

Anglo-Saxon church at Raunds

Philip Rahtz

Boddington, A, 1996 *Raunds Furnells: The Anglo-Saxon church and churchyard*, English Heritage Archaeological Report 7. English Heritage: London. ISBN 1 85074 520 X. Hb, 133pp, 107 figs, 91 tables (2 microfiche); £35.00.

It is a pleasure to review this book for the first issue of the journal; it is a classic in its genre.

The Raunds Area Project is one of the most successful large-scale, multi-period landscape studies that English Heritage has initiated in a long-term rescue context. The church and cemetery which is the subject of this book lay beneath a medieval manor complex – the high-status nucleus of a settlement which had its origins in the 6th century. This is the first volume of the Project to be published.

The stone church was established as a small 'private', field church in the late 9th or early 10th century. In the middle of the 10th century, a chancel was added and burial began, the cemetery spanning about 200 years. A second, enlarged church was built in the late 11th to mid 12th century. Few graves are associated with this phase. Finally, the building was converted to a secular component of the manor in the mid 11th to 13th century. Neither the second church nor its conversion occasioned much disturbance to its Anglo-Saxon predecessor. The result is a remarkably complete survival of both church and cemetery, meticulously excavated in 1975–84.

The single-cell first church was set outside the 'proto-manorial' complex and is the smallest Anglo-Saxon

church ever recorded, measuring only c4.5m x 3m internally, with an entrance towards the west end of the south wall. On the central axis, a third of the distance from the east wall, was a remarkable feature: a pottery vessel, interpreted as a *sacrarium* of St Neots ware, with a stratified filling. David Parsons, in a fine essay, argues that the honey/wax/tartaric acid primary fill was the residue of candle-making, associated with the dedication ceremonies of the church. The addition of the chancel was the occasion not only for burial, but also for the burying of the pot in a significant place related to the altar, to be used as an 'ablution drain' for the disposal of holy water.

Interesting though this sealed church is in detail, the churchyard is the principal subject of this volume. There were 363 supine, extended, west–east burials, interred on all sides of the church. The arrangement is roughly in rows, but with a wide variation of orientation either side of a 'preferred' mean. Apart from a few 'family' enclosures, the graves are mostly single, with little intercutting.

The excavation of the graves achieved one of the highest standards of data recovery yet seen. The value of this was enhanced by the use of complex statistical procedures. The result is a model for our times, made especially important by the almost total completeness of the cemetery and the good survival of skeletal material and associated accessories.

Much is made of the disposition of bones. 'Parallel-sided' skeletons are seen as having been tightly-wrapped in shrouds or coffins. 'Tumbled bones', particularly those spreading beyond the body area, are interpreted as the result of several factors, including violent disintegration of the corpse in a non-confined space. In many cases the body was supported by stones, under the head and, for example, round a withered left leg.

Stones were also placed over the corpse to protect it from backfill.

Signalling of status was achieved by location (south and east of the church were preferred), and by stone covers or markers, and sarcophagi. Many of these are decorated and they form a useful sealed group, discussed by Professor Rosemary Cramp. What may be a male founder's grave was covered with an elaborate slab and probably also marked by a standing cross. A complete sarcophagus with a head-recess is the first known from a pre-Conquest context.

Pottery (Terry Pearson), while mostly residual, falls into a neat series, stratigraphically grouped, and corresponding well with radiocarbon ranges. The volume ends with a succinct section on the human remains by Faye Powell.

*This book is a classic
in its genre.*

The book is expertly produced, with excellent graphics, a fine design, and good typography: a big improvement on earlier volumes in this series. Although expensive for a relatively slim book, it is highly recommended to readers of this journal, not only for its eminent attractiveness and readability, but for its importance in methodology and interpretation. It is a useful guide to all those working in church/cemetery archaeology.

Philip Rahtz is Emeritus Professor of Archaeology, University of York, now retired, but still working on archaeological projects including Wharram Percy

Raunds Furnells can be obtained from English Heritage, PO Box 229, Northampton, NN6 9QY (quote product code XC 10728).

A company of saints

Richard Morris

Schofield, J, 1996 'Saxon and medieval parish churches in the City of London: a review', *Trans London & Middlesex Archaeol Soc*, 45, 1994, 23–145. LAMAS/Museum of London: London. ISBN 0 903290 48 0. Pb, 186pp; £12.50.

London in the Middle Ages contained more parish churches than any other city in Britain – more, indeed, than several other towns in the medieval big league (like Winchester and Lincoln) added together – and this gathering of information about 108 of them is much to be welcomed. The medieval parish was a socio-religious phenomenon, and there is everything to be said for the study of churches in groups. Groups yield patterns, and patterns furnish history.

To be useful, however, patterns must be reliably informed. John Schofield's efficient and succinct review looks by turn at available sources, trends in the structural development of the City's churches, and a suite of associated themes. A gazetteer follows containing descriptions of the structural outlines of 51 churches, using all kinds of evidence, plus a further 12 where evidence is less complete. The survey is rounded off by an appendix from Ian Betts on medieval floor tiles. Schofield's study has benefitted from the help of colleagues, and the contributions of his assistants – Charlotte Harding, Richard Lea, and Peter Marsden – deserve salute.

What emerges? In the first place, a clarification of the picture first sketched by Alan Vince (1990), namely that the multiplication of London's churches seems to have begun in earnest no earlier than the

second half of the 10th century; the process seems to have been in spate (continuously or intermittently?) in the 11th century, and subsided in the 12th. (Exactly *when* urban church-founding died down, incidentally, is an issue in itself, in some respects as interesting as the origins which hitherto have claimed greater attention.) If urban churches established within the period c900–1200 can indeed be seen as a function of population and wealth, then this profile tells us a good deal about London at large; its refinement would tell us more.

The survey offers observations about links between churches and London's citizenry, alive and dead, poor and rich. Towers – or at any rate new ones – become *de rigueur* from the later 14th century, and by 1400 'a nave and two aisles was becoming the norm' (p. 47). In the later 15th century, maybe sooner, a form of altar tomb begins to appear around east ends. The devotional and ideological implications of these and other developments are discussed, and the makings exist of a further study to examine how and why, or in response to what stimuli, typical urban forms originate and proliferate. Comparison with the results of another study from, say, Norwich, and then the results of that with several European cities, would take such discussion into an even more rewarding realm. What, in all this, we are asked on page 79, is distinctively English or 'London' – and why?

Schofield's study is particularly valuable for its signposting of sources, archaeological and historical, published and unpublished. It is also splendidly illustrated, and makes telling use of 16th- and 17th-century graphical sources, antiquarian engravings, plans, analytical perspectives, and photographs. Among the latter are some nostalgic images from earlier points in this century. Glass, furnishings and monuments are not neglected.

To all intents and purposes this is a small book disguised as an essay in a journal, and many members of the Society may wish to acquire this issue of the *LAMAS Transactions* because of it. If they do, they will find Bruce Watson's report on Grimes's 1950–51 campaign within the Jesus Temple of Austin Friars thrown in as well.

Richard Morris works for the Council for British Archaeology. His books include The Church in British Archaeology (1983) and Churches in the landscape (1989).

The *Transactions* can be obtained from Publications Assistant, London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, c/o Museum of London Archaeology Service, Walker House, 87 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON EC4V 4AB.

Bibliography

Vince, A, 1990 *Saxon London: an archaeological investigation*

Church archaeology (almost) comes of age

Richard K Morris

Blair, J & Pyrah, C (eds), 1996 *Church archaeology: research directions for the future*, CBA Res Rep, 104. CBA: York. ISBN 1 872414 68 0. Pb, 230pp, 123 figs & tables; £28.00.

On Christmas Eve it was with some trepidation that I unwrapped my compulsory Christmas reading – this volume is not compiled for quick reviewing, with 22 sections

by 24 contributors spread over 13 chapters, covering church archaeology in England, Scotland and Wales from early Christianity to modern times. Fortunately the book opens with a clear summary of aims and content, also translated into Gaelic, Welsh, French and German; followed by a stimulating contextual Introduction by Richard Morris, and concluding with a short overview from Warwick Rodwell.

The book, produced under the auspices of the CBA Churches Committee, is divided into five parts, three chronological – c400–1200, c1200–1600, and post-Reformation – and two thematic. Of the latter, Part IV covers church cemeteries and human remains, including priorities for producing a skeletal report (Elizabeth O'Brien & Charlotte Roberts); and Part V reviews aspects of legislation and management (Carl Bianco & Edwina Proudfoot). The first three parts are more my scene and this review focuses on them. Each has separate chapters on England, Scotland (including the Isle of Man in Parts I & II) and Wales, which leads to some repetition of subjects (eg holy wells). The volume's outstanding contribution is to bring together, within one set of covers, substantial accounts of relevant subject matter and research priorities in each of these areas of Britain. One regrets only that some coverage of Ireland was not possible as well.

Part I deals with the traditional heartland of church archaeology – the early church in Britain to c1200 – opening with a chapter on England by Richard Gem and John Blair. Gem concentrates on problems of function, iconography, technology and style, particularly concerning greater churches. Blair, in an inspirational paper, 'sets an agenda' for early medieval church archaeology through a variety of social and cultural contexts ranging from the town- and villa-based Christianity of 4th-century Britain, through monastic towns, to

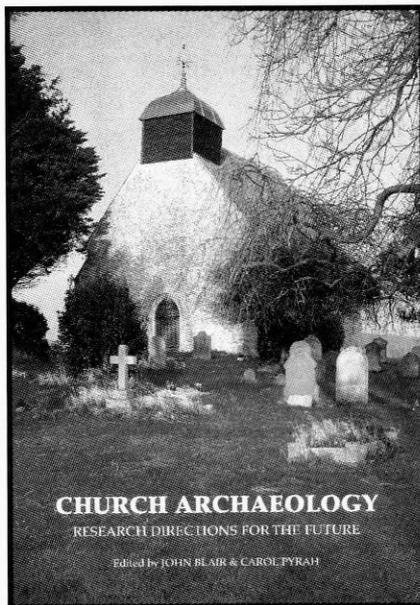
the making of local churches. Chapter 2 provides substantial coverage of Scotland in the same period by Ian Fisher, Neil Cameron and the late Ian Smith, dividing the material both geographically, with sections on North Britain and Southern Pictland, and the west of Scotland; and chronologically, with a section on the 11th–12th centuries (mainly monumental architecture). In Chapter 3 Nancy Edwards contributes an important survey about identifying the archaeology of the early church in Wales and Cornwall.

The extended time-span of c1200–1600 for Part II, the 'later Middle Ages', permits all its authors to assess the early effects of the Reformation and issues of continuity. As the bulk of standing fabric for English historic churches belongs to this period and has been described extensively in the art-historical literature, it was an inspired move to put Chapter 4 on England in the hands of three historians: Andrew Brown (Edinburgh), Christine Peters and Gervase Rosser. Between them they provide a thought-provoking survey of some key issues and features involving the archaeology of parish church architecture and furnishings, and of religious practice 'on the margins' (churchyards, and outlying chapels and shrines). In contrast, the less researched state of late medieval material in Scotland means that Chapter 5 deals primarily with greater churches and is by an architectural historian, Richard Fawcett. Lawrence Butler provides a summary for Wales in Chapter 6, as well as providing shorter entries for the Isle of Man in both Parts I and II.

The fact that almost a quarter of the book is given over to post-Reformation churches, in Part III, is one of its major achievements, compared with the two pages afforded Lawrence Butler for this purpose in CBA Research Report 47 (Morris 1983). Terminal dates vary, with A J Parkinson's Chapter 9 on

Wales opting for c1900, whereas the Scottish Chapter 8 (John Dunbar & Simon Green) carries on to the post-War years, for reasons which relate more to a Royal Commission-style inventory than to the rationale for this book. It is refreshing that two archaeologists, Roberta Gilchrist and Richard Morris, took on Chapter 7 on England c1600–1880, posing a variety of stimulating questions, though they seem unaware (re p.126) of the pioneering work of Alan Gowans (1964), and recent work by architectural historians in the Victorian period (Brooks & Saint 1995).

The book is certainly good value, clearly organised and impeccably edited: 'Boxbourne' for 'Broxbourne' on p.67 being a rare example of a slip. The semi-gloss paper makes the text irksome to read by the light of the yule fire. Minor criticisms are that the List of Illustrations is uninformative (eg '10.2 Intercutting burials'), the Index is variable in quality (why include 'Nunnery' and 'voussoirs', yet omit many more useful references to proper names?), and some figures are virtually incomprehensible except to the specialist (eg Fig 2.5). If church archaeology is to communicate to a wider audience, such matters should be addressed, including making better use of better photographs. Though the papers are relatively well illustrated quantitatively, the size and clarity of many photographs is disappointing compared with the line drawings, and the seductive colour photo on the front cover finds no fellows or mention inside. The Harvard reference system, when used without sensitivity, makes some sections almost unreadable (eg p.19, first paragraph), and can lead to incomplete or inaccurate referencing, eg p.137, '(Dunbar p.130)'. Here I cannot resist noting how the output of the 'RKMs' continues to bemuse authors and editors: p.66 '(Morris



1978; 1979)' must be my 'Later medieval mouldings', not to be confused with 'Morris, R, 1978 *Churches and archaeology*', whereas p.75, '(Morris 1979)', should refer to Richard's *Churches in the landscape* (1989).¹

Everyone with an interest in British churches and religious sites should acquire a copy of this volume, as an essential reference work for key themes and national studies. It falls short of producing a synthesis of common goals, but this would have proved a difficult assignment considering the variations in survival and recording over time and region. Nevertheless, most authors include helpful summaries of the state of research and research priorities in their areas, so that it is now easier to perceive shared agendas where relevant.

Beyond the common ground of protection, recording and investigation lie several key principles and issues. One is to maintain our intellectual curiosity. It is essential that we pose 'useful generalising questions which the evidence can answer' (p.112); 'we may wonder if building archaeology has advanced too fast ... ahead of the questions which recording techniques should be designed to answer', lured by 'the

fallacy of "value free" data capture' (p.xvi). Another issue is the worrying lack of appropriate specialist knowledge by many professional archaeologists working in the field. Richard Morris rightly sees this as a matter to be addressed urgently (p.xvi), but implies that this should be rectified by teaching within the discipline of archaeology, rather than accepting that church archaeology is an interdisciplinary subject and that architectural historians, *inter alia*, should be involved more in archaeological projects from their inception. Richard's picture of archaeology as the all-embracing subject, now apparently including 'historical archaeology' (once called 'history'), is not the best route to follow for the long-term health of 'church archaeology'. Nor can this reviewer accept the distinction made on p.122 'between buildings as statements in themselves (primarily a matter for architectural history) and the capacity of archaeology to provide new insights into how, why, [or] when ... the statements were made'. Architectural history encompasses both the history of architecture, and history derived from architecture (Cooper 1996).

However, the overriding priority is cooperation which, along with the training of future church archaeologists, would be well served by some large-scale excavations and research projects on selected sites, as called for by John Blair and Nancy Edwards. The subject cannot prosper on the basis of piecemeal recording and poorly-funded rescue archaeology. Resources, of course, remain a problem. It is worrying to read that some relatively low-budget projects, which would facilitate research considerably, lie dormant, apparently for lack of funding. eg the place-name archive at Bangor awaiting transfer to a computer database (p.61). For the major research excavations now needed,

such as John Blair's suggestion of a monastic town ('the Wharram Percy of church archaeology', p.10), academics are better placed than the units to spearhead the quest for the necessary mega-funding. Martin Biddle has recently caricatured the current situation, with an element of truth, 'that those who think don't do, while those who do, don't think' (Biddle 1995). Large-scale research projects have the potential to ease this situation, as well as to challenge the reasoning behind the current presumption against excavation.

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Church Archaeology can be obtained from CBA, Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 2UA, Tel 01904 671417, Fax 01904 671384

Notes

1. For the record, we were both christened 'Richard Keith Morris', so the middle name is of no assistance ('Kenilworth' and 'Kirklees' have been suggested as alternatives!). Richard, in his CBA Research Report 47 (1983), designated himself as '(I)' and myself as '(II)', but Warwick Rodwell, bless him, reversed this in his *Archaeology of the English church* (1981). Nowadays we seem to be settling for Richard of CBA without the 'K' and me, to retain it.

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The archaeology of cathedrals

1997, Tim Tatton-Brown & Julian Munby (eds), Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 42. Oxbow: Oxford. ISBN 0 947816 42 9. Pb, 240pp, with figures and photos; £28.00 (+ £3 p+p).

This collection of essays reviewing the progress of archaeological research and discoveries at English cathedrals is based on a 1989 conference held in Oxford. The contents include: The archaeological study of cathedrals in England 1800–2000: a review and speculation (R Morris); Seventeenth-century work at Ripon and Hexham (R N Bailey); The cathedral priory church at Bath (P Davenport); The origins and development of the 12th-century cathedral church at Carlisle (M R McCarthy); Archaeology and Chichester Cathedral (T Tatton-Brown); Current thinking on Glasgow Cathedral (R Fawcett); The archaeology of Gloucester Cathedral (C Heighway); Archaeology and the standing fabric: recent investigations at Lichfield Cathedral (W Rodwell); The archaeology of Oxford Cathedral (J Blair); Archaeology and Rochester Cathedral (T Tatton-Brown); Above and below ground: archaeology at Wells Cathedral (J Crook); Robert Willis and the study of medieval architecture (M W Thompson); Cathedral carpentry (J Munby); Dendrochronology in cathedrals (W G Simpson & C D Litton); Mouldings in medieval cathedrals (R K Morris); Masons' marks and stone buildings (J S Alexander); *The Care of Cathedrals Measure 1990* (R Gem).

Available from Oxbow Books, Park End Place, Oxford OX1 1HN, Tel 01865 241249, Fax 01865 794449, Email oxbow@patrol.i-way.co.uk

St Mary's Church, Deerhurst

1997, Philip Rahtz, Lorna Watts, Harold Taylor & Lawrence Butler (eds). Boydell & Brewer: Woodbridge. ISBN 0 85115 687 8. c224pp, 25 photos; c£49.50.

St Mary's Church, Deerhurst, is one of the most famous Anglo-Saxon churches in the country. It incorporates much of a complete Anglo-Saxon building, with a complex pre-Conquest history of additions and alteration. This book is a full report on recent work at Deerhurst including documentary research, structural analysis of the fabric, excavations within and adjacent to the church, as well as in nearby fields, and a survey of the parish. Contributors include F Aldsworth, Michael Aston, S Bassett, Dorothy Charlesworth, Henry Cleere, Andrew Crowther, R Dallas, Roberta Gilchrist, M Hare, Cathy King, Keith Manchester, Nicholas Mayhew, J R Richards, S P Q Rahtz, F W Shotton and Alan Vince.

Available from Boydell & Brewer, PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 3DF, Tel 01394 411320, Fax 01394 411477

Romsey Abbey: report on the excavations 1973–1991

1996, Ian R Scott, Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society Monograph 8. Stroud. ISBN 0 907473 09 1. Pb, 176pp, 90 figures and photos; £15 (+ £2.50 p+p).

This joint publication from the Hampshire Field Club and the Test Valley Archaeological Trust brings together for the first time, reports of excavations on the site of Romsey Abbey and its precinct. The book charts the development of the abbey from the late Saxon foundations through to its dissolution in 1539 and

includes specialist reports on the medieval floor tiles, human remains, pottery, stone, glass etc.

Available from Publication Stock Holder, Hampshire Field Club, Miss G A Rushton, Sussex Street, Winchester, SO23 8TH, Tel 01962 846154

The archaeology of bellframes

1996, Christopher J Brooke (ed). Nottinghamshire County Council/IFA Buildings Special Interest Group. ISBN 0 900986 13 1. Pb, 48pp, figures and photos; £6.50 (+ £1 p+p).

Historic bellframes are amongst the least studied aspects of churches and, with escalating pressure to rehang and augment church bells, early examples of their associated fittings are becoming increasingly scarce. The papers presented in this book arise from a symposium held by the IFA Buildings Special Interest Group at Retford in 1994. They detail national and regional aspects of recording and research and explore the merits and criteria for preservation.

Available from David Thackray, Boxwell Cottage, Mill Bottom, Nailsworth, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 0LA

Medieval art and architecture at Salisbury Cathedral

1996, Laurence Keen & Thomas Cocks (eds), British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XVII. Leeds. Hb, ISBN 0 901286 66 4; £39.00. Pb, ISBN 0 901286 67 2; £30. 178pp, with figures and half tone plates (1 colour plate).

The relocation of the cathedral from Old Sarum to its new site, with the first buildings being erected in 1219,

provided the Dean and Chapter with the opportunity of constructing a new cathedral without any apparent constraints. Although built in one more or less continuous programme, the design of the cathedral is unexpected compared with other cathedrals under construction during the 1220s. Recent archaeological work on the spire and scientific analysis of the timbers in the cathedral add to a new understanding of the construction and development of the building, while detailed analysis of the crossing tower provides new dating for its construction and reinforcement. This volume contains papers given during the 1991 conference at Salisbury and, in addition to articles about the building, has contributions on the complex iconography of the chapter house sculptures, the 13th-century glazing, the decorated medieval floor tiles and the Tournai marble tomb-slabs. Authors include Diana Greenway, Gavin Simpson, Peter Draper, Virginia Jansen, M F Hearn, Lee Willis, Richard K Morris, Tim Tatton-Brown, Pamela Blum, James King, Freda Anderson, Christopher Norton and Richard Marks.

Available from W S Maney & Sons Ltd, Hudson Road, Leeds, LS9 7DL

Life and death in Spitalfields 1700–1800

1996, Margaret Cox. CBA: York. ISBN 1 872414 62 1. Pb, 142pp, with figures and photos; £15.00.

This popular account of excavations of the crypt below Christ Church, Spitalfields, combines archaeological and anthropological evidence, with many illustrations, to provide an interpretation of the environs of an urban church in its widest context.

Available from CBA, Bowes Morrell

House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 2UA, Tel 01904 671417, Fax 01904 671384, Email 100271.456 @compuserve.com

Building Jerusalem: Jewish architecture in Britain

1996, Sharman Kadish (ed). Vallentine Mitchell: London. Hb, ISBN 0 85303 283 1; £45.00. Pb, ISBN 0 85303 309 9; £19.50. 240pp, 91 photos.

Jews have been part of the British scene since at least the 17th century. This comparatively settled history results in a rare heritage of Jewish monuments throughout the country and this collection of essays explores synagogues, cemeteries, *mikvaot* (ritual baths) and social architecture. A central theme of the book is the need for a responsible conservation policy which strikes a balance between respect for the past and contemporary communal needs.

Available from Vallentine Mitchell, Newbury House, 900 Eastern Avenue, London, IG2 7HH, Tel 0181 599 8866, Fax 0181 599 0984, Email sales@frankcass.com

Fetternear 1995

1996, P Z Dransart & N Q Bogdan. Lampeter. ISBN 0 905285 56 5. Pb, 50pp, 17 figs, 10 photos; £3.50.

This first interim report issued by the Scottish Episcopal Palaces Project reports on the 1995 excavation season at Fetternear, the pre-Reformation summer palace of the Bishops of Aberdeen.

Available from Dr P Z Dransart, Department of Archaeology, University of Wales, Lampeter, Dyfed, SA48 7ED, or N Q Bogdan, Scottish Castle Survey, Barra Castle, Old

Meldrum, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 0BB

The chapel and the nation: Nonconformity and the local historian

1996, Michael R Watts, Historical Association Helps for Students of History Series 97. London. Pb, 46pp; £3.95.

This booklet provides a national overview of Nonconformity which will prove invaluable to local researchers. It includes a chronological history of the development of the dissenting churches from the 1640s to the present, a glossary of the various sects and denominations and a guide to the sources available to the local historian researching Nonconformism, together with an extensive bibliography.

Available from The Historical Association, 59A Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4JH

Recording a church: an illustrated glossary

1996, Thomas Cocke, Donald Findlay, Richard Halsey & Elizabeth Williamson, Practical Handbook 7, 3rd edn. CBA: York. ISBN 1 872414 56 7. 52pp, with line drawings; £6.50.

This new edition of an old favourite is a comprehensive glossary providing definitions for over 500 terms used to describe church architecture and furniture.

Available from CBA, Bowes Morrell House, 111 Walmgate, York, YO1 2UA, Tel 01904 671417, Fax 01904 671384, Email 100271.456 @compuserve.com

Medieval Scotland: an archaeological perspective

1995, Peter Yeoman.
Batsford/Historic Scotland. ISBN 7134 7465 3. Pb; £15.99

A heavily illustrated synthesis of medieval excavations in Scotland over the past 20 years. The book is divided thematically into separate chapters on abbey and priories, friaries, churches and cathedrals, towns, earthwork castles etc.

Available from any good bookshop or directly from Batsford Books, FREEPOST WD240, Braintree, Essex, CM7 2BR

The protection of our English Churches: the history of the Council for the Care of Churches 1921–1996

1996, Donald Findlay. London. ISBN 0 7151 7575 0. Card cover, 130pp, 32 illustrations; £5.75.

The Council for the Care of Churches was formed in 1921 as the central co-ordinating body in the system of care for the Church of England's architectural heritage. Its terms of reference, and those of the Diocesan Advisory Committees, were soon extended to cover all aspects of churches, their furnishings and

churchyards. The Council became a Board of the Church Assembly in 1927 and is now a permanent commission of the General Synod. This book traces the history of the Council through the people and places involved.

Available from Publications Department, Fielden House, Little College Street, London, SW1P 3SH

Discovering stained glass

1996, John Harries & Carola Hicks, 'Discovering' book 43. Shire Publications. ISBN 0 7478 0205 X. Pb, 96pp, 62 photos (including colour); £4.99.

This handy guide tells the story of stained glass and how it was made, explaining the designs and styles over the centuries, culminating in the great 19th-century revival and present day work. It includes a county gazetteer of places where some of the most important and interesting glass is to be found.

Available from booksellers or Shire Publications Ltd, Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9AA, Tel 01844 344301, Fax 01844 347080

The Victorian undertaker

1996, Trevor May, Shire Album 330. Shire Publications. ISBN 0 7478 0331 5. Pb, 32pp, figures and photos; £2.25.

Another Shire production, this well-illustrated booklet gives an insight into Victorian funeral customs, as well as an introductory reading list and places to visit.

Available from booksellers or Shire Publications Ltd, Cromwell House, Church Street, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9AA, Tel 01844 344301, Fax 01844 347080

Discovering epitaphs

1996, Geoffrey N Wright, 'Discovering' book 144, 2nd edn. Shire Publications. ISBN 0 7478 0324 2. Pb, 96pp, figures and photos; £3.95.

In the final offering from Shire, Geoffrey Wright traces the background history of churchyard memorials and provides numerous examples of inscriptions and epitaphs.

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