

St Thomas and St Edmund, Salisbury

This is now largely a 15th-century building with fine, low-pitched roofs carved with angels, the Nave one particularly of Somerset type. The furnishings include an iron-bound chest (probably 16th-century) and a fine pedimented reredos of 1724 in Wren manner in the Lady Chapel, flanked by heraldic stands for mayoral regalia, the late

18th-century mahogany one with polychrome royal arms being of superb quality. However, the main reason for our visit was to study the carved oak memorial of 1671 to Humphrey Beckham (carved by himself) in the South Aisle (Figs 2 and 3). The large panel, framed by a foliate quadrant moulding, very much resembles an over-mantel. The main scene depicts the sacrifice of Isaac and Jacob's dream, which were popular subjects for Beckham, with large winged cherubs above, framed by oriental-looking curled clouds. The bold yet naïve execution, combined with such things as the cherubs' and lions' faces, strapwork, flowerheads and vines, enabled us to start building up the Beckham family's vocabulary as typical of the Salisbury Joiners' Company style.

All Saints, Durrington

Although much remodelled in 1851, the interior was much preserved, including the foliate strapwork, linked flowerhead and lunette-carved pews and pew ends, which were skilfully altered from the previous forty box pews in the church. On some, carving was visible on both sides in inaccessible places. All this, and the 17th-century communion table and made-up lectern and priest's stall, were carved with typical Salisbury school motifs. The same was true of the Jacobean pulpit with its lunettes, 'dominoes' and four unusual carved figures, supposedly representing the evangelists; however, not all were convinced by this (only two having attributes). Its study was not helped by the fact that it had been turned round for Harvest Festival! The 17th-century rood screen door, and another door dated 1634 are both carved with repeated reverse-gouged S's and have polychrome carved coats of arms applied to the panelling (one dated 1691). There is also some reset



Fig. 2 Carved oak memorial to Humphrey Beckham, dated 1671,
SS Thomas and Edmund, Salisbury



Fig. 3 Detail of Fig. 2



left to right

Fig. 4 All Saints, Durrington, Wiltshire. Repeated S pattern carved into the panelling and the date 1634

Fig. 5 All Saints, Durrington, Wiltshire. Panelled carving

Fig. 6 All Saints, Durrington, Wiltshire. The carved figures on the pulpit

panelling by the organ, matching a screen visible but not accessible in the tower gallery. We were unable to find an oak joined stool that was supposedly supplied in 1705 at a cost of 3/6 (Figs 4, 5 and 6).

St Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle

The only surviving church of Old Sarum, this has a 13th-century chancel and a 14th-century nave, both with wagon roofs, carved corbels and bosses including a mermaid, a bear and demi-angels. The tower was rebuilt in 1711 after it collapsed, at which time much of the woodwork, including the pews, reredos, communion rails and chancel panelling was donated by Thomas Pitt, grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, who lived nearby. The classical centre of the Gothic rood screen also dates from this time: an interesting mix. However the chief concern for us was the arcaded carved oak pulpit in Jacobean style. Ronnie and Candy Butler pointed out that a pulpit is recorded in a 1573 visitation in the churchwardens' records and wondered if this could be that early. There is also an account of 1638 for 14/- for 'fitting up' the pulpit. Could this refer to repairs and perhaps the fitting of the tester? A carved panel, set sideways, in the tester support certainly ties it in with identical ones on a Salisbury school caquetteuse chair, as well as two others in *Oak Furniture* (Figs 4.69a, 4.69b and 4.71). (Fig. 7) The pulpit has subsequently been altered with a cupboard inserted in its canted base, the door probably reused from a box pew. Its surface has also been stripped (traces of red paint were noticed), while the tester and support seem to have been applied with a grained varnish.



Fig. 7 St Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire. The carved woodwork on the pulpit tester

St Andrew, Great Durnford

A fine and spacious Norman church, it was sympathetically restored in 1903, and retains a rich collection of furnishings. A pre-restoration watercolour showed the changes that had been made, including, as we had seen elsewhere, the many traceried bench ends that had spent time made up into box pews before being reversed again. Parts of family pews with rows of columns were retained against the east walls of the nave. In the picture, the pulpit, dated 1619, is shown with a small tester – very likely what is now the octagonal font cover, which was certainly not made for the circular Norman font (Fig. 8). The pulpit, altered and moved, has a lovely velvet cloth on it dated 1657. Also Jacobean was the baluster-supported gabled



Fig. 8 St Andrew, Great Durnford, Wiltshire. The circular Norman font and its later font cover

lectern with its chain for a bible. The carved altar table was thought to have its original top cut down beneath a later one, while the 17th-century communion rails appear to be of a different, non-Salisbury School tradition with pierced flat 'balusters' and tall baluster finials (Fig. 9).

Christopher Claxton Stevens



Fig. 9 St Andrew, Great Durnford, Wiltshire. The splendid turned and fretted-out oak communion rail



A detail of the bottom right-hand panel of the Humphrey Beckham memorial panel in the church of SS Thomas and Edmund, Salisbury. Carved in oak by Beckham in 1671, see also page 11, Fig. 2 for the whole panel