St Thomas' church on July 11th 1843 and complained that 'the furniture and ornaments which have been introduced by the present Vicar are in a style corresponding with the pointed architecture but are derogatory to the simplicity which ought to characterize a Protestant place of worship' (W726 Dev/Dav 237-250). He was similarly dubious about the new church at Exwick, noting that 'It is a rich and beautiful specimen of the highly decorated style of architecture, but its gaudy effect, its superabundance of ornament and the frequent introduction in every practicable instance of the objects and emblems of Roman Catholic adoration & worship almost deprive it of the character of a Protestant house of prayer' (W726 Dev/Dav 11 July 1843 P 25(1)).

It is interesting to note that, although St Thomas did not erupt into riots, as in other parishes in the city 'threatened' by liturgical innovations, Medley could not have everything his own way. Despite the ecclesiological furniture in the chancel, and Medley's widely publicised antipathy to box pews, which he later pursued, after 1845, amid great controversy during his tenure as bishop of Fredricton in New Brunswick, Canada, the nave and aisles of St Thomas' Church remained seated with box pews until the 1870s.

Medley's vision of a restored renewed and open church was perhaps met with some resistance from his congregation, both in Exeter and Canada, for whom the system of pew rents had become almost an article of faith. The forthcoming decades saw a concerted attack upon the development of ecclesiology, opposition which increasingly focussed on physical objects and Gothic architecture as the embodiment of liturgical crime. The most famous examples of this are the legal action against the Cambridge Camden Society's installation of a stone altar in the round church at Cambridge and the Rev. Francis Close of Cheltenham's notable sermon, published in 1844 as pamphlet entitled *The Restoration of Churches is the Restoration of Popery: Proved and Illustrated from the Authentic Publications of the Cambridge Camden Society*.

Not all 19th-century restorations involved a clean sweep of earlier furnishings. Exeter churches seem to have retained their pre-ecclesiological furnishings particularly well, perhaps because these were recognised during the 19th century as being of high quality. Ecclesiological restoration of some of Exeter's small urban churches came rather later than elsewhere and perhaps after an appreciation of post-Reformation furnishings had developed among local architects. Even the more High-Church or ecclesologically-minded parishes seem to have respected post-



Fig 193 Exeter, St Thomas, the early ecclesiastical canopied monument of Christina Medley (1842) (RWP Exeter St Thomas DSC00288).



Fig 194 Exeter, St Martin, a conservative restoration preserving all the post-medieval fittings, by Edward Ashworth in 1875 (RWP Exeter St Martin DSC DSC04954).

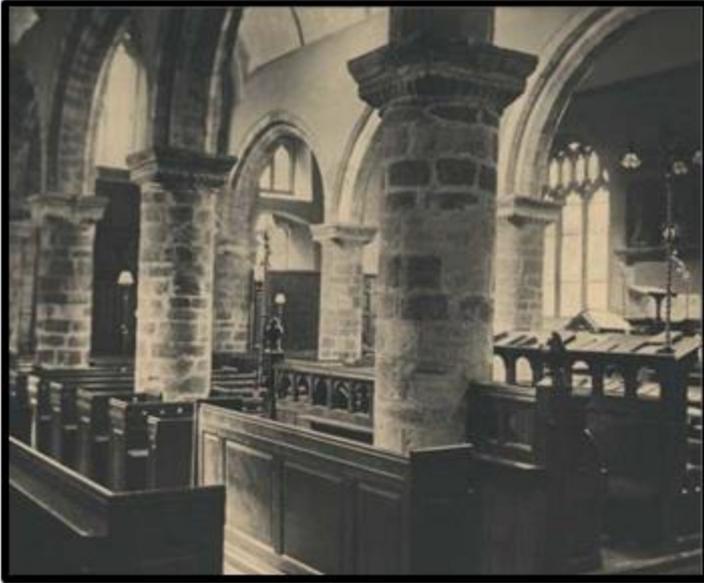


Fig 195 The interior of St Mary Arches after restoration by John Hayward in 1867-68, showing the remains of box pews reconfigured as open benches and stalls (SWHC WCSL St Mary Arches 1906 Kate M. Clark).



Fig 196 The reredos at St Lawrence, Exeter, by John Bacon, preserved at a restoration by Edward Ashworth in 1847 (from a postcard in the author's collection).



Fig 197 Exeter, St Thomas (right), a large pre-ecclesiological extension (1828), by Andrew Patey (RWP Exeter St Thomas DSC03032).

Reformation furnishings to an extent not usually recognised. For example, the large Corinthian reredos of c.1690 remained at St Paul's, Exeter, a noted Tractarian church during the incumbency of Dr Armstrong, later Bishop of Grahamstown in South Africa (Carter 1857, **IV**, 2). Sadly, this reredos was lost when the church was demolished in 1936. At St Stephen's church in Exeter a Corinthian reredos was retained, together with the Communion table of 1660 and a set of 17th-century altar rails, at the rebuilding in 'Gothick' style of 1826. These furnishings were used throughout the incumbency of Joseph Theophilus Toye, one of the officers of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society during the 1840s and early 50s. Both these clergymen were keen supporters of the Society and yet neither seem to have felt the need to Gothicise their own churches in a more 'authentic' style or to purge them of 'Pagan' furnishings. This may, of course, be because they met resistance from their congregations. The reredos at St Stephen's seems to have been finally removed in the 1890s, and the 17th-century altar rails survived until the 1970s. Only the Communion table now remains.

At St Lawrence's Exeter, a large early 19th-century reredos featuring the Decalogue and an angel wielding a cross was retained in position at the parishioners' request during a phase of restoration, despite a move on the part of the architect (Edward Ashworth) to relocate it to another part of the church (Fig. 196). This reredos, designed by John Bacon Junior, was later described as 'very remarkable, not to say remarkably ugly' (Cresswell 1908, 76). It shows how un-ecclesiological furnishings might be retained and tolerated at the request of the congregation, and that their artistic value, or at least their significance as relics of a less 'correct' period of English art might be recognised even by contemporary Gothic revival architects. Ashworth's restorations of St Martin in Exeter and John Hayward's restoration of St Mary Arches also involved the retention of many of the existing furnishings, even to the extent of preserving the box pews at St Martin's and reusing the box pew material to create open benches at St Mary Arches (Fig. 194).

#### *Early Victorian reactions to Gothic revivalism*

These examples show that, by the 1830s, Gothic was firmly established as a suitable architectural expression for Anglican churches in both urban and rural areas of Devon and that attention to accurate medieval detail was increasingly regarded as desirable. They also demonstrate that although individual furnishings or elements of a building might be consciously modelled on medieval artefacts, and genuinely medieval elements salvaged and reused, the overall design and planning of churches had not yet caught up with this medievalising trend. In part this may have been because the liturgies of the church remained unchanged, with the usual Sunday worship dominated by the sermon and conducted from the pulpit, rather than the altar. The affluent and

more influential members of the congregation remained seated in privately-owned or rented pews which, when these were threatened with replacement or reordering, they would jealously defend.

It is still debatable whether Gothic designs were generally utilised before 1840 simply to make new fabric conformable with the old rather than for their semiological qualities, and it is certain that Gothic furnishings had not yet become identified with, and did not yet embody for the public, a direct threat to customary forms of worship. After 1840; however, the perception that church furnishings and liturgical layouts could embody Papistical teachings and thus disturb and threaten the Church and the whole Protestant Reformation gathered speed very swiftly and began to dominate church life. Devon was to see some of the most striking outbursts of this unrest, which culminated in 1848 with ‘the surplice riots’ in St Sidwells (Ingle, 1848).

The following example provides an interesting illustration of how the perception of church restoration projects might change over time, to the extent that by the 1840s quite ordinary, inanimate objects had become charged with threat, resulting in disruption to church rebuilding and reordering programmes and, ultimately, the direct identification of ‘restoration’ with ‘Popery’.

The Vestry of the large parish of St. Thomas, a rural district west of Exeter had begun a programme of extension and beautification of their ancient church in 1820, when tenders were invited for building a new aisle, the particulars being available from Mr Hemingway, architect, of 41 High Street Exeter (EFP 22.06.1820). In 1821 an application to the ICBS for a grant for the addition of an aisle and the enlargement of the east end was rejected, but the plans record that alterations were already underway; the north aisle was ‘now in progress’. The new aisle survives and is a sensitive addition almost indistinguishable from the 17th-century Gothic of the rest of the church. Indeed, the new aisle has often been, taken for genuinely medieval work. The replication of the details of the south arcade and the window tracery were particularly effective and drew the attention of Sir Stephen Glynne, who visited the church prior to its subsequent enlargement. Glynne recorded that the church consisted of a nave, chancel and south aisle, the north aisle having recently been added to increase the accommodation. The windows were all of ‘Perpendr character’ and the whole church was ‘done over with stucco’ (D&C N&Q, April 22 1933, 277). This phase of the project seems to have been almost entirely uncontroversial and the use of medieval styling here seems likely to fall into the category of ‘conformable’ work, rather than work capable of driving a High-Church agenda.

In March 1828 a meeting was called by the committee to ask the parishioners to approve Mr Patey’s plans for enlarging the church at a cost of £1,200, to provide an additional 249 seats. The sum of £200 per annum was to be raised from a church rate until the debt was paid off. After some protest on the part of those who wished to see a chapel of ease constructed instead,

rebuilding commenced in December 1828 to Mr Patey's designs, which added transepts and a very large and tall new chancel beyond the east end of the original building (Fig. 197). The first signs of dissension appeared at this stage. On the night of 01.07.1830 a ghost was reported in the churchyard, said to have 'burst its cerements' in consequence of the 'annoyance from the recent alterations'. The protestor was discovered to be 'a Bryanite' from Redruth 'sent by the spirit to endeavour to reclaim the wicked'. He was recommended by the magistrate 'for fear of rougher treatment, to make the best of his way home' (EFP 08.07.1830). Although this may simply have been an outpouring of evangelical enthusiasm, the identification of a church building project with annoyance to the faithful departed and with wickedness is perhaps prophetic.

Soon after its completion the new church of Allhallows on the Walls began to feature as a potential nest of Jesuitical priestcraft; On January 5th, 1854 the Exeter Flying Post reported that:

'A gentleman was buried last week in the cemetery in accordance with the latest Puseyite plan. We have heard of certain peculiarities connected with the funeral of Major Lee; that the coffin was adorned with some medieval ironwork; that it was conveyed to the church of Allhallows on the walls as early as 6.00 in the morning; that it was left there 'til the day was further advanced, when, on the arrival of the funeral party the burial service was read and the corpse afterwards conveyed on a bier to the cemetery for internment. The officiating ministers were the Revds J. T. Toye and J.L. Fulford. the Rev. C.C Bartholomew was present'

(E.F.P 05.01.1854)

Here we begin to see the identification of Gothic ornament and Gothic buildings with 'Puseyism' and a threat to the religious liberty of the English people. Now the press, and particularly the Western Times, began to encourage a view of the Tractarians as a kind of 'axis of evil', and Gothic acquired a new and sinister meaning.

These doubts did nothing to stem the sudden flood of new Gothic buildings and ecclesiological restorations — between 1840 and 1850, 42 medieval churches were restored in accordance with ecclesiological principles, and 25 new churches were constructed. Many of these early restorations were partial, the chancels being repaired at the expense of the church commissioners or from the incumbent's own pocket. The boom in church building continued, and over the next two decades between 1850 and 1870 no less than 86 medieval churches (out of a sample of 361 medieval buildings whose dates are known) were restored, while 45 entirely new

churches were provided. Between 1870 and 1880 a further 80 churches are known to have been restored, after which numbers halved in each decade, but only fell below double figures after 1900. Although church restorations seems to have peaked in the 1860s-80s, new church building remained remarkably constant with, on average, 23 entirely new churches constructed in the county in each decade between 1830 and 1900. In all, 218 entirely new churches were provided.

Many of these new churches, of course were in urban areas, particularly in resort towns like Torquay and Paignton, where many outstanding churches by notable architects of national importance survive, furnished with exceptional richness, reflecting the wealth of the resorts. Barnstaple also expanded its church provision during the period with new buildings by Benjamin Ferrey and David Macintosh. Ilfracombe, though a relatively late arrival as a resort, acquired three very fine new churches too. Rural Devon in the same period received no less than 65 chapels and school-chapels designed for rural mission.

#### *Church Expansion in the Three Towns*

The Three Towns, as the fastest-growing community in the county were obviously the most vibrant in terms of religious diversity. The city was to become the seat of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth and was also a major centre of Non-conformism. Increasingly, the traditional low-church ethos of the city was challenged by the establishment of fine new Anglican churches, many of which were later to adopt Tractarian and ritualist practices. A most remarkable achievement in the 1840s was the astonishing series of new churches built for the developing town of Plymouth Dock, or Devonport. The town already had a number of large proprietary chapels, and the ancient parish church of Stoke Damarel had been considerably enlarged, but the town still had a great shortage of free seats and was growing fast. During the 1840s this problem was addressed by the foundation of five new churches.

The first of the new churches was designed by Benjamin Ferrey in 1838-46. St Michael's in Albert Street (Fig 198) was a chapel of ease to Stoke Damarel, located on the edge of the



Fig 198 St Michael, Devonport (1843-5) by Benjamin Ferrey, Demolished 2007 (David King).

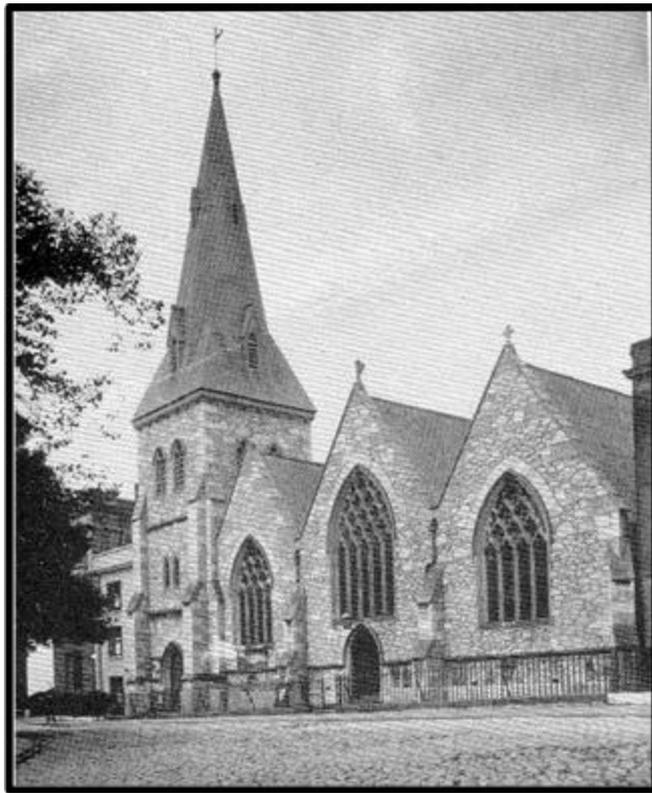


Fig 199 St Paul, Morice Town, Devonport (1849) by J. P. St Aubyn. Damaged 1941, Demolished 1958 (David King).

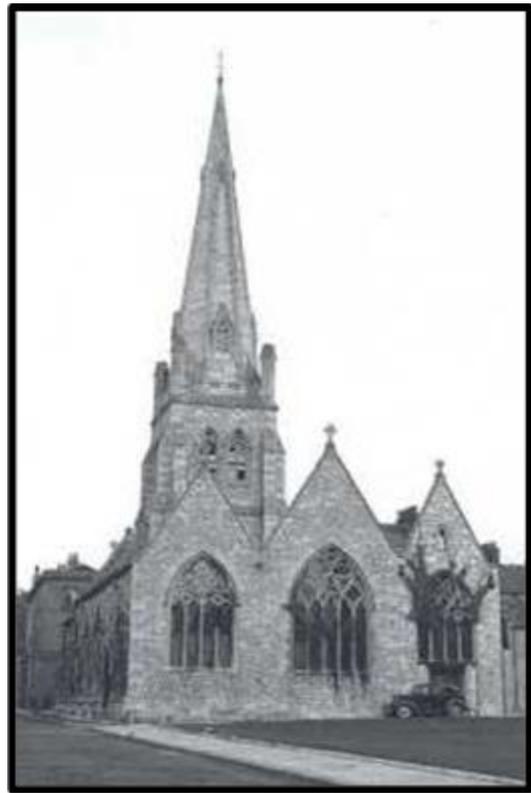


Fig 200 St Stephen Devonport (1846), by J.P St Aubyn. Damaged 1941 and demolished 1958 (David King).

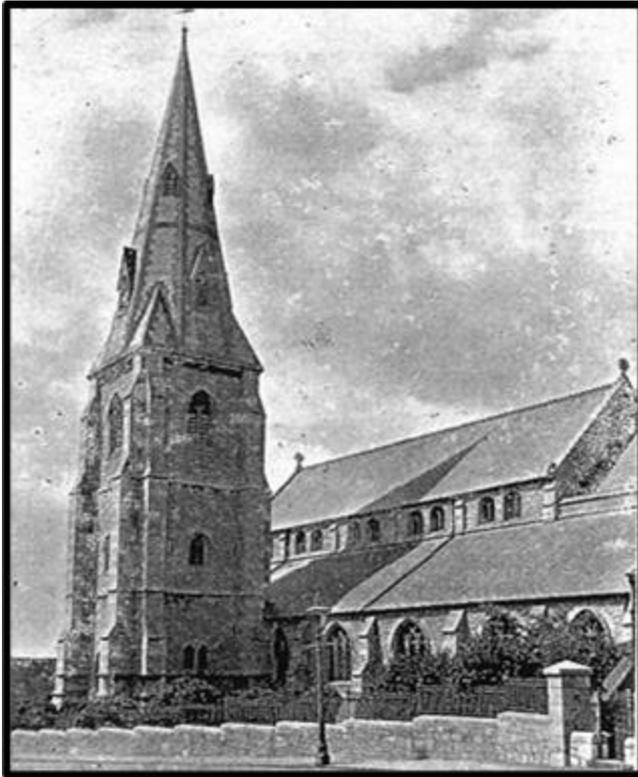


Fig. 201 St James The Great, Devonport (1849-50) by J. P St Aubyn. Damaged 1941, demolished 1958 (David King).

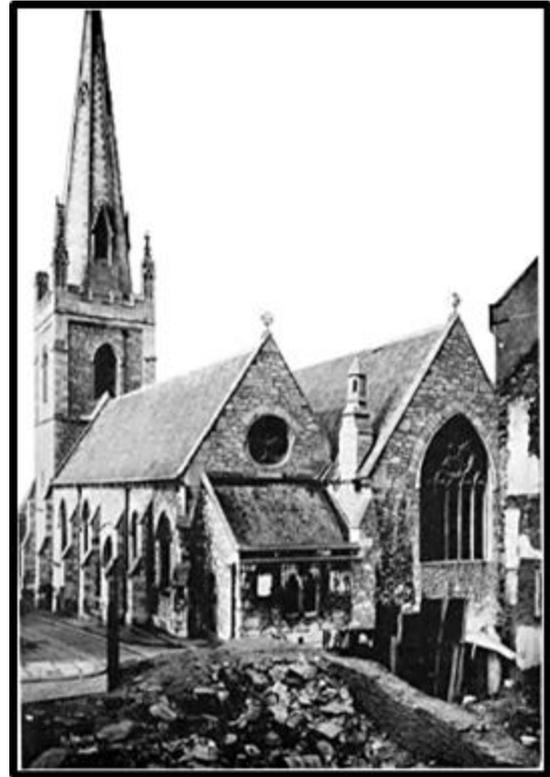


Fig. 202 St Mary, Devonport (1850) by J. P. St Aubyn. Demolished 1956 (David King).

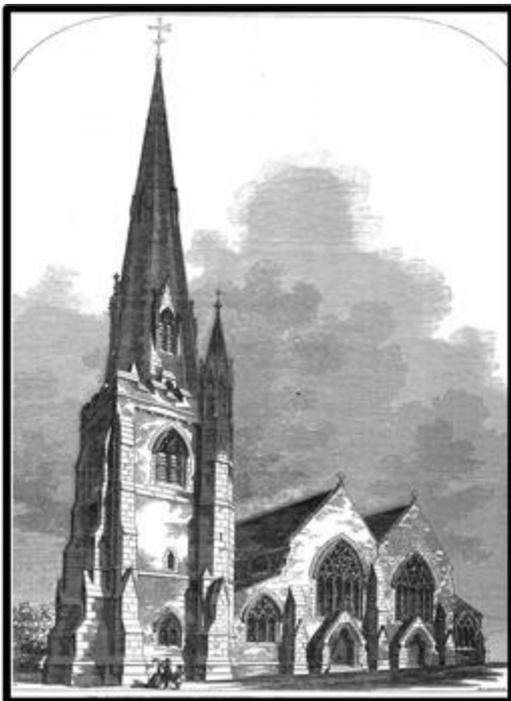


Fig. 203 St James the Less, Plymouth (1854) by J. P St Aubyn. Destroyed 1941 and demolished (David King).



Fig. 204 St Barnabas, Stoke (1885) by J. P. St Aubyn. Demolished 2002 for a housing development (David King).

developed area, outside the fortifications or dock lines of Devonport, in an area of new housing known as Morice Town. It was a cruciform church, constructed from grey Plymouth limestone in the lancet or early English style. It had a long nave lit by a clerestory and a short, almost square chancel. There was a western gallery and also north and south transeptal galleries and for this reason the building was probably unsatisfactory from the point of view of the Diocesan Architectural Society. The church could seat 1200 people; 620 of the seats were free. Ferrey went on to design St John, Sutton on Plym, to the east of the city in 1851-5 and this was to become a centre of High-Church religion.

The next four churches to be built in Devonport were remarkable because they were all designed by a single architect, and nearly all were completed within the same few years. These new churches were all designed in accordance with ecclesiological principles and, most unusually, nearly all were actually completed as designed, with their towers and spires.

Four districts were created within Devonport and its suburbs in 1846, with the intention that they would in time be designated as parishes. By the end of the decade a group of magnificent new churches had been begun, to provide church accommodation for the rapidly growing town, the population of which had for a period outstripped that of Plymouth itself. All of the new churches were designed by James Piers St Aubyn, a member of the St Aubyn family, who held the lordship of the manor. All of his churches were in the decorated Gothic style, in grey limestone, and each one had a handsome steeple giving the town a distinctive character and skyline.

The first to be begun St Paul's Church in Morice Square (Fig. 199); building commenced in 1849. This was the most conventionally planned of St Aubyn's churches, since it occupied a roughly rectangular site on one side of the square, though its east wall was at a peculiar angle and there was no space for a chancel. It was thus very Devonian in character; a hall church with three equal naves, each with a sumptuous reticulated Gothic traceried window of four or five lights. It had a stone broach spire and seated 716 people. All of the seats were free (LPL ICBS 08364). It was demolished, after blitz damage, in 1958.

The next church to be begun was St Stephen's in Clowance Street (Fig. 200). This was originally designed as having two naves, but was later expanded to include a third, though the plan remained long and narrow, with a chancel extending east of the tower. The tower, with a colossal stone steeple stood over the choir and the building seated 498 people (before enlargement). It developed an extremely High Church tradition and was one of the most notable churches in the area. It too was damaged in the blitz and subsequently demolished in 1958. Again, all the seats were free.

St James the Great (Fig. 201) was built in 1849-51 at Keyham in Morice Town and, unlike the other buildings, it stood isolated in its own yard. It too had a mighty steeple, almost detached from the church and serving as a porch. There was a distinct chancel and seats for 1093 people, all free, including seats in the chancel aisles for the school boys and school girls. It was undamaged in the war but was nevertheless closed and demolished in 1958.

St Mary's Church in Dockwall Street (Fig. 202) was also built in 1850-1852. It too had a commanding steeple overlooking the dockyards and was entered through the tower on St Mary's Lane. The layout was similar to that of St James the Great and it seated 650 people, once again all the seats were free. It was closed and demolished in 1959.

Each of the churches had a suitably Gothic school or Sunday school building and designated seating for the children. St James and St Stephen's also had Gothic vicarages, the latter looking like something from a wild dream of William Burges. In addition to these Anglican churches, the Congregationalists, Methodists and Roman Catholics were also building and the 18th-century stucco townscape was soon varied with rough, silver grey limestone pierced by lancets, spirelets and structural polychromy.

Every single building constructed during this fruitful period has since been demolished; all of the Anglican churches between 1958 and 1959. These years must have been something of an *annus horribilis* for Devonport, as her skyline of graceful steeples was suddenly and wantonly removed, almost as quickly as it had appeared and only a century later. These buildings must have contributed to a highly distinctive sense of place: 'that urban individuality which Stonehouse and Devonport have been fortunate enough to preserve' (Pevsner 1952, 227). Despite the almost complete demolition of the unblitzed parts of Stonehouse and Devonport since Pevsner wrote, some trace of this distinctive character still remained in 1989, when Bridget Cherry could write 'the townscape is still memorably punctuated by sturdy grey walls towering above smooth iridescent pavements that glisten when the fine rain blows in from the Atlantic' (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 638). Since that time the destruction has continued, as a result of deliberate diocesan policy to replace Victorian churches,<sup>38</sup> and the unique architectural and ecclesiastical legacy of the three towns no longer exists.

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<sup>38</sup> "the diocese (of Exeter) believe there can be no retreat. There needs to be a Christian presence in every community — at the heart of every community — and they are seeking to renew their buildings, even for small congregations. They have a rolling programme of church building replacement— declaring redundant the old Victorian barns, demolishing then redeveloping with modern flexible worship spaces" *Buildings — Practical Issues*. Sub Regional Seminar Presentation Paul Lewis and Paul Howlett, Church Commissioners. No date.

Copies of the plans for all these churches were submitted to The Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society and survive in their scrapbooks. Although they claim that some of the plans superseded older ones which were less satisfactory, the unworthy designs were unfortunately not included in the scrap books and we do not know what changes had been made. Commenting on the design for St Paul's church they remark that, although they would have wished to see a clerestory, given the close proximity of the neighbouring buildings, they 'had much pleasure in expressing their entire approbation of the design' (EDAS QR January 1849).

In a later annual report in May 1849, they acknowledged that 'the designs for these district churches are of late much improved in character, as an evidence of a still growing conviction that the role of church building is to build well rather than to build cheaply' (EDAS AR May 1849). St Aubyn designed two other churches for the Three Towns; Saint James the less (Fig. 203) in Plymouth (1854-60) and St Barnabas (Fig. 204) in Stuart Road, Stoke (1885). St James the less was never completed, the spire remaining unbuilt, and it was unfortunately destroyed in the blitz, after many years as one of the most exotic Anglo-Papalist shrines in the Westcountry (Fig. 37). St Barnabas was a dignified essay in the early English style. It, too, has been demolished and replaced with flats, the church moving into the former Sunday schools. The architectural loss to the City of Plymouth cannot be underestimated.

While one may argue that the current diocesan project of demolition of 'obsolete' buildings and their replacement with new structures, more practical to use, cheap to heat and 'replete with every modern convenience', is a legitimate development of the 19th-century desire to outreach to the poor and marginalised, it is certainly true that the limits of the modern ambition stop short of the 19th-century desire to provide buildings that will inspire, and buildings that could, should the need arise, accommodate the whole, or even a large percentage of the community in public worship or communal activities. The Gothic church buildings of the Three Towns, rising amongst and above an urban environment of stucco, plate glass and Grecian pilasters, served a different and didactic purpose to that of the erudite neoclassicism that surrounded them. The modern churches, none of which could seat more than 60, are almost invisible in the modern townscape, and signify a failure, rather than an engagement.

### **The later-Victorian period: developed Gothic and new materials**

Although in the early 19th century late Georgian and early Victorian architects had occasionally used new materials such as cast iron in the construction of new church buildings particularly in the provision of galleries etc., new materials, including brick, were initially disapproved of by those

more ecclesiological-minded individuals seeking authentically medieval precedent for their buildings and furnishings.

Initially, the ideal of the ecclesiological-correct church had been the rural church of the middle of the 14th century, picturesquely asymmetrical in its layout, and utilising locally sourced materials, if not exactly replicating local patterns of Gothic building. From the 1850s, however, groups such as the Ecclesiological Society began increasingly to accept ‘development’ of Gothic as a style appropriate for the modern age, and also began to consider alternative forms of church planning and architectural forms based on continental rather than traditional English examples. The Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society, among whose officers and members were some very widely travelled architects, also began to consider how Gothic might be developed to suit 19th-century needs.

William Butterfield’s church of All Saints, Margaret Street in London (1850-53), designed and built as the flagship church of the movement, for Alexander James Beresford Hope, one of the ecclesiological Society’s principal officers, shows how quickly the society could revise its ideas and accept new ones, though it need not be stated that not everyone was entirely comfortable with the results (Brooks 2000, 145). New materials and new forms of Gothic of this kind were regarded as particularly appropriate for urban contexts but, as they became an established part of the architectural vocabulary of Victorian church building, they spread rapidly into rural contexts, particularly among such ‘modern’ types of church building as the school-chapel and the suburban mission church, where they may have been deliberately employed to give a distinct character to these modern buildings as opposed to the bastions of traditional English life embodied by the ancient parish churches.

Examples of this newly energised, potent and ‘muscular’ Gothic style, unsurprisingly, maybe found in the larger towns and cities (Fig 205); however, the style appears to have been adopted slowly by regionally based architects employed in church restoration. Their approach appears to have been to work in a contextual way, respecting the character of the original building. Edward Ashworth, for example, regarded the regional version of the perpendicular style, or ‘third-pointed’, as admirable rather than debased:

“We would merely, in conclusion, remonstrate against the disrepute into which some half-educated amateurs are endeavouring to thrust the third pointed style, crying it down as a debasement altogether of the preceding architecture of the 14th century. We are sorry to find this”

(Cox, forthcoming, quoting *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 8.06.1850)



Fig. 205 Early French style 'Muscular Gothic' crocketed capitals at St Michael's Mount Dinham, Exeter (1864-8) by M. Rohde-Hawkins (RWP Exeter St Michael's DSC06722).



Fig. 206 Ashworth's rebuilding of the church at Lympstone (1863-4), in the Perpendicular Gothic style of the medieval building, but with decorative flourishes of his own (RWP Lympstone DSC03658).

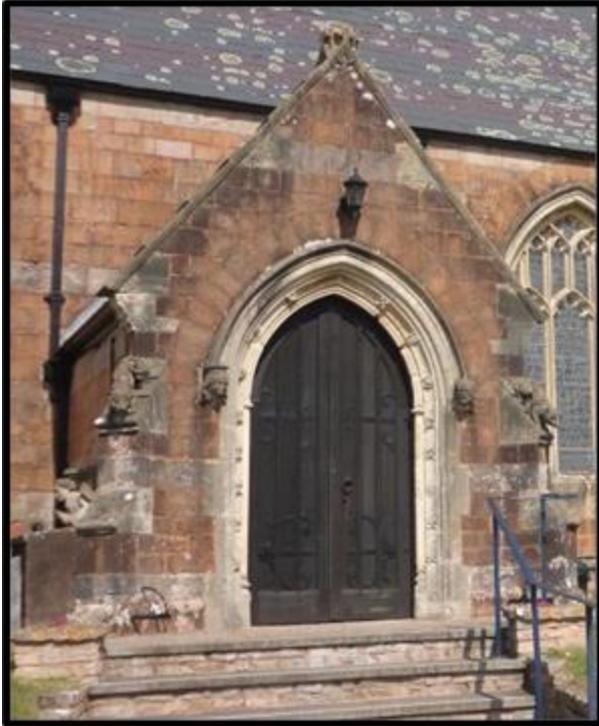


Fig. 207 The porch with vigorous beasts at Lympstone (RWP Lympstone DSC03661).



Fig. 208 The iron columns at St Luke, Torquay (RWP Torquay St Luke DSC08616).



Fig. 209 The iron columns at Christchurch, Ellacombe (RWP Ellacombe; Torquay Christchurch DSC06226).

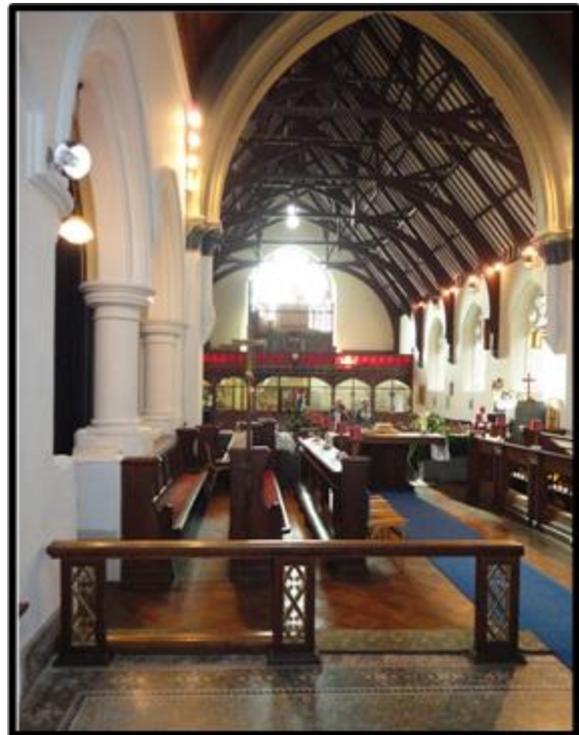


Fig. 210 The interior of Christchurch from the chancel (RWP Ellacombe; Torquay Christchurch DSC06198).

Ashworth used Perpendicular Gothic style for his substantial restoration of the church at Lypstone in 1863-4, enlivening its porch with grotesque beasts (Figs 206, 207). For new builds, Ashworth appears to have preferred to use Decorated Gothic, though his rebuilding (unwillingly) of the medieval church of St Mary Major, Exeter (1864-5), was in a sumptuous early English style, this being determined by the portions of the ancient building which he reset in the new fabric.

The drive for the use of muscular and 'modern Gothic' appears to have been led instead by London-based rather than by regional architects. The principal examples may be found in Torquay, a town which, unlike either Plymouth, Exeter or Barnstaple, appears to have consistently chosen London architects rather than local architects for most of its 19th-century church work, including some of the most significant architects of the period, William Butterfield, George Edmund Street and John Loughborough Pearson.

#### *Town churches in Torquay*

In Torquay two outstanding structures remain which employ cast iron in a wholly un-medieval way though within a Gothic vocabulary. The church of St Luke, Torquay (1863), by Arthur William Blomfield (Fig. 208) has short, iron columns supporting the arcades on each side of its broad nave and these are entirely of cast iron and without any form of Gothic ornament. The slightly later church of Christchurch, Ellacombe (1867-8) by Habershon, Brock and Webb (Fig. 209) also employs cast iron columns for the arcades. Though these have a quatrefoil section and slightly more ornate capitals, they are still ostentatiously too small for the massive, unmoulded arcades; honest construction revealing that these are iron and not stone piers. Both churches were designed by London architects and neither makes any real concession to regional forms of architecture in their Gothic detail, though at Christchurch some reference to the early 14th-century tracery designs of Thomas of Witney may perhaps be detected in the varied tracery patterns of the south aisle.

These two churches were intended for quite different social and economic groups. St Luke's stands on Waldon Hill above Torre Abbey Sands, in an area of extremely grand 19th-century villa developments aimed at the very richest of the upper classes. Ellacombe is a far more working-class district of terraced housing. Both churches have large uninterrupted naves ensuring clear views to the altar at the east end as well as to the pulpit; however, St Luke's is richly decorated with wall and ceiling paintings (renewed accurately after a fire in the 1960s) whereas Christchurch, before the addition of new chancel furnishings in the 1900s, seems to have been more austere in its decorations and remains so today. Both churches are constructed of local stone with stone dressings and both have west galleries (intended for the accommodation of children) and broad naves with enormously impressive wide roof spans.

Both churches were provided with a mixture of free and appropriated seating. At St Luke's all the free seats were situated on the north side of the central alley and the appropriated benches on the south, and thus social divisions were perpetuated. Even so, the benches on both sides of the church were identical in form and an equal number of free and appropriated seats were provided (LPL ICBS 05880)—an advance on the usual situation at the period. At Christchurch the benches are numbered and were presumably allotted by the churchwardens. No ICBS plan survives and the church may have been built without grant aid, perhaps by public subscription. Although the potential for social division to express itself was certainly present, all the benches were equal in height and the social divisions were not expressed in the architecture, but only in the way in which the churchwardens operated the building<sup>39</sup>.

The character of both churches shows that they were built for low church congregations, and Christchurch remained of this tradition until its recent closure. Though perhaps a generalisation, it certainly seems to be the case that the higher churches — those more likely to be influenced by the ecclesiological movement given the known affiliations of the members of the Ecclesiological and Diocesan Architectural societies— were more likely to have free seats throughout. St John's, Torquay, for example, a major work of George Edmund Street dating from 1861-73 (though replacing an earlier proprietary chapel in the form of a classical temple, designed in 1823 by John Lethbridge of Exeter) remains a High-Church bastion to this day and had free seats throughout from its inception (LPL ICBS 06356). All Saints Babbacombe (1865-7), by William Butterfield — a church which may perhaps be characterised as 'stratospheric' even though it lay within the already High-Church parish of St Marychurch, Torquay, — also had free seats throughout from its inception and, presumably, whatever the social make-up of its congregation, no-one was turned away.

#### *Mission churches and District churches in the later Victorian period*

By the 1880s the large, urban mission church had been established as a building type. This bore little relation to the medieval character of the ancient, English parish churches of town or city, but had developed into a structure which, though it was undoubtedly Puginian in its honesty of construction and Gothic detailing, might adopt a consciously modern manner and modern materials, utilising red brick rather than local stone, even in areas where the latter was readily available.

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<sup>39</sup> It remains, possible, of course, that such churches were built to empty churches like St Luke's and St John's of 'undesirables', but history does not record such motives. Perhaps wisely.



Fig. 211 Churches for the resort towns: Torquay St Luke (1863), by A.W. Blomfield, showing the brightly-coloured interior (RWP Torquay St Luke DSC08647).

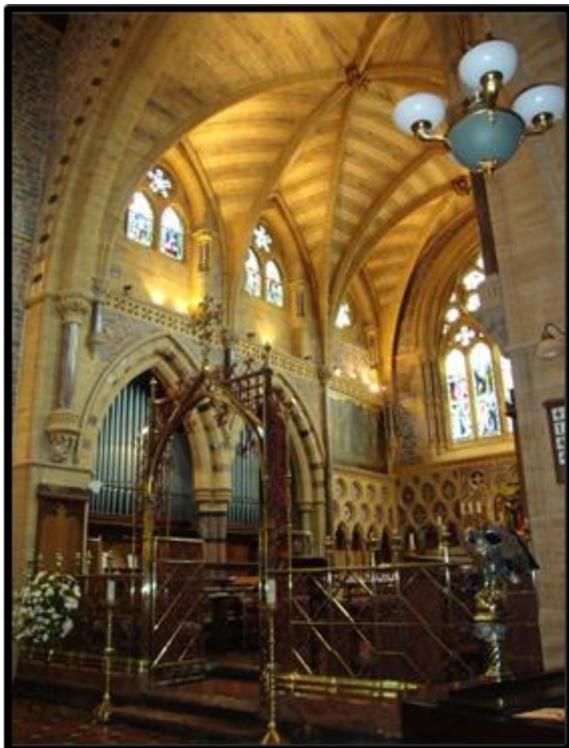


Fig. 212 The vaulting and sumptuous fittings at St John's, Torquay (1861-73) by G. E Street (RWP Torquay; St John DSC08492).



Fig. 213 The interior of All Saints Babbacombe (1865-67), By William Butterfield (RWP Babbacombe All Saints DSC09448).



Fig. 214 The short chancel and transepts surmounted by a crossing spire at St Michael Mount Dinham, Exeter (RWP Exeter St Michael's DSC01014).

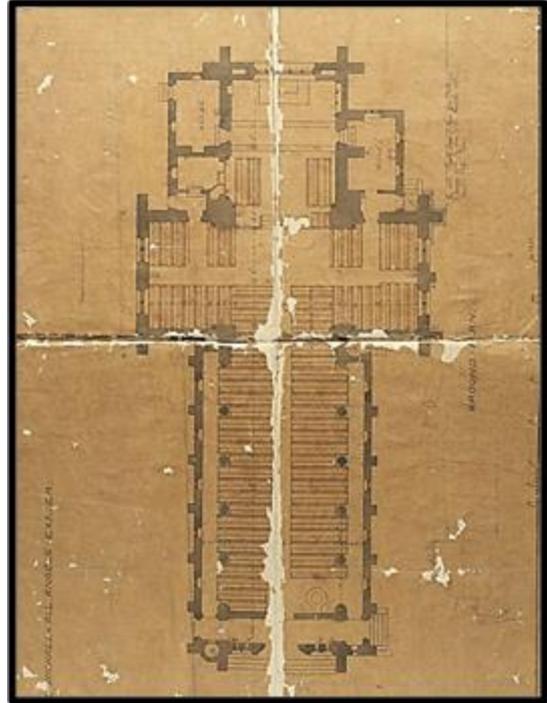


Fig. 215 The 1864 plan of St Michael's, showing the original layout of the furnishings (SWHC WCSL 2931A\_PW\_13).



Fig. 216 The short chancel and powerful roof structure at Gulworthy, Tavistock (RWP Gulworthy DSC00028).

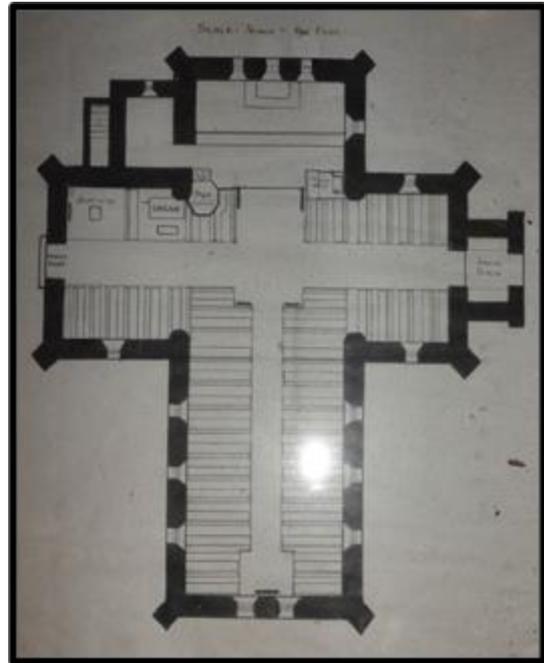


Fig. 217 The plan of Gulworthy, showing the layout of the furnishings (RWP Gulworthy DSC00066).

A distinct form of church planning is noticeable in large urban mission churches. Contrary to earlier Ecclesiological custom, the chancel of these large buildings was shorter and the eastern transepts or chapels broader than usual so that, increasingly, the eastern end of the church might be tri-lobal with three equal projections to north, east and south. (This produces a centralising emphasis which has, unfortunately, tempted many a modern clergyman or clergywoman to install a nave altar, though this was never the intention of the designers of the building). This form of liturgical planning with approximately equal eastern projections seems to have been particularly aimed at the poor. One early example is the large urban mission church of St Michael and All Angels, Mount Dinham, Exeter (1864-8), designed as a chapel for the poor of the parish by Major Rohde-Hawkins (Fig 214). The church was paid for, in its entirety, by the Tractarian multi-millionaire William Gibbs and is one of the few large churches of the period which was brought to completion by the realisation of its 230ft-high crossing tower and spire.

The church was built at the instigation of the Rev. Joseph Theophilus Toye, perpetual curate of St David's, Exeter, within whose parish the new 'model village' of Mount Dinham had been constructed by the evangelical philanthropist John Dinham between 1861 and 1864. Dinham's aim was to provide a new site for the Episcopal Schools in the city, and also for a new boys' school and almshouses, with a chapel for the residents. Though he died in 1864 before the chapel could be realised, he set aside land for the construction of the new church and this was finally constructed through the combined efforts of Gibbs and Toye in 1868.

Although both Gibbs and Toye were noted High Churchmen — Toye had been one of the officers of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society in 1851, though he seems to have left the society by 1857 — the plan of the church as erected has transepts and chancel of almost equal length and although the church has a developed and raised chancel containing stalls for a liturgical choir, this is relatively short and the church still exudes a sense of being centrally planned. St Michael's also has a west gallery, though this is vestigial and appears never to have been used either for seating for children, or for a western organ, as in Gibbs' own chapel at Tyntesfield.

The architectural style employed by Rohde-Hawkins was 'Early French' with short, cylindrical piers, crocketed capitals and structural polychromy, including a palette of materials including blue Westleigh limestone, golden Ham stone, buff Bath stone and richly-coloured marbles, both green and pink. This sumptuous building does not betray its intention as a church specifically designed for the poor; however, the plan form of the building, in which both the northern and southern transepts were seated with benches facing north and south (for the charity children from the schools and the Institution for the Blind), and the enormous open volume of the nave, flanked by passage aisles on the model of the Dominican church at Ghent, does perhaps

indicate the social class for which this building was intended. The church is, and always has been, entirely seated with free seats. The Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society commented during its construction that there were local precedents for broad nave and narrow aisles (TEDAS second series, QR Sept 1868 II (1871), 158). A useful comparison, for example, might be the churches at Gulworthy (Figs 216, 217) (provided by The Duke of Bedford specifically for the use of mining communities near Tavistock) or the church of St Matthew, Newtown, Exeter, designed by Robert Medley-Fulford in 1881-2, for the large working class district of Newtown in St Sidwell's.

There is a possibility that these churches with broad crossings and a shallow chancel were popular among evangelical communities regardless of social class, for example the large urban church of St Paul Courtenay Gardens, Newton Abbot (1859-61) by J. W. Rowell (Fig 218) which lies as the centre of a prosperous garden suburb featuring many detached stuccoed villas of both Gothic and Classical design. Also the large church of St Jude, Beaumont Road at Plymouth, of 1881-2 by the Plymouth Architects Hine & Odgers, which served a middle class suburb in eastern Plymouth. An early example of this plan in a rural context is the church Harbertonford (1859), designed by John Hayward (Fig 219). This building has a rectangular nave terminating in three eastern limbs facing north, east and south crowned with a pyramidal roof and fleche. This un-ecclesiological building, designed by one of the county's principal ecclesiological architects, may reflect the clients wishes rather than the architect's principles. Hayward's responsibility for this building has not formerly been widely known and it may be that the architect chose to suppress it for fear of adverse criticism. Hayward's responsibility for the building is acknowledged in the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* for the 5th November 1859 (D. Cook, pers. comm.).

The later mission churches in Plymouth and Devonport were of superb architectural quality, many began their existence as prefabricated huts of corrugated iron, but nearly all were rebuilt as magnificent, free-Gothic churches, to Arts and Crafts standards of craftsmanship as part of the late Victorian and Edwardian Three Towns Church Extension Scheme. Though few of these churches were finished, the architectural quality of the buildings and furnishings of such buildings as St Simon, Mount Gould (Fig 220), St Mary, Laira (Fig 221) and St Gabriel, Peverell is remarkable. That so many churches should have been built to such a standard, effectively by public subscription was a major achievement. The recent demolition of nearly all of these structures and their replacement with nondescript new buildings is an astonishing betrayal of Plymouth's unique ecclesiastical legacy<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Among the most recent losses are St Boniface (1911), d.2002; St Mary, Cattedown (1899-1910), d.2007-8 and St Philip, Weston Mill (1912-13), d.2014. They were designed by W.D. Caroe, Nicholson & Corlette and N. Alton Bezeley, respectively.



Fig 218 The short chancel and transepts at St Paul, Newton Abbot (1859-61) by J. W. Rowell (RWP Newton Abbot; St Paul DSC09582).



Fig 219 The similar church at Harbertonford (1859) by John Hayward (RWP Harbertonford DSC04529).



Fig 220 The spacious interior and sumptuous furnishings at St Simon, Mount Gould, Plymouth (1902-7) by Harbottle Reed (RWP Plymouth St Simon DSC07879).



Fig 221 The Arts & Crafts church at St Mary, Laira, Plymouth (1907-14) by T. R. Kitesell (RWP, Plymouth, Laira, St Mary the Virgin DSC09838).



Fig. 222 The small rural church of All Saints, Axminster (1840), by Benjamin Ferrey (RWP All Saints DSC09405).



Fig. 223 The similar and very early church at Escot (1837) by Henry Roberts (RWP Escot DSC09097).



Fig. 224 The picturesquely-planned church of St Barnabas, Brooking, near Totnes (1851-5) by Pennell of Exeter (RWP Brooking DSC04513).

*Classical and Gothic Planning*

Another departure from the ecclesiological ideal in these large mid- to late-Victorian churches is the return of classical planning, as opposed to the irregular, picturesque compositions of earlier ecclesiological buildings. Early 19th-century churches were usually entirely symmetrical with a tower to the west end flanked by vestibules containing staircases to the galleries, the tower forming a central lobby or vestibule at the entrance to the church. Examples of this type include St Paul's in Plymouth by John Foulston (1830-1) and St Paul's in Honiton (1835-8) by Charles Fowler. The symmetrical planning of such churches extends even to the eastern end where there are usually two vestries balancing the central sanctuary recess. This type of planning could be adopted whether the church was designed in either the Classical or Gothic manner and its principal characteristic is that the building was entered axially from the west. In this respect this plan is entirely Neo-classical, resembling that of a Greek or Roman temple with a pedimented façade on its short end and the long sides of the building simply decorated with pilasters or buttresses alternating with windows.

Nothing could be further from the type of picturesque planning first introduced by the Ecclesiologists, in which the building would be entered by a porch set asymmetrically towards the western end of one of the long sides of the building and the tower might lie anywhere to north or south, forming an irregular and varied composition. These picturesque types of building, like medieval churches, could easily be expanded by the addition of northern or southern aisles without necessarily disrupting the composition, whereas the classically planned church could only be expanded at the expense of its own logic. The early Ecclesiological churches of All Saints near Axminster (Fig. 222), Escot, near Ottery St Mary (Fig. 223) and Exwick all have asymmetrical porch entrances, but one of the finest picturesque compositions is St Barnabas at Brooking, near Totnes (1850-5). This is a highly accomplished essay in the early English style with a porch entrance at its North West corner and a transseptal tower and spire (Fig. 224). Asymmetrical planning of this type seems to have been common both for rural and urban churches from the 1840s to the 1860s but towards the end of the 1860s, perhaps through the influence of continental Gothic and, one suspects, Baroque and Renaissance planning, classical, axial planning begins to reassert itself.

Later Victorian churches, such as St Michael's and St David's in Exeter, St Matthew's Newtown, Exeter and the churches by Edmund Sedding and E. H. Harbottle in Shaldon and Plymouth return to classical planning. These churches usually have a western narthex, sometimes containing as many as five separate doorways or porches. The east end planned with symmetrically disposed vestries, for clergy and choir, sometimes linked (as at St Matthews in Exeter), by a passage running behind the east end of the church behind the altar. This no doubt enabled the clergy to

join the choir before services to commence processions to and from the altar. Many of these churches were designed to accommodate large choirs and had vestries contrived under their raised east ends.

The return of classical planning in 19th-century Gothic architecture is perhaps unsurprising given the latent classicism in almost every architects' training, but these churches do appear to be less contextual in their design, as though designed, like a classical temple, to be placed on almost any landscape or site without any change in their appearance. Where late-Victorian churches of this type strongly differ from the classical temple is in their extraordinarily creative architectural detailing and of course the high quality of their craftsmanship, particularly with respect to Arts and Crafts movement churches, such as those by Edward Sedding, John Dando Sedding, William Douglas Caröe and Nicholson and Corlette.

It might be argued that the re-adoption of classical symmetry and axial planning in later 19th-century churches is an example of the kind of assimilation of Renaissance ideas characteristic of architects such as Ninian Comper, Norman Shaw and others began to use classical elements in essentially Gothic buildings, a practice which Comper defined as 'unity by inclusion' (Symondson & Bucknall 2006, 105), although some have seen this as a sign of the weakening of the Gothic revival and a rejection of its principles, I do not see this as the case. It is quite clear that in terms of the liturgical use of the buildings and their planning, as in the quality of their craftsmanship, Gothic revival principles were very much alive and well. The assimilation of Classical design elements within late 19th-century buildings seems to me emblematic of the continuing strength, rather than the weakness, of the Gothic revival and also a recognition of the wholeness of the Church where artistic impulses and designs from every period of human history could be pressed into the services of true Religion.

As has been explored in earlier chapters of this thesis, the retention and incorporation of post-Reformation fittings within Victorian restoration schemes was more common than has been acknowledged, even if they were sometimes deprived of their original function and context. This seems to emphasise that 19th-century church restoration did not represent a clean break and rejection of the legacy of the post-Reformation Church but a reassertion of the trajectory of Christianity throughout history; All generations of men and women contributing their portion to the building of the kingdom of God.

## Victorian Churches and Social Inclusion

‘It (the floor) is the place for heraldic devices: we thus, by treading them under foot symbolically express the worthlessness of all human dignity and rank in the sight of God’.

(J.M. Neale 1841)

One of the principal ways in which Victorian men and women engaged with the poorer classes and those not already included or involved with the day to day worship of parishes was through a new emphasis on worship as part of schooling. The activities of the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society after 1811 and 1814 respectively, (though the British Society had earlier origins) were to place education as the first concern of Christian churches and also to introduce church activities (such as regular acts of worship at the beginning of the school day) into school life. This is a legacy which survives even today as the school assembly.

Several National Society school buildings in Devon were designed specifically to allow a clergyman to address separate classes of boys, girls and infants in the two arms of an ‘L’-shaped school building, the clergyman standing at the angle of the ‘L’ to address both groups. The best survivor of this form of building today is the former National School at St James’ in Exeter, founded c.1844 to the rear of the new district church building of 1835.

Church activity in the context of school buildings has already been alluded to in the general discussion at the beginning of this thesis; however, it was to bear quite exceptional fruit in the development of new forms of church building, specifically designed to create accessible places for the young, the poor and the unchurched. This new type of building, known as a Mission Chapel or a School-Chapel, provided spaces for teaching, for public worship on Sundays and for evening celebrations and events. The services were held at times specifically chosen to appeal to working class groups who might otherwise not have been able (or feel welcome) to join the larger community in worship at the parish church.

School-Chapels were specifically not chapels in the sense of those at Eton, Winchester and Rugby, but rather they were churches that doubled as schools, directed at communities who may have had almost no regular contact with organised religion. Together with the schools run by the National Society in association with the Church of England parishes, these institutions formed the principal form of ‘outreach’ to the poorest classes. Their influence on our society and upon the emancipation and enfranchising of the poor should not be underestimated (Bovett 1989).

One of the earliest of the School-Chapels recorded in Devon was founded for mission in part of St Andrew's parish, Plymouth by the then incumbent, the Rev. John Hatchard, in 1835 (DHC Diocesan (Pr 337-338) Rebuilding of Churches (1 Box A-S and oversize file (Exeter)). This building, identified at the time by the dedication of the parish church, as 'St Andrew, West Hoe', was first proposed in 1835 by Thomas Gill, who intended to construct it at his own expense with the aim of getting it licensed for worship. The application was dated 30th Jan 1835 and countersigned by Hatchard. An assistant curate named Barnes was to be licensed to officiate there. The plan appended to the application (Fig 225), though rudimentary, shows a rectangular building divided into two sections by a movable screen, which also divided two adjacent polygonal structures, one identified as the pulpit and the other as the clerk's desk. There were paired entrance porches in the opposite wall. The interior was fitted with fixed seats throughout, identified on the 'key' as 'public sittings for 200 persons'.

Unfortunately, it is uncertain from the plan whether there were intended to be 200 sittings in each half of the building or 200 in total. In addition to the public sittings there were to be two small areas of private seats at each end of the building, the number and purpose of these being unspecified. They may have been intended for those who came to witness teaching and worship at this new facility. Presumably the building was intended to serve as a separate boys' school and a girls' and infants' school, with the pulpit and clerk's desk doubling as teachers' rostra for the two halves of the building when the movable screen was closed. When the screen was withdrawn the whole building might serve as a church, with the two halves of the congregation facing inwards towards each other and the clerks' desk and pulpit.

The original building no longer survives, if indeed it was ever built. It was replaced in 1891 with a new mission church dedicated to St Michael, built on a new site within a former stone quarry to the south of the town. This building is now in use as an orthodox church. Oddly, the origin of the present building as a school-chapel is still evident as it has a pair of porches at either end, suggesting that the mixed use of the original building for separate congregations or classes of boys and girls was continued in its successor. The present church has a central fleche rising over the former division at the centre of the building (Fig 226). This unusual double-ended structure may indeed be the successor to the long-lost school-chapel of West Hoe.

The West Hoe school-chapel was also an exceptionally early example of this type of building. Most of the surviving examples seem to date from the 1860s to the 1890s, both in rural and urban areas. The construction of a school-chapel seems to have been an unusual venture at the time, since the other mission churches in Hatchard's parish, St Andrew's Chapel (later St Catherine's) in Lockyer Street (1823) by John Foulston (Fig 227), Holy Trinity, Southside

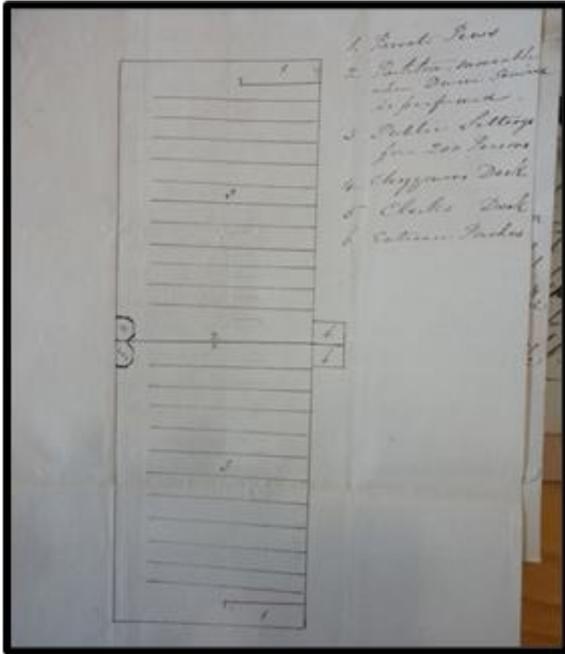


Fig 225 The plan for the proposed school-chapel of 1839 at West Hoe, Plymouth (RWP Plymouth West Hoe DSC06641).



Fig 226 The rebuilt school-chapel at west Hoe showing the two porches (RWP Plymouth West Hoe DSC08817).



Fig 227 St Catherine's (formerly St Andrew's Chapel), Plymouth (1823) by John Foulston, A Greek revival chapel-of ease for St Andrew's (David King).

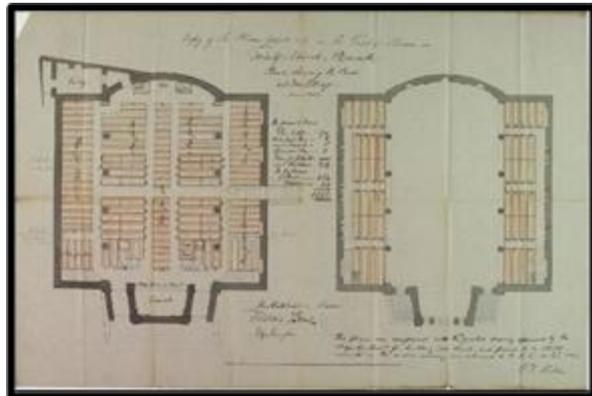


Fig 228 Holy Trinity, Plymouth. Designs dated 1843 for a profoundly uneclesiological structure by George Wightwick (LPL ICBS 02322).

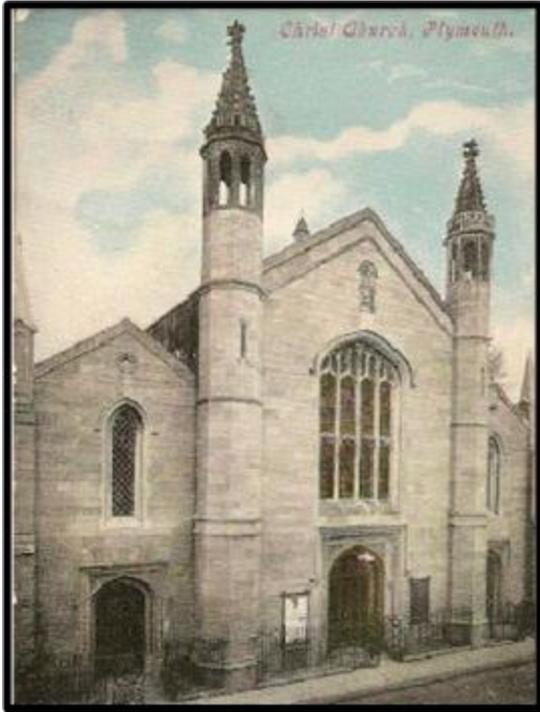


Fig. 229 Christchurch, Eton Place, Plymouth (1844-6) by George Wightwick, showing another profoundly uneclesiological structure in the ‘Tudor’ style (Postcard in the author’s collection).



Fig. 230 The school-chapel built for St Peter’s parish, Plymouth (1862), by Roger Elliott (later The Good Shepherd) showing the chancel arch (RWP Stonehouse The Good Shepherd DSC08894).

Street (1841) (Fig. 228), and Christchurch Eton Place (1844) (Fig. 229) both of which were designed by George Wightwick, operated simply as churches. Both these latter churches seem to have been designed in deliberate resistance to the ecclesiological movement; only Christchurch was Gothic, and that in a ‘Tudor’ style which seems almost consciously perverse in the mid 1840s.

The provision of School-Chapels like West Hoe was not the sole preserve of evangelicals like John Hatchard but also seems to have been encouraged by High-Church congregations such as that operating at St Peter’s Wyndham Square in Stonehouse under the guidance of their priest the Rev. George Fellowes-Prynne. One of their school chapels survives near The Octagon, just off Union Street (Fig. 230). It was probably designed by Roger Elliott of Plymouth (*The Church Builder* XIX 133). The chapel was constructed in 1862 and licensed in 1864. It existed under various differing titles and dedications before finally settling in as the ‘Mission Chapel of The Good Shepherd’. This building survives today, although no longer in use as a church or a school. It is an exceptionally well-preserved example of the type (though sadly none of its furnishings remain),

and notable particularly for its correct archaeological Gothic detailing. The architectural language employed here was quite distinct from that at Hatchard's earlier Mission-Chapel in West Hoe, with a high open roof and a chancel arch which was originally screened off; however, the use of the building may not have been very different. Nothing remains to show what message Hatchard's mission chapel was intended to convey, but the language of Elliott's building clearly states its purpose as a church, and a Gothic church to boot.

The essential features of one of these school chapels were a wide nave, unencumbered by columns, with a narrower and structurally distinct chancel. During school hours the chancel was expected to be enclosed by a high timber screen either completely or partially obscuring the chancel and sanctuary. Very few such screens survive, however, one magnificent example may still be seen at the former school chapel at Oreston near Turnchapel, Plymouth (Fig. 231), where the timber structure takes the form of a rood screen surmounted by a plain cross but with sliding shutters to either side which could be drawn across to enclose the sanctuary during school hours.

School-chapels of more complex form, with additional classrooms to accommodate larger schools including girls, infants and sometimes senior boys, might accommodate these classes in side wings or transepts which again, were screened off from the body of the building by timber partitions; either sliding doors or folding shutters. Good examples remain at Ashill near Tiverton (Fig. 232) and Gunn in Swimbridge parish, North Devon.

At Ashill the folding screen survives today, separating the church from the former classroom (Fig. 233), though the school function, as in every building of this type, has now ceased. The architectural expression of School-Chapels was often carefully designed to make a deliberate contrast between the sanctuary or chancel reserved for religious use and the nave with its dual-purpose function. At the school-chapel at Postbridge (1868-9) on Dartmoor, by R. Medley Fulford, the chancel has stone dressings to the windows with trefoil heads and Gothic detail, whereas the nave has shouldered-headed windows (Fig. 236). A further refinement was the provision of two bell-turrets where the church bell is contained within an overtly ecclesiastical bell turret at the division between the nave and the chancel and the school bell is housed within a more modest western protrusion of the nave roof (Fig. 235).

As no school-chapels remain in use for their original dual-purpose function, very few retain their original furnishings. These were revolutionary in that they were designed to convert into school desks, church pews and with a little manoeuvring, tables for church sales and other community activities. These desks were produced both by local firms such as Wippell & Co and



Fig. 231 The surviving school-chapel screen at Oreston, Plymouth (1886) by H. May, (RWP Plymouth Oreston DSC07526).



Fig. 232 The school-chapel at Ashill (1881) by Robert Medley Fulford, looking towards the chancel (RWP Ashill DSC08042).



Fig. 233 The school screen separating the classroom from the chapel at Ashill (RWP Ashill DSC02807).



Fig. 234 The school-chapel at Ashill, showing the fine brick architecture (RWP Ashill



Fig. 235 The school-chapel at Postbridge (1868-9), by R. Medley Fulford, showing the separate ecclesiastical and educational bellcotes (RWP Postbridge DSC03621).



Fig. 236 Richer fenestration to the east and sensitive use of local materials at Postbridge (RWP Postbridge DSC03618).



Fig. 237 St Matthias school-chapel at Amity Place, Plymouth (1891), by D. Bellamy, shortly before its demolition in 1996 (Author, EA Archives 1996).

also by London firms. The school chapel at Beacon near Sandford in Mid Devon retains its convertible desks intact and the simpler school-chapel of St Raphael at Huccaby (designed by Robert Medley Fulford in 1868) has been furnished by the congregation with reclaimed school benches by a London manufacturer to reflect its interesting multi-functional use. Many of the surviving school chapels, including the chapel at Ashill, Postbridge, Huccaby and St Loye's at Wonford, near Exeter, were designed by Robert Medley Fulford; this seems to have been a major aspect of his architectural work. More eccentric architectural styling was chosen by the Architect D. Bellamy for his Mission-Chapel in St Mathias' Parish, Plymouth (Fig. 237), designed in 1891 in a quirky Venetian-Gothic style incorporating polished knobs of coloured marble between the window heads and with a small spirelet crowned with an ogee dome between the nave and the chancel. This small building, now demolished, appears to have been used as an adjunct to an existing house which may have been utilised as a community centre.

By the later Victorian period, particularly in densely populated areas such as Plymouth, the provision of new churches often involved integral school rooms either below the body of the church as may still be seen at Gabriel's Plymouth. By W. D. Caröe of circa 1904 or, formerly, at St Alban, Crownhill, now demolished. Provision of school-chapels and mission chapels seems to have continued despite the Education Act of 1901 which made local authorities responsible for the provision of schools. Many continued in use into well into the 1930's at which time, school provision having been assumed by the councils, most school-chapels were finally converted into the sole-use as churches. These unsung buildings, as has hopefully been demonstrated, were architecturally ambitious, they were often richly furnished with stained glass and encaustic tiling. Many were provided with handsome furniture and, in many ways, they would suit the ideals for outreach to the community of modern churches today. It is remarkable to think that this focus on flexible use spaces for both religious and community use was in fact a late-Georgian and early-Victorian initiative and not a modern invention.

### **Appropriation and reuse of earlier fabric**

Ecclesiological antiquarianism, with its focus on the inherent value of historic craftsmanship, honest use of materials and interest in ancient furnishings and liturgical practices may inevitably have led to a renewed appreciation of the integrity and patina of ancient buildings. Long before the establishment of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), through the efforts of William Morris in 1877, there is a clear trend in the ecclesiological movement towards conservation.

Many of the suggestions in J.M. Neale's early pamphlets written for the Cambridge Camden Society urge those responsible for churches to show respect for the original form of the building, its 'fair proportion' and for its antiquities. Custodians such as clergy, wardens and sextons are urged to preserve and maintain buildings by the sort of daily maintenance and regular care (Neale 1843, 6) which was later recommended by Morris and the SPAB.

If enlargement of the building was necessary (in the medieval and post-medieval manner, by throwing out aisles), Neale urged that features such as windows and tracery from demolished walls should be reused in the new walls, and that professional advice should always be sought when altering an ancient church, for 'we are not enlarging an house, nor fitting up a hall, but have to do with a building hallowed in itself, and so well devised that there is probably not a single point in it but has its own and deep meaning' (Neale 1841, 17). Although Victorian standards of conservation may be very different from ours, this represents an important plea for the preservation of ancient fabric and for its sympathetic treatment in the face of alterations which may have been seen at the time as unavoidable and necessary. By the middle of the century this trend was well established and widely debated in the architectural profession (Miele 2005, 151). The Committee on the Conservation of Ancient Monuments and Remains was founded in 1864 and led by architects of the stature of George Gilbert Scott and William White, many of whom were stern critics, repenting publicly, of their own earlier practice (Miele 2005, 161-163).

### **Early Ecclesiological sanctuary arrangements**

#### *Chancels and their furnishings*

One of the earliest activities promoted by the ecclesiologists was the restoration of chancels. This seems to have taken priority for them over reforms in the furnishings of the rest of the church, possibly for reasons of propriety. To ecclesiologists, the chancel was an holy place which at all costs should be kept sacrosanct and in a clean and tidy condition. The restoration of chancels may have been easier to achieve initially than major interventions in the nave or aisles, since chancels were held to be the responsibility of the rector and were not to the same extent subject to the approval of the churchwardens. These officials and others with vested interests in the preservation of the *status quo*, particularly those holding private seats, were not unlikely to resist attempts to remove their seats, especially if the intention was to throw them open to the poor. Where the incumbent and the rector were one and the same, and private finance allowed it, the chancel was often the first part of the church to be restored. Many of these early restorations have no recorded architect and may have been carried out by local builders under the direction of the incumbent.

In *A Few Words to Church Builders* (1841) John Mason Neale wrote that ‘of the twelve thousand ancient churches in our land, in whatever else they may differ, agree in this, that every one has or had a well-defined chancel... which should be expressly appropriated to the more solemn rites of our religion’ (Neale 1841, 5). It was also essential that the chancel should be screened off or physically separated from the nave of the church by some sort of partition and that it should be not used as a space for additional seating ‘except during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist’ (ibid., 10). The chancel should be raised above the level of the nave both for the sake of the ‘effect’ and in order to keep the chancel dry and to emphasise its sacredness. ‘A chancel level with the nave is all the more objectionable when (which, however, never ought to be) the rood screen is wanting’ (ibid., 11). The ecclesiological movement thus supported the retention of rood screens from the very start, though they were pragmatic about it, as about all of their rulings; where a rood screen did not exist or and was considered undesirable a lower partition or simply a change in level might be tolerated. Every point Neale thought to enforce was justified by reference either to ancient custom or to ‘the practice of the Reformed Anglican church in its best times’ which he illustrated by the pronouncements of 16th- and 17th-century Bishops and Archbishops in an attempt to spike the guns of those of the movement’s critics who saw church restoration as a return to popery (ibid., 5).

Neale summarised his arguments with the sentence (printed in capitals, for emphasis): ‘if everything else is forgotten and two points only remembered, THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A DISTINCT AND SPACIOUS CHANCEL, and the ABSOLUTE INADMISSIBILITY OF PUES AND GALLERIES IN ANY SHAPE WHATEVER, I shall be more than rewarded’ (ibid., 30). This statement articulates both the aim of the Ecclesiologists for propriety and dignity in the layout of the church building and for the inclusion of the entire congregation as equals in worship.

The drive to ensure a structural chancel immediately encountered a difficulty in the restoration of medieval churches in Devon. In some Devon churches there was no structural chancel at all, one or both aisles extending the full length of the nave, the church terminating at the east with two or three gables of equal size and, apparently equal importance (Fig. 238). This appears to have been the ideal of the later medieval church in the region — a sort of hall church with the nave and aisles of equal height and width. There was very often no chancel arch; many of these having been removed in the late middle ages, often leaving an uncomfortable discontinuity between the roofs of the nave and chancel. This remains evident in many churches to this day, though the resulting void has sometimes been patched with some skill (Parker 2013, 6). In these late-medieval hall churches the chancel was usually defined only by the rood screen and parclose screens, set either one or two bays to the west of the east wall and running the entire width of the

church. Where the rood screen had been removed the absence of any physical distinction of the chancel was perhaps almost as intolerable to Victorian ecclesiologists as a Georgian church which had never had a chancel at all. A structural division between the nave and chancel was so imperative that many chancel arches were rebuilt. Where this was not possible the chancel was distinguished by an increased elaboration of the roof with paintings, or with additional ribs. In other places (such as Milton Abbot and St Budeaux) the situation just had to be endured (Fig. 238).

In medieval churches of this type, the east end of the chancel aisles usually had three eastern altars. After the Reformation it was not usually accepted that an Anglican church (apart perhaps from very large churches such as cathedrals) should possess more than one altar. Where two altars had survived, or been restored, as in the case of the lady chapel at Exeter cathedral (restored in 1820 under John Kendall), the side altar was used as a 'morning chapel' for the celebration of services for smaller congregations. Such uses were extremely rare before the 1880s. Generally, the redundant side chapels were employed as a vestry or perhaps as additional seating for children and charity schools. In some cases, of course, as at Powderham, the patrons of the church reserved these areas as private pews or as family mausolea but, as liturgical choirs became more popular, many side chapels were eventually used to accommodate the organ, a situation that still troubles clergy and delights organists to this day.

In some cases chancels were actually added to medieval buildings. At North Tawton, for example, a shallow but architecturally accomplished chancel was added to the medieval church, with carefully observed perpendicular-style architectural detail (Fig. 239). This addition may have been made as early as 1832 (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 604) and if this is so it is remarkable for its date and for its architectural style. Unfortunately, the architect of this work is currently unknown. In many other church restorations, such as Holcombe Burnell (1843) and Sandford (1848), both by John Hayward, and at Eggbuckland (1841), the existing east end was simply enlarged by extending the chancel eastwards to create an area distinct from either the side aisles or the nave. In many of these cases the medieval piscina were usually reset in the new fabric.

Not even the most ecclesiologically-minded architects necessarily responded to this call for developed, structural chancels, particularly in the case of church restorations. Their response seems to have been more pragmatic and may have been led by the character of the existing building rather than contemporary theory, even if the church was to be completely rebuilt. At Whimple, which was rebuilt (except the tower) in 1845 by John Hayward, when he was already the leading ecclesiological architect in the county, the chancel was no more developed or defined than the shallow recesses at Ide or Oakford, both of 1838. Hayward's addition of a south aisle, giving the church a more-or-less symmetrical plan, and his omission of a chancel arch or rood screen, meant



Fig. 238 The east end of the medieval church at Milton Abbot showing the absence of a distinct chancel (RWP Milton Abbot DSC09662).



Fig. 239 The extended chancel of c.1832 at North Tawton (RWP north Tawton DSC02244).



Fig. 240 The very slight enlargement of the chancel (1843) at Holcombe Burnell (RWP Holcombe Burnell



Fig. 241 The rebuilt church at Whimple (1845), by John Hayward showing the absence of a distinct chancel, which is marked only by a slight enrichment of the wagon roofs. (RWP Whimple DSC05125).



Fig. 242 The rebuilt church at St Giles in the Wood (1862-3), by John Hayward, showing the use of Decorated Gothic (RWP St Giles in the Wood DSC04445).

that this church was almost identical in layout to those of the earlier two buildings. In fact the chancel at Whimble and at Holcombe Burnell was far less structurally distinct than in his two pre-ecclesiological buildings at Blackborough and Tipton St John.

It is true that at Whimble the east end of the present building stands almost at the very eastern limit of the churchyard, with a road running immediately below the east wall; there may have been no room for a longer chancel, yet it does seem extraordinary that Hayward made no effort to distinguish the chancel from the nave with either a chancel arch or a change in the roofline. This, and his employment of a Perpendicular Gothic style rather than Decorated, may have been a response to the character of the medieval church. Hayward reused some of the medieval bench seating for the free seats at the centre of the church and had replicas made in a similar style to fill the nave. Possibly, close examination of the window tracery and nave arcades may show that Hayward reused earlier architectural material, and this may have influenced his choice of style and plan. The impression of the interior, with its wagon roofs (Fig 241), is that Hayward deliberately intended to recreate the local, late-medieval architectural character of the building rather than imposing upon it a modern— and perhaps more ecclesiologically correct— appearance.

Comparison of Hayward's new buildings (on new sites) with his restorations of older structures would seem to confirm that Hayward's approach to church design was contextual. Nearly all his major restorations are in Perpendicular style as though to respect earlier fabric, even if this was to be entirely rebuilt. Notable exceptions are Monkton St Mary Magdalen and St Giles-in-the-Wood, which were entirely rebuilt (except the towers), but in Decorated style (Fig. 242). In these buildings it is possible that the survival of earlier fabric— or perhaps the total absence of a distinct architectural character due to Georgian alterations — meant that he had a free hand in the choice of architectural style. Alternatively, the style may have been the choice of his clients, the Rolle family. In his new churches, on new sites, Hayward was usually true to ecclesiological principles and nearly all his new buildings are Decorated Gothic in character.

#### *The use of existing Communion tables*

Even though late Victorian ecclesiology may have necessitated quite drastic change in sanctuaries this did not mean inevitably the complete loss of earlier arrangements. Some furnishings may have been preserved because of their architectural interest or because they were felt to embody continuity with pre-ecclesiological practice. Although the Victorian ecclesiologists probably preferred the replacement of the free-standing Communion table with an 'altar' situated up against the east wall, they do not appear to have been antagonistic to Communion tables and very often

retained them in use at the east end or re-sited them within the building. So many examples remain that their retention, even merely as side tables and vestry tables must surely have been deliberate and seems to show that they were regarded as having been invested, by long use, with sacred qualities and were not therefore lightly to be disposed of or converted to secular uses. There are several examples in Devon where elements of a post-Reformation Communion table have been worked up into a larger modern altar of chest form, either by infilling the space between the legs with carved work, as at Abbotsham near Bideford (Fig. 243) or by resetting the legs and other elements of the ancient table within a new structure as at Clyst Honiton (Fig. 244). These early furnishings assimilated into the new work embody an intention of continuity, rather than disruption, in the Anglican Church of the 19th century.

This desire to incorporate or preserve early altar furnishings within modernised sanctuary fittings culminates in the extraordinary situation at Combeinteignhead on the Teign estuary where an early Victorian sanctuary arrangement of exceptional interest survives, though altered. This reordering may have taken place in 1850-51 at the instigation of the Rev. John Wrey, Rector between 1840 and 1856 (D19P, Combeinteignhead, card 2). The architect responsible for the early restoration is not known, though a drawing of one of the ancient bench ends was contributed to the EDAS scrapbooks at this time (EDAS SB I, 101. 1850) and it may be presumed that the architect was a member of the Diocesan Architectural Society (John Wrey is not listed among the members in 1850-51 (TEDAS 1st ser IV, 106) and the drawings are therefore unlikely to have been contributed by him personally). Both the nave and chancel were restored for a second time under the architect Robert Medley Fulford in 1887; however, the earlier arrangement is recorded intact in late 19th-century photographs taken before the second restoration of the church and now kept at the church.

The arrangement of the nave was highly conservative and may not have formed part of either the 1850 or the 1887 refurbishment. It was pre-ecclesiological in character, with no central alley and high box pews with traceried ends (not dissimilar to those at the neighbouring church of Hacombe, restored by John Kendal in the 1820s). Two enormous rectangular 'Gothick' reading desks dominated the nave, in front of the medieval rood screen and standing on either side in its central doorway, just as still exists at Hacombe. This arrangement is so old fashioned that it seems most unlikely that it can date from as late as 1850, and it is probable that the nave had remained furnished as it had been since the 1820s and that the chancel alone was restored in 1850-51.

The 1850s arrangement of the chancel at Combeinteignhead was extremely unusual, in that the sanctuary and Communion table were separated from the chancel by a low stone traceried wall pierced with trefoils running the full width of the chancel (Fig. 245) without any opening



Fig 243 The augmented Communion table infilled with newer material at Abbotsham (RWP Abbotsham DSC03778).



Fig. 244 The reuse of elements of an ancient Communion table at Clyst Honiton (RWP Clyst Honiton DSC02725).



Fig. 245 The interior of Combeinteignhead church before the restoration of 1887, showing an old-fashioned interior with box pews, no central alley, and, remarkably, a stone altar rail (arrowed) crossing the entire sanctuary without interruption (photo in the anonymous Combeinteignhead church guide).



Fig. 246 The Combeinteignhead sanctuary with elaborate early Victorian chancel fittings (RWP Combeinteignhead DSC06359).



Fig. 247 Detail of the truncated altar rails (RWP Combeinteignhead DSC06331).



Fig. 248 The 'levitating' altar table at Combeinteignhead, seen from the rear (RWP Combeinteignhead DSC06337).

between the choir and the sanctuary. This area could not be approached directly from the chancel without vaulting this stone altar rail, an eventuality that would be improbable in an early 19th-century church service. The sanctuary must therefore have been approached by a doorway from the vestry adjoining the chancel, via a further door opening into the sanctuary. This doorway remains, but it has since been blocked and converted into a wall seat. The elaborate niche with a nodding ogee canopy, echoing the single sedile of identical form opposite, must have originally framed the door. Presumably, routing the clergyman through the vestry on his journey to the sanctuary allowed him to change his preaching gown for a surplice, without the impropriety of the congregation having to witness their priest publicly changing his clothes. The use, or not, of the surplice (except during the celebration of Holy Communion) was highly controversial in the 1840s and 50s and famously led to riots in both Exeter and London where the use of the surplice while preaching was regarded by some low-churchmen (who do seem to have been set on making trouble) as a dangerously Papistical innovation (Chadwick 1966, 219-220, 501; Ingle 1848). The trend in some Victorian churches for the pulpit to be accessed from the vestry, rather than from the body of the building, may also reflect sensitivities to this issue of the donning or removal of vestments which, in some places (known for their liturgical volatility), may have lasted longer than in others.

Although no documentary evidence for controversy at Combeinteignhead is known, it is hard to account in any other way for the inconvenience that this unusual arrangement of the sanctuary must have caused. At the 1887 restoration of Combeinteignhead under Robert Medley Fulford the formerly unbroken traceried altar rail was pierced with a conventional opening to the chancel and the interruption of the trefoil motifs by the new fabric is still evident (Fig. 247). Nevertheless, the rail was preserved rather than replaced with a modern one, as might reasonably have been expected. It may be presumed that by that date, the clergyman in a Devon parish was permitted to wear a surplice throughout the service, with no need to change for preaching. No other example is known to the author of a completely enclosed altar rail without any form of gate or bar and with its own separate entrance from the vestry; however, almost all existing altar rails include removable gates and bars and most traditional high altars will still have their gates and bars pulled across by servers during the administration of the Sacrament.

The mid 19th-century altar table at Combeinteignhead was relatively small and originally much lower in height than would be convenient for a modern altar; it had an open arcaded front of three bays with a central IHS symbol. The table has survived the restoration of 1887 and still shows its carved front behind the present altar cloths, but it has been extended both to north and south and also vertically (in a way respectful of its original design) by the addition of side bays, to

make it both longer and taller. Although physically part of the new structure of 1887, the early Victorian altar table is now suspended from the underside of the later structure with its legs no longer touching the ground (Fig. 248). This indicates that the physical structure of the older Holy table (which presumably dated from no earlier than 1850) was regarded as of sacramental importance and that it was deliberately retained and incorporated within the later Victorian arrangements. This may also indicate an advanced view of the sacramental significance of altar furnishings in this relatively remote Devon parish.

The same conservatism with regards to historic and ancient furnishings which has been explored above in relation to Communion tables may also be identified in the treatment of altar rails. A great many Devon churches retain sets of 17th- or 18th-century altar rails which have been reconfigured to form a straight fence across the chancel but which are clearly derived from an early four-sided or three-sided enclosure, as at Horwood in north Devon (Fig. 249). The reuse of altar rails in Victorian chancels, despite their obviously classical character, is surprisingly common, indeed, too numerous to mention. This may show a degree of respect by Victorian ecclesiologists for Laudian furnishings, which they may have admired as relics of the reformed rite of the Eucharist.

Even where post-Reformation altar rails have been superseded by 19th-century rails of wood or brass, the balusters and other elements of the earlier altar rails have very often been preserved and worked up into other furnishings such as reading desks or tower screens, as at Ermington, in south Devon, or in the tower screen at Dartington (Fig. 250), ensuring their preservation in the building and the continuity of sacred materials within the church building. These examples show an approach to the treatment of church furnishings of all periods which is not generally associated in the public mind with Victorian church restoration.

Even post-Reformation nave furnishings were retained and reused in Victorian restorations. Post-Reformation pulpits were often preserved *in situ*, though perhaps reduced in height and without their three-decker configuration, while classical altarpieces, commandment boards and Communion tables were often simply re-sited in other parts of the church. These may often be encountered today, either fixed to the walls of the tower or supporting the visitors book and the parish magazines, often alongside High-Victorian furnishings which have in turn been banished in the name of changing taste. Box pews, like Victorian seating today, were the most vulnerable type of furnishings, since they were objects of particular loathing to ecclesiologists. It is true that, where these survive today it is more likely to be as a result of financial constraints or religious conservatism than an early conservation ethic, yet there are many examples in Devon of



Fig 249 The 17th-century altar rails at Horwood reconfigured as a chancel screen (RWP Horwood DSC03936).



Fig. 250 18th-century altar rails reused in the tower screen at Dartington (RWP Dartington DSC05718).



Fig 251 A democratised interior; the removal of box pew doors at Stockleigh English to cheaply create open benches (RWP Stockleigh English DSC01977).



Fig 252 one of a pair of 'Flemish' altar chairs at Langtree incorporating reused continental carving (RWP Langtree DSC03875)



Fig. 253 The continental choir stall reused at Oldridge (RWP Oldridge IMG1789).



Fig. 254 Continental choir stalls (from the same set) at Powderham (RWP Powderham DSC04739).



Fig. 256 The early Victorian reredos (1845) at Dunsford (the Decalogue painted out) (RWP Dunsford DSC01768).



Fig. 257 The reredos and stone altar of 1842 at Dunkeswell Abbey. (RWP Dunkeswell Abbey DSC0958).

17th- and 18th-century seating schemes which were simply adapted and ‘democratised’ by Victorian restorers to form open benches for occupation as free seats (Fig. 251).

A more unusual form of adaptation was the inclusion of reclaimed continental church furniture into English church interiors. During the early 19th century, antiquarian interest in Baroque church furniture flourished during the period when monastic institutions were being rationalised and their furnishings sold. Keen collectors like Augustus Welby Pugin were able to acquire redundant church furniture at knock-down prices and import them to England for incorporation into both secular and sacred interiors (Tracy 2001, 45-46). The collection of furniture now at Langtree Church in north-west Devon, includes a Rococo altar a Baroque pulpit and two enormous altar chairs possibly made up from fragments of other furnishings (Fig. 252). These objects might have been imported from overseas in the 1840s, or perhaps in 1865-6, when the church was restored (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 532); alternatively they might have been acquired in the later 19th century when Baroque-style furnishings briefly became popular as a result of the work of the society of St Peter and St Paul (see above), which sought unification with Rome, though Langtree does not look as though it was ever Anglo-Papalist in tradition.

Other reused continental woodwork in Devon appears to have been acquired in the 1840s in the 1840s, such as the richly-carved panels attached to the 18th-century pulpits at Uffculme and Dunsford, the single continental choir stall now serving as a sedile at Oldridge (Fig. 253), or the group of six continental choir stalls incorporated into the present stalls at Powderham (Fig. 254), which were presumably collected by the Earl of Devon while travelling and brought to Powderham church along with other material culled from more local churches. These include parts of the rood screen from Moretonhampstead and possibly parts of a screen from Tiverton. The stalls at Powderham are almost exactly identical to the single stall which survives at Oldridge and probably belonged to the same set. It is possible that other parts of these furnishings might yet be identified in other churches with a connection to John Medley or the Earl of Devon.

### *The Reredos*

The earliest ecclesiological sanctuary arrangements to survive in Devon show that there was no immediate or dramatic change in the arrangements of the sanctuary except perhaps for the form of the altar itself — and that seems to have depended on the churchmanship of the clergy and patrons. Lower churches tended to remain relatively sparsely furnished throughout the period whereas the Higher churches tended to be enriched by additional furnishings as the century progressed. In the 1840s and 50s it would have been harder to tell the difference between a church with a High-Church, Tractarian tradition, and one at the opposite end of the liturgical spectrum.

The architectural setting was still defined by a large reredos (Fig. 255), which almost invariably incorporated the Creed and Decalogue. Often the reredos would be linked to the side walls of the sanctuary by continuous arcading with shafts, running across the whole width of the east wall and wrapping around the north and south. This may still be seen at Stoke Canon, where the fully-panelled sanctuary was designed by John Hayward in 1836. At Dunkeswell Abbey church, designed by Benjamin Ferrey in 1842 the entire east wall is arcaded but the vertical shafts are interrupted to allow the Decalogue and Creed to be incorporated in the panels below (Fig. 256). These have since been painted out.

It was recognized by the ecclesiologists that medieval sources on which to base the design of a reredos were in short supply: 'We are unfortunately in possession of but few examples' (Neale 1841, 11). Among the churches cited by Neale as possible examples for imitation, most were from large churches and cathedrals such as Winchester or Christchurch in Hampshire, where the vast, sculptured altarpieces, with many tiers of niches may have been too daunting as models for the interiors of ordinary parish churches. The medieval reredos at Harlton in Cambridgeshire, also cited by Neale, where a continuous arcade below the east window was surmounted by two large image niches, flanking the east window, may have seemed the most adaptable model for modern Anglican needs, not least if the image niches were frames for the Decalogue rather than statuary.

The standard pattern for east ends now became a central reredos below the east window, either arcaded or canopied and usually decorated with a sacred monogram (rather than any figurative images) flanked by two gabled aedicules rising on either side of the window in which the Decalogue would be inscribed, usually with illuminated Gothic capitals. One of the earliest survivors of this type of arrangement is the altarpiece by John Kendall at Haccombe, dating from the 1820's (Fig. 93), though here the side panels were not strictly subservient to the east window. It is easily as dominant as the earlier Baroque altarpieces at Totnes (Fig. 139) and Withycombe Raleigh (Fig. 144) but its Gothic authenticity is quite new and impressive.

Kendall appears to have taken his inspiration for this reredos from Thomas of Witney's furnishings of the early 14th-century at Exeter Cathedral, particularly the sedilia, for his tripartite canopies and miniature vaults. Kendall's high altar reredos at the cathedral, installed in 1805 (Fig. 257), continued the form of the sedilia with a series of tripartite aedicules on either side of a wider central aedicule surmounting the two tablets of the Decalogue. In the reredos of the Lady Chapel at Exeter Cathedral, installed in 1820, the arcade covers the entire east wall and is so restrained that it has sometimes been mistaken for authentically medieval work (Fig. 258). A photograph taken by Nathaniel Rogers in c.1865 shows the effect of the small, simple wooden table, without frontals, standing against the arcading of the east wall, which may be taken as typical of most 19th-



Fig. 257 The high altar at Exeter Cathedral in 1865, photographed by Nathaniel Rogers before G. G. Scott's 1870s restoration, showing Kendall's reredos of 1805 with two central panels for the Commandments (D&EI 1870 ROG).

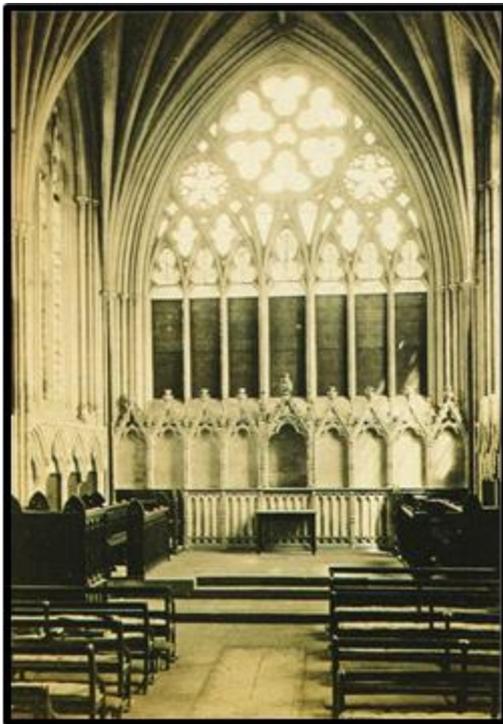


Fig. 258 The Lady Chapel reredos at Exeter Cathedral in 1865 (D&EI 1870 ROG).



Fig. 259 The reredos and stone altar at Arlington (1842-5) by R.D. Gould (RWP Arlington DSC00993).



Fig. 260 The reredos at Uffculme (1843) by John Hayward (RWP Uffculme DSC00358).



Fig. 261 One of a pair of stools for north-end celebration at Iddesleigh (RWP Iddesleigh DSC07212).



Fig. 262 The 1860s reredos at Holne, featuring a Calvary group. A rare and early survivor of a controversial church furnishing (RWP Holne (DSC01187)).

century sanctuaries, both before and after the ecclesiologists. Another example, incorporating a stone altar, is at Arlington (Fig. 259). These early examples of altarpieces reflect the trend at the time towards archaeological accuracy as a basis for design but are nevertheless a distinct innovation, since they accommodate modern Anglican needs (the requirement to display the Creed, Decalogue and Paternoster) within a framework of carefully observed archaeological details.

One of the best-preserved examples of an early ecclesiological east end is that at Uffculme, formerly a High-Church parish, but notorious since the 1970s for its modernist liturgy (with benches set in an arc around a very early instance, in an Anglican parish context, of a nave altar). The original east end, reredos and stone high altar remain, though garishly painted (Fig. 260). These furnishings were designed by John Hayward and installed in 1843 during a major refurbishment of the chancel. The medieval rood screen was extended, indistinguishably from the original, when the south aisle was added in 1847. The reredos and altar are less convincing but are perhaps instructive as an example of what early-Victorian architects—even those of high calibre—might invent in the absence of authentic examples to follow. The stone altar standing under an oval arch, with a central crocketed ogee and tiers of side canopies still have something of the flavour of Strawberry Hill.

Early ecclesiological altar pieces seem to have remained relatively uncontroversial as long as they presented the Decalogue and contained no carved or painted imagery beyond conventional symbols, such as the monogram 'IHS'. The early ecclesiologists saw themselves as strict observers of the rubrics of the Prayer Book, and therefore there was no immediate change to the usage of the altar. Many ecclesiologically-minded clergy continued to celebrate 'at the north end' in accordance with the usual interpretation of the Prayer Book rubrics. Some churches still preserve a pair of small stools for kneeling at the Epistle and Gospel ends of the altar (Fig. 261) and in many cases the Elizabethan or Jacobean Communion table remained in use, though perhaps in an enhanced architectural setting. Where the Communion table had been superseded by a new, ecclesiological altar, it was usually preserved in the building. In addition to its new stone altar the church at Uffculme also retains a very large Elizabethan Communion table which appears to have been relegated to vestry use since Hayward's alterations.

Reredoses of this type, with side canopies for the Decalogue, remained popular throughout the century, though increasingly, after the 1870s, they began to be decorated with figurative imagery. From the 1860s in some very advanced parishes, such as Holne (Fig. 262), on Dartmoor (Worthy 1875, 125) and St John the Evangelist, Sutton on Plym, Plymouth, the reredos was provided with a carved Calvary (This was risky, since a complaint from an unsympathetic

parishioner might lead to the archdeacon insisting on the removal of either the whole reredos or just the Calvary figures, as at Lynton in 1871 and Exeter Cathedral (Fig. 263) in 1874-5 (Church Association Tract 40, 67, 177). At Lynton the reredos still remains in place, but without its Calvary).

In less liturgically-advanced parishes it was therefore sometimes the custom to keep the reredos as plain as possible, or decorate it with conventional symbols such as those of the four evangelists, the 'IHS' Monogram or simply a plain cross. A failure to display the Decalogue might still result in complaints, as seems to have happened at St Michaels, Mount Dinham, Exeter, where a correspondent in the *Exeter Flying Post* asked:

‘Let me ask why the vicar did not approve of having the Commandments Creed and Lord’s Prayer placed over the Communion table and “as a good conservative” the Queen’s arms at the west end— as in all really loyal protestant churches? — instead of which we see crosses and flowers, a gaudy figure of Saint Michael and, on the outside, this ‘patron saint’ weighing the souls of the faithful. I make no allusion to the choral part but, like many others, I dislike intoning the lessons and Gregorian chants and extemporising on the organ during the admission of the sacraments, the segregation of the sexes, no prayer before the sermon or blessing from the pulpit ...’

(EFP June 16, 1869)

Until the final decision of the Courts in favour of the Exeter Reredos— and for some time afterwards—it was sensible to proceed cautiously to avoid controversy. A reredos might, after all, be upgraded with new paintings or statuary in time, or supplanted with a new one, by Faculty, when fears of ‘Popery’ in the Church community were less inflamed.

Victorian altar furnishings were thus often subject to incremental changes which can make their original form difficult to discover without early drawings, photographs or documentary records. The reredos which so provoked the ire of the correspondent in the *Flying Post* at St Michael’s Mount Dinham (Fig. 264), as originally designed by Major Rohde- Hawkins in 1868, is known to have had twelve lozenge-shaped panels in two tiers flanking a central roundel containing a plain cross of white marble and four lesser roundels . It contained no figurative imagery of any kind. The design and layout of the structure, however, does seem to anticipate a time when it could be enriched with images of the twelve apostles, Christ in Majesty and the four evangelists. Perhaps this is what annoyed the anonymous correspondent. The heads of the Apostles were added by Frederick Drake in 1882 (D19C Card 1), but the image of Christ in Majesty and the evangelist



Fig 263 The controversial reredos featuring the Ascension designed by Sir G. G. Scott for Exeter Cathedral in the 1870s, and now at Heavitree. (RWP Exeter; Heavitree DSC3168).



Fig 264 The reredos At St Michael's Mount Dinham, Exeter, originally designed without figurative imagery but subsequently enriched with figures and symbols (RWP Exeter; St Michael DSC01080)



Fig. 265 The early-Victorian reredos at Shute now reset in a side chapel, showing that a free-standing table was employed (RWP Shute DSC09026).



Fig. 266 The commandment panels of the same reredos, now re-erected on the west wall of the aisle (RWP Shute DSC09629).

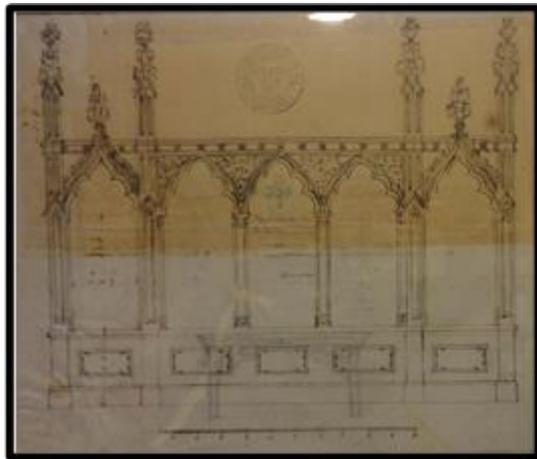


Fig. 267 Design for a reredos (1840s) by Roger Elliott of Plymouth for Plympton St Mary (D&EI EDAS Scrapbooks).



Fig. 268 The central panels of the same reredos, now re-erected as the altar of a side chapel (RWP DSC04084).

symbols was not finally installed until the 1890s and is reputed to have been designed by W. D. Caröe (Smith n.d. 15). The three stages of enrichment of this reredos are perhaps a warning that even what appears to be a homogenous work of 19th-century art may have developed in many stages and be the work of Different artists.

Many Victorian altarpieces have been upgraded by the addition of richer imagery, others have been painted out to neutralise their rich colouring in accordance with 20th-century tastes (Fig 255). Though in many cases the zinc painted panels bearing the Decalogue have been removed, they are often also preserved within the building, generally hung either side of the tower arch or within the tower itself. In some cases such as Shute, in east Devon, an early-Victorian reredos has been dismembered and reset in other parts of the building (Fig. 265, 266). Early-Victorian altarpieces which have been treated in this way sometimes end up serving as architectural frames for later-Victorian side altars. Examples include the former reredos at Plympton St Mary, designed by the little-known architect Roger Elliott, of Plymouth, in 1843, which was dismembered and reset in the 1880s during a second restoration of the church by E. H. Sedding. The original design survives as drawings in the EDAS scrapbooks; the altered version, robbed of its pinnacles and widened at the centre, now frames the side altar in the north chancel aisle (Figs. 267, 268).

#### *New ecclesiological furnishings*

Stone altars were one of the most controversial introductions into parish churches and remained so into the 20th century. Neale acknowledged this in *A Few Words to Church Builders*: ‘there is some difficulty in speaking on the subject of the altar, on account of the vehement objections raised by many against the use of anything beyond a table, nay, to the very name ALTAR’ (Neale 1841, 11). Neale clearly considered that stone altars were desirable, if only because ‘the altar is something more than a piece of church furniture; that it is an actual and essential part of the church’ (ibid.).

The introduction of stone altars seems to have been regarded as of dubious legality after the notorious case of the ‘Round Church’, St Sepulchre in Cambridge, where a model restoration by the Cambridge Camden Society in 1845 (after the partial collapse of the church) was challenged by the non-resident incumbent on the grounds that they had installed a stone altar and a credence table. These were described by the objector as ‘pernicious and soul-destroying heresies’ (Chadwick 1966, 221). The Incumbent sued the Society and won; the offending furniture was removed from the building and the Society, after suffering a number of high-profile resignations, including that of the Bishop of Exeter, had to dissolve itself and reform as the Ecclesiological Society, based in London (Ibid.). After this controversy stone altars became rare even in churches where the clergy and congregations may have been sympathetic to their use.

Several early ecclesiological projects in Devon incorporated stone altars. One of the earliest was the district church of All Saints near Axminster. This church was built to serve an ecclesiastical district carved out of the parishes of Axminster and Chardstock in the late 1830's. It was completed in 1840 and, like Gideon Boyce's Roman Catholic chapel at Tiverton it must rank as one of the earliest and most archaeologically informed buildings of the Gothic revival in the Westcountry.

All Saints was probably designed by Benjamin Ferrey, as it is described as having been designed with his assistance in *The Christian Remembrancer* (CR 1841, 280-283). This church is a very simple structure of nave and chancel, the chancel originally being a short one of only one bay. The chancel was, however, vaulted in stone and featured a stone altar which had a panelled front of quatrefoils. A pamphlet entitled: *Progress and Cost of the Building of All Saints Church for a District formed out of Chardstock Dorset and Axminster Devon: Reprinted with amendments in The Christian Remembrancer, April 1841* (LPLICBS 02472) preserves an illustration of the east end of the building as it was first constructed with the stone altar in position (Fig. 269). The illustration also shows cushions placed at the north and south ends of the *mensa*, showing that the altar was used at that time for north-end celebration. When the chancel was extended in the late 19th century this stone altar was demolished and replaced by a conventional wooden altar, but the panelled front and sides of the altar were reinstated as a reredos above the modern altar where it remains (Fig. 270). Again, this seems to demonstrate a desire to retain material which had been made sacred by long use.

The design of these early stone altars may have been based on the survival of what was then thought to be a medieval altar (perhaps, in fact, a chest tomb), at Hartland Abbey. This was eventually brought to the parish church of Stoke-by Hartland for use as an altar at the restoration of the church by David Macintosh in 1848 (Fig. 271). It has a panelled front which may well have been a source for the design of early-Victorian stone altars.

Ferrey's other buildings of this period include Dunkeswell Abbey Church (1842) and the district church of Chevithorne (1843) near Tiverton. Both of these churches have stone altars which still survive. The stone altar at Dunkeswell (Fig. 256) has a plain arcade decorated with sacred emblems. At Chevithorne the stone altar has quatrefoil ornaments like that originally at All Saints, but it is now encased within a later wooden altar casing and is only partially visible. It is unclear whether this wooden casing was simply to enlarge or raise the height of the existing altar, or to disguise it from legally-minded rural deans who might demand its removal as illegal. A similar stone altar was provided when the church of Arlington in north Devon was rebuilt for the Chichester family in 1842-5 by the architect Richard Davie Gould (Fig. 259). This altar too seems to have been covered for a period by a later wooden altar casing (Fig. 272), which remains in the

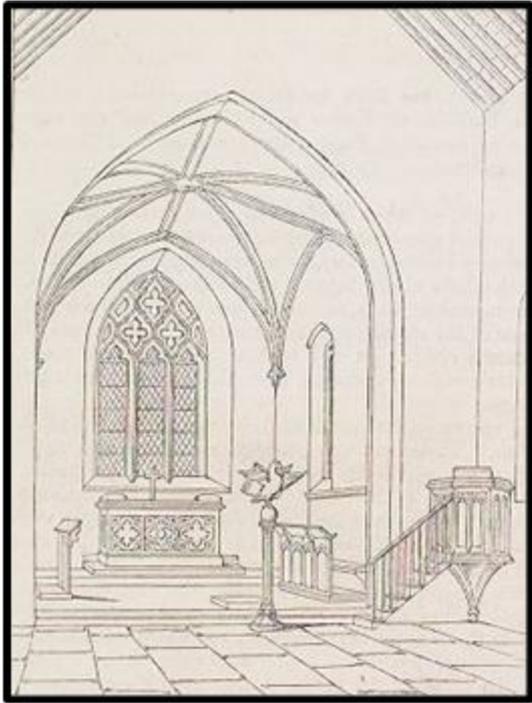


Fig 269 Drawing from *The Christian Remembrancer*, showing the stone altar at All Saints with cushions for the Gospel and Epistle (LPL ICBS 02472)



Fig 270 The stone altar from All Saints now re-erected as a reredos and superseded by a wooden altar (RWP All Saints, Smallridge DSC09629).



Fig 271 The stone chest tomb, then believed to be a surviving medieval altar, reset as an altar at Hartland (RWP Hartland, Stoke-by-Hartland DSC04554).



Fig 272 The wooden casing, perhaps designed either to mask or to enlarge the stone altar, at Arlington (RWP Arlington 00957).



Fig. 273 The early stone altar at Wolford Chapel, Dunkeswell (?1800) for the Simcoe family (RWP Woford Chapel DSC02163).



Fig. 274 The stone altar table at the chapel at Killerton (1838-41) by C. R Cockerell, for the Acland family (RWP Killerton DSC01270).



Fig. 275 The unusual stone altar table at Stockleigh Pomeroy. The chancel was restored in 1841 and the church in 1861. (RWP Stockleigh Pomeroy DSC00099).



Fig. 276 The stone altar at Ashburton, originally much smaller but sympathetically enlarged in 1881-4 (RWP Ashburton DSC00727).

building (though now in use as a side table. Again, it is uncertain whether this arrangement existed to disguise the stone altar or to enlarge it to more practical dimensions as, like most early Victorian altars, this one was both short in length and low in height.

Fixed stone altars were also provided in the reconstruction of the chapel of Cofton, near Dawlish, by Charles Fowler, for the Earl of Devon in *c.*1838; at Wolford Chapel near Honiton (Fig. 273), by an unknown designer for the Simcoe family (who also employed Benjamin Ferrey at Dunkeswell Abbey), and at the chapel of The Holy Evangelists at Killerton, designed in the Romanesque style for Thomas Dyke Acland by C. R. Cockerell in 1838-41 (Fig. 274). These instances of stone altars were installed by wealthy patrons whose influence may have helped the furnishings to survive after the scandals of 1845.

The stone altar at Salcombe in Malborough parish had been a gift from the Earl of Devon in the 1840s but it was almost destroyed when it was brought to attention by a faculty application in *c.*1900 for its replacement and re-erection as a side altar. Fortunately, demands for its destruction after more than half a century of apparently uncontroversial use did not prevail, and it was indeed re-erected, where it remains. That stone altars remained controversial and could still be removed in the later 19th century is shown by the history of the stone altar at St Peter's in Shaldon, near Teignmouth. This modern church was begun in 1893-4 and consecrated in 1902. It originally had a stone altar but, an objection being made, the Bishop ordered its removal. It was re-erected as a side altar, but does not survive (Stabb 1911, 155).

The churches of Exwick, near Exeter (1841) and St Thomas' Exeter (1842) did not have aristocratic patrons and the survival of both with stone altars (Figs 190, 191) after 1845 is perhaps more remarkable, especially as both churches were substantially restored in the 1870s, which may have provided an opportunity for critics to demand their removal. The two altars near Exeter were both commissioned (and that at St Thomas' possibly designed) by the Rev. John Medley, incumbent of St Thomas and one of the founders of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society. It is possible that the association with Medley— a sort of local clerical hero— helped to preserve these altars from later disapproval.

The choice of stone altars for these churches is particularly interesting since, when Medley had restored the chapel of Oldridge near Crediton, which lay within his parish, in 1841, he did not install a conventional stone altar, but a very unusual structure, consisting of a slab of reclaimed marble, apparently from Exeter Cathedral, supported upon two stone brackets projecting from the east wall (Fig. 192). The slab is thus entirely independent of the ground, but this does not show, of course when the altar is vested. The contemporary tiling of the sanctuary floor runs uninterrupted to the east wall so that the altar slab was always unsupported by legs or a

substructure. It appears more like an exaggerated gradine when its hangings are removed. This is the only one of its type known to the author in the entire county. It is clearly not a 'table' in the conventional sense, but neither is it a conventional 'altar'. It may be that by this cunning contrivance and reuse of genuinely medieval fabric Medley managed to satisfy both those resistant to the idea of an 'Altar' and also those who sought permanence and the continuity of sacred materials.

At Oldridge, this may have been an area of particular sensitivity, since Jenkins, writing in 1806, tells us that the Communion table from the medieval chapel 'was made a drinking board in a neighbouring ale house' by the lords of the manor, that 'the family never prospered after this sacrilege; and that all those concerned in it; particularly the one who had the chapel bell for his trouble, died miserably' (Jenkins 1844, 433). The stone altar tables at Killerton (Fig. 274) and that at Stockleigh Pomeroy (Fig. 275), are designed in the form of open tables and not as solid stone chests. Like the bracketed *mensa* at Oldridge the open, table form may have been intended to silence potential critics

Other stone altars seem to have been tolerated and were sometimes sympathetically enlarged, as at Ashburton on south Dartmoor. Here, a stone altar which may have been provided during the tenure of Hurrell Froude as Archdeacon of Totnes during the 1830s and 40s was described in 1875 as having a front of three quatrefoil panels (Worthy 1875, 11). The present altar is early ecclesiological in character but has four quatrefoil panels; it has clearly been carefully extended during the late 19th century, probably during the restoration in 1882-4 under G. E. Street (Fig. 276). The alteration may have been undertaken to enlarge it to more practical dimensions. Stone altars also survive at Dittisham (Fig. 277) and Plympton St Maurice, the latter in a side chapel and of shallow projection. The altar at Dittisham presumably predates the controversy at the Round Church whereas that at Plympton St Maurice (Fig. 278) may be later. As it is only of shallow projection from the wall, it may have been used as a 'table of prothesis', a credence for the preparation of the altar vessels before they were brought to the main altar or Communion table for use. A similar structure in a side chapel at Down St Mary (Fig. 279) consists of similar shallow stone projection with a stone *mensa*, a tiled footpace and a bold architectural cross in its western front. This resembles a stone altar but also conspicuously does not, being built into and flush with a window embrasure. It may also have been used as a credence and is perhaps an indication of extreme High-Church practice in this remote Devon parish.

The characteristic form of an early Victorian or even late Georgian altar was small in size and low in height and, when it was not also trying to resemble a Communion table, it usually consisted of a chest with a panelled front. At Countisbury, near Lynmouth on the North Devon



Fig. 277 The early 19th-century altar in a side chapel at Dittisham (RWP Dittisham DSC DSC05001).



Fig. 278 The early 19th-century altar in a side chapel at Plympton St Maurice, of shallow projection and ancillary to the main altar (RWP Plympton St Maurice DSC04319).



Fig. 279 The stone structure at Down St Mary, with a footpace, a *mensa* and other decorations, but seemingly not an altar. (RWP Down St Mary, DSC02637).



Fig. 280 The wooden altar table at Countisbury, showing the small scale and naïve Gothic detail of early wooden tables (RWP Countisbury DSC03273).



Fig. 281 The wooden altar, probably from St Barnabas Chapel (1831) (RWP Dartmouth St Petrock DSC07262).



Fig. 282 The late-medieval chest at Holcombe Burnell, probably a domestic furnishing (RWP Holcombe Burnell DSC01746).



Fig. 283 The 'Cologne' altar at Dartington, one of three associated with Froude, (RWP Dartington DSC05310).



Fig. 284 The 'Cologne' Altar at Bicton, in the new church (1850) by John Hayward, for Lady Rolle, (RWP Bicton DSC09589)



Fig. 285 The 'Cologne' altar at Ottery St Mary, one of the Froude Cologne altars (RWP Ottery St Mary DSC00475).



Fig. 286 The 'Cologne' Altar at Glastonbury, Somerset, with no known connection to Froude (RWP Glastonbury DSC 02343).

coast, the sanctuary arrangements of 1846 include the spectacular if unorthodox reinstatement of what must once have been a large classical rood screen, a wrought iron altar rail resembling the Gothic balcony of a late Georgian Villa and a tiny Gothick Communion table (Fig. 280), almost square in plan. An alternative was to have a table of 'altar form', with a solid front decorated with panelling. A number of wooden altar chests survive that may be early ecclesiastical altars, though many have since been supplanted by larger and more up-to-date altars. At St Petrock's Church in Dartmouth Castle the present high altar is a 17th-century Communion table but, preserved in the building and in use as a side table, is a very small wooden chest with Gothic panelled front and sides which may represent an early-Victorian altar chest (Fig. 281). It is possible that this was brought to St Petrock's from its daughter church in Newcomen Road. The new church was designed by the Dartmouth architect Thomas Lidstone in 1833 as a chapel of ease for use when the way to the parish church became completely impassable during bad weather. The church was later rededicated to St Barnabas and elevated to Parish Church status (Parker 2006, 3). Although Lidstone's building could not have been described in any way as ecclesiologically advanced for the period, being a huge square box with a Gothic turret (it was also wrongly orientated with its altar towards the west), Lidstone's chancel furnishings, which survived in situ in the building until its recent refurbishment in 2006-7 were archaeologically accomplished. Lidstone's reredos consisted of a tall wooden arcaded structure with richly carved cornices of alternating shields and fleurons and was flanked by pilasters decorated with four ogee arches with crocketed poppy-head motifs, apparently derived from the decorations of the rear of the 14th-century reredos at Ottery St Mary (S.R. Blaylock pers. comm). The cornice decorations may be based upon the same source; however the crocketed ogee cresting above this is possibly derived from Exeter Cathedral, particularly the cresting of the eastern chapel screens. It is uncertain whether this reredos now survives, but it seems likely that the altar chest was brought here when St Barnabas closed in 1975 (WMN, 18/07/77) in perhaps a further example of the preservation of sacred furnishing in preference to their destruction or secular use.

### *'Cologne' Altars'*

A very specific and unusual form of ecclesiastical altar is the 'Cologne altar' so-called because its design appears to have been based on that of the altar at the foot of shrine of the Three Kings at Cologne Cathedral. The altar at Cologne consists of a very large and deep structure whose front and sides are decorated with many small aedicules with gabled canopies separated by buttresses and pinnacles. Each aedicule contains a small image. Unlike earlier Victorian altars the Westcountry 'Cologne altar' (Figs 285, 286) is both broad and long with a strong plinth and a

recessed central chest portion which is decorated with many small gabled aedicules separated by buttresses and pinnacles and a pronounced projecting *mensa* above. 'Cologne altars' appears not to have been designed to be vested with a frontal and each canopied niche contains a small polygonal base as though for an image. No images were ever provided and it is possible none were ever attempted. The use of an overt reference to the architecture of Cologne Cathedral in rural Devon parish churches might be interpreted as an attempt to connect the local Gothic revival and Ecclesiological Movement with this larger pan-European movement; to recover Gothic architecture as an expression of a renewed, revitalised and united Christian culture regardless of ones' personal religious affiliations, whether to Rome, Constantinople or the Crown.

The first Cologne altar in Devon is reputed to have been designed or commissioned by the Rev. Robert Hurrell Froude, Archdeacon of Totnes, who is supposed to have constructed the altar using timber recovered from the dismantled roof of Dartington Hall (Worthy 1875, 125). Information collected by the congregation of Holne church, based on notes made in the rural dean's visitation book, and now displayed there, suggests that Froude may have had three altars made with timbers he had recovered from Cologne and from Dartington. The three altars were made for the churches of Dartington, Holne and Ottery St Mary in c.1836. All three altars are fortunately preserved today.

Although the folk traditions surrounding Cologne altars seem to suggest this was a small commission, by an ecclesiologically-minded and well-connected clergyman living and operating in the South Hams, there are a surprisingly large number of Cologne altars in existence, scattered across Devon and even examples in Somerset. Some of these seem to have been designed to have stood free of the wall, as they have the remains of truncated canopies and buttresses on their rear face. Others have an open back and were clearly intended to be used against a wall in the traditional manner of a medieval altar. There may be other examples in existence, and it seems unlikely that they can all have been made from material from either Cologne Cathedral or Dartington Hall or that they were all in some way connected with the Froude family.

The surviving Cologne altars do seem to be located in parishes which were either advanced in their High-Church tradition at an early date or have some association with Christian sites of national importance. For example, Cologne altars which may well be directly connected with Froude are preserved at Dartington (Fig 283), Holne and Ottery St Mary (Fig. 285), but others may be found at Malborough, Coffinwell, Aylesbeare, Cornwood, Bicton (Fig 284), and St John's at Glastonbury (Fig 286). The examples at Aylesbeare and Coffinwell may have been moved from other churches. The church guide at Coffinwell suggests that the Cologne altar there was moved from St Mary church, a notoriously High-Church parish on the outskirts of Torquay.

There seems to be no obvious connection between many of these churches and Froude. They do not all lie in the archdeaconry of Totnes, nor in the same rural deanery. The churches do not seem to have been restored at the same period or by the same architects. Further research would be necessary to understand the origin of these unusual furnishings, their significance and the reason for their distribution.

Sanctuary flooring can often provide clues as to the form of the altar and also archaeological relationships with other furnishings whether medieval or modern. In early Victorian buildings and restorations where an older Communion table was maintained in use, very often the tiling of the sanctuary floor will be continuous beneath the site of the table, whereas when a solid chest form of altar was used, with an opaque front, the tiling was not continuous beneath the fixed altar, leaving a bare patch or 'altar shadow'. Even if the furniture has changed the floor may still reveal that an earlier open table was employed until a relatively late date in the 19th century. The altar shadow will often betray the original size and shape and form of the early-Victorian altar if the present one has been enlarged, as was often the case in the late 19th century.

In the mid-Victorian to later-Victorian period, when open-fronted altar tables were employed on a richly-tiled floor of patterned encaustic tiles, and the floor remained visible behind the open traceried or arcaded front of the altar, the altar shadow might still be clearly expressed in the floor, but was often decorated with five crosses representing the five consecration crosses carved into the top of a medieval stone altar *mensa*. In some relatively rare cases, as at St Mary Steps Church in Exeter a wooden table or altar might support a large stone slab marked with five consecration marks. This would normally be concealed by altar cloths or coverings which might have helped to avoid awkward questions about its legality.

A further archaeological relationship may often be observed between the altar foot pace (or step on which the table or altar stands) and the reredos behind. At Staverton, for example, the reredos is a very handsome stone arcade featuring the Decalogue and a central tiled panel with the evangelist symbols and a central cross. This appears to be earlier in date than the present sanctuary floor and foot pace which are built up against it, obscuring a row of quatrefoil or trefoil ornaments running along the base of the reredos. The present floor levels have clearly been raised to the extent that the present altar cuts the earlier reredos in half. The existing floor levels seem likely to be installed at the restoration of the church in the 1873 by Ewan Christian, when most of the present furnishings of the church were installed, and it may therefore be assumed that the reredos relates to an earlier and unrecorded phase of restoration. The present altar riddels and dossal installed in 1948, and the oak panelling designed to mask the Victorian tiling obscure these

relationships entirely, which is a pity, since they are crucial to interpret the development of the sanctuary furnishings.

At Stockleigh Pomeroy and at St Giles and St Nicholas' at Sidmouth the existence of medieval piscinae in the south wall at head height or above (Fig. 287) demonstrate that in both cases the floor of the sanctuary has been lowered by perhaps as much as several metres, since the piscina would be unusable in its present relationship with the floor. At Stockleigh Pomeroy a small opening at ground level in the east wall, visible externally (Fig. 288), may suggest that there was formerly an eastern crypt in this church a very rare feature. It is likely in these cases earlier floors and archaeological deposits have been entirely removed, though it is conceivable that the lower part of any crypt at Stockleigh Pomeroy may survive.

#### *Piscinae, Aumbries and Sedilia*

One of the requirements of the Prayer Book was that the vessels for Holy Communion should be prepared prior to bring them to the altar and for this purpose ecclesiologists required that a suitable shelf should be provided for the vessels to rest on: a 'table of prothesis' (Neale 1841, 12). Neale suggested that this may be made like an Easter Sepulchre; a small niche in the north side of the chancel, or like a piscina or a shelf supported on brackets on the south of the church. There should also be a lockable cupboard or recess in the north or east wall of the church, in which the silver could be kept on a permanent basis when not in use (*ibid.*).

A credence shelf on the north side of the church is not a specifically medieval feature and does not appear frequently in local medieval churches but, while the custom prevailed of celebration at the north end of the altar in strict accordance with The Prayer Book rubrics, it was probably convenient for the clergyman to have access to the sacred vessels on the north side, close to his position. Late-Georgian churches appear to have been without these features, though at Tipton St John a small clustered column supporting a credence shelf stands on the north side of the chancel (Fig. 289). This is, as far as I know, contemporary with the building; its architectural details matching the remains of the original reredos. It may be the earliest incidence of a 19th-century credence shelf in Devon.

In later developments the credence shelf was increased in size and is often supported by richly-carved brackets, often in the form of carved angels or tracery (Fig. 290). The usual position of the piscina (a stone basin used for the washing both of the celebrants hand and the sacred vessels and, indeed



Fig. 287 The inconvenient piscina at Stockleigh Pomeroy (RWP Stockleigh Pomeroy DSC00111).



Fig. 288 The window for the former crypt at Stockleigh Pomeroy (RWP Stockleigh Pomeroy DSC00109).



Fig. 289 The 'table of prothesis' at Tipton St John (RWP Tipton St John DSC01590).



Fig. 290 The 'table of prothesis' at Thorverton (RWP Thorverton DSC01584).



Fig 291 The sedilia at Sowton (RWP Sowton DSC02821).



Fig 292 The Sedilia at Holcombe Burnell (RWP Holcombe Burnell ).

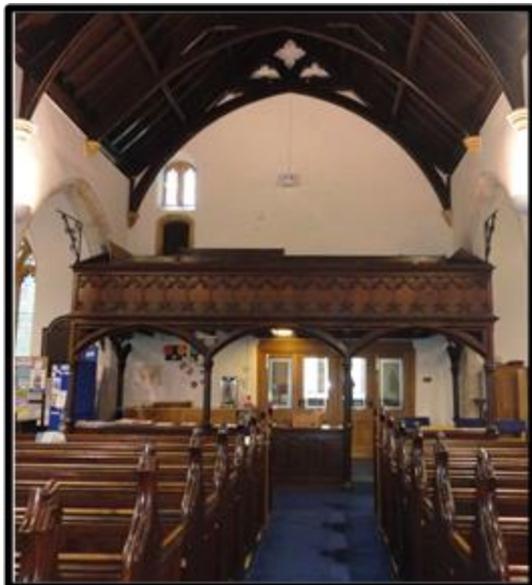


Fig 293 The singing gallery at Hemyock (the organ has since been moved) (RWP Hemyock DSC09818).

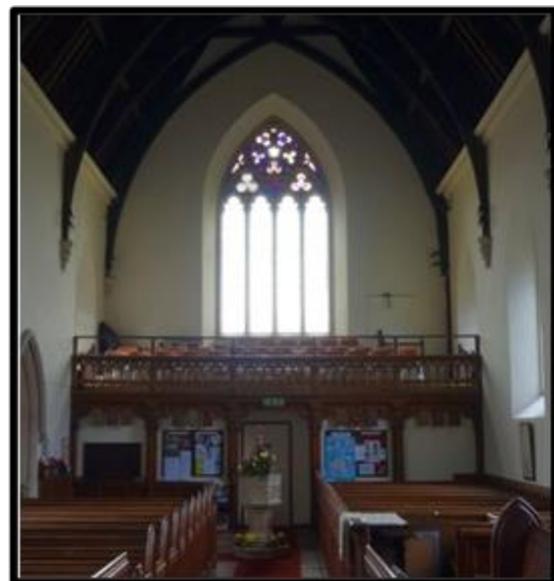


Fig. 294 The 'singing gallery at Woodbury Salterton (RWP Woodbury Salterton DSC09120).

sometimes doubled for this purpose), which was usually on the south side of the altar, does not appear to have been adopted immediately. The credence shelf on the north side served this purpose instead; however, with the revival of more specifically medieval forms of celebration,

especially eastward facing celebration, provision of *piscinae* on the south side of the church appears to have become common. Sowton church, designed by John Hayward in 1845, has a substantial credence bracket on the north side of the chancel but no *piscina* on the south. In churches with an overtly Low Church tradition, such as some of the new churches in Plymouth and Torquay, *piscinae* were never installed.

Sowton does have another significant medievalising feature in the form of two niches for *sedilia* on the south side within the sanctuary railings (Fig. 291). *Sedilia* were often found in medieval church architecture locally and many magnificent examples survive. They provided seats for the priest, deacon and subdeacon at High Mass, but even J. M. Neale recognised that, in the context of the 19th-century Anglican church, *sedilia* no longer had any purpose (Neale 1841, 12). Since very few Anglican churches, if any, would ever have had two sacred ministers during Holy Communion it can only be assumed that the installation of these features in Sowton in 1845 replicated a feature of the Medieval church, perhaps too mutilated to preserve, or that the incumbent and his curate sat together here in the chancel.

Holcombe Burnell Church was rebuilt in 1844 and has been attributed to John Hayward (LPL ICBS 03236). This church also incorporates two very heavily decorated Gothic niches on the south side, balancing the late-medieval Easter sepulchre on the north side (Fig. 292). These arches may have served as *sedilia*, though they are without integral seats — presumably chairs were positioned beneath the arches when and if these were used as *sedilia*. Their purpose without such a function, other than to act as decoration and memorialise the departed is unclear.

Obviously where medieval *sedilia* were uncovered during restoration work they were generally restored but for a large part of the 19th century people were unaware of the function of *sedilia* and often took them for memorials. It is true that the *sedilia* at Crediton, now sadly damaged, incorporate a tomb chest. These were, of course, some of the richest of such furnishings. The 14th-century *sedilia* at Exeter Cathedral for example, were described by Alexander Jenkins in 1806 as ‘seats’, but he adds, in a footnote, that:

‘For what purpose and at what time these seats were erected is not now known. The accounts given by some of our historians that they were purposely built for the instalment of Leofricus, the first bishop of Exeter, must be erroneous if no part of the present choir was then erected’

(Jenkins 1844, 28)

This indicates the extent to which the archaeologically-minded antiquarian in c.1800 still had to learn about medieval architecture and liturgy.

### *Choir stalls and organs*

Before the Ecclesiological movement it was highly unusual for any English church below cathedral rank to have a robed choir singing the services. The few places where this might exist were those, like the fictional church of Cullerne Wharf in John Meade Falkner's *The Nebuly Coat*, where endowment for a choral and musical establishment had somehow survived, possibly in association with an ancient charity school. At Crediton in Devon four choristers were provided under Edward VI and confirmed by Charter by Elizabeth I. This would have been extremely rare. The churches of St Peter Tiverton, St Mary Arches in Exeter, St Andrew's, Plymouth and, of course the cathedral had large and important organs dating from the 17th or 18th centuries. Such choirs as did exist were generally accommodated at the west end of the church within raised ranks of seating set aside for their use or in a western gallery crossing the tower arch roughly at first floor level (Figs 293, 294). These singing galleries began to be inserted at the Reformation as additional seating areas, though there are records of earlier western galleries which seem to have been put to a variety of uses. At St Olave's Church in Exeter the medieval west gallery seems to have incorporated a house for the priest. Organs, where they existed, seem mostly to have been in the chancel or built in the loft on top of the rood screen. Inevitably, many organs were demolished with the rood lofts in the 16th century, as formerly at St Petrock, Exeter and, those that had survived probably perished during the turbulence of the Civil wars in the 17th century. After the Restoration some churches will have rebuilt and recovered their organs, but the majority of western galleries were either used for additional seating, or as a platform for choir and organ.

The introduction of a liturgical choir in the eastern parts of the church may not have been problematic when the choir sang unaccompanied chants and the organ was used for voluntaries for the accompaniment of congregational singing but, increasingly, the provision of choir settings of the canticles set for choir and organ necessitated the removal of the organs to east end. The provision of sites for these instruments, some of which were of enormous size, was difficult since they needed to be in a close relationship with the choir. The ideal situation would be the provision of a purpose-built chamber for the organ, although this has remained controversial amongst organists, who prefer to instrument to speak into an open volume.

Very often an eastern chancel aisle or a transept might be used to house the organ with the choir vestry behind it. In the mid to late Victorian period, before the introduction of side chapels and side altars, this may have been a reasonable re-use of redundant spaces in the building, which

had previously been occupied by private pews or left entirely derelict; however, with the growth of the custom of having morning chapels or lady chapels after about 1880, and a developing sense that places that had been used as chapels should be recommissioned as such for occasional use the position of the organ in these areas presented difficulties.

A singing gallery had been installed at Cheriton Bishop in 1831 by the Exeter builders Cornish and Julian, in place of singers seats, (perhaps of the ramped variety at the west end) which had required repair in 1822; however, this seems to have provoked a row between the clergy and the parishioners in which the singers played a significant part. The bishop intervened and reprimanded the Rev. Mr Tothill for his handling of the matter (DHC Cheriton Bishop vestry minutes 1822-46, PO1). This issue seems to have remained live, since on the 23rd of July 1860 a motion to remove gallery, proposed by the Vicars' warden, Richard Lewin Pennell, was opposed by the Peoples' warden, John Haydon, and defeated by 54 votes to 18. A later attempt on Pennell's part to remove gallery, in June 1878, for which he offered a donation of £50 was declined, with thanks, as a result of counter motion proposed by John Haydon and seconded by W.G. Haydon (DHC Cheriton Bishop vestry minutes 1847-93 PO2). Pennell was a woodcraftsman of some skill and appear to have won the day in the end, since the gallery was eventually removed. Pennell, then known as 'The Craftsman of Crockernwell' had provided a set of remarkable returned choir stalls for the church in 1869 but it is unclear whether these were in use by the musicians at that stage, or whether the musicians continued, in protest, to occupy their gallery.

A good example of a singing gallery survives at Tipton St John which accommodated both the choir, the school children and the boys in clearly marked spaces with a central platform for an organ. A further singing gallery survives at Chudleigh Knighton, complete with its organ (Fig. 297). Singing galleries remained popular at the beginning of the ecclesiological period, possibly because they were the traditional place to accommodate organs, but also perhaps because they allowed for the continuation of mixed choirs (it is a sad truth that, although women may have continued to provide music through the organ or harmonium, the introduction of a surpliced liturgical choir on the cathedral model in England at this period, does seem to led to a restriction of the singers in church choirs to men and boys only).<sup>41</sup> The 'cathedral service' was the aspiration of ecclesiologically-minded churchmen, but, though in some places, on special occasions, it may have been achieved, as at the opening of the new organ at Dunsford, near Moretonhampstead, in 1847, 'with full Cathedral Service' 1847. The organ has since been replaced but it occupied the western gallery and had been built by Mr Dicker of Exeter (EFP 21. 01 1847)

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<sup>41</sup> The contribution of womens' voices to choral singing remains, sadly, controversial in some churches to this day.

Seating in the chancels had formerly been disposed of by the incumbent as he wished and often served as the rectory pews, where the rectory family and servants would be accommodated; however the Tractarian desire for a proper robed choir directly serving the liturgy and close to the main focus at the altar was to lead to great changes in the seating of chancels. The establishment of robed choirs, though an early ideal of the ecclesiological movement seems to have taken a long time to accomplish. Early Tractarian buildings such as the church at East Woolfardisworthy, rebuilt by John Hayward in 1845, were supplied with a single rank of benches on each side of the chancel. These may have been used as rectory pews or possibly as seating for communicants, but they set a precedent for north and south facing seats which were in time to become an ideal position for a liturgical choir.

Some architects, particularly William White and Robert Medley Fulford, faced with a screenless church, or one without a defined chancel, used this as an opportunity to create a kind of *scola cantorum*, to house the liturgical choir; a low timber enclosure projecting into the church, based upon the arrangement of monastic choirs in early Christian churches at Rome and elsewhere. Examples survive at Clyst Honiton (Fig. 297) and at Chudleigh Knighton (Fig. 297).

A. G. Bradley's Memoir, *Exmoor Memories* (1926) includes his recollections of church life at Challacombe in North Devon, during the 1860s. Challacombe or, 'Windycombe' (as he renamed the parish to preserve its anonymity), the church was a tiny building and the Rectory pews and the choir pews were shared in the same narrow chancel. Since the church orchestra was directed by a prominent but unmusical villager whose choice of music and manner of singing was rather more rustic than was desirable, this caused much politely understated conflict between the rectory and the wardens. He was finally persuaded to retire and replaced by a young lady with an harmonium (Bradley 1926, 56-64). A similar story is told by Thomas Hardy in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, a novel of 1872 which describes the last days of the Melstock church orchestra Choir. Although these literary examples may seem extreme, they are borne out by documentary evidence, for example the choir at St Lawrence's Exeter were dismissed for unruly behaviour just before Ascension day in 1826, although their salaries were paid back to Christmas 1825.

Those Tractarian clergy who could not persuade their church wardens to support the introduction of a robed choir in the chancel but were successful in removing their western galleries frequently had to compromise by the creation of raised choir seats at the west end of the church



Fig 295 The singing gallery at Chudleigh Knighton, complete with organ (RWP Chudleigh Knighton DSC02487).



Fig 296 The *scola cantorum* or choir enclosure at Clyst Honiton (1876) by R. Medley-Fulford (RWP Clyst Honiton DSC02712).



Fig 297 The *scola cantorum* at Chudleigh Knighton (RWP Chudleigh Knighton DSC09120).

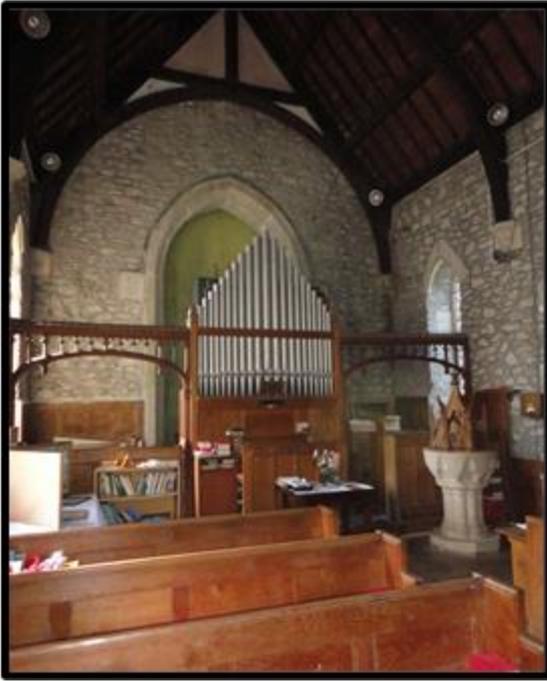


Fig 298 The singing gallery at North Brentor complete with organ (RWP North Brentor DSC02487).

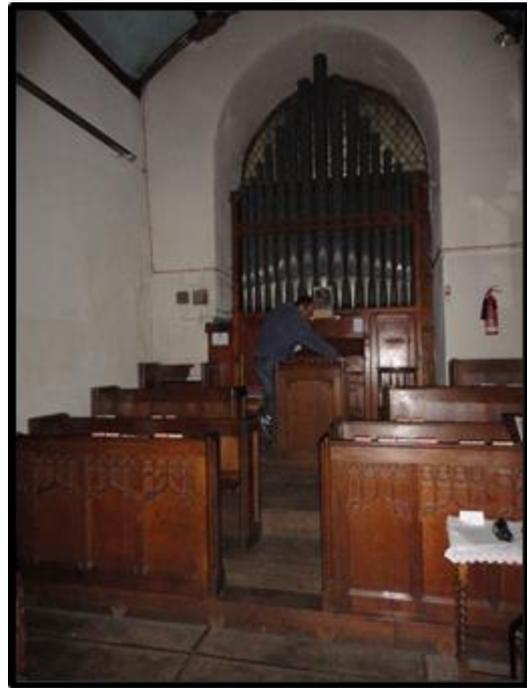


Fig 299 The raised choir seats or singing gallery at Lew Trenchard (RWP Lew Trenchard DSC09021).



Fig 300 The choir stalls of c.1900, by W.D. Caröe, at St David's Exeter (RWP Exeter; St David DSC03186).

in association with the organ and clearly marked for singers. Examples remain at St Thomas' Exeter, dating from the 1870s, at North Brentor (Fig. 298) and at Lew Trenchard (Fig. 299), the parish of the antiquarian, hymn writer and 'Squarson' Sabine Baring Gould. Raised choir seats in a mid-Victorian context also survive at Littlehempston and, until recently, at Bratton Fleming, where the western choir gallery, a raised platform beneath the tower arch, has recently been destroyed in a programme of reordering.

The robed, liturgical choir in the chancel seems not to have been achieved in many places until the very end of the 19th century and in some places into the early 20th century. The vast majority of choir furniture now in existence, some of which is of the highest possible standards of craftsmanship (Fig. 300), generally dates from the 1880's to the 1920's, and in many places the front row of seats can be seen to have been added at the point when the rectory family finally gave up their seats to a liturgical choir. By the 1920s or 30s it seems that nearly every parish church in the county could support some sort of liturgical choir, and most churches now had some sort of organ. The popularity of hymnody was enhanced by new collection of hymns and, in the more esoteric churches, Latin and English plainsong had been restored to use, in the translations of J.M. Neale and others. The opportunity that this provided for people to not just witness, but actively participate in the liturgy perhaps achieved, if only briefly, a level of involvement in the life of the Church that had not been seen since the Middle Ages.

### *Rood Screens*

In Devon, a county where medieval rood screens have survived to an extent uncommon in many other parts of England, rood screens do not seem to have been regarded as actually idolatrous, though the images of saints painted on the dado might be defaced, as is still visible at Manaton (Fig. 301) and the roods, and the lofts that supported them, were usually removed (Williams 2008, 252). In these latter cases the remains of the coving and cresting of the screens were sometimes fixed onto the exposed framework of the screen in order to disguise the damage, not usually very effectively (Fig. 302), or the rude framework of the screen was simply left exposed, contrasting strongly with the fine detail of the tracery and panelling (Fig. 303). Such damage certainly disfigured screens, but it may have been nothing by comparison with the damage wrought by time and wear, or by clergy and churchwardens seeking to improve the view of the chancel, or provide access to pulpits and reading desks by cutting out the tracery of the openings or, in many cases, simply cutting the entire screen down to a mere dado. Since such screens were terribly expensive to repair,



Fig. 301 Defaced images on the screen at Manaton (RWP Manaton DSC07656).



Fig. 302 The rood screen at Chivelstone, showing the damage following the loss of the rood loft and basic wear and tear (RWP Chivelstone DSC1842).



Fig. 303 The screen at Cornworthy showing damage following the loss of the loft and dado panels (RWP Cornworthy DSC04876).



Fig. 304 The interior of the church at Bradstone before restoration showing the poor condition of the interior (undated and anonymous watercolour painting, held in the church).



Fig. 305 The interior of the church at Bradstone today (RWP Bradstone DSC07425).

and the skills required go repair them not easily available, it may have been a simpler option simply to remove them. This had the advantage of allowing the chancel to be used for additional seating

Although Williams argues that Tractarian principles led to the removal of many rood screens in Devon, the early ecclesiologists were greatly in favour of screens and preferred their retention. In fact, the screen was to a large extent regarded as a necessity. At Uffculme the medieval screen was extended to fill the newly added aisle and at Down St Mary the screen, which had been removed and reassembled in tiers at the west end of the church in the Georgian period was lovingly reinstated as a parish craft project. Although there were some notorious losses of screens for ideological reasons during the later 19th century, particularly the screens at Malborough, west Alvington and Bridestowe<sup>42</sup>, (Baring Gould 1907, 226, 76, 123), the greater number of screens seem to have been removed in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Those that had survived, like that at Bradstone (Fig. 304) were often so dilapidated and incomplete, missing whole sections across the aisles or nave, that they may have been regarded as beyond economic repair. Modern churchmen and women are often faced with the same choices and should not be too hasty to judge our forbears.

During the later 19th and early 20th-centuries churches were faced with the options of restoring screens, in some cases fully, to the extent of fully restoring the lofts and Roods, as at Staverton (Fig. 306), Kenton, Littleham near Bideford (Fig. 307) and Lew Trenchard, or, alternatively, the coving or vaulting of the screen alone might be restored, as at Ashton, or an entirely new screen might be provided. Screens were at their apogee in the early 20th century when some of the most magnificent screens in the county, whether entirely new in design and material (Figs 308, 309). or closely replicating local medieval examples were installed. The Great Rood remained controversial, and most examples existing today were installed as Great War memorials. They represent some of the finest works of the local woodcarvers Harry Hems, Herbert Reed, Violet Pinwill and James Hunt of Plymouth

### **Victorian church seating**

During the late 18th and the 19th centuries one of the most visually significant changes likely to be made to the interiors of English churches would have been the provision of new seating. Re-seating remains today one of the most controversial forms of 'reordering' which can be undertaken in a church, more so even than liturgical change, which can often be accomplished

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<sup>42</sup> In fact, the destruction to the screen at Bridestowe was less thorough than has been thought. The dado survives, with the tracery of the upper section set against it. Perhaps as much as 80% of the screen remains. In an ideal world it could be very easily restored.

with only minimal alteration to the physical furnishings of a place of worship.<sup>43</sup> The traditional social relationships of a parish - at least, as these were understood by those who had the responsibility for the allocation of the seats - are believed by modern scholars to have been modelled and thus reinforced by the seating arrangements of the typical parish church (Thomas 2009).

The allocation of certain areas to particularly prominent local families, to landowners, yeomen or labourers, the segregation of family and servants, provision for social groups such as young unmarried men and maidens and of areas for the less-easily categorised masses of the poor, as well as casual visitors whose status was unknown, made the social fabric of a typical parish tangible during Sunday worship, when the whole community, whatever their social standing, were expected to gather together in one place for public worship. The systems of seat allocation and of pew rents separated residents in good standing in the community from strangers, aliens and undesirables and was also a highly significant source of income for the church. It is not, therefore, surprising that attempts to reform these systems during the 19th-century met with opposition and it is all the more remarkable, in a society which was still very conscious of social class and status, to what extent attempts at reform by Victorian churchmen and women can be regarded as successful.

Reordering of church seating during the 19th century has been presented by some modern scholars as a direct attack on the traditional social order of a parish, and as the beginning of the end for social cohesion and ‘republicity’ in a community (Thomas 2009, 283-4). Victorian church restorations in general have frequently been viewed by modern, and even some contemporary writers, as an unwelcome imposition on the worshipping community; as the appropriation of the church building and its chattels to serve as an ideological vehicle for a powerful middle and upper-class social elite. This elite group, often characterised as Oxford and Cambridge educated, High-Church clerical and lay leaders, is represented as either blindly ignorant of or disdainful of the subtle relationships and sensitivities of traditional church life (Brooks 1995, 63; 73-4).

Clergy of this type may be characterised by the crushingly boring, snobbish and ignorant Canon Parkyn in John Meade Falkner’s *The Nebuly Coat* (1903) — though he was no ecclesiologist, rather a type of the income-farming, late-Georgian clergyman who had survived into the era of church restoration — or to a lesser extent and perhaps more sympathetically, by ‘Mr Maybold’ in

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<sup>43</sup> As, for example, in the introduction of a ‘Nave Altar’ in the form of a light, portable table west of the chancel, or the moving of the high altar away from the east wall to facilitate celebration of the Mass *Versus Populum*; the repositioning of liturgical choirs among the congregation or the use of a portable or repositioned font to permit Holy Baptism without the congregation having to either move or turn their heads.

Thomas Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). Hardy's narrative of the replacement of an essentially working-class culture of gallery bands, rustic revelry and drinking, with the proprieties of a young lady and an organ, was surely designed both to appeal to those who lamented a passing world and also to those who knew that the vested interests of the late Georgian gallery quire, however picturesque they might be, needed combating quite as fiercely as the interests of those whose worldly vanity and consequence depended upon their rented pew.

While recognising that the ecclesiological reforms of the 19th century were motivated by a desire for radical change in the way the Christian community was presented and modelled in church, it is my contention that these changes to church seating were consciously directed at the inclusion and accommodation of all parts of society and the encouragement of new, more cohesive and less restrictive relationships between churchmen and women of all social classes. The re-seating of churches and the 'War against Pews' (see page 337) can be understood as a movement for the empowerment of ordinary lay people which tended against the perennial weakness of human beings for erecting divisions on the grounds of social status. It may also be shown that this drive for social empowerment worked against the interests of the traditional dominance of the clergy and gentry in church life. In a church re-seated on the Victorian 'Ecclesiological' model, the social class of members of the congregation was more-or-less ignored by the forms of the furniture; traditional symbols of hierarchy such as Coats of Arms, high-sided pews and plainer galleries for the socially 'inferior' being consciously and deliberately suppressed.

The resistance of church communities to such well-intentioned interference in their social relationships, and the tendency of old habits to die hard, can also be explored through the survival of traditional pew rents and seating allocations to very late dates; in some places well into the 20th century, as in the case of the resort church of St Philip and St James at Ilfracombe, north Devon, where pew rents were still being charged up to the Second World War (information from the Churchwarden in 2010, Jo Cox, pers.comm.; Cox 2011, 275). Pre-ecclesiological pew rents and pew-allocation systems survived in some of the most unlikely places, including some parishes whose clergy had been most strident in their campaigns against the evils of 'Pews'<sup>44</sup>. At Woodbury in east Devon, despite the long incumbency (1846 to 1898) of the Revd J. Loveband Fulford (a leading member of the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society (EDAS) and one of its chief officers, who widely disseminated his views on the impropriety of high pews)<sup>45</sup>, the nave of the church remained seated with box pews until 1893 (Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 917). At Barnstaple (a

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<sup>44</sup> A deliberately repulsive spelling of the word widely used by Victorian ecclesiologists to instil a distaste among contemporary churchmen and architects for high-sided box pews.

<sup>45</sup> Notably in his articles on church restoration, such as *Practical Hints on the Restoration of Churches*, read in the College Hall at Exeter in May 1848 and published in the Exeter Diocesan Society's *Transactions* in 1849.

centre for the ecclesiological movement in North Devon) pew rents at the parish church of St Peter were only given up in 1923-24, at the prompting of the incumbent, despite the fact that these contributed to his stipend (Minute book of the PCC, 11, Sept 1923 (NDRO 3054A/PPZ)<sup>46</sup>. Not every Tractarian cleric therefore succeeded in refurnishing and remodelling his church; some congregations fought to preserve their customary pews and won. Some architects, despite their known ecclesiological affiliations and preferences, were still installing box pews in otherwise ‘correctly’ restored buildings as late as the 1850s (Cox 2011, 268).

Though these conflicts were highly significant in the life and growth of Anglican parishes during the 19th century, many of the issues have left no record. Evidence of the height of feeling sometimes survives in the form of vociferous correspondence in local newspapers, such as the *Western Times*, the *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, and in the records of court proceedings against ‘ritualists’, but the most tangible survival is the furnishings; the direct, physical evidence of the progress of Christian social reform or the obstinacy of traditional social prejudices. Both the advance of radical ideas and conservative reactions against them can be measured and understood by an archaeological analysis of 19th-century church interiors — at least where these yet remain unaffected by modern reordering schemes.

The economic fortunes of a parish and its churchmanship can be clearly read in the surviving furniture, whether in the form of unfinished seating schemes; a significant part of which might be completed in the first enthusiasm of restoration, then petering out in a series of dated gifts and bequests at longer and longer intervals until the seating fund was finally closed.<sup>47</sup> In some places a mid 19th-century seating scheme aimed at replacing Georgian box pews was overtaken and superseded by a more ‘tasteful’ scheme of 20th-century furnishings before it had even been completed.<sup>48</sup> Other churches remain seated with ad-hoc arrangements of benches, chairs and the occasional high pew, sometimes incorporating Victorian benches rejected in the 20th century by a larger and wealthier church nearby. Examples are the church of Hittisleigh, furnished in the 1920s with objects rejected from Chagford, and the Mission Chapel at Docombe, near Moretonhampstead.

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<sup>46</sup> I am grateful to Dr Jo Cox of Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants for this information also.

<sup>47</sup> As in the unfinished, high-quality scheme by W.D. Caröe at St David, Exeter, recently destroyed, where the provision of superb carved benches continued from c.1901 until around c.1934. The seating fund was finally closed by the incumbent in 1984 after a long period of inactivity (Smith 1984, 21).

<sup>48</sup> As at Alphington, where the Scheme of 1875 by Edward Ashworth, to replace box pews, was superseded by new ‘Westcountry’ style benches in the 1930s. Both schemes are now to be replaced with modern chairs.

*The war upon PUES'*

One of the main stated aims of 19th-century church reformers of all colours of churchmanship was the inclusion of all members of society within a revived, national church. This was not only to be achieved through the kind of paternalistic philosophy embodied in the idea of the kindly, patriarchal 'Squarson', but also through a radicalism that set out to level those monuments of inequality, the 'Squires pew' (Figs 67, 68) and the private pew, and thus make the equal status of all men and women in the house of God visible and tangible by providing sufficient seating for all parishioners, of which a large proportion was to be 'free' and unappropriated and thus available for the poorest classes.

From its foundation in 1818, the ICBS sought the provision of copious free seating. The Ecclesiological Society went further and campaigned tirelessly for the complete destruction of the system of pew rents which seemed to them to place both physical and psychological barriers between the established Church and the poorest classes. Archdeacon Robert Hurrell Froude, visiting Stoke Fleming in 1840 remarked:

'In such alterations and improvements, it must not be forgotten, that the poorest man in the parish, if he be a member of the Church of England, has as strong a claim to a sitting as the richest.'

(Browne 2019, Archdeacon's visitation,  
Stoke Fleming 9/6/1840 DHC 1342A/16/PW/1).

On Monday November the 22nd, 1841, John Mason Neale read a paper before the Cambridge Camden Society entitled '*The history of pews*' in which he argued that pews, as men of the period knew them (i.e. enclosed panelled partition with lockable doors, which were sold or rented out to private individuals and families (See taxonomy, Page 371) and not the 'pew' of our present understanding; an open wooden bench free to all comers), had not been in use before the Reformation and that for a variety of reasons they were illegal as well as improper. The article was published by the Society in 1842. This was followed by other papers; '*Twenty-four reasons for getting rid of church pews*' (1854) and articles to the same effect soon appeared in architectural journals across the country. The Vicar of Taunton, the Revd. James Cottle, wrote in 1845: 'I rejoice at the war commenced against pews, and trust that it will cease only with their entire extermination' (Cottle 1845, 25).

The ecclesiologists were not the first to attack the pew system; 17th-century prelates, such as Bishop Corbet of Norwich had lambasted them on the grounds that they could shelter immorality as well as sloth and that their architectural pomp was an impiety:

‘Stately pews are now become tabernacles with rings and curtains to them. There wants nothing but beds to hear the word of God on; we have casements, locks and keys, and cushions — I had almost said bolsters and pillows — and for these we love the church. I will not guess what is done within them, who sits, stands or lies asleep at prayers, Communion, etc., but this I dare say, they are either to hide some vice or proclaim one; to hide disorder or to proclaim pride.’

(Bishop Corbet of Norwich address to his clergy c.1633,  
quoted in Ditchfield 1914, 116)

The Ecclesiologists were remarkably successful in achieving their aim, all the more so since rents from pews were an important source of income for churches and most Proprietary Chapels relied upon them entirely.

By the 1860s the ICBS was announcing in *The Church Builder* that in every newly-built church receiving grant aid, over half the sittings were free and that, in the 4,365 churches which had received grant aid for re-seating, ‘no less than 895,526 seats are for the use of the poor, being three fourths of the whole accommodation the Society has assisted to provide’ (*The Church Builder* 1862, 6-7). Although they never succeeded in entirely abolishing pew rents, the success of this church-led drive for social inclusion is evident in almost every church in the country, apart, of course, from those ‘The Victorians Forgot’.

In some, striking cases the war on Pews almost literally became a battle; in 1849 the churchwardens at Cullompton, dissatisfied with the state of their parish church made a personal assault upon it and:

‘commenced cutting down all the pews to an equal height, and removing some large canopies with which some of them were adorned, and which made them look more like four-post bedsteads than anything else. All this, however, caused so much dissatisfaction that they were obliged to desist and they were threatened with being made personally responsible for the cost of what they had done’

(Pugsley 1986, 20).

It is interesting that, in this case, it was the wardens who were fired up with enthusiasm for re-seating the church, and perhaps unsurprising that they met with opposition.

Enthusiasm for Georgian furniture in the 20th-century has tried to sanctify the box pew, and they are now considered virtually untouchable, despite the evident difficulty in using them which is only apparent when one attends a service at a church as densely pewed as St Mary's Whitby, in Yorkshire. In this remarkable interior, so many high pews and galleries surround the nave and cross the chancel arch that the chancel and altar are virtually invisible. In spite of his basic premise that, in a reformed church, all should be required to see and hear clearly, Addleshaw comes to what can only be described as an absurd conclusion; claiming that the post-Reformation system of pewing:

‘had two advantages; where it was successful in seating all the parishioners, and in many places it was, it conveyed a sense of community in parish life which has since largely disappeared. The other advantage was of an historical kind; the method succeeded in preserving in a general sense the medieval appearance of our churches down to the 19th century; and for this medievalists should be grateful. The pews, many with screens and canopies looking from the outside like chantry chapels, broke up the space in the nave much as it was broken up in the Middle Ages, and incidentally considerably improved its appearance by making for variety. So much so that small country churches which still retain their family pews with the high screens have a far more genuine medieval atmosphere than many of the well-known churches of the Middle Ages’

(Addleshaw 1948, 97-8)

How the presence of high pews with screens and canopies can have conveyed a sense of ‘community in parish life’ is unclear. A similar social argument for the pre-Victorian interior, but possibly more unpalatable to modern tastes, is put forward by Spencer Thomas and deserves to be quoted at length:

‘Ultimately, pews (in their traditional use) became casualties of the profound social and cultural changes that accompanied industrialisation and urbanisation in the 19th century...the hierarchical pyramid disintegrated as social boundaries became blurred, while the collapse of compulsory attendance and the dwindling sanctity of the Sabbath undermined the rôle of the church itself.

The nouveaux riches, impersonating the hereditary landed gentry, spent heavily on their parish churches, principally as a means of self-promotion. Pews and galleries were replaced by individual seats and rights, both real and imagined, were abolished. The social composition of the clergy began to change as the ‘squarson’, and clerical dynasties, were replaced by those of a “ruder stock and upbringing” with inferior qualifications and habits...’

(Thomas 2009, 283)

And, further to this:

‘The parish abandoned any attempt to be a cohesive social unit “glued to one another with concord and charity” and became fractured. Village society, repositories of the collective consciences of centuries, was shattered. Deference, once “an essay in reprococity”, was rejected. Churches attracted the ambitious and upwardly mobile at prayer, but the pews and seats had been divested of any significance. Honour was no longer associated with status in the community, leaving nothing to defend. Decency and order which had obsessed the church for centuries arrived by stealth rather than decree.’

(ibid., 283-4)

This is so powerfully redolent of nostalgia for an ordered, deferential Church, free of the industrial and bourgeois vulgarities of the Victorian age, which had now supplanted the natural order of village society with a new order led by dishonourable social mushrooms usurping the place of the real villagers, greedy for a status they did not deserve. After such an outburst of snobbery it is rather a surprise to find Thomas finish thus:

‘Within living memory pews surrendered their potential for conflict, financial gain and emotional symbolism and consequently have been emancipated to fulfil egalitarian ideals first envisaged for them 700 years ago but elusive to achieve in reality.’

(ibid., 284).

#### *Early ecclesiological forms of open seating*

The earliest truly ecclesiological seating schemes in Devon appear not to have been based on local precedent, but on sources from outside the county. This may well be because the architects and

patrons first employed to turn Camdenian principles into solid and tangible architecture were either returning here after periods of exile in northern universities or from serving in the offices of London architects whose understanding of Gothic architecture was, understandably, more national than regional.

The examples of medieval bench ends published by John Henry Parker for the Oxford Architectural Society and also for the ICBS (Figs \*\*, \*\*, \*\*) were mostly, like Westcountry benches, low and square in outline rising no higher than the back rail of the seats. It is likely that these drawings were acquired soon after the foundation of the Diocesan Architectural Society and that they were made available for architects and designers to study. Certainly, the influence of these drawings upon church restoration in the county should not be underestimated; the 'Headington' bench end proved to be one of the most popular designs ever employed, perhaps because of its simplicity, but also perhaps because it could be enriched with chamfering, cusping diagonal boarding and mouldings to express the very latest in ecclesiastical fashion.

The Steeple Aston examples featured a separate moulded top rail and a sunk panel in each bench end decorated with tracery and shields. The Headington example was similar but of panelled construction with two vertical muntins clasping a panel and a separate top rail with mouldings secured to these with pegs. Further examples including poppy-head bench ends were collected from Stanton Harcourt, also in Oxfordshire, and Great Chalfield in Wiltshire. These were flat, solid bench ends carved to rise above the back rail of the seat and terminate with a carved *fleur-de-lys* finial of varying degree of richness. These types, like the medieval examples mentioned above from Atherington, were often of asymmetrical form with a shoulder like projection towards the front to mask the projecting end of the seat. This type of design, although initially popular in Devon, is strongly associated with East Anglia and seems soon to have been replaced by a more conscious attempt to reflect regional, rather than national styles.

The earliest forms of ecclesiological church seating in Devon therefore do not attempt to replicate the classic Westcountry square-ended bench, but rather the typical forms that might be encountered while exploring churches in the Midlands and in East Anglia. This must surely be the reason for the popularity of the poppy-head bench early in the period, and of the shouldered and elbowed forms of bench after the poppy-head came to be regarded as *de trop*.

At Benjamin Ferrey's Churches of Chevithorne (1843) and All Saints (1840), the poppy-heads of the original benches were later sawn off and new top rails fitted to give these benches the characteristic square profile of Westcountry bench ends. At the very large parish church of Heavitree designed by the Exeter based architect David Mackintosh in 1844 (to replace a dilapidated and much-altered medieval structure), the entire church was seated with poppy-head



Fig. 306 The restored rood screen and loft at Staverton (1891-3) by F. Bligh-Bond, the carving by Harry Hems (RWP Staverton DSC09990).



Fig. 307 The new rood screen and loft at Littleham, Bideford (1891-2) by Temple Moore, (RWP Littleham (Bideford) DSC00068).



Fig. 308 The new rood screen at Shaldon (1893-1902) by E. H. Sedding (RWP Shaldon DSC09974).

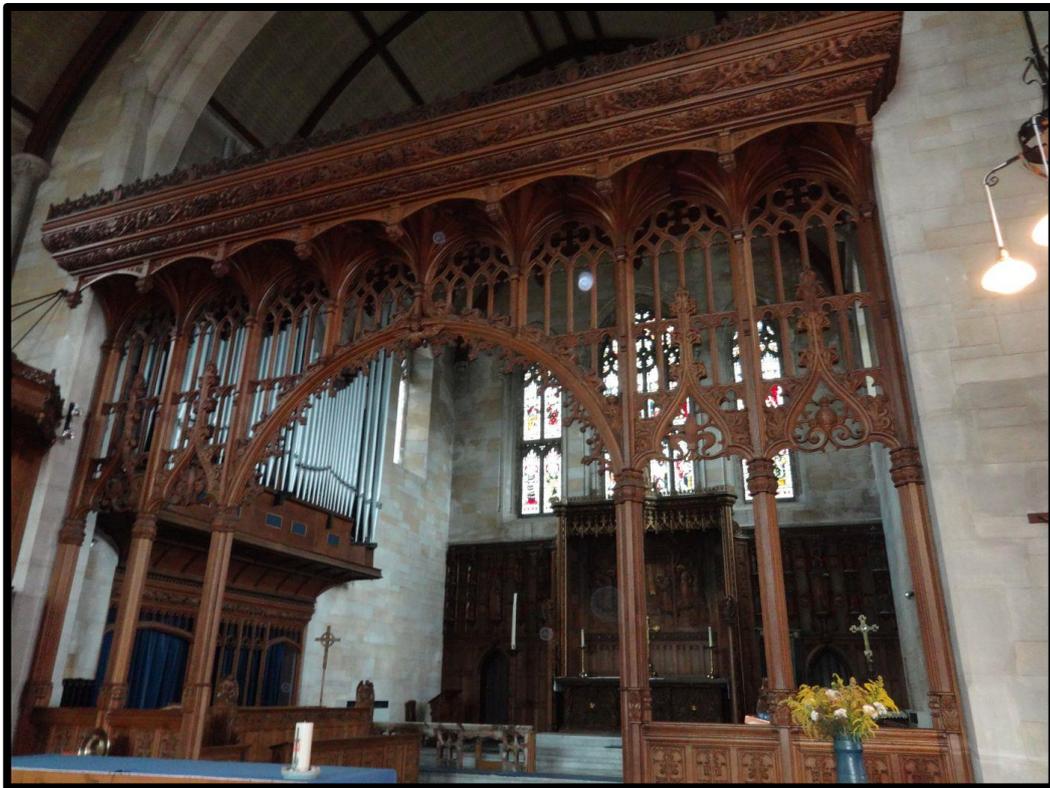


Fig. 309 The new rood screen at Abbotsbury, Newton Abbot (1904-1908) by E. H. Sedding, screen by Violet Pinwill (RWP Abbotsbury DSC02049).

bench ends which are recorded in late 19th-century photographs. These too were later sawn off and the bench tops finished with square-topped mouldings as though they were an authentically Westcountry type of seat. Unfortunately, no example of these benches now survives as the entire church was re-seated again in the early 20th century.

The best surviving example of an early Victorian (pre-ecclesiological) seating scheme employing poppy-heads survived until recently at the church of Blackborough near Uffculme, designed by John Hayward in 1838 and probably his first major architectural work in the county of Devon. Unfortunately, these benches were lost when the church was demolished in the 1990s and, though they are believed to have been removed and taken into storage they are only known today from photographs taken before demolition by the Rev. Peter Lee. They appear to have been close in character to the seating scheme at Hemyock in East Devon, which has benches with most unusual, non-foliolate finials to each bench, the seats being fitted with doors. These were designed by Richard Carver and Charles Edmund Giles in 1846 and may represent the earliest unmutated Poppy Heads to remain in the county. ‘Robert’ Carver of Taunton (perhaps a mistake for ‘Richard?’) was one of the architects castigated by the Ecclesiological Society as ‘entirely ignorant of the principles of ecclesiastical architecture’ (Brandwood 2000, 54).

Later examples of poppy-head seating schemes include the seating at St Mary Magdalen’s Church in Upton, Torquay, designed by Anthony Salvin (1843-9). This scheme survives almost intact, each bench having a sloping book desk and a brass, umbrella or stick holder — which are usually seen as indications of a Low-Church tradition— though it is uncertain why. Certainly, the benches at the church of the Holy Trinity at Woodbury Salterton, a church designed by the Exeter Architect David Macintosh in 1843-4 has similar book desks, fitted to benches with doors.

The research work carried out by the Exeter Diocesan Architectural Society through its ‘rough notes’ and the EDAS scrapbooks soon demonstrated that the region had its own traditions of open bench seating and that these were perhaps more appropriate for use in the context of the restoration of local church buildings, especially where existing medieval or Renaissance benches survived. This led to some uncomfortable moments when architects and craftsmen from other parts of the country became involved in the restoration of local buildings.

The EDAS scrapbooks also contain careful pen and wash drawings of fragments of typical bench ends recovered during Edward Ashworth’s restoration of the church at Cullompton in 1845 and other sketches by different artists showing typical examples of elaborate carved bench ends from the region. These were also used as models and remained popular throughout the entire period, particularly in the restoration of historic churches where the remains of older bench seating had survived which could be replicated and extrapolated to fill an entire church.

These ornate, hand-carved bench ends were expensive, but for those who followed the Ruskinian argument that the hand crafts were the basis of a new, better and more egalitarian society, they were obviously very appealing. Harry Hems, who is thought to have been one of the more despotic master craftsmen, is rumoured to have allowed his 'Merrie Men' free expression in their carving, although, as one does not usually find hansom cabs and gas lamp standards featuring in their work, it must be presumed he exercised some editorial control.

The very beautiful poppy-head benches with traceried perforated backs in the church of Thorverton were installed in 1876. These benches, made by the firm of Rattee & Kett in Cambridge to replace box pews installed at the restoration of the church in the late 1830s. they were installed alongside a number of earlier, carved bench ends that had been recovered at that time by the Earl of Devon — one of the great collectors of discarded church furnishings of the early 19th century. Although the new poppy-head benches were much approved by The Ecclesiologists, who saw them as 'starting a new trend in Westcountry furnishings', this did not occur. It is noticeable that, with the exception of John Hayward's early use of poppy heads in the one single instance at Blackborough, all the poppy head schemes were designed or made by architects and firms from outside the county; locally-based architects seldom if ever used them. This implies a strong desire on the part of local architects to reflect regional characteristics in their furnishings by employing square-ended forms of bench rather than the more elaborate types from the Eastern counties and the Midlands.

Another type of bench which is extremely rare in Devon but almost ubiquitous in other English counties is the buttressed type. These, based upon Parker's drawings of the benches at Great Haseley, involved the ornamentation of the bench end with applied micro-buttresses usually two to either side and sometimes a further buttress to the rear facing westwards. Sometimes this, like the Steeple Aston type, proves to be a mere elaboration of the Headington panelled bench end. These are the most unusual form of bench end and are only encountered in three Devon churches. They seem to have been used for the first time in John Hayward's new church of 1850 at Bicton, but Hayward is not known to have ever used this type of bench in any other church. Again, the few instances of buttressed ends which do appear in Devon are associated with London architects or practitioners from outside the County. These include the benches at Landscope (1849-51) by John Loughborough Pearson and the benches at Ashprington (1900) by W. D. Caröe. At Caröe's Exeter church of St David, buttressed bench ends were employed in the seating of the Lady Chapel, probably installed in around 1900, but the rest of the seating of the church was of a distinctly different and of an eccentric Arts and Crafts type.

The failure of locally based architects to adopt buttressed or poppy-head types of bench seating in Devon church restorations and new buildings points to a greater sensitivity to regional context on their part than on the part of the London architects. A notable exception to this was George Gilbert Scott who, in his few known restorations in Devon at Barnstaple, Fremington, Stowford and Totnes, always employed archaeological forms of bench end; square, carved from a single timber and enriched with tracery patterns. Scott carefully researched the appropriate form of regional seating types while restoring the churches at Iver in Buckinghamshire (Branfoot 2014) and he seems to have been as conscientious here in Devon as he was elsewhere.

Unfortunately, perhaps his greatest restoration scheme of this type at St Andrew's Plymouth was entirely destroyed in the Blitz of 1941, but photographs survive to show the extraordinarily consistent interior which resulted (Lafarge, 1946, 85). This archaeological approach in which designs of bench ends recovered from genuine Westcountry examples were replicated and extrapolated to fill whole church interiors is characteristic of the more expensive restorations and was enthusiastically adopted by local firms of artists and craftsmen such as Harry Hems and Herbert Read and also by the Pinwill Sisters, operating out of Plymouth.

Notable examples of the replication of earlier bench ends in several phases of 19th-century restoration included the interior of Stoke Canon church, which was refitted, with the reuse of a great deal of older material, by Harry Hems in 1875 (Fig. 310) This extremely interesting seating arrangement incorporated both genuine medieval bench ends and back rails which had been retained as free seating when the church had been rebuilt in 1835. The seating also incorporated elements of Mason's box pew seating from the appropriated seats which had been arranged against the north and south walls of the church, as at Hayward's 1845 restoration at Whimble. The 1870's scheme at Stoke Canon was probably altered in the 1880's or 1890's when the organ and choir seats were removed to the east end of the church, a move that was probably necessitated by the removal the west gallery. As the layout of John Mason's early-19th-century building, without aisles or side chapels and with only a short chancel, was not really conducive to the new arrangement, the organ was eventually resited and the seats were again reconfigured.

Each phase of this alteration could still be traced in the furniture until recently. Each phase of alteration represents a significant change in the function and liturgy of the church from the introduction of unappropriated pews in the 1870s to the peregrinations of the choir and the organ in the 20th century. The church has, unfortunately, since been reordered, but because of their engagement with the archaeological process, which was led by John Allan from Exeter Archaeology, the church retained samples of much of the old material, of every phase, in the new arrangement. At Halwell (Fig\*\*) the box seating was equally complex and interesting.

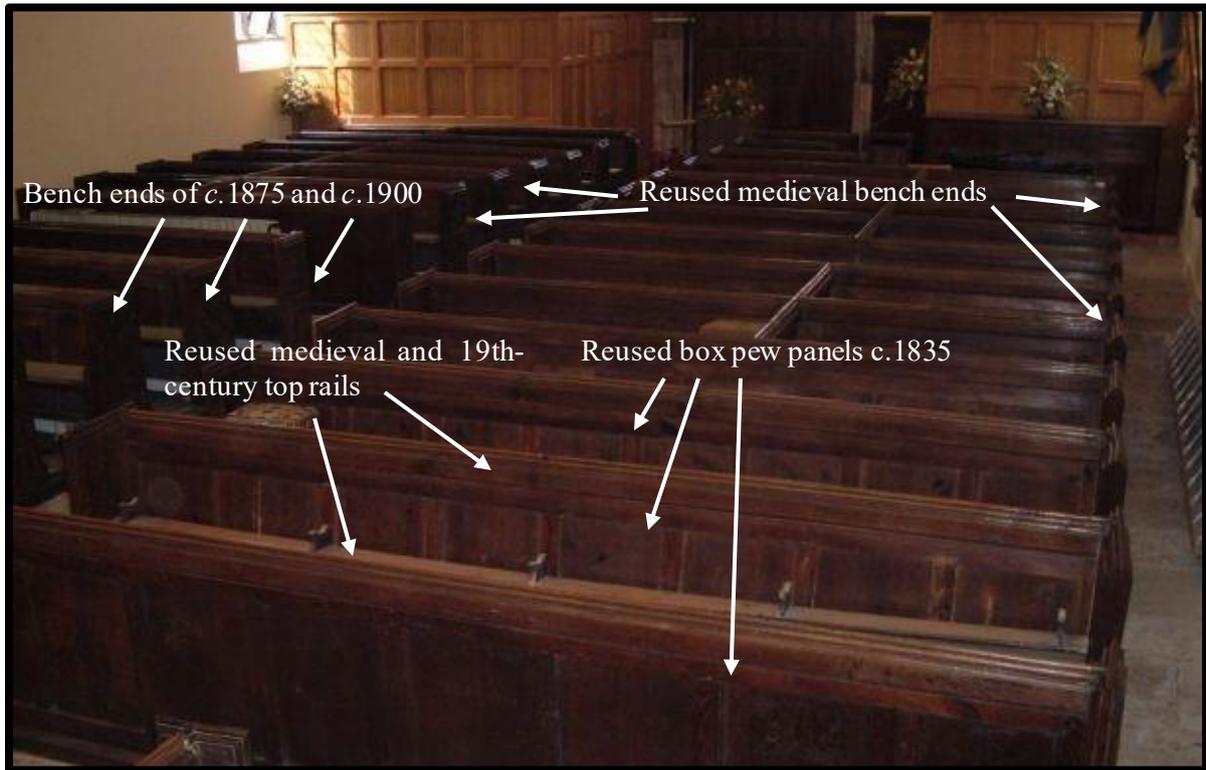


Fig. 310 The seating at the rebuilt church of 1835 at Stoke Canon, photographed by the Author in 2006 prior to reordering, showing the reuse of materials from the medieval church in 1835 and also from the Georgian seating in *c.*1875 and *c.*1900 (RWP Stoke Canon 6078\_036).



Fig. 311 Reused sections of box pews at Halwell, now partially removed, incorporating joinery of at least three periods. (RWP Halwell DSC04642).

*Modern or non-archaeologically based forms of seat*

From the late 1840's or early 1850's, particularly in new churches and those in urban contexts, both regionally-based and nationally-based architects began to experiment with new forms of bench end, which though constructed on Gothic or ecclesiastical principles of truth to materials, honestly expressing their construction, were not based on any known medieval precedent. Among the most interesting of these is the 'Y'-Bench. This is a light, and therefore portable, form of church bench consisting of a plank seat and rail supported at either end on a diagonally set muntin with a shorter muntin propping it about mid way to the rear; the end timbers thus forming an inverted lower case 'Y'. This elegant and spare design was relatively cheap in terms of materials but was also capable of elaboration to form the most vigorous bench seating. For example, the principal muntin was often curved into an 'S' form and crowned with a trilobate finial or, in some rare cases, (as at Bradfield near Cullompton, designed by John Hayward in 1875) with poppy-heads. The principal muntin might also be haunched, thickening at the centre to form a shoulder or elbow at the edge of the seat, and pierced with an ornamental device. The muntins of the bench end might be braced underneath by cusping and the tenons joining the seat and back rail to the bench ends might be made to protrude through the seat end in the form of a chamfered tusk-tenons, secured and tightened with a wedge—another frank admission of 'honesty' in construction. The design origin of these benches is unknown, but they seem to have been very widely used by Architects such as James Piers St Aubyn, in his series of early ecclesiastical churches in Plymouth Dock (later Devonport) from the 1840s and they are clearly early-Victorian rather than later-Victorian, despite their longevity as a design.

Benches of this type are reminiscent of some of Pugin's early designs for domestic furniture, where the structure of the carpentry is very clearly and overtly expressed, and it is interesting that Pugin's early Gothic-revival church of St Marie, at Derby (1838-39) features Y-benches in the south aisle. These examples may possibly have been designed by Pugin, as it is difficult to imagine who else, at this early period, would be re-thinking church furniture in such a radical way; however, there is insufficient evidence to suggest this with any confidence and the origin of this design remains uncertain.

Very few of Pugin's illustrations of his own buildings in *The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England* show any form of fixed seating, although both his illustration of St Mary's on The Sand at Southport, first published in *The Dublin Review* Number XX of May 1841 (Plate X) and The Jesus Chapel near Pomfret, published in his second article of the same title in *The Dublin Review* Number XXIII of February 1842 (Plate X) show a more standard form of bench seating with shouldered ends and angled or chamfered tops which later became widely used by church

furnishers and designers. Shouldered varieties of bench (to use a term defined by Brandwood) were clearly in use by Pugin as early as 1841 but they seem to have been first introduced to Devon as the main seating of a church in 1847 at the restoration of Halberton church by John Hayward. Open benches without doors, and every variety of square-ended bench had been previously employed by architects, but shouldered ends, or asymmetrical types of bench end with a solid end cut to an asymmetrical profile were not used in early-Victorian Devon, except for in choir seats at the west end of Churches, until after 1847. Churches before this are otherwise entirely seated with box pews or variations on a theme of the poppy-head or square end.

The shaped bench end or 'shouldered end' may conceivably be derived from the typical east-Anglian asymmetrical poppy-head seat, though with the omission of the elaborate carved finial. Rather than being archaeologically based, these 'shouldered' ends after the 1850s seem to be looking forward, rather than backward, to the creation of a new and original form of furniture soundly based in medieval constructional principles but designed and applicable for modern use. Through its asymmetrical shape this sort of bench end was inherently unsuitable for the addition of doors, either as part of the initial conception or as an afterthought, which may explain its popularity in the mid 19th-century for churches intended for the poor.

The shouldered bench end, like the 'Y'-bench might be adapted in an endless variety of ways to provide exciting variations on the theme. Some, at their simplest, are like square ends with one sloping shoulder, the end sometimes being pierced by a decorative roundel. In other cases, the seat end features a square or round shoulder at roughly half its height. The more exciting varieties involve complex shapes including pronounced concavities cut in the forward edge of the seat end, sometimes bulging out into an elbow or knop for the hand to rest on and sometimes with miniature buttresses at the rear side or short shafts and capitals.

Some of the most exciting and innovative forms of bench, predictably, seem to have been devised by the architect William Butterfield, for his restorations at Morebath and Yealmpton and his new church of All Saints Babbacombe, Torquay, where the bench ends take almost indescribably complex forms, all of relatively light-weight construction. These types of bench end, though soundly and honestly constructed and displaying their structure openly seem to be making a deliberate step away from the overt use of 'authentic' Gothic detail and towards a modern Gothic firmly rooted in sound principles of construction and the use of materials.





Fig 312 A Victorian bench-end medley showing something of the wide variety of different types and approaches employed by Victorian architects and church furnishers.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The Victorian contribution to the fabric of our churches is still much misunderstood, indeed despised. This is probably a consequence of its extraordinary success in transforming churches and the way in which they were used. The vast majority of British churches still bear the clear stamp of the 19th century and the very ubiquity of this legacy is perhaps an obstacle to our understanding its value and the motivations and agendas which produced it.

Georgian churchmen and women certainly regarded the parish church as a Holy space, set aside for worship, in which the proprieties should be observed. The Victorians had, if anything, a still more reverent view of the church building and sought to remove from it things that they perceived as untruthful, improper, or unseemly, including the relatively casual way in which chancels were occupied and encumbered by private seating.

The iconography of the Georgian church and the late Victorian church were very different. Much of the imagery in a Georgian church interior was heraldic or dynastic, with little in the way of visible Christian imagery and little emphasis on the sacramental aspects of worship. These churches strongly expressed contemporary social hierarchies, especially in their seating arrangements. The principal objects of interest in a Georgian church, and particularly for the Georgian antiquary, would have been tombs and monuments to local lords, their wives and

children and perhaps some heraldic glass. The prominence of these elements in the Georgian church interior is testified by the records of early antiquarians, who seem to have viewed churches essentially as mausolea for local families and a resource for dynastic research. These monuments would probably be the only objects in the church to bear colour, unless the tradition of painting and gilding the rood screen had continued, or the altarpiece retained a large painting. Georgian church interiors, though, as the magnificent fittings at Kingsnympton reveal, could be highly dignified, indeed magnificent spaces, and there is no reason to assume that contemporary churchmen and women treated them with irreverence. Gothic seems to have been preferred for church architecture throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, especially in rural areas where the church building seems to have been rooted in a picturesque ideal of the landscape. Urban churches also seem to have employed Gothic by preference until a surprisingly late date when, at the beginning of the 18th-century, completely new forms of church building based on metropolitan examples were imported to the county, largely in the new and rapidly growing industrial and port towns. Furnishing, however, appear to have utilised renaissance and classical detail, though often as ornament on what remained an essentially traditional, medieval form of furniture. The principal change in the appearance of the churches would appear to be the addition of new box-seating, which may have helped keep the congregation warmer as well as providing an income for the church. Regardless of the presence of box seats, or not, by 1800 almost all active churches in Devon operated systems of pew rents (Gray 2012).

The present research has shown that the myth of a period of neglect and decay, during the ‘Long 18th century’ in which churches fell into ruin, necessitating their extensive re-building by the Victorians, is not supported by the evidence. It seems that church communities during the 18th century did take pride in their churches and that they sought to keep them clean, neat and respectable and that their services, especially at the opening of new or rebuilt churches, could be engaging and involve the whole community.

Churches were kept in repair, but they were also being dramatically changed. A striking finding of the research was that the great majority of the churches, both urban and rural, were completely refitted, rebuilt or substantially enlarged prior to the period of ecclesiological influence in the 1840s and not, as was expected, as a result of it. The peak of activity in the early 19th century seems to reflect a rise in populations in rural areas as well as the availability of grant aid for church building. The pilot project also showed that late-Georgian church work could, though rarely, be archaeologically sensitive with regard to architectural detail. There seems to have been a movement to replace the old arrangements of private pews of all shapes and sizes with new, uniform sets of box pews, to give the church interior a neatness and propriety it may previously

have lacked. This gained impetus after 1818, when grant aid became available on condition that the amount of available seating was maximised. It was already well advanced at the time of the foundation of the Camden Society in 1839. The few surviving pre-Victorian interiors in the county seem to show a homogeneity in their seating which suggests that they had been substantially refitted on numerous occasions prior to their Victorian restorations. These late 18th-century refittings were thorough and not particularly respectful of the medieval fabric, to the extent that arcades and rood screens were routinely removed to create space for additional seating or re-plan interiors. Window tracery was also commonly removed and wooden tracery, usually of intersecting 'Y'-pattern was installed in its place, as may still be seen in the churches of Cornworthy, Rattery, Ugborough and in some parts of the church at Higher Brixham. Probably the greatest damage to the fabric of churches was caused by the continuation of intramural burial, which honeycombed the footings of earlier buildings with vaults and voids and may have led to structural issues as well as concerns for public health.

Before the end of the 18th century ideas which we now think of as 'Puginian', 'Camdenian' or 'Ecclesiological' were, in fact, current not only in the university and antiquarian circles, but among the clergy and presumably, 'churchy' members of the laity. These included a preference for Gothic, a preference for open seats as opposed to private pews and a desire to engage with the poor. Conservation principles, including rigorous study of medieval remains and, where necessary, its accurate replication were also preferred. Classical architecture began to be regarded as unsuitable as a means of creating the devotional atmosphere appropriate to worship.

Later Victorian restorations, seen in this light, seem less like sudden and unprecedented interventions and more like the correction and re-direction of a pre-existing trend towards wholesale church refurbishment which had already had a significant impact upon the fabric of medieval churches. The removal of galleries and clearing away of box pews in the later part of the 19th century may have been possible because the early 19th-century growth in population had not been sustained, and such extensive seating provision was no longer necessary. Alternatively, the relaxation of legislation restricting the foundation of new churches, which allowed new worship centres to be established in existing parishes, including some remarkable new types of building for flexible use, seems to have reduced the pressure for increasing accommodation in the existing parish churches. Thus, the redundancy of 18th and early 19th-century galleries may have been as much a factor in their removal as their unsightliness and lack of archaeological legitimacy.

Most 19th-century furnishing schemes are based upon reconstructions or interpretations of medieval church interiors and are either informed by a concern for archaeological accuracy, or a desire to develop 'medieval' types of furnishing for contemporary use. The extent to which

churches restored by the Victorians can be regarded as successful recreations of medieval interiors is debatable; it must be remembered that most architects and churchmen of the period neither desired nor intended to recreate absolutely authentic medieval interiors, even had they believed this to be possible. Rather, they sought to make churches seemly, suitable and fit for modern worship, while redolent of all the inherited values and virtues of the past. Attitudes to the appropriate appearance of churches changed considerably during the period — the appearance of an ancient rural parish church and a large, urban church aimed at the working poor were to be quite different, but both should share the same Gothic principles of beauty, truth and access to all, in equality before God.

The Victorian revolution was to reconfigure the church as a holy place with its emphasis firmly on sacramental worship and the inclusion of all members of society within it as equal before God. The whole architecture and symbolism of the building was reinterpreted to express the eucharist as the main Christian act of worship. Religious imagery replaced secular imagery throughout the building and free seating, gradually installed throughout the church, replaced the social segregation so characteristic of earlier centuries. Although Victorian churches remained full of oligarchic and dynastic labels, these were less prominent than they had been and were relegated to secondary importance by a new emphasis on the religious aspirations of the whole community.

These innovations were, however, deeply rooted in a recognisable past. The ecclesiological reforms did not spring from nowhere, neither did they instantly replace common usages in liturgy or church attendance. New furnishings were certainly introduced, but in most churches the older furnishings were retained alongside these, effectively recommissioned in support of the Camdenian message of continuity with the past. The peak period of church restoration in Devon was 1860-80, with a smaller boom after 1840. New churches, by contrast, seem to have been provided at a steady rate between 1830 and 1900. Much of this church building was aimed at providing church room for the urban and rural poor.

The new egalitarianism also impacted upon the functions of the church building. The provision of active rôles in the life of the Church for more of its lay members led to fundamental changes in the way churches were planned and used. Older buildings were adapted and extended to allow a wider range of activities such as robed choirs and serving teams, larger and grander instruments were provided to support a growing musical repertoire. New types of church building were provided designed for flexible use and for mission to the poorest classes. The progress of this social agenda may still be read and understood by an archaeological reading of church buildings and their furnishings.

This thesis studies the effects of this movement on the ancient and modern churches of Devon, at a time when this remarkable legacy is under severe threat, as churches once again face dramatic change, whether through closure as 'redundant plant' or through reordering as church communities seek to reorientate themselves to appeal to new generations. The thesis tries to view Victorian and Edwardian churches as archaeological artefacts and to record elements, such as forms of church seating, that are not usually recorded in other studies of local churches and which are disappearing at a tremendous rate.

All the Anglican churches of Devon remaining in use, and many others that have passed into private use have been visited and photographed. Information about their historic appearance and the changes they have undergone has been collected and reviewed, with the aim of showing that Victorian and Edwardian church buildings are as revealing about the progress of religion in society as those of any other period, and that they should be understood as an important and irreplaceable archaeological resource which needs to be carefully managed.

The serious nature of the threat may be judged by the fact that, since this project was begun in 2005, more than 25 19th-century church buildings churches have closed for worship and, of these, 11 have been demolished. Many of the remaining buildings have either already been converted to residential or commercial use, with the loss of nearly all their historic furnishings and with the almost entire loss of public access to their interiors. Reordering schemes of functioning churches are still taking a heavy toll of historic fittings. The situation is perhaps a hundred times more difficult for non-conformists. The intention of this research is to contribute to an ongoing review of the archaeological resource, begun by the Devon 19th-Century Churches Project. This task might perhaps be undertaken in future as a community project, encouraging congregations to engage with the physical fabric of their churches and to understand their buildings in new ways. The production of a comprehensive digital photographic record of so many churches is presented here as an original, contribution to knowledge.



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## APPENDIX I: TAXONOMY OF SEATING TYPES

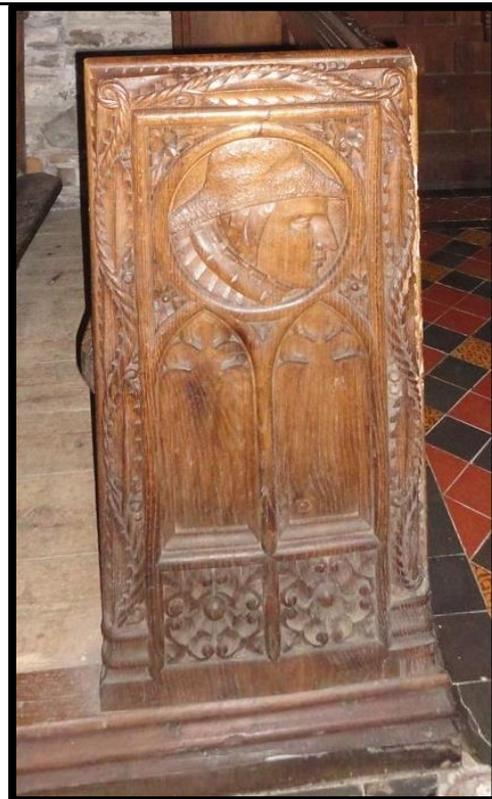
### *Square-ended benches*

Carved 'square-ended' benches: the typical Westcountry type of seating, common from the 15th to the 17th century and revived in the 19th. Usually with a rectangular bench end cut from a single plank, usually of oak; the face toward the alleys being richly carved and the edges moulded or carved with foliage. The bench frontals and backs to the cross alleys may be richly ornamented with arcading or simply boarded. A book rest or elbow rest is usually provided on the back of each seat for the use of the person sitting behind. These benches usually face eastwards except in eastern chapels, or transepts, where they may face north and south.



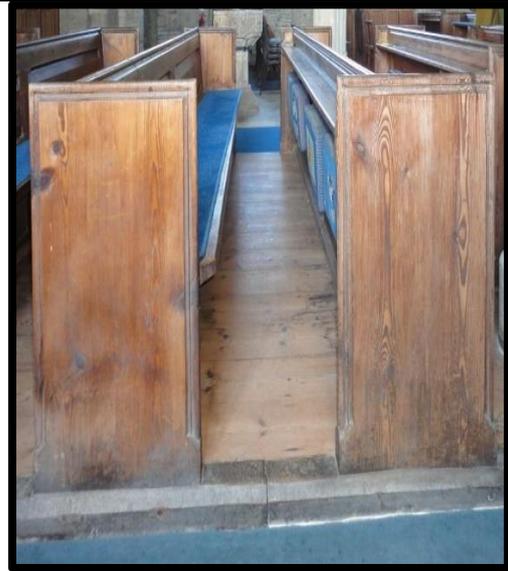
A medieval or Renaissance square-ended bench from Broadwoodwider.

The 'Archaeological' type: 19th- or 20th-century square-ended benches consciously replicating local Medieval and Renaissance examples such as those above. These are usually of oak and were common throughout the 19th century but were especially favoured in the first half of the 20th century. Manufacturers were often locally-based craftsmen and women such as Harry Hems, Herbert Read or the Pinwill sisters. Although the bench ends and frontals are often careful replicas of ancient bench seating, the other part of the bench are usually of slighter construction and sometimes feature hat rests contrived beneath the seat of the bench in front. A source of local pride, such benches are still (though rarely) being made. Because of their richness these benches are highly valued, but are still vulnerable to removal in church reordering schemes



A Victorian 'Archaeological' bench end from Stowford, carved by Harry Hems in 1874.

The plain 'Square-ended' type, replicating the basic forms of local Medieval and Renaissance benches but without the richness of ornament. These were employed throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although cheaper than the carved variety of benches and produced in both oak and pine, these are still based on observation of local historic examples and are carefully detailed with mouldings and stops. Because of their plain appearance these benches are often undervalued by congregations and are thus highly vulnerable to removal and disposal during church reordering schemes.



Victorian plain square-ended benches at West Alvington, from c.1866.

### *Panelled Construction*

The 'Headington' type of panelled bench end. These bench ends are assembled from separate stiles and rails framing plain panels or tongue-and-grooved boarding, with a moulded top rail, providing a cheaper form of square-ended bench. Although not based on local historic examples they are modelled on the bench ends at Headington in Oxfordshire, which were assumed to be of Medieval date and were popularised in the 1840s by the Oxford Architectural Society. The ends might be of any material, oak or deal, and might be rendered richly ornamental by applied tracery in imitation of Medieval or Renaissance benches. These benches, being unadorned, are highly vulnerable to removal.



A Victorian 'Headington' bench from Milton Abbot; installed in 1860.

The ‘Steeple Aston’ type. An enriched variation of the ‘Headington’ type, of panelled construction, decorated with applied tracery, often of varied patterns, reflecting the varied designs of early bench ends. These are also based upon drawings published by the Oxford Architectural Society in the 1840s and, because of the attractive varying patterns of their ends, they are marginally less vulnerable to removal.



Victorian bench ends with applied tracery at Shobrooke, c.1878.

‘Cusped’: bench ends, another variation of the ‘Headington’ type, of panelled construction but with the stiles and rails decorated with boldly-scooped cusping or notched ornament cut away from the solid members. The panels often have diagonal tongue-and-grooved boarding. This type might be categorised as having ‘Go!’; a vigorous, muscular quality.<sup>49</sup>



‘Cusped’ bench ends at Thornbury, of 1876.

‘Benches with doors’: 19th-century benches (not box pews), or ancient benches with lower, fitted doors, either integral or secondary, allowing the appropriation of seats while preserving the impression of open seating. This seems to have been popular among congregations up into the 1860s but were generally resisted by ecclesiologists.



‘Benches with doors’ at East Woolfardisworthy, dating from 1846.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Go!’ was a term used by 19th-century architects to define a quality of vigour and originality in mid-Victorian architecture that sometimes crossed over into vulgarity (Stevens-Curl 2002, 96, 97).

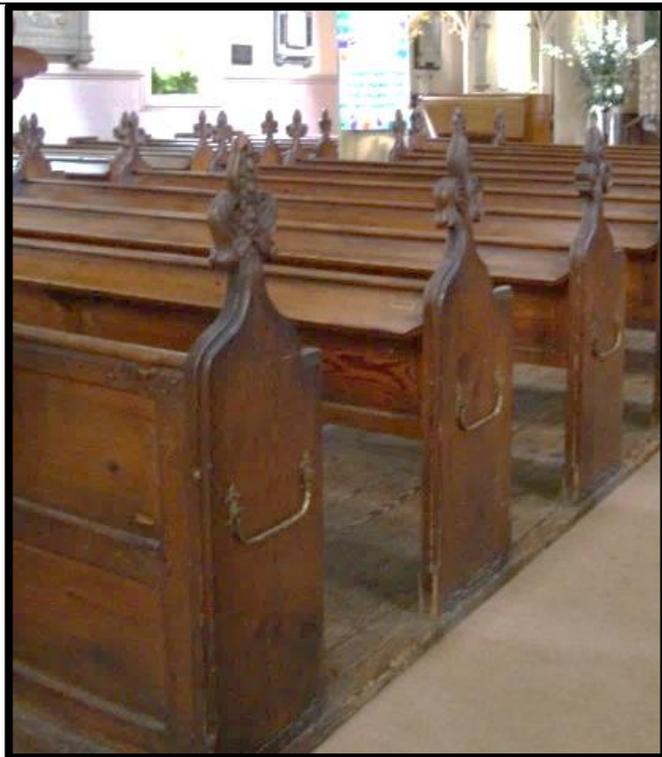
‘Buttressed’: A rare type in Devon, consisting of a square-ended bench (often a variation of the ‘Headington’ type) with miniature buttresses towards the alleys. These were based on medieval bench ends from the Midlands and East Anglia, and disseminated as models for emulation in the 1840s. Though ubiquitous in other counties, including Cornwall, they are only known from four sites in Devon



‘Buttressed’ benches at Landscope, dating from 1851.

#### *Asymmetrical and shaped bench ends*

‘Poppy-headed’ benches: A rare type in Devon, though with some limited medieval precedent in the north and west of the county, including medieval examples at Cookbury and Atherington. These take the form of tall asymmetrical bench ends carved from a single plank having high, carved, foliate finials. These are usually based upon East-Anglian precedents and were sometimes made by national rather than local firms. They became unfashionable by the 1860s and rarely occur after that date.



‘Poppy-headed’ benches at Upton, Torquay; 1843-9.

‘Shouldered’: A term devised by Brandwood to describe asymmetrically-shaped bench ends, usually formed of a single piece, shaped to broaden at the base to accommodate the seat. The profile may vary widely, taking concave or convex forms and can be further enriched with mouldings, foliage, and micro-architecture such as shafts and buttresses. In addition the ends are sometimes pierced or decorated with carved roundels. Shouldered benches were popular throughout the entire period and might be supplied from church-furnisher’s catalogues as well as being bespoke designs by individual architects



Plain ‘Shouldered’ benches at St Michael’s, Exeter; 1868.



‘Shouldered’ benches, with ‘Go!’ and incised detail at Alphington (now destroyed); 1876.

‘Elbowed’: A term devised by Brandwood to describe a variety of shouldered bench end with a prominent projecting knop or foliate boss on the shoulder of the bench near the seat, often elaborately carved with foliage or decorated with roundels .



Elbowed benches at Brixton, Devon, c.1887 or 1895.

‘Nosed’: a low asymmetrical bench end with a bulbous projection or scroll near the top of the bench end, at the same height as the back rail. These are a very rare type in Devon, occurring in only four churches.



Nosed bench ends at Bradstone, c.1863

‘Eccentric’ benches: experimental forms of bench end and forms, using Gothic motifs but in an unconventional way. These are often variations of more conventional types, but fantastically enriched with notching, chamfering, moulding and wilful ornament, or elements of ‘revealed construction’ such as projecting tusk-tenons and other exaggerated constructional details. These ostentatiously un-medieval and consciously modern seats may be characterised as having ‘Go’, a term used by 19th-century architects such as John Thomas Micklethwaite to define a quality of vigour and deliberate eccentricity which was not always uncritically approved (Stevens-Curl 2002, 96, 97).



Eccentric benches with ‘Go!’ at Culm Davy, c.1860



Eccentric composite benches, with ‘Go!’, at Hooe, near Plymouth, 1855.

'Queen Anne' bench ends: these rare and usually late-19th- or early 20th-century bench ends reflect the increasing interest in Renaissance and Classical designs towards the end of the period, as part of the 'Arts-and-Crafts' movement and perhaps as a reaction to High-Victorian 'Go'. They freely use mixed motifs from different periods, especially the 17th century, and are usually of a very high calibre of craftsmanship.



'Queen Anne' or freestyle benches, mixing Gothic and Renaissance ornaments at St David's, Exeter, currently being removed; c.1900-1911.

### *Post-Reformation fixed seating*

'Box pews' (or 'pues'): 17th- to mid 19th-century fully enclosed seats of wainscot panelling with integral doors, the doors of the same height as the fronts and backs of the seats. The seats might be arranged to face in any direction, usually with respect to the position of the pulpit. The grander seats were sometimes enriched with ramped corners. The classic post-Reformation church seat, these were probably made by local carpenters and were almost always appropriated. Now considered rare, these are yet vulnerable to casual alteration.



Conventional, long and narrow 18th-century box pews at Kingsnympton, 18th century.

'Horse boxes' or 'square pews': So called because of their resemblance to loose boxes in stables. This is a contemptuous Victorian term for the larger box pew built with seats on three or four sides facing an open centre, designed to accommodate an entire family. These might accommodate a table, a fireplace and be enclosed with screens or curtains for privacy. They are now extremely rare.



A 'horse box' or 'square pew' at Clyst Hydon (with a modern table at its centre, reviving a much derided feature of private and family pews), 18th century.

'Raised seats', sometimes (Confusingly) known as 'galleries'. These raised areas of seating built up well above the medieval floor levels, sometimes in the aisles but usually at the west end of the church, partially blocking the tower arch, allowed the congregation seated here better visibility and audibility. Raised seats with doors may have been appropriated to particular families, but they could also serve as choir seating, particularly by those churchmen and women who resisted the 'liturgical' choir, in the chancel, favoured by the Tractarians. Alternatively they were sometimes used or as seating for groups such as almsmen or charity school children. These are also now extremely rare.



Raised seats for rent at Parracombe old church, 18th century.



Raised seats without doors, possibly for a choir or a charity school, at Kingsnympton, 18th-century?

*Moveable seating*

‘Y’-benches’: light, cheap, open-backed benches with curved, inverted ‘Y’-shaped supports, one extended to support the back rail, the other short, supporting the first. Sometimes fixed but often moveable. Popular from the 1840s to the 1910s and probably supplied from church furnishers’ catalogues.



‘Y’-benches with kneelers at Bradford, Devon; 1871.

‘X’-benches’: A more ruthless and much rarer muscular version of the above, formed of crossed, straight or curved members, the shorter either creating an ‘elbow’ or supporting the front of the seat. These are extremely rare and are known from only four churches in Devon. They are mostly associated with mid-Victorian churches of a muscular character or restorations of earlier churches.



‘X’-benches at All Saints, Torre, Torbay; 1883-9

‘School Benches’: A rare type, though presumably once more common. Late 19th-century convertible benches consisting of iron frames and mechanisms supporting moveable planks designed to adjust to form either bench seats with sloping backs, bench seats with sloping desks or benches with flat tables. Manufactured and supplied by Wippell’s of Exeter and by London firms. These were once popular for School-Chapels and mission churches designed for flexible use.



Adjustable ‘School Benches’ by Wippell & Co at the Beacon School-Chapel at Sandford, c.1880-90

‘Forms’: Portable open benches, with or without backs, for use by the poor, latecomers or for additional seating on special occasions. Positioned wherever space allowed and stacked in corners when not in use.



Open forms for overflow seating at Virginstow; 1851.

‘Church chairs’: timber chairs with integral book racks, popular with Arts-and-Crafts architects and for multi-purpose buildings. These are intended to be moveable but are often fixed together in rows and held in place by battens nailed to the floor. They were often installed as a temporary measure, and replaced by fixed benches.



‘Church chairs’ at St Gabriels, Peverell, Plymouth, showing fixed floor battens, c.1911.

‘Flap seats, draw seats etc. A rare type, usually fixed to the face of or contrived within the bench ends facing the alleys, possibly designed to provide additional seating or seating for servants. Draw seats can be pulled out from under the main seat and may have been to accommodate personal servants; flap seats are hinged to fall downwards when unused and are supported by a hinged bracket. These seem to have been occasionally used in resort towns where extra seating was required during the season..



A draw seat (for a servant?) at Loxbeare; 1896



Secondary flap seats (overflow seating for holidaymakers?) at Holy Trinity, Ilfracombe, c.1900s.

## APPENDIX II: DEVON CHURCHES EXAMINED FOR THIS STUDY

Name	Type	Restored/ built	Altar	Seating	Status	RWP record
<b>Abbots Bickington; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1868	wooden open arcaded EXTENDED	round-shouldered solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Abbotsbury; St Mary</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1904-6	wooden chest exceptionally elaborate. carved Pinwill	square-ended replaced with modern chairs	functioning but threatened	yes
<b>Abbotsham; St Helen</b>	parish church	Restored 1848 chancel	wooden chest incorporates ancient communion table	ancient reset	functioning	yes
<b>Abbotskerswell; The Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1881-1884	wooden open traceried attrib Wm Butterfield	round-shouldered double shoulder	solid, functioning	yes
<b>Alfington; St James and St Anne</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1840 Restored 1891	wooden open arcaded	square-ended plain with open backs	functioning	yes
<b>All Saints (Smallridge); All Saints</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1840 Restored 1890	wooden open arcaded EXTENDED replaces stone	poppyheads cut down square-shouldered solid with applied ribs	functioning	yes
<b>Alphington; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 185, 1876, 1878,	wooden open arcaded	round-shouldered, solid, with go and incised symbols	functioning	yes
<b>Alswear; mission church</b>	Mission Church (rural)	never built	unknown	never installed	never realised	no
<b>Alverdiscott; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1800s	stone modern	'Headington' 1863	functioning	yes
<b>Alwington; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1806	17th communion table	ancient Antiquarian collection	functioning	yes
<b>Appledore; St Mary</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1838, restored 1909	wooden open arcaded EXTENDED and raised	pews and open benches replaced by square ended	functioning	yes
<b>Arlington; St James</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1842-5	stone panelled ecclesiologic al	square-ended plain solid parting round font 1840s	functioning	yes

<b>Ash Thomas; St Thomas</b>	school- chapel (rural)	Built 1876	unknown	unknown		closed. future uncertain	yes
<b>Ashburton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1882-1884	stone panelled EXTENDED	square-ended plain solid		functioning	yes
<b>Ashbury; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1701, 1926, rebuilt 1871	wooden open arcaded with internal hangings	Y-benches		preserved closed 1981	yes
<b>Ashcombe; St Nectan</b>	parish church	Restored 1823, 1926	wooden open table with peirced traceries front and cross motif	archaeological solid with suspiciously Georgian detail. Salvin??		functioning	yes
<b>Ashford; St Peter</b>	parish church	Rewstored 1798 tower Rebuilt 1852-4	1868 made up of 16th fragments very odd	ancient antiquarian collection reset in 19th		functioning	yes
<b>Ashill; St Stephen</b>	school- chapel (rural)	Built 1881	open-fronted table	concave-shouldered added tops	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Ashprington; St David</b>	parish church	Restored 1845, 1865, 1886, 19098	open-fronted table with cross motif	Headington variation buttressed and traceried		functioning	yes
<b>Ashreigney; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1889-90	plain table	Headington cusped, boards	diag	functioning	yes
<b>Ashton; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1901	wooden chest 20th	Archaeological replica		functioning	yes
<b>Ashwater; St Peter Ad Vincula</b>	parish church	Restored 1882	chest type, panelled front with painted motifs	box pews cut down		functioning	yes
<b>Atherington; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1883	1950s 'English' Altar	poppyhead replicas	asymmetrical	functioning	yes
<b>Aveton Gifford; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1868	destroyed now modern	shouldered polygonal heads DESTROYED		functioning	yes
<b>Avonwick; St James</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Built 1878	open table	y-benches		functioning	yes

<b>Awliscombe; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1845, 1887	open fronted table with carved stiles	elbow-shouldered with polygonal heads	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Axminster; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1827, 1870	wooden chest 20th	round-shouldered 'Go'	solid with	functioning	yes
<b>Axminster; The Holy Cross, Woodbury</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1898	plain table	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Axmouth; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1830, 1885-9	plain 19th table turned legs	concave-shouldered plain	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Aylesbeare; The Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1896-9	'Cologne' Altar	square-ended mod.	solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Ayshford chapel</b>	ancient chapelry	Restored 1847	plain table	'garden seat' w kneelers		preserved	yes
<b>Babbacombe; All Saints</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1865- 1867	wooden chest solid with traceried panels	eccentric backs haunched	muscular open with go!	functioning	yes
<b>Bampton; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1872, 1896-8,	open table	Headington softwood		functioning	yes
<b>Barbrook; St Bartholomew</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1872	open- fronted table extended NS	elbow-shouldered polygonal heads	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Barnstaple; St Andrew, Bickington</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1911	unknown	unknown		closed residential	yes
<b>Barnstaple; Holy Trinity</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1843- 5 Rebuilt 1867	wooden chest solid 20th	headington w raised panels ( reused?) now removed		functioning	yes
<b>Barnstaple; St Mary Magdalene</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1844	unknown	destroyed		DEMOLISH ED	no
<b>Barnstaple; St Paul, Sticklepath (Old church)</b>	school- chapel	Built 1935	unknown	unknown		closed community use	yes
<b>Barnstaple; St Peter</b>	Parish Church	Restored 1810, Restored 1823-4 Restored 1866-1880	17th communion tablecup and cover legs extended in use	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Barton; St Augustine</b>	school- chapel (urban)	Built 1874	unknown	unknown		Closed 1928 residential	yes

<b>Beaford; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1878-79		eccentric round-shouldered solid round-headed with 'Go'	functioning	yes
<b>Beaworthy; St Alban</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1877		Headington cusped	functioning	yes
<b>Beer; St Michael</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 18th, rebuilt 1877		concave shouldered polygonal heads	functioning	yes
<b>Beesands; St Andrew</b>	modern chapelry (rural)	Built 1883		chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Belstone; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1881-2		square-ended plain solid	functioning	yes
<b>Bere Alston; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1848		round-shouldered solid high shoulders	functioning	yes
<b>Bere Ferrers; St Andrew</b>	collegiate church	Restored 1871	open traceried front	ancient benches reset	functioning	yes
<b>Berry Pomeroy; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored		square-ended solid traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Berrynarbor; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1887-9		Headington variation w trefoil tracery	functioning	yes
<b>Bickington; St Mary the Virgin</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1882	wooden open table with brattished stretchers and central cross motif	round-shouldered solid square added tops	functioning	yes
<b>Bickleigh (Roborough); St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1882	1960s granite	archaeological square-ended solid traceried and plain	functioning	yes
<b>Bickleigh (Tiverton); St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1843-9		archaeological square-ended replicas	functioning	yes
<b>Bicton; St Mary</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Rebuilt 1850	Cologne altar	Headington variation buttressed and traceried	closed 2012, preserved	yes
<b>Bideford; St Mary</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1818, Rebuilt 1862-5		Headington traceried Nave	variation functioning	yes

<b>Bideford; St Peter East the Water</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1890		chairs	closed, commercial	yes
<b>Bigbury; St Lawrence</b>	parish church	Restored 1868-72		square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Bishops Tawton; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1865, 1878	mod table	elbowed round-shouldered solid angled heads with go	functioning	yes
<b>Bishopsnympton; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1869 chancel		headington traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Bishopsteignton; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1829		square-shouldered panelled - a kind of double, graduated Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Bittadon; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1833, 1881		Square-shouldered panelled - a stacked Headington variation	functioning	yes
<b>Black Torrington; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1901-3	wooden solid chest with strapwork	Archaeological, solid	functioning	yes
<b>Blackawton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1887-89	20th chest	square-ended solid plain, horizontal linenfold frontals	functioning	yes
<b>Blackborough; All Saints</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Built 1838, Restored 1895		poppyhead, destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Bondleigh; St James the Apostle</b>	parish church			square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Bovey Tracey; St John</b>	'alternative' church?	Built 1853, Restored 1862		'Y'-benches unfixd	functioning	yes
<b>Bovey Tracey; St Peter; St Paul &amp; St Thomas Beckett</b>	parish church	Restored 1857, 1886-7		square-ended solid traceried (nave)	functioning	yes
<b>Bow; (Nymet Tracey) St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Restored 1859-62, 1889		round-shouldered solid inc box pew panels	functioning	yes

<b>Bradfield; All Saints</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Built 1874		round-shouldered from Uffculme?	brought	functioning	yes
<b>Bradford; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1871	16th-17th columnar legs large two in this church	'Y-benches, separate kneelers	unfixed,	functioning	yes
<b>Bradninch; St Disen</b>	parish church	Restored 1842, 1889,	16th communion table carved all sides	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Bradstone; St Nonn</b>	parish church	Restored 1863		nosed solid		preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Bradworthy; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1883		box pew panels cut down		functioning	yes
<b>Bramford Speke; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1834, Rebuilt 1852-3		Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Branscombe; St Winifred</b>	parish church	Restored 1911	plain table	Arts & Crafts Square ended caroe		functioning	yes
<b>Bratton Clovelly; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1874, 1897	wooden chest type 20th	Square-ended richly carved		functioning	yes
<b>Bratton Fleming; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1855-61		concave shouldered solid		functioning	yes
<b>Braunton; St Brannock</b>	parish church	Restored 1872-3, 1887-9	open table with bobbin legs	ancient richly carved Square ended collection		functioning	yes
<b>Brendon; St Brendon</b>	parish church	Restored 1832-3	modern open fronted chest	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Brentor north; Christchurch</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1856, Restored 1931-38		Square-shouldered solid	plain	functioning	yes
<b>Brentor; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1838		square-ended solid separate tops cut down?		functioning	yes
<b>Bridestowe; St Bridget</b>	parish church	Restored 1866, 1890		square-ended applied tracery very unusual		functioning	yes

<b>Bridford; St Thomas Becket</b>	parish church		Restored c. 1815	made up of older woodwork incl poppyhead bench ends	Square-ended early 20th	functioning	yes
<b>Bridgerule; St Bridget</b>	parish church			open arcade table	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Bridgetown; Totnes; St John the Evangelist</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of	Built 1832		square-ended (destroyed) traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Brixham; All Saints</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of	Built 1815, Transepts 1825 proposed rebuilding 1850 Rebuilt 1885		concave shouldered angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Brixham; St Mary</b>	parish church		Restored 1864-6, 1905		round-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Brixham; St Peter the fisherman</b>	sailors mission (urban)		Built 1874		Y-benches now at All Saints	Closed 1977, residential	yes
<b>Brixton; St Mary</b>	parish church		Restored 1887, 1895,	plain table	elbowed solid	functioning	yes
<b>Broadclyst; St John</b>	parish church		Restored 1833, 1882	20th-century panelled chest	square-ended panelled	functioning	yes
<b>Broadhembury; St Andrew</b>	parish church		Restored 1848		Headington with inset tracery and low doors	functioning	yes
<b>Broadhempston; St Peter and St Paul</b>	parish church		Restored 1879 chancel		Archaeological square-ended plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Broadnymet; St Martin</b>	parish church		Never restored		destroyed	Preserved closed 1835, derelict	yes
<b>Broadwoodkelly; All Saints</b>	parish church		Restored 1867	open-fronted table six legs	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Broadwoodwidge; St Nicholas</b>	parish church		Restored 1871		Headington, plain (few)	functioning	yes
<b>Brooking; St Barnabas</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	of	Built 1850-5		Y-benches	functioning	yes

<b>Brownston; (Modbury) St John</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1841-44		unknown		closed, residential	no
<b>Brushford; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church		plain table modern	Headington variation	vertical boards and light cusping	functioning	yes
<b>Buckerell; St Mary and St Giles</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1906-11		Box pews		functioning	yes
<b>Buckfastleigh; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1846-1850		Box Pews (destroyed)		preserved ruin; burnt 1992,	yes
<b>Buckfastleigh; St Luke</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1894		unknown		DEMOLISHED	yes
<b>Buckland Brewer; St Mary and St Benedict</b>	parish church	Restored 1759, 1878	open fronted chest type	round-shouldered round-headed	solid,	functioning	yes
<b>Buckland Filleigh; St Mary and Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1871		Headington incorporating Renaissance panels		functioning	yes
<b>Buckland in the Moor; St Peter</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1907		Archaeological	20th	functioning	yes
<b>Buckland Monachorum; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1869		ancient and replicas		functioning	yes
<b>Buckland Tout Saints; St Peter</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)	Rebuilt 1779, Restored 1874	open table plain	square-ended solid	plain	functioning	yes
<b>Bucks Mills; St Anne</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1859-61	chest type solid arcaded	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Budleigh Salterton; St Peter</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1812 New Church 1891-3	wooden open arcaded	modern benches replacing chairs		functioning	yes
<b>Bulkworthy; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1873-4	wooden chest solid	Headington	cusped, diag boards	functioning	yes
<b>Burlescombe; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1844	very ornate 17th-style table 1844	archaeological	tracery 1844	functioning	yes
<b>Burrington; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1869 (mission church 1872)	wooden open arcade two bays	round-shouldered solid		functioning	yes

<b>Butterleigh; St Matthew</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1861		Headington variation with angled corners and low doors	functioning	yes
<b>Cadbury; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1856-8		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Cadeleigh; St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Reseated 1766, restored 1890		Box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Calverleigh; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1883-7		concave shouldered angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Chagford; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1824-27, 1864		Headington 1864 phase	functioning	yes
<b>Challacombe; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1850, restored 1875	stone panelled three quatrefoils	square-ended plain solid	functioning	yes
<b>Chardstock; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1838-1840 Rebuilt 1865	wooden openfronted	elbow-shouldered angled tops	solid functioning	yes
<b>Charles; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1875 Restored 1889	open wooden table	Square-shouldered panelled-a stacked Headington variation	functioning	yes
<b>Charleton (West); St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1849	trestle type, open 'muscular'	Headington 1849	functioning	yes
<b>Chawleigh; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1842, 1874	wooden open arcaded	Headington using older material	functioning	yes
<b>Cheldon; St Mary</b>	parish church	?	19 pitch pine open arched table	ancient square ended carved	functioning	yes
<b>Cheriton Bishop; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1869, 1884	wooden open arcaded muscular	'y'-benches to W	functioning	yes
<b>Cheriton Fitzpaine; St Matthew</b>	parish church	Restored 1883-9	table with shaped trimmer	Box pews cut down	functioning	yes
<b>Chevithorne; St Thomas</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1843	stone panelled (Rowe) masked by mod wooden altar	poppyhead panelled (EDAS) cut down	functioning	yes

<b>Chittlehamholt; St John The Baptist</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1838	open traceried front, 1880s?	Square-ended angled corners pierced with oculi, adaptation of original box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Chittlehampton; St Hieritha</b>	parish church	Restored 1871-4		Headington with tracery	functioning	yes
<b>Chivelstone; St Sylvester</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)	?	Jacobean communion table extended	square-ended pine solid w south hams diaperwork frontals and backs as at Sherford and Stokenham	functioning	yes
<b>Christow; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1862	wooden chest type 1899	Headington with doors 1862	functioning	yes
<b>Chudleigh Knighton; St Paul</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1841-2 Restored 1876		Headington Square ended with open backs what date?	functioning	yes
<b>Chudleigh; St Martin and St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1846, 1868-9	wooden open arcaded	square-ended panelled with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Chulmleigh; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church	Restored 1879-81	wooden chest solid	Square-ended panelled traceried varying	functioning	yes
<b>Churchstanton; St Mary/ Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1830		Box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Churchstow; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1847-51	modern panelled chest	hollow-shouldered solid plain incorporating box pew panels	functioning	yes
<b>Churston Ferrers; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1864-6		square-ended plain with low doors	functioning	yes
<b>Clannaborough; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1839	plain table	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Clapworthy</b>	Mission Church (rural)	?		unknown	closed, residential	yes

<b>Clawton; St Leonard</b>	parish church	Restored 1893	open fronted table	elbowed concave shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Clayhanger; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1879-81	17th communion table in use	ancient collection	renaissance	functioning yes
<b>Clayhidon; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1846	modern	poppyheads truncated	with doors numbered 1846	functioning yes
<b>Clovelly; All Saints</b>	parish church		open arcaded	ancient plain		functioning yes
<b>Clovelly; St Peter</b>	sailors mission (urban)	Built 1846?		eccentric open forms	With Go!	functioning yes
<b>Clyst Honiton; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1876	legs of 17th communion table built into altar	square-shouldered umbrella holders	with	functioning yes
<b>Clyst Hydon; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1836, 1856		Box pews		functioning yes
<b>Clyst St George; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1876		archaeological square-ended destroyed		functioning yes
<b>Clyst St Lawrence; St Lawrence</b>	parish church	Restored 1848	wooden chest solid panelled small 1840s	box pews cut down with new low ends		functioning yes
<b>Clyst St Mary; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1869		y-benches		functioning yes
<b>Cockington; Chelston St Matthew</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1895-1904		chairs		functioning yes
<b>Cockington; St George &amp; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1882-3, 1916		chairs		functioning yes
<b>Coffinswell; St Bartholomew</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)		Cologne Altar	square-ended roundels	solid with	functioning yes
<b>Cofton; St Mary</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Rebuilt 1823-38, restored 1863	stone panelled ecclesiastical 1840s	Headington round-shouldered	tracied and with ANGLED CORNERS	functioning yes
<b>Colaton Raleigh; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1873-5	wooden chest type with rich painted decorations, secondary?	elbow-shouldered, solid and additional X chairs		functioning yes

<b>Coldridge; St Matthew</b>	parish church	Restored 1877 (chancel), 1897		Headington variation raised field panels	functioning	yes
<b>Colebrooke; St Andrew</b>	parish church	1834,		ancient bench ends reset	functioning	yes
<b>Collaton St Mary; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Built 1864-6		y- benches	functioning	yes
<b>Columb John</b>	ancient chapelry (private)	Rebuilt 1851		None survives	Preserved private funerary chapel	yes
<b>Colyford; St Michael</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1888-1889		round-shouldered solid open backs	functioning	yes
<b>Colyton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1826, 1897		Concave-shouldered with elbows and angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Combe Martin; St Peter ad vincula</b>	parish church	Restored 1858,		round-shouldered solid some late 19 box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Combe Raleigh; St Nicholas</b>	parish church	Restored 1886		round shouldered angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Combeinteignhead; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1850-51, 1887	wooden open arcaded extended and now preserved within new	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Combpyne; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1878	wooden solid chest type with sacred emblems referencing early	round-shouldered, eccentric solid w carved 'comb over' knops	functioning	yes
<b>Cookbury; St John the Baptist and the Seven Maccabees</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1870?	parts of rood screen forming solid chest	ancient square-ended solid	functioning	yes
<b>Cornwood; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1875	Cologne altar side chapel	concave-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Cornworthy; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1820?		box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Coryton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1838		square-ended angled corners	functioning	yes

<b>Cotleigh; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1911	wooden open arcaded	Square-ended plain	functioning	yes
<b>Countisbury; St John the Evangelist</b>	parish church	Restored 1796, 1836, 1846	open table very small	concave-shouldered with hat racks	functioning	yes
<b>Cove; St John the Baptist</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Rebuilt 1855		unknown	closed 1995. residential	yes
<b>Cowley; St Antony</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1868		square-ended solid with angled corners	closed. future uncertain	yes
<b>Creacombe; St Michael</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1850		can't remember	closed 1995. residential	yes
<b>Crediton; St Lawrence</b>	Lazar chapel	Restored 1920		chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Crediton; The Holy Cross</b>	Collegiate Church	Restored 1876-7, 1887-9, 1913		archaeological traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Croyde; St Mary Magdalene</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1874	wooden open-fronted chest	chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Cruwys Morchard; Holy Cross</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1680		box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Cullompton; Langford Chapel</b>	place_of_worship	?		unknown	functioning	no
<b>Cullompton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1848-50		box pews with Headington ends 19th	functioning	yes
<b>Culm Davey</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Rebuilt 1860	small open table with turned legs	eccentric solid y-shaped with rounded corners with go!	functioning	yes
<b>Culmstock; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1825, 1879	wooden open arcaded traceried	hollow-shouldered elbows	with functioning	yes
<b>Dalwood; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1876-8		square-ended plain	functioning	yes
<b>Dartington; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1850 rebuilt 1878, -80	cologne Altar	ancient bench ends reset	functioning	yes
<b>Dartmouth; St Barnabas</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1831-3		unknown destroyed	closed. commercial	yes

<b>Dartmouth; St Clement</b>	parish church	Restored 1881-5		destroyed modern chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Dartmouth; St Petrock</b>	parish church		17th communion table	square-shouldered angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Dartmouth; St Saviour</b>	parish church	Restored 1891-3		archaeological traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Dawlish; St Mark</b>	chapel ease (urban)	of Built 1841-51		unknown	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Dawlish; St Gregory the Great</b>	parish church	Restored 1820, 1874		round-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Dean Prior; St George Martyr</b>	parish church	Reseated 1913		square-ended solid plain 1913	functioning	yes
<b>Denbury; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1845, 1866		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Devonport; St Anne, Swilly</b>	mission Church (Urban)	Built 1930		unknown	DEMOLISHED closed 1959	no
<b>Devonport; St Chad Moon Street (now Dockyard Chapel)</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1912		unknown	DEMOLISHED	yes
<b>Devonport; St Clement, Warleigh Avenue</b>	School-chapel (urban)(senior and infants)	Built 1912		chairs	DEMOLISHED; Blitzed closed 1939,	no
<b>Devonport; St John the Baptist</b>	proprietary chapel (urban)	Built 1779		unknown	DEMOLISHED closed 1958	no
<b>Devonport; St Nicholas; Royal Naval Barracks</b>	institutional chapel	Built 1905		unknown	functioning	no
<b>Devonport; St Stephen</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1852-8		'y'-benches	DEMOLISHED; Blitzed 1958	no
<b>Devonport; St Anne, Foliot Road</b>	Mission Church (urban)	Built 1930		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Devonport; St Aubyn</b>	proprietary chapel (urban)	Built 1771, restored 1884		Headington collegiate (prior to recent reordering)	functioning though partially converted to Library use	yes

<b>Devonport; St Barnabas</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1885		chairs	DEMOLISHED and replaced 2002	David King
<b>Devonport; St Bartholomew, Church Street</b>	Mission Church (urban)	Built 1881, Restored 1925		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED and replaced	no
<b>Devonport; St Boniface</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of Built 1911-13		round-shouldered reused	DEMOLISHED	David King
<b>Devonport; St Budeaux</b>	parish church	Restored 1876		Square-ended solid plain with hinged flap seats	functioning	yes
<b>Devonport; St James The Great, Keyham road</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1849-51	now? at St Chad Whiteleigh	Headington	DEMOLISHED 1958	no
<b>Devonport; St Lo</b>	institutional chapel	Built 1700, restored 1814		unknown	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Devonport; St Mark, Ford</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of Built 1874-1885		'Y'-benches	DEMOLISHED and replaced 2007	David King
<b>Devonport; St Mary</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1850-52		Unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED 1959	no
<b>Devonport; St Michael</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of Built 1838-46		round-shouldered destroyed 1941	DEMOLISHED 2007 and replaced	David King
<b>Devonport; St Michael and St George</b>	District Church (urban)	?		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED	David King
<b>Devonport; St Paul</b>	District Church (Urban)	Built 1849		unknown	DEMOLISHED; Blitzed 1958	no
<b>Devonport; St Thomas the Apostle, Keyham</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1906, rebuilt 1904		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED and replaced 2004	David King
<b>Diptford; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church			box pews in situ cut down and fitted with new ends	functioning	yes
<b>Dittisham; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1924	stone panelled ecclesiologic al quatrefoils	chamfered shoulders plain	functioning	yes

<b>Docombe;</b>	Mission church (rural)	c. 1878		round shouldered and square shouldered reused	functioning	yes
<b>Dodbrooke; St Thomas of Canterbury</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)y	Restored 1846, 1886,		square-ended solid plain (horizontal linenfold panels in frontals)	functioning	yes
<b>Doddiscombsleigh; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1875		ancient bench ends reset	functioning	yes
<b>Dolton; St Edmund</b>	parish church	Restored 1848, 1862, 1874	Plain table massively extended	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Dowland; St Peter</b>	parish church	?	open table standing on eight columns	ancient and renaissance	functioning	yes
<b>Down St Mary; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1848, 1866	wooden open arcaded with stone mensa	ancient bench ends well restored pieced together from bits	functioning	yes
<b>Drewsteignton; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1825-7, 1862-3	wooden chest solid carved front	Headington with low doors 1860s nave, aisles and formerly rear numbered	functioning	yes
<b>Dunchideock; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1893		ancient bench ends reset	functioning	yes
<b>Dunkeswell; Holy Trinity (Dunkeswell Abbey)</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1842	stone panelled ecclesiologic al arcaded	hollow shouldered, elbowed ends and open backs	functioning though threatened	yes
<b>Dunkeswell; St Nicholas</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1818, 1864-69	18th Communion table dated 1737 disused	hollow-shouldered eccentric	functioning	yes
<b>Dunsford; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1844-5	modern open table	box pews until 1933 now arts and Crafts square end with tracery panels	functioning	yes
<b>Dunterton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1889-90	wooden solid arcaded very small	chairs old	functioning	yes
<b>East Allington; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restore d 1874-5	wooden chest solid	hollow-shouldered heads and trefoils	domed functioning	yes
<b>East Anstey; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1871		'Queen Anne' c. 1955	functioning	yes

<b>East Buckland; St Michael</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 162-3	plain table on wooden footpacec	Headington, numbered	functioning	yes
<b>East Budleigh; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1884		ancient seating including base rails	reset, functioning	yes
<b>East Down; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1886-88		square-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>East Ogwell; St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Restored 1884	wooden chest type, solid with Annunciation 20th?	square-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>East Portlemouth; St Winwalloe</b>	parish church	Restored 1881	Charles A Nicholson drawings preserved	round-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>East Putford (disused)</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1882		Unknown destroyed	Farm building closed 1971, derelict	yes
<b>East Worlington; St Mary</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1875	wooden solid chest	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Eggbuckland; St Edward</b>	parish church	Restored 1841, 1864	wooden open arcaded	archaeological ended traceried l	Square- functioning	yes
<b>Eggesford; All Saints</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1867	open traceried with central cross motif	Headington and some open forms	functioning	yes
<b>Elburton; St Matthew</b>	mission church (urban)	Built, 1915, rebuilt 1923		chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Ermington; St Peter and St Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1889	marble panel in wooden frame	archaeological traceried and plain Pinwill horizontal linenfold	functioning	yes
<b>Escot; St Philip and St James</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1837	gothick table (disused)	poppyheads round-topped panelled , some with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Exbourne; St Mary Blessed Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1879	plain open table with cross device and IHS symbbol	Square-ended richly carved edwardian	functioning	yes

<b>Exeter; Allhallows Goldsmith Street</b>	parish church	Restored 1883-4	destroyed	round-shouldered destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1906	no	
<b>Exeter; Allhallows on the Walls</b>	Replaceme nt Church (urban)	Rebuilt 1841-5	destroyed	unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1950s	no	
<b>Exeter; Bedford Chapel</b>	proprietary chapel (urban)	Built 1831- 2, restored 1897	destroyed	unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED; Blitzed	no	
<b>Exeter; Emmanuel</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1897- 1901		square-ended truncated corners destroyed	traceried destroyed	closed 2016 residential	yes
<b>Exeter; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Built 1819 Restored 1884 (executed 1889)	plain open table now at Talatou	hollow-shouldered elbowed alternating each end now at Tiverton St Paul	closed, commercial	yes	
<b>Exeter; Holy Trinity (Wynards)</b>	almshouse chapel	Restored 1863-4		Poppyheads for Almsmen	closed private owners	yes	
<b>Exeter; St Andrew; Willeys Avenue</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1904		destroyed	DEMOLISH ED and replaced	no	
<b>Exeter; St Anne</b>	almshouse chapel	Restored c. 1910		unknown destroyed	functioning Now Orthodox	yes	
<b>Exeter; St Catherine's Chapel</b>	almshouse chapel	Restored c. 1900		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED; Blitzed	yes	
<b>Exeter; St Catherine's Mission Church</b>	mission church (urban)	Built c. 1881		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED	no	
<b>Exeter; St Clare</b>	almshouse chapel	Restored 1850s		unknown	functioning	yes	
<b>Exeter; St David</b>	Replaceme nt Church (urban)	Rebuilt 1819, enlarged 1839-40, rebuilt 1897-1901		box pews until 1897, then open benches	functioning	yes	

<b>Exeter; St Edmund</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1834		chairs destroyed	preserved ruin, partially demolished 1972	yes
<b>Exeter; St George The Martyr</b>	parish church			unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1843	no
<b>Exeter; St James</b>	proprietary chapel (urban)	Built 1835 Rebuilt 1875, 1880		Y- benches destroyed	DEMOLISH ED; Blitzed	no
<b>Exeter; St John</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1843		pointed destroyed	DEMOLISH ED closed 1936, partially	no
<b>Exeter; St John's Hospital</b>	institutional chapel			unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1879	no
<b>Exeter; St Kerrian</b>	parish church			unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1878	no
<b>Exeter; St Lawrence</b>	parish church	Restored 1847	wooden open front traceried hangings behind destroyed	Headington destroyed 1942	DEMOLISH ED; Blitzed	no
<b>Exeter; St Leonard</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1833, rebuilt 1875		chairs destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Loye</b>	wayside chapel				preserved ruin	yes
<b>Exeter; St Loye's School chapel</b>	school- chapel (urban)	Built 1882		Adjustable school desks	closed, now residential	yes
<b>Exeter; St Luke; Countess Wear</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1837-9		archaeological 20th centiury	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Luke's Chapel</b>	institutional chapel	Built 1852-4, enlarged 1912		unknown destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Mark</b>	District church (urban)	Built 1934-7		chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Martin</b>	Parish Church	Restored 1875		box pews	preserved Churches Conservatio n Trust	yes

<b>Exeter; St Mary Arches</b>	parish church	Restored 1867-68	square-ended 1942	Destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Mary Magdalene</b>	District church (urban)	Built 1859-62	unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISH ED 1933	no
<b>Exeter; St Mary Major</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1864	hollow-shouldered foliate elbows	with	DEMOLISH ED 1971	no
<b>Exeter; St Mary Steps</b>	parish church	Restored 1824-6, 1874-5	square-ended square-ended replicas	plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Matthew</b>	Mission Church (urban)	Built 1881-1890	shouldered	20th	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Michael and All Angels (Mount Dinham)</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1864-8	shouldered	round-headed	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Olave</b>	parish church	Restored 1815, 1890s	square-shouldered	old box pew material	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Pancras</b>	parish church	Restored 1830, 1888	round-shouldered	destroyed (as at Allhallows?)	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1877 reseated	unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISH ED closed 1936,	no
<b>Exeter; St Paul (Burnthouse Lane)</b>	District Church (urban)	Built c. 1936	unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISH ED	no
<b>Exeter; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1828, 1881	Headington destroyed	traceried	functioning, partially converted	yes
<b>Exeter; St Sidwell</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1815, restored 1823 and 1875	concave-shouldered corners	angled	functioning, partially converted	yes
<b>Exeter; St Stephen</b>	parish church	Restored 1826, 1890s	unknown	destroyed from St matthias Ilsham	functioning	yes
<b>Exeter; St Thomas the Apostle</b>	parish church	Restored 1826, 1840s, 1875	stone panelled ecclesiologic al	Headington traceried 1871 High pews 'A thing of the past' Tedas QR	functioning	yes

<b>Exminster; St Martin</b>	parish church			Archaeological and ancient benches reset	functioning	yes
<b>Exmouth; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1825, Restored 1905-7		concave shouldered elbowed	functioning	yes
<b>Exmouth; St Andrew</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1896		Unknown destroyed	closed, now residential	yes
<b>Exton; St Andrew</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1864		unknown destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Exwick; St Andrew</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1841, restored 1873-5	stone panelled ecclesiologic al	archaeological traceried solid 1840s	functioning	yes
<b>Farringdon; St Petrock and St Barnabas</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1870-1	veranda type, solid back and two legs	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Farway; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1874-6	16th communion table	concave-shouldered foliate elbows angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Feniton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1877		Square-ended solid traceried inc. med removed	functioning	yes
<b>Filleigh; St Paul</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Rebuilt 1732, restored 1876-7		eccentric framed panelled round shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Fremington; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1866-67	17th communion table as mentioned	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Frithelstock; St Mary and St Gregory</b>	parish church	Restored 1885-6	open arcaded table hangings behind	ancient ends and benches reset	functioning	yes
<b>Galmpton (South Huish); Holy Trinity</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Built 1867-8-		'y'-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Georgeham; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1876-7	open arcaded table central cross motif	round shouldered solid pine	functioning	yes
<b>Georgenympton; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1882	wooden open table	square-ended traceried replica and restored med	functioning	yes

<b>Germansweek; St German</b>	parish church	Restored 1870		Headington, designs by Hooper included	functioning	yes
<b>Gidleigh; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1853		chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Gittisham; St Michael</b>	parish church			box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Goodleigh; St Gregory</b>	parish church	Restored 1881	wooden open table	Headington variation with tracery panels	functioning	yes
<b>Goodrington; St George</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1939		chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Great Torrington; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1828, 1861		concave shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Gulworthy; St Paul</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1856		concave-shouldered domed tops	functioning	yes
<b>Gunn; The Holy Name</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1873	1935 Pinwill PWC	eccentric shouldered and triangular roundels With Go!	functioning	yes
<b>Hacombe; St Blaise</b>	parish church	Restored 1863-4	17th communion table	square-ended traceried	gothick functioning	yes
<b>Halberton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1847-9		hollow-shouldered and plain	traceried functioning	yes
<b>Halwell; St Leonard</b>	parish church	Restored 1879		box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Halwill; St Peter and St James</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1876-9	wooden chest type solid extended with side brackets	square-shouldered pine	functioning	yes
<b>Harberton; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1824-6, 1870		Headington with tracery and low doors	functioning	yes
<b>Harbertonford; St Peter</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1859		hollow-shouldered angled corners	elbows functioning	yes
<b>Harford; St Petrock</b>	parish church		wooden traceried chest type dated (by plaque) 1897	square-ended plain solid moulded top separate	functioning	yes

<b>Harpford; St Gregory the Great</b>	parish church	Restored 1883-4	open fronted three crosses	square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Harracott; Holy Trinity</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1842	unknown	Unknown destroyed	closed 1972 residential use	yes
<b>Hartland Town; St John</b>	Chapel of ease (urban)	Built 1837	unknown	unknown	closed 1972, community use	yes
<b>Hartland; Bursdon Moor, St Martin</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1920?	unknown	Unknown destroyed	closed 2005, residential	yes
<b>Hartland; Stoke St Nectan</b>	parish church	Restored 1848-9	stone Altar tomb from Abbey set up 1848	ancient square-ended solid	functioning	yes
<b>Hatherleigh; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church		17th-18th table large	square-ended plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Hawkchurch; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1859-61	wooden plain table extended	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Hawkerland</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1889		unknown destroyed	closed residential	no
<b>Heanton Punchardon; St Augustine</b>	parish church	Restored 1889-90	modern nave altar	ancient and replicas	functioning	yes
<b>Heavitree; St Michael and all Angels</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1844		Poppyheads (destroyed) replaced by modern square-ended	functioning	yes
<b>Hele; The Good Shepherd</b>	school-chapel (urban)	Built 1883		unknown	closed 1928 commercial	yes
<b>Hemyock; St Mary</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1845-8	plain table open	poppyhead variation with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Hennock; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1860 contemplated 1874-5	wooden chest solid carved utilising old material	concave-shouldered, shafts and roundel	functioning	yes
<b>Herner Chapel</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Built 1888		unknown (Square ended?)	functioning	yes
<b>High Bickington; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1873		ancient antiquarian collection	functioning	yes

<b>High Bray; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1873	Plain Table	open	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Highampton; Holy Cross</b>	parish church	Restored 1834	plain table	open	round-shouldered angled corners	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Highweek; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1892	open mod	table	square-shouldered headington variation		functioning	yes
<b>Hittisleigh; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1926-27	18th console	with legs	square-ended solid		functioning	yes
<b>Hockworthy; St Simon and St Jude</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1862-66	plain table	open	square-ended solid plain with doors		functioning	yes
<b>Holbeton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1895-7	marble in frame	front wood	archaeological square-ended traceried		functioning	yes
<b>Holcombe Burrell; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1843-4	wooden chest heavily carved		Headington with low doors 1844		functioning	yes
<b>Holcombe Rogus; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1858-9			concave-shouldered roundels	with	functioning	yes
<b>Holcombe; St George</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1867			concave-shouldered modern		functioning	yes
<b>Hollacombe; St Petroc</b>	parish church	Restored 1880-2	Barley-sugar legged table incorporated into larger structure extendede		chairs modern		functioning	yes
<b>Hollocombe(Chulmleigh); St Michael and All Angels</b>	School-chapel (rural)	Built 1890-1			unknown destroyed		closed residential	no
<b>Holne; St Mary Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1840s, 1909	flimsy modern table with columnar legs		Headington with low doors replaced by square-ended solid plain after 1960		functioning	yes
<b>Holsworthy; Ss Peter and St Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1865, 1882-4			Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Honeychurch; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1907			ancient misc		functioning	yes

<b>Honicknowle; St Francis</b>	district church (urban)	Built 1938		shouldered benches	functioning	yes	
<b>Honiton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1896, 1911		Headington Stabb (destroyed)	functioning but threatened	yes	
<b>Honiton; St Paul</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1835-8, Restored 1848, 1904		'Queen Anne' classical shouldered and panelled	functioning	yes	
<b>Hooe; St John the Evangelist</b>	Replacement Church (rural)	Built 1854		eccentric assymetric	functioning	yes	
<b>Hope Cove; St Clement</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built c.1870	wooden solid panelled richly carved later	fishtail or poppyhead	truncated	functioning	yes
<b>Horrabridge; St John the Baptist</b>	Replacement Church (urban)	Built 1830, rebuilt 1892		'y'-benches	functioning	yes	
<b>Horwood; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1889	17th-18th communion table	ancient bench ends plain and traceried	functioning	yes	
<b>Huccaby; St Raphael</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1868	open table	Adjustable school desks Geo M Hammer London	functioning	yes	
<b>Huish; St James the Less</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1873	wooden chest arcaded secondary	square-ended plain	functioning	yes	
<b>Huntsham; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1854-1871		archaeological square-ended replicas	functioning	yes	
<b>Huntshaw; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church	Restored 1862 aisle rebuilt	wooden chest arcaded solid	square-ended with simple Gothic detail as at Haccombe	functioning	yes	
<b>Huxham; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1865, 1871		nosed solid	functioning	yes	
<b>Iddesleigh; St James</b>	parish church	restored 1878-9	plain open table secondary	archaeological traceried	functioning	yes	

<b>Ide; St Ida</b>	parish church		Rebuilt 1838, restored c.1910	Box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Ideford; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church		Restored 1852	destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Ilfracombe; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church		Restored 1861	enormous Elizabethan style, extended, earlier chest preserved within	square-ended panelled traceried not quite headington many with later flap seats	functioning yes
<b>Ilfracombe; St Peter</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1902-3	chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Ilfracombe; St Philip and St James</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1851-57	Headington, with applied tracery	functioning	yes
<b>Ilsington; St Michael</b>	parish church		Restored 1882 (nave)	Square-ended solid	functioning	yes
<b>Instow; All Saints</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	of	Built 1936	chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Instow; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church		Restored 1875	Square-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Inwardleigh; St Petrock</b>	parish church		Restored 1898	open arcaded with central cross motif	round-shouldered solid	functioning yes
<b>Ipplepen; St Andrew</b>	parish church		Restored 1872 (chancel), 1892	headington; hollow shouldered (western choir seats)	functioning	yes
<b>Ivybridge; St John the Evangelist</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1882	wooden chest type with colonnade	square-ended plain solid pine	functioning yes
<b>Jacobstowe; St James</b>	parish church		Restored 1886, 1902	poppyhead, solid, splat-style uncarved	functioning	yes
<b>Kelly; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church		Restored 1879	Headington with brattished middle rail and tracery panels	functioning	yes
<b>Kenn; St Andrew</b>	parish church		Restored 1863 (chancel), 1866-9	ancient and replicas	functioning	yes

<b>Kennerleigh; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1847-8	open table modern	ancient and modern square-ended plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Kentisbeare; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1865-6		Headington traceried with brattished middle rail	functioning	yes
<b>Kentisbury; St Thomas</b>	parish church	Restored 1873-4		elbowed concave shouldered (as at trentishoe)	functioning	yes
<b>Kenton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1854,		ancient and modern square-ended plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Killerton; The Holy Evangelists</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Built 1838-41	stone ecclesiologic al Norman	collegiate	preserved National Trust	yes
<b>Kilmington; St Giles</b>	parish church	Restored 1832 Rebuilt 1862	open-arcaded tble	square-ended angled corners solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Kingsbridge; St Edmund King and Martyr</b>	ancient chapelry (Urban)	Restored 1827, 1849		Box pews 1849 replaced with plain panelled (or doors removed?)	functioning	yes
<b>Kingskerswell; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1856,1875	muscular chest with piercings disused	Square-ended angled corners solid with roundels	functioning	yes
<b>Kingsnympton; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1755		Box pews	functioning	yes
<b>Kingsteignton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1824,1865		modern benches	functioning	yes
<b>Kingston; St James the Less</b>	parish church	Restored 1892-94	modern	square-ended plain solid pine	functioning	yes
<b>Kingswear; St Thomas of Canterbury</b>	parish church	Restored 1844-49	wooden chest solid quatrefoils 1840s extended	square-shouldered replacing Headington	20th functioning	yes
<b>Knowle (Barnstaple)</b>	mission church (rural)	Built c.1900		unknown	closed residential	yes

<b>Knowle (Budleigh Salterton); St John</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Built 1893		unknown destroyed	closed 2012	yes
<b>Knowle (Crediton); St Boniface</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built c.1870s	open arcaded table	Y-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Knowstone; St Peter</b>	parish church	?	wooden open arcaded	box pews doors removed	functioning	yes
<b>Lamerton; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1876		Square-ended solid traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Landcross; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1865	open table with single arch	ancient benches reset	functioning	yes
<b>Landkey; St Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1870	wooden chest solid with forward jowls	square-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Landscape; St Matthew</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1849-51		buttressed not Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Langtree; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1865	imported continental rococo	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Lapford; St Thomas of Canterbury</b>	parish church	Restored 1888		ancient benches much restored	functioning	yes
<b>Lee; St Matthews</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1833, Restored 1860		unknown destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Leusdon; St John the Baptist</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1864	wooden open arcaded	Y-benches now replaced with chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Lewtrenchard; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1877-1890	open table plain	ancient antiquarian collection	functioning	yes
<b>Lifton; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1871		Headington with scooped cusps	functioning	yes
<b>Little Torrington; St Giles</b>	parish church	Restored 1866-7		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Littleham (Bideford); St Swithun</b>	parish church	Restored 1874, 1891-2		ancient	functioning	yes
<b>Littleham cum Exmouth; St Margaret &amp; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1883	wooden chest type (reversed at time of recording to form crib	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes

<b>Littlehempston; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1863	wooden chest solid linenfold	archaeological solid traceried lidstone diapered frontals	functioning	yes
<b>Loddiswell; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church		plain table	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Loxbear; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1850 (chancel), 1896	20th chest type	Headington some with draw seats	functioning	yes
<b>Loxhore; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1844, 1882, 1900	open fronted table	Headingtonish square ended panelled	functioning	yes
<b>Luffincott; St James</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)		chest type solid arcaded small 1918	square-ended solid	preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Lundy; St Helen</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Built 1896	open arcaded table	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Luppitt; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1870-71, 1881		square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Luscombe Castle chapel</b>	private domestic chapel	Built 1862		y-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Lustleigh; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored c.1850 (chancel), 1869-72	wooden chest type solid	archaeological modern richly carved	functioning	yes
<b>Luton; St John</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1852-1855	wooden chest	Y- Benches	functioning	yes
<b>Lydford; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1888-9		archaeological square-ended traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Lympstone; Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1830, 1864-7		Headington with tracery inserts	functioning	yes

<b>Lynmouth; St John the Baptist</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1869-70		chairs		functioning	yes
<b>Lynton; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1833, 1869, 1891, 1905?	open arcaded	chairs		functioning	yes
<b>Malborough; All Saints</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)	Restored 1844 (some mullions replaced in wood), 1870	Cologne altar	square-ended solid plain		functioning	yes
<b>Mamhead; St Thomas the Apostle</b>	parish church	Restored 1830, 1854, 1914-15		Headington (aisles)	with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Manaton; St Winifred</b>	parish church	Restored 1893	modern stone altar	archaeological 1925	traciated	functioning	yes
<b>Mariansleigh; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1876-1877	wooden open arcaded	mixed reclaimed headington and really strange	selection with open backs supports	functioning	yes
<b>Maristow Chapel</b>	private domestic chapel	Built 1871		double-shouldered unusual	very	functioning	yes
<b>Marldon; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1884	open arcaded with central cross motif fulford style	concave elbows	shouldered with	functioning	yes
<b>Martinhoe; St Martin</b>	parish church	Restored 1867	wooden chest with traciated and buttressed front	round-shouldered elbowed	and	functioning	yes
<b>Marwood; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1858-9 (chancel), 1903		med benches nave		functioning	yes
<b>Mary Tavy; St Mary</b>	parish church	1893?	wooden chest type solid panelled	shouldered	traciated solid	functioning	yes

<b>Marystow; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1866	open wooden table, secondary, replacing much shorter	square-ended traceried with doors	panelled	functioning	yes
<b>Meavy; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1874-75	wooden chest solid carved with stone mensa	round-shouldered pine		functioning	yes
<b>Meeth; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1892-3	17th-century table large in use	ancient square-ended with carved initials	plain	functioning	yes
<b>Membury; St John the Baptist</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1892, 1909	plain open table	square-ended construction plain	panelled	functioning	yes
<b>Merton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1874	wooden chest type solid pierced central cross motif	concave-shouldered round heads with Go!	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Meshaw; St John</b>	parish church	Restored 1838, 1879, 1904	open table bracketed chunky	Headington incorporating box pew material		functioning	yes
<b>Milber; St Luke</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1936	stone altar 20th	chairs modern		functioning	yes
<b>Milton Abbot; St Constantine &amp; Aegidius</b>	parish church	Restored 1860	open table in late gothic style	Headington incorporating box pew material		functioning	yes
<b>Milton Combe; The Holy Spirit</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1878	open table	archaeological 19th from Tavistock		functioning	yes
<b>Milton Damerel; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1904	wooden chest type solid	Headington with cusps	scooped	functioning	yes
<b>Modbury; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1860	open table on six octagonal columns	Headington very narrow		functioning	yes
<b>Molland; St Mary</b>	parish church		17th-18th communion table small	box pews		functioning	yes
<b>Monkleigh; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1879		Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Monkokehampton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1855	wooden plain open table	square-shouldered solid		functioning	yes

<b>Monkton; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church	Restored 1861-3		unknown	closed 2004 privately owned	no
<b>Morchard Bishop; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1887-91	very chunky plain table	box pews cut down	functioning	yes
<b>Morebath; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1875-82		eccentric round-shouldered and back buttresses	functioning	yes
<b>Moreleigh; All Saints</b>	parish church			box pews reset with new round-shouldered ends	functioning	yes
<b>Moretonhampstead; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1856, 1904-5	open arcaded table	elbowed-shouldered 1905	functioning	yes
<b>Mortehoe; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church	Restored 1857-60	open table saltire braces	ancient and replicas	functioning	yes
<b>Muddiford</b>	mission church (rural)	Built c.1900		unknown destroyed	closed, commercial	no
<b>Murchington; St Andrew</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1889		unknown	closed 1954, sold 1975. residential.	yes
<b>Musbury; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1865 (chancel), 1874-6		eccentric composite round-topped with go very unusual	functioning	yes
<b>Netherexe; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1890, 1906		chairs	functioning, but seldom	yes
<b>New Buildings; Beacon Church</b>	school-chapel (rural)	Built 1874	wooden chest solid traceried	Adjustable school desks by Wippel & Co	functioning	yes
<b>Newport; Barnstaple; St John the Baptist</b>	replacement church (urban)	Built 1829, restored 1882, 1928		chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Newton Abbot, Wolborough; St Paul</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1859-61	wooden open table	concave-shouldered solid w tusk tenons and feet, raised on further feet	functioning	yes
<b>Newton Abbot; St Leonard</b>	Ancient Chapelry (urban)	Built 1835, restored 1876		unknown destroyed	closed, derelict	yes

<b>Newton Abbot; St Mary's Chapel Highweek</b>	Ancient Chapelry (urban)	Restored 1871			closed, residential	
<b>Newton Ferrers; Holy Cross</b>	parish church	Restored 1885-6		chairs replaced with square- ended solid plain 20th	functioning	yes
<b>Newton Poppleford; St Luke</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1825, 1876	antiquarian assemblage, possibly assembled from a four poster	destroyed; modern chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Newton St Cyres; St Cyriac &amp; Julitta</b>	parish church	Restored 1830-1, 1913		modern benches	functioning	yes
<b>Newton St Petrock; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1884, 1887	very odd 17th or 19th open table heavily carved	Headington , cusped incorporating renaissance screen panels	functioning	yes
<b>Newton Tracey; St Thomas Becket</b>	parish church	Restored 1868	Open chest type with central cross motif	Square-shouldered, removed	functioning	yes
<b>No Mans Chapel (Thorverton); dedication uncertain.</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)			unknown destroyed	functioning cemetery chapel	yes
<b>North Bovey; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored c.1920		Archaeological replica	functioning	yes
<b>North Huish; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored c. 1880	open table central panel	Canararvon arched heads and roundels	preserved Churches Conservatio n Trust	yes
<b>North Lew; St Thomas of Canterbury</b>	parish church	Restored 1883		ancient benches repaired and reset	functioning	yes
<b>North Molton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1884-5	plain table	concave-shouldered elbowed	and functioning	yes
<b>North Petherwin;</b>	parish church	Restored 1878	wooden chest with open arcades, now filled	Square-ended plain tracery	and functioning	yes

<b>North Tawton; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1829, 1832 (chancel)	17th-18th communion table with barley sugar legs, small, extended	ancient carved bench ends reset on modern benches	functioning	yes
<b>Northam; St Margaret</b>	parish church	Restored 1849-65	open arcaded traceried	Archaeological traceried ends	varied functioning	yes
<b>Northleigh; St Giles</b>	parish church	Restored 1868	open arcaded table	ancient bench ends reset	functioning	yes
<b>Noss Mayo; St Peter</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1838, rebuilt 1880-82		Archaeological traceried ends	varied functioning	yes
<b>Nymet Rowland; St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Restored 1873, 1889	wooden open arcaded hangings within	square-ended solid with chamfered corners solid pine in nave and aisle	functioning	yes
<b>Oakford; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1837-40	modern wooden chest	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Offwell; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1798, 1853	open table chunky extended	box pews 1798	functioning	yes
<b>Okehampton; All Saints</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1842	open arcaded table	box pews traceried with plain doors same height	functioning	yes
<b>Okehampton; St James' Chapel</b>	Ancient Chapelry (urban)	Restored 1862		Headington with flap seats	functioning civic chapel	yes
<b>Oldridge; St Thomas</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Rebuilt 1789, 1841-2	stone shelf on brackets	Archaeological square-ended traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Oreston; the Good Shepherd</b>	school-chapel (urban)	Built 1886	wooden open fronted chest type with cross motif	chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Otterton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1869-71		round-shouldered corners numbered	angled functioning but threatened	yes

<b>Ottery St Mary; St Mary the Virgin</b>	Collegiate Church	Restored 1847-50			nosed solid ends with Gothic alternating with round- shouldered. Micro buttresses . some with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Paignton; St Michael Derrel  Road</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1938			unknown destroyed	closed, residential	no
<b>Paignton; Christchurch</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1886-8			y-benches straight	functioning	yes
<b>Paignton; St Andrew</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1892-7			chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Paignton; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1864			chairs mod	functioning	yes
<b>Paignton; St Paul</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1939	open plain	table	square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Pancrasweek; St Pancras</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1894- (chancel), 1910	wooden chest	arcaded solid	chairs 19th	functioning	yes
<b>Parkham; St James</b>	parish church	Restored 1875	plain table	open	X-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Parracombe; Christchurch</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1878	plain table legs	open eight	round-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Parracombe; St Petrock</b>	parish church				box pews and ancient benches	preserved Churches Consrvation Trust	yes
<b>Payhembury; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1895-8			archaeological	functioning	yes
<b>Pennycross; St Pancras</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Restored 1820, 1870			Gothic topped benches solid with roundels	functioning	yes
<b>Peter Tavy; St Peter</b>	parish church		open fronted gridded arcaded		Headington variation with cuspings	functioning	yes
<b>Petersmarland; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1865	modern- commemor ates great war		Square-shouldered solid	functioning	yes

<b>Petrockstowe; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1877	wooden chest solid 20th	square-shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Petton; St Petrock</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Rebuilt 1847	very open spirally twisted columns	Headington with lower doors	functioning	yes
<b>Pilton; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church		17th communion table cup and cover legs huge	square-ended solid angled corners roundels	functioning	yes
<b>Pinhoe; Mission Church</b>	school chapel (rural)	Built 1863		unknown	functioning	yes
<b>Pinhoe; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1833,1879		square-ended solid with high stops	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth Laira; St Mary the Virgin</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1907-14		chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; All Saints, Harwell Street</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1872-80, completed 1910		chairs	DEMOLISHED	David King
<b>Plymouth; Charles</b>	Parish Church	Built 1640-58, restored 1828		destroyed	preserved ruin	yes
<b>Plymouth; Christchurch Eton Place</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1844-6 restored 1896		mixture of Y and open benches with domed tops, replacing high pews? DESTROYED	DEMOLISHED closed 1965	no
<b>Plymouth; Emmanuel</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1836 Rebuilt 1870, 1881, 1895	1950 Pinwill PWC	round-cut corners solid W umbrella stands	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; Holy Trinity, Southside Street</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1841	in chancel bay	unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED; Blitzed	no
<b>Plymouth; Knackersknowle, Holy Trinity Crownhill</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1837-1850		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Plymouth; St Alban Crownhill</b>	District Church (urban)	?		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no

<b>Plymouth; St Andrew</b>	parish church		Restored 1824, 1875		Square-ended 1941	destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Augustine Lipson</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1898		open benches	domed tops	DEMOLISHED	David King
<b>Plymouth; St Catherine</b>	chapel ease (urban)	of	Built 1832, Restored 1879-80		unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Plymouth; St Gabriel; Peverell</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of	Built 1908-10	wooden chest type	chairs old		functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St James the Less</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1854-60		unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISHED; Blitzed	no
<b>Plymouth; St John the Evangelist</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1851-5	open wooden table extended	square-ended Westcountry type	solid	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Jude; Beaumont Road</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1875-6		round-shouldered (architect designed), ICBS drawings		functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Katherine; The Hoe</b>	institutional chapel		Rebuilt 1845		unknown	extant	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Luke, Tavistock Place</b>	Chapel Ease (urban)	of	Built 1828, Restored 1897		box pews facing inwards towards pulpit	DESTROYED	closed 1964 and converted to Library use	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Martin Tavistock Road</b>					unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Plymouth; St Mary and St Mary Magdalen Cattedown</b>	mission church (urban)		Built 1911-12		unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISHED 2007-8	David King
<b>Plymouth; St Matthias</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1887	open arcaded	archaeological ended traceried	Square-	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Matthias Mission Church</b>	mission church (urban)		Built 1891		unknown	destroyed	DEMOLISHED	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Michael's West Hoe</b>	school-chapel (urban)		Rebuilt 1891		unknown		Functioning Orthodox use	yes

<b>Plymouth; St Peter; Wyndham Square</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1830 restored 1848, rebuilt 1879-82	1938 tabernacle top Pinwill Destroyed PWC	destroyed 1941	functioning	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Philip; Weston Mill</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1912		Y-benches with haunches destroyed	DEMOLISH ED and replaced 2014	yes
<b>Plymouth; St Saviour</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1870, enlarged 1883		unknown destroyed	DEMOLISH ED	no
<b>Plymouth; St Simon, Mount Gould</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1902-7	R.B. Hunt?	chairs	functioning but threatened	yes
<b>Plympton; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1858, 1866		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Plympton; St Maurice</b>	parish church	Restored 1878	wooden open arcaded	archaeological traceried solid some dated 1879	functioning	yes
<b>Plymstock; St Mary and All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1828	wooden chest with pierced traceried front	round-shouldered angled corners	functioning	yes
<b>Plymtree; St John</b>	parish church	Restored 1895		ancient benches traceried ends	functioning	yes
<b>Poltimore; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1879-82		ancient and modern square- ended plain and traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Posbury; St Francis (proprietary chapel)</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Built 1930s		unknown	functioning, but uncertain	yes
<b>Posbury; St Luke (proprietary chapel)</b>	Chapel of Ease (rural)	Built 1836	open plain table	garden bench with book desks	functioning	yes
<b>Postbridge; St Gabriel</b>	school- chapel (rural)	Built 1869	plain open table tusk- tenoned	Square-ended solid 1930s- 50s	functioning	yes
<b>Pottle Lake Chapel</b>	proprietary chapel	Built 1893		unknown destroyed	closed residential	yes
<b>Poughill; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1856 (guide)	17th-18th barley-sugar legs	box pews in aisle, round- shouldered	functioning	yes

<b>Powderham; St Clement;</b>	parish church	Restored 1857-8,	wooden chest solid traceried front	archaeological ended	Square-	functioning	yes
<b>Princetown; St Michael</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1812, Restored 1876, 1899,1902, 1908,		y-benches		preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Puddington; St Thomas a Becket</b>	parish church	Restored 1837-48		Archaeological d replicating originals	1837-40	functioning	yes
<b>Pyworthy; St Swithun</b>	parish church	Restored 1884	20th wooden replacing Fulford type	shouldered and nosed		functioning	yes
<b>Queens Nympton</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)			None survives		Ruined	no
<b>Rackenford; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1877-1902		box pews cut down		functioning	yes
<b>Rattery; Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	parish church			concave shouldered with trefoils		functioning	yes
<b>Revelstoke; St Peter the Poor Fisherman</b>	parish church	c.1880		some chamfered-shouldered with open backs		preserved ruin Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Rewe; St Mary Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1867-8		ancient and modern square-ended plain and traceried		functioning	yes
<b>Ringmore (Shaldon); St Nicholas</b>	parish church	Restored c. 1900	stone, early 20th	y-benches		functioning	yes
<b>Ringmore; All Hallows</b>	parish church	Restored 1862-3	plain table	open Muscular cusped stiles and rails	panelled with	functioning	yes
<b>Roborough; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1868 (Chancel)	very strange chunky open fronted, extended N and S	ancient and replicas		functioning	yes
<b>Rockbeare; St Mary with St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1888	timber arcaded	Headington pine		functioning	yes

<b>Romansleigh; St Rumon</b>	parish church	Restored 1887	Small open arcaded (hangings within)	Headington pine	functioning	yes
<b>Rose Ash; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1874,	wooden chest solid	Archaeological dated 1893	functioning	yes
<b>Rousdon</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1872	possibly now at Combepyne ?	unknown destroyed?	closed residential	yes
<b>Salcombe Regis; St Mary and St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1869 chancel		Headington with fielded panels	functioning	yes
<b>Salcombe; Holy Trinity</b>	ancient chapelry (urban)	Built 1800, rebuilt 1841, Restored 1889,	Stone altar moved to chapel 1900, new wooden altar 1900 originally open arcaded both front and rear??	round-shouldered solid, open backs, removed in modern reordering	functioning	yes
<b>Sampfords Courtenay; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1889	wooden open arcaded traceried replacing v small sq one	chairs old	functioning	yes
<b>Sampfords Peverell; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1861-4		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Sampfords Spiney; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1829, 1865-8	muscular open table with braces	round-shouldered crosses	incised	functioning yes
<b>Sandford; St Swithun</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1848		ancient bench ends fitted with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Satterleigh; St Peter's</b>	parish church	?		Square-ended solid traceried 19th?	preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Saunton; St Annes Church</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Built 1896	wooden open arcaded	square-shouldered modern	functioning	yes
<b>Seaton; St Gregory</b>	parish church	Restored 1817, 1868, 1901	wooden chest solid carved early 20th	Headington panelled with applied tracery	functioning	yes
<b>Shaldon; St Peter</b>	parish church	Built 1893-1902		chairs, now replaced	functioning	yes

<b>Shaugh Prior; St Edward</b>	parish church	Restored 1869 (chancel ecclesiastical commissioners)	wooden open arcaded later stone top	round-shouldered angled tops	with	functioning	yes
<b>Shebbear; St Michael</b>	parish church	?	wooden open arcaded	Headington in pitch pine		functioning	yes
<b>Sheepstor; St Leonard</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1862	Wooden chest type solid panelled	Headington in pitch pine 1860s		functioning	yes
<b>Sheepwash; St Lawrence</b>	replacement church (rural)	Rebuilt 1879-80	wooden chest solid arcaded	square-ended one rounded corner panelled diagonal boards		functioning	yes
<b>Sheldon; St James the Great</b>	parish church	Restored 1834	open arcaded table	round-shouldered		functioning	yes
<b>Sherford; St Martin</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)	?	wooden open single arch	square-ended diapered frontals as at Chivelstone		functioning	yes
<b>Shillingford St George; St George</b>	parish church	Restored 1856	20th traceried chest type	archaeological mixture of med and replicas	traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Shiphay; St John the Baptist</b>	school-chapel (urban)	Built 1897		chairs		functioning	yes
<b>Shirwell; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1873-79	open table	Square-ended solid		functioning	yes
<b>Shobrooke; St Swithun</b>	parish church	Restored 1843, 1878-80	wooden chest type pierced with small cinquefoils	Headington panelled with applied tracery		functioning	yes
<b>Shute; (Whitford) St Mary at Cross</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1908		chairs mod		functioning	yes
<b>Shute; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1868	wooden open arcaded	Headington panelled with applied tracery		functioning	yes
<b>Sidbury; St Giles and St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1843, 1884, 1890s		Headington chunky umbrella holders 1880s	with	functioning	yes

<b>Sidford; St Peter</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1867-73	open-fronted table	y-benches		functioning	yes
<b>Sidmouth; All Saints</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1837-9	heavily carved open table	box pews originally destroyed	all	functioning	yes
<b>Sidmouth; St Giles and St Nicholas</b>	parish church		Aisle 1822, Rebuilt 1859-60	wooden chest modern	benches replaced by White mod	now benches	functioning	yes
<b>Silverton; St Mary</b>	parish church		Restored 1861-3		Headington doors indeed	with very low	functioning	yes
<b>Slapton; St James the Great</b>	parish church		Restored 1831, 1885-1905		y-benches		functioning	yes
<b>Sourton; St Thomas a Becket</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)		Restored 1848		square-ended solid		functioning	yes
<b>South Brent; St Petrock</b>	parish church		Restored 1870		round-shouldered solid with angled corners		functioning	yes
<b>South Huish; Holy Trinity</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)				ancient, now at Powderham		Preserved ruin c1868	yes
<b>South Milton; All Saints</b>	ancient chapelry (rural)		?	plain open table	square-ended solid plain old?		functioning	yes
<b>South Molton; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church		advertised 1859; 1864-66	wooden chest modern	concave-shouldered pine		functioning	yes
<b>South Pool; St Nicholas and St Cyriac</b>	parish church			plain open table modern	square-ended solid plain with provision for candle-holders as at Stokenham, but slightly different diapered frontals		functioning	yes
<b>South Tawton; St Andrew</b>	parish church		Restored 1881	not seen	Archaeological square-ended traceried and med reset		functioning	yes
<b>South Zeal; St Mary</b>	place_of_worship		Restored 1877	open arcaded	y-benches destroyed chairs modern		functioning	yes

<b>Southleigh; St Lawrence</b>	parish church	Restored 1826-7, 1854		rounded-shoulders angled corners and back buttresses with go	functioning	yes
<b>Sowton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1845		archaeological square-ended replicas	functioning	yes
<b>Sparkwell; All Saints</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Restored 1904-1908		square-ended solid plain 20th	functioning	yes
<b>Spreyton; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1913	wooden open arcaded small with large stone mensa found in porch restored 1928	Box pews removed 19th. Chairs (stabb). Minimal Y benches 1913? replaced with archaeological 20th	functioning	yes
<b>St Giles in the Heath; St Giles</b>	parish church	Restored 1868, 1878		square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>St Giles in the Wood; St Giles</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1862-3	wooden open arcaded	round-shouldered solid angled tops	functioning	yes
<b>St Marychurch; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1860-1		poppyheads destroyed	functioning Blitzed and rebuilt	yes
<b>St. Budeaux; St Boniface</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1911		chairs and reused benches	DEMOLISH ED and replaced	David King
<b>Starcross; St Paul</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1826, Rebuilt 1854		eccentric hollow-shouldered domed tops with Go!	functioning	yes
<b>Staverton; St Paul de Leon</b>	parish church	Restored 1873-82	1948 modern	square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Sticklepath</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1875	wooden open arcaded	Headington cusped	functioning	yes
<b>Stockland; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1822, 1826,	17th or later communion table top extended	square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Stockleigh English; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1878-83	wooden chest with arcade and angels marble mensa with crosses 1885	box pews cut down	functioning	yes

<b>Stockleigh Pomeroy; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1861-3	stone altar arcaded ecclesiologic al	ancient benches reset	functioning	yes
<b>Stoke Canon; St Mary Magdalene</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1835, restored 1875		ancient and modern square-ended plain and traceried two periods	functioning	yes
<b>Stoke Damerel; St Andrew with St Luke</b>	parish church	Restored 1892-1911		box pews, then chairs from 1884	functioning	yes
<b>Stoke Fleming; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1871		round-shouldered solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Stoke Gabriel; St Gabriel</b>	parish church	Restored 1854-6 seating ICBS,	open table modern	square-ended solid plain and ancient	functioning	yes
<b>Stoke Rivers; St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Restored 1832	open-fronted chest with cross motif 20th	square-ended solid pine with rounded corners	functioning	yes
<b>Stokeinteignhead; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1865		square-ended solid plain 20th?	functioning	yes
<b>Stokenham; St Michael and All Angels</b>	parish church	Restored 1874-5	wooden chest type solid	square-ended solid plain with diaper-work frontals alternate bench ends with fixtures for candles?	functioning	yes
<b>Stonehouse; Chapel of the Good Shepherd</b>	school-chapel (urban)	Built 1862		unknown destroyed	closed, commercial	yes
<b>Stonehouse; Church of the Good Shepherd</b>	Military chapel	Built 1883 Restored 1945-6 after war damage		pitch pine with 'v'-jointed boards and shaped ends	extant	no
<b>Stonehouse; St George</b>	Chapel of ease/parish Church	Built 1789	1933 v. Pinwill PWC	unknown destroyed	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Stonehouse; St Matthew</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1876		shouldered with angled tops destroyed.	DEMOLISHED	no
<b>Stonehouse; St Paul</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1830 Restored 1890		shouldered solid pine	functioning	yes

<b>Stoodleigh; St Margaret</b>	parish church	Restored 1879-80	wooden muscular open fronted	square-ended solid plain but with separate heads. cut down Poppies?	functioning	yes
<b>Stowford; St John</b>	parish church	Restored 1874	wooden open fronted traceried	archaeological traceried Hems based on samples	functioning	yes
<b>Strete; St Michael</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1836	wooden open traceried hangings behind	muscular panelled trefoil-headed with diagonal boards	functioning	yes
<b>Sutcombe; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1876	wooden chest type plain panelled	ancient and replica restored	functioning	yes
<b>Swimbridge; St James the Apostle</b>	parish church	Restored 1880	wooden open arcaded	square-ended solid replica and med restored	functioning	yes
<b>Sydenham Damerel; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1864		unknown destroyed	functioning	yes
<b>Taddiport; St Mary Magdalene</b>	Lazar chapel	?	open-fronted table with saltaire cross	chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Talaton; St James the Great</b>	parish church	Restored 1859-61	modern From Holy Trinity exeter?	ancient benches fitted with doors and Headington traceried end with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Tamerton Foliot; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1851,	wooden open arcaded 1895	Box pews 1851	functioning	yes
<b>Tavistock; Fitzford Church (now RC)</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1865-7		square-ended solid with separate tops	functioning, now Papist	yes
<b>Tavistock; St Eustachius</b>	parish church	Restored 1843-46	wooden open arcaded	square-ended solid replica and med restored	functioning	yes
<b>Tawstock; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1867		Square-shouldered traceried in chancel	functioning	yes
<b>Tedburn St Mary; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1866		Headington with applied tracery	functioning	yes
<b>Teigngrace; St Peter and St Paul</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1786 restored 1872		concave-shouldered tusk tenons	with functioning	yes
<b>Teignmouth; St James</b>	chapelry	Rebuilt 1820		hollow shouldered umbrella stands	with functioning	yes
<b>Teignmouth; St Michael the Archangel</b>	chapelry	Rebuilt 1829, restored 1875,		elbowed solid	functioning	yes

		1877-9, 1925					
<b>Templeton; St Margaret</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1877	very unusual trestle type with turned columns	box pews cut down	functioning	yes	
<b>Tetcott; Holy Cross</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1893		square-ended solid plain and some old ends	functioning	yes	
<b>Thelbridge; St David</b>	parish church	Restored 1871-2	wooden chest solid arcaded	headington variation with notched corners pierced by roundels	functioning	yes	
<b>Thornbury; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1876	fibe large 17th communion table with baluster legs	Headington variation with cusping and diagonal boarding , kneelers and hat recesses	functioning	yes	
<b>Thorverton; St Thomas of Canterbury</b>	parish church	Restored 1834, 1865		Poppyhead 1860s Rattee & Kett	functioning	yes	
<b>Throwleigh; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1883-4	modern stone	Headington with simple inset tracery	functioning	yes	
<b>Thrushelton; St George</b>	parish church	?	plain open table	Headington	functioning	yes	
<b>Thurlestone; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1902-4	wooden chest 20th	chairs	functioning	yes	
<b>Tipton St John; St John</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1837-40	wooden chest solid mod	Box pews and open benches orig replaced by shouldered 20th (but reflecting earlier arrangement with no central passage)	functioning	yes	
<b>Tiverton; St Andrew</b>	district Church (urban)	Built 1971		concave- shouldered from st Mary Major	functioning	yes	
<b>Tiverton; St George</b>	parish church	Built 1714- 16		round-shouldered with roundels and umbrella stands	functioning	yes	
<b>Tiverton; St Paul</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1854- 64		round shouldered	functioning	yes	

<b>Tiverton; St Peter</b>	parish church		Restored 1821-2 1825-9, 1853-6		headington with low doors incorporating box-pew panels	functioning	yes
<b>Topsham; St Margaret</b>	parish church		Rebuilt c.1680, Restored 1828, Rebuilt 1872-5		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Torbryan; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church			wooden chest richly carved	box pews enclosing ancient seats	preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>Tormohun; St Saviour</b>	parish church		Restored 1849,1873-4		archaeological ended traceried l	Square- now Orthodox	yes
<b>Torquay; All Saints Torre</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1883-9	wooden open table	'X'- benches, unfixed	functioning	yes
<b>Torquay; Christchurch; Ellacombe</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1868-1907	wooden chest peirced tracery and cross motif	eccentric shouldered with Go!	functioning?	yes
<b>Torquay; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1830-1, rebuilt 1894-6		unknown destroyed	closed 1980, commercial	yes
<b>Torquay; St Barnabas, Ellacombe</b>	mission church (urban)		Built 1878		unknown	closed 1965	no
<b>Torquay; St John the Evangelist</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1823, rebuilt 1861-73		concave shouldered round heads	functioning	yes
<b>Torquay; St Luke</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1863		square-shouldered with Go	functioning	yes
<b>Torquay; St Mark, Torwood</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1856-7 Restored 1891, chancel		unknown destroyed	closed 1979, now theatre	yes
<b>Torquay; St Martin, Barton</b>	parish church		Built 1938		chairs	functioning	yes
<b>Torquay; St Matthias, Ilsham</b>	District Church (urban)		Built 1858, restored 1882-5		shouldered and elbowed, to be removed	functioning	yes
<b>Torquay; St Michael Pimlico</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	of	Built 1877		chairs	DEMOLISHED 1968	no

<b>Torquay; St Paul, Ellacombe</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1890	unknown	unknown		closed 1966, commercial	no
<b>Torquay; Upton, St James</b>	mission church (urban)	Built 1910		unknown		closed, commercial	no
<b>Torquay; Upton, St Mary Magdalene</b>	District Church (urban)	Built 1843-9		Poppyheads with umbrella stands numbered		functioning	yes
<b>Totnes; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1824, 1869, 1874		square-ended solid traceried		functioning	yes
<b>Travellers Rest; St Thomas</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1866-71	stone Pers comm, remains built into a fireplace	Square-shouldered solid,		closed 1970 residential use	yes
<b>Trentishoe; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1861, 1878	17th communion table	elbowed, solid vigorous pine with go as at kentisbury		functioning	yes
<b>Trusham; St Michael the Archangel</b>	parish church	Restored 1865		square-ended solid plain all removed		functioning	yes
<b>Twitchen; St Peter</b>	Ancient Chapelry (rural)	Restored 1842-44	wooden chest carved	Headington type		functioning	yes
<b>Uffculme; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1843 (chancel), 1847-9	stone, small, buttressed, Agnus Dei Samuel knight)	Y benches brought from Bradfield	Poppy-headed	functioning	yes
<b>Ugborough; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1867-8, 1872	wooden chest type with gabled panels and Agnus Dei	Concave-shouldered with angled tops, rounded shouldered		functioning	yes
<b>Umberleigh; The Good Shepherd</b>	Mission church (rural)	c.1880		chairs modern		functioning	yes
<b>Uplowman; St Peter</b>	parish church	1863-6	wooden open arcaded	Square -ended benches with doors and some candle-holders		functioning	yes

<b>Uplyme; St Peter and St Paul</b>	parish church	Restored 1826,1875	wooden open table	nosed with angle scrolls (removed)	functioning	yes
<b>Upottery; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1826-7, 1875, 1898	wooden side table, extended	square-ended umbrella holders	solid w	functioning yes
<b>Upton Hellions; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Enlarged 1833, restored c. 1875	wooden chest linenfold panels	Square-ended solid plain	functioning	yes
<b>Upton Pyne; Our Lady</b>	parish church	Restored 1874-5		square-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Venn Ottery; St Gregory</b>	parish church	Restored 1832 Chancel		ancient and replicas	functioning	yes
<b>Virginstow; St Bridget</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1851		Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Waddeton</b>	proprietary chapel (rural)	Rebuilt 1868-9		round shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Walkhampton; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1860-1, 1889-90	wooden chest solid traceried	depressed pointed ends	functioning	yes
<b>Warkleigh; St John the Evangelist</b>	parish church	Restored 1850 (chancel), 1883	very small open table on raised base, top extended kneelers for north-end celebration	square-ended mirted corners	panelled	functioning yes
<b>Washfield; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	Restored 1875	wooden six pillared	Headington with low doors	functioning	yes
<b>Washford Pyne; St Peter</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1887	wooden open table with tusk tenoned stretcher, extended	round-shouldered solid with lancet panels	functioning	yes
<b>Weare Giffard; Holy Trinity</b>	parish church	Restored 1862-4	open table with braces	Headington	functioning	yes
<b>Welcombe; St Nectan</b>	parish church		Wooden chest solid arcaded early 19	y-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Wembury; St Werbergh</b>	parish church	Restored 1886	wooden open arcaded	Archaeological traceried ends	varied	functioning yes
<b>Wembworthy; St Michael</b>	parish church	Restored 1840, 1902	muscular open arcaded	Square-ended solid	functioning	yes

<b>Werrington; St Martin</b>	parish church	Restored 1891, 1911?		Headington buttressed	variation	functioning	yes
<b>West Alvington; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1866-8	plain bracketted table with six legs	Square-ended solid		functioning	yes
<b>West Anstey; St Petrock</b>	parish church	Restored 1877	muscular solid chest with cross and diagonal boards	square-shouldered		functioning	yes
<b>West Buckland; St Peter</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1863-5	open arcaded	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>West Down (Thorverton); St Martin</b>	mission church (rural)	Built c.1890		unknown destroyed		closed residential	yes
<b>West Down; St Calixtus</b>	parish church	Restored 1841 (chancel), 1872	wooden solid chest type with forward brackets	Square-shouldered		functioning	yes
<b>West Hill; St Michael the Archangel</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1845		archaeological	trceried 1840s	functioning	yes
<b>West Ogwell</b>	parish church	Restored 1800 (1832 date of royal Arms)	open table with cross motif. mod.	box pews		preserved Churches Conservation Trust	yes
<b>West Putford; St Stephen</b>	parish church	Restored 1883? chancel	open arcaded with central cross motif	square-ended plain		functioning	yes
<b>West Worlington; St Mary (and Affeton)</b>	parish church	Restored 1881 (chancel), 1905-13	wooden chest type solid traceried	ancient square-ended traceried same sort of patterns as Puddington		functioning	yes
<b>Westleigh; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1878-9	single arched open table eccentric	square-ended plain	rear of nave and in aisle	functioning	yes
<b>Westward Hol; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1867	wooden open fronted with roundels	chairs		functioning	yes
<b>Westwood; St Paul</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1873		unknown destroyed		closed residential	yes

<b>Wheatley; (Alphington) St Peter</b>	mission church (rural)	Built 1874		unknown destroyed		closed commercial use	yes
<b>Whimble; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1845	small muscular open table concealed in modern frame	Box pews in aisles, replica and resetv old square traceried ends		functioning	yes
<b>Whipton; All Saints</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1859-62		destroyed		closed community	yes
<b>Whitchurch; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1879	wooden open arcaded very gothick	round-shouldered solid pine with umbrella stands		functioning	yes
<b>Whitestone; St Catherine</b>	parish church	Restored 1866-8		round-shouldered		functioning	yes
<b>Widcombe; St Pancras</b>	parish church	Restored 1870-1880	18th communion table large	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Widworthy; St Cuthbert</b>	parish church	Restored 1785-7, c. 1870	plain open table	hollow-shouldered with tusk-tenons	elbowed	functioning	yes
<b>Wiggaton; St Edward the Confessor</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1892		eccentric benches	open backed With Go!	functioning	yes
<b>Willand; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church	c. 1845	open heavily carved table	Square-ended replaced with benches	removed and with modern	functioning	yes
<b>Winkleigh; All Saints</b>	parish church	Restored 1871-2	open-fronted table eight legs and cross motif	square-ended panelled	traceried	functioning	yes
<b>Witheridge; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1841	antiquarian assemblage	headington variation panel umbrella holders	flush	functioning	yes
<b>Witleigh; St Catherine</b>	chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1845-7	17th table raised and extended	Headington		functioning	yes
<b>Withycombe Raleigh; All Saints</b>	Chapel of ease (urban)	Built 1896-7		square-ended solid plain		functioning	yes
<b>Withycombe Raleigh; St John in the Wilderness</b>	Ancient chapelry (rural)	Restored 1925		square-ended solid plain	20th	functioning	yes

<b>Withycombe Raleigh; St John the Evangelist</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1720, Restored 1841-2, rebuilt 1862-4	wooden open arcaded type	Headington (w applied tracery in central aisle)	functioning	yes
<b>Wolborough; St Mary the Virgin</b>	parish church		wooden open table	square-ended solid plain mod 1920	functioning	yes
<b>WoodburySalterton; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1843-4 Restored 1899 chancel refitted	16th-17th century. from Woodbury? replaces wooden open arcaded table	pointed panelled with doors	functioning	yes
<b>Woodbury; St Swithun</b>	parish church	Restored 1852,	wooden chest type , solid , small, EXTENDED does not fit	square-ended solid plain 1911	functioning	yes
<b>Woodland; St John the Baptist</b>	ancient chapelry	Restored 1877-8, 1900	wooden chest type solid	shouldered angled corners solid	functioning	yes
<b>Woodleigh; St Mary</b>	parish church	Restored 1850?	wooden chest type c. 1888, supersedes earlier open table (in transept)	'Y'-benches	functioning	yes
<b>Woolacombe; St Sabinus</b>	Chapel of Ease (urban)	Built 1910-12	panelled wooden chest type	chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Woolbrook; St Francis of Assisi</b>	District Church (rural)	Built 1929	wooden chest type solid classical details	Headington panelled	functioning	yes
<b>Woolfardisworthy (east); St Mary</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1845	plain 4 legged open wooden table, v. plain 1840s	Headington with doors	functioning	yes

<b>Woolfardisworthy (west); All Hallows</b>	parish church	Restored 1872	small wooden chest type with blind arcade, replaced by 20th-century longer wooden chest type	concave shouldered in nave and aisle	functioning	yes
<b>Yarcombe; St John the Baptist</b>	parish church	Restored 1889-1891	wooden substantial table with 4 legs and open base. blind panelling	Headington, pine, replacing box pews in 1889	functioning	yes
<b>Yarnscombe; St Andrew</b>	parish church	Restored 1888-1889	wooden chest with open arcades, now filled	square-shouldered solid	functioning	yes
<b>Yealmpton; St Bartholomew</b>	parish church	Rebuilt 1848, 1849, 1850	open four-legged table with grey stone slab	concave shouldered	functioning	yes
<b>Yelverton; St Paul</b>	parish church	Built 1910-12	chest type, panelled, with foliage bands	chairs . benches intended?	functioning	yes
<b>Yeoford; Holy Trinity</b>	Chapel of ease (rural)	Built 1891	plain 6-legged wooden table, designed for frontals	chairs modern	functioning	yes
<b>Zeal Monachorum; St Peter</b>	parish church	Restored 1913-15	wooden chest type with later painted panels, too large for tiling- later.	Headington (partly replaced with chairs)	functioning	yes