

**THE SOUTHWELL MINSTER PULPITUM
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Note: This paper is reproduced from presumably a draft found in Richard Beaumont's box in the Minster Library. We have long wanted to find it, in view of his comments elsewhere of the differences between her work and that of Sergeant Petch, which is recorded elsewhere. We have tried to locate Debbie without success. We know that she married to become Debbie Gent but the trail goes cold in Sussex. Therefore we do not have her permission to reproduce it and the copyright may well lie with the University. But contact with them has been hampered by the Covid lock-downs. So please be aware of the caution necessary in distributing it further.

We think it got Debbie her degree, which would seem well justified. We have left in the references to the photographs she must have submitted, although we do not have them, as they add to the value of the comment. We do not have her section three: patronage, conclusions or bibliography, but the latter are probably largely a summary of her footnotes.

Her Introduction to the thesis:

Since I have known Southwell Minster from my early teens, it was inevitable that I should choose a particular aspect of the building to research for my thesis. I selected the pulpitum as an alternative to the famous Chapter House. This finely carved screen of the Decorated style has long been neglected by architectural historians.

In this paper I refer to the use, development, decoration, and unusual design of the screen in context with other secular, collegiate and monastic pulpits. Having outlined changes made to the screen by early C19th renovations, I then go to use similar architectural sculpture to date the pulpitum and assess its identity of the workshop who may have carved it. The final section entitled 'patronage' highlights the problem of assigning church fittings like pulpits, to an individual patron.

Researching the pulpitum was not an easy task. There are only several items of documentary evidence which can be associated with the pulpitum. The only document that can be related to the building of the pulpitum is the Royal Licence for the free carriage of stone from the Mansfield quarry through the Royal Forest of Sherwood. This is dated 16 October 1337. It is usually believed that this refers to the construction of the pulpitum but as there are other Decorated additions to the Early English Choir. It could quite easily have been for them. Apart from a C15th will naming the 2 altars beneath the pulpitum, the only other references are payment of 1804-9 to a Mr Bernasconi, reputed to have restored the pulpitum. There is also very little valuable published material about the pulpitum. It is mainly referred to in a very general context. It has been mentioned in 'Quire screens in English Churches with special reference to the C12th Quire screen formerly of Ely' by W St John Hope and F Bond's 'Screens and Galleries. Mr A Hamilton Thompson does briefly allude to the use of the pulpitum, other works similar to it and possible origins of the workshop. 'Greater English Church Screens' by A Valance, 'Nottinghamshire' by N Pevsner and late C19th and early C20th century monographs only describe and date the pulpitum.

However the belief that I was treading on uncertain ground and my research would be of value to the Minster was a tremendous challenge

SECTION ONE

1. DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTION

The stone pulpitum at Southwell stands between the Norman piers of the Eastern Arch of the crossing and extends to the clustered shafts of the first bay of the Early English choir.

The stone¹ pulpita at the secular cathedrals of Lincoln, Exeter, York, Wells and the collegiate Church of Ripon are also placed at the West end of the choir. The purpose of erecting a pulpitum in the 'parochial position²' was to segregate the Regular or Secular Canons from the rest of the Church.

Since the Norman East End of Southwell was almost half the size of the present Early English Choir, it seems likely that the Norman pulpitum was probably situated in the first or second bay of the nave.

Certainly, in the Norman Cathedral of Wells the choir of the Secular Clergy extended under the tower and into the first bay of the nave. The pulpitum was constructed here during the Episcopate of Bishop Rainald (1174 -91), had two altars against it and a further pair abutting the nave piers. Like Lichfield, Beverley, Old St. Pauls, Salisbury and Exeter to name a few, the Eastern end of Southwell was rebuilt in the C13th [see illustration].

The new choir at Southwell was underway by 1234 and ready for use by 1240³. It seems that it was simultaneously fitted with a new pulpitum. It may have been of wood or stone. Certainly it was situated beneath the Eastern arch of the crossing. This is distinctly revealed by the Early English doorway, visible in the North West part of the South choir aisle and is also suggested by the close proximity of the Norman piers and Early English arch, to the choir arcade responds. Further evidence can also be quoted from Mr Livett⁴, who remarked how when the choir stalls were removed, the inner bases of the Early English responds had no mouldings like those on the aisle side. Their simple chamferings are an indication that they would not have been seen in the original arrangement. The screen certainly had a loft, since the Early English doorway opens onto a flight of stairs at a level of 5ft 6ins from the floor. It is quite possible and it has been suggested⁵ that the original pulpitum may have had a corresponding rood screen in the Western Arch of the tower.

This would have had the parochial altar against its West side. There would probably have been screens across the aisles of the nave, through which the Chantry Priests would go to masses at the altars of the West end of the Church. These rood screens normally stood several bays to the West of the pulpita in monastic Churches. They usually had had two screens. The screen at the end of the quire, enabled the monks to perform their daily services in in seclusion, whilst the second formed a barrier across the church, the door being closed, West of the Eastern entrance from the cloister. This door would always be kept unlocked to let the monks have access to the choir for day and night services. The screen ensured that no intruder should have access to the monks' living quarters beyond the cloister. Few of these rood screens remain. Stone ones can be found at St Albans, Ewenny, Boxgrove, Crowland, Darlington and Tynemouth.

1 *There are only several important wooden pulpita - Carlisle, Hexham, Manchester, University Colleges e.g. Kings College and. the former pulpitum of Rochester.*

2 *F. Bond, 'Screens and Galleries', 1908.*

3 *In 1234, the Archbishop of York, Walter de gray, issued letters of indulgence for 30 days for those contributing towards the fabric of the choir, which he states had 'lately begun'. The continuity of the East end structure indicates that the choir must have been completed by 1240.*

4 *G.M.Livett, Southwell Minster, Southwell, 1883.*

5 *A. Hamilton-Thompson, The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Transactions of the Thoroton Society, Vol 15, 1911.*

Most of them were of wood and perished easily. There is no reason to suggest that Secular Churches did not have these rood screens. Certainly, the collegiate Church of Ottery St Mary, Devon, had a stone screen to the East and an oak rood to the West. Since the aforesaid Church was copied from Exeter Cathedral, there may have been one there and even one at Southwell. One can only suggest that the present pulpita was erected in the C14th because the original screen was no longer adequate for the purposes of the Church. The altar facilities of the pulpitum suggest that if there was a rood screen in the opposite arch of the crossing, it was removed and the rood was placed above the new pulpitum. This would have given the laity more of a chance to listen to the singing and services taking place beyond the pulpitum. There would, no doubt, have been screens across the aisles to preserve the required amount of privacy.

When these pulpita were erected they were more than just structural divisions of the Church. They were also important for the church services. These were based on the Customary, a C14th elaboration of the Rule of Sarum or Consuetudinary dated 1210⁶. According to the Customary, the pulpitum was used for:

- 1) The singing of the lesson at Mattins.
- 2) The reading of the Epistle, the singing of the gradual and Alleluia and the reading of the gospel on Sundays, Maundy Thursdays, Easter and Pentecost and All Saints Day.
- 3) When a station was made before the rood at the procession on Sundays and other occasions.
- 4) On Christmas Day for the singing of the Genealogy at Mattins.

There are many variations on the use, of Sarum, that of Lincoln being the most ritualistic. The ceremonial procedures at Southwell would probably have been taken from the York usage⁷.

The desire to open up Churches and use the nave and choir together in services in the late C19th meant a narrow escape for the pulpitum. In an architectural report⁸, Mr Street suggested the Eastern end of the Church should be returned to its original C13th arrangement and the screen should either be used as a singing gallery to unite the nave and the choir or be totally removed. Fortunately, Mr Ewan Christian⁹, who was put in charge of the restorations, dismissed the ideas put forward by Mr Street. He believed that the church and pulpitum should remain as they were but at the same time be adapted to the requirements of the present and future.

2. DESIGN

The structural form of Medieval pulpita was strongly dictated by their use. Most pulpita whether secular, collegiate or monastic consist of one solid wall or two parallel roofed over walls. Their walls are pierced only by a central doorway or passageway which are protected by gates or doors. The Eastern faces of the screens normally have the return stalls placed against them, while on the Western faces, there is usually a pair of altars. Where the screen is a vaulted structure, it has staircases to the left between its walls. There are several exceptions to this rule. The pulpitum at St Davids, Pembrokeshire, is in a category all of its own. It has a West front with a chamber at its southern most end, containing a tomb.

6 *A. Valance, Greater English Church Screens, London, 1947.*

7 *This is according to A. Hamilton Thompson, The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Transactions of the Thoroton Society, vol. 15, 1911.*

8 *Made in 1876, Information extracted from 'A summary of work completed in the restoration of Southwell Minster, Southwell Diocesan Magazine, 1888.*

9 *As 8 above.*

Southwell pulpitum, like Exeter and Chichester, is generally referred to as an example of the 'verandah' type¹⁰. These have East and West faces connected by vaults. Their East faces are of solid stone and have return stalls against them like any other cathedral pulpita. Their major difference is their west fronts. These have triple arcades supported on columns. Beneath these vaults they have recesses for altars, one on each side of an Introitus Chori.

The lofty arcades are close to the stone rood screen of some parish churches - Bottiswell, Cambridgeshire; Westwell, Kent; Stebbing and Great Bardfield, Essex and Bramford Suffolk to name a few, have such arcades, dividing the chancel from the nave. The verandah screens seem to be an assimilation of the cathedral and [parish church types.

Unlike the Exeter and Chichester screens the Southwell pulpitum is wholly intact. The Exeter screen 1317-1326¹¹ was partly destroyed in 1875. Sir Gilbert Scott removed its Eastern side exposing the quire to view from the nave. The pulpitum at Chichester, constructed during the Episcopate of John of Arundel, 1458-77, was entirely dismantled in 1859-60. Fortunately its original form can still be perceived, since it was in the belltower in 1904. The design of the Chichester and Exeter screens are very similar. Since Chichester is later in date, it seems likely that it used the Devonshire screen as a prototype. Like the Exeter, it has an arcade which extends the whole length of its West façade and broad openings. It is surmounted by a parapet of niches, which would have originally contained sculptured images. It has quatrefoils in its spandrels, no doubt in imitation of the seaweed scrollwork of Exeter.

The design of the pulpitum at Southwell is extraordinary [see illustration]. Its arcade does not extend the length of the West façade: it has these rather odd ogee niches at each end. The boldly cusped arches of the openings of the arcade are also unequal in width. The middle arch is narrower than the outer arches. The arches are supported by cup-shaped and four clustered shafts. The shaft facing West is square with a square moulded base. The outer three shafts are round with octagonal bases. The square shafts are divided at intervals by miniature crocketed gables. They extend into a curious frieze which is surmounted by a small parapet. The ogee niches are attached to the Norman piers of the crossing by the square shafts of the arcade [see illustration]. The ogee of the niches is cusped. At their bases are deep moulded plinths. Like the openings of the arcade, the niches are topped by crocketed gables.

When on steps under the pulpitum, one realizes that the inner recess is shorter in length than the West façade. One glance at the Northern and Southern walls of the recess reveals the identity of the façade niches [see illustration]. They are actually the ends of tombs.

The sides of the tomb consist of a shallow recess with a low broad arch. The arch has cusping and a gable above it. The inside of the arch is supported by columns. Next to these are pinnacles. The wall space above the tomb is filled with blank tracery.

The rear wall of the recess takes the form of a three arched arcade. Its Northern and Southern arches are only half solid. Against these walls there were altars, known to have been dedicated to St. John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Holes in these walls testify that at one time the altars were protected by metal gates. The greatest surprise of the pulpitum must be the skeletal vaults of the flat topped recess [see illustration].

10 *An expression used by N Pevsner, Nottinghamshire, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979 and A Valance, Greater English Church Screens, London, 1947.*

11 *Dated by fabric rolls.*

The roof has a cornice around its edges, a longitudinal ridge rib and is divided into three bays by horizontal ridge ribs. Each bay is subdivided by another horizontal ridge rib and also has diagonal ridge ribs. Three flying ribs spring out from each capital. The central rib leads to the bisection point of the bays, whilst the other two ribs lead to the middle of corresponding bays. In the spandrels of the flying ribs are trefoiled circles. There are also large bosses at the centre of each bay and their dividing points. There is a miniature flying rib vault beneath the introitus choir. This is a strange device. Its central bay is identical to the vaults of the recess but on either side it has horizontal ridge ribs supporting skeletal arches. These arches spring from the heads of curious little men, who seem to cling onto the pillars. Each side of the passageway, there were once the customary staircases to the loft. Only the Northern flight remain. Those on the South were removed during the early 20th century. According to a writer of *Building News*¹² these flights of steps were undiscovered until the 19th century. Before then entry to the left had been through the doorway of the original pulpitum in the South quire aisle.

The central doorway of the East façade is a cinquefoiled crocketed ogee arch which supports a statue of the Virgin Mary and Child. Cusping connects the arch to a large crocketed gable. In the spandrels above the gable, there are figures of angels. These stand on corbels, below small trefoiled canopies. Either side of the archway there are three prebendal stalls, which take the form of cinquefoiled nodding ogees. Above the stalls is a strange arrangement of crocketed gables, filled with tracery. Those above the two end stalls on either side are pierced open. The stalls are divided by octagonal shafts. Just below the capitals of the stalls and between the upper gables, the shafts have miniature crocketed gables. The lower part of the shafts are covered in diaperwork. The diaperwork also decorates the stall of the Archbishop. At the extreme ends of the screen, there appears to have once been provision for another bay. The well on the North side is solid: it has a crocketed gable and remains of a vertical shaft on it. There seems to have once been an arch present, which has been unsuccessfully ripped off [see illustration]. At the Southern end there is a hole in the wall exposing a pillar and a strip of wood [see illustration]. Above it is half a crocketed ogee arch, a carved head hanging from a cusp and a larger head supporting a shaft. The shaft has a large crocketed gable attached to it, which is identical to the one of the North side and indeed those above the stalls.

3. DECORATION

The earliest screens were quite plain. The 12th century screen at Ely, consisted of a solid wall pierced with three doors and was decorated with small pillars, feint arches and a parapet of moulded quatrefoils and columns. The lower part of the 13th century screen at Salisbury had arcading of two centred arches with trefoiled canopies and spandrels with sculptured angels. Its upper part was simply decorated with solid arcading of thirteen trefoiled arches, surmounted by a parapet of oblong panels. In the 14th century, the pulpita generally became far more lavishly embellished. Screens like Lincoln, Exeter, St. Davids and Wells were encrusted with crocketed ogee arches, finials, tracery and niches. In the 15th century, it appears to have been fashionable to adorn the pulpitum with niches containing statuary under canopies. Images of Kings had previously been inserted in the niches of Old St. Pauls, Wells, Durham and possibly Salisbury. They were also adopted by the pulpita of York and Canterbury in the 15th century. The new screen at Durham had statuary of 'Royal Personages'. These were of Queens and Scottish and English Kings. The screen at Ripon and those at Ely of Bishop Alcocks Chapel and Bishop West's Chapel would have been covered with statuary.

Pulpita were also painted. Colour decoration was more popular in secular and collegiate churches than monastic ones. It was prohibited at Churches of the Mendicant and Cistercian orders. Screens in Churches of the unreformed Benedictines, such as Canterbury and Rochester had their Eastern faces painted, as did those of the Austin Canons at Christchurch, Twynham and Hexham. The screens at Lincoln, Wells, Wingham and Tattershall were all elaborately painted.

The odd patch of gold and red, is an indication that Southwell was once embellished with paint. Its sculptural decoration can only be compared with the screen at Lincoln. It takes the form of carved heads and foliage. The heads of animals are mainly shown in grotesque form. The heads of Kings, Queens, Bishops and noble courtiers are shown in grotesque, normal and full figure form. The basic foliage form is a cross between the fern and seaweed¹³. The leaf has the serrated edges and ripples effect of the fern and the small globules of seaweed. Some of the leaves are characteristic of the vine and are thus interwoven with grapes. Some are entwined with flower heads and acorns.

The West façade is sparsely decorated in comparison with the East façade. It has carved human heads in its upper frieze, projecting from the cusping of its niches and it has grotesques heads at the bottom of the miniature gable of the dividing shafts. The foliage of the crocketed gables, seems to crawl up towards the large sprouting finials in the frieze. The leaves have very bulbous profiles and many fern-like tendrils, overlapping the moulding of the arch. The miniature gables have small puffed out globular leaves [see illustration]. The leaves of the ogee arch and capitals are much flatter. There is one capital with vine leaves and berries, but most have foliage of the fern/seaweed genre [see illustration]. In contrast to the naturalistic foliage of the Chapter House, [see illustration] the leaves seem to sprawl around the cupshape. They do not rigidly grow out of the capital but rather cling on and stick to it. The crocketing of the tomb gable and pinnacle is similar to the bulbous form of the West façade gables.

At the top of the pinnacles is blank tracery. Like the tracery above the tomb this is flamboyant. The bosses are an intricate arrangement of leaves joined together, slightly overlapping.

The East façade is lavishly decorated. It not only has carved heads in its upper frieze and grotesques at the end of its miniature gables. They also spring from the cusping of the entrance arch, from the cinquefoils of all the stalls and are situated at the bottom of the gables above the stalls. The foliage of the central ogee archway and upper gable is similar to the ogee arch of the West front. [see illustration]. Unique to this façade is the intricate arrangement of leaves on the underside of the gable [see illustration]. This is also found in the inner moulding of the central ogee arch and below the crocketing of the stalls. The foliage of the later is a squashed together version of the flat leaf form. The leaves of the upper gables of the stalls have a slightly bulging profile an vine leaves woven together with grapes, in the space below the capitals [see illustration]. The tracery of the upper gables and miniature gables are similar to the West façade and its recesses. Finally, the diaperwork of the decorated stall uses the conventional leaf as motif [see illustration]. The motif used in greatest profusion for the stall and dividing shafts is a four petalled flower with a central bud.

12 *28th February 1887*

13 *This is the conventional form of the decorated style S. Gardner – English Gothic Foliage Sculpture Cambridge 1927*

RESTORATION OF THE FABRIC

Much of the sculptural detail on the screen may not be original. This is suggested by some sketches of 1789 by a man named Grimm. The sketches, which illustrate the East side of the screen and Southern end of the pulpitum recess, reveal other features have also been changed and added. Pevsner¹⁴ says the restoration work was carried out by the Bernasconi brothers. In the book of the New Fabric Fund, I found reference simply to Mr Bernasconi, I assume, this is Francis Bernasconi, who was an Italian plasterer, based in London and active from the early 1800s to approximately 1825. During this time he decorated many of the London Royal Palaces, country houses and several Scottish castles with Scagliola work and decorated plasterwork. He was also involved in various ecclesiastical projects. In 1803 he decorated the tower of Westminster Abbey with stuccowork and executed an altarpiece for the Abbey in 1825. Between 1814-18 he was at York repairing the pulpitum. The Duke of Bridgewater employed him to decorate the chancel of Gaddesden Church, Hertfordshire in 1817. He was also at Southwell in 1820 to repair the sedilia. References to work at Southwell 1804-08 can be only for the pulpitum. In the 1802 Fabric Fund Book it is unclear whether Bernasconi was paid £400 or £900 for the work¹⁵.

It is difficult to assess just how much of the sculptural decoration is by Bernasconi. This is simply because some of the details of Grimm's sketches are impossible to interpret. Many of his carved heads are drawn on such a small scale they are incredibly difficult to identify. It would seem some of the heads of the frieze and upper gables, on the East side of the screen are original. The cusping of the of the cinquefoiled arch had only two upper heads projecting from it: these appear to be identical. Most grotesques of the miniature crocketed gables are Bernasconi's work. At a guess much of the carved heads of the western facade and tombs are also new plasterwork. Likewise it is hard to decide whether the foliage and diaperwork is actually different or simply stylised by Grimm. Certainly the foliage of the third stall on the north side of the screen is not original because it is shown in a state of disrepair on Grimm's sketch.

The drawings do reveal some changes definitely made by Bernasconi, the parapet, presumably, of both sides is new. The crenellation seems to have originally been much larger. The cusping of the band was trefoiled and there were more numerous mouldings between the parapet and frieze below. The fourth bay on either side of the East facade is a total addition on Mr Bernasconi's behalf. There was nothing in this wall space in 1789. The shafts and gables which exist here now, were part of Bernasconi's plasterwork, designed to imitate the sculptured stall arrangement. The wooden choir stalls were placed against these ends in the early 19th century. The plasterwork must have been damaged when Mr Ewan Christian replaced the stalls with new ones during the late 19th century restoration work¹⁶.

14 *N. Pevsner: Nottinghamshire. Harmondsworth, Penguin 1979.*

15 *The references are:-
July-October 1804: £50.11.6
April 1806: To Mr Bernasconi on further account £200.0.0
December 1806: To Mr Bernasconi balance due to him of £139.10.4. This makes a total payment of £890.9.10
1809 To Mr Bernasconi, Composition plasterer, balance of account from May 1807-May 1808 £53.12.8.*

16 *Southwell Diocesan Magazine: A Summary of the Work completed in the Restoration of Southwell Minster 1888.*

Bernasconi also changed the gables above the stalls. The first gables on both sides of the screen were solid as they are now. The other two stalls on the North side appear to have been half open. On the South side the second gable was filled with square leaded glass, whilst the third contained an upper stall for the Prior of Thurgarton¹⁷.

Examination of the drawing of the recess reveals, the floor of the recess was originally higher than the level of the crossing. Bernasconi made them equal and hence changed the bases of the arcade and miniature tomb pillars. The North and south arches of the east wall of the recess were former totally solid and had small piscinas attached to them. The flying rib vault appears to be unchanged except for one feature. Its spandrels originally had trefoils, but were solid, not open as they are now. The final change one can assume Bernasconi made, was to remove carved heads from the cusping of the arcade arches.

In conclusion one can only say Bernasconi does not seem to have made any major changes, or at least, none which may jeopardise the character of the design. The uncertainty of much of the decorative detail is slightly worrying. However, I think, when making comparisons with other sculpture one can assume the decoration of the screen is true to its original form.

SECTION TWO

THE PARALLELS

Other similar 14th century works similar to the Southwell pulpitum are the Reredos and the Percy tomb at Beverley and the Lincoln Pulpitum. Carved during the 1330s – 40s, the Beverley sculpture is believed to be the product of local schools of Yorkshire masons. The Lincoln Pulpitum was completed by masons of a Lincolnshire/Nottinghamshire workshop about 1320¹⁸. The earliest part of the screen at Southwell, the West façade, is close in date to the Beverley reredos, whilst the East façade is probably the same date as the Beverley tomb. The pulpitum is clearly not from the same Yorkshire workshops: it is much closer to the style of the Lincoln Pulpitum and the evidence suggests that it is later in date.

BEVERLEY

The reredos at Beverley is of the same construction as the arcade and recesses of the Southwell screen. The structure is however reversed. It's open arcade faces East, it's West wall is solid. Certain aspects of its design are different. It has Purbeck shafts with capitals, formed of figure sculpture and foliage. Above the capitals, it has canopies containing statuary diaper work in the spandrels of the arches. At its outer edges, there are no niches and hence no tombs. The only date that can be related to it is 1334¹⁹. In this year the Archbishop of York, William of Melton, donated money towards its fabric. There is no indication as to whether the construction was underway at this date or about to begin. Although close in date to the Reredos the Southwell work must be slightly earlier, since the Beverley inner panels of flowing tracery appear to be more advanced than the South and North walls of the Southwell tombs [see illustration].

17 *This was a wooden structure.*

18 *Dr Mansel Sympson. Memorials of old Lincolnshire, 1911.*

19 *N Dawton: The Percy Tomb at Beverley Minster: the style of the sculpture – Studies in Medieval Sculpture: Society of the Antiquaries Occasional Paper [New Series] III, 1983.*

It is the North and South canopies of the Percy tomb which are similar to the East façade of the Southwell pulpitum. They are of the same cusped cinquefoil ogee arrangement as the entrance arch at Southwell. Unlike the East façade, the ogee arch is sub-cusped and its mouchettes are also cusped. The content of its decoration is so similar, that Southwell must be of the same date as the tomb. Dated 1340²⁰, or shortly after, the tomb is adorned with crocketed foliage, flowers and fruit, miniature gables and finials.

The belief that Southwell is not by the Yorkshire workshop stems from the difference between their foliage, diaperwork and carved heads. The foliage is not of the fern/seaweed variety. The Percy Tomb has hawthorn and vine leaves, the Reredos, plain seaweed. All have small globules at the end of the leaves, and large exaggerated globules at their centres [see illustration]. The vine leaves of the tomb have round bulges, which are so large that they resemble apples or pears, from a distance [see illustration]. The diaperwork is of a four petalled flower motif with double ripples [see illustration]. The carved heads, particularly of the reredos are a strong contrast to the passive, noble forms of Southwell. The expression of the men emerging from its reredos capitals and those at the sides of the screen are almost violent. Their faces have hard, ungraceful features [see illustration]. There is also a profusion of flowers and fruit on the Percy Tomb, which is absent from Southwell. Fruits of the vine adorn the finials, ballflower decorates the vaults and flowers are on the edges of the arch cusping.

LINCOLN

The East façade of the Southwell Pulpitum is so close in style to the Lincoln screen that it is clearly a later improved copy. The group of masons who worked at the Minster have merely elaborated and refined the Lincoln screen. They have taken the central broad ogee archway and replaced it with a more delicate version. The corbels have been readjusted; the diaperwork removed and a crocketed gable added. The ogee tabernacles have been shortened and their gables filled with tracery. The square shafts have been transformed into octagonal forms with more numerous miniature gables. The foliage clumps of the frieze have been replaced by elegantly carved heads. The crocketing is more fragile and not foreshadowed by diaperwork. The masons have used the same diaper motif for the shafts at Southwell and introduced more varied ferns for the Bishop's stall. Considering the changes made, a date of 1340 for the East façade seems reasonable. When the West façade is compared with the Pulpitum, it looks almost contemporary. It is the nature of the passage vault of Lincoln, which retains a date close to the Beverley reredos for Southwell. The two bays of the flying rib vault are joined in the same manner as Southwell but the ribs are thinner²¹ and have fewer mouldings. The ribs do not spring from capitals, rather the bare surface of the wall. There are no trefoils in the spandrels of the flying ribs [see illustration]. The miniature vault at the foot of the loft stairs on the north side, is also smaller than its Southwell equivalent. It is of one bay and has no arches on either side of it. Its ribs are the same as its neighbour and spring from corbels [see illustration]. A date for the Southwell vault and hence the West facade may be established by putting in context with other skeletal vaults. There are only three others in England²².

20 PJP Goldberg: *The Percy Tomb in Beverley Minster. The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal Vol 56, 1984.*

21 *The Southwell ribs have a side profile of 10ins and a flat profile of 7ins. The Lincoln ribs, in contrast, have a side profile of 7ins and a flat profile of 6 1/8 ins.*

22 *There are other examples in Germany. Three are contemporary with the English vaults; These are at St. Catharine's Chapel, Strasbourg, dated 1331 – 47, Freiburg im Breisgau dated 1304, Magdeburg dated 1330s. Others later appeared at Prague Cathedral in the Sacristy and South Transept portal: They were the work of Peter Parler and were completed 1356 – 62.*

The earliest ones are at Lincoln Cathedral (Easter Sepulchre) and Bristol Cathedral (Ante-chamber to the Berkeley Chapel). The Easter Sepulchre vault must be circa 1296²³. The vault of the six bays is divided by flying rib arches. It has no cornice or horizontal ribs in each bay. The ribs, which spring from capitals, have few mouldings and chamfers and narrow side and flat profiles²⁴ [see illustration].

The vault at Bristol is dated circa 1300. Unlike the Easter Sepulchre vault, it has a cornice and horizontal ribs in each bay. Its flying ribs are attached to the wall by moulded shafts. Although the ribs have even simpler mouldings than Lincoln, they have wider profiles. [see illustration]. Southwell and Lincoln (pulpitum) vaults are earlier than the introitus chori of the pulpitum at St. David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire. The central passage of the screen, plus the Southern end, are the work of Bishop Gower (1328 – 47) and are dated 1330 -40²⁵. Unlike Southwell, the two bay vault has four extra ribs in each section: Two pairs meet on the longitudinal ridge rib of each bay, the other two pairs on the horizontal ridge rib of each bay [see illustration]. The vault does not appear to be much more innovative than the Southwell one. A period of 8 – 10 years²⁶ between the Lincoln and Southwell vaults would seem to be justified. Even more so if one takes into consideration, the flying rib vault of the Tonsur at Magdeburg, Germany. This has quatrefoils and trefoils in its spandrels and has been dated to the 1330's²⁷.

The evidence from Lincoln suggests Southwell was executed by the masons of the Lincoln Screen. The idea of Southwell being a copy of Lincoln indicates it could only have been carved by men familiar with the Lincoln work. It also seems more than a coincidence that three of the five English flying rib vaults are situated within thirty miles of each other. The strength of the argument grows if one considers how widely the workshop travelled, they were active, not only to the West of Boston and the fens but also South of Lincoln and into Nottinghamshire. The East side of Southwell pulpitum is actually very similar to the church fittings of Hawton Church, Notts., reputed to be by the same workshop²⁸. The Chancel fittings dated 1330s – 40s, consist of an Easter Sepulchre, Founders tomb and doorway on the North side, and double piscina and triple sedilia on the South side [see illustration]. They have the characteristic Lincolnshire features: nodding ogee crocketed arches with gables above them, a frieze and diaperwork. The crocketing of the Easter Sepulchre arches, large gable and miniature gables are absolutely identical to their Southwell East façade equivalents. [see illustration]. The foliage diaperwork close to the Holy Sacrament niche is also extremely similar to one of the Bishop's stall motifs [see illustration].

23 *It is thought to be contemporary with the cloister arcading which was in construction by 1296*

24 *They have a side profile of 5ins and a flat profile of 4 1/2 ins.*

25 *A. Hamilton-Thompson: The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Transactions of the Thoroton Society Vol 15 1911.*

26 *This means the suggestions of Mr. M. R. Petch cannot be accurate. Mr. Petch cannot be accurate. Mr Petch found a masons mark on the North East respond of the entrance passage through the Southwell pulpitum and has been identified as the mark of a Master Mason, named Ivo de Raughton Senior. He probably also worked as a mason at York Minster, since he is recorded as a freeman of the city in 1317 – 18. Mr Petch says that Ivo de Raughton, Senior may have worked on the West face of the pulpitum at Southwell and the entrance passage. Since he is recorded as dead in 1328 – 29, this cannot be possible.*

27 *P. Crossley: Wells, The West Country and Central European Late Gothic: Wells and Glastonbury British Archaeological Association 1978.*

28 *The workshop also executed sculpture at the parish churches of Beckington, Sleaford, Newark, Anwick, Ewerby, Silk Willoughby, Donnington and Navenby.*

Veronica Sekules²⁹ says the work at Hawton is by the same masons as Southwell. This seems possible. The masons could have gone to Southwell from Hawton or come from Southwell. However, since Southwell and Hawton appear to be of the same date, it seems likely that they could have been working on both at the same time.

The pulpitum could have equally been carved by a group of local Nottinghamshire masons. Nottingham was the centre of a major school of carving from 13th century until the Reformation. The carvers³⁰ made small figures, tombs and altar pieces from local Alabaster. The stone came from Tutbury, near Burton, Notts; Chellaston, near Derby and Redhill, Notts. These men were at Southwell in the 16th century when they carved a memorial to Archbishop Sandys in the Minster. There is no reason to suggest that they could not have been here in the 14th century. They could easily have copied the style of the pulpitum at Lincoln; it was a distinctive style that could have been imitated by any competent mason. Just because the pulpitum at Lincoln looks like Southwell, there is a danger of jumping too quickly to conclusions.

The comparison of Southwell Pulpitum with work at Beverley Minster and Lincoln Cathedral, reveals the 1337 Royal License must refer to the stone for the east side of the pulpitum. The pulpitum was probably constructed 1330 – 40. Sound conclusions regarding the origins of the workshop, can only be made after reference to the patronage of the pulpitum.

29 *V. Sekules: The Tomb of Christ at Lincoln and the Development of the Sacrament Shrine; Easter Sepulchres Reconsidered. Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln. British Archaeological Association 1986.*

30 *Documentary evidence refers to 'alabasterers, alabaster men, carvers, and imagemakers.'*