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## **Gloucestershire Churches**

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## GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

by W. I. CROOME, F.S.A., *President*

(*Presidential Address, March 14, 1953*)

I WOULD like to examine with you to what extent we can trace in our Gloucestershire churches, in spite of the widely differing geological and geographical divisions of the county, native and local features or mannerisms in plan and design.

The *National* characteristics of architecture are recognised easily by all, becoming ever plainer as medieval art developed into the Perpendicular of England, the Flamboyant of France, the uneasy Gothic of Italy, always ready to revert or to develop into the Classical forms; the hard and wiry lines taken by the later German Gothic, or the mingled influences that shaped the great Spanish churches: but to what sources may we turn when we try to find local influences and characteristics within our own national architecture, especially in those ancient churches which provide by far the largest remnant of their contemporary building works? I would suggest, without for a moment claiming that my list is exhaustive, that we should consider Race, then Geology and Geography, with the Periods of Greatest Prosperity here, and finally Fashion, for our medieval builders were a good deal more imitative than was once thought; and certainly within narrow local limits the effect of deliberate copying, or of rivalry, is sometimes clear to see amongst a group of old churches.

First, let us look at the most obscure, and among the learned the most disputable, of these influences which have moulded the form of our churches, that of Race: where it may be easier to draw negative, rather than positive, conclusions. So far as Gloucestershire is concerned we can, I think, dismiss from our churches any Roman influence through the Basilican form which was marked by aisles and an apse; at least we have no surviving traces to show that it was employed in any Parish

church in our area. Its introduction followed the arrival from Rome of St. Augustine, whose followers implanted it in south-eastern England, Kent, Essex, and the Home Counties; but we have no evidence that it ever penetrated to our county. Brixworth, or Wing, must be the nearest notable example.

Of Celtic origins and influences there is ample trace in the general nave-and-chancel type from which all our surviving Gloucestershire churches, except perhaps Deerhurst, seem to have been developed and elaborated. That form, a narrow rectangular nave with lateral entrances and a small, square-ended chancel projecting eastward from it, is now broadly traced to the early Celtic missionaries, who if they prospered in their task would replace their first tent or rude hut with a small building to shelter the Altar, the sacred vessels, and any book they possessed; their converts at first following the pagan habit of worshipping in the open air. (Have we, perhaps, a relic of that pagan Celtic worship in the strange figure carved in stone and set in the north wall of Churcham, thought to be a pagan god?) Later, the converts would add their own larger shelter up against the Priest's, and thus the germ of the nave-and-chancel plan emerged; the nave always maintained, as it was built, by the people; the chancel, right down to our own times, by the Priest. For further Celtic influence we must turn to surmise rather than to fact. The late Sir Reginald Blomfield, in an essay upon 'Atavism in Architecture', sought to trace the rise of Gothic architecture in France and England, the wealth of ornament exhibited in Gothic art, the exuberant carvings in stone and wood, to the romantic temperament of the Celtic strain found in both countries. If his theory can be accepted, there are pointers enough in the west country, and in our own county so near to Celtic influence, in the great wealth of ornament which our churches have displayed; from the many bold and intricate tympana of earlier days, through those exquisite capitals of naturalistic foliage on the piers at Slimbridge and many sumptuous works in wood and stone, down to the last exceeding richness of the 'Crowns' which grace the summits of our finest towers.

When we turn to Saxon sources it is a commonplace to recall that though this mode of building endured for some five hundred years, against a mere hundred and fifty years for the Norman Romanesque which succeeded it, we have none the less but comparatively scanty, and largely fragmentary, evidences of the former style, though very many entire churches of the latter; and that our Saxon remains are also almost all of buildings on a modest scale. Two causes, no doubt, account for this: the prevalence among the Saxons of wooden buildings, which inevitably perished owing to their material; and the ravagings and razings of the Danish invaders which were severe in our own district, and which in turn must have discouraged the general use of stone till they had been overcome in the last hundred and fifty years before the Conquest. If we bear in mind those causes of inevitable rarity, we have proof enough that we were once rich in Saxon churches, of which Deerhurst (and Odda's chapel there) are our outstanding examples. Deerhurst, too, perhaps, shows a solitary trace of the Scandinavian influence, which can often be marked in Saxon churches of the north and east. I leave to more expert minds the problems of date and form which Deerhurst presents; for at Coln Rogers we have the full evidence for a pre-Conquest church of that Celtic type, nave and square-ended chancel, which spread down through Northumbria and Mercia towards the west, till it encountered the far-western Celtic type of the rectangular cell, in Cornwall and Devon. The feeling for the rectangular cell seems to have persisted in those parts, so that in the last phase of Gothic building many churches there resumed the rectangular plan by extending their aisles eastward to the full length of their chancels. Then, in the great Saxon chancel arch at Bibury, we have the proof that one at least of our Saxon churches was built upon an imposing scale, and here and there, in a fragment of early masonry, a primitive window, or the entire foundations of a smaller, pre-Conquest, building beneath the existing church, revealed by excavation, as at North Cerney, we have evidence enough to tell us that the Saxon period saw our county endowed with very many churches, and that it is

probably through those buildings that all England inherited the plan with a western tower and lateral entrances, as against the Continental norm of a main western entrance, and central or twin towers.

When we try to assess Norman influences on the development of Romanesque style, we are on rather more debatable ground than was once thought to be the case. The former view that the invaders from Normandy brought with them, and imposed upon the conquered Saxons, a complete building style no longer holds the field; modern research tends rather to show both that what we called Saxon symptoms, herring-bone masonry for instance, persisted for some time after the Conquest, and also that the change in style was in fact developing naturally, if more slowly, in our island. Harold at Waltham Abbey, as well as St. Edward at Westminster, seem to have built in the new manner without any sense of importing an entirely foreign style; but in the change so plainly shown in our churches in Gloucestershire we have also to reckon with another potent influence upon the forms of building, that of the founder or patron.

Most of our English parishes seem to have had their origin in the manors or lordships of Saxon thegns, who built, endowed, and presented to a church which they provided to serve their lands and people. In great part these Saxon owners were now to be dispossessed and replaced by new, Norman, lords; and we know that this took place on an extensive scale in much of our district. In replacing existing, or erecting new, churches these Patrons would naturally employ or encourage the style of building which had matured more rapidly across the channel, and with which they were familiar. We now have evidence enough as to how the taste, or even the choice of a Master-Mason, of a King, a Bishop, or a great Monastery or other patron might largely mould the forms of the buildings which they promoted; to such an extent indeed that some of them, like William of Wykeham, were for long credited with the actual designing of the buildings for which they paid. Of such direct influence upon our surviving churches, I know of only two

possible instances, and those only deductions from facts. The first concerns the Cathedral, long deemed the actual point of invention, in the south transept and the choir, of the Perpendicular style. Mr John Harvey, in his life of Henry Yevele,\* seems clearly to show that this style was in fact devised and used a trifle earlier by William Ramsey and Master Hurley in the Chapter House of Old St. Paul's, and then was almost certainly carried to Gloucester by William Ramsey, whose mannerisms are found in our Cathedral; for it would be natural for the genius in the Royal service to have been sent to direct the conversion of the Abbey Church into what for a time became almost a Royal mortuary chapel, with the tomb of King Edward II as its focal point. The other possible instance relates to the glass at Fairford, where the resemblance between some figures there and those surviving till 1941 in Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey, could perhaps be traced to the visit paid by that Sovereign to Sir Edmund Thame at Fairford, before the completion of the church, and his likely influence in promoting the interests of his Master Glass-painter, Barnard Flower, whose connection with the Fairford glass now seems to be admitted.

At all events, of Romanesque work of the Norman period we have an astounding wealth. On the greatest scale, there is the Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey, where the western arch and the central tower are two of the noblest works of the period in all England; and where the almost exact comparison, even to dimensions, of the tall piers and short arches of the nave arcades clearly points to fashion and imitation. Yet on the smaller scale our riches are no slighter, for in the hills there is hardly a church which has not, in some surviving feature, the proof that it was first begun in this style; and there are many outstanding examples, such as Elkstone, Hampnett, Duntisbourne Rous and Leonard Stanley. The exceptional amount of Norman work surviving in them is indeed one common characteristic of our Gloucestershire churches; and when we reflect

\* *Henry Yevele*, by John H. Harvey. (Batsford 1944), pp. 7 and 8.

upon the smallness of the population, the problems of transport, and the crudity of tools and gear, both their number (more numerous than we count to-day) and the comparatively short time within which, from internal evidence, they were often completed make them an astounding achievement.

There is one very marked and unusual feature of our Cotswold churches which I think should be classed under Norman influences, and that is the large number of churches, five at least, which have a blind East wall, unpierced by any window: a group which cannot be matched in any other part of England. Blind East walls occur at Notgrove and Aston Blank, at Baunton, and at Winstone and Brimpsfield, all of which date back to the 12th century. The fact that the first two named, and the last two, are close together, might suggest that this unwonted treatment were better studied when we think of the effects of fashion or imitation; but I am inclined to think that it is rather to be regarded as the rare, unaltered, survival of an early plan. We know that there is no more characteristic development of our English churches, as a national feature, than the ever-growing importance and elaboration assigned to East windows: the development which had such marked effect upon the whole arrangement of our chancels, bringing with it the long, stately, English altar, and enforcing the treatment of the East wall, altar, reredos, and great window above as a unit of design, the three portions interlocked and interdependent, blending into a harmonious whole.

But this hardly appears before *c.* 1250, and in the Norman period, that lawless and uneasy time, churches and all buildings had to be readily defensible against intruders, and designed to offer few points of entry. Windows were small, and early churches must have all been very dark; perhaps they liked it so, as giving more value to the many lights already in use, and being endowed. At all events, where other early Norman East walls survive, as at Elkstone, Edgeworth, Tarlton chapel, Hampnett, and Clapton, though these all boast an East window, these are but small, insignificant openings which play no important part in the architectural design. So I think we may conclude that

our large total of blind East ends is really the unusual survival, in the hills and in small, remote places, of a practice common before the East window plan began to develop all over England.

There, I suggest, we can leave racial influence, for from the date of the next changes in style the races were fusing, and the influences at work became truly national.

When we turn to the effects of geology and geography we come to the heart of our matter, for there we detect the paramount influence upon the form and character of our local churches, of the fact that they all stand upon, or just beneath, the vast beds of stone from which they were built. The local effects of that great belt of good building stone, the oolites, are marked throughout its great extent, all the way from Wells to Whitby, by the famous and lovely buildings which punctuate its course. Here, even in those roadless times freed from any reliance upon water-transport, they could build where and as they pleased from the stone always lying at hand; and the existence of the stone produced and fostered the bands of craftsmen who used it so nobly. So we find all these churches built entirely of stone, used in the early days as rubble, then later as the finest dressed ashlar work; and so, too, we find the stone put to many uses, for in this county are still fifteen medieval stone pulpits of varying form, and only Somerset, with twenty examples, exceeds our total. At Cirencester, North Cerney, Northleach, Chedworth, Naunton, and Cromhall, are the finest examples of the type which rests upon a slender stone stem; and at Chipping Sodbury and Cold Ashton we have the uncommon form bracketed out from a wall, and approached by steps cut in the wall; while at Iron Acton we have the graceful and elaborate out-door pulpit or preaching-cross.

The stone encouraged the sculptors as well as the masons. Through periods of mistaken zeal which have passed into history, we have lost a grievous portion of their statuary. The former grace of the empty niches is suddenly revealed when, as in Northleach's famous porch, the images are undisturbed. Even yet a great treasure remains. In our Norman churches we have more than twenty surviving carved tympana, of which

those at Quenington are the outstanding examples. These are scattered all over the county, from Little Barrington and Eastleach Turville in the east, through Ampney St. Mary and Elkstone to Ruardean, Kempley, and Upleadon in the west; and from Broadwell and Condicote in the north to Siston in the south. A long and important series of tomb-effigies is to be seen all over the county, and of all periods, from the early knights in chain-mail or armour down to the bewigged Georgians who sprawl at ease upon one elbow. They range from important and elaborate chantries in the greater churches, such as the Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey, to the simplest tombs in small churches. It is not, I think, always appreciated that the main output of our best sculptors has to be studied, not in our Museums, but in our churches; and that their work is also of the utmost value as records of costume, ecclesiastical, judicial, military, and civilian, all down the centuries. Among the works in smaller churches few, perhaps, rival the recumbent alabaster effigies of Sir William and Lady Sandys in Miserden church, dating from 1644; but we are rich also in another form of monument, the brasses of every type, from Sir John Cassy at Deerhurst in his Judge's robe (and his wife's named pet dog 'Terri') to the great series of wool-merchants at Campden, Northleach and Cirencester, and the heraldic effigies of the Thames at Fairford. A technique akin to the incised lines of the brasses was also applied to stone, in those strange, incised, drawings of the Manticores on the walls of North Cerney church.

A more unusual recourse to stone is met in our two surviving stone screens, that at Berkeley, and the stone parclose screen of the Holy Trinity chapel at Cirencester, both much renewed, but recording the medieval schemes; while the curious returned stalls in stone at Ampney St. Mary, the mutilated brackets on the jambs of the chancel arch at Bagendon (a work of the Holy Trinity guild at Cirencester) and some indications at Little Barrington suggest that we may once have had yet other instances of this substitution of the abundant stone for the more usual wood.

The once glorious sedilia, and the canopied chantries, at Tewkesbury; the exquisitely refined terminal-heads at Bledington, with the delicately canopied niches in the splays of the nave windows, or the tiny chantry with its miniature window and coffered stone roof there; at Cirencester the figures of the Whitsun-Ale carrying musical instruments, on the drip-course beneath the battlements; or the elaborately pierced and stepped battlement itself (only rivalled at St. George's, Windsor, and once at Henry VII's chapel at Westminster); or the spirited gargoyles at Winchcombe: these are but an arbitrary selection from the wealth of adornment which accrued to our churches from the boundless stores of fine stone, and the art which it stimulated.

One other feature very characteristic of our churches (though of course also found all along the stone belt) is the series of both gable, and sanctus, bell-cotes; one of the finest, a triple cote cusped, pinnacled, and surmounted by a floriated cross, being found at Preston All Saints. In other parts of the country these bell-cotes were usually made of wood in the form of a box carrying a small spirelet.

Our churchyards contain the mutilated bases and shafts of a great number of medieval churchyard crosses, on which ancient gable crosses have sometimes been fixed. At Ampney Crucis we have the rare case of an original tabernacled head complete with its sculpture, which was found within the church and carefully replaced; while at Bisley we have a unique structure which was almost certainly a 'Poor Souls' Light', showing a lantern by night, of which so many can still be found in Western France where they are called 'Lanternes des Morts'. It stands some twelve feet high, circular at the base, hexagonal above with a blind arcade surmounted by trefoiled openings, all crowned in turn with a spirelet which may well once have carried a cross, thus serving two purposes.

Before we leave the stone it may be relevant to record the large number, no less than twenty-one, of medieval Mensae, or Altar-slabs, which remain in our churches. In the sacristy at Northleach is our solitary boast of an altar *in situ* and

undisturbed, but we have three more which are complete with their substructure, though reconstructed after long displacement. Daglingworth possesses an unusually tiny and interesting Norman altar, the slab supported by rudely shaped pillars with caps and bases. It now serves as a credence in the north chancel wall, to which site it was moved from the West end where it had formed the altar of a chapel in the former Norman tower; while at Forthampton and North Cerney are early 13th century altars of differing types, the former carried on four pillars chamfered at the angles; the latter supported by five solid slabs of stone (three in front and one at each end), and retaining on its under-side a sinking measuring 4 inches square by 1 inch deep into which fitted the leaden 'Sepulchre' containing the Relics. This great slab, weighing much over a ton and dating back to near 1200, bears on its front edge above the chamfer a sixth cross incised, in addition to the normal five upon its upper surface. Of Mensae alone, replaced and again in use, the most important is the great slab, measuring 13 feet 8 inches in length, which now forms the High Altar at Tewkesbury Abbey, which may have come from the vanished Lady Chapel there. The next largest is in Northleach chancel, some 10 feet in length; and others again in use are, no less than three at Newland, at Edgeworth, Farmcote, and Shipton Sollars, where one of the supporting brackets is also original. Other slabs carefully preserved within their churches are found beneath the existing Altar-Tables at Hailes, Saintbury, and Wyck Rissington, and elsewhere within the building at Westwell, Leigh, Brimpsfield, Turkdean, and a fourth example at Newland. Two slabs at Bishops Cleeve, classed as Mensae by Dr Cox, cannot be identified with certainty, without being raised and examined.

Of our store of ancient glass I shall say nothing, since it was so exhaustively treated in our *Transactions*<sup>1</sup> by the late Sydney Pitcher; and the only important change since he wrote, the replacement of a quantity of the Cirencester glass into its

<sup>1</sup> Vol. XLVII, 1925.

original lights (where it is much nearer to the eye than formerly, and so much easier to study and enjoy) was fully described there by myself.<sup>1</sup>

Some mention, however scanty, must be made of our wealth in medieval wall-paintings; for in the Norman work at Kempsey, and at Stowell, in the 13th century work at Ampney St. Mary to which we have now to add the extensive and most important paintings lately revealed by Mr Clive Rouse at Stoke Orchard, and in the much later work at Oddington, Baunton, and Cirencester, to name but some principal examples, we have a series which most valuably illustrates the development of this once universal decoration of our church walls. Unfortunately, the condition of many of these paintings, Kempsey especially in our county, is giving rise to anxiety; and a Committee of scientific experts (of whom, somewhat fearfully, I have been made Chairman as representing the Convenors) is now busy examining the matter strictly from the scientific side with a view to deciding on the safest methods for treating and permanently preserving these important works of art.

A brief mention must also be made of our possessions in medieval embroideries, that 'opus anglicanum' which won for our broiderers a world-wide reputation. In most of our examples the former vestments have been cut up and converted into frontals or palls, as at Cirencester, Buckland, or Northleach; but at Baunton we have a complete frontal of the 15th century, quite unaltered, with its embroidered subjects appliqué upon alternate panels of red and yellow silk damask; and at Campden we have a treasure unique in England, the 15th century frontal of the High Altar complete with its Upper Frontal, or Dorsal. Campden also boasts a fine 15th century cope of velvet embroidered with powdered coronets and stars, the orphreys showing saints under canopies, all in its full original form.

Now it is time to turn to our third source of influence upon local character, that of the Periods of Greatest Prosperity in

<sup>1</sup> Vol. LXI, 1940.

our county; for it is obvious that however rich may be the natural resources of a district, and however high the ensuing skill of its craftsmen, the opportunities for exploiting these assets will turn upon the wealth available to use them, and this wealth was dependent upon the periods when a gale of prosperity blew over the favoured region. The main features of our Gloucestershire churches, as we find them to-day, indicate very clearly when (to change my metaphor) these tides of prosperity flowed.

The great influx of new, Norman, landlords following the Conquest was the first such period, and it is plainly reflected in what we have already considered, the remarkable extent and richness of the church-building undertaken at that time all over our district, much of which remains to us.

The next period of expanding wealth was the close of the 14th and the whole course of the 15th centuries, when the combined proceeds of the wool trade and the newly established weaving industry amply filled the purses of those engaging in them. This phase developed here, and in more of the west country, at a time when medieval architecture had settled down to its final phase. The plan of the church was becoming fixed, with flattened roofs, ever-larger window space, and with battlements, pinnacles, and tracery as the only acceptable form; while spires had gone out of fashion. This wealth flowed mainly into the Cotswold area and the adjacent lands, producing a great wave of rebuilding and re-fashioning the churches of those districts so that the buildings, broadly speaking, now present us mainly with either Perpendicular, or much earlier and chiefly Norman, features; but with a marked absence of notable examples of the Decorated work of the 14th century in the parish churches. To find extensive illustration of 14th century building, we have either to go to the Cathedral and Tewkesbury Abbey (for the great Monastic churches, with their lands and revenues, were more independent of trade-cycles) or into the Vale at Standish and Badgeworth, or across the Severn to Newland, beyond the wool district, where almost every type of 14th century window tracery can be studied.

In the absence of documents, we cannot tell for certain whether our hill churches were never re-modelled in the 14th century from lack of funds, or whether any work then carried out was later swept away in the larger schemes of the 15th century; but the former seems the more probable view, and is supported also by the marked absence in the hills of the characteristic ball-flower decoration. Yet the fact remains that, with notable exceptions as to every rule, such as Longborough or Maisey-Hampton chancel, the broad picture in the Cotswold churches is either much earlier than 1300 or pure Perpendicular; and there is hardly a building there which shows no trace, even if no more than a window or a porch, of some attention and expenditure between 1400 and 1530, when the yields of the wool entirely re-modelled great churches like Northleach and Cirencester, and raised whole new churches most richly appointed like Fairford and Winchcombe. Yet we may note that, since the money was the people's, it was the nave and chapels which were rebuilt, older work often surviving in the chancels.

The effect of these two periods of prosperity was undoubtedly to give a remarkable over-all character to, and resemblance between, the majority of our churches, in spite of their fascinating diversity and individuality, and in spite of their showing, to our great profit and content, innumerable small exceptions to this general level.

So, I think, we may come to the last of the sources which I have proposed to you: that of Fashion, always important and always, since it must be connected with imitation and rivalry, tending to be local in its results. Perhaps the most obvious instance of a distinguishing local feature in our Perpendicular churches, which seems solely due to Fashion, is the large window set over the chancel arch. It is to be found at Campden, Chipping Norton (just outside our county, but squarely on the stone-belt) Northleach, where the loss of stained glass reveals the awkwardness of the steep-pitched chancel roof rising above the lower cill, and Cirencester; and in the small, three-light, imitation of its greater brethren at North Cerney, now blocked

by an 18th century reconstruction of the chancel. This feature is rare outside our district, and must have been due to the spread of a fashion.

Another unusual provision to be found in at least seven of our churches, which may also be due to fashion, is that of the passage squint, which occurs again just over the Wiltshire border at Sherston, and is met also in the Lizard district of Cornwall, but is otherwise rare. I refer to cases where the squint, or hagioscope, from a transept to a chancel is extended downwards to ground-level, forming a passage through which one can walk. The best example is at North Cerney, high enough for me to walk through without stooping, the great slabs of stone which roof it ingeniously forming on their upper surfaces the treads of the winding stair to the rood-loft. This passage was once closed with a grille or door, the rabbit for which remains at the chancel end; and it connects the Lady Altar in the South Transept with the High Altar, for these passage-squints always occur where they formed a way from one altar to another. At Sevenhampton, Beverston, and Stanton, the passages connect a northern transept with the chancel, and in the two former cases would seem to have been constructed for the passage of a child acolyte rather than of an adult, being very low; at Icomb, Tormarton, and Bledington they are found on the south aisle, and at Bledington the passage, of normal height, also connects the charming chantry with the aisle. They make an interesting feature, and at North Cerney we still find it a very useful one.

The steeples of the county would also seem best considered under the heading of Fashion, for they are marked by some entirely local characteristics. We might first note our large number, thirteen, of the primitive form of gabled steeple, which was in use up to the 14th century. Most of ours are, as is usual, early works; that at Churcham is distinguished by four gables, the ridge lines crossing each other. It has been suggested that their prevalence all along the stone-belt may be due to two causes: first that the presence of the stone enabled these districts to achieve a tower at an earlier date than others; but

also, since they are mostly found on the poorer lands, that they felt a need to roof their tower as cheaply as possible. In some of the later cases, however, it seems as if fashion was a main cause. My own church at North Cerney has a gabled top, but from quite different and specific reasons, for the original four-square tower was badly damaged in a fire between 1460 and 1470; and the people (faced with the entire reconstruction of their Nave) economised in the repair of their tower, laying a ridge beam across the two least-damaged sides (the east and west) and sweeping a tiled, gabled, roof down from it to the tops of the lower walls remaining on the north and south sides. But gabled tops were also chosen at Bagendon, Duntisbourne Rous, and Duntisbourne Abbots, all close by, and these three are all late 15th century additions to earlier towers, and are later even than the date of the repair at North Cerney. I am inclined to class them as due to Fashion and imitation, either from admiration or the desire for economy. At Eastleach Turville, Syde, and Brookthorpe, we have typical specimens of the normal earlier date.

Spires went out of fashion after 1400, and the Gloucestershire examples, of which no less than thirty-nine remain, are usually of earlier date. These, though there are early broach-spires at Saintbury, Siddington, and Westbury-on-Severn (the latter roofed with wooden shingles), are for the most part of a marked local type, very slender and narrow at the base with roll-mouldings at the angles; one could quote Stanton, Leckhampton, Bisley, and Slimbridge as typical of this form. From 1400 onwards the taste was all for towers. Here again local fashion predominates, and its features are easily recognised. The buttresses of our 15th and 16th century towers are set diagonally at the angles, not parallel with the main walls as elsewhere, and the string-courses are carried boldly across the buttresses instead of dying out behind them. In the later examples there is an exuberance of surface-ornament expressed in almost excessive panelling. If one could criticise the splendid tower of our Cathedral one might hold that it would have appeared even more impressive had the elaborate panelling been more

restrained, at least in the lower portions; for richness increasing towards the top leads the eye naturally upward and increases the effect of height. This tendency to great elaboration also gave us another local distinction in the glorious richness of those 'Crowns', with their pierced battlements and pinnacles, as on the Cathedral, or most wonderfully at Thornbury, where the Crown ranks with such famous imitations of the Gloucester work as the towers of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton, or Dundry, near Bristol. Fashion again spread the Gloucestershire Crown beyond the county borders, not only to Somerset, but also to Great Malvern, and as far as Cardiff (St. John's) and Llandaff Cathedral in Wales. St. Stephen's, Bristol, is another notable instance, with other Gloucestershire features such as the string-courses carried obtrusively over its lower, and earlier, stages. Cirencester has one of our most peculiar towers; at the base the buttresses are rectangular, but from the level where a broad, horizontal band (a most unusual treatment) divides the top stage from the lower, the buttresses continue in the local, diagonal, form.

There is one other rather sad link between the majority of our churches (a misfortune which we share with the county of Dorset) in the almost total disappearance of their once splendid rood-screens. Among the few survivors, Fairford, Cirencester, Somerford Keynes, Rendcomb, Beverston, Cranham, Hailes and Ashchurch rise to my mind, but by and large they have nearly all vanished to our great loss. Perhaps the hot, reforming, zeal of Bishop Hooper was one factor in producing their widespread, but unauthorised, removal.

Another mark of our churches which must be classed as 'Midland' rather than purely local, is the general retention of a chancel arch through the later rebuildings; Oxenton, Rendcomb, and Mitcheldean, with roof levels unbroken from West to East, are the exceptions which prove this rule. As a result of this decision the aisles of our churches have very seldom been prolonged to the full eastward extent of the chancel, since the east wall of the aisle is a necessary abutment to the thrust of a

chancel arch: an extension which became the habit, as already noted, further west and indeed all along the south coast.

One of the lessons we have learned in the past fifty years is to avoid the mistakes of the last century in despising all Post-Reformation work in our churches. We are fortunate in possessing at least four notable examples of such buildings. In St. John's, Gloucester, we have a fine Classical church, though it has not preserved all its arrangements intact, as has the splendid church at Badminton, which gives a true impression of the sumptuous and stately appearance which the Renaissance church can so well provide. At Tetbury we have one of the most interesting and successful buildings produced by the earlier Gothic revival. Planned and built in 1783-4 by the architect Francis Hiorn of Warwick, it is a striking and interesting church, alike in its plan—a lofty interior lit by huge Perpendicular-style windows surrounded by a low-roofed external passage from which doors afford access to the blocks of handsome, contemporary, pews; and equally in its remaining fittings. Although the designer's plan of furnishing has been gravely disturbed, almost all the original work has most fortunately and happily been preserved in or about the building, and a complete reconstruction of its former fine effect is possible when funds permit. Already, by a generous gift, two of the finest brass chandeliers in the country, each carrying 35 candles and part of Hiorn's first furnishing, have been repaired and rehung with truly imposing result. His original and stately altar-piece, a central oil-painting with carved and decorated wings, has now been replaced, and parts of the contemporary altar-rail have also been discovered. Heavy expense has been incurred over the fabric, for Hiorn did not make a wise choice of stone, but it is greatly to be hoped that in due time the whole pristine and dignified setting may be recovered. At Doddington the Classical church designed by Wyatt on the plan of a Greek Cross, with a central coffered dome carried on arches supported by delicately fluted pillars, has a purity of line which makes it a most distinguished little building; it is alas, in very bad repair.

There I must close my survey of these many and highly individual buildings, with their precious contents, as a group; and the search amongst them for local features common to many of them: an attempt which, so far as I am aware, nobody else has been so bold, or so foolhardy, as to make; but one which I think was worth the making, for the longer that I move amongst them, the more am I impressed with their strong kinship, as with the conviction that in our churches, no less than in our many other buildings, we have indeed a native and indigenous heritage of which we may rightly be very proud.