

The Cathedral of St Tugdual, Tréguier, and the Chapel of St Gonéry, Plougrescant

Friday afternoon, 16 September

The cathedral of St Tugdual is in the centre of the market town of Tréguier, on the Côte de Granit Rose. Built in the 13th to 15th centuries, it has three towers - one romanesque, one gothic and an 18th century spire. One of the great Breton *pardons* takes place here annually in May, celebrating the feast of St. Yves, the patron saint of the cathedral and lawyers, and it draws lawyers from all over Brittany who come for the procession.

Most of the cathedral's furniture was lost in the Revolution, except for the choir stalls, which were taken apart and hidden. The commission for the choir stalls had been part of a large improvement programme at the end of the 15th and the early 16th century. Surviving documentary evidence, in the form of the contract, has enabled them to be securely dated to between 1508 and 1512. Made by Tugdual Kergus, a Breton craftsman, and Gerard Dru, a German craftsman, they are typical of the style of German carving of the late middle ages. Characterised by expressive and grimacing faces, the

misericords feature rude drunken figures, madmen, jesters, and exotic creatures, recalling Bosch's depiction of hell and earthly pleasures. Carved on an end panel is a green man, which is not part of Breton folklore and was clearly introduced from Germany by Dru. In the treasury is an interesting chest, c1650, where vestments are stored in long drawers pivoted in the centre.

The 15th century chapel of St Gonéry, Plougrescant, with its leaning steeple dating to 1612, and an earlier 10th or 12th century tower, is well known for its brightly coloured painted wooden ceilings. A large and important canopied buffet, c.1500 was the focus of our visit. Of panelled construction, both the front and side panels are enriched with high quality carved figurative subjects, including St Gonéry and St Barbara. Formerly used for the storage of vestments and plate for services, it is believed to have been made by Breton craftsmen.

Deterioration owing to damp has resulted in the loss of some of the front sections of the faces. Opinions vary about the cause of the bleached appearance. This could be the result of lime treatment or washing, or the wood could have been painted and subsequently cleaned. There is evidence under the ironwork hinges of red leather or fabric (which we noted again under the door furniture at the Chateau de Kerjean). In recent years both the base and canopy have been raised. Penelope Eames' description (July 1969) and photographs pre-date these alterations.¹ Eames describes it as a buffet of estate, combining a storage space with a board designed for the display of plate, and suggests it may have been commissioned by either a secular or ecclesiastical patron.

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¹ Penelope Eames, *Furniture in England, France and the Netherlands from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century*, London, Furniture History Society, 1977: 59, 70-72, plate 33.