

CHURCH FURNITURE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH AND WELSH PARISH CHURCHES

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Despite the regrettable depredations of Edward VI's reign and the Civil War, England can boast the finest collection of medieval parochial church woodwork in Europe.¹ Elsewhere very little has survived,² since on the Continent, from the Reformation, monotonous tides of iconoclasm swept pitilessly to and fro in all directions from the mid-sixteenth century to the early-nineteenth century. In particular, in Flanders, there was the notorious destruction of the so-called *beelderstorm* of 1566–67, and in France the Revolutionary period, and its after-shocks, particularly in Belgium and Germany.

The destruction of church goods and fittings in England at the Reformation was almost total in the monastic churches that were not adopted under the new dispensation, either as cathedrals, or in part at least, as parish churches. At parochial level, the principal foci of the iconoclastic hatred were the rood-screen and rood-loft. The other fixed wooden furnishings remained more-or-less untouched. Certainly, they did not suffer to anything like the same extent as the sculpture in wood and stone, panel paintings and stained glass. Yet the undeniable heavy losses of medieval furniture in our parish churches are due as much to neglect and subsequent re-ordering, as to Protestant iconoclasm. The dynamic development of the Anglican liturgy resulted in an intense sequence of radical internal alterations, particularly from the early nineteenth century. This led to a further erosion of medieval parochial nave benching and choir-stalls, as well as to the comprehensive 'restoration' of rood- and parclose-screens.³ Re-orderings have continued since and, in the early twenty-first century, the threat to medieval parish church furnishings is, if anything, more grave than ever. The replacement of choir-stalls by west-facing modern tiered benching for clergy and singers at the west end of the nave, and the removal of the ancient rood-screen to the back of the church, is not uncommon. Notwithstanding, however, much of the medieval material still remains *in situ*.

It is surprising to comprehend the sheer typological variety of surviving furniture, such as font covers, parclose and rood-screens, rood-lofts, choir-stalls, pulpits, aumbries and banner stave lockers, lecterns, chests and collecting boxes. Last but not least, the crucial role played by the structural carpenter within the overall ensemble should be borne in mind. The timber porches, doors, roofs and canopies of honour are the pride of many parish churches.⁴ It is my intention to set the scene for the interior of the medieval English parish church, in terms of the fittings and their liturgical purpose, with reference, where possible, to contemporary descriptions, and the contents of parish wills and churchwardens' and guild accounts. Due to the paucity of both monuments and information from before 1400, most of the woodwork discussed, and any related documentary material, inevitably refers to the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Not a great deal is known about the daily life of the typical medieval English or Welsh parish church. This is partly due to a previous comparative neglect of the subject by

historians, although there is currently a resurgence of interest.⁵ The description of the interior of Long Melford church, Suffolk, written by Roger Martin at the end of the sixteenth century, is based upon the writer's clear memories of pre-Reformation times, when he was already in his twenties. His family lived at Melford Place, one of the several manors in the town. Martin had been a churchwarden in Queen Mary's reign and was a notorious recusant for the rest of his life. His account provides a unique insight into the furnishings of a late-medieval English urban parish church (Figure 1).⁶ He looked back with nostalgia to the condition of the unreformed church of his youth. His forbears had been intimately connected with the rebuilding of the church in the late fifteenth century and his interest in it seems to have been almost proprietorial. In 1484 his great-grandfather, Richard Martin, had founded the chantry chapel for his family on the south side of the new church. Roger begins his personal recollections as follows:

At the back of the high altar, in the said church, there was a goodly mount, made of one great tree, and set up to the Christ's Passion, representing the horsemen with their swords, and the footmen etc., as they used Christ on the Mount of Calvary, all being fair gilt, and lively and beautifully set forth...⁷

The 'mount' was an elaborate oak reredos, depicting the Passion, which stretched from the top of the altar to the sill of the east window. From Martin's description it would seem that it may have been carved from one great tree trunk, although one would expect the manufacture of such an object to have been additive for the most part. It would have resembled examples still surviving on the Continent, such as the one on the high altar at St Nicholas, Kalkar of 1505–08 by the Flemish artist Jan Joest, in the German Rhineland. Martin goes on to explain that it had painted hinged doors, 'To cover and keep clean all the whiche, which were opened upon high and solemn *feast-dayes*'. He added that 'At the north end of the same altar, there was a goodly *gilt tabernacle*, reaching up to the roofo of the chancell, in the which ther was one fair large *gilt image* of the Holy Trinity, being patron of the church, besides other fair images. The like tabernacle was at the south end'.

He went on to describe the rood-loft:

There was a fair roodloft, with the rood, Mary & John, on every side one, with a fair pair of organs standing thereby; which loft extended all the bredth of the church, and on Good Friday a priest, there standing by the rood, sang The Passion.

He mentioned that there was also an organ in the rood-loft as well as beside it. From the church plan it can be seen that the rood-screen was over 57 ft wide, and that access to the loft was provided by means of an external staircase turret on the north side of the church (Figure 1). For a building completed in 1484, and of this importance, one would expect there to have been choir-stalls, particularly as by tradition the space on the south side of the choir relative to the Clopton chantry on the north has always been known as the choir vestry. The stalls have long-since disappeared.⁸ Two bays of ancient parclose screenwork survive at the west end of the choir space, and there must have been a similar screen filling the next bay to the east. To north and south the extension of the outer rood-screens, and parclose screens, enclosed chantry chapels. That for the Clopton family, who lived at nearby Kentwell Hall, extends from the rood-screen on the north side through an antechapel, where the church's founder, Sir William Clopton, is buried as well as several other members

of the family, to the exquisite Kentwell Chapel, where the remains of his son, John, are interred.⁹ As already mentioned, the chapel in the adjacent position on the south side was dedicated to the Martin family.¹⁰ It contains two early seventeenth century memorial brasses to family members and, doubtless, several more unrecognised Martin burials. This space also doubled as a Jesus Chapel. It seems that the casket-like central space of the exquisite Lady Chapel at the east end of the church was never fitted with parclose screens.

The nave at Long Melford is now bereft of wooden fittings of much interest. Originally it would have been furnished with a full set of benching. At Haddenham, Buckinghamshire, a slightly more populous medieval town, at a conservative estimate, there would have been a seating capacity in the nave in excess of two hundred and seventy-four places, for a parish population of little more than one hundred. At Long Melford the seating capacity could have been more than double this total. Given that in 1524 there were only one hundred and fifty taxpayers at Melford, one wonders whether such provision would have been in response to the real needs of the town's population, or the consequence of a certain hubris on the part of the three interested parties in the construction of a city-scale church.¹¹ An important contribution to the commissioning of the building must surely have been the abbot of Bury, the principal lord of the manor. The font was probably capped with a spired canopy, the extant one being modern. The pulpit is also nineteenth century. One should note that, due to the opulence of the commission, the south porch, the church's most commonly used entrance, was built of masonry faced with flushwork, with limestone dressings, instead of the half-timbered construction typically found in less affluent East Anglian parish churches. The building has a fine set of Perpendicular traceried external doors.

Melford has retained a list of church goods, made in 1529 and 1541.¹² Of great interest are the chests mentioned. Behind the high altar was 'The Priests Vestry', which was built on two levels. These spaces were known as the 'solar' and 'the vestry beneath'.¹³ The latter is provided with a stone flat fan-vault and a fireplace. Under 'Chests' the first entry of the 1529 inventory reads: 'A great chest, upon the vestry cellar (solar), with two great locks to the same, of iron, the gift of Mr Clopton'. One needs to remember that, in the days before bank vaults, security was a major consideration in a medieval church. The value of the vestments even in a well-endowed parish church could be considerable, quite possibly more precious than the gold and silver plate. Nonetheless, one might have thought that the above-mentioned locks were sufficiently strong to resist any robbery attempt. Roger Martin, however, was haunted by the memory of the distressing event of January 13th 1531, when he continues the entry above with the note: 'which two great lokes ... were broken by the thieves ... on which day this church of Melford was despoiled'.¹⁴ The trauma of losing sacred and revered objects is all too evident. The next two chests are described as having only one lock, and there was 'an old chest to lay in copes, all in the keeping of the *sexton*'.¹⁵ Furthermore there were a further 'two old chests, in Our Lady's chappel, in decay'.¹⁶

By 1541, it seems that measures had been taken to improve the security of the chests. For instance: 'Item, one other great chest, bounde with yrons and dyvers stapuls to hange on (pad) lokes, serving to lay in the *evydens* and dedes belonging to the church and other gode uses within the town'.¹⁷ This suggests that at that time some of the town records were stored in the church, and that a few chests were close-banded with iron straps. One

is reminded of the magnificent boarded chest at Salisbury Cathedral, with a double lid and two compartments lined with paper, one for Close leases and the other for City leases.¹⁸ At Melford, another chest referred to: 'Item, in the vestry beneath, a great huch (hutch) bounde with yrons, of the gift of Syr William Clopton', may have been the one referred to in the earlier inventory but upgraded with iron strap banding. There is a vestment chest: 'Item, one other fayre *huche* to lay in the vestments, albes and towells', which may have been a replacement of the one mentioned in 1529. Finally there is a chest which appears to have been kept in the choir vestry: 'Item, one other chest at the quere dore, wherin the Registry boke and the churches boke be kepte'. The former was the register of baptisms, marriages and burials, and the latter contained churchwardens' accounts and lists of church goods.¹⁹

NAVE BENCHING

In respect of the wooden fittings at Long Melford we have already touched on the provision of nave pews. Benched seating was as much a feature of the English parish church before the Reformation, as after it.²⁰ The surviving evidence suggests, however, that not until sometime before the end of the fourteenth century did English parish churches start to be provided on any significant scale with congregational seating. Notwithstanding, as early as 1287, the ordinances of the synod of Exeter censure the apparently already existing custom of reserving seats in church:

*We enact that no one from hence forth may claim a seat in church as his own; noble persons and patrons of churches only excepted. He who for the cause of prayer, shall first enter a church, let him select a place of prayer according to his will.*²¹

However, any evidence of special seating at this period has been lost, although Justin Kroesen and Regnerus Steensma suggest that in the twelfth century in northern Europe integral stone benches on the west wall of the nave would have been used by local gentry and yeoman farmers.²² Stone benches also line the sides and sometimes the backs of many English churches. Most of them date from the beginning of the fourteenth century, and their disposition in the nave is haphazard. Kroesen and Steensma insist that, in northern Europe at any rate, lateral benches, for women on the north side and men on the south side, were as much for the use of the general congregation as for the infirm and women and children.²³ During the office of the Mass, able-bodied parishioners were expected to stand or kneel, but could sit down during the sermon. In their view, these writers suggest that the accommodation offered by a majority of these stone benches would often have been sufficient for the needs of an entire congregation. In England stone benches seem to have gone out of fashion with the introduction of wooden benching, from the end of the fourteenth century. Some parishioners may have brought their own portable wooden stools, a highly perishable artefact, to allow them to sit near the pulpit.

Most English early wooden benching dates from the period 1450–1550.²⁴ Its introduction reflected the changing social status of the worshippers and the emergence of distinctions by class and gender. Moreover, the decoration of benches in many cases mirrored the standing of their occupants. The increasing influence of the preaching orders of friars in England must have contributed to the growth in communal seating.²⁵ The friars

had started to exert a strong influence in English towns from the late-thirteenth century, although they did not fully come into their own until the fifteenth century. By then their sermons became longer and more frequent. As early as 1330, the monk, Richard Whitford, in his manual, stressed that attendance at the Sunday sermon was even more important than attendance at Mass.²⁶ The almost cathedral-size of the late-fourteenth century rebuilt parish church at Boston, Lincolnshire, was a direct response to the flourishing friars' houses in that busy trading port, with which it found itself in direct competition.

An allied development in the administration of many of the larger parish churches was the construction of church- or guild-houses close to the churchyard. These buildings were provided as an alternative meeting place for church ales, weddings and wakes, and other community and fund-raising activities, which had formerly been held in the nave.²⁷ With the introduction of fixed seating for parishioners, the holding of these traditional activities inside the church was precluded. Benching did not become an absolute necessity before the reign of Edward VI, when the sermon became a compulsory part of the church service. The word 'pew' occurs occasionally in the fourteenth century and commonly in the fifteenth century, particularly in churchwardens' accounts.²⁸ Pews were often allocated to men or to women only. Many people believe that the practice of renting pews in the nave for personal or family use was the invention of the nineteenth century, and are surprised to learn that it was entrenched during the middle ages. In 1441-42 at St Lawrence, Reading, the wife of John Tanner gave 4d. for one 'setell', another person giving 6d.²⁹ In 1498 the annual rents for seats in this church amounted to 6s. 8d.

The doors of the grander pews, particularly in the chancel, were often supplied with locks. In the *Boke of Nurture*, written around 1450, such pews were referred to as follows:

Prynce or prelate, if it be, or any other potestate

Ere he enter into the church, be it early or late

Perceive all thinges for his pew, that it be made prepare..

Bothe cosshyn, carpet, and curteyn, bedes and boke, forget not that!

Very few indeed of these exclusive medieval pews have survived, and they are generally datable from the end of the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries.³⁰

This culture of quasi-commercialisation, allied to the rigid class structure of the middle ages, has been memorably dubbed by one eminent British historian as the 'privatization of religion for the gentry...'.³¹

As has often been pointed out, there are noticeable regional, formal and stylistic differences in English church furniture. For example, the central passage through an East Anglian rood-screen tends to be open, whilst in the West of England, doors are normally provided. East Anglian and north-country screens tend to be tall and open. Those in the West of England are long and opaque. By the same token, benches vary in appearance by region. The typical West Country and East Anglian forms are well-known, but how easy it is to overlook the products of the 'Midlands' style, with their squared ends, carved with tracery in the solid, as at Great Tew, Oxfordshire (Figure 2).³² Most of these benches, whose seat backs normally reach down to the floor, are of the late fifteenth century. Bench seat backs in Norfolk and Suffolk often use a horizontal plank that finishes at seat level. At Haddenham the Midlands-style benches have typical Perpendicular mouldings – triple three-quarter round beading on the top rail, with smaller similar beading and a generous hollow below, and variations on the same theme on the en-suite rood-screen

(Figures 3, 4). The use of similar mouldings on top rails can be seen on benches in Oxfordshire (Minster Lovell, Steeple Aston, Great Tew), Northamptonshire (Byfield, Ashby St Legers), and Cambridgeshire (Landbeach). Haddenham and Great Tew are examples of ancient more or less completely pewed-out parochial naves.

The superior quality of both design and joinery at Haddenham is highlighted in a comparison with the less ambitious productions in many other parish churches in the Midland region, such as Blunham or Shelton, Bedfordshire and Guilden Morden, Cambridgeshire. The level of competency at Haddenham, however, is still below what one would expect to find in a greater religious house. Nonetheless, only an urban workshop would have had the facilities to plan and execute such a large commission, and the scale of manufacture would have been well beyond the capabilities of a village joiner. By the same token, the handling of the framed-up double-panelled bench ends at Haddenham, another speciality of the Midland region, represents a noticeable technical advance over the solid traditional-style bench-ends at Great Tew and elsewhere. For the latter, an unusually thick piece of timber was required, Frank Howard and Fred. Crossley claimed that those in Devon were made from a thicker scantling than anywhere else, since the supply of oak in that region was more plentiful.³³

The decoration of bench-ends has been well documented, and includes a plethora of allusions to clergy, parish officials, donors, maker's names, as well as heraldry, religious iconography, trades, secular images and date of manufacture.³⁴ At Altarnan, Cornwall, Joanna Mattingly has pointed to the images of fund-raisers 'whose activities presumably helped to pay for the benches', which were made sometime between 1523 and 1554.³⁵

*These include a fool or jester, viol player, and two sword dancers. A bagpiper with attendant dog may in fact be the shepherd in charge of the flock of sheep grazing on the adjoining bench (Figure 5). This may represent the parish or guild store of sheep and is comparable to the poor's stock at St Columb Minor (in Cornwall) which was said to have paid for all the benches there in 1525.*³⁶

The Altarnan bench ends, which very unusually appear to have been 'signed' by their carver, are stylistically close to those at Braunton, near Barnstaple, Devon, and Poughill, just over the county boundary in North Cornwall, and about twenty miles to the southwest. At Poughill punching is used again, to provide a field for the motifs (Figure 6). It is evident that at a time when West of England benches were being installed everywhere, carvers and joiners were travelling around within a hundred miles of their domiciles.

The installation of pulpits in parish churches, not discussed in this article, was in many ways analogous to the development of nave benching.

ROOD-SCREENS

The rood-screen was the most conspicuous and liturgically important wooden furnishing component in a late-medieval parish church.³⁷ It played a central part in the religious life of the parishioners, and acted as mediator between the daily celebration of the eucharist in the holiest part of the church, and the parochial nave. The familiar image of a rood-screen carrying a loft, and the rood-beam above supporting a Crucifix with figures of the Virgin and St John, often flanked by angels on either side and backed by a painted tympanum, is likely to date from no earlier than the middle of the fifteenth century, and

is usually much later than this. The genesis of the rood-screen barely dates back to before the late-thirteenth century. In the West of England, the puritanical strictures of the diocese of Exeter in the late thirteenth century appear to have excluded altogether the provision of a rood in parish churches.³⁸ The evidence of what appears to be a rood-loft access door-frame, decorated with nail-head ornament, at Colsterworth, Lincolnshire, is an anomaly which has yet to be clarified.³⁹ The documentary evidence for a rood-loft in 1297 at Furneaux Pelham, Hertfordshire, is incontrovertible. It mentions that 'a large staircase to the rood-loft is wanting in the body of the church'.⁴⁰ In a typological chronology of the different components of the rood-screen one can predicate that the rood itself and the beam on which it rests came first. In the twelfth century the beam was usually attached to the upper wall of the low chancel arch, with a painted scheme behind, such as a Last Judgement. Unusually, the surviving fragments of the original painting at East Shefford, Berkshire, indicate that the subject matter of the painting was the Adoration of the Three Kings. One of the earliest surviving rood-beams was the late-thirteenth century example formerly at Dodington, Kent, since lost.⁴¹ The section of the beam at the foot of the Cross was often elaborately carved, as at Cullompton, Devon, with its vivid depiction of the detritus of the Mount of Olives, including the skull of Adam.⁴²

The wholesale rebuilding of the east end in the thirteenth century greatly increased the height and size of the chancel arch. The tradition of painting on the west side of the chancel wall was replaced by the insertion of a painted wooden tympanum, as at Penn, Buckinghamshire. The first surviving wooden rood-screens of the late-thirteenth century can be seen at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire and Cumnor, Berkshire, both minster churches. Contemporary parish church examples are at Thurcaston, Leicestershire and Gilston, Hertfordshire. A later reference to a rood-loft, at Tillingham, Essex in 1335, complains that it 'impedes the light around the altar of the Holy Virgin, and (it) makes a dark space in which the parishioners chatter'.⁴³ This is an interesting instance of parochial opposition to the introduction of a loft.

The functions of the rood-loft were multifarious. Its key role was in providing a high place from which to recite the Gospel, and to make certain public announcements, such as the Letters of Communion and bishops' Pastorals. For such purposes a lectern was often provided. It could also serve as a parish muniment room or library, and a chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross, when pews were sometimes provided. By the later middle ages the nave altars were universally situated at ground level on either side of the rood-screen entranceway. The specifically liturgical functions of the rood-loft included the shrouding of the rood and the high altar during Lent, the use of the rood-loft bressumer for burning candles, particularly on Easter Day, in some cases, the provision of accommodation for an organ and singers, and as a place to keep the sacring bell.

The most interesting complete rood-screens in Britain are in Wales, where several lofts have remained in remarkably authentic condition.⁴⁴ In England almost every single surviving rood-loft is more or less restored.⁴⁵ As an illustration of a Welsh rood-screen the example at St Anno, Llannano, Montgomeryshire (Figure 7) will be briefly analysed. The style of the foliate decoration is typical for mid-Wales, and is close to that on the rood-screen at Llanwnnog, in the same county (Figure 8). They must have both been manufactured by the same workshop. There are fragmentary remains of others belonging to this 'school', but the principal almost complete loss is the former rood-screen in the

abandoned medieval church of St Mary, Newtown. The artist and antiquary, the Reverend John Parker, painstakingly recorded the most important specimens. He visited Llannano in 1828, noting that originally there were only four bays either side of the entranceway, rather than the five bays at present. Crossley and Ridgway suggested that, when the church was rebuilt at the end of the nineteenth century, it must have been widened, and the screen adapted accordingly.⁴⁶ This would also explain why there is no longer any access to the rood-loft. The sculpted figures under niches along the loft front were inserted in the nineteenth century. Originally the screen was lavishly polychromed, but sadly most of this has been pickled off. There is a satisfying series of Perpendicular-type half-round mouldings on the standards and mullions. The fringe-like tracery heads of the main screen lights are typical of Montgomeryshire, but also for south-west Welsh woodwork. The soffit of the rood-loft is slightly tipped. The traceried soffit panels are astonishing in the variety of the mesh-like character of their ornament (Figure 9). This feature is uniquely mid-Welsh, as is also the handling of the foliage decoration, such as the water plant. The detailing on the east side of the Llananno screen is much plainer than that on the west side. Because the church has been rebuilt, there is no evidence for the tympanum. Importantly, there does not appear to have been a door filling the screen entranceway. The roof foundation beam is still intact, but the loft floor is gone.

Further south-west is to be found the modest single-cell church at Bettwys Newydd, Monmouthshire. This is a picturesque rural church without any particular architectural pretension. As at Llananno, it exemplifies the standard Welsh rural single-cell plan, and is distinguished by its rare integrated internal fittings and fixtures. Newman described it as 'A little grey stone building, Perp, nave and chancel in one, with W double bell gable (remodelled in the C19), and W porch, clearly a medieval addition'.⁴⁷

The verandah-style rood-screen, which is 16 feet in length, is somewhat archaic in character (Figure 10). Although it has been rebuilt, and has lost its tympanum, it is otherwise largely authentic. It has a plain-panelled dado to the lower screen and five open bays with three-light Perpendicular heads above. The loft is 42 feet deep and supported on pairs of posts, attached to the nave walls, flanking the entrance. Although the latter are modern, they cover ancient mortises on the underside of the bressumer beam at each end. The entrance has a basket-shaped arch-head with pierced tracery. Behind the loft is a boarded tympanum, with applied cross-shaped struts in the centre, and two three-light windows either side (Figure 11). The bressumer beam has ovolo mouldings in the hollows between which are running foliage trails (Figure 12). Above are fourteen openwork panels with heavily-finialled traceried ogee arches. It is noticeable that the rhythm of the bay plan in the lower screen is ignored on the loft front above. The screen is lit from a wide-splayed window to the south-west, adjacent to the door to the rood stair, which is hidden in the thickness of the wall. The integrity of the two major components of the fixtures and fittings in this church, the rood-screen and timber ceiling, raise the archaeological status of the interior to a high level. The tympanum fits exactly within the radius of the later plastered and double-purlined wooden boarded barrel-vaulted ceiling. The latter has mostly restored foliate carved roof bosses at the intersections. In the chancel it has not been plastered over and the butted boarding, and the ancient carved bosses, can still be enjoyed. The loft front fits exactly beneath the highly moulded wall plates. Notwithstanding the disjunction of the front elevations at ground and loft level,

the rood-screen appears to be all of one build.

Most of the panelling in the dado of the rood-screen is secondary, having been replaced possibly in the seventeenth century. The entire monument has been stained down to an unpleasantly dark and dirty appearance. The bays of the loft front are filled with somewhat ingenuous finialled, traceried and crocketed arches, which would have looked a little more impressive if the original attached moulded stiles each side had been retained. Crossley and Ridgway pointed out the redundant nail holes in the latter, although they acknowledged that buttresses were normally carved in with the stiles in this part of Wales.⁴⁸ The unusual feature of the design is its attempted three-dimensionality, with the attached archlet standing proud of the cusped tracery below, and the bare triangular shapes at the base. Crossley and Ridgway suggested that this feature would originally have been covered by 'good cresting' above the lower bressumer (Figure 12).⁴⁹ The trailing oak and vine foliage friezes are well carved, although they could do with more shadow behind to bring out the shapes. The handling of the loft front here, particularly the treatment of the vine-scroll friezes, is reminiscent of that at Mamhilad, also in Monmouthshire (Figure 13). There is an attempt to represent a surprising variety of plant species on the loft archlets at Bettws Newydd, with six in all, including hawthorn, voluted-trefoil leaf, and four squared-up examples, reminiscent of the English fourteenth and fifteenth century ornament vocabulary. Mamhilad is a good example of a loft that has been re-used as a singing gallery at the west end of the church.

The ample windows in the back of the rood-loft at Bettwys afford an excellent view of the high altar. They contrast with the irregular and covert squints at Llanelieu, Breconshire and Llangwm Uchaf, Monmouthshire (Figures 14, 15). Crossley and Ridgway claimed that the screen entrance posts at Bettwys, although moulded on the inside faces, appear to have been prepared to take a door, hinged on the west side. They felt that, since the tracery of the door-head is cut from thicker timber than that used for the open bay heads on either side, the former might be a later addition. This tracery, and the basket arch which contains it, is probably somewhat later in date than the mid-fifteenth century-looking character of the rest of the screen.

Unfortunately, there is not space here to contextualise these Welsh screens any further, but it is to be hoped that this account will stand for other more-or-less complete examples in the Principality, as well as in England.

CHOIR-STALLS

The possible role of the rood-loft in providing a platform for the singers in a parish church has already been mentioned in passing. The surviving evidence, such as it is, however, implies that in most churches of the later middle ages, particularly the larger urban ones, there must have been sets of stalls at the east end for a choir and clergy. In trying to verify this information we are hampered by our inability to inspect the foundations beneath the floor-boards, which may or may not cover a resonance passage. If we were able to identify this feature, we could be much more confident about the incidence and distribution of parochial choir-stalls. However, it is possible that only a few of them were provided with acoustic chambers, which were probably only associated with more prestigious establishments. The financial resources of most smaller parish churches may not have run to such a sophisticated provision.

Fine sets of choir-stalls survive at places like Lavenham, Suffolk (mid-fourteenth century), Ludlow, Shropshire (c.1430), Boston, Lincolnshire (mid-15th-century), St Mary's, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire (c.1445) and Salle, Norfolk (c.1450). All four churches are atypical, each being unusually well endowed. Accommodation for the boy singers in such churches was sometimes provided on shallow benches incorporated on the front of the stall desks, as at Sefton, Lancashire and Stowlangtoft, Suffolk. We are much less well informed about the arrangements in the average village church. A complicating factor is the alleged introduction of alien furniture from neighbouring religious houses into parish churches after the Dissolution, as for instance at Barkestone, Leicestershire, where the four stall-ends are, supposedly, from either Croxton Abbey or Belvoir Priory,⁵⁰ or the twenty stalls at Beaumaris, Anglesey, traditionally believed to have migrated from the nearby Franciscan friary at Llanfaes.

One of the finest sets of parochial stalls in England is at Nantwich, Cheshire (Figure 16).⁵¹ The high quality of the furniture in this provincial urban church of the late-fourteenth century is a great surprise, until one comes to terms with the building's unexpectedly cathedral-size and sophistication. It must have been funded by a combination of the brethren of Combermere Abbey, the mother church, the four religious guilds based in the parish, and a number of wealthy local families, whose armorials formerly decorated the windows. The stalls are highly unusual, because they exhibit a direct stylistic influence from the nearby Chester Cathedral (formerly a Benedictine abbey) (Figure 17). The designers and manufacturers of parish church stalls were normally regional workshops, that operated exclusively within their own orbit. The Nantwich furniture (c. 1390) is ultimately the unexpected progeny of the Lincoln Cathedral stalls, whose distinguished design emanates from royal commissions in London in the mid-fourteenth century, and other sources.⁵² The desking at Nantwich is nineteenth century, but otherwise the furniture is authentically medieval, albeit inevitably, with some Victorian restoration. The arrangement of the seating is unusual for England, there being only two return stalls each side. These have been angled off, so as to stop just in front of the eastern piers of the wide chancel arch. These seats must have been reserved for the rector and the presiding chantry priests. They are wider than the other seats, a normal hierarchical refinement found in choir-stalls. The seat rail, on which the seats and the superstructure depend, is original throughout. Iron clamps are embedded in the back wall, to restrain the superstructure.⁵³ At Nantwich there are enough stylistic parallels with the stalls at Chester Cathedral, themselves a stylistic intermediary between Lincoln and Nantwich, to make it a reasonable assumption that at least one of the master carpenters who worked on the Chester furniture must have subsequently found employment here. John Maddison attributed the contemporary architectural works at Chester and Nantwich to the same 'Perpendicular Master'.⁵⁴ Many details of the Nantwich stalls betray an intimate knowledge of the Chester woodwork. But at the same time there are considerable differences. The seat standards are much wider, the shape of the seats is quite different and, most importantly, the superstructure has undergone important modifications.

The impressive canopy design at Nantwich takes the refinement and complexity found at Chester one stage further. There is an even greater interest in the exploitation of light and shade. The hierarchical massing of forms, which Chester inherited from Lincoln and exploited still further – the cavernous lower canopies, the tall hollowed-out open-work

screens and the large shadow-casting upper canopies that resemble the lids of so many sumptuous *ciboria* – whilst still evidently present at Nantwich, is played down in favour of an impressionistic blurring of the outlines. The painstaking use of applied detail at Chester – the variety and articulation of the foliage, the unusually specific modelling of the sculptural detail even at the upper level of the structure, the use of elaborate carved bosses in the vaults of the canopies at both levels and the application of traceried panelling and figure carving on the seat backs – is as much reminiscent of goldsmith's as joiner's work. It is on the creation of a quasi-goldsmith's art, with the emphasis on dematerialisation, that the designer of the Nantwich stalls concentrates. This superstructure is a lacy skeleton freely accessible to light and air. It is as if the intensely intricate design were sketched impressionistically upon a sheet of paper. The major emphasis is upon the small forms which merge one into another in both horizontal and vertical directions. The tendency to dematerialisation and flatness is further emphasized by the penetration of light from behind. With this monument we move into a different world from that of Lincoln both formally and aesthetically. This is the most progressive canopy composition of the century in all England. It demonstrates how the north of England took the lead during the second half of the fourteenth century in the making of canopied choir-stalls. This was to fuel a vigorous spate of choir-stall making on distinguished and idiosyncratic lines throughout the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries in these parts.⁵⁵ The existence of the most sophisticated canopy design of all in an obscure Cheshire parish church gainsays the notion that the most expensive is always the best.

By way of contrast we shall consider the late-fourteenth century parish church at Balsham, Cambridgeshire, and its highly idiosyncratic choir-stalls (Figures 18, 19). There are now twenty-six seats in all, with ten lateral and six return stalls, although there were originally twenty-eight. The church has a thirteenth century west tower, what appears to be an early fourteenth century chancel and a mainly fifteenth century nave.⁵⁶ Despite the claim on his memorial brass in the chancel that John de Sleaford, the rector of Balsham from 1378, who died in 1401, had built the church (*ecclesiam struxit*), the archaeology indicates that, whatever else he did, he fitted out the choir with stalls. Sleaford was an able administrator and churchman.⁵⁷ He died a canon of Ripon, archdeacon of Bath and Wells, Prebendary of Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, and had been chaplain to Queen Philippa. A Lincolnshire man, he had begun his career as a clerk of the King's works around 1362, and was promoted to Keeper of the King's Wardrobe at the Tower. His brother William was dean of St Stephen's Chapel, Westminster. By 1384 John was forced out of office, his face no longer fitting in the new regime. His previous royal duties must have been well rewarded. He would have been well able to rebuild, or at least restore his church. He is reported as holding the lease of Oxcroft Farm in the 1370s and at Linton.⁵⁸ In 1384 he is known to have owed the considerable sum of £400 (later marked paid), which must relate to his building activities.⁵⁹ John Sleaford's memorial brass is exceptionally fine, and its inscriptions provide much information about him. Apart from the claim that he had built the church, it also recounts that he gave the stalls.

The latter are very unusual because, although revealing a typical late fourteenth century style, they do not conform to any comparable joinery in England. Under the seats there is no capping rail. The seat backs consist of two panels, one above the other, the upper being filled with a moulded single trefoil-headed light. The destroyed seat backs of

the return stalls would have been treated similarly. They have been modified to accommodate the later rood-screen. The shoulder pieces at the top of the seat standards, that would normally have been made from an extension of the capping rail, consist of a figure leaning forward at the top of the standard 'quadrant'. A pair of these standards is used to create the corner arrangement. The desk fronts are decorated with pairs of cusped lights under a moulded ogee arch, with small pairs of lights in the spandrels.

The misericords represent a fairly standard range of subject matter, except for a man eating with a wooden spoon from a mazer. There are plain desk-ends with trefoil poppy-heads, some with human heads, typical of the period. The chief interest is the elbow and shoulder carvings, which include birds, animals, hybrids, and human figures. The image of a 'Fen Fowler', wearing a pleated cloak and holding a dog on a leash in his left hand, seems to be unique (Figure 19). He has stilts strapped to his legs, and he is, presumably, catching fish, eels and waterfowl in the then mainly undrained water fens.

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the existence of these very unusual stalls in what today is a remote country village. As a retired royal servant and pluralist, Sleford was probably interested in providing as full a liturgical routine in the church as possible. We know that there were two guilds at Balsham in the fifteenth century, one dedicated to the Holy Trinity and the other to St Nicholas. Their altars were located at the east end of the nave aisles. The two guild chapel priests would have been expected to attend the main services in the choir, and given Sleford's familiarity with the liturgical round at St Stephen's Chapel, one would not be surprised to learn that he made sure that there were boy singers and lay clerks for his choir. Another interesting dimension at Balsham is the Ely connection. The parish of Balsham had been the property of the monastery of Ely since 1035, and in 1109 was transferred to the bishops of Ely, when the monastery became the seat of a bishopric. The present church dates from the thirteenth century, and may have been built at the behest of Hugh de Balsham, who was bishop of Ely from 1258 to 1286.

John Sleford must have been well aware of the strategic importance of his church, in a village in which was located one of the bishop of Ely's palaces. It would have been an overnight stop for the episcopal retinue on the journey south. Interestingly, in the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, there were two rectors with strong Ely connections. John Blodwell, another clever churchman, was a lawyer. He was educated at Bologna, and at the close of his career, between 1438 and 1444 appointed absentee Bishop and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ely.⁶⁰ In the early sixteenth century the rector was Henry Mynn, who had been steward to bishop West. Unfortunately, we know practically nothing about the Balsham palace, which was only a five-minute walk from the parish church. Whereas it probably had an oratory or private chapel for the bishop's exclusive use, one wonders whether the prelate's retinue at least routinely used Holy Trinity Church for worship.

EASTER SEPULCHRES

Although the importance of both temporary and permanent sepulchres in the Easter liturgy in England is becoming better understood, there are still plenty of unanswered questions in regard to the conduct of the ceremony and the form of the sepulchre itself.⁶¹ Apart from the unique wooden monumental but portable example in oak at Cowthorpe, North Yorkshire (Figure 20), combining the characteristics of both sarcophagus and

shrine, the survivors are in stone. The permanent kind is built into the fabric of a church, generally on the north side of the chancel.⁶² The multi-purpose kind consisted of the canopied effigee-less 'tombs' of the type found on the north side of the high altar, which became popular in parish churches in the second half of the fifteenth century, for instance, at Long Melford, Hadleigh and Blythburgh, in Suffolk.⁶³ Wooden sepulchres, like the one at Cowthorpe, were also intended to be placed for the most part against the north chancel wall during Easter Week, remaining until the Sunday after Easter (for the rest of the year they would have been stored elsewhere).⁶⁴ There is also evidence for the use of a miniature sepulchre, almost certainly of wood, which was placed within these 'tombs' on the evening of Good Friday. They must have been small enough to fit on top of the sarcophagus within the sides of the open canopy.⁶⁵ Thus the tomb-sepulchres enjoyed the privilege of being used at Easter as receptacles for the symbols of the body of Christ. Therefore, those with sufficient status and influence to commission such 'tombs', whether clerics or gentry, were guaranteed eternal life through their permanent proximity in the church to the celebration of Mass at the high altar after their death and their intimate association with the body of Christ, placed within their tomb during the Easter period.

According to the entries in churchwardens' accounts, the wooden demountable type of Easter sepulchre was the most commonly used in parish churches. Many of them were of simple construction, such as the one at Tunstall, Kent, of deal boards.⁶⁶ Apart from that at Cowthorpe, and a shrine-shaped example at Coety, Glamorgan, with pitched roof and carved Passion scenes,⁶⁷ the more elaborate carved wooden Easter sepulchres have disappeared, save for a few fragments reported in the early-twentieth century to have survived.⁶⁸ The ritual took its own course in England, and was centred around the rites of *Depositio* (the Deposition of Christ's body), when after Vespers on Good Friday, the Cross (a crucifix) was buried with the Host in its pix in the sepulchre, and the *Elevatio* on Easter Day (Christ Risen from the Grave) when the Host was carried from the sepulchre to the high altar, and then the Cross was taken in procession around the church to an altar on the north side.⁶⁹ For this liturgical drama the sepulchre would have been decorated with coloured fabrics,⁷⁰ and at Melford,

'a fair painted frame of timber set up about Maundy Thursday, with holes for a number of fair tapers to stand in before the sepulchre and to be lighted in service time & sometimes it was set overthwart the quire before the high altar, the sepulchre being always placed, and finely garnished, at the north end of the high altar ...' .⁷¹

The Cowthorpe sepulchre is 2165 mm high, 1610 mm wide and 650 mm deep. At the base is a chest, 1450 mm high, with four stiles at the corners, meeting the base of the gable above.⁷² The stiles have tracery and sloped offsets in two zones, and mouldings at the base, now mostly missing or rotted away. The chest is embattled at the base, and its front has applied traceried panels with segmental heads, leaf spandrels and flower cusps. There are two storage compartments, on the left about 610 mm square and on the right 965 mm by 610 mm, with six original wrought-iron strap hinges with trefoil ends on the chest lid. The two iron lifting rings are backed by flower escutcheons. The lock plates are original. The remains of a locking mechanism survives on the back of the right hand hatch. The hasps and staples are probably more recent in origin.

The superstructure is gabled, and decorated with crockets and cresting at base and top.

The finials, which were at each end, are lost. There is a frieze decorated with various motifs under the lower cresting. The spandrels of the openings on the front and left side are decorated with leaves and shields, presumably originally coloured. From the positioning of the decorative carving it is clear that the object's principal viewing point was from the front or the left side. At the right end the buttresses were not carved, and the back is completely plain. There are a few repairs and replacements, but the condition is generally authentic. There are traces of a gesso covering on the superstructure, which suggests that it was originally fully coloured. The ritual cross (crucifix), used in the *Depositio*, representing Christ's dead body, was probably placed in the larger compartment of the chest, and the host in the smaller. This portable Easter sepulchre was unquestionably made for the church. Bryan Rouclyff, who had been a lawyer in the reign of Henry VI, became a Baron of the Exchequer, and was also Lord of the Manor and patron of the living at Cowthorpe. He was given permission by the Archbishop of York in 1456 to start building a church on a new site.⁷ The celebrated brass memorial to him and his wife Joan Hammerton, which partially survives, displays, amongst other family armorial motifs, the *fleur-de-lys* of his maternal uncle's family. Also interlaced with the marginal inscription were the chess rooks of the Rouclyffs. Both appear on the frieze of the sepulchre.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a vast subject with a generally well-known supporting bibliography, with which specialists will be familiar. Within the confines of this paper, by no means exhaustive, it has been possible to touch on no more than some the key components of the typology – nave benching, rood-screens, choir-stalls and Easter Sepulchres, although passing references have been made to altarpieces, chests and pulpits. It is difficult to gain the impression of an authentic English medieval church today. The biggest losses being the nave altars, screened-off chantry chapels, choir-stalls, and the statues of the Virgin, the church's patron saint, and the many popular saints, the indispensable vehicles of intercession. It has been my intention, as far as possible, to recall the liturgical functions of the medieval parish church, and to evoke the former role of its principal wooden furnishings.

Today the rural parish churches of Brittany and Scandinavia provide the most genuine experience of a Northern European medieval parish church, even though much of the material that survives there is of the Baroque period. Brittany provides a distressing contrast with the rest of France, where the depredations of the mainly Revolutionary iconoclasm are all too evident. In England and Wales the interiors of parish churches have been irrevocably transformed by the reformers, and the re-orderings and restorations of successive centuries. None the less, in England, and to a lesser extent in Wales, much of the medieval wooden furnishing has survived. Its potential for historians can never be exhausted.

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3. Some of the restoration work carried out in parish churches from the middle of the 19th-century was, however, sensitively handled and of a high quality.
4. See the recent invaluable review of parish church fittings in western Europe in J. Kroesen and R. Steensma,

The Interior of the Medieval Village Church, Peeters, Louvain, Paris, Dudley, MA, 2004.

5. For a recent study of the English parish church, containing many useful references, see P. Binski, 'The English Parish Church and its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem', in R. K. Emmerson and P. Sheingorn, *Studies in Iconography*, Routledge, Kalamazoo, 1999, pp. 1–25. For an up-to-date general coverage of Welsh medieval culture, see P. Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2003. For the classic series on Welsh church woodwork, see F. H. Crossley and M. H. Ridgway, 'Screens, lofts, and stalls situated in Wales and Monmouthshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Parts one, two and four were written by Crossley, and the remainder was under joint authorship. A complete list of the components is as follows: 'Part one. General introduction', 97.2 (1943), pp. 135–60; 'Part two. Anglesey and Caernarvonshire', 98.1 (1944), pp. 64–112; 'Part three. Merioneth and Flintshire', 98.2 (1945), pp. 153–98; 'Part four. Denbighshire and Cardiganshire', 99.1 (1946), pp. 1–56; 'Part five. Montgomeryshire and Carmarthenshire', 99.2 (1947), pp. 179–230; 'Part six. Radnorshire', 100.2 (1949), pp. 207–51; 'Part seven. Brecknockshire', 102.1 (1952), pp. 48–82; 'Part eight. Pembrokeshire', 106 (1957), pp. 9–45; 'Part nine. Glamorgan', 107 (1958), pp. 72–108; 'Part ten. Monmouthshire', 108 (1959), pp. 14–71; 'Part eleven. Border influences. Additions and Corrections etc.', 111 (1962), pp. 59–102. In the final part the authors itemized thirteen Welsh screen types, and provided a distribution map; see part eleven, pp. 99–100.
6. Roger Martin, 'The State of Melford Church and our Ladie's Chappel at the East End. As I did know it'. See Dymond and C. Paine, *The Spoil of Melford Church. Reformation in a Suffolk Parish*, Salient Press, Ipswich, 1992. For an account of Martin's life, see Dymond, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 36, 2004, pp. 975–76.
7. Dymond and Paine, *Spoil of Melford*, p. 1.
- 7a. 'See a speculative discussion of the former Melford altar piece in K.W. Woods, 'The pre-Reformation altar piece of Long Melford church; *Antiquities Journal*, 82, 2002, pp. 93–104.
8. By the early 16th century the 'choir of singers' at Melford was given three dinners a year by the abbots of Bury St Edmund's. *ibid.*, p. 7, note 37.
9. N. Pevsner and E. Radcliffe, *Suffolk. The Buildings of England*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 347.
10. On the exterior of the lower windows of the Martin Chapel is inscribed: 'Pray for ye soulis of Lawrens Martyn and Marion his wyffe, Elysabeth Martyn a'd Jone, and for ye good estat of Richard Martyn and Roger Martyn and ye wyvis and alle ye childri of whose goidis made anno Dni millesimi ccccLxxxIIII.
11. See W. Goult, *A Survey of Suffolk Parish History*, Suffolk County Council, Ipswich, 1990.
12. The 1529 list begins: FIRST OF THE PLATE, ORNAMENTS, AND GOODS, BELONGING TO THE SAID CHURCH. It lists plate, 'basons', a silver pot, paxes, crosses, a pix, christmatories, 'ships of silver', two silver candlesticks, two silver censers, and 'four cruets of silver'. Other items from both of the inventories include 'Coats belonging to Our Lady', copes and vestments, altar cloths, mass books, 'Grails' (gradual), towels, corporasses, coverlits, Lattyn (latten), 'holy water pails of Lattin (*sic.*)', basons and ewer, chests, coffer, 'cross cloaths', banner cloths, streamers of silk, table of beech, 'cloth of Adam and Eve (lenten veil)', etc. Dymond and Paine, *Spoil of Melford*, pp. 10–35.
13. *ibid.*, p. 21, note 73.
14. *ibid.*, p. 21.
15. *ibid.*
16. *ibid.*
17. *ibid.*, p. 34.
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22. Kroesen and Steensma, *Medieval Village Church*, pp. 268–71.
23. *ibid.*, p. 268.
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30. See Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, pp. 282–25, where the early 16th-century Scrope pew in Wensley Church, in the Yorkshire Dales is cited. The definitive work on English church pews throughout their history is M. Aston, 'Segregation in Church', in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood, *Studies in Church History*, 27, *Women in Church*, Ecclesiastical History Soc., Oxford, 1990, pp. 237–94.
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36. *ibid.* Also at Morebath, Devon, see the several references to 'Our Lady's sheep', in E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath. Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2001.
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39. A. Vallance, *English Church Screens*, Batsford, London, 1936, p. 66.
40. *ibid.*
41. *ibid.*, fig. 12.
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49. *ibid.*
50. C. Tracy, *English Gothic Choir-Stalls. 1400–1540*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1990, p. 70.
51. C. Tracy, *English Gothic Choir-Stalls. 1200–1400*, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1987, pp. 59–61, where Nantwich is incorrectly described as having been collegiate. An insightful new account of the choir-stalls is contained in the article by Joanne Allen, 'The choir Stalls of Lincoln, Chester Cathedral and St Mary's Church, Nantwich', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Leeds, 161, 2008, forthcoming. The author stresses the close interest in the church and county taken by Richard II in the late-1390s. This would explain, she claims, the refreshment of inspiration found in the monument in the late-14th-century examples of micro-architecture in London and Canterbury.
52. Joanne Allen has challenged my thesis on the stylistic influences of the Lincoln stalls, placing more weight upon complementary north-country sources. See Allen, *Choir-stalls of Lincoln Cathedral*.
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56. N. Pevsner, *Cambridgeshire. Buildings of England*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 295.
57. For further details on Sleaford's career, see Emden, A.B., 1963. *The Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, 533, and P. J. Heseltine, *The Figure Brasses of Cambridgeshire*, Solo Publishing, St Neots. 1981, p. 17.
58. W. N. C. (Canon Bill) Girard, 'Balsham Parish Church. A Guide to the Brasses', 1998.
59. *ibid.*
60. See W. N. C. (Canon Bill) Girard, 'John Blodwell, Rector of Balsham', *Monumental Brass Society Trans*, XV, Pt 2, 1993, 119–36 and Heseltine, *Brasses of Cambridgeshire*, p. 18.
61. For the standard works on Easter Sepulchres, see V. Sekules, 'The Tomb of Christ at Lincoln at Lincoln and the Development of the Sacrament Shrine: Easter Sepulchres Reconsidered', *Medieval and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral, BAA Conference Trans for 1982*, Leeds, 1986, pp. 123–25, and P. Scheingorn, *The Easter Sepulchre in England. Early Drama, Art and Music Reference Series*, 1987, pp. 18, 19, 22, 26, 31, 33, 34.
62. In particular the group of stone Easter Sepulchres in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.
63. At Long Melford Roger Martin discusses the use of John Clopton's tomb as a receptacle for a small portable Easter Sepulchre, see below. Dymond and Paine, *The Spoil of Melford*, p. 4, note 15.
64. It has been pointed out that elsewhere in Europe the Easter Sepulchre was usually sited in the nave. Kroesen and Steensma, *Medieval Village Church*, p. 293.
65. Dymond and Paine, *Spoil of Melford*, 4, n. 15. On the ceiling of the empty canopy at Melford there is a painting of the Resurrected Christ. For the tomb at Hadleigh, see C. Tracy, 'Master William Pykenham, LL.D (c.1425–97) Scholar, Churchman, Lawyer, and Gatehouse Builder', *Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, XLI, Part 2, 2007, 296–99.
66. F. Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches*, OUP, Oxford 1916, p. 232.
67. Lord, *Visual Culture of Wales*, Fig. 316, p. 203.
68. Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, p. 77.
69. C. Herbert, 'Permanent Easter Sepulchres: A Victorian Re-creation?', *Church Archaeology* (2003–05), p. 10, n. 20.
70. E. Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath*, p. 77.
71. Dymond and Paine, *Spoil of Melford*, pp. 3–4.
72. See N. Pevsner and E. Radcliffe, *The West Riding, The Buildings of England*, 2nd edn, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 172, pl. 31a; S. Glynne, 'Notes on Yorkshire Churches', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, XXVI, 1922, pp. 272–72; and L. Butler, *St Michael's Church, Cowthorpe, North Yorkshire, The Churches Conservation Trust*, London, 1999.
73. *ibid.*

KEY:

A. LADY CHAPEL

B. CLOPTON CHANTRY

C. PRIEST'S VESTRY WITH SOLAR ABOVE

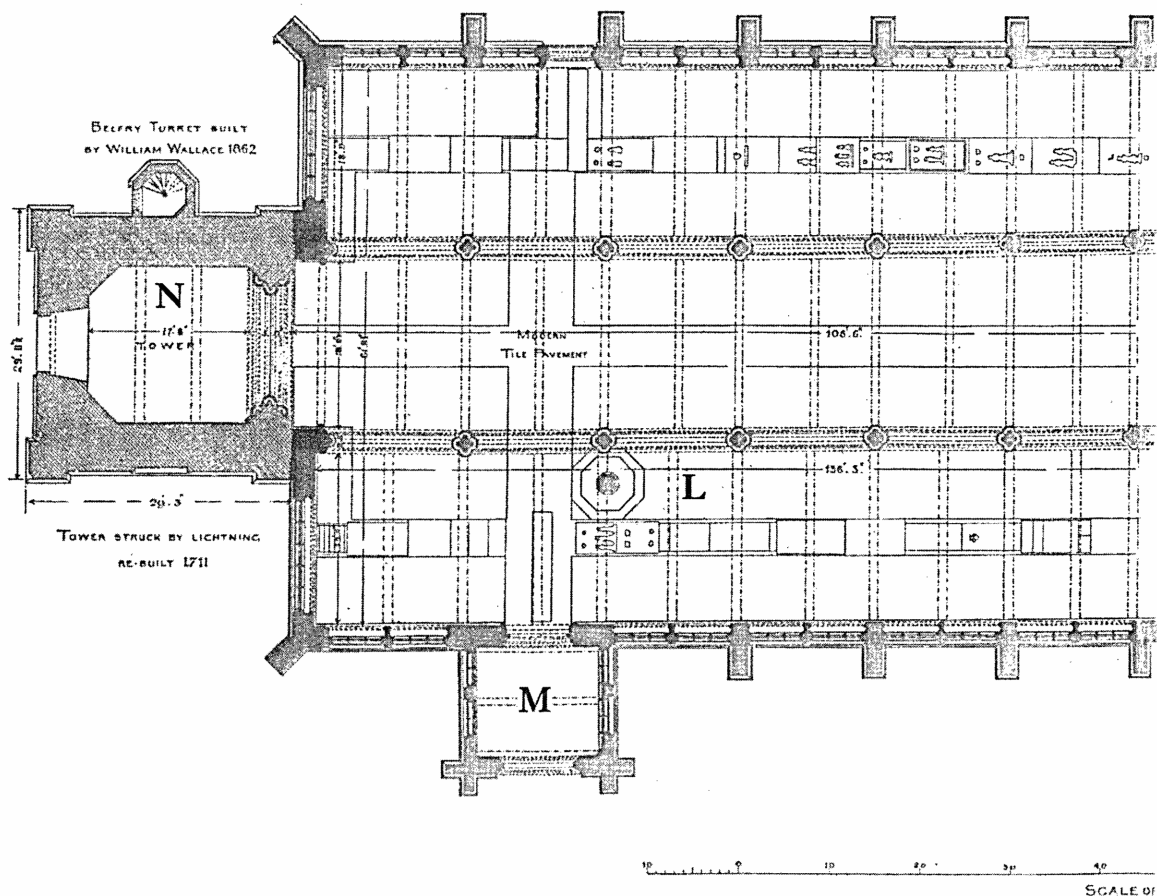
F. MONUMENT TO SIR WILLIAM CORDELL, d.1580 (BUILT EXTANT MELFORD HALL)

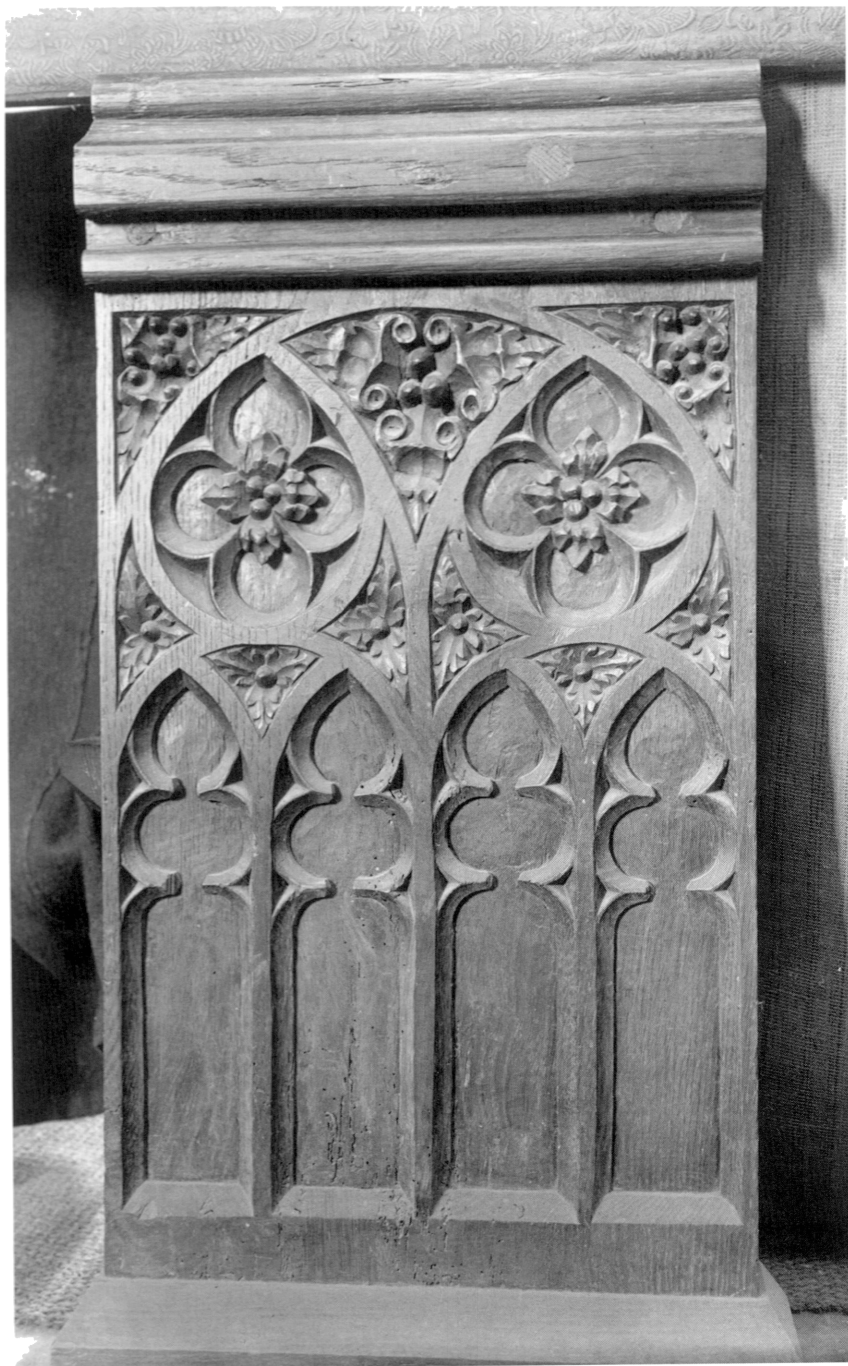
G. CHOIR VESTRY

I. ROOD TURRET

J. JESUS OR MARTYN CHAPEL (FAMILY BURIALS)

K. SITE OF FORMER ROOD SCREEN





2. Great Tew, Oxfordshire. Bench-end
Copyright: English Heritage



3. Haddenham, Buckinghamshire. Nave bench end. Detail
Photo: author



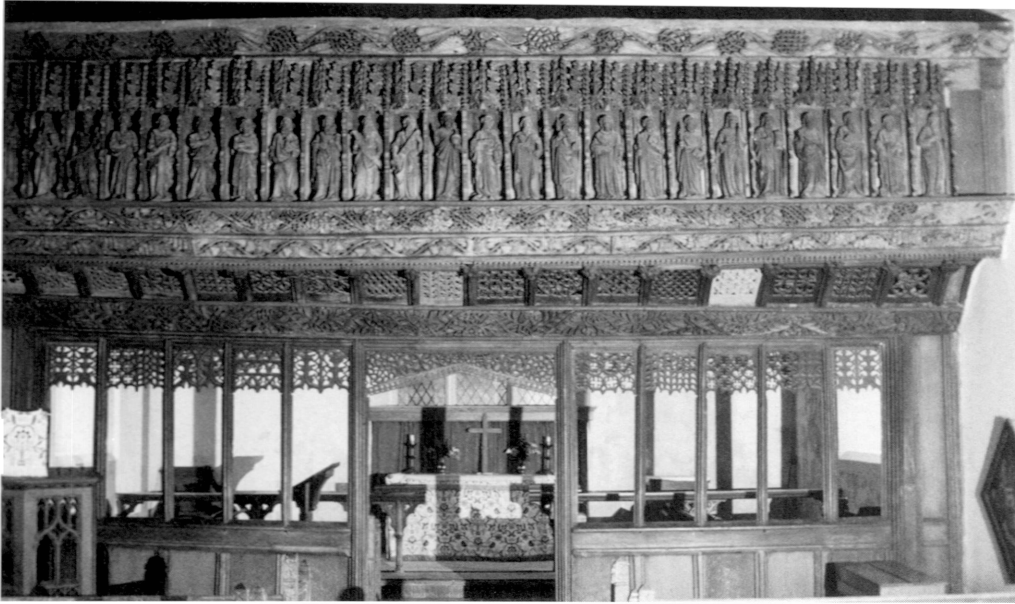
4. Haddenham, Buckinghamshire. Rood-screen. Detail of dado panel
Photo: author



5. Altarnun, Cornwall. Bench-end with bag piper
Photo: author



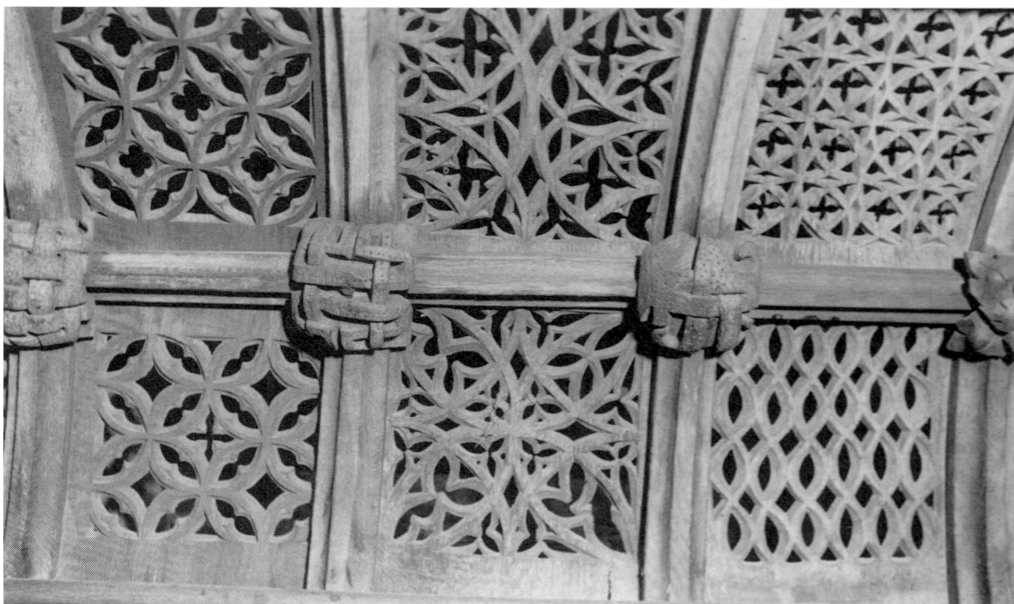
6. Poughill, Cornwall. Bench-end with mermaid and fantastic beast
Copyright: English Heritage



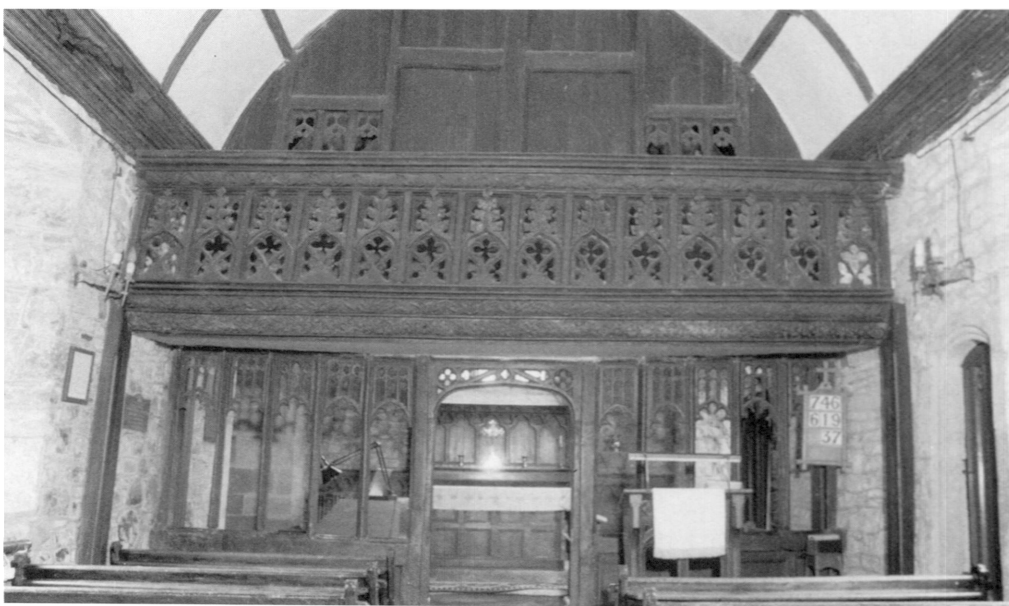
7. Llananno, Montgomeryshire. Rood-screen from west
Photo: author



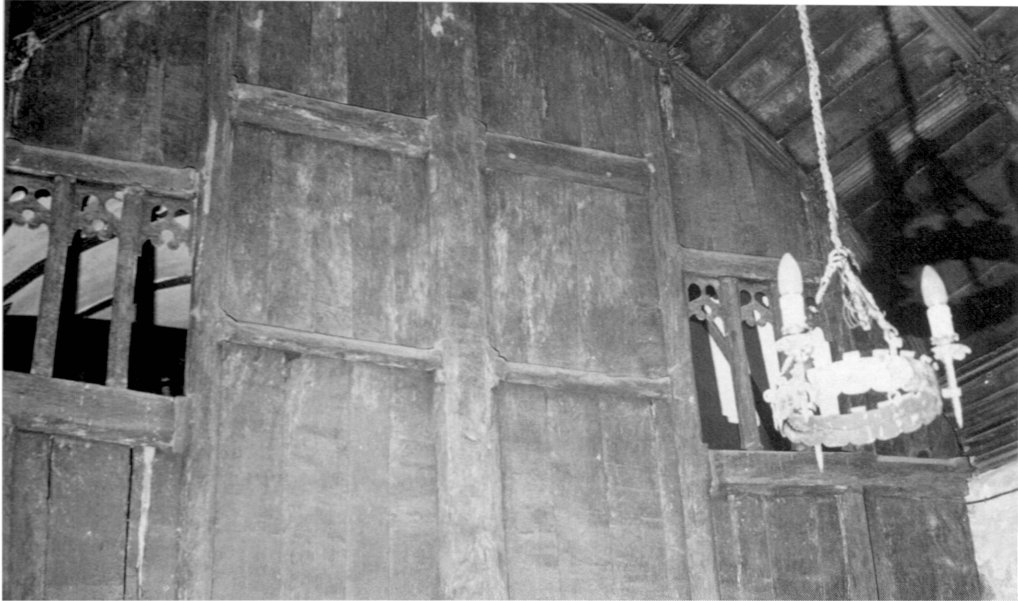
8. Llanwynog, Montgomeryshire. Rood-screen. Detail of bressumer beam ornament
Photo: author



9. Llananno, Montgomeryshire. Rood-screen. Detail of soffit panel ornament
Photo: author



10. Bettwys Newydd, Monmouthshire. Rood-screen from west
Photo: author



11. Bettwys Newydd, Monmouthshire. Detail of rood-loft tympanum from west
Photo: author

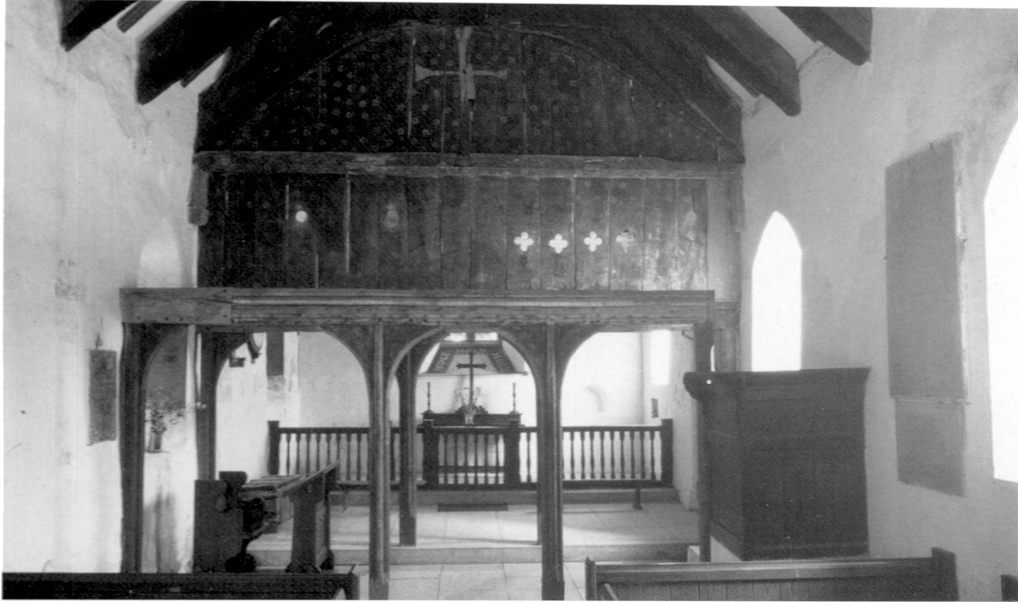


12. Bettwys Newydd, Monmouthshire. Detail of bressumer beam
Photo: author

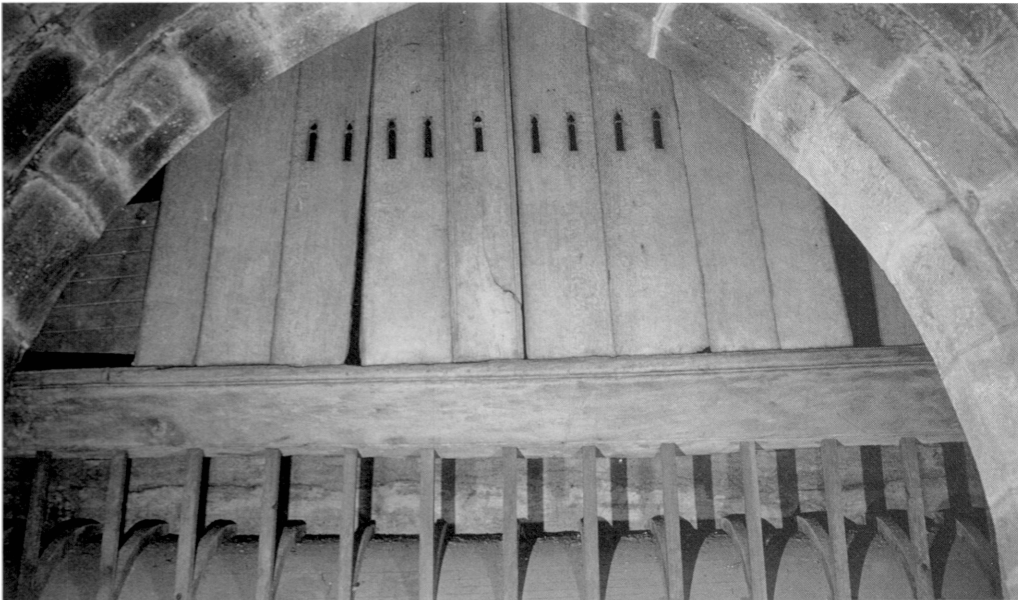


13. Mamhilad, Monmouthshire. Detail of loft front from ancient rood-screen,
used as west gallery front

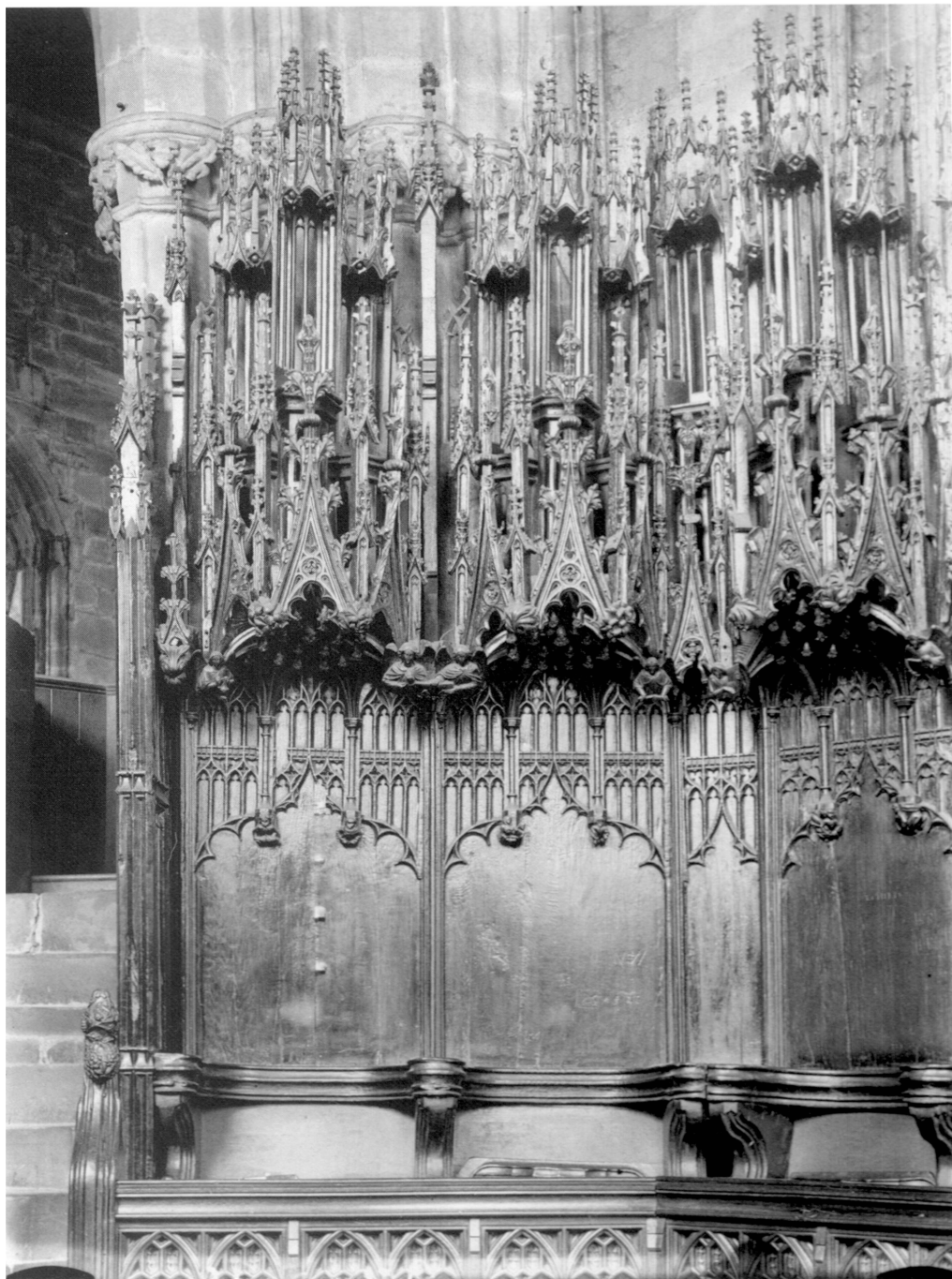
Photo: author



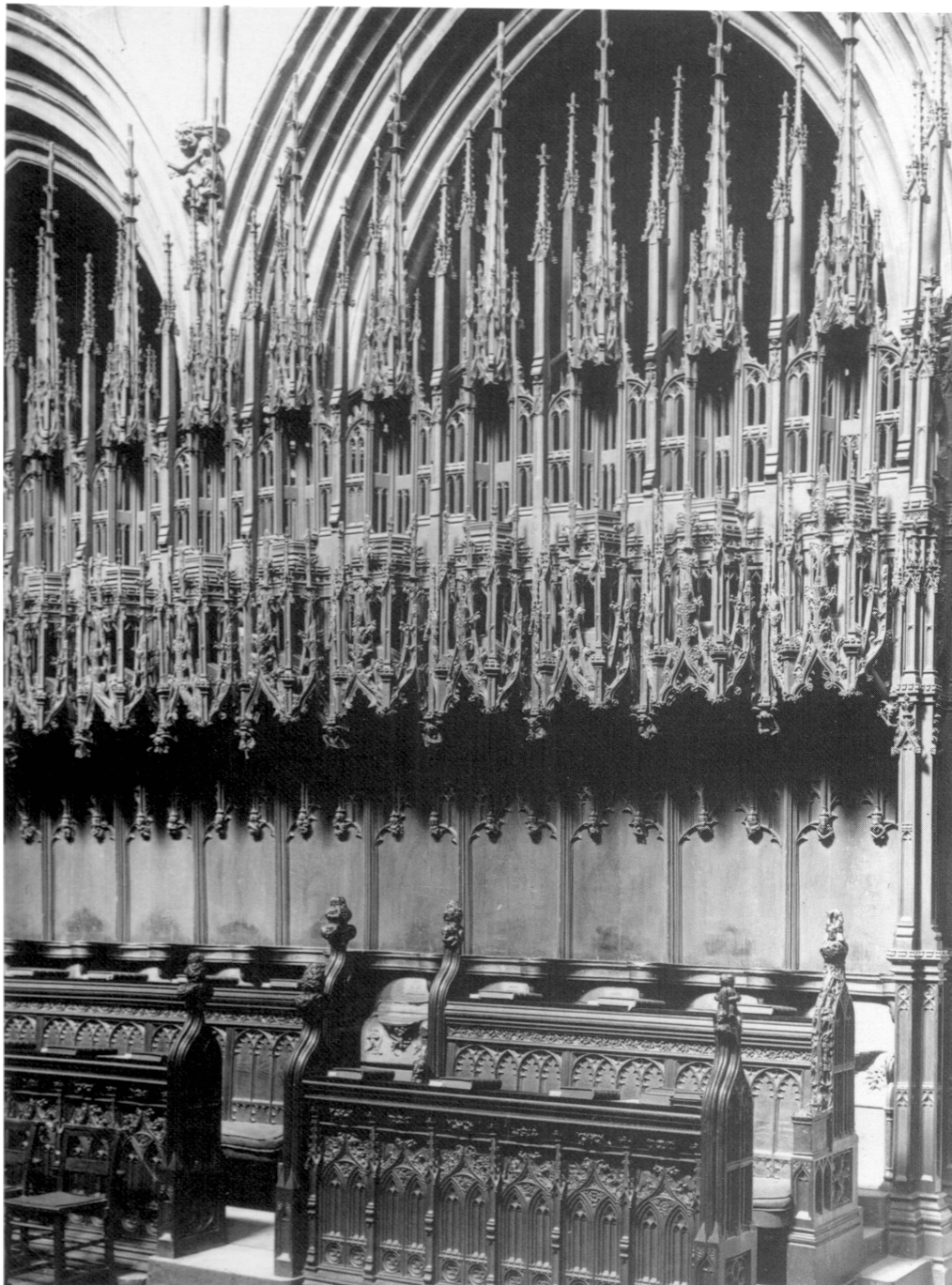
14. Llanellieu, Breconshire. Rood-screen from west
Friends of Friendless Churches. Copyright: Charles and Patricia Aithey



15. Llangwym Uchaf, Monmouthshire. Rood-screen. Detail of east side
Photo: author



16. Nantwich, Cheshire. Detail of north-west end of choir-stalls
Copyright: Courtauld Institute of Art



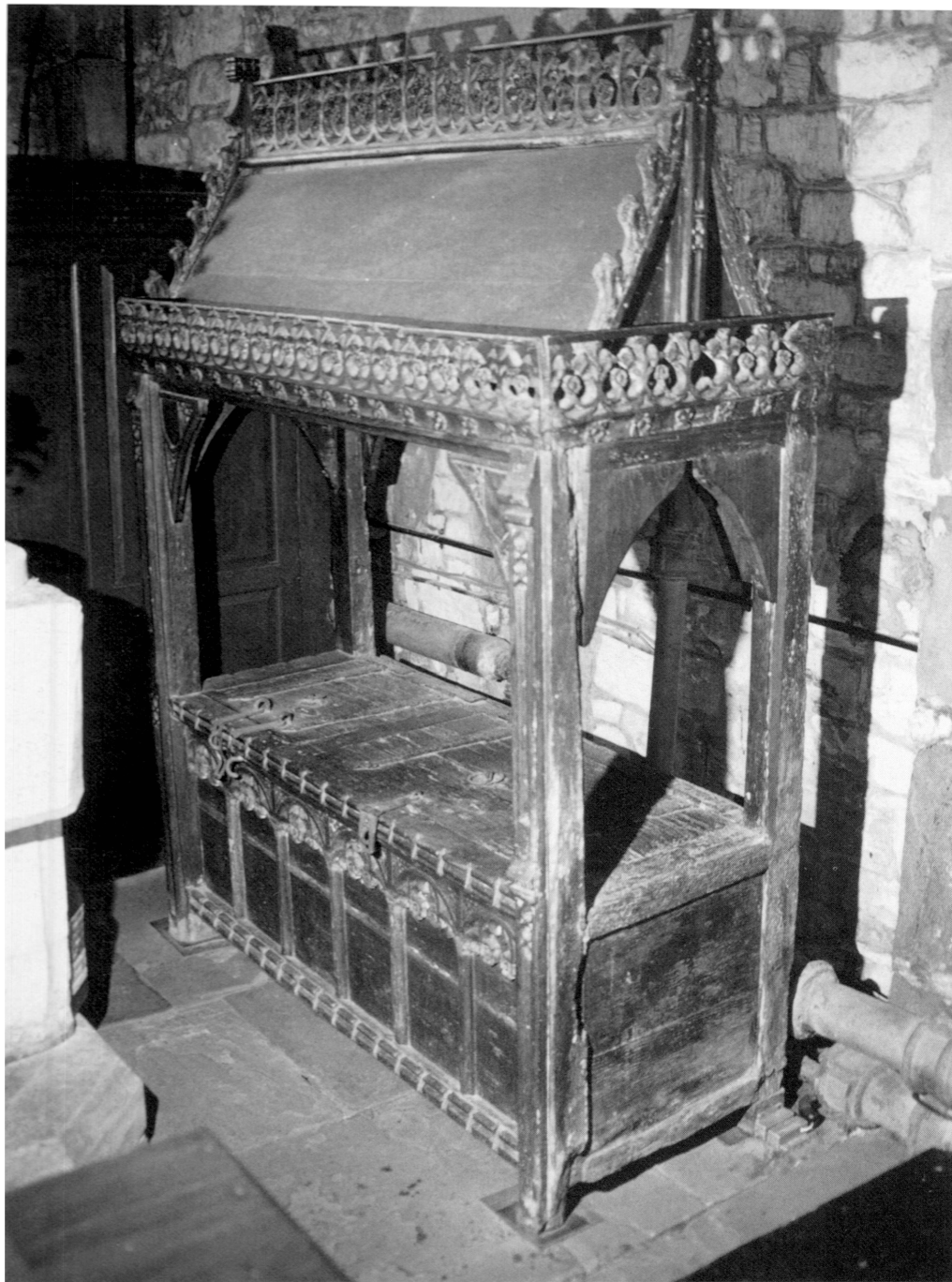
17. Chester Cathedral. Choir-stalls. North side
Copyright: Courtauld Institute of Art



18. Balsham, Cambridgeshire. Choir-stalls. North side. Detail of seating
Photo: author



19. Balsham, Cambridgeshire. Choir-stalls. North side. Detail of 'fen fowler' on standard elbow
Photo: author



20. Cowthorpe, North Yorkshire. North-west end of nave. Easter sepulchre
Photo: author