

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*

Included in my book, *In search of St Walstan* (see New books) is a national gazetteer of representations of SS Walstan and Blida which includes Anglican and Catholic places of worship and some secular imagery. Since publication yet more sites have come to light which suggests that others have also been overlooked. I would be most interested in any further examples which readers of *Church Archaeology* may be able to suggest.

Most of the representations are in East Anglia, and range in date from the 12th century to the present day. There is one possible stone figure atop All Saints Church in Gresford (Denbigh) and an icon of St Walstan on an as yet unidentified English cathedral (not Norwich or Bury St Edmunds). There is also a 20th-century church dedication in Rongai (Kenya).

Generic emblems for St Walstan (d 1016) include a crown and/or sceptre, and specific emblems include a scythe, two calves at his feet and three 20th-century church screens include a spade (more usually attributed to St Fiacre or St Phocas). Uniquely, Walstan is depicted at Gaywood (Norfolk) with a staff, dog and bible, while at the church of St Laurence, Norwich (Norfolk) he carries a lantern and bible, the cover of the bible depicting the site of his Shrine Chapel at Bawburgh, near Norwich.

St Blida (or Blythe), reputedly the Anglo-Saxon mother of Walstan has no specific emblem but is depicted on a screen dated 1515 at the church of St Mary Magdalene, Norwich, holding a quill and bible.

The cult of Walstan, England's patron saint of agriculture, bears interesting parallels with the Spanish saint, Isidore the Farmer (d 1170), whose emblems include a sickle and two white oxen. Both saints are associated with miraculous wells. Few representations of St Isidore in Britain

have been found but any information on further examples would be greatly welcomed.

The feastday of 30 May is helpful in distinguishing St Walstan from Bishop Wul(f)stan, whose feastday is 19 January. There is no known day for St Blida.

An area of currently undeveloped research is the likelihood of representations of St Walstan on the pilgrim routes which left East Anglia for the Midlands, in particular those along the Icknield Way. Kirk (1946) points to a possible cluster of 'Wolston' dedications in Leicestershire, including the church at Wiston Magna, where the Fosse Way meets Watling Street. However, this was later thought to refer to Wulstan of Worcester or another, and now forgotten, St Wolstan.

If any readers know of further examples of representations of SS Walstan and Blida I would be most grateful for any information. Letters can either be addressed to the Editor or direct to me at Hill Farm, Rendham, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 2AL.

Bibliography

Kirk, K E, 1946 *Church dedications of the Oxford Diocese*. Clarendon Press

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On reading the first issue of *Church Archaeology* I was particularly interested by Ian Roberts' article on masons' marks from Bradford Cathedral (pp 42–43). Several points he raised had attracted my attention during investigations at St Michael's Church, Aldbourne (Wilts) (Sewell 1994).

By an odd chance the main feature of St Michael's Church is, as at Bradford Cathedral, a very substantial tower added in the 1450s. It is also clear that the original central tower

had to be taken down, probably due to indifferent foundations. One consequence was that the south arcade was reconstructed using, in part, the earlier Norman voussoirs for the chancel and crossing arches. The chalk used for the original church was quarried in the village, but the tower is of Corallian limestone from down in the Swindon Vale.

This had to be brought some 10 miles or more up a steep escarpment. To reduce the transport load as well as concentrating the skilled masons at the quarry, where in any case the stone is usually easier to work when freshly cut, the arch work at least was all prefabricated. Construction and assembly was done by masons on site and it seems probable that the shaped stones had to be marked to assist the local workforce. Thus, while masons' marks may well have included the equivalent of 'initials' for recording the work of individuals, it was also essential to use other marks to show how the individual stones were to be assembled.

While some of the marks shown in Ian Roberts' diagram may have identified the mason, I would suggest that others, particularly those at the top, may have been assembly marks.

I have failed to find any marks in St Michael's. However, the interior of the new tower was lined with reused blocks from the reconstruction of the crossing and one block has cut on it a compass-drawn circle with the indication of a twisted cord shape inside. Obviously this surface would have been placed inside the wall in the original chalk stone building but when the stone was reused it was reversed.

Bibliography

Sewell, A, 1994 'St Michael's Church, Aldbourne', *Wilts Archaeol Nat Hist*, 87, 102–115

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