



## What I Am Planning To Do During My Summer Vacation

by Bob Scott

Those of you who have heard me speak about cathedral building over the years have no doubt also heard me mention my intention to someday write a book about the topic. Well, if all goes according to plan, beginning on June 1 and going until September 2, the pen will hit the paper. This will happen because I have been granted a three-month leave from my work at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences to permit me to get started on writing a book-length manuscript describing what I have learned about cathedral building during the Middle Ages. Julia and I will be going to our adopted home in Salisbury in an effort to seal off the distractions of the outside world and begin to write. (In aid of this objective, I have been telling some who ask that we have rented a one-room cabin on the banks of a mosquito-infested swamp in rural Mississippi and that they are more than welcome to visit us during our stay).

I thought I would take advantage of Dinah's invitation to contribute to this newsletter to say a few words about what sort of a book I have in mind, both for purposes of informing you but also because, as usual, I need your help.

Ever since I began lecturing on this subject five years ago, I have been struggling with the question of how I should try to explain to people what it is I have been learning. I have provisionally hit on an idea that feels right to me now, and I would very much welcome your thoughts, comments and reactions to it. The basic notion is to write a book that tells the story of how and why I became interested in gothic cathedral building in the first place, the wide range of aspects of medieval life this interest has caused me to study, and some of things I have learned about this topic along the way.

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## TRIVIUM PURSUIT

Test your knowledge of things Medieval. (Answers on page 6 . . . no peeking!)

1. Which one of the following cathedrals did not experience a fall of one of its towers? Winchester; Worcester; Ely; Exeter.
2. What was the name of Charlemagne's father? Pepin the Short; Charles Martel; Charles the Bald; Carloman.
3. Who was the first of the troubadour poets? Jaufré Rudel; William IX of Aquitaine; Bernart de Ventadorn; Arnaut Daniel.
4. Who was the first archbishop of Canterbury? Lanfranc; Anselm; Sudbury; Augustine.
5. The Peasant's Revolt of 1381 occurred under which English king? Edward II; Edward III; Richard II; Henry IV.

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### Also Enclosed

Membership Roster  
Questionnaire

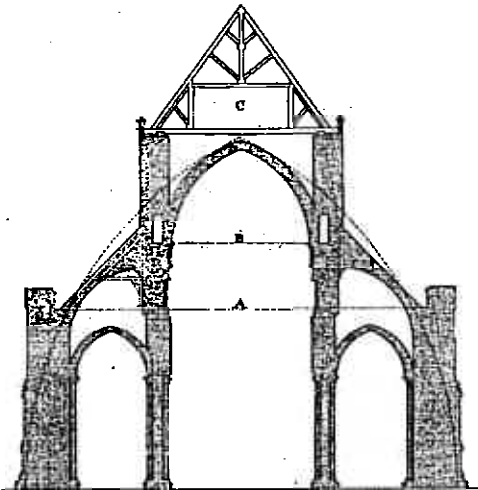


## BOOK CORNER

*Observations of Salisbury Cathedral*, by Francis Price; a replica of the 1753 edition; 78 pp; Salisbury & Stonehenge Edition Facsimiles, Andover, 1997. ISBN 1 902153 00 6. £24.95.

This book is for seriously addicted students of Gothic cathedral building and maintenance, especially those who lust after original sources untainted by modern editors and scholars. Francis Price was Clerk of Works to Salisbury Cathedral starting in 1738, and this book, in its 1753 original edition, was not only the first book about Salisbury Cathedral, but the first serious study of the practicalities of Gothic building. The original full title is: *A SERIES Of particular and useful OBSERVATIONS Made with great Diligence and Care, upon that ADMIRABLE STRUCTURE, The Cathedral-Church of Salisbury*. The observations include a description of 18th century Old Sarum along with an excellent history of the translation of the cathedral from its old site to the current one. There is more detail here than in accounts to be found in most modern books. For example, he includes the names of all the canons who were present at the first divine service in the "fabrick of the new church of Sarum" on St. Michael's Day in 1225.

Before starting his own analysis of the cathedral building, Francis Price quotes several pages from the only known previous written survey, that of Sir Christopher Wren, in 1668. Because only the first line is widely known—"The whole pile is large and magnificent, and may be justly accounted one of the best patterns of architecture in the age wherein it was built"—it's a treat to read more of Wren's comments.



The last fifty pages are the heart of this book. The Clerk of Works guides us through his Gothic church, illustrating his points with fourteen plates that range from a full perspective view to detailed cross-sections. He talks about the materials, specifies past and present structural problems, and theorizes with convincing authority on the causes of some flaws in the structure and the reasoning of the original builders. For example, he gives us a scenario for the building of the tower with its resulting deformations and threats to the whole building, then tells us what the master mason did to correct things—build in lots of new flying buttresses and change the design of the tower wall for the upper half, making it lighter.

This new facsimile edition was photographically reproduced from a first edition on heavy, acid-free paper that mimics the feel of 18th century handmade sheets. The

outer case under the dust jacket is printed from a scan of the original binding. It is available in all the bookshops in Salisbury, but I haven't seen it on this side of the Atlantic, even at *amazon.com*. If you're not going to England, you can order by phone (011-44-1980-610918) and pay by credit card. Incidentally, the same publisher has just come out with another replica book, *Medieval Stonehenge* by William Stukeley, from 1740, which includes 34 engravings with 6 large fold-outs. Also £24.95.

Bob Nyden



## More About Books

**Books Needed:** Looking for a special book to assist with your research or for reading enjoyment? Let us know the title or topic; maybe someone in the group will have it!

**Want to Swap?** Let us know what books you'd like to swap, and hopefully other members will have ones that you'd like to receive.

**Sarum Seminar Library?** One of our members has suggested compiling a list of medieval books and reference materials owned by the group. This would be a daunting but resourceful undertaking which would create a valuable pool from which members could draw. If you are interested in coordinating such a project, or have comments, please contact Dinah.

**Turtle Island Booksellers:** Do you know about this resource for texts on medieval studies? Many are hard to find, and offerings cover all disciplines and many languages. They publish a catalog periodically (#32 had 812 entries!) and assist with book searches. Phone (510) 540-5422; Fax (510) 540-5461. But at least one trip to the store at 2041 Center Street, Berkeley, is well worth the drive!

### HELP WANTED

Each edition, we need contributions for articles and regular features. Please respond by completing the enclosed questionnaire or informing Dinah Hazell. We need submissions for:

- Feature Articles
- Book Reviews
- Community Calendar Events
- Medieval Trivial Pursuit Questions
- Works in Progress
- Books Needed/Books to Swap
- Original Artwork
- Other Ideas?

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SARUM SEMINAR WEBSITE

The Sarum Seminar has a set of web pages hosted by HP Laboratories, where their maintainer, John Wilkes, works. The pages include:

- a general overview of our activities, including upcoming meetings;
- some course information from Bob Scott's Stanford Continuing Studies Courses, including his bibliography;
- records of some of the presentations we have listened to;
- instructions on subscribing to our email list (sarum@cello.hpl.hp.com).
- plus a few miscellaneous items such as Dick Jones' recipe for medieval cookies, and a record of interesting URLs that people have found.

You can find the web pages at: [http://www.hpl.hp.com/personal/John\\_Wilkes/Sarum](http://www.hpl.hp.com/personal/John_Wilkes/Sarum)

You can reach John at: [wilkes@hpl.hp.com](mailto:wilkes@hpl.hp.com) or (650) 857-3568. He always welcomes additions to the pages, and is delighted to help people add stuff. Please send him (or [sarum@cello.hpl.hp.com](mailto:sarum@cello.hpl.hp.com)) notes from relevant items, papers/presentation summaries, pointers to interesting things, bug reports, lists of interesting upcoming events, and anything else that you think might be of interest to the Sarum members.

## Bob Scott's Summer

(continued from Page 1)

My quest is to communicate to readers what I have been able to learn about the mobilization during the medieval period of popular religious sentiment, ecclesiastical power, material and human resources, technical wherewithal, organizational capability and the like, that were required to undertake and complete buildings of such awesomeness, grandeur, complexity, and expense as these. In this way I hope to communicate to the reader something of the awe, excitement and fascination the topic holds for me and others in a way that will open it up to readers for their continuing study and exploration.

Even this brief description makes it obvious what kind of a book this is not meant to be. It is not a book written for specialists who are already doing the sort of historical, archeological and architectural analyses of the topic on which my own work depends. What I have to say on the topic is shamelessly parasitic off of the wonderful works of scholarship these specialists have produced. Insofar as I claim to be making a contribution, it takes two forms: presenting a broader overview of the great medieval cathedral building movement than most readers are accustomed to reading in standard works of scholarship; and second, insofar as I am able, making some of the more esoteric ideas contained in these scholarly works accessible to an intelligent but not technically trained audience of readers.

Another thing it is not is a book with a single thesis which will unlock the great mystery of cathedral building. I have long since given up on the idea that there is a single theme, or thesis, or hypothesis, or factor or set of factors that somehow hold the key to understanding the questions that have animated my study. No single factor permits us to understand how and why

people during the medieval period managed to build these magnificent structures. If I have learned nothing else from my efforts, it is that the gothic cathedrals that were built by the women and men who lived during the middle ages are complicated products and expressions of the societies of which they were a part. There are few facets of medieval life about which I have ever read that do not in some way illuminate the topic of cathedral building. For this reason it strikes me as silly to make the claim that cathedrals can be understood in their entirety by recourse to the politics, or the economics, or the religious beliefs, or the church hierarchy, or the craftsmanship, or whatever, of people or institutions that then existed. Cathedrals are much too complicated to be subsumed under one or even a number of these headings. What I aim to show is how just about any facet of medieval life one studies is in some interesting way reflected in the collective project of cathedral building.

What kind of a book, then, will I try to write? Basically, I have mapped out a series of chapters, each one written to show how a separate facet of medieval life is implicated in or connected with cathedral building projects. The topics I will cover don't exhaust the topic by any means but merely provide a good beginning that should enable the educated novice to become launched.

What are these topics? As I envision it now, the book will begin where all books begin, with the obligatory introductory chapter. This I will write last and only after I have drafted all of the other chapters. I will represent its purpose as being that of providing my readers with an overview of what I intend to tell them. However, since I won't know this until after I have done it, I plan to end with the beginning, if you see what I mean. What I now imagine will be Chapter One outlines the scope of the great medieval cathedral building movement spanning the period 1134-1550. Its purpose is to explain to

the reader what it is I am trying to understand. Chapter Two will explain what I have learned about what a gothic cathedral is meant to be, what about its style makes it gothic, and what theological and philosophical precepts are thought responsible for producing it. Chapter Three I envision as a prelude to everything else that follows. It presents a synthetic, integrated overview of conditions of existence of *homo medievalis* and key aspects of the world view in which this existence was experienced that have a central bearing on why cathedral-type buildings were required and the functions they were designed to fulfill. Here I will develop ideas about the relationship between this world and the hereafter, the role of the dead in the world of the living, basic notions about appeals to divine spirits, including ideas about magic and the concepts of curative and magical powers that were invested in sacred objects. By now the topic of Chapter Four will be familiar to most of you. It will show how cathedrals became potent cultural symbols which kings, bishops and abbots used as instruments for strengthening their political authority within the states and regions they were endeavoring to control and rule. Chapter Five will also be familiar to many of you. I propose to devote it to explaining the role miracles played in powerfully reinforcing the faithful's acceptance of claims of authority made by the established church, and how such demonstrations in turn eventuated into a steady flow of capital, much of it used

to build cathedrals. Chapter Six explores the topic of cathedrals and collective memory and explores some of the ways in which these great buildings were used to establish dominion over preferred versions of a society's past, present and therefore its future. I have other chapters planned on other topics such as the role of liturgy in legitimating religious authority in the minds of the faithful and what we know about the actual process of how cathedrals were built and the work of accomplishing this organized. I have other ideas, but this should give you a flavor for what I am about.

The book, then, is aimed squarely at the sort of audience I have always found you to be: intelligent, interested, passionate about the subject, energetic but, like me, not fully schooled in the fine details of specialized scholarship. My question of you is whether this is the sort of book you would find interesting to read. Can you think of better ways for me to accomplish what I hope to do? What else should I put in it? What should I leave out?

I hope you will believe me when I say that I really need your help on this. Send your comments to me at CASBS, 75 Alta Road, Stanford, California, 94305 or bobasbs@aol.com

I hope your summer is as terrific as ours is going to be.

### **Upcoming Dates**

Mon., May 18: *Sarum Seminar Meeting.* Bill Mahrt will present "Sacred Time and Sacred Space: the Processions and the Doors in the Sarum Rite."

June 22-July 3: *Salisbury Trip.* Music focus with Bill Mahrt.

July 3-6: *Cotswolds Crawl* with Hugh and Jean Dickinson.

Sat., July 25: *Sarum Seminar Pot Luck.* Hosted by George Tuma and Dinah Hazell.

Watch the mail for details of meetings.

June *Sarum Seminar Meeting?* Since Bob Scott will be on sabbatical this summer and Julia will be away as well, there has been discussion whether or not to meet in June. If you would like to chair a meeting in June, let Julia know.

- ☛ **What shall we call it?** Now that we have a newsletter, temporarily called *Sarum Seminar News*, we need to find a permanent name for it. And a logo would be terrific. Please give your ideas to Dinah.
- ☛ **Upcoming Issues:** Will you be among the summer travelers to Salisbury and/or the Cotswolds? We'd love to have your impressions of the trip for an upcoming issue of the newsletter. Let Dinah know if you'd like to share your adventures with us armchair travelers.

## *Salisbury Reflections*

A note from Jean Converse, on her arrival home to Ann Arbor after the March trip to Salisbury:

The Marble Top Commode, which we have always liked—my father used the central section as a very modestly stocked Liquor Cabinet—has taken on still more charm and fond association. All those whitish squiggles, fanciful curves and careful circles (some of which look like nothing so much as rings left on wood by heartless drinkers that hate furniture, and which I had vaguely considered as mere defects) surely establish it as a piece of Genuine Purbeck.

We had thought to fashion a very modest pillar out of it to elevate our living room arch just a teeny bit higher than that of our neighbors, but the executive committee of the Condo Association rejected the design as in violation of Rule 102.9 against Gaudy Displays. So we have moved the Purbeck Marble Top Commode to the front hall, where its elegant fossils will not be obscured by piles of magazines. Imagine how many times a day the sight of our very own Purbeck reminds us of the delights of the spring field trip, its warm-hearted and sprightly pilgrims and its peerless directors.

Love, Jean

## *ANSWERS*

1. Exeter. 2. Pepin the Short. 3. William IX of Aquitaine. 4. Augustine. 5. Richard II.

### *EDITORS' NOTE*

This is the first issue of our group's newsletter, and suggestions for future editions are welcome and desired—essential, in fact. Tell us how we can create an informative communication that will keep our members connected and entertained. The success of our newsletter depends on your participation and contributions, so please take a moment to complete the enclosed questionnaire and give us your ideas.