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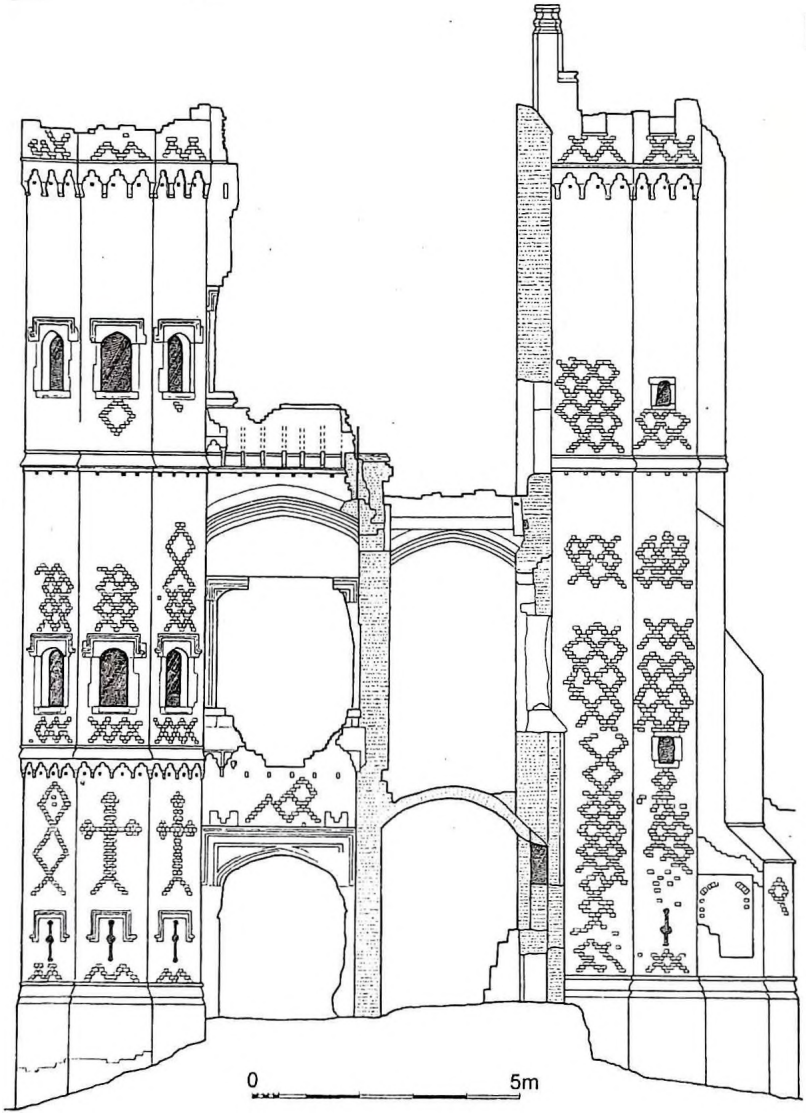

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British Brick Society web site:

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Cover Illustration:

The gatehouse of Nether Hall, Roydon, Essex. The staircase is in the right-hand tower. The gatehouse was built as part of the quadrangular house of Sir Thomas Colt (*d.* 1467), reputedly the richest commoner in England.

Editorial:
Towns of Brick on Television

Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century brick buildings lend themselves to presentation on television. During the latter part of 2018, individual programmes were shown about four brick-built towns: Belfast, Luton, Northampton, and Stoke-on-Trent, the first-named with one presenter, Alice Roberts, the last three with a different one, Steph McGovern. More recently, in September 2019, BBC4 showed Martha Kearney's four-part series 'Great Irish Journeys', the second programme of which depicted Victorian Belfast. Two things the four towns have in common include expansion due to a dominant industry or industries and a plethora of terraced houses (fig.1). An aspect of urban expansion which these programmes did not explore in sufficient depth was the rise of small-scale builders who erected these terraced houses, initially those in Belfast were of a rough and ready quality, being erected in great rapidity.

In the quarter century before the outbreak of the Great War, the jobbing builders of these towns took on all types of work. They possibly built between three and six houses in a single year and some years in the 1890s and 1900s may not have built any: expansion of their town could have temporarily stopped or land was not available for building in the area of the town where they worked. Limited production even applied in the 1930s. The house where the writer spent his primary school years was one half of three pairs of semi-detached houses erected in 1939 by a builder, who in 1940 intended to erect four large, four-bedroomed, detached houses on the hillside below my parents' house. The other side of the road was not built up, nor was the rest of the same side.

The terraces became more standardized in the decade before the Great War, not least because builders found it easier to repeat the design year after year rather than dream up a new one for each year: no architect was involved in their design. The east end of the north side of High Town Road, Luton, has a series of short terraces, three to five houses each, joined on to a previous year's terrace, erected in 1899 and between 1906 and 1911, all built by the same builder, Arthur Cole. A terrace of six houses had been constructed on the south side of the street in 1895. But each terrace has a different frontage and minor differences in plan. Houses built by the same firm in 1912 and 1913 were short terraces on the nearby North Street and of a standardized design. The rise of builders' merchants also facilitated standardized designs with standard fitments such as tiled pictures and stone embellishments for the porch. The switch from gas fittings to electric light, something which was not completed until the late 1920s, also assisted in the use of a standard plan. By the 1920s, however, and certainly in the 1930s, much mass house-building outside of the environs of London had moved from the long terrace of six or more houses via the experiment of the short terrace, a block of four houses, to the near ubiquitous pairs of semi-detached houses, each with a large garden. The back garden of the house where the writer spent the first twelve years of his life was the length of a cricket pitch, 22 yards, and from the back of the house to the front garden wall was about half this. The house was built of 'Luton Greys', a plum-coloured brick. Its ground floor was in Flemish Bond using snap headers; the first floor was rough-cast. New, it cost £595 0*s.* 0*d.* Late Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses were erected on far less generous plots: the writer's grandmothers in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston-on-Sea lived in terraced houses built in 1844 and 1865 respectively, the former with a small front garden but only a rear yard but the latter with a ground-floor bay at the front had both a front garden and a 30-feet long back garden.

Alice Roberts, 'Victorian Belfast', on Channel 4, was the last of six programmes from her first series about a typical town in a specific era in the history of the United Kingdom. The five earlier ones were all in England: 'Roman Chester', Viking York', Norman Winchester', 'Tudor Norwich', and 'Regency Cheltenham'. None of these in the period under consideration appeared as a brick-built town although the stucco of Cheltenham often hides brick. In 2019, a second series covering 'Wartime Dover', 'Edwardian Cardiff', 'Georgian Bath', and 'Civil War Oxford' was shown in a reverse historical order. The programme on Cardiff concentrated on two aspects of the city: coal and the civic centre. It claimed that the first million-pound cheque was written in the Cardiff Coal Exchange on Mount Stuart Square: a Mancunian would dispute this. Sadly, there was no mention of the Pierhead Building, a magnificent brick structure in Cardiff Docks.

Fig.1 The variety of finishes to terraced housing erected in the years before the Great War. The photograph shows Lyndhurst Road, Luton, in 1916, hence the soldiers in uniform.

Steph McGovern's programmes about Luton, Northampton, and Stoke-on-Trent were part of a series called 'Made in Great Britain', examining how four crafts were transformed by technological change into *the* local industry, often becoming in global terms its undoubted centre. The crafts morphing into an industry were hats in Luton, shoe-making in Northampton, ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent; additionally, there was a programme on Wensleydale cheese in Yorkshire. In these programmes, four craftspersons — Charlton, a chef who had studied ceramics, Claire, a ceramic artist, Katie, a blacksmith, and Jason, a leatherworker — were set the task of bringing their own skills to each of these different crafts. The programmes, on BBC2, were more about the participants applying their expertise and skills to a different craft as the buildings in which it took place.

Belfast and Cardiff have many of the same late Victorian and Edwardian characteristics: improved transport links, docks, exports, and wealth transforming a small town into a great city. Each had a university college initially part of multi-town collegiate university, in Cardiff with new buildings situated within the stone-built civic centre and erected a generation later in the Welsh capital than in the Northern Irish one. Whilst manufacturing was less important in Cardiff than in Belfast, both are cities of Victorian terraced houses, particularly in Cardiff late Victorian ones. The great difference between Cardiff and Belfast was the presence in the latter of shipbuilding on a large scale: early-twentieth-century Belfast saw itself as *the* shipbuilding centre of the world. Harland and Woolf was founded by two engineers on 11 April 1861: Edward James Harland (1831-1895) designed the hulls and Gustav Wilhelm Woolf (1834-1913) designed engines of ever increasing capacity and efficiency. The ships were increasing size, culminating in the ill-fated *RMS Titanic,* completed in 1912. Its sister ships, the *RMS Olympic* finished in 1911 and the *RMS Britannic,* the latter the third vessel to hold the name which first sailed in 1913, were commercially successful over their thirty-year life-spans.

Making linen was and is the unique selling point of Belfast industry, represented by its mills, although unlike the cotton mills of Manchester and its surrounding towns, the linen mill featured in the programme was stone-built not of brick. Others, it would seem, were brick-built. And from the 1860s onwards, brick was the building material for houses quickly erected for the new working class who worked in the mills and had transported themselves from small hamlets to the big city. In the course of the nineteenth century, Belfast increased from 20,000 inhabitants in 1801 to 350,000 in 1901.

The programme about another textile town 'strawopolis' — Luton, Bedfordshire (fig.2) — and how it went from being a small market town with a cottage industry, mainly providing women with work, making straw hats, with a population in 1871 of 15,000, to an industrial centre of 30,000 people in 1891 with brick-built warehouses and factories up to five storeys in height, reliant on the new invention of the treadle sewing machine, again worked by the town's women. In the early 1960s, John Dony BSc (Econ), PhD, FLS (1899-1991), the senior History master of Luton Grammar School, used to tell his pupils that before Heywood Tyler, where John had served an engineering apprenticeship, and other firms like Vauxhall Motors came, Luton had been a town where the women kept the men: John's family had lived in the town for several generations. The programme brought out how women had independent means throughout the late nineteenth century and on into the twentieth. The industry had its own purpose-built halls: good photographs were shown of their iron-framed interiors when the straw market, some of which this writer was not aware. Until demolished in the 1970s for an over-sized shopping mall, for sixty years these brick-fronted buildings served as a general market, one wing devoted to produce and general merchandise, the other almost entirely to clothes.

Vauxhall Motors, Hayward-Tyler, Commer Cars, Skefco makers of ball bearings, and the chemical firms gave Luton a further population boost between 1901 and 1911, growing from 36,000 inhabitants to not quite 50,000 people when the census was taken. The 1890s had seen the transformation of the straw hat industry in the face of cheap Chinese competition to a felt hat industry which led to the rise of a male occupation: the hat blocker. This mechanised and steam-powered industry was still important in the 1950s and 1960s — the father of one of the writer's classmates was a hat blocker. For more than half a century, the hat factory transformed what was worn on the head of a celebrity lady — for some, Lady Diana Spencer *was* the ultimate fashion icon — into a mass-market product; these rather than production of the boater dominated the industry. My own boater, purchased in 1976 and even though highly battered, is still worn in the summer months. Perhaps, because, surprisingly, the boys of Luton Grammar School did not have a school boater, although the girls of Luton High School could wear one in the summer.

Now, with the decline of obligatory, class-defining headgear, the fourth generation of a hat dynasty who had trained at London College of Fashion just makes the hats for "celebrities".

One area the programme on Luton did not explore was the rise of the chemical industry in the town as a by-product of the change from straw to felt as the raw material for hats. Felt hats needed to be dyed and firms like Laportes and British Celanese came to Luton to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the need for the dyeing industry and stayed to make other chemicals. Laportes had their factory on the west side of the Edwardian town while after 1945 British Celanese utilised the brick-built 1912 country house at Putteridgebury as their research centre: the latter and its park just east of the Bedfordshire's county boundary.

If the terraced houses and small workshops of the hat industry, often incorporated in the rear of the business owner's house, were of brick, brick was also used for the premises on George Street, the town's main thoroughfare. Two of the country's major banking chains — HSBC and Lloyds — occupy former brick-built hat warehouses; in the 1950s and 1960s, a third bank, the old Trustees Savings Bank, was in a former hat factory on Bute Street. Before 1936, when a new town hall was constructed, only three buildings, all now demolished, had stone frontages: the Carnegie Library (1912: Basil C. Deacon) but that had much brick in its construction, the London, County and Westminster Bank of 1912, and marginally on the frontage of the second Blundell's store of 1910, Luton's first steel-framed building. The first Blundell's store of 1892, further up Market Hill, was built of load-bearing brick with its fourth floor used as a dormitory for the shopworkers. All four of these buildings have been demolished.

Northampton is the shoe capital of England and whilst its civic buildings, whether seventeenth century in date or constructed in the nineteenth century are of the local ironstone, the overwhelming impression of the town is of a brick-built one. The high-class, three-storeyed terraced houses on Derngate, with an attic bedroom for servants who operated in the semi-basement kitchen, include number 78, the house transformed in 1917 by Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928) for the toy manufacturer William Basset-Locke. The house, restored to its appearance as Mackintosh designed it, is now open to the public.

McGovern's second programme examined how a clutch of six villages along the clay ridge of north Staffordshire — from south to north, Fenton, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Hanley, Burslem, and Tunstall — went from being isolated settlements, each producing butter pots in local farms in the seventeenth century, to making

Fig.2 Aerial view of Luton in 1938. The terraced houses in the quadrilateral formed by the two streets converging on the town hall (1936-38: Bradshaw Gass & Hope; senior partner in charge: A.J. Hope), the major road cutting across the photograph from bottom left to tight centre, and the Luton to Dunstable railway line were built between 1856 and 1860 and are indicative of the early expansion of the town. These roads have street names reflecting the engagements and English commanders of the Crimean War (fought 1854-56). The streets visible on the right-hand edge of the photograph have names reflecting the places in Wales and Scotland where the Marquis of Bute, Lord of the Manor of Luton, also owned property. The streets to the left of George Street, the town's main thoroughfare, formed an area with small hat-making establishments. These were built in the late 1850s and the 1860s. The photograph brings out just how packed a town created by Victorian expansion was.

fine china in the eighteenth century and beyond, becoming joined into a continuous settlement and ultimately in 1912 were amalgamated into the City of Stoke-on-Trent. The programme centred on different centuries: rural production in the seventeenth century, eighteenth-century master potters with apprentices imitating Chinese wares as the craze for tea filtered down the social scale, and in the nineteenth century creating bone china from a mixture of white china clay from Cornwall and locally-ground cattle and sheep bones. Mechanisation of the industry continued in the twentieth century and up to the present day. Each process demanding high level skills but with the atmosphere of coal-fired kilns and silica dust reducing life expectancy by more than a decade.

Coal to fuel the kilns was derived from a long seam adjacent to the clay ridge. Distribution of the finished products after 1777 from the land-locked area was by canal. The Grand Trunk Canal was financed by the potters, Josiah Wedgwood with his factory at Etruria prominent among them.

The bottle kilns of Gladstone Pottery were the brick buildings most prominent in the programme. One point brought out in the early part of the programme was the employment of child labour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 4,500 children under the age of 13 were employed in the pottery industry in north Staffordshire before the Factory and Workshop Act of 1878 came into operation. *The Cry of the Children of the Brickyards* applied as much to other clay industries as to the making of bricks.

Alice Roberts' programme recalled the leisure of the working class at the late Victorian music hall, a building type of which few now survive. These, like early cinemas and contemporary public houses, were built with load-bearing brick. Both music halls and early cinemas, of which several survive, even if they are not in use as places of entertainment, would be worth more detailed study. One in Manchester is a fast-food restaurant, one in Salford serves as a church, and one in York is a furniture store.

Partly because of their emphasis on work, one aspect of life which none of Steph McGovern's programmes seemed to explore was the place of religion in people's lives: for a family to be seen to be 'respectable', whether working class or middle class, church attendance was necessary even if personal belief was not. Nonconformity — in descending order of social aspiration from town-centre Congregationalist to Wesleyan Methodist via Primitive Methodist and suburban Congregationalist to Baptist — was the ruling creed in Luton. Methodism, in particular, built much. In 1913, in the town and its hamlets there were no fewer than thirteen Methodist churches or chapels: the denomination used either designation indiscriminately. They ranged in size from the cavernous, barn-like buildings in the town centre ones to the much smaller village ones. All were built of brick; each had a Sunday school attached which served also as a social space. Some of the Sunday school buildings were almost as large as the substantial chapel premises.

Also, Roberts looked at crime, or more precisely, punishment. Belfast's Crumlin Road held both the courthouse and the gaol: a grand civic building in dressed stone with a hexastyle portico for the former on one side of the road but rough stone walls with a central brick chimney for the latter on the other. The two were connected by a curving underground passage lined with brick. Linking underground passages between court and prison are not uncommon: Oxford Castle retains that between the prison wings and the former assize court and at Luton in the 1970s the new police station was linked to the new Magistrates Court by a passage under Buxton Road: the road was dug up for it! The then editor of *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal* was obliged to find a different route to its printers. Both police station and courthouse are finished with external walls of red brick, not quite as bright as 'Accrington Reds' but almost.

In 2019, in addition to the Annual General Meeting in Ripon, the British Brick Society has held two brickworks visits: to York Handmade Brick Company at Alne, North Yorkshire, on the Friday before the AGM, and to the last Fletton brickworks at Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire in June. On 14 September, the meeting at Alvechurch, Worcestershire, postponed from June, was conducted. A set of 'Buildings Notes' was prepared and issued at the meeting; members not attending who would like a copy of these should send an email to the organiser, David Kennett: email address under the officers on the inside front cover.

Reports on these three meetings, together with a note of buildings viewed in Ripon, will be included in *British Brick Society Information,* **144,** February 2020. All these reports have colour photographs. Also to be included and with colour photographs are a number of contributions by different authors requesting

information about specific brickmakers and some suggestions as to whom these producers might be based on research in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century trade directories.

Members of the British Brick Society will have noticed that the illustrations in this issue have reverted to being in black-and-white. The illustrations submitted for the articles and notes included in *British Brick Society Information,* **143,** November 2019, were all in black-and-white.

In consultation with the contributors, several items with colour illustrations have deliberately been held over to *BBS Information,* **144,** February 2020.

There is also the matter of the society's finances. With one issue with colour illustrations and two with just black-and-white illustrations (irrespective of whether the originals were in black-and-white or in colour), the society will not be obliged to dip into its reserves. Two issues in colour in 2019 would have entailed the society incurring a loss of several hundred pounds in the year. As members will have noted from the published accounts, the society's reserves are not particularly substantial.

It therefore seemed prudent to choose contributions for *BBS Information,* **143,** November 2019, where the illustrations would be in black-and-white.

This has also permitted the inclusion of the two fairly long items in this issue of *British Brick Society Information* which, themselves, have each been held over more than once.

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the British Brick Society is to be on Saturday 16 May 2020 at 11.00 am in the Committee Room, Bridport Town Hall, Bucky-Doo Square, Bridport, Dorset. Built of red brick with stone dressings, the Town Hall was constructed to a design by William Tyler in 1785-86.

There will be a tour of the brick buildings of the town in the afternoon.

In view of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, *British Brick Society Information,* **145,** May 2020, will be devoted to 'Brick in South-West England' for which several contributions have been promised and more than one has been received.

DAVID H. KENNETT
Editor, *British Brick Society Information*
24 October 2019

BRICK IN THE NEWS: IRON AGE BRICKS?

In *The Times,* 11 September 2019, there was a report an archaeological excavation at the Roman *civitas* of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester), Hampshire. The excavation was focused on the Roman bathhouse whose building it was suggested involved the demolition of an earlier bathhouse and the building of public baths during the reign of the Emperor Nero (*r.*AD 54-66). The report suggested that the brickwork from the earlier building was different from the later bathhouse, that it was 'sus[icious' and the 'Late Iron Age baths are ever a possibility'. The bricks were described as 'of dimensions and fabrics not previously recognised at Silchester'. It is not discussed in the article, but if the interpretation is correct this pre-Conquest bathhouse is probably the earliest brick-built structure in Britain? It is presumed that the inspiration for the baths was provided by Roman baths in Gaul with whom the Catuvellani tribe of pre-Roman Silchester had strong links.

MIKE KINGMAN

Brick Staircases: the Rye House Group and Beyond

Michael Tutton

INTRODUCTION

There are probably no more than two dozen brick spiral, or winding, staircases made entirely of brick surviving in England. Most are concentrated in the eastern counties where the fourteenth century renaissance in brick took hold, having leapfrogged over the channel from the Low Countries where it had a longer pedigree.[1] If we compare this figure of 24 with the many thousands of similar staircases in stone or timber to be found in churches, castles, fortified and unfortified houses of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it becomes clear that the brick spiral staircase is rare indeed. Even in substantial early brick buildings such as Queens' and St John's Colleges in Cambridge, Eton College, Herstmonceux and Tattershall Castles and many more, the stairs are of stone.[2] Why are these brick stairs so rare? And what is the rationale behind their procurement and commissioning? The answers to these questions are: Exacting and high levels of bricklaying skills and status respectively. This paper brings together the strings of previous research and investigations and thus draws on secondary sources, although not exclusively so.[3]

THE STAIRCASES

Listed geographically from north to south. I have designated three types:

(a) a continuous barrel-vaulted spiral;
(b) a stair carried on a series of arches,
and (d) indeterminate at the time of writing.
RH indicates the Rye House Group.

All were built in substantial high status brick buildings.

Tower-on-the-Moor, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, (b). A surviving stair turret only with some fragments of wall, a hunting-lodge for Tattershall Castle. Before 1450, a stair carried on a series of arches rather than a winding vault. Mentioned by Smith and seen by him before 1975,[4] and by some members of the British Brick Society following the society's Annual General Meeting in June 1996 but now collapsed as seen from a photograph taken in March 2014.[5] Bricks were already being taken from the site as early at 1472 for Tattershall Castle.[6]

Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire, (d). Slim evidence of a stair similar to that at Tower-on-the-Moor c1450.[7] Attached to the outer face of the north-east octagonal turret is the scar of a former attached building hinting at a brick spiral stair. Other stairs in Tattershall Castle are of stone as mentioned in the introduction.

Hussey Tower, Boston, Lincolnshire, (b). Wight dates it c1510 but Smith suggests slightly later than Tower-on-the-Moor, i.e. second half of the fifteenth century.[8] The tower once derelict but recently restored for a local museum. The stairs are carried on a series of brick arches, there is an integral moulded and sunk handhold, a feature common to brick staircases. (Fig.9)

Caister Castle, Norfolk, (d). The remains of a defensive fortress on the Norfolk coast.[9] Built by Sir John Fastolf from 1433. The great tower is 90 feet high (27.5m) with the stair turret rising a further 8 feet (2.5m). The staircase is problematic, the listing description states "The staircase of bricks and the moulded handrail cut into the wall have been removed above the first floor which is now accessed via a C20, timber, winder stair." There is certainly a brick staircase lower down, although this is not a spiral staircase. The form of the main staircase in the turret may have been brick or stone. Wight mentions that 122 stone steps were removed in 1782 for use as a parapet (?) elsewhere, and that stone was used for the newel of the stair turret,[10] although there are no specific sources given.

Drayton Old Lodge, nr. Norwich, (d). Also built by Sir John Fastolf. A much-ruined hunting lodge just north of Norwich. Complete by 1437.[11] Smith includes it on his map of brick-built newel stairs but does not otherwise mention it,[12] until 2014 when he conjectures that it may have been brick to the first floor or wholly of timber.[13] The County H.E.R. states: "Southwest tower formerly had staircase, now all gone, ..."[14] The Lodge is currently undergoing repair and would repay further close investigation of the inside of the tower.[15]

Cow Tower, Norwich, (d) (Fig.1). An artillery tower, part of the City defences *c.*1398.[16] The earliest example, a hybrid with a stone newel, so not entirely of brick construction. Nevertheless, with all other elements in brick it is sufficiently important to be included. These stone newels are coeval and not added later, the Building Accounts for 1398-99 give detailed costs: 'To the same [Robert Snape] for 30 nowels price 3d a piece, 7s 6d.'[17] The staircase is in poor condition, although it was complete in 1809[18], there are only 7 newels in-situ and the vault above appears to have collapsed although there is the hint of an arch higher up. This may have been a type (b) staircase similar to Tower-on-the-Moor and Hussey Tower. There is no handhold. There is no access beyond the entrance gates, but the interior of the tower and the start of the staircase can be clearly seen through the gates. The Cow Tower in Norwich is an exception here, quite why such a complicated and high status stair should be included in a military building of precise purpose is something of a mystery. But there are other elements equally mysterious in the Tower that await satisfactory answers.[19]

Fig.1 Cow Tower, Norwich, 1398. Brick stair with stone newel. Note the arch radiating from just above the dark hole or putlog in the upper right-hand. (M. Tutton)

Ashby-de-la-Zouche Castle, Leicestershire (d) In the south-west tower at the edge of 'The Wilderness', the formal garden attached to the domesticated medieval castle, the northern lobe of the quatrefoil-plan south-west brick tower contains the remains of a brick newel stair, rising clockwise, of which only the lowest steps remained in the mid-1990s. The newel post was missing. The stair had no handrail but a series of square and trapezoid holes at a constant level above the treads indicate the presence of a former wooden handrail. The stair turret retained substantial traces of plaster. In the south-east corner of 'The Wilderness' is an octagonal tower with a semi-circular projection for the stair turret which an engraving by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck shows rising above the level first floor, thus giving access to the roof. The stair is carried on corbelled-out bricks, on neither radiating arches nor a spiralling tunnel vault, the two usual methods of construction. It has brick steps with the edges of the treads set on-edge, but there is no evidence of plasterwork in either the main portion of the tower or the stair turret.[20]

Kirby Muxloe Castle, Leicestershire, (a) (Fig.2). 1480-83, built by William, Lord Hastings a favourite of Edward IV. Bricks were being manufactured in October 1480 under the supervision of a Fleming, Anthony Yzebrond.[21] There are two staircases in the gatehouse and two in the surviving west tower, one of which is ruinous. There are no handholds.

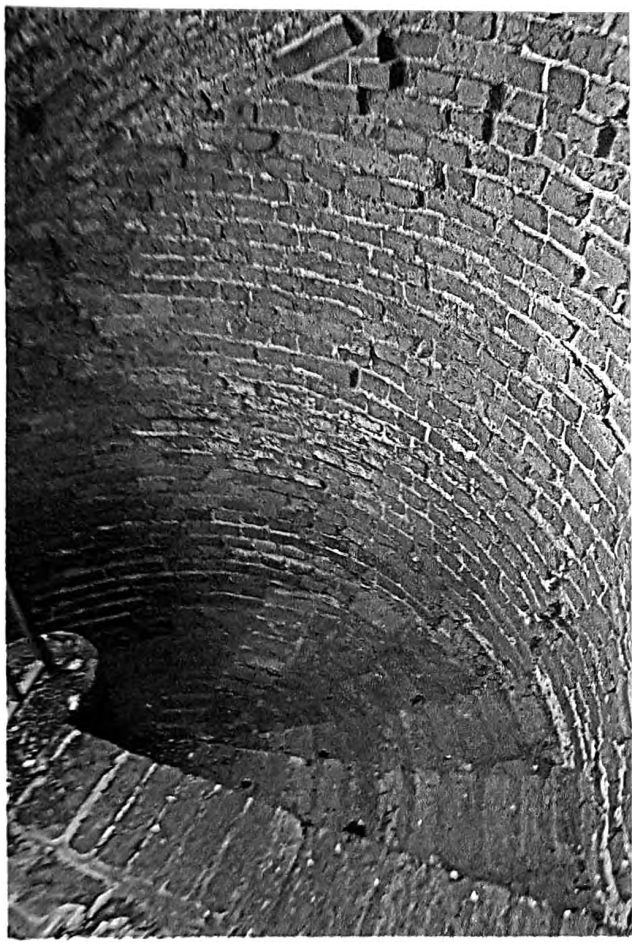


Fig.2 Kirby Muxloe Castle, 1480-83. One of the four brick staircases in the castle. The vault is seen at the top left-hand. (Jeremy Polanski, Flickr, Creative Commons Licence)

Welle Manor Hall, Upwell, Norfolk, (d). A fourteenth-century hall house, much altered *c.*1480 and later.[22] The house has a rear stair turret with brick spiral stairs to the attic. To the north are two free-standing towers which flanked the former courtyard entrance in the perimeter wall, although all of this is now gone. These towers also contain brick spiral staircases and date to *c.*1480.[23] When Jane Wight saw this house before 1970, she described it as "remains, partly ruinous, ...". The house was substantially restored and extended in the later twentieth century and is now a private residence.

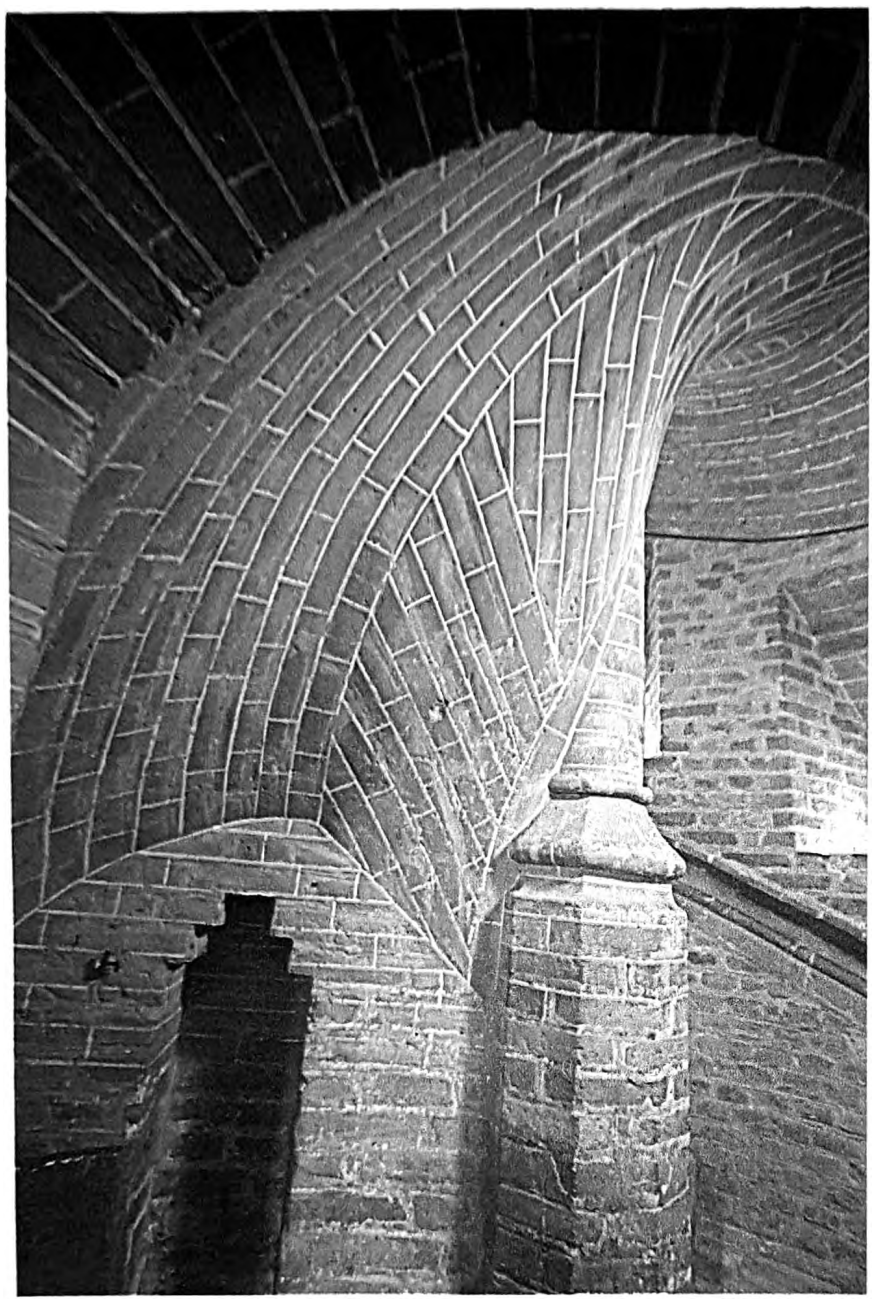


Fig.3 Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk, *c.*1482. Bottom of the staircase with the base of the newel, lamp niche and handhold. Note the lining out of the pointing to the underside of the vault. (M. Tutton)

Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk, (a) (Fig.3). 1482, when Edmund Bedingfield obtained licence to crenellate from Edward IV.[24] Staircase in north-west turret of gate tower, some 80 ft (24.6m) high serving the ground, first floor and the roof. A fine well-preserved staircase with integral sunk handhold, there is a moulded base to the newel atop a larger diameter pedestal and tall lamp niche on the ground floor. The vault brickwork, particularly lower down, has been filled flush, painted to match the colour of the base brick then intricately lined in white paint to reproduce finely pointed work. This may be a nineteenth century restoration although Wight says the gate tower survived the eighteenth and nineteenth century rebuilding and restorations.[25]

Leiston Abbey, Suffolk, (d). An early fifteenth-century gatehouse to an earlier monastic complex dating to the 1360s. The north turret of the brick gatehouse survives to second floor level and probably had a further storey. It certainly has a staircase, or the remains of one.[26] Further investigation is necessary to establish the form of the staircase.

Buckden Palace, Cambridgeshire (formerly in Huntingdonshire), (d). Former palace of the Bishops of Lincoln, extensively rebuilt by Bishop Thomas Rotherham in 1472-80, of which the great tower and gatehouse only are now extant. I am reliably informed, that a brick staircase existed here some 50 years ago.[27] Also Smith is fairly adamant that a brick stair, or the remains of one, exists at Buckden.[28] However the plan of the gatehouse and great tower show only one spiral staircase in the north-east turret of the great tower,[29] and this is stone according to the listing description: "North-east turret has a stone staircase, partly restored, with moulded stone hand-rail and stone newel."[30] In the opposite turret there now exists a recent metal fire escape stair. The people who run the site state that there is no brick staircase there now, we can assume then that the staircase is now lost.

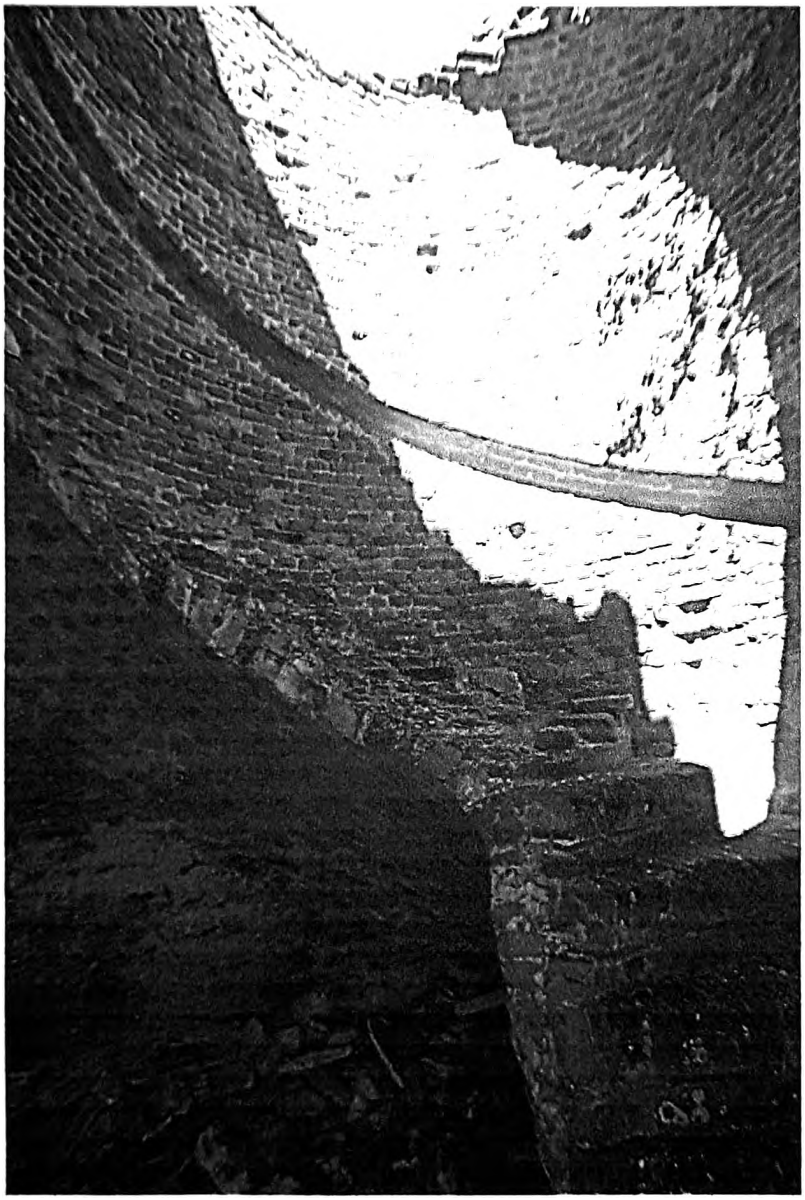


Fig.4 The ruined staircase at Someries Castle, Bedfordshire, After 1448. (M. Tutton)

Someries Castle, Bedfordshire, (a) (Fig.4) RH. 1448 onwards, the ruined gatehouse and chapel of a larger complex, probably a fortified manor house, started by Sir John Wenlock, who completed the gatehouse. On his death in 1471 the estate was bought by Archbishop, Thomas Rotherham who continued, after a break from 1471 to 1475, work on the chapel attached to the gatehouse.[31] The staircase is in the gatehouse at the southern corner. In 1966 it was climbable to the first floor, although Smith says 'with difficulty'.[32] It is now unfortunately partially collapsed with the entire newel and part of the inner vault missing, although it would

still be possible to climb some way up, albeit keeping tight to the outer side against the shaft, it is however not accessible for safety reasons. The staircase has a sunk handhold, although this is damaged with most of the semi-circular rail broken off.

Rye House, Hertfordshire, (a) (Fig.5) RH. A fortified manor house, 1443,[33] built by Sir Andrew Ogard a naturalised Dane. Similar to Someries Castle, this is a gatehouse of a much larger complex, now all gone above ground, although in this case the gatehouse is intact. The stair is in the southern corner and has a sunk handhold. The steps are unfortunately heavily and uncharacteristically restored with Staffordshire blue bricks which creates an unpleasant contrast with the red bricks.

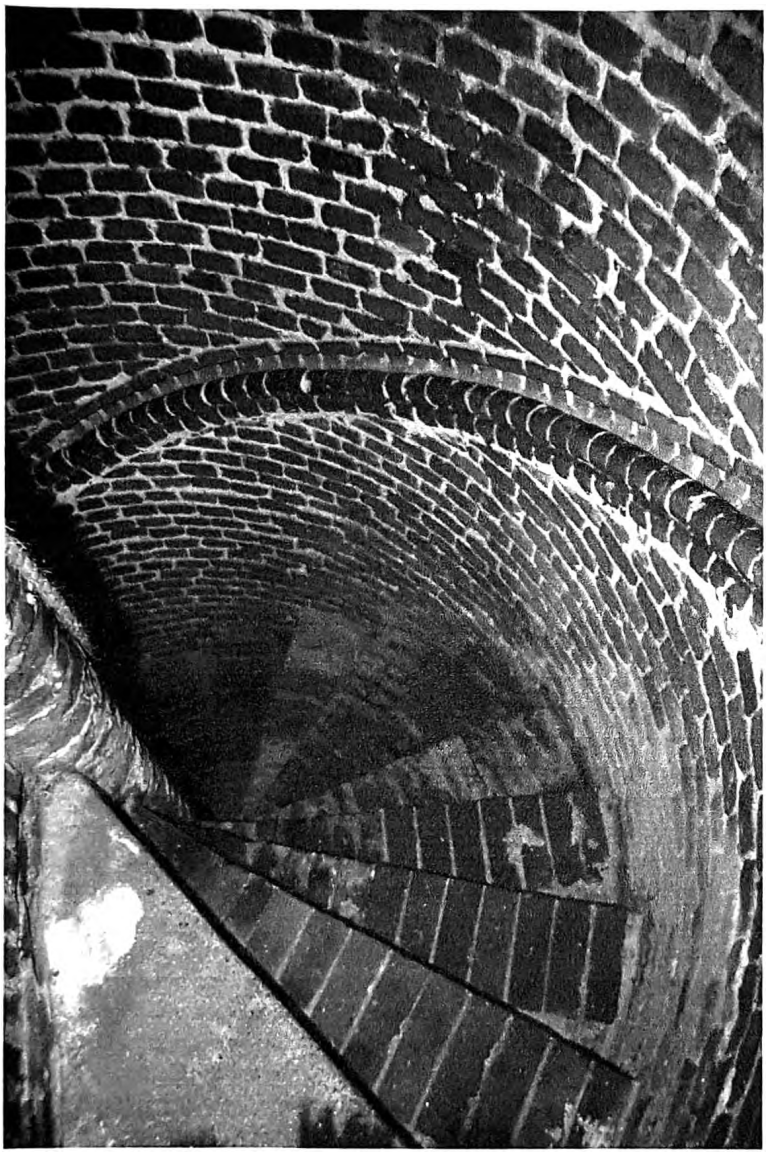


Fig.5 Rye House, Hertfordshire, 1443. The handhold is particularly fine. The newer darker bricks to the treads are replacement Staffordshire blues and the tread in left foreground is faced up with sand and cement. (M. Tutton)

Faulkbourne Hall, Essex, (a) RH. Sir John Montgomery added to an earlier timber-framed house when he obtained licence to crenellate in 1439. This was continued by his son Sir Thomas from 1449 and this includes the north-east tower with its attached stair turret and brick stair complete with sunk handhold. An illustration was included by Lloyd, although in general he gives these staircases only passing reference.[34] Faulkbourne Hall is a private residence and is generally not accessible.

Hertford Castle, Hertford, Hertfordshire, (d). Vague evidence of a fragment of concave brick handhold in a bastion tower in the walls,[35] probably fifteenth century.

Hatfield Old Palace, Hertfordshire, (d). Former palace of the Bishops of Ely, built by John Morton, 1480-90. The surviving east wing of a quadrangular block, now an entertainment venue for Hatfield House. The west front projecting porch has a stair turret. Smith states 'The Hatfield Palace examples are plastered over, but the form of the spiralling barrel-vault is almost certainly evidence for a brick stair.'[36]

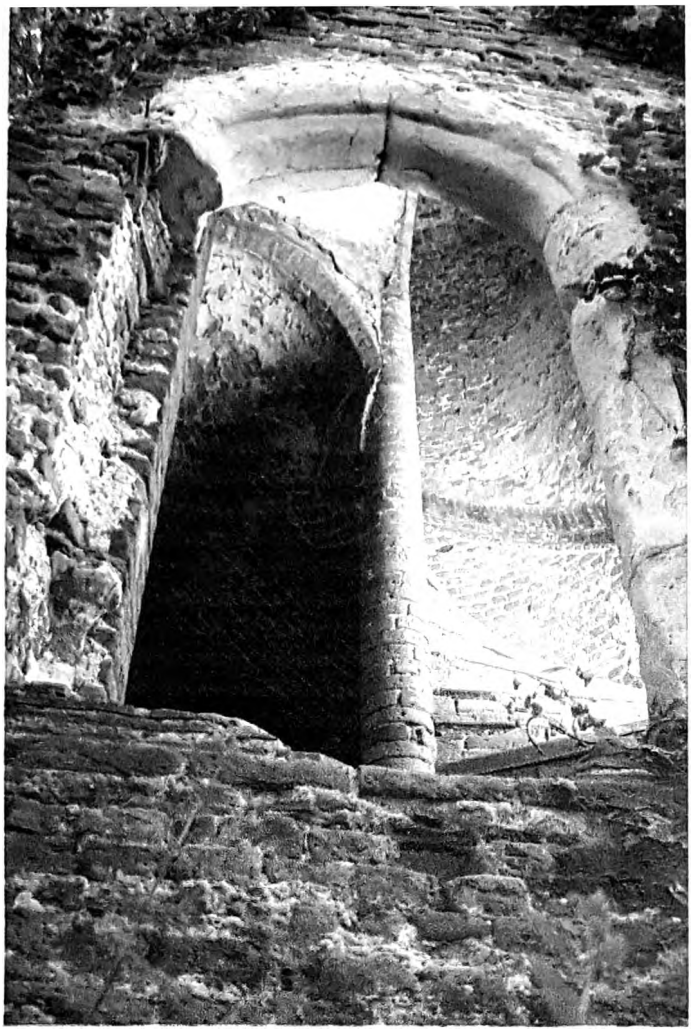
Nether Hall, Roydon, Essex, (b) (Figs.6 and 7), RH. Built by Thomas Colt (*d.*1467), begun late 1460s.[37] Again the ruined gatehouse of a fortified manor house now all destroyed except for a section of curtain wall and the moat. The stair is located in the right-hand three-storey tower which is virtually intact, the other is partially collapsed (see cover illustration). The stair has a sunk and moulded handhold and is supported on arches rather than a barrel-vault, unusually the steps have timber leading edges, probably Oak or Elm, it is not known if these go all the way to the top but it is possible to climb the staircase to the parapets.[38] Ryan states "... the lower part of the stair has a spiralling barrel vault, but the upper part is constructed on arches which radiate from the central newel, so has reversed what is there."[39] Also of note is clear evidence of plastering.

Moot Hall, Maldon, Essex, (a) (Fig.8) RH. Built by Robert Darcy, it is sometimes known as Darcy's Tower. Possibly 1424-25[40] although Wight dates it a decade later.[41] Almost certainly part of a larger complex, virtually all physical trace of which is now lost. Excepting the Cow Tower in Norwich, this is the earliest brick staircase in England, of the type and period we are concerned with. Along with Oxburgh Hall, the best preserved of those seen to date. The staircase from ground to first floor was sealed off in 1810 by the insertion of a floor at first floor and a partition on the ground floor. It was not opened up until the late 1960s. In 1810 a new timber staircase was inserted at the front of the building to the first floor to enable easier access to the court on that floor.[42]

Eastbury Manor House, on the outskirts of east London, although there is no brick stair here and slightly late at *c.*1556-73. It has a pair of brick staircase shafts, both had timber stairs, but only the service stair survives. The principal shaft, which now contains a modern steel stair, has a moulded countersunk brick handhold of the type common with brick spiral stairs. (Fig.9) This feature is absent in the service stair where a rope would probably have been utilised.[43]

Wayneflete's Tower, Esher Place, Surrey, (a). 1475-80, A bishops' palace of which only the gatehouse remains. Built by William Wayneflete Bishop of Winchester.[44] The gatehouse has had later windows inserted, including in the stair turret, which break through the shaft in an ungainly manner, possibly by William Kent.[45] Wayneflete employed the master mason John Cowper, to build his house, who also worked at Kirby Muxloe Castle and Buckden Palace.[46] The staircase has all the attributes of the standard brick winder, although the sunk handhold is less refined than others.

Wayneflete's or Fox's Tower, Farnham Castle, Surrey, (d). 1470-75,[47] another residence of the bishops of Winchester. Although resembling one at first sight, this is not strictly speaking, a gatehouse, rather it was built to provide extra and more comfortable accommodation. There is slim documentary evidence only for a brick staircase. Thompson working from the manorial accounts and rent books states: "In 1477 the tower's staircase (*novus gradus novi Turris*) was tiled,"[48] at the date of recording, this could well mean 'bricked' or constructed in brick. Wight tantalisingly quotes: "In 1450s William Burgess was paid for making brick stair in a new tower, £1. 11s 8d."[49] Odd because of the date, unfortunately there is no specific source given.



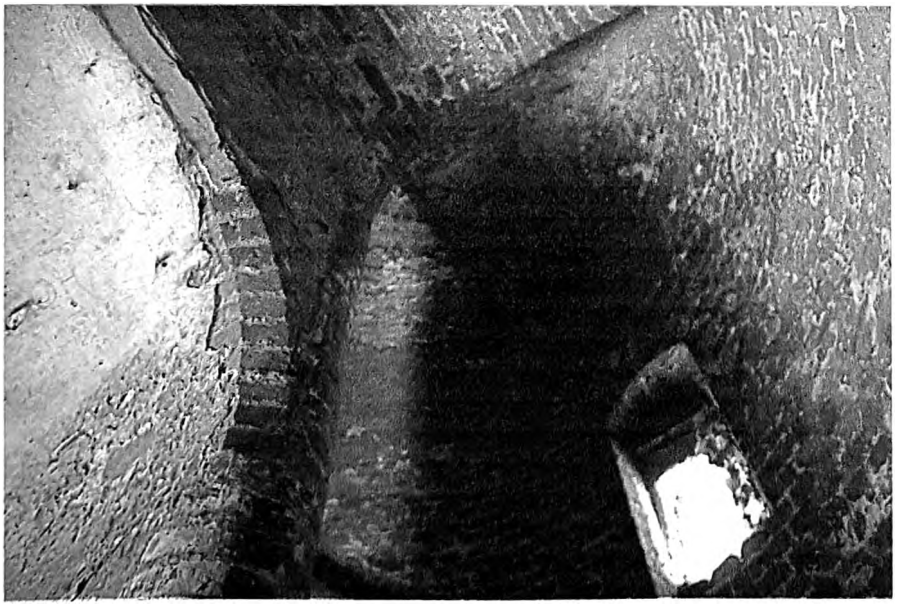


Fig.6. (top) Nether Hall, Roydon, Essex, c1460. Note the timber leading edges of the steps and clear evidence of plastering. (M. Tutton)

Fig.7 (below) Nether Hall, Roydon, Essex, c1460. The arched arrangement to the lower part of the stair. (M. Tutton)

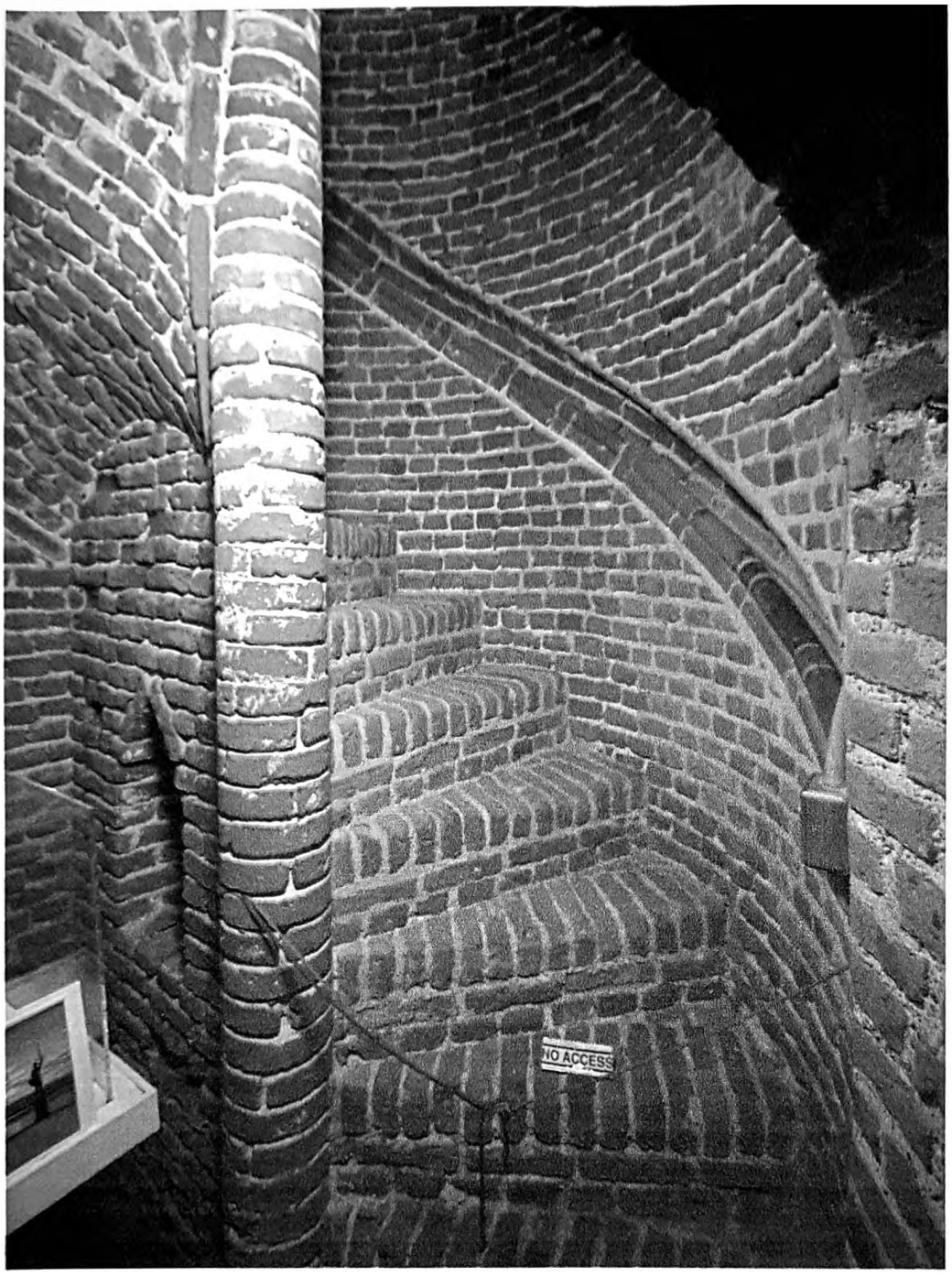


Fig.8 The Moot Hall or Darcy's Tower, Maldon, Essex, 1424. (M.Tutton)

Laughton Place, East Sussex, (b) (Fig.10). A surviving tower only of a larger house, built by Sir William Pelham in 1534, on an earlier moated site.[50] He employed Fuller White who had earlier worked at Esher Place under John Cowper. White built a different type of brick staircase, which is carried on closely joined radiating brick arches. This differs from the other arched staircases at Hussey Tower and Nether Hall, which have more widely spaced arches with a section of vault between. There is no sunk handhold.

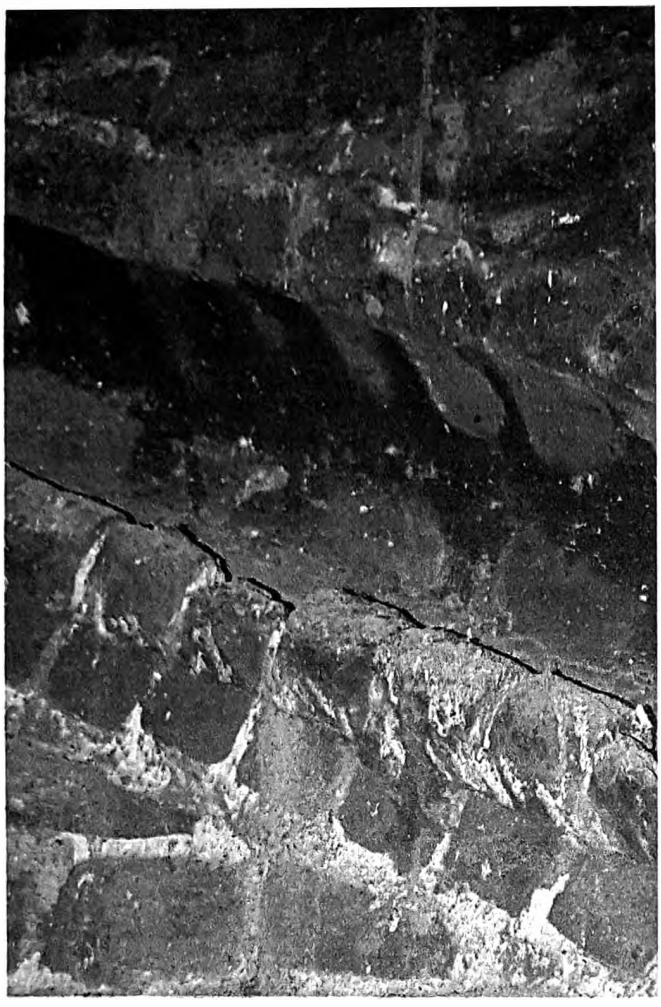


Fig.9 Eastbury Manor House, Barking, East London, *c.*1556. The handhold to the higher status timber stair. (M.Tutton)

DISCUSSION

Adding together the above examples we arrive at nineteen definite brick spiral staircases and seven possible examples, some of which require further investigation. Other strong possibilities are, or were: Denston Hall, Suffolk, although the gatehouse tower now demolished; Hadleigh Deanery Tower, Suffolk, which survives; Hunsdon House, Hertfordshire, built 1447, later a Royal residence of Henry VIII, now much altered and reduced but parts surviving. These may repay further close scrutiny and research. There may be others of course, as yet undiscovered and unrecorded, but they cannot amount to many. The reason for this scarcity must be the high degree of skill required to build them. It is one thing to lay bricks, rub and cut bricks for details and even corbel tables and the like. But to set out complicated formwork, cut bricks and lay them for a spiral stair with a continuing rising barrel-vault, finished in facing brickwork, is no mean task. Not to mention, in most cases, a highly crafted sunk handhold rising in a parallel line with the going of the steps. There must have been a very limited number of craftsmen with the skills and expertise to produce such work. It would also have been expensive.

A stone vaulted spiral staircase was easier to build and less expensive, contrary to popular opinion, bricks in this period were not cheap. The early stone stair required rough formwork to construct the vault in a rubble mix concrete upon which to place the steps. The newels were usually procured separately from a mason or direct from the quarry. On removing the formwork the underside of the vault would be plastered smooth, a task well within the capabilities of the average plasterer. The newel staircase, where the newel and step are one piece of stone, was easier still. These staircases were by far the norm for the period, and for some two centuries earlier. Here each step with integral newel was usually obtained direct from the quarry according to

specification. It was then simply winched into place as the shaft was built around it, with the outer bearing within the shaft, requiring just simple timber props for temporary support whilst the surrounding masonry cured.[51] Stone spiral stairs were as common in East Anglia as elsewhere, evidenced by their existence in many parish churches, fortresses and houses. Indeed, it has been forcefully argued that no part of East Anglia is so far from sources of stone that its procurement and transport was in any way prohibitive.[52]

The Rye House Group

The Rye House Group, as noted above, are: Someries Castle, Faulkbourne Hall, Rye House, Nether Hall, Roydon, and Maldon Moot Hall. The group was so named by Terence Paul Smith for similarities in decoration such as corbel-tables and diaper and other brick patterns externally.[53] Although the Moot Hall has none of these,[54] they are all, nevertheless linked by their staircases, which are, with the exception of Nether Hall, near identical. This can be seen from the illustrations, although the Rye House stair rises clockwise and the others are all anti-clockwise. This perhaps a whim of Andrew Ogard, for there is no real significance as to whether a spiral stair rises clockwise, or anti-clockwise.[55] The other link that Smith postulates is that this group was all the work of a single group or *atelier* of craftsmen.[56] Even taking into account the anomalies above, there appears to be no strong argument against this assertion.

Soldiers, Bishops and a Lawyer: The Links Between the Buildings and the Staircases Within

The desire for something exceptional in building was not uncommon and a brick staircase was seen as something highly fashionable, unusual and expensive. With the exception of the Cow Tower in Norwich, and other rare early examples, such as the twelfth-century stair in St. Botolph's Priory, Colchester built of Roman bricks. We can assume that Sir Robert Darcy, was the leader in this fashion. He was a highly influential lawyer associated with the eastern ports from Berwick-upon-Tweed southwards, would have been familiar with the early brick industry in Hull and most probably had travelled overseas to the Low Countries, the Netherlands, Denmark and northern Germany.[57] He was elected Parliamentary Burgess for Maldon in 1422. He was not the first to build in brick in the fifteenth century, but was surely the first to commission a brick staircase in the house he built in Maldon, possibly as early as 1424. The remains of the house are now called the Moot Hall, also known as Darcy's Tower. He was closely associated with other brick builders in Essex, Sir Lewis John, Sir John Tyrell and Sir John Montgomery, all three soldiers who had served in France. The latter of Faulkbourne Hall, also with a slightly later brick stair. All were immensely wealthy. John, Tyrell and Darcy were knights of the shire of Essex as well as serving together in other formal government and legal capacities.[58] There were also associations through marriage of Darcy's children with Tyrell's and possibly Montgomery's.

That these men were well travelled and thus influenced by the traditions of northern Europe's extensive use of brick is clear. Indeed, Sir Andrew Ogard of the Rye House was himself a Dane. Ogard in turn was associated with Sir John Fastolf of Caister Castle, and cross-county associations surely existed, particularly within the Rye House group. It is fairly certain that Robert Darcy arranged to bring over Flemish or German bricklayers to construct his staircase, if not the whole house. There is plenty of evidence that alien brick craftsmen were working in East Anglia in the period and Smith cites extensive instances of this.[59]

And so the links continue and spread their web. Richard Bennington who built Hussey Tower and Ralph Lord Cromwell who built Tattershall Castle and Tower-on-the-Moor were both justices of the peace in south Lincolnshire and surely exchanged ideas, the stairs at the former and the latter are both similar in type.[60] William Wayneflete Bishop of Winchester was born in Wainfleet, Lincolnshire, hence his adoptive name. He was responsible for much brick building at Eton College where he was Fellow and Provost from 1440-47. He is also credited with the towers at both Farnham Castle and Esher Place, now both know as Wayneflete's Tower. The latter certainly with a brick stair and the former with documentary evidence of one. He is closely associated with Tattershall, close to Wainfleet, where his arms are displayed on the church and he knew Ralph Lord Cromwell the builder of Tattershall Castle personally.[61] He was an extremely powerful and influential person becoming Lord Chancellor of England in 1456. Wayneflete took into his service, sometime in the late 1470s, John Cowper a master mason who had been apprenticed at Eton College. He is inextricably linked to Wayneflete at Esher (and probably Farnham) and Tattershall on the church. He doubtless also found work at Tattershall Castle. Whilst there he was employed by Lord Hastings at Kirby Muxloe Castle with its four brick staircases, he is also linked to Buckden Palace.[62] Another powerful prelate and brick builder was Thomas

Rotherham Archbishop of York and on two occasions also Chancellor of England. Before being appointed to the See of York he was Bishop of Lincoln and is responsible for much building and rebuilding at Buckden Palace the site of a brick staircase. In June 1471, he purchased the estates of Sir John Wenlock, a soldier who fell at Tewkesbury on 4 May 1471. Wenlock was the builder of Someries Castle and Rotherham continued his work there, although not responsible for the staircase, which must be attributed to Wenlock, he would undoubtedly have much admired it.

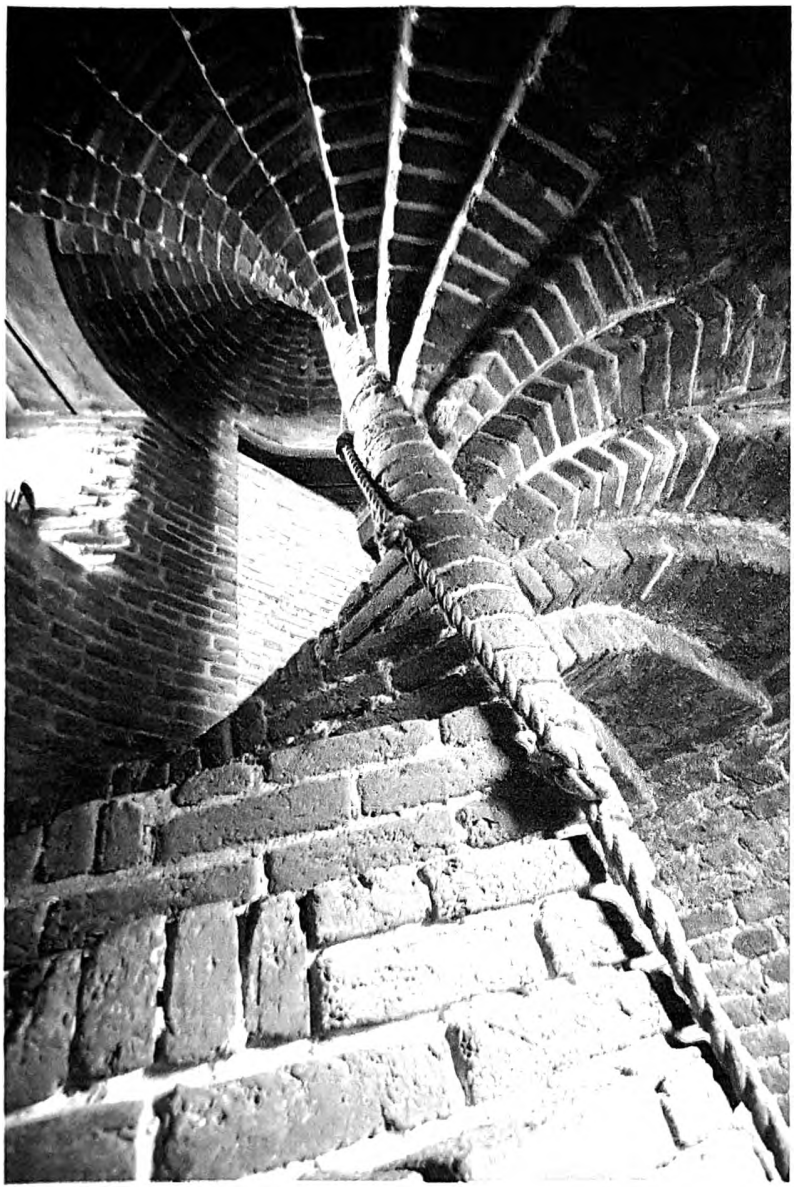


Fig.10 Laughton Place, East Sussex, 1534. (Victor Bayon, Flickr, Creative Commons Licence)

CONCLUSIONS

Not all the staircases in the list have established links, but cross-fertilisation must be assumed, fashions travel. These staircases were commissioned by wealthy men to impress and celebrate their equally impressive brick residencies, hunting lodges and gatehouses and they surely influenced one another. Their rarity, there are very few now and there never were many, is due to the high degree of craftsmanship required to construct them. There were very few workshops capable of this work with the high degree of finish required. The number of craftsmen appears to have been static for a period and then dwindles with the required skills ever more scarce.

This in turn was due to the expense of such staircases, the limitations of the material and the time taken to construct them. The fashion lasted little more than a century and by the time Clement Sysley came to build his mansion, Eastbury Manor House in Barking, in *circa* 1556 the appetite had gone. Although he incorporated a brick handhold in the higher status stair, he opted for the much less expensive and more quickly erected option of a timber stair. Brick never really represented a threat to stone and timber in staircase design and construction. In construction history terms these examples must be seen as rare and often beautiful phenomena that never took hold. The surviving examples are exceptional, even in ruin. They deserve further research and closer inspection particularly in comparison with their continental counterparts.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For general works on the history of brick in England see: Nathaniel Lloyd, *A History of English Brickwork,* London: H Greville Montgomery, 1925, [reprinted: Woodbridge: The Antique Collectors Club Ltd., 1983]; Jane A Wight, *Brick Building in England: from the Middle Ages to 1550,* London: John Baker, 1972; T.P. Smith, *The Brickmaking Industry in England 1400-1450,* Oxford, British Archaeological Reports, 1985; R.W. Brunskill, *Brick Building in Britain,* London, Victor Gollancz, 1990. Some additional References have been supplied by the Editor of *BBS Information.* [DHK]
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4. Smith, 1975, p. 137 and 138 note 114, recorded as a personal observation by him, see also Wight, 1972, p.86. Smith also notes this staircase in 'The Early Brickwork of Someries Castle, Bedfordshire, and its place in the history of English brick building', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* **129,** 1976, p.46. Subsequently, A. Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300-1500, Volume II: East Anglia, Central England, and Wales,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p.323.
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6. Wight, 1972, p.306, using W.D. Simpson, ed., *The Building Accounts of Tattershall Castle,* being *Lincoln Record Society,* **55,** 1960, reprinted Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2000, pp.39 (Latin) and 78 (translated into English).
7. Smith, 1976, pp.46-74. See also Emery, 2000, pp.308-316.
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9. Wight, 1972, pp.116-122; Smith, 1979, p.33 and fig.3c.
10. Wight, 1972, pp.120-121.
11. T.P. Smith, 'Drayton Lodge: A Fifteenth-Century Hunting Lodge near Norwich', *BBS Information,* **127,** 2014, pp.7-17
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21. John Goodall, *Ashby de la Zouch Castle and Kirby Muxloe Castle,* (Guidebook), London, English Heritage, 2nd revised edition, 2011, p.24. A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., 'The Building Accounts of Kirby Muxloe Castle' *Trans. Leicestershire Archaeological Society,* **14,** 1913-1920, pp.193-343, only gives wages and makes no comment on which bricklayers performed which tasks. See also unsigned but Sir Charles Peers, 'Kirby Muxloe Castle, *ibid.,* pp.109-114, which has, facing p.109, a drawing of the stair showing the continuous barrel-vaulted spiral.

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25. Wight, 1972, p.343.
26. List entry: http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1014520 [Accessed 10 January 2016].
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42. M. Tutton, 'The Moot Hall or Darcy Tower, Maldon, Essex', *BBS Information,* **132,** February 2016, pp.7-20.
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Brick Query:
Identifying Brick Buildings by William Vesey

Fig.1 The fireplace at Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire.
Photograph: L. Holmes.

THE QUERY

As a volunteer guide and researcher for the National Trust at Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, near Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, I have been asked to follow up a visitor's comment that the *circa* 1450 moulded brick fireplace in the Kitchen at Greys Court (figs.1 and 2) looks typical of an individual called William Vesey (or Veysey). It is not altogether clear whether William Vesey was the brick-worker or an overall contractor specialising in the construction of brick buildings.

From dendrochronological investigations, we know that the timbers in the kitchen were felled in the winter of 1450-1451 and that the Lovell family built the timber-framed wing, of which the present kitchen is the last remnant. Earlier in its history this room seems to have been a servants' hall as historically the kitchen was a separate building in the service courtyard until Lady Brunner decided to bring it inside the mansion on moving into Greys Court in 1937. The fireplace had been plastered over at some point and was only rediscovered in the 1980s when the Aga was installed.

Fig.2 The corner of the arch of the fireplace at Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire.
Photograph: L. Holmes

The first photograph (fig.1) shows the whole fireplace. There is a bread oven on the left-hand side which seems to have been removed in the seventeenth-century alterations to the mansion. Figure 2 shows part of the arch of the fireplace which gives a better impression of the moulded bricks.

Unfortunately, initially I was unable to discover much about him and I wondered whether the British Brick Society has any information about him. Subsequently I did further searches on the internet and worked on a hunch that William Vesey could have been employed by the crown and might have worked at Henry VI's Eton College. He appears to have been a 'Ducheman' (Fleming or German) who was appointed in 1442 to run the new brickworks at Slough which provided the bricks for Eton College.

Other possibilities for places where William Vesey worked are Herstmonceaux Castle, East Sussex, and the complex of church, almshouse, and school at Ewelme, Oxfordshire.

What I would like to know is are there any other buildings connected with William Vesey?

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THE WORK OF WILLIAM VEYSEY FOR HENRY VI

William Vesey was first employed by the government acting in the name of King Henry VI by at least 1432, and possibly as early as 1429, in continuing work on completing Henry's father's new brick-built palace at Sheen, in Richmond-on-Thames, now in Greater London, but then a riverside village in Surrey.

Sheen Palace was begun by unrecorded persons working for Henry V in 1415 and work proceeded relatively slowly until Henry's death in 1422. There was then an hiatus in building work until 1429. Between 1432 and 1435 a total of £1,560 was spent on building works at the palace, followed by a further £1,015 in the four building seasons, 1436-1439. In these periods stone, timber, lead, and other materials were brought to the site from the Tower of London, Banstead, and Weybridge as well as bricks from the royal stores at Calais, then an English possession. During these years also, William Vesey supplied large quantities of bricks but the exact source of the bricks at Sheen Palace is unknown although there was a brickworks at Petersham which may have been managed by Vesey. He is known to have supplied 9,500 'breke' at 4*s.* 6*d.* per thousand. The 1430s included three exceptionally severe winters: 1432, 1435, and 1438. While exceptionally long frosts — that of 1435 began on 24 November 1434 and lasted until 10 February 1435 — are good for breaking up clay, they can leave the raw material for bricks wet rather than dry.

When Henry VI married Margaret of Anjou further work was done at the palace to provide accommodation for the queen. This work was done at various times between 1444 and 1447.

Sheen Palace was destroyed by a major fire just before Christmas 1498 but the 1562 drawing by Antonius van der Wyngaerde of the new palace, erected for Henry VII in the first decade of the sixteenth century, shows a large ruined building on the old site beside the new palace. Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677) also drew Sheen Palace in 1638 again showing a large building away from the early Tudor palace.

Vesey was thus well-established as a supplier of bricks to the crown when in 1442 land at Slough was hired for William Vesey to extract the clay and build a kiln to supply bricks for Henry VI's new school at Eton, over the river from Windsor Castle. In the four seasons between February 1442 and September 1445 a total of two million bricks were made. Between February 1442 and September 1447, some 1,613,000 bricks were conveyed from the brickfield at Slough to Eton. Transport was probably on the River Thames, with the brickfield and the building site both relatively close to the river. A further 493,000 bricks were delivered in the four building seasons between March 1448 and September 1451. The gap between September/October 1447 and March 1448 being best explained by the fact that the building season in the fifteenth century was between just before Lady Day (25 March) and relatively soon after Michaelmas (29 September); the same period was when brickmaking and the firing of a kiln took place, with the intervening winter frost being used to break up the clay dug in that year. Surplus bricks from the kiln not used at Eton College were sold.

At Eton, the 2,106,000 bricks were used to build the great hall, which though unfinished in 1449 was in use, and the north range of School Yard. Begun in stone but completed in brick, the hall is the south range of Cloister Court, around which was the accommodation provided for the provost and ten fellows of the original foundation. How much of the east and north ranges of the same were completed by 1448 is uncertain; the west range of Cloister Court is known to have been left incomplete: the first floor was completed by Provost Roger Lupton after 1517. Lupton's gatehouse in the centre of this range was finished in 1520.

The school provision, for a schoolmaster and twenty-four poor and indigent scholars, was a detached range built of brick running from the north-west corner of Cloister Court along the north side of School Yard: today this forms the Long Chamber and the Lower School. It is across from the Chapel, which was found to be unsafe in 1448 and then re-planned, being built between 1449 and 1461 and again between 1469 and 1475. An ante-chapel was erected by the provost, Bishop William Waynfleet, between 1476 and 1483, with the wall paintings in the chapel executed over nine years from 1479.

William Vesey's association with the building of Eton College seems to have been confined to the 1440s. Although allowed to 'impress masons and layers (*positores*) called *brikelegges* for works at Eton' in 1442, he is not credited as the master mason. Robert Westerley (*fl.*1429-1461) fulfilled that role from 1442 to 1445 and was succeeded by John Smyth (*fl.*1429-1460) who went to Westminster Abbey in 1453. The double courtyard plan of Eton College with the hall to the right of the entrance to the inner court seems to have been devised by Robert Westerley.

Vesey may have held the post of "master of works" being succeeded in that role by Roger Reys in 1448. This role would have been to supervise the brickyard — Vesey was described as a 'brickmaker' in 1442 — and to oversee the recruitment of workers, particularly bricklayers. This would seem to fit with the appointment as King's Serjaent in the mid-1440s and the royal beerbrewster at about the same time. He would go on to accumulate wealth and become a member of parliament, siting for the Dorset boroughs of Lyme Regis and Warcham.

In modern terms, Vesey was a brickworks manager but one with additional responsibilities recruiting other, specialist labour for specific projects.

WILLIAM VESEY AND OTHER PATRONS OF BRICK BUILDINGS

In the 1430s and 1440s, brickmaking and brick building was relatively new in England, especially for the construction of large-scale secular works such as Sheen Palace and Eton College. Men who possessed William Vesey's combination of talents in the management of complex building projects were few. It is probably not surprising that he may have been involved in other projects elsewhere. Two have specifically been suggested: the complex at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, and Herstmonceaux Castle, Sussex.

Ewelme was begun in 1436 as an almshouse for thirteen poor men with two chaplains to care for them; it was financed by William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk (*k.*1450), a leading figure in the government acting for Henry VI, and building continued until 1446. The building was constructed round a quadrangle with timber posts, joined below dado level by herringbone brickwork forming a cloister. The external walling with brick chimney stacks is completely of brick. On the north side is an arch of moulded brick beneath crow-step gables considered to be Flemish work, possibly made by a brickmaker and bricklayer with connections to Bruges.

Adjacent is the school, now the local infant school, and the house of the chaplain responsible for the school in the fifteenth century, where there is further moulded brickwork. The ground floor and the schoolroom on the first floor both have large fireplaces, with externally massive stacks providing buttressing for the west wall. In the garden wall of the schoolmaster's house is a wide, fifteenth-century brick arch beneath a battlemented parapet. To validate comparisons between the arch in the kitchen of Greys Court and those at Ewelme, one would need to see the two buildings on the same day and possibly to make drawings or take photographs of the various arches.

The schoolroom measures 28 ft 6 in by 18 ft 3 in (8.7 by 5.6 metres); the building also has diagonal corner buttresses.

Certainly, from geographical propinquity, there is no reason why William Vesey might not have advised on or supplied bricks to the buildings at Ewelme if he has connections with Greys Court.

Greys Court is without lengthy historical record and the building accounts have not survived. It is not unlikely that William Vesey was permitted to accept other work even when in charge of royal works.

The connection of William Vesey with Herstmonceaux Castle to some degree rests on the similarity of the multi-courtyard plan of the moated country house with that of the school. Herstmonceaux was built by Sir Roger Fiennes (1384-*c.*1454) and begun in 1441, when a licence to crenellate was issued on 5 February, and probably had been completed by the time of the patron's death. On the basis of similarity of plan of the building and treatment of the brickwork, no less an authority that W.D. Simpson suggested that William Vesey acted as master mason at Herstmonceaux. Pending fuller examination of all the possible buildings, this writer would reserve judgement on the connections, if any, of William Vesey with Herstmonceaux Castle.

Fiennes as Treasurer of the Household to Henry VI in the early 1440s would have been familiar with the work at Eton College: he would have paid out the money, probably to Vesey. There is no inherent reason to question Simpson's judgement particularly if Vesey's contract with the king did not forbid the brickmaker to do work for other patrons. As far as this writer is aware, that contract may not be specific in any prohibition.

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Joseph Hamblet, Piercy Brickworks, West Bromwich

Alan Cox

In 1851 Joseph Hamblet, having acquired part of the estate of J. E. Piercy, started the Piercy Brickworks at West Bromwich, near Greets Green and Ireland Green, and not far from Oldbury. Initially it was a modest enterprise and Hamblet was in partnership with a man called Parkes until 1861. Hamblet was then sole proprietor and manager for the next thirty years. Fred Ballard, whose family had various business interests in Colwall, Herefordshire (between Hereford and Worcester) learnt brickmaking with Hamblets at West Bromwich and in 1891 became Hamblet's partner.[1] The Etruria Marl of the Upper Coal Measures was used to produce both blue and red bricks, as well as flooring and roofing tiles, pavings, copings, kerbings, channel and sough bricks.[2] In 1885 the firm also advertised its Adamantine stable bricks and 'Hamblet's Patent Machine-Made Brindled Bricks'.[3] Between 1874 and 1879 the firm won five 'highest awards' at various exhibitions, for the excellence of its products,[4] and won gold and silver medals at exhibitions in Paris and Brussels.[5] Joseph Hamblet had as his trademark an anchor and cable, with the letters J and H on either side, set within a circle with an intricate filigree border.[6] Fred Ballard returned to Colwall, taking with him some of the workers from West Bromwich, in order to set up the Colwall brick and tile works. This works produced very hard bricks, not necessarily blue ones, and was a quite short-lived concern, closing soon after 1900.[7]

At its most extensive the Piercy works covered some 135 acres, bounded by Albion Road, Bromford Lane and Claypit Lane, with another 23 acres at Cutlers End Farm in Harwood Street. Tramways were laid under Albion Road to transport clay from later marlholes. The bricks spent seven to eight days in the kilns, so that only 10 or 12 of the 26 kilns were in use at any one time. Three types of brick were fired together in a kiln: blue bricks in the hottest top part of the kiln, brindled bricks below this, and common red bricks at the cooler base of the kiln.[8] By the mid-1890s the Piercy works was turning out between 400,000 and 500,000 bricks a week, while at the time Hamblets owned its own fleet of 40 canal barges.[9] So, for instance, at the end of the 19th century the firm delivered blues, via a short canal journey, to Braziers, a builders in Bromsgrove, to the south-west of Birmingham.[10]

The firm's products were distributed almost the length and breadth of the country, as some examples of their use in the southern half of Britain demonstrate. The parapet of Weybridge Bridge in Surrey is constructed of bricks impressed 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / OLDBURY/BIRMINGHAM, 1865'.[11] Interestingly, a few of the blue bull-nosed coping bricks on bridges over the Great Eastern's railway line from Bishop's Stortford to Braintree are also impressed with the date '1865' as well as the words 'HAMBLET / OLDBURY / NEAR BIRMINGHAM'. One such coping has the date 1865 stamped no less than 13 times. Other blue copings on bridges on this line are impressed 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH'. The disused line now forms the 'Fitch Way' footpath and seven overbridges survive along it. The Great Eastern's almost contemporary line from Loughton to Ongar also has Hamblet-marked blue copings.[12] On another Great Eastern line in Essex, bridges numbers 1073 and 1074 at Parkeston, on the Harwich branch (probably dating from when much of the line was doubled in the early 1880s), have blue bull-nosed copings stamped 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH / STAFFORDSHIRE', together with the anchor mark.[13] On yet another Great Eastern line, from London Liverpool Street to Chingford, opened in 1870, blue copings survive on some low walls at St James Street Station, Walthamstow, East London, stamped either 'HAMBLET / OLDBURY / NEAR BIRMINGHAM' or 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH'.[14] The bridges on the new lines opened in 1893 on the former London, Tilbury & Southend Railway between Romford and Upminster have Staffordshire copings, some of which are impressed 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH'. Similarly impressed copings occur on the Abbey Road bridge, dated 1882, on the North Woolwich railway line, in East London.[15] Hamblet also manufactured copings for some of the railway bridges built in 1884 at Parkstone, Poole, in Dorset.[16] Staffordshire blues were used to face most of the bridges on the former Midland & Great Northern Railways' line from Bourne, Lincolnshire, to Saxby, Leicestershire (built 1890-93). Many of them were supplied by Hamblets, with coping bricks impressed 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH'.[17]

Blue engineering-type coping bricks by the firm protect the top of the red-brick northern boundary wall of the former East London Waterworks Company, No. 2 Forest Row, Walthamstow (the site is partly occupied by Walthamstow Wetlands). Several of the copings are stamped, most unusually on their sides rather than on top. The stamps read: 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH' arranged in an oval around the date

1894.[18] In South Wales blue bricks stamped 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH, 1895' form part of the gutter outside the front door of No. 24 Church Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.[19] A blue engineering brick from a railway loading dock, location unknown, is marked at the end 'JOSEPH HAMBLET / WEST BROMWICH' in a circle around the date 1896.[20] Subsequently, Hamblet's Blue Brick Company (see below) were paid in 1899-1900 for supplying various special bricks – such as copings and plinth bricks – for the rebuilding of a section of the boundary wall around the Duke of Bedford's Woburn Abbey estate in Central Bedfordshire.[21] Two Hamblet blue bricks are recorded which have a shallow frog, shaped rather like a bone given to a dog or like a dumbbell. One has 'HAMBLET' impressed into the frog.[22] The other has just an angled 'H' stamped centrally in the frog.[23] A blue engineering brick found in Twickenham has a similar but slightly differently shaped frog bearing the name 'HAMBLET', plus five 'bosses' or raised dots, which may be a press number.[24] Further afield some of Hamblet's bricks went to India for the construction of a palace.[25]

The original Joseph Hamblet died in 1894, and, four years later, in 1898 the business was reconstituted as Hamblet's Blue Brick Company Ltd.[26] The new firm purchased the old concern for £180,000, and the founder's grandson, known as Joseph Hamblet or Joseph Hamblet junior, although actually Joseph Hamblet Davies, became managing director and chairman of the reconstituted company.[27] The younger Joseph Hamblet then lived at Henley House, Chelsham, Warlingham, in Surrey but close to the Kent border. The other two directors of the new firm were Major Hector Tulloch CB, a Royal Engineer, of The Hollies, Bickley, Kent (not that far from Chelsham), and John Parker, a civil engineer, of South Lodge, Nottingham. Fred Ballard was not either a partner or a director in the new firm. Among the holders of preference shares in the new concern was the distinguished theatre architect Frank Matcham and the well-known music-hall comedian Harry Randall.[28] The fact that Joseph Hamblet junior was living where he was may be connected to the fact that a Joseph Hamblet had been running the Aylesford Pottery Company's brick, tile and pipe works near Maidstone, Kent, from at least the mid-1870s until the 1890s.[29] It may be significant that from the outset of Joseph Hamblet junior's involvement with Hamblet's new company he is already described as a brick manufacturer.[30]

The new company did not prove very successful financially. In its first year ending 31 March 1899 it made a profit of only £11,724,[31] but paid out a 10 per cent dividend.[32] In June 1902 the *Building News*, in reporting the company's fourth annual report, was highly critical of Joseph Hamblet junior. As part of the reconstituting of the business in 1898 he had been allocated all but one of the 60,000 ordinary shares in the new firm, each worth £1. He had been selling these off at £2 per share, a one-hundred-per-cent profit, on the basis of the very generous first year dividend to shareholders. However, in the second year the dividend was halved to five per cent, and after March 1900 no dividends had been paid out. The fourth year's accounts showed a loss of £654, there was a bank overdraft of £1,800 and it was by then almost impossible to sell any shares in the company.[33] Nevertheless, in 1905 Hamblets had a London agency at 20 Victoria Street.[34]

Joseph Hamblet also operated the Eagle Foundry, West Bromwich, and an advert of about 1901 offered: 'Brick machinery for all clays; Pumps for all liquids and capacities; Castings of every description; Steam Engines'. In November 1903 the foundry quoted the Colwich Brickworks, Staffordshire for: 'two cast iron slide blocks planed top and bottom bored out and faced on bosses to your sketch for the sum of £2. 10. 0 delivered to Oldbury Station'.[35]

Evidently things did not improve, as far as the brickworks was concerned, and in February 1908 five directors resigned, including Hamblet and Tulloch. Colonel George Dibley, already managing director of Kingsbury Collieries Ltd, Tamworth, took over as Chairman. Hamblets continued to suffer financial difficulties,[36] and Hamblets and its Piercy Brickworks ceased production in 1915, ostensibly because of both fuel and labour shortages.[37] The company was put into receivership in 1918, and its land, buildings and plant were put up for auction in 1919.[38] The company's affairs were finally wound up in 1920, and it was agreed that all the firm's books, papers and documents should be destroyed.[39] However, the goodwill of the business had been acquired by Barnett & Beddows Ltd, who operated the Atlas Brickworks, Aldridge, north-east of Walsall. In 1985 their letterhead included the words 'incorporating Hamblet's Blue Brick Co'.[40]

The site of the Piercy Brickworks was eventually acquired by the local authority, which used the three large marlholes that had been created, first as rubbish tips and then as building sites for council houses, a school and its playing field. Hamblets Road now crosses the site.[41]

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Review Article:
"Your Very Own Community Theatre — A Vibrant Century":
Buildings for Community Use in the United States, Wales, and England

Ann Satterthwaite, *Local Glories: Opera Houses on Main Street Where Art and Community Meet,*
New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016,
viii + 446 pages, 81 (unnumbered) black-and-white illustrations,
ISBN 978-0-19-939254-4, price, hardback, £22-99, $34-95.

The small town of Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire, England, with a population of approximately 6,600 people in late 2019 but expanding rapidly with current house building programmes, was barely 3,500 souls twenty years ago and little more than half of that in the 1961 census. In 1960, the Townsend Hall was reconstructed at the top of Sheep Street. The community centre has a large hall with a stage and its auditorium's flat wooden floor marked out for badminton; additionally, it has a small hall, two kitchens, and the usual facilities; unusual is the caretaker's flat over the entrance.[1] Nearby Warwickshire villages such as Brailes, Ettington, Long Compton, Newbold-on-Stour, and Preston-on-Stour have halls, perhaps not quite so elaborate in their provision but having a big room with a stage, a kitchen, and facilities. The single-storey brick buildings at both Brailes and Long Compton are adjacent to the village sports field and the buildings thus provide changing facilities for teams playing on the pitches.[2] Co-incidentally, the village hall in both villages is near the local primary school, a convenient resource for games lessons. Like other Warwickshire villages with a hall, none has more than 2,000 inhabitants.

On the visit of the British Brick Society to Alvechurch, Worcs.,[3] members viewed the exterior of the village hall designed in 1929 by Bloomer & Gough; while on his journey home, the meeting's organiser saw Greig Hall, Alcester,[4] a community hall with a circular entrance from which wings project housing toilets and the kitchen. Built in 1958, this building in light buff-coloured brick echoes structures of two decades earlier.

In the United States of America in the late nineteenth century probably the community building would be called the 'Opera House'. Thomas Noel tells an interesting story about the Opera House Block Building in Fort Collins, Colorado:

> Like other western "cities" rushing to respectability, Fort Collins had to have an opera house. Although no full-scale opera was ever staged there, the upstairs hall accommodated traveling theatrical companies, local talent, balls, motion pictures, and high school graduations.[5]

The building in Fort Collins was constructed by unrecorded persons — neither the architects nor the builders are known. It was built in 1881, four years after the railroad first hit town. The three-storeyed building, 100 feet long, with stores on its ground floor was renovated in 1917, to designs by Ansel Pierce, with a new buff brick skin incorporating terracotta ornament and stained-glass windows. A late-twentieth-century reconstruction has turned the building into a galleria.[6]

Many opera houses were built on the upper floor of a two-storeyed building with stores on the ground floor as at Red Cloud, Nebraska (fig.1, left). The colour photograph on the dust jacket of Ann Satterthwaite's book is of this opera house, built in 1885, and shows the first floor in red brick. Red Cloud was the home of Willa Cather (1873-1947), novelist, drama critic and theatre enthusiast.[7] Satterthwaite remarks of the small towns of Nebraska, a corn-growing state in the lee of the Rockies, that half of those with an opera house had a population of under 2,000 — Red Cloud was 676 people in 1880 and 1,554 in 1900 — and the other half held fewer than 20,000 people: Satterthwaite's gazetteer (p.370) lists 26 surviving buildings in Nebraska once used to stage opera, plays, school graduations, social events of all kinds, political rallies, and even roller-skating if the floor was flat, of which four are 'still being used for performances and community events' (p.360). Colorado, a mountain state also has 26 surviving buildings; here eight of the 'early mining-town opera houses which provided entertainment to remote gulches in the nineteenth century now play to local residents and many tourists' (p.6).

Nebraska and Colorado are two of four states on which research for the book concentrated. Kentucky is 'a southern state with an early, strong, and persistent interest in theater and entertainment' (p.6), where nineteen buildings remain standing but only two in use for performances, whilst in the New England state of Vermont are 'many opera houses in town halls where theater has been treated almost like a public service' (p.6): nine of the ten surviving buildings still function as an 'opera house'; the tenth has become an office block.

Fig.1 Red Cloud, Nebraska, USA: the former Opera House, now Willa Cather Center to the left; commercial block to the right.

These four states have widely differing levels of social capital, a measure of human interconnectedness used by sociologists.[8] Vermont scores extremely high, being in the highest of the ten levels distinguished by Bob Putnam for the states of mainland USA, with Kentucky at the second lowest level. Nebraska is in the second highest level and Colorado just above the mid-point.[9] In this context it is worth pointing out that both Vermont and Nebraska are states where almost all of the towns have small populations:[10] Omaha, Nebraska, being the major exception.

As can be seen from Satterthwaite's gazetteer (pp.359-381) large numbers of 'opera house' buildings surviving in a particular state does not guarantee continuing use as a community space. In nineteen states, the gazetteer lists ten or more surviving buildings. Ohio has 61 buildings surviving but sadly almost none in the use for which it was built and in Kansas, there are 42 surviving buildings of which only five are in use, although in this Mid West state Satterthwaite's listing omits the Kincaid and Cooper Opera House in Pleasanton, a building now used as a garment factory.[11] In Wisconsin, just three of the 30 extant buildings have performances. Both Michigan and New York State have twenty buildings surviving with eight and seven respectively in use. The list given for Michigan omits the Delta Theater, Escanara, in Delta County in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This has a prominent stepped gable in the centre of its brick frontage and stepped gables on the ends of the long building: a Dutch Renaissance Revival style was postulated.[12]

Of the seventeen buildings in Indiana only two are in use. In both Maine and West Virginia, sixteen buildings survive with seven still functioning in each state yet in neither North Carolina, with fifteen buildings, nor in Minnesota, with fourteen standing buildings, are performances held in any opera house. Eleven 'opera house' buildings remain in both Arkansas and New Hampshire but only a small number are in their original use. States with ten extant buildings include Missouri and Iowa, but the World Theater, Cedar Rapids, Iowa,[13] built in 1923, is omitted from the gazetteer: it was severely damaged in the 20 feet deep flood of the Cedar River in 2008 and may now have been deemed too unsafe to preserve: in May 2010, it had an ugly tidemark three-quarters of the way up the faience-covered street façade.[14] The visible side wall is brick.

West of the Rockies, only one of the thirteen 'opera house' buildings surviving in Oregon is in use; this is another state which has been the subject of specific research (p.6).[15] Equally, none of the nine buildings listed in Washington State nor the six in California is functioning as a performance space.

Fig.2 Council Bluffs, Iowa, USA: Dohany Opera House, on left, as built: photograph *circa* 1910.

After an Introduction (pp.1-6), Satterthwaite divides her book into four parts. 'Part One: A Heady Time: Thousands of Opera Houses' (pp.7-50) examines the political, economic, social, and cultural background to the building of so many opera houses in small towns and out of the way places. 'Part Two: On Stage: Performances, Performers, and Patrons' (pp.51-144) describes what went on in these buildings. 'Part Three: In Town: Public Halls and Public Roles' (pp.145-250) considers the wider social environment of the opera house in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and 'Part Four: Born Again: Revived Opera Houses and Their Communities' (pp.251-352) looks at the more recent history of some of the 85 buildings that have come to life again, charting their restoration and revival.

Satterthwaite's 'Thousands of Opera Houses' is borne out by the scale of survival: 496 buildings are listed in the gazetteer. Initially, the great enemy of survival was fire: one of the most spectacular losses was in 1922 when the celebrated Grand Opera House in Pueblo, Colorado (pp.222-224), burnt down.[16] Later loss was due to alternative attractions: the movies, although many opera houses acquired projection equipment, and television. From these came a lack of use, indifference to its fate, the physical decay of the building, and ultimately real estate values. The late-nineteenth-century Dohany Opera House in Council Bluffs, Iowa (figs.2 and 3), is a case in point; remodelled in 1927 with a new front in light-coloured brick with red brick diaper, the substantial corner lot was acquired by the local chamber of commerce, demolished, and the site redeveloped for their own offices.[17]

To judge from the exteriors of those illustrated by Satterthwaite and other references available to this writer, a large number were like the building in Red Cloud, two-storeyed with stores on the ground floor and a flat-floored hall above. In many, the first-floor hall was taller than the stores on the ground floor; this is illustrated by the plan and section of the demolished opera house in Bozeman, Montana (p.229), opened in 1890 but succumbing to the wrecking ball in 1966. Three-storey buildings including the Tabor Opera House, Leadville, Colorado, of 1879 (p.40) make up the next largest group. A building externally of three storeys is often giving expression to a balcony surrounding the auditorium. With either two or three floors, the ground floor is almost invariably given over to retail premises. In adopting the mixed use of retail and cultural activity, these buildings invite comparison with the central churches built by nonconformist denominations in Lancashire between 1880 and 1915. These have shops on the ground floor, and often commercial premises on the outer walls if the site was either sufficiently large or a corner one.

Fig.3 Council Bluffs, Iowa, USA: the Dohany Opera House, on left, rebuilt as the Strand Theater in 1927 with light-coloured brick exterior with stone dressings and red brick used to pick out a diamond pattern.

The Bolton firm of Bradshaw & Gass designed buildings for the Methodists in Liverpool, Wigan, and Bolton[18] as well as the Leysian Mission in London.[19] The Congregationalists erected substantial buildings on Trafford Road, Salford,[20] and in Hulme, Manchester: the latter now the Zion Arts Centre.[21]

Far fewer opera houses were in buildings four and five storeys high. Among the latter was the Grand Opera House, Denver, Colorado, built in 1881 and demolished in 1964.[22] The former included the Grand Opera House in Pueblo, Colorado.[23] designed in 1890 in the new offices of Adler & Sullivan in Auditorium Tower, Chicago:[24] the Auditorium Theater was Chicago's answer to the Metropolitan Opera in New York[25] or the Palais Garnier in Paris.[26] Satterthwaite rightly draws attention to the involvement of Frank Lloyd Wright in the design of the Pueblo Grand Opera House; she might also have noted a similarity in roof pitch to two demolished buildings, the southern terminus of the Illinois Central Railroad in New Orleans, Louisiana,[27] and the Victoria Hotel in Chicago Heights[28] opened in 1892; the hotel and the opera house are both demolished and buildings built of brick; they were among the last designs to which Wright contributed when he worked for Adler & Sullivan.[29]

Unlike village halls in England, single-storey community buildings were rare in American opera houses: only the Freeman Opera House in Sargent, Nebraska (p.212) is illustrated by Satterthwaite. At the Thresher Opera House in Green Lake, Wisconsin (p.213), the front block is two storeyed but the hall is a single storey.

The buildings considered by Satterthwaite have construction dates ranging from as early as 1878 to as late as 1915, with the greatest concentration in the late 1880s and early 1890s. There was a definite hiatus in construction between 1893 and 1897 as the vicious sting in the tail of the Long Depression adversely affected the building industry across the United States of America.[30] Future students of this building type in individual states in the USA may wish to explore the complex interplay of economic fortunes and the manias, panics, and bank failures of a classic recession with the building of an opera house in specific location.[31]

Most of the opera house buildings were of brick: red, pressed brick being especially favoured in both the Mid West and New England. Stone dressings might be present, particularly on the ground floor: the four-storey Love Larson Opera House in Fremont, Nebraska, of 1888 (p.216) is a good example. The still functioning opera house in Central City, Colorado, of 1878 (p.267), is a rare example of one completely encased in stone.

The celebrated Opera House in Pueblo, Colorado, already mentioned was built of the local red Maniton sandstone.

The red-brick, upper floor in the two-storeyed ones, particularly if there is a central pediment, is not greatly different to the façade of a commercial block with stores on the ground floor and offices above. The Keeley Block of 1870 on one side of the Public Square, Milan, Erie County, Ohio,[32] is a good example of this building type. Figure 1 shows both the Opera House in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and the adjacent commercial block of shops on the ground floor with offices above. The opera house as a prestige building in a small town often faced the town hall or the county courthouse across the public square.

The opera house could be combined with the town hall. This was a New England phenomenon: Barre, Vermont (p.46), being a continuing example and Dexter, Maine, one where the opera house has closed. Ideas spread across states. Bozeman, Montana has been mentioned but one can also cite the same combination at Loudenville, Ohio; at Stockbridge, Michigan; at Mellen, Wisconsin; at Madison, Minnesota; and at Elgin, Oregon. A combined opera house and town hall is to be found in five other towns in Wisconsin. Three decades ago, David Hackett Fischer put forward the idea of four British folkways in the United States,[33] one of which derived from the English Puritans of East Anglia, Lincolnshire, and Essex who settled in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and later in the rest of New England and whose culture and *mentalité* spread west across the northern fringe of the United States.[34] Despite their long-standing objection to plays and the theatre, the later acceptance of the medium, particularly in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine as well as upstate New York, produced a number of buildings combining the town hall with the opera house. The same combination in the most northerly states of the USA could be yet another manifestation of this folkway, albeit a late one.

Another building combination was the opera house and the hotel. They could be physically in the same building, even if with separate entrances, as at the Auditorium, Chicago,[35] or within the Great Southern Hotel which houses the Southern Theater in Columbus, Ohio.[36] Alternatively, the town's premier hotel could be adjacent to the opera house. In Colorado, at both Central City and Leadville, the hotel is joined to the dress circle of the opera house by a bridge over the roadway between the two buildings. Elegant ladies in flowing long dresses would not have their skirts sullied by walking in the mud and dust of a mining town.

The United States of America is essentially a nation of immigrants, not least in its white population: Wisconsin has many of Swedish and German ancestry; in Nebraska, a high proportion of incomers were of Czech origin. *Mitteleuropa*[37] has a long tradition of opera and orchestral music. In Nebraska, at both Clarkson and Verdigre, the *Zapadni Ceska Bratrska Jednote* (the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association) built the opera house, proudly putting the letters 'Z.C.B.J.' above the door at Clarkson (p.202) where there is a safety curtain with a scene showing the Karlstein Castle in Bohemia (p.243). There was and is a determination by communities of Czech origin to maintain their ethnic and cultural heritage.[38]

In most small towns these buildings served a whole variety of functions. Even though called 'opera house' or 'theater', they put on not only opera and plays from both touring companies and local societies but also concerts and lectures, and the building served for political and social meetings: Mitt Romney hit the campaign trail in the opera house at Rochester, New Hampshire, on 11 January 2012 (p.272). Speakers giving lectures in the nineteenth century included Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and Oscar Wilde (pp.86-93). In small towns, the opera house was the location for high school graduations: Willa Cather was one of three seventeen-year-olds in Red Cloud to complete high school in 1890; afterwards she went to the University of Nebraska in the state capital of Lincoln before her writing career took her to Pittsburgh and New York.[39]

This essay has already pointed to two English comparisons with the 'opera house', the local community centre or village hall and the nonconformist central church. Another building having a similar range of functions to the American 'opera house' is found in the industrial areas of both Wales and England: the textile towns of central Lancashire have the Mechanics Institute but building is more usually called the Workingmen's Institute in Gwent and Glamorgan, Wales.[40]

The second and third series of the television programme *Restoration,* broadcast in the early years of this century, each featured a workingmen's institute; the second series included the Celynen Workingmen's Institute and Memorial Hall in Newbridge, Gwent, two separate buildings, where construction was completed in August 1908 and 1924 respectively,[41] and the third series had the Pritchard Jones Institute, Newborough, Ynys Môn (Anglesey), built 1902-05.[42] Building materials vary. The local grey stone is employed for much of the Pritchard Jones Institute with lighter ashlar dressings and much timber-framing with white plaster infill on the first floor; the roof is the local slate. But elsewhere on Ynys Môn, the Cemaes Village Hall of 1898 was built of brick: Cemaes had a brickworks between 1907 and 1914[43] and was across the bay from the Porth Wen brickworks at Llanbadrig, in operation between 1889 and 1924.[44] The bricks at the Cemaes Village Hall doubtless were sourced from the latter. At the Newbridge building, the front is in the local red brick relieved by yellow brick

accents round the windows whilst the side walls are of the local Grey Pennant sandstone. The roof is Welsh slate.[45]

Finance, too, was different. Sir John Pritchard Jones, chairman and part owner of the successful London department store, Dickins and Jones,[46] gave the institute in Newborough to his native village together with the adjoining single-storey pensioners' cottages.[47] The Cemaes Village Hall was also a benefaction. In contrast, the miners of Celynen Colliery raised the money for their buildings. Beginning in 1898, the miners were aspirational in providing a centre for all the community without alcoholic drink being available. There were a coffee room, a recreational room including four snooker tables and a large reading room with newspapers on the ground floor with a large hall above. The Memorial Hall, conceived after the first mortgage had been paid off in 1922, has a rich interior and was multi-functional: in the auditorium upstairs, the institute could show films and stage plays while the sprung floor of the lower floor was ideal for Saturday night dances. Facilities were no less varied at the Newborough building: a coffee room, a smoking room, a 'ladies' room' on the ground floor, together with a library, which is now administered by Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn (Anglesey County Council). The first floor had a large hall but at the time of the television programme it was in use as a snooker centre.

Welsh workingmen's institutes are roughly contemporary with the American opera houses. Those in Gwent include three from the early 1890s: Blina, 1892; Tredegar, 1893; and Blaenavon, 1893-94.[48] Another five were built in the decade leading up to the Great War: Ebbw Vale, 1907; Celynen, 1908; Fleur-de-Lys, 1911; Risca, 1915; and Llanhilleth, before 1915.[49] Those in Glamorgan show a similar concentration in the quarter century before the Great War: Mountain Ash, 1888 and undated; Blaengarew, 1893-94; Treorchy, 1895 and 1913; for Nixon's Colliery's miners at Mountain Ash, 1898-99; Abercynon, 1904; Pontardulais, 1905-06; and Llanbradach, 1912.[50] Later ones tend to be financed by colliery owners and to be more ambitious than that at Newbridge. Again, the building dates reveal an hiatus in construction following the 1893 crash and subsequent economic downturn, which affected Britain far less than the USA.

Many of the south Wales workingmen's institutes were built using three local stones: grey Pennant sandstone, blue Pennant sandstone, or grey Forest stone. Brick, however, is used in Gwent: at Blaenavon it is buff Ebbw Vale brick and here there is buff terracotta also. Grey and red brick were used at Blina and red brick on the two upper floors at Fleur-de-Lys. Red brick is used with grey stone at the institutes at both Llanhilleth and Risca, both Gwent, and in Glamorgan at the institutes in Abercynon, Aberaman, and Blaengarew. Cardiff architect Bruce Vaughan used red brick on its own at Llanbrdach and Dan Lloyd of Aberbeeg chose yellow brick with red brick Doric pilasters for the Workingmen's Institute of Nixon's Colliery in Mountain Ash. Its pediment included red, yellow, and blue terracotta, both glazed and unglazed. The miners paid for it out of their own money and as at Newbridge, they intended to show their taste and their intention to self-educate. The institute had a library, lecture and reading rooms, a public hall capable of seating 1,500 and a swimming pool.[51]

In central Lancashire, the mechanics institutes belong to an earlier time-frame, the mid-Victorian years of affluence between just before the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the onset of the Cotton Famine of 1861-65:[52] the Harris Institute at Preston, 1846-49; Bacup, 1846; Burnley, 1854-55 with an extension in 1888; and Haslingden, 1859.[53] That at Accrington was somewhat later, 1878;[54] as the world recovered from the crash of 1873; the building was designed by George Baines[55] who had moved to the town from Great Yarmouth when he gained his first independent commission, a former Baptist church on Cannon Street of 1874. These buildings all have stone frontages. Those in Bacup and Haslingden have become the public library; that in Accrington has been incorporated in the adjacent public library. As such they still fulfil an important original function of a mechanics' institute, self-education.

As with the workingmen's institutes in Wales and the mechanics' institutes in England, the theatre or 'opera house' was the 'sign of civilization' in the small towns of rural America. The 'Opera House' was beyond the initial necessary accoutrements of the store, the bank, and the courthouse; the town hall, often with provision for housing the village or town fire engine, and the library were built next. Building an opera house often followed the arrival of the railroad and the building of the railroad station. A small town's acquisition of the railroad was often led by a dynamic attorney-turned-entrepreneur: Judge George Greene in Cedar Rapids, Iowa,[56] or Jay H. Bouton (or Boughton) in Fort Collins, Colorado.[57] These men would then turn their attention to providing a cultural centre. Greene also financed the first hotel in Cedar Rapids as well as having a farm implements factory and being the driving force behind Grace Episcopal Church and the Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute (now Coe College).

Like opera houses, many railroad structures survive but not all in their original uses. The railroad station in Grinnell, Iowa, is now a restaurant, while that in Iowa City houses an attorney's office. Freight trains still run even if passenger services have long disappeared.[58] Libraries and town halls still function as do many of the banks, especially if taken over by Wells Fargo, as has happened at Owatonna, Minnesota.[59] Wells Fargo also

own the bank buildings designed by Louis Sullivan in Grinnell and Cedar Rapids, both Iowa.[60] The former has a modern extension for a new banking hall; the former bank, which is preserved internally in its near-original state and beautifully maintained externally, is leased to the local chamber of commerce. The latter, sadly, was victim of a devastating flood in 2008, remaining closed in May 2010 because it was still drying out; enquiring at the large, city centre branch of Wells Fargo, I was told that the firm was uncertain about the future of the building. The bank in Newark, Ohio, has become an ice cream parlour.[61] But two of Louis Sullivan's small-town bank buildings still prosper under the local enterprise for whom they were built: the People's Savings & Loan Association in Sydney, Ohio,[62] and the architect's penultimate built work: the Farmers' and Merchants' Union Bank in Columbus, Wisconsin.[63] The latter has been twice extended and the bank has a major building elsewhere in the small town.[64]

The point of this short excursus is to suggest a need for wider studies than have so far been attempted on most of these building types. Sullivan's banks in the Mid West have generated a wide literature,[65] and there is published material on banks by his pupils and imitators,[66] but no general study of the building type has been attempted, even on a state level, let alone a regional one. The libraries and railroad stations designed by H.H. Richardson and his successor firm, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, have attracted attention[67] but the present writer is unaware of any wider survey; railroad stations in the USA when considered by railway historians have less interest than other aspects of their subject. However, in Great Britain, stations have been studied by those with a greater concern for architecture and building.

A building type which has commanded interest is the store. In the USA, Ann Satterthwaite, herself, has given us *Going Shopping: Consumer Choices and Community Consequences* about the store;[68] Kathryn A. Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping* is an English equivalent.[69]

As noted above Satterthwaite devotes two-sevenths of her text in *Local Glories* to the continued operation and the restoration of opera houses. If the Deadwood Stage[70] had travelled a dozen or so miles further west, it would have reached Spearfish, South Dakota, where in 1970 the theatre students of the town's Black Hills State College rescued the Matthews Opera House of 1906, restoring it to a serviceable state sufficient for their summer programme (p.356). Their good work was taken up by the Spearfish Downtown Association and the Spearfish Center for Arts and Humanities. After full restoration, the building can now stage plays, show films, and host art exhibitions. Its motto, "Your very own community theater — A vibrant century", provides the title to this review article.

One measure of the success of the rehabilitation of the local opera house or theatre can be judged by taking Amtrak's daily *Ethan Allen Express* at 3.15 pm from New York's Pennsylvania Station which terminates in Rutland, Vermont.[71] As Satterthwaite points out in her introduction (pp.3-4):

> In little more than hour's drive from Rutland, in summer 2012, one could attend performances of opera by resident companies in four opera houses: Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Opera North at the Lebanon Opera House in Lebanon, New Hampshire; Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* by the Opera Company of Middlebury in the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, Vermont; Rossini's *Barber of Seville* by the Hubbard Hall Opera Theater at Hubbard Hall in Cambridge, New York; and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* by the Green Mountain Opera Festival at the Barre Opera House in Barre, Vermont. Who would have thought that these small places, ranging in size from fewer than 2,000 to about 13,000 inhabitants, would have established local companies performing grand opera? Discovering these revived opera houses has provided an unexpectedly happy ending for my research.

The summer season in Lebanon brackets a classical opera with a popular musical. The performers are a wide cross-section of the town's population supplemented by aspirant professionals. The house also provides a wide range of musical and other cultural activities, not least for young people. Further north, three equally small places in Vermont have functioning performance centres: Derby Line, where the stage of the opera house is actually in Canada, Enosburg Falls, and Hyde Park. Figure 4 shows the location of the surviving and operative opera houses in northern New England — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont — and the eastern edge of New York State. Like those in the towns previously cited they are kept going by a varied programme and a careful mix of enthusiastic volunteers with some professional management. Satterthwaite devotes much space and provides illustrations to the successes and the support small towns can give to their local organisations. Not least in how this helps to kick-start economic regeneration (pp.306-325). Restoring the opera house on Main Street brings businesses and life back to Main Street. This is clearly the case also in Red Cloud, Nebraska, where the Willa Cather Center, housed in the former opera house has led to regular visits by literary persons and a thriving literature festival.

Fig.4 The Rose Bumpkin Performing Arts Center, Omaha, Nebraska, USA, opened as the Riviera in March 1927 and continued as theatre until after the Second World War. After a period as a bowling alley in the early 1960s, it was remodelled as 'The Astro' a movie theatre (cinema) in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. After a period of disuse, it was refurbished as a children's theatre, the Rose, opening in 1995. It continues to be well patronised.

The same care for the community occurs in small towns in England: for example, Shipston-on-Stour boasts two long-standing singing groups whose performances are to a professional standard and a town band with a junior band, all of whom feature in the town's two-week music festival; the town has societies for many interests and different sporting activities as well as lunch clubs for the elderly and support groups for specific disabilities and diseases. Here, one is not, in Bob Putnam's useful phrase, "bowling alone".[72]

Perhaps organising societies and recruiting volunteers is easier in a small town or a village[73] but as Ann Satterthwaite points out, the Anglophone world spends considerably less on cultural activities than the countries of *Mitteleuropa,* whether rich or comparatively poor. She also quotes the Austrian Minister of Finance: "Culture costs but a lack of culture — Un Kultur — costs much, much more" (p.335). Germany in 2012 at $150 per head spent 316 times on culture than 46 cents for each citizen the US Treasury doled out to the National Endowment for the Arts, the equivalent of the Arts Council in Britain whose budget in 2017 was £409 million, or 52 pence per person.[74] But only a small percentage of $146 million the NEA received in 2013 went to the 29,263 towns with a population in 2010 of under 10,000 people. As in England, where even now following the programme of

austerity of 2010 to 2018 with its well-publicised cuts to four major arts bodies, London still takes the lion's share, in the USA the big cities got three-quarters of the money. Yet the smaller towns there, with 43 million people, represent just under one-seventh of the 325.3 million inhabitants of the United States but they got barely a seventeenth of the grants.

Just to emphasise what can be done, whilst an early draft of this Review Article was being written, the Mid Wales Opera Small Stages Team were performing William Walton's burlesque opera *The Bear* in the villages and small towns of Powys and Ceredigion. *The Guide*, one of several Saturday supplements to *The Guardian*, noted Llandinam Village Hall and Llanfair Caereinon Institute in one week and the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth, and Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, in another;[75] three actors and an ensemble of five musicians akin in numbers to Sergei Prokofiev's ballet *Trapeze*, where the instrumentation is for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, and double bass.[76]

And in the USA success stories do happen outside the small towns. The Paramount Theater in Omaha, Nebraska, has reopened as The Rose, a children's theatre, whose full title is the Rose Bumpkin Performing Arts Center.[77] The Rose is a splendid building in buff brick with red brick diaper and terracotta figures over rainwater heads (fig.4).[78] The St Louis Theater in that city's midtown has been refurbished as the Powell Symphony Hall,[79] while the former Paramount Cinema in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, serves the same function.[80] Restorations of the Fox Theater, a super cinema, in both St Louis[81] and Detroit[82] have proved successful, both artistically and financially.

Local Glories has much to teach building historians about the culture which produced and maintained the theatre in small towns, not just in the USA but across the Anglophone world; generous state subsidies and cultural tradition makes *Mitteleuropa* different. As one would expect from the publisher, the book is beautifully produced. It can be thoroughly recommended and, hopefully, will inspire wider studies of theatres in other countries and of other building types in the USA and in Great Britain, including village halls.[83]

DAVID H. KENNETT

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Shipston & District Local History Society, *The Stour Valley in Old Photographs,* Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990, p.60 upper photograph shows the hall, then The Hostel with a gable to the road, and adjacent buildings to the east now demolished when the hall was enlarged 1960-61. C. Pickford and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Warwickshire,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016, p.564, is somewhat dismissive of the building.
2. Personal observation. None is included in Pickford and Pevsner, 2016. The sports field is also adjacent to the local primary school in Brailes and across the road in Long Compton.
3. A. Brooks and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p.108.
4. Pickford and Pevsner, 2016, p.95.
5. T.J. Noel, *Buildings of Colorado,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, re-issued in paperback, 2002, p.224.
6. Noel, 1997/2002, pp.224-223. See n.55 *infra* for comment on the prime mover behind the Opera House
7. For Willa Cather see the numerous references in Satterthwaite, 2016, supplemented by two biographies: M. Meltzer, *Willa Cather: A Biography,* Buffalo NY: Twenty-First Century Press, 2007; and J. Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life,* Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. Apart from theatre criticism, Cather's own writings are mainly fiction, both short stories and novels, several set in Nebraska.
8. Two introductory works on Social Capital are J. Field, *Social Capital,* London: Routledge, 2003, and D. Halpern, *Social Capital,* Cambridge and Malden MA: Polity Press, 2005. R.D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, provides an American perspective.
9. Putnam, 2000, fig.80 on p.293. *Ibid.,* pp.285-363, provides insights into the relationships between social capital and education, neighbourhood safety, economic prosperity, health, happiness, and participation in democracy as positive indicators, and on the dark side intolerance, inequality both racial and by gender, and economic inequality on a state by state basis in mainland USA.
10. See the symbols used for the towns in these states in *Warren's United States, Canada, Mexico Road Atlas,* Lancaster PA: Antenna Audio Inc., n.d. but before 2011, pp.31 and 33, respectively.
11. D.H. Sachs and G. Ehrlech, *Guide to Kansas Architecture,* Lawrence KS: University of Kansas Press, 1996, p.196.
12. K.B. Eckert, *Buildings of Michigan,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1st edn, 1995, pp.529-530, with illustration on p.529.
13. D. Gebhard and G. Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.184, with photograph of the façade before the flood. The hotel in Cedar Rapids in which I stayed was 9 feet under water in 2008. One criticism of Satterthwaite's gazetteer is that it did not use the published volumes of 'The Buildings of the United

States' series of which Gebhard and Mansheim, 1993, is one. On the other hand, not all theatres and opera houses are noted by the compilers of the volumes in 'The Buildings of the United States' series.

14. Personal observation. The building was not in active use in May 2010.

15. Noel, 1997/2002, p.315; see also n.21 *infra.*

16. A.H. Ernst, *Trouping in the Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Theatre,* Portland OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1961; listed in the Bibliography, Satterthwaite, 2016, p.400.

17. K. Gerber and T. Kessler, *Omaha and Council Buffs, Yesterday and Today,* Council Buffs IA: Nonpareil Publishing, 2008, pp.pp.40-41.

18. J. and T. Lingard, *Bradshaw Gass & Hope: The Story of an Architectural Practice — the First One Hundred Years 1862-1962,* London: Editions Lingard, 2007, pp.66-68 with figs.78-80 (Victoria Hall, Bolton), 73 with fig.85 (Liverpool), and 75-77 with figs.89-91 (Wigan). See also C. Hartwell, M. Hyde, and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, p.139 (Bolton), and R. Pollard and N. Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Lancashire: Liverpool and the South-West,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006, p.285 and pl.73 (Liverpool) and p.671 (Wigan).

19. Lingard, 2007, pp.71-73 with figs.12, 38, 82, 83. See also B. Cherry and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 4: North,* London: Penguin Books, 1998, p.605. Members saw this building on the visit to Islington and Finsbury in September 2009. The Leysian Mission was outreach work by the boys of The Leys School, Cambridge, a Methodist foundation.

20. Personal observation between 1994 and 1997. No gazetteer known to the writer lists this building. It was erected in 1907; I thank the late Mrs Evelyn Jones of Salford for illuminating discussion on this building.

21. Hartwell and Pevsner, 2004, p.454 (as Zion Arts Centre). Two Methodist examples in Manchester city centre of the Central Hall are those on Oldham Street (1885-86: George Woodhouse) and the Albert Memorial Hall, Peter Street (1910: W.J. Morley), the latter now in secular use. See Hartwell and Pevsner, 1998, pp.277-278.

22. Noel, 1997/2002, pp.16-17, with photograph on p.16.

23. R. Nickel and A. Siskind, *The Complete Architecture of Adler & Sullivan,* Chicago: The Richard Nickel Committee, 2010, pp.369-370, no.116; H. Frei, *Louis Henry Sullivan,* Zurich, München, London: Artemis Verlag-AG, 1992, pp.80-81; and L.C. Engelbrecht, 'Adler & Sullivan's Pueblo Opera House: City Status for a New Town in the Rockies', *Art Bulletin,* **67/2**, June 1985, pp.277-295.

24. J.R. Siry, *The Chicago Auditorium Building: Adler and Sullivan's Architecture and the City,* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002. Nickel and Siskind, 2010, pp.362-365, no.1010; Frei, 1992, pp.68-75.

25. S. Bradford Landau and C.W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper 1865-1913,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, p.110, record 'In 1883, yet another venerable institution, the new Metropolitan Opera House, America's first permanent home for grand opera, would open at the corner of Broadway and 39th Street'. For a plan of the Metropolitan Opera House see E. Homberger, *Mrs Astor's New York,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, p.233; with *ibid.,* pp.224-237 for the social context of upper-class New York attendance at the opera. The Metropolitan Opera has moved since then to the Lincoln Center: N. White and E. Willensky with F. Leadon, *AIA Guide to New York City,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5th edn, 2010, p.355 records the current building of 1966 on Amsterdam Avenue (10th Avenue). This writer lacks the familiarity with New York and its architectural literature which he has with Chicago and its architectural literature.

26. A. Sutcliffe, *Paris: An Architectural History,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, pp.99-100. R. Johnston, *Parisian Architecture of the Belle Epoque,* Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2007, pp.16-18 with illustrations.

27. Nickel and Siskind, 2010, p.373, no.156. K. Kingsley, *Buildings of Louisiana,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p.41 with illustration on p.40; Daniel Burnham's Southern Railway Station of 1906 in New Orleans with its Beaux Arts classical façade is illustrated on p.41. Both buildings have been demolished. The present railroad station in New Orleans, Union Station, was constructed on the site of the Adler & Sullivan station in 1954.

28. Nickel and Siskind, 2010, p.397, no.166; Frei, p.107.

29. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) worked for Adler & Sullivan from February 1888 to late in 1892 or very early in 1893: R. Twombly, *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life and His Architecture,* New York and Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1979, pp.19-22.

30. The comparative Economics literature on the Long Depression (1878-1896) is vast. Two contrasting perspectives are C.P. Kindleberger and R.Z. Aliber, *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises,* 6th edn, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 [1st edn, 1978] and C.M. Reinhart and K.S. Rogoff, *This Time is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly,* Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009. C.M. Conant, *A History of Modern Banks of Issue,* New York: 5th edn, G.B. Putnam and Sons, 1915, pp.668-697, is a near contemporary account of the 1893 financial crash caused by bankers' greed.

31. Between May 2009 and October 2011, the present writer assembled a large collection of notes and printouts, about 3 inches (75 mm) thick, from the local newspapers of St Louis in connection with a projected article for *Missouri History* on *unbuilt* office blocks in St Louis, Missouri, designed in the offices of Adler & Sullivan in 1893 and 1894 which failed to get built because of the depression of 1893-97, caused by bank failures. As yet the paper awaits completion due to a lack of knowledge of precisely which banks failed in the city of St Louis in 1893 and 1894. The local newspapers of St Louis, which are daily publications, still need to be read with care.

32. J. Ware, *Building Ohio: A Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Rural Architecture,* Wilmington OH: Orange Frazer Press, 2002, 194-195 with photograph on p.194.
33. D. Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, re-issued in paperback, 1991, *passim.*
34. Hackett Fischer, 1989/1991, pp.13-205.
35. Siry, 2002, pp.197-269 for the theatre; pp.271-329 for the hotel. There was and is no communication between them as a fire precaution. Those who take the tour of the Auditorium Theater enter through the entry on Congress Drive, those who visit the former hotel (now Rooseveldt University) enter from South Michigan Avenue. Office accommodation, excluding that for Adler & Sullivan on the sixteenth floor of Auditorium Tower, was accessed from Wasbash Avenue. The elevator to the architect's offices was accessed from the Congress Drive entrance but this gave no access to the theatre's upper floors.
36. J. Ware, *Building Ohio: A Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Urban Architecture,* Wilmington OH: Orange Frazer Press, 2001, pp.195-197; J.T. Darbee and N.A. Reechie, *The AIA Guide to Columbus,* Athens OH: Ohio Univerity Press, 2008, pp.52-53.
37. *Mitteleuropa* is a convenient way of describing Germany in its pre-1914 borders and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914: this area would now be Germany, western Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and the western edge of Ukraine.
38. An English comparison might be the Polish communities in Bedford and Bristol and the Italian community in mid-twentieth-century Bedford. Staunchly Roman Catholic in their religious observance, the Italians in Bedford raised the finance to construct their own building, on Midland Road; later the Poles in the same town bought a redundant Anglican church, St Cuthbert's, for their worship and social activities.
39. See n.5 *supra* for references to Willa Cather. For a person in the middle years of his eighth decade, it is not difficult to appreciate just how few people received a university education before 1945 and certainly before 1917. The opportunity for this level of education in the UK, which if ameliorated after 1953 when mandatory maintenance grants were introduced in the UK, was by no means universal; of the 130 eleven-year-old boys who entered Luton Grammar School on 7 September 1956, only 25 are known to have gained a first degree; those 130 represented 9% of the boys born between September 1944 and August 1945 who were living in the town and the surrounding villages to the north in February 1956. At least seven of the graduates who were eleven in September 1956 went on to receive at least one post-graduate degree. Except for veterans, the USA has never had the generous system of grants and payment of fees for undergraduate study which was current in Great Britain from 1953 to the mid-1990s.
40. The choices of Lancashire and the south Wales coalfield are not exclusive for the building type. They are areas known to the writer: a graduate both of Prifysgol Cymru, Cardiff, and of the University of Salford. One could also find examples of the building type from industrial areas in Yorkshire, the East Midlands, and Scotland. On the other hand, the writer is unaware of this building type in the East Anglian counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, where he lived for thirteen years. The writer is unfamiliar with much of Scotland and would welcome information about brick-built community buildings in Scotland.
41. P. Wilkinson, *Restoration: the Story Continues ...,* Swindon: English Heritage, 2004, pp.121 and 162-169; J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002, p.419.
42. P. Wilkinson, *Restoration Village,* Swindon: English Heritage, 2006, pp.136-141; R. Haslam, J. Orbach, and A. Voelcker, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, pp.202-203.
43. Haslam *et al.,* 2009, pp.129-121. The brickworks had a single Hoffmann kiln.
44. Haslam *et al.,* 2009, p.141 and pl.97. There are three large circular kilns.
45. Wilkinson, 2004, photographs on pp.162 and 163.
46. For Sir John Pritchard Jones see *Who Was Who 1916-1928,* London: A. and C. Black, 4th edn, 1967, p.858. Neither Sir John nor Mr Dickens seem to have entries in the print edition of *ODNB.*
47. Brief notice of the cottages, Haslam *et al.,* 2009, p.203.
48. Newman, 2002, p.130 (Blina), p.560 (Tredegar), pp.127-8 with pl.117 (Blaenavon).
49. Newman, 2002, p.225 (Ebbw Vale), p.419 (Celynen Collieries at Newbridge), p.229 (Fleur-de-Lys), p.514 (Risca), pp.322-3 (Llanhilleth).
50. J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan,* London: Penguin Books, 1995, pp.454 and 453 (Mountain Ash), p.155 (Blaengarew), p.639 and pl.3 (Treorchy), p.453 (Nixon's Colliery at Mountain Ash), p.131 (Abercynon), p.518 (Ponterdulas), p.373 (Llanbradach).
51. Details of building materials are from Newman, 2002, and Newman, 1995; see nn.46-48 for specific references to individual buildings.
52. With the American Civil War, the blockade of the South by ships of the North, cotton ceased to cross the Atlantic to the ports of Liverpool and Preston, hence the Cotton Famine. Despite the harsh effects on the workers of the mill towns, Lancashire backed the North.
53. C. Hartwell and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire: North,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, p.522 (Preston), p.91 (Bacup), pp.180-1 with pl.79 (Burnley), and p.324 (Haslingden).
54. Hartwell and Pevsner, 2009, pp.75-76.
55. In the 1880s, George Baines moved to London, where he went on to develop a successful practice specialising in nonconformist chapels. He was later joined in practice by his sons.

56. F.P. Donovan Jr., edited by H. Roger Grant, *Iowa Railroads,* Iowa City IA: University of Iowa Press, 200, pp.181-183, 192, and 204.
57. Noel, 1997/2002, p.232 for the Bouton House and a comment that Jay Bouton 'spearheaded the campaign to erect the Opera House', a point not made in the description of the Opera House, *ibid.,* p.224.
58. The writer having travelled by long-distance bus from Minneapolis to Owatonna was disconcerted to hear a freight train plying the tracks on the edge of the downtown. The comments in the preceding sentence on the railroad stations in Grinnell and Iowa City are based on personal observation in 2010.
59. L. Millett, *The Curve of the Arch: The Story of Louis Sullivan's Owatonna Bank,* St Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985. Additionally, L.M. Wiengarden, *Louis H. Sullivan: The Banks,* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1987, pp.48-61; Frei, 1992, pp.130-133; Nickel and Suskind, 2010, pp.423.
60. Gebhard and Mansheim, 1993, p.237 with illustration (Grinnell), and p.186 with small illustration (Cedar Rapids). B. Menner, *Louis Sullivan's Merchants National Bank [Grinnell],* San Francisco and Warwick: Pomegranate, 2007, is a more detailed study. See also Wiengarden, 1987, pp.84-97; Frei, 1992, pp.146-151; and Nickel and Suskind, 2010, p.430.
61. J.R. Tebben, *The Old Home: Louis Sullivan's Newark Bank,* Granville, OH: The McDonalds & Woodward Publishing Company, 2014, see also J. Ware, *Building Ohio: A Traveler's Guide to Ohio's Rural Architecture,* Wilmington, OH: Orange Frazer Press, 2002, pp.50-51; see also Wiengarden, 1987, pp.98-109; Frei, 1992, pp.156-157; Nickel and Suskind, 2010, p.431.
62. Weingarden, 1987, pp.110-123; Frei, 1992, pp.156-157; Ware, 2002, pp.260-262; Nickel and Suskind, 2010, pp.431-432. Attempts to visit Sidney in both May and September 2011 were frustrated by the lack of public transport going into the town; infuriatingly, the Greyhound bus from Detroit MI and Toledo OH to Cincinnatti OH and beyond uses Interstate 75 which has an intersection for the town but Sidney is not a stop on the route.
63. S. Caldwell, *Farmers & Merchants Union Bank, Columbus, Wisconsin,* Columbus, WI: Farmers & Merchants Union Bank, n.d.; A. Schmidt *et al.,* eds, *Columbus History and Architecture Tours,* Columbus WI: Columbus ... Tours, 2009 edn, site 54 and cover. See also Wiengarden, 1987, pp.124-141. Frei, 1992, pp.158-161; and Nickel and Suskind, 2010, pp.432-433.
64. Personal observation, 2011. I wish to record my thanks to the staff of the Farmers and Merchants Union Bank who facilitated my visit in September 2010.
65. L.M. Wiengarden, *Louis H. Sullivan: The Banks,* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1987, is a general survey. Most books on Louis Sullivan devote space to consideration of the banks. Useful discussions are W. de Wit, 'The Banks and the Image of Progressive Banking' in W. de Wit, ed., *Louis Sullivan: The Function of Ornament,* New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1986, pp.pp.158-197, and Ch.4, 'Why Sullivan's Houses are as Important as His Banks, *c.*1910', in D. van Zanten, *Sullivan's City: The Meaning of Ornament for Louis Sullivan,* New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2000, pp.93-131, esp.113-119, 124-131. For studies of individual banks see the literature cited in notes 57-61. For the tructure of the American banking industry see C.W. Calomaris and S.H. Haber, *Fragile by Design: The Political Origins of Banking Crises and Scarce Credit,* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014, pbk 2015, *passim.*
66. H.A. Brooks, *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Mid West Contemporaries,* Toronto and Buffalo NY: University of Toronto Press, 1972, pp.134-140, 200-205, 227, 230-234, 300-302, 309-313; D. Gebhard ed. P. Gebhard, *Purcell & Elmslie: Prairie Progressive Architects,* Salt Lake City UT: Gibbs, Smith, 2006, pp.118-127.
67. K.A. Breisch, *Henry Hobson Richardson and the Small Public Library in America: A Study in Typology,* Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997.
68. A. Satterthwaite, *Going Shopping: Consumer Choices and Community Consequences,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.
69. K.A. Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping,* New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2003.
70. Song from the film, *Calamity Jane* by Sam Fain and Paul Francis Webster, 1953; it was sung by Calamity Jane, played by Doris Day in the film. There is also a stage version, which is suitable to be performed as a school play, as at Oriel High School, Gorleston-on-Sea, in March 1993. Deadwood is an actual place in the Black Hills of South Dakota.
71. Amtrak, *Timetable,* since at least 2007.
72. Putnam, 2000, *passim*; see n.8 *supra.* For a discussion of 'The Loss of Community in Metropolitan America' see K.T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States,* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, pbk 1987, pp.246-271.
73. This has been the writer's experience in both Bradwell, Norfolk, in the 1980s fast becoming a dormitory village, and Shipston-on-Stour, a small town, since 1997; it is in contrast to his experience in Luton in the mid and late 1970s. I noticed the considerable variety of local sporting and cultural organisations and groups on my visits to both Grinnell, Iowa, and Columbus, Wisconsin, both towns with under 5,000 inhabitants.
74. Even at 2019 exchange rates of around $1.25 to £1, the UK spends half as much again per head on the arts as does the USA. On this calculation, the USA allows a mere 37 pence to the UK's paltry 52 pence. At the 2012 exchange rate of $1.50 to £1, the USA spent a mere 31 pence per person. As this writer has commented: four decades ago, in Italy a town with the population and the personal and corporate wealth of Luton, Bedfordshire, (then about 150,000) would have had an Opera House, whereas Luton at that date the town did not even boast a hall for orchestral or pop concerts; its cinemas were either closed, two finding new uses, or were in the process of being run down before eventual closure and standing empty. *Cf.* D.H. Kennett, *Portrait of Bedfordshire,* London: Robert Hale, 1978, p.192. Cultural differences between and

within Europe's major countries are considerable, not least in the economic provision made for public libraries and high culture, or even for popular culture.

75. *The Guide,* supplement to *The Guardian,* 17 and 24 February 2018.

76. In 1924, Prokofiev's ballet score became the third movement of his Quintet in G minor Opus 39 for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, and double bass. I. Bent, sleeve notes to recording by the Melos Ensemble of London, 1964, Editions de l'Oiseau Lyre, SOL267.

77. Gerber and Kessler, 2008, pp.130 and 131.

78. When the writer saw the building, in May 2010, one of the terracotta heads had been removed revealing the rainwater head beneath; each terracotta head and the brick pilaster beneath neatly hides a drainpipe taking rainwater from the low-pitched roof of the building. The roof is hidden behind a parapet. A similar use of unglazed terracotta beasts occurs on Sullivan's bank at Cedar Rapids IA, personal observation, May 2010.

79. C.H. Toft with L. Jesse, *St Louis: Landmarks & Historic Districts,* St Louis MO: Landmarks Association of St Louis Inc., 2002, pp.87 and 94; see also F. Peters and G. McCoe, *A Guide to the Architecture of St Louis,* Columbia MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989, p.67, site M12, and p.16 for colour plate of the interior.

80. Gebhard and Mansheim, 1993, p.184.

81. Toft with Jesse, 2002, pp.83-84; Peters and McCoe, 1989, pp.65 and 16 with colour photograph of the interior; for excellent photographs of the exterior of the theatre and its setting see E. McNulty, *St Louis Then and Now,* San Diego CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2000, pp.124-127.

82. E.J. Hill and J. Gallagher, *AIA Detroit, The American Institute of Architects Guide to Detroit Architecture,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003, p.62.

83. This paper has twice been held over; it was originally submitted for *BBS Information,* **140,** November 2018 [Ed.].

BRICK AT RISK: RICHMOND HOUSE, 76 WHITEHALL, LONDON

Sir William Whitfield (1920-2019) is best-known to members of the British Brick Society as the architect of the Chapter House at St Albans Abbey, the cathedral for the Diocese of St Albans which covers the now populous counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. The Chapter House was built in 1981 and was being extended when the society held its Annual General Meeting in St Albans in 2018. Members of the society had previously seen this building at the Spring Meeting in April 1996. In load-bearing red brick, the building combines a reflection of the Roman brick in the abbey church with a modern approach to the needs of a cathedral chapter, who prior to its construction had to meet in a side chapel in full view of the tourists.

But he designed much else using brick, not least Richmond House, 76 Whitehall, London. Richmond House was built in 1987 to house the Department of Health, who moved out in 2017. Awkwardly placed between the former New Scotland Yard, now the offices for members of parliament, and the Regency Richmond Terrace facing the south side of Whitehall and directly overlooking the Cenotaph. Set back from the road in a gap between two parts of Richmond Terrace, Whitfield's answer to the building's neighbours was to produce a modern building with echoes of the past. Particularly striking are the oriel windows above the main entrance, a hint of the Tudor palace which once stood on the site. The double-height oriels are separated by towers, concrete on the ground floor, courses of brick, irregular in number, alternating with layers of artificial stone, so as to reflect the proximity of Norman Shaw's New Scotland Yard. The entrance façade is in yellow brick and stone; stair towers to the rear are in red brick and stone.

Now a committee of the present members of parliament dealing with the need to vacate the Palace of Westminster for urgent repairs and restoration of the 1830s building have proposed that Richmond House be demolished, with the exception of its façade to Whitehall, in order to provide a temporary building in which the House of Commons could meet for the several years during which of the repairs and restoration of the Palace of Westminster will be taking place.

D.H. KENNETT

Book Notice:
Coronae of Towers, Locus of Power

Richard Oram, ed., *'Urbs Turrita' Urban Towers in Medieval and Renaissance Europe,*
[being *Tower Studies,* **3**]
Donington, Lincolnshire: Shaun Tyas, 2019,
xx + 188 pages, 72 illustrations,
ISBN 978-1-907730-66-1; price, hardback, £45-00

As the final sentences of a thoughtful 'Introduction' (pages vi-xx), which takes as its starting point the multi-towered image of Troy presented by the Anglo-Norman poet, Benoit de Sainte-Maure, Richard Oran writes:

> Indeed, a millennium after its rediscovery by European rulers as a vehicle for their egos, the tower is a continuing expression of power, symbolising the confidence and ambition of their builders and triggering emotions that range from admiration to envy to outright hostility towards the systems which the structures represent and the new elites who inhabit them. From London's Canary Wharf or the Shard to La Defense in Paris, coronae of towers still signify the locus of power in the twenty-first century (page xix).

This volume arising from the third collaborative research project of *Turris,* the European Towers Studies Association is devoted to secular medieval urban towers although as objects of civic pride church towers of stone in Dundee, Scotland, and of brick with stone dressings, buttresses, and quoins at Amersfoort, Netherlands, are illustrated (page 148).

Three papers examine towers in the towns of modern Poland. From Wroclaw, Małgorzata Chorowska offers an interpretation of the demolished, brick-built eighteen-sided structure in Piast Castle, the foundations of the outer wall and of the central pillar of which have been excavated, as a four-storeyed dwelling, probably constructed in the final quarter of the twelfth century (pages 1-15), with an analogy to the brick-built, circular domestic tower at Altenburg Castle. Dominik Nowakowski examines 'The Towers of Urban Castles in Lower Silesia' (pages 80-96), illustrating his paper with maps, town plans, and a page of early-eighteenth-century drawings by F.B. Warner now in the Library of the University of Wroclaw. Three authors — Piotr Lesak, Tomasz Olszacki, and Tomasz Ratajczak — write about 'Residential Towers in Urban and Suburban Royal and Magnates Residence in the Kingdom of Poland between 1300 and 1500' (pages 108-119). Their final illustration is of the brick-built Halszka's Tower in Szamotuly (page 119), a rectangular, four-storeyed tower of brick with diagonal brick buttresses at the corners.

David Merta and Marek Peška review 'Towers and Houses with Towers in Medieval Brno' in Slovakia (pages 72-79). The city is much rebuilt: only about twenty houses out of 572 houses within the town walls have not been rebuilt in the last hundred years. Much of the authors' evidence is taken from the bird's-eye view of 'The Siege of Brno by the Swedish Army in 1645' made by Hieronymus Benno Beyer and Hanns Jörg Zeisser and the same illustrators' 'The Siege of Brno by the Swedish Army in 1645: view from the east' of 1650 (pages 77 and 78). The authors conclude that the towers represent the 'self-confident expression of the wealthiest burghers, whose descent as well as family and trade connections often reached beyond the frontiers of the Moravian margravate.

San Gimignano, Italy, is justly famous as 'the City with Beautiful Towers', to quote the epithet of the title of Barbara Bojdo paper (pages 65-71). The city's saint, St Germinianus, is shown in a fragment of a polyptych with a model of the city (page 66). As Bojdo remarks, 'In Tuscany ... the skyline of the cities there was crowded with towers, San Gimignano was probably the most significant example of that charteristic' (page 67). Of the 72 towers extant in the thirteenth century, only 14 have survived. Outer walls are wholly of limestone but some towers have an inner skin of brick as with the Torre Grossa. In another Italian city, Prato, the Palazzo Pretorio was initially a five-storey brick tower; later it was incorporated in a high, but still five-storeyed tower where the new work was stone (pages xvi-xvii).

Taco Hermans, who contributed to both the earlier collaborative research projects (see R. Oram, ed., *'A House that Thieves Might Knock At'*, Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2015), offers an intriguing paper on 'Towers in Medieval Cities and Towns in the Netherlands' (pages 97-107). The examples include no fewer than four towers from 's-Hertogenbosch, two of which are outside the city wall; three each from both Haarlem and Utrecht; two from Maastricht; and single ones from Alkmaar, Appingedam, Beverwijk, Groningen, and Sneek. The buildings date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The thirteenth-century ones are from the earliest period of brick building in towns in the Netherlands. Perhaps the first brick house in the Netherlands was the 'Gravensteen' (the count's stone) in Leiden of before 1200 (page 104), a square brick tower whose sides are 7 metres (23 feet) in length. Other 'Gravensteen' are those in Haarlem and Delft (a plan of the latter is on page 106).

The buildings in Hermans' paper have resonance in the brick tower shown on the picture map of Great Yarmouth made in 1587 or 1588. This reviewer thinks that it may be Sir John Fastolf's house in the port town, although it is near the town wall rather than by the haven on the river Yare. The urban Dutch towers are two- and three-storeyed rather than the three and four storeys of their rural counterparts, which in part are analogous to the brick solar towers of Lincolnshire and elsewhere, many of the latter having been built by men with Lincolnshire connections.

In the introduction, Richard Oram draws attention to the towers of the surviving manses of the canons of Utrecht Cathedral (pages xviii-xix). These are analogous to the (now demolished) brick-built residences of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century canons of Lichfield Cathedral: see Michael Kingman, 'Pre-Reformation Brick Building in Staffordshire', *British Brick Society Information,* **120,** May 2012, pages 5-14.

Other papers in *'Urbs Turrita'* look at stone-built structures. Radosław Palonka examines 'Towers as an Architectural Element of Pueblo Culture in the Mesa Verde Region, Utah-Colorado, in the 12th-13th Century A.D.', (pages 16-35). Ben Murtagh's 'The Defensive Towers of the Medieval City of Waterford, Ireland' (pages 36-64) has superb illustrations showing how both the French Tower and Reginald's Tower were raised but the original crenellations can still be discerned (pages 42 and 61). Other town walls with multiple towers, such as Great Yarmouth, would benefit from similar detailed analysis. As would domestic brick towers: for example, the corner towers to the gatehouse of Dent-de-Lion, Carlinge, outside Margate, Kent, whose putative patron, Sir John Dandelyon, was buried in Margate parish church in 1435. On-going research on the building accounts of Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire, suggests particular surviving periods of financial records can be related to specific floors and specific areas of the walls and other features of these rooms in the donjon, on which paper is in preparation for a future issue of *British Brick Society Information.*

As befits a research group whose editor is a professor at the University of Stirling, the final two papers in the volume examine Scottish towers. Penelope Dransart looks at 'A Three-faced Sentinel: a Proclamation of the Holy Trinity from an Urban Tower in Elgin, Scotland' (pages 120-145) and Richard Oram offers 'Urban Towers in Sixteenth-Century Scotland' (pages 146-167). The volume closes with an extensive 'Bibliography' (pages 168-180) and a comprehensive index (pages 181-188).

For those interested in medieval brick buildings in *Mitteleuropa,* and particularly those in Poland, this is a valuable volume; for those with the necessary linguistic skills in the Slavic languages the footnotes and the bibliography provide an opening into wider research on brick in east central Europe while Taco Hermans offers interesting parallels with brick buildings in medieval England.

DAVID H. KENNETT

BRICK IN PRINT

In August 2019, the Editor of *British Brick Society Information* became aware of items of interest to members of the society. 'Brick in Print' has been a regular feature of *BBS Information* for several years with surveys usually appearing twice a year. Members who are involved in publication or who come across books and articles of interest are invited to submit notice of them to the editor of *British Brick Society Information.* Websites and television programmes may also be included. Unsigned entries in this section are by the editor.

D.H. KENNETT

Roger Bowdler, 'At Sixes and Sevens: Skinners' Hall, Dowgate Hill, London EC4',
Country Life, 7 August 2019, pages 38-43.

The title, 'At Sixes and Sevens' refers a dispute in 1483 and 1484 regarding the order of precedence in the Lord Mayor's Procession on the Thames of both the Skinners' Company and the Merchant Taylors' Company. Adjudication of the tensions resulted in the two companies alternating their standing in the pecking order (p.40). The two livery companies now enjoy mutual respect and annual dinners in each other's halls.

The London Livery Companies began as trade guilds in medieval London: the Skinners trading in Baltic furs and concerned with their skinning and sale. On Dowgate Hill, opposite the great bulk of the walls of Cannon Street Station, the courtyard with the hall on the west side is entered though an alley at the outer left-hand bay of a stone-fronted, five-bay range with a façade of 1778-79 by William Jupp (1734-1788) with the passageway matched by a door at the outer right-hand bay. The rear walls of this range and an adjacent house are red brick. The courtyard has a cloister (1902-16: W. Campbell-Jones) leading to the brick front of the hall. This is red brick in Flemish Bond, originally completely with blue brick headers: the illustration on pages 38-39 bring out the contrast, and also demonstrates the infilling of the windows to the hall in 1847-50 by George Moore (*c.*1777-1859). As the photograph shows, war damage in 1940 was repaired but rather hurriedly and not to the same standard as the rebuilding of the hall following the Great Fire in 1666. John Oliver was the surveyor responsible, beginning in 1668 and completing the work within about two years.

The article considers twentieth-century artistic work: Frank Brangwyn's scenes from the company's history of 1902-09 and Robert Anning Bell's three surviving reliefs in painted gesso: Charity, Hospitality, and Education. Commerce was a victim of a German bomb.

An architectural account of Skinners' Hall is given S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 1: The City of London,* London: Penguin Books, 1997, pages 403-405, with plan, page 404.

Jonathan Meades, 'The General's Erections',
The Guardian, G2, 26 August 2019, pages 10-11;
Franco's Building with Jonathan Meades,
BBC4, 27 August 2019

The newspaper article promised much; the television programme delivered little. The article anticipated much of the commentary, almost word-for-word, and there was far too an obtrusive a presence of the presenter. The first twenty minutes were devoted to the religious environment of Francisco Franco's childhood and his adolescence, his time in the military academy in the Alcázar at Toledo (1537 *ff:* Alonso de Covarrubias). Franco made an accommodation with the twin demands of military discipline and strict obedience to the dictates of the church. Meades' attitude to both was not merely hostile, it was downright rude: one can criticise religious fervour without being objectionable.

In the programme, the trendy graphics could have been replaced by a longer examination of the architecture of Spain between 1925 and the start of the Civil War in 1936. Spain, then, was an integral part of the community of democratic nations and had a flourishing local version of Art Deco. But few architectural critics have much appreciation of the style and its buildings, which is to everyone's disadvantage.

The fortunes of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostella and the needs of the serious student of building history on the one hand — represented by Meades by the paradors, luxury hotels mostly in historic buildings, and by Sacheverell Sitwell's *Spain* — were contrasted with the highly successful efforts of Pedro Zaragoza to entice worshippers of a sun-drenched fortnight to Benidorm, which in the late 1950s a tiny fishing village where at 28 he became mayor; it is now one of Spain's most highly commercialised holiday destinations with high-rise structures of limited, if any, architectural merit.

When buildings were discussed, the presenter got in the way. The adventurous, brick, Dominican church dedicated to St Peter the Martyr (Inglesia de San Pedro Mártir), Madrid (1960: Miguel Fisac) made a fleeting appearance but was not verbally identified and the caption on the screen was of limited duration. The building bears comparison with the work of Eladio Dieste in the church at Atlantida, Uraguay, of 1957-61. The Madrid church was not in the newspaper article. Its plan anticipated changes made to the performance of the liturgy in Vatican II.

In contrast Fisac's 'Pagoda', a multi-storey office block in concrete where each floor is turned though 45 degrees, built in 1960, did not feature in the programme while it had a large photograph and some consideration in the article. Sadly, the building was demolished in 1999.

There was a phase of Franco's building programmes which tried to imitate the past. The ministry of the most modern technology, the former Air Ministry (1941-57: L. Gutierrez Soto), was housed in an almost exact copy of El Escorial, Philip II's palace-monastery outside Madrid (1563-82: Juan Bautista de Toledo and Juan de Herrera). But with one significant difference: the former Air Ministry is a brick building, albeit one with columns, pilasters and other features in stone.

The programme left the feeling that Franco was not a worthy successor to Philip II. The latter gave the sailors who returned penniless from the Armada in 1588-90 pensions, which if not exactly generous were sufficient for a man and his family with a smallholding to more than make ends meet. Franco enslaved his opponents and working them to an early grave in digging out his neo-Classical Monument to the Fallen; he displaced peasants through his hydrographical schemes transporting water from the Asturias and the Basque Country to Murcia. As Meades emphasised H.G. Wells' riposte to Winston Churchill's assessment of Franco as 'a gallant Christian gentleman' that the dictator was 'a murderous Christian gentleman' is justified; the frequent insertion of the skeletons of the disappeared into an architectural assessment should limit the personal to a single word: 'murderer'.

The great cellist, Pablo Casals, leaving his beloved Catalunya for exile in 1938, was right.

Dragons just keep on coming

To begin with, the first terracotta dragon finials to be found in Ireland. No less than three are perched on the gables of the lodge to St Patrick's Cemetery, Waterford Road, Clonmel, South Tipperary. The lodge probably dates from the second half of the nineteenth century. [details and photos at *www.buildingsofIreland.te/niah/search.jsp?type=TS&regno=22115005&print=true*]

There is a terracotta dragon on the roof of 31 Whitehill Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, dating from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. A black and white photo of it appears in Priscilla Douglas and Pauline Humphries, *Discovering Hitchin*, Baldock: Campion Publishing Services for Egan Publishers Ltd, 1995, page 145. Also illustrated on page 145 is a page from the 1910 catalogue of the well-known firm of Broad & Co Ltd of London, illustrating a range of red terracotta ridge tile finials, including a dragon.

According to Steven Denford and David Hayes (eds), *Streets of Old Holborn*, London: Camden History Society, rev ed 2010, p.121, the upper floors of 76 Chancery Lane of 1876 are neo-Jacobean in style, with a balcony in the gable arch, 'which terminates in dragons that seem to hang on the building for dear life'.

In another Camden History Publication, *The Streets of Belsize*, edited by Christopher Wade, 1991, pages 47-49, gryphons or dragons can be seen on 4, 7, and 10 Strathray Gardens, built about 1885-6.

Finally, two bits of information on dragons already mentioned in previous editions of *British Brick Society Information*.

In *BBS Information,* **62,** June 1994, page 24, it was reported that a dragon finial had been stolen over Easter 1994 from the gable above a shop in West Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire. The dragon is shown in situ on a black and white photo taken in 1943 in Rachel Brown and Julian Hunt, *Marlow, A Pictorial History*, Chichester: Phillimore & Co Ltd, 1994, unpaginated, illustration 136. As the photo shows the whole row of buildings, the dragon is very small but its wings are clearly spread out.

Tony Lewis, in *BBS Information* **81,** October 2000, page 22, mentions several dragons, as well as a goblin, bear and swan in Maidenhead. The introduction to the entry on Maidenhead in Geoffrey Tyack, Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Berkshire*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010, page 367, suggests that these finials were 'made *c.*1880-1914 by the local builders J. K. Cooper and Sons'.

ALAN COX

Reactions to Colour Printing

A questionnaire asking for 'Reactions to Colour Printing' was issued with *British Brick Society Information,* **142,** August 2019. Thirty-five responses have been received, for which many thanks. The responses split:

27	Approve and would pay £16-00 for three issues a year with colour photographs.
4	Approve and would pay £14-00 for two issues a year with colour photographs.
1	Did not approve and favoured paying £14-00 for three issues a year with black-and-white photographs.
3	Neutral as to future pattern of issues and the use of colour photographs.

Additional comment was received from eleven of those willing to pay £16-00 for three issues with colour photographs; from two of those who favoured two issues with colour photographs at a subscription of £14-00 per annum; from the person favouring black-and-white photographs only; and from two of the three neutral responses. To begin with the last-named:

1. I don't *mind.* But I do *not* want to see the extra money paying for colour photographs of members attending meetings, if such photographs are included at all. Save the colour for pictures of bricks and brick buildings.
2. Colour photographs overall looked better but, of course, there is still a lot of black-and-white content, all of which will vary between issues. Given the cost, perhaps we should be more selective and perhaps have one 'colour' issue with a predominance of colour photographs every so often.

The single adverse reaction to colour photography in print was very firm:

> Much better to save the worlds' resources (and yours). You can find buildings on the internet if you want colour.

Of the four who favoured two issues a year using colour photographs, one gave the opinion that 'the quality is good' while one of the others wrote:

> Detail is easier to pick out in colour but good monochrome pictures are acceptable. Two issues per year would perhaps take pressure off the editor but even £16-00 a year would be good value.

Some of those favouring three issues per year with colour photographs wrote extensively; one was more succinct.

1. I think printing the photographs in colour is a great idea and well worth the additional cost.
2. Seeing a colour photograph of a brick is far better than a black-and-white one with a written description of its colour when trying to understand the appearance of a brick.
3. Colour illustrations bring the picture to life and make it much more interesting, particularly the smaller details.
4. It looks good and is a great improvement. I am happy to pay an increased subscription to cover the cost.
5. It would be good to ensure there is always a colour image on the front cover. I think a heavier weight paper (say 250 gsm) should be used for the cover.
6. The colour is helpful with contrast as well as being a 'happier' medium.
7. £16-00 is still a low subscription rate to receive three issues per year in my opinion.
8 In any case, colour pictures or not, the issues I would like to be is three per annum.

9. I consider that colour printing for illustration of bricks and brickwork is essential to do justice to their colour and texture, and the beauty and craftsmanship of the buildings. It is also important to achieve high definition, which, at the moment, is lacking.
10. Since bricks are coloured it makes sense to show them in their full glory where possible.
11. Vast improvement.

In this discussion, the Editor of *British Brick Society Information* is strictly neutral. The replies from members will be discussed by the committee at its next meeting.

DAVID H. KENNETT
Editor, *British Brick Society Information*
1 October 2019

General Data Protection Regulation and the British Brick Society

The EU General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25 May 2018. It replaced the existing Data Protection Act. In accordance with the regulation, the British Brick Society circulated all members and requested that they return an enclosed form giving written permission for the society to contact them.

In the form it was stated that the British Brick Society will ...

- **Hold** your data securely on a personal computer and only share it within the officers of the society as required.
- **Use** your data to contact you by post, email, or telephone.
- **Only** contact you to
  1. Send you your copy of issues of *British Brick Society Information.*
  2. Inform you of forthcoming meetings, including the Annual General Meeting.
  3. Use written and email communication in furtherance of the legitimate affairs of the British Brick Society.
- **Only** hold your data for as long as you are a member of the British Brick Society
- **Not** share your personal data with any third party whether an individual, a corporate entity, or another learned society.

Most members have returned the form issued with *British Brick Society Information,* **138,** February 2018, although a few have not.

To simplify matters, it is assumed that *all* members of the British Brick Society who have paid the correct subscription wish to continue their membership.

If you would like further clarification on this matter please contact
Dr Anthony Preston
Membership Secretary, British Brick Society
11 Harcourt Way, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 0PF.

Changes of Address

If you move house, please inform the society through its Membership Secretary, Dr Anthony A. Preston at 11 Harcourt Way, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 0PF.

The society has recently been embarrassed by material being returned to various officers from the house of someone who has moved but not told the society of his/her new address.

BRITISH BRICK SOCIETY
MEETINGS in 2020

Saturday 16 May 2020
Annual General Meeting
Bridport, Dorset
Meeting in the Committee Room, Bridport Town Hall, Bucky-Doo Square, Bridport Town Hall; rope factory; seaside buildings at West Bay
Contact Mick Oliver, *micksheila67@hotmail.com*

Planning for possible visits in 2020 is in progress and dates will be announced in the next mailing: it is hoped to arrange a visit to at least one and possibly two of Alcester, Banbury, and the industrial area of Worcester, and to include a visit to a brickworks in the 2020 programme. Visits to Tewkesbury and Cardiff Bay are being planned for future years.

At the 2019 Annual General Meeting in Ripon it was agreed to hold the 2021 Annual General Meeting in Lincoln, on a Saturday in May 2021.

All meetings are subject to attendance at the participant's own risk. Whilst every effort is made to hold announced meetings, the British Brick Society is not responsible for unavoidable cancellation or change.

Full details of future meetings will be in the subsequent BBS Mailings

The British Brick Society is always looking for new ideas for future meetings.
Suggestions of brickworks to visit are particularly welcome.
Offers to organize a meeting are equally welcome.
Suggestions please to Michael Chapman, Michael Oliver or David Kennett.

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