

Life, death, and art – medieval glass in multimedia

Christopher J Brooke

Brown, S & MacDonald, L (eds), 1997, *Life, death, and art: The medieval stained glass of Fairford parish church*. Sutton Publishing: Stroud. ISBN 0 7509 1523 4. Hb, 175pp, 74 b/w figures, 35 colour plates; plus CD-ROM (IBM PC format); £40.00 (Minimum requirements for CD-ROM: Intel 486 processor, 8 Mb of memory, quad CD-ROM drive operating under Microsoft Windows 3.1 or Windows 95; a sound card is needed for audio facilities.)

The importance and splendour of the glass of St Mary's parish church at Fairford in Gloucestershire is justly famed, and much has been written concerning the remarkable survival of a complete set of 28 medieval stained glass windows, installed in a single campaign during the early years of the 16th century. For this, Fairford is unique amongst English churches, possessing, unlike any other church or cathedral, the harmony and pellucidity of a single, fully planned medieval scheme.

This beautifully produced volume, however, goes far beyond a reappraisal of the style and iconography of the glass. It attempts to place Fairford, its church, and people in their temporal and cultural setting – a task which is admirably achieved by using a combination of words, pictures, and – with the assistance of computer technology – sounds and video.

The book commences with a short preface by Joanna Trollope which sets the scene for a *tour de force* discourse of late medieval culture, commencing with a sound résumé of the medieval

attitude to mortality by Colin Platt. This is followed by a colourful exploration of the Tame family, whose fortunes in the wool trade resulted in the rich artistic and architectural legacy which survives in the church today, indeed, as Sally Annesley explains, the story of wool and cloth is woven into every aspect of Cotswold life and 'just as John Tame had much to be grateful for, our own debt to the sheep of medieval England is enormous' (p. 24).

Chapter 3 deals with the fabric of Fairford Church, and Anna Eavis explores the history of its evolution and the architectural detail of the present building, dating largely, with the exception of the tower, from the 15th century.

The remainder deals mainly with Fairford's late medieval glass, with chapters by Sarah Brown describing the windows in detail and the craft of the glass artists, Kenneth Munn, who investigates 'fables and facts' surrounding the history of the glass, and Keith Barley on the conservation and restoration, from the earliest repairs in the late 16th century through to the recent programme of works. The four appendices present the Tame family wills, two 17th-century poems, a discussion of photographic techniques ranging from conventional methods to modern digital imaging – and the techniques used to produce the images in the accompanying CD-ROM. Finally, there is a useful exploration of the principal sources of information about stained glass.

The book is full of lively discussion and detailed debate – the possible hidden portraits, for example, of contemporary characters such as Sir John Savile, servant to Edward IV, Catherine of Aragon and members of the Royal household – Henry VII and his daughters Mary and Margaret Tudor, who appear discretely, disguised amongst the more traditional renderings of biblical personalities. Parallel portraits are

presented and the controversy highlighted – but the reader is able to investigate further with help of the CD-ROM which allows a detailed exploration of the characters in every window.

Illustrations are liberal and superb – there are 36 colour plates which show all 28 stained glass windows in the church, and a host of details in black-and-white. It is, however, the accompanying CD-ROM which really adds to the extent and depth of illustrative material, not only by allowing on-screen views of all the glass – with a detailed zoom facility – but by the ingenious explanatory guide which permits the reader to 'browse' through each window and see, or hear, the iconography and history explained. Useful arrow pointers and automatic close-ups reveal the finer points of the story and, for those wishing merely to soak-up the ambience and culture, period music (Taverner's *O Splendor Gloriam*, with optional text selectable in Latin or English) may be chosen to accompany a visual tour through the entire collection – sit back and enjoy!

The CD is beautifully produced and presents a real multimedia addition to the book, allowing considerably more colour illustrations and detail than would be affordable in print. It is organized into several sections – the most useful of which is the detailed views and descriptions of the windows already discussed. Although the interface is a little unconventional, it is quickly learned and there are mercifully short help menus which speedily provide all the required instructions.

The principal section on the windows is followed by details of Fairford church which furnish interesting additional historical photographs and information on the fabric and fittings, and which include a set of aerial photographs taken from every angle, from which the window description numbers may be highlighted on the exterior of the

building – a nice touch. There is also a ‘virtual’ walk-through of the interior and, although this did not work from the CD-ROM on the review copy, it works well when installed as a separate Quick-Time application on the hard disk (instructions supplied), allowing almost every general aspect of the interior of the church to be explored.

Other sections allow a browse through the culture of late medieval England, with Fairford and its glass as a central theme; the iconography and artistry of the windows are used throughout to illustrate particular cultural traits. There are useful visual parallels with other sites and with the glass of King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, the latter accompanied by a video sequence of Dr Hilary Wayment explaining the relevance of the Cambridge glass to Fairford.

If the reader seeks escape from the more formal aspects, this is provided in the form of the ‘Old Clerk’s Tale’, a wonderful tour through the principal aspects of the glass. Brilliantly narrated in a traditional Cotswold dialect, this is the typical mid 19th-century patter which visitors to the church could expect, here visually assisted by images of the windows with the ‘clerk’s pointing stick’ detailing each aspect of the story. For the more literary minded, there are also poems by Richard Corbet – *Upon Fairford Windows* – and William Strode – *On Fairford Windowes* – narrated by Robert Hardy. The text and plates of an earlier monograph on Fairford’s windows, written by the Reverend James Joyce in 1872, are also presented on the CD-ROM.

Finally, there are many additional photographs and explanatory text relating to the various periods of restoration and conservation, which complement the discussion in the book, plus informative video clips of the glass under restoration in the Barley Studio.

The book is a superb treatment of the Fairford glass, its artistry and its

cultural place in late medieval England, which should appeal to all medieval historians and church archaeologists. The material is presented in a lively and readable manner and is accompanied by superb illustrations. The CD-ROM extends the boundaries of the text and plates into an interactive environment which allows a detailed exploration of the subject matter and which is a delight to use. Although expensive for those without the capability to use the CD-ROM, this is nevertheless a worthwhile buy as the text of the book alone is masterly; but it will reward efforts to use the two together.

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Life, death and art: The medieval stained glass of Fairford parish church can be obtained from Sutton Publishing Ltd, Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2BU, Tel 01453 731114, Fax 01453 731117.

Primacy at Canterbury (almost)

David Stocker

Blockley, K, Sparks, M & Tatton-Brown, T *et al.* *Canterbury Cathedral nave: archaeology, history and architecture*, The Archaeology of Canterbury New Series Volume 1. Dean & Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral/Canterbury Archaeological

Trust: Canterbury. ISBN 1 870545 03 6. Hb, 248pp, 88 figs, 93 plates; £25.00 (+ £4 p+p).

1993 was an important year for English archaeology. PPG16 was only a couple of years old and many curators had reacted to it with imagination and enthusiasm – appreciating the potential for coordinated programmes of archaeological research in their areas. In that year several conferences were held, in counties such as Essex, aimed at establishing priorities for future research programmes. But some curators had frozen like rabbits in the headlights. In such areas archaeology became purely reactive – only the barest minimum of excavation was required or permitted, regardless of how relatively academically meaningless the result was. Such conservatism by some curators was widely criticised; this was the year of Martin Carver’s *Arguments in stone* (Carver 1993), and the following year Martin Biddle delivered a blistering attack on ‘content-less’ archaeology at the IFA conference (Biddle 1994). In his address, however, Biddle seemed to blame such ‘content-lessness’ on the PPG itself. In reality, curatorial negligence was not widespread and where it did occur it was the curators themselves who were usually culpable, not the framework provided by the PPG.

Into this new game, with its shifting realignments and tensions, came a new player – the church archaeology curator. The Care of Cathedrals Measure of 1990 mirrored the contemporary PPG16 in that it established a curatorial framework for cathedrals in which archaeological conservation would have a voice. There was nothing compelling the new cathedral curators to occupy the same positions which had formed within secular archaeological conservation: the Cathedrals’ Fabric Advisory Committees had a clean slate to write on. What would they

say?

It is now clear that, appropriately enough, a lead was given by Canterbury. By chance or by design the need (or was it *merely* the opportunity?) for archaeological work arose when Canterbury Cathedral elected to replace its nave floor slabs. A conservation debate ensued. Should the archaeological remains below the floor be fully investigated, despite the fact that only a small part of them (if any at all) was threatened, or should the remains be preserved to await fully-funded research excavations at a time when improved technology would permit maximum understanding of the results? It was a classic post-PPG16 dilemma enacted daily in the offices of secular curators. In the event the church archaeology curators' decision was discriminating – part of the archaeological capital should be spent now and a degree of flexibility was to be allowed within the specification to allow minor additional excavations where the curators considered it necessary to achieve a useful understanding of the results. The test of whether or not this was the correct decision, whether destruction of the deposits would be vindicated by the quality of the results, would only come in the publication. This publication has now appeared.

In the event the Canterbury nave excavations repaid this self-confident, optimistic approach on the part of the new curators. The work was initially guided by the principle that the bare minimum of deposits would be removed where required by the new underfloor heating and wiring systems (about which there is a useful section in the report by John Burton). In the event, it was discovered that during the last reflooring, in 1787, when medieval and post-medieval graves had been roughly removed and their voids backfilled with rubble, the destruction of archaeological structures had been considerable. As Blockley's brief allowed his team to

excavate the 1787 material, they were able to obtain not just plan information about the Anglo-Saxon and Early Norman cathedrals underneath the late 14th-century nave (structures which seem to have been visible almost immediately beneath the flagstones), but also information about their stratigraphic interrelationships which was obtained from the sides of the massive 1787 robbing pits. Consequently, plenty of coherent information was found below the nave floor with which to construct a meaningful sequence for the site and to propose a dating framework for the Anglo-Saxon cathedrals. It was this understanding – generated during the course of the excavation itself – which prompted a number of further forensic excavations into undisturbed, pre-1787 deposits in order to answer specific questions (such as, was the western apse of the period 4C cathedral polygonal or sub-circular?).

When work started, the plan form of the latest pre-Conquest cathedral, which had been damaged by fire in 1067 and written about by the monk Eadmer in the 1120s, was still controversial. The western three-quarters of its plan is now recorded, although the reconstruction (fig 38) shows it as strangely trapezoidal (could the writers possibly have made the mistake of presuming that its walls would have sat squarely on the roughly laid out foundations below?). Although we now know that Eadmer's church was begun in the late 9th- to early 10th-century (and was the subject of major alterations in the middle of the 10th century, and again early in the 11th), its most controversial aspect has always been the layout of the crypt complex at the east end. This remained unexplored in the excavation. The reconstructions of the east end provided in the report – whilst eminently plausible – could have been made without the aid of the excavation. An unexcavated east end, then, is left as part of a

substantial legacy for future generations. In respect of the earliest cathedral(s) on the site the legacy is, frankly, even more handsome. Only a small part of the structure begun shortly after 597 was recognised in the 1993 excavations and its interpretation relies so heavily on an extended discussion of the famous 'Kentish Minster' group of early church plans that the 1993 excavation has added little.

But the project was not just about the early cathedrals; the approach to the archaeology of more recent and better understood activity in the nave area is admirable. The structural archaeology of the present nave is very well observed by Tim Tatton-Brown, using more information from above ground than below. The account of the archaeology of iconoclasm is also valuable (though perhaps over reliant on documentary sources and not drawing enough from patterns of destruction visible in the reuse of rubble). Even the account of the area in modern times is compelling (of the conversion of the eastern crypts into air-raid shelters, for example) and this too is elucidated through the archaeological record just as tellingly as through the documentary account.

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing study is that made of Lanfranc's cathedral in which, for the first time, this building achieves that status it deserves, as the premier church of the immediate post-Conquest era. Previously Lanfranc's church has often registered as a rather disappointing precursor to the two spectacular 12th-century choirs to the east (ie it was built in a hurry and was to some extent provisional) and, perhaps because of this, available information has not been pulled together before to make a coherent account. For Lanfranc's cathedral Blockley and his team have new data from the excavations. However, they understood that their results would only be telling if set within the

archaeological context derived from the standing fabric. Consequently, they undertook a substantial survey of standing fabric to relate the excavated findings to an understanding of the church as a whole. The report contains a series of important surveys of the north transept, revealing how much of Lanfranc's masonry survived the late-medieval rebuild in this area. It also contains a study of the famous drawings made by J C Buckler of Lanfranc's north-western tower before it was demolished in 1832. Of the various phases, Blockley's team can say most about this church and what they have to say is an important contribution to study of the archaeological impact of the Norman Conquest. I hope that the survey of the above-ground Lanfranc fabric (and similarly Tatton-Brown's study of the late-medieval nave) was conceived and funded as part of the overall project, even though this fabric was not affected by the repaving scheme. All archaeological curators should be arguing that the 'developer' has a responsibility to set the results of archaeological work (done as part of the development process) within an appropriate archaeological context, and it would be comforting to think that Canterbury provides an early example of this principle put successfully into action.

This, then, is a praiseworthy report on what seems to have been a carefully considered project. Although good, the Canterbury performance was not perfect. I was particularly concerned that the cathedral did not keep the excavation archive, which for some reason (not explained here) is to be kept by the archaeological contractor. The next big step in the process of coaxing archaeology into the cathedral community must be to ensure that the archaeological archive is not regarded simply as the property of a few specialists, and of little practical relevance to the cathedral itself. It needs to be seen as a useful working tool for cathedral

conservators.

Beside this reservation with the project design, I saw only one major flaw with the report – the lack of discussion about the technical and symbolic functions of what was, at each phase, one of the most important buildings in England. The closest Blockley comes to these issues is to regurgitate sections from Arnold Klukas' excellent paper on the liturgical use of Lanfranc's church (Klukas 1983–4), but his repetition of the point that the liturgical layout at Canterbury is very like St Etienne, Caen, does not really take us any further. The *Decreta Lanfranci* are not just a map allowing us to say where things were in Lanfranc's church, they are a complex guide to the symbolism of spaces which, if treated carefully, allow us to understand why space within the church was organised in the way it was. What did the spaces mean to the church's users and what messages was the building intended to convey to the outside world? These issues are not discussed here, and even the rebuilding of the nave following 1377 is attributed only to motives of fashion (p. 124) – a very superficial understanding. This lack of engagement with the more profound issues of symbolic forms and spatial analysis is the weakest aspect of the publication, but using this new data, those interested in such issues can now develop such understandings with greater ease.

Although a minor reservation, I also noted problems with the plate captions. Contrary to its caption, plate 24 does not show lewis holes; in plate 55 the lead plug is (presumably) the item to the right of the scale – and not to its left as stated; plate 88 does not show a fan vault; and I am still struggling to understand the meaning of the caption to plate 55. The finds reports are also given only cursory discussion in the overall conclusions. To a non-specialist the medieval pottery reports (by Nigel Macpherson Grant and John Cotter)

seem to have a wider importance for the archaeology of Canterbury than one would understand from the brief comments offered in the excavator's conclusions. Architectural fragment No 13 looks like a section of Roman cornice moulding to me (not a medieval altar), and I remain puzzled as to why the drawings of fragments 18 and 19 are presented on their sides. I could find no plan of the geophysical survey results (undertaken by Jonathan Berry) – which is a shame, because, although the survey results appear significant, the report is virtually incomprehensible. These are minor quibbles with what is a consistently solid publication, albeit conventional in its format. As always with Canterbury publications, the production quality of the report is high and it is certainly good value.

In conservation terms, then, the archaeological results of the first major test of the 1990 Care of Cathedrals Measure seem highly satisfactory. On the one hand minimal destruction of archaeological deposits has occurred but, on the other, the intervention has resulted in a huge gain in knowledge about one of the most important early ecclesiastical sites in England. An acceptable balance between conservation of deposits and academic gain has been struck. Furthermore, important additional survey work on the standing fabric and the cathedral's documentation was undertaken to set the excavation results in their proper context. The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, evidently, should take the credit for all this, even if they were only following their new legal obligations. It is clear that every facility was given to the archaeological contractors within the broader works programme, and the Dean & Chapter have also contributed to the costs of the rapid post-excavation and publication programme. The project was designed and executed in the best spirit of the 1990 Measure and, now that it has been brought to such a

successful conclusion, it should be recommended to other cathedrals as a model to follow.

David Stocker works as an Inspector for English Heritage on the Monuments Protection Programme.

Canterbury Cathedral Nave can be obtained from Canterbury Archaeological Trust, 92A Broad Street, Canterbury, CT1 2LU; and Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, 8 The Precincts, Canterbury, CT1 2EE

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NEW BOOKS

Compiled by Charlotte Foster

Stained Glass Design

1997, Ron Shoemsmith & Ruth Richardson (eds). Logaston Press. ISBN 1 873827 84 9. Hb, 240pp, with figures and photos; £19.95.

Including 25 chapters and six appendices this book does indeed appear to be a definitive history. Mr Shoemsmith confirms that the choice of 'a' rather than 'the' definitive history for the title was deliberate and there remains considerable scope for further research at Dore Abbey. For the present, however, this work admirably achieves a drawing together of current knowledge of the Cistercian Abbey of Dore, which was founded in AD 1147 by Robert Early of Ewyas in the Golden Valley in Herefordshire.

The book includes individual chapters on the known history of the site prior to the foundation and the chronological development of the house both in terms of its physical and architectural embellishment and its economic and religious growth. There is something for most interested parties, including the traditional art historical and architectural descriptions and reconstructions of the building complex and its decorative elements, the floor tiles, the altar and vestments, the east window and several important tombs from the post-monastic period. Modern

scientific approaches are reported and conservation issues, such as those concerning the historic bells and bellframe, are raised. Equal consideration is given to the evidence for cults and ritual activity. Where direct evidence is lacking for Dore Abbey, a selection of comparative sites provides discussion of the possibilities, particularly with regard to the precinct layout at Dore and the engineering activities of the monks. These discussions allow the book to look beyond the detail of a specific site and provide another welcome source for the wider consideration of the Cistercian order throughout Europe.

The work has involved specialists from all fields and demonstrates the value of such multi-disciplinary approaches to individual sites. It is well illustrated with both colour and black and white plates and a good selection of maps, plans and line drawn elevations and reconstructions. There is also a balance of writing styles which allows for the interested amateur in the field of monastic studies to appreciate the work whilst providing enough technical detail to satisfy the specialist, although, in individual chapters, different parts of the audience may struggle to overcome either the wealth of detail provided, or to avoid some disappointment at the simplicity of a certain approach.

Abbey Dore is unique in England as the only Cistercian church to

remain in use as a parish church and it has seen several phases of restoration and refurbishment which add to the archaeological patina of the building. These alterations are skilfully explained, with equal weight given to both the pre- and post-Dissolution phases. The book includes a final chapter on the Abbey today, which considers its continuing spiritual and physical development and its importance as a religious as well as an archaeological resource for the future.

Available from Logaston Press, Little Logaston, Woonton, Almeley, Herefordshire, HR3 6QH, Tel 01544 327344.

John Carter and the mind of the Gothic Revival

1995, J Mordaunt Crook, Society of Antiquaries of London, Occ Pap Vol 17. Leeds. ISBN 0 85431 267 6. Pb, 100pp, with figures and photos

This occasional paper, a study of the life of John Carter FSA, originated as a lecture delivered at the Society of Antiquaries in 1992. It provides over 30 beautifully reproduced plates of a selection of Carter's own work and other contemporary and influential examples of Gothic architecture. The paper is extensively annotated and there is a detailed bibliography of

Carter's works and a glossary of terms. Carter was the son of a family of sculptors, but was trained also in draughtsmanship and building and made his living largely in journalism. The paper examines his later influences and his fascination with the Gothic and demonstrates his 'antiquarian zeal—a reverence for the remnants of Gothicism'. Carter's career and his contributions to the debate between the conservationists and the evolutionists are illuminated, throwing light on to 'the mind of the Gothic Revival'. Carter is seen to have been 'so concerned to protect England's medieval heritage that he had no time to consider just what the architectural legacy of his own generation was to be', but the paper concludes that 'the Gothic Revival was reborn in the strange, obsessive mind of John Carter'.

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

Lewes Priory: Excavations by Richard Lewis 1969–82

1997, Malcolm Lyne. Lewes Priory Trust. Lewes. ISBN 09530839 0 X. Pb, 190pp with figures and photos.

This work sees the publication of excavations carried out between 1969 and 1982 by Richard Lewis, who was prevented by ill health from completing the task of writing up. Malcolm Lyne has attempted to follow the interpretations reached by the excavator, but has also been able to update certain interpretations in the light of current knowledge. A summary of earlier excavations and known historical data is also provided. The excavations revealed evidence for Saxon occupation, possibly monastic, pre-dating the Priory. Considerable new evidence was obtained about the internal layout of the 11th- and 12th-century reredorters and sewers. Other

ancillary buildings such as a mason's lodge and ovens, as well as evidence for gardens, were also discovered. Well-dated pottery assemblages have contributed to the creation of a pottery sequence for Lewes and there are additional reports on roofing and ceramic building materials, floor tiles, window glass, mortars and wall-plasters, building stone, grave slabs, finds, wood, human bones, animal bones, mollusca and plant remains.

Available from Lewes Priory Trust, c/o Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes, BN7 2LX, Tel 01273 471600 (ext 4145).

Yorkshire Monasticism: Archaeology, art and architecture from the 7th to 16th centuries

1995, Lawrence R Hoey (ed). British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XV1. Leeds. ISBN 0 901286 540. Hb & Pb, 153pp with figures and photos.

This is an ambitious title for a publication which in reality presents a collection of conference papers largely concerned with detail and minutiae. The book includes 11 chapters by some of the most eminent scholars in this field and, as one would expect, the academic content of the papers is high. There is a summary of the current state of knowledge concerning Whitby Abbey following major new initiatives there, and a number of contributions concerning recent study of architectural features at Rievaulx, Selby, Kirkstall and Lastingham, which provide useful reconstructions and chronologies of building and stylistic developments. Any addition of this quality to the architectural catalogue is welcome and specialists will be gratified by the attention to detail and wealth of descriptive material. There are also interesting case studies of the development of the

study of archaeology and architectural history by antiquarians at Ripon Minster and the Priory of the Holy Trinity, York. Also included is a discussion of evidence for a 12th northern monastic school.

The work suffers, however, from the lack of an editorial overview on the direction and future of research in the named disciplines, and of any attempt to draw the studies together to discuss wider ranging regional issues and the interface between these and national and international research. The bones of monastic studies are frequently the detailed description and discussion of artefacts, architecture and works of art, and these papers present such discussion at the highest possible level. One cannot help feeling, however, that the opportunity to flesh out the bones and address the meatier issues has, by and large, been overlooked. This perhaps, is not the fault of any individual contributor, but reflects the character of the original conference. Is it merely the title of the collection which is misleading, causing one to expect a broader discussion of the developments? Or does the disappointment felt on reading the contents of this work result from the opportunity missed by our leading scholars?

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

Whithorn and St Ninian: The excavations of a monastic town 1984–91

1997, Peter Hill *et al.* Whithorn Trust/Sutton Publishing. ISBN 0 7509 0912 9. Hb, 656pp, with figures and photos; £45.00.

The most sought-after book of 1997, this eagerly-awaited report of the major research excavations at Whithorn is essential reading for

scholars of the period. The high price may put off some purchasers but at nearly 700 pages this attractive volume is by no means overpriced. Readers will have to hurry to get their order in – sales are going so well that the Society was not able to get a review copy in time for the 1998 issue. A full review will appear in Volume 3 of the journal.

Available from Sutton Publishing Ltd, Phoenix Mill, Thrupp, Stroud, Glos, GL5 2BU, email spluk1@aol.com.

Closed for business: Ewan Christian's restoration of Southwell Minster 1848–1888

1997. Harold Brooke. Southwell Cathedral Council. ISBN 0 9528514 1 5. Pb, 79pp, with figures; £4.00 (+ 90p p+p) special offer to Society members.

Between the 1840s and 1880s Southwell Minster went through a long period of repair and restoration under the careful guidance of Ewan Christian, architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The work is detailed in the files of the Commissioners and this book presents a full account of the work of rectors, architects and the remarkable mason John Gregory who 'virtually rebuilt the Minster alone'. The Minster, raised to Cathedral status in

1884, was finally reopened at a service in February 1888.

Available from The Minster Shop, Church Street, Southwell, Nottinghamshire, NG25 0HD.

The churches and graveyards of Berwickshire

G A C Binnie. ISBN 0 9526805 0 5. 468pp; £21.95.

This volume collects together information about every known ecclesiastical site and building in Berwickshire, from the earliest to the most recent and including all denominations. A history of each church is given together with a description of the site, the building and its contents.

Available from G A C Binnie, Ladykirk, Berwick, TD15 1XL.

In search of St Walstan

1995, C Twinch. Media Associates. ISBN 0 9521499 1 5. Pb, 200pp, with photos; £9.95 (+ £2.50 p+p).

This sets out to discover evidence for a legend which began in Anglo-Saxon England and which, one thousand years later, still attracts pilgrims to its shrine at Bawburgh, Norfolk. The author establishes a network of

previously undiscovered links between villages throughout East Anglia and, in the process, disproves the theory that St Walstan was just one of the many localised cults of medieval England.

Available from Media Associates (In search of Walstan), PO Box 79, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 4UZ.

The Church of Pitsea St Michael: research project 1994–1995

1997. Roderick Mackley (ed). Transactions of the Rochford Hundred Field Archaeology Group, volume 2. Card cover, spiral bound, 55pp, with figures; £5.00 (+ £1.50 p+p)

This simply, but attractively produced volume presents the results of a research project at the now abandoned church of Pitsea St Michael, Essex by the Rochford Hundred Field Archaeology Group. The project comprised an historical survey of documentary and pictorial references to the church, an exploratory excavation of two substantial areas inside and a field survey of the churchyard and surviving gravestones.

Available from Peter Howard, 39 Bailey Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3PJ.

LETTERS

David Stocker ('*Fons et origo*', *Church Archaeology*, vol 1, pp 17–25) will be reassured that the rituals attached to the disposal of redundant fonts live on.

Some years ago the British military presence in the Persian Gulf was

withdrawn. As part of the process of closing down the garrison church in Bahrain the military chaplain caused some consternation among the authorities by taking a sledge-hammer to our rather nice font. He explained, on being asked, that in the first place

the font 'belonged not to the MoD but to GoD' and that he was saving it from becoming a patio plant holder at the local British Political Residency.

*Major (Retd) M C J Davis
Great Missenden*