

ANY QUESTIONS?

By Jos Hall & John Beaumont 12 Jan 1991

*Q: When were the defaced heads in the Chapter House damaged?*

A: At many different times, up to the present day, when some have even been daubed with paint, or otherwise misused. But the first ever photos of the carvings, preserved in the Library, show them much as they are now.

*Q: What about other acts of destruction?*

A: Undoubtedly much done during the Civil War and Commonwealth; however Edward Cludd, the only local landowner to support Parliament, is said to have ordered the Scottish Covenanters out of the Minster and stopped their acts of vandalism. He also stopped a proposal to demolish the nave. The Chapter House was without glass in the windows throughout the Commonwealth, and erosion shows on the east side.

*Q: Where do the fragments of stained glass in the Chapter House windows come from?*

A: They come from various places: the nave, Gonalston, Annesley, and other churches, and date from the 14th to the 18th Century, though most are 14th-15th.

*Q: About the article in the Advertiser about Richard Beaumont's book on the carved heads.*

A: We are recommended to buy the book, which is much better than the article, though it does not include the finest carvings in the Minster, the chancel arch capitals.

*Q: Why is the tympanum thought to be Norman rather than Saxon?*

A: Both John and Jos think it is in fact late Saxon. It could have been over the north door, as this one was often left open during baptisms for the devil to go out, and St. Michael was often portrayed nearby. If so, it is almost in its original place, as the Anglo-Saxon church was where the transepts are now. Some experts think it early Norman, but Dr. Taylor, the eminent authority on Anglo-Saxon architecture, classifies it as pre-Conquest.

*Q: About the quire stalls*

A: An excellent example of 19th cent work by Charles Simpson, who worked from age 14 for 65 years for the same firm. See also Factsheet No. 7.

*Q: Whose is the tomb on the north wall, west of the north door, and does the inscription above refer to it?*

A: Once a real tomb, but reconstructed by Ewan Christian in the niche; it may have been a chantry. The inscription refers to the window above.

*Q: Whose is the tomb in the south quire aisle with headless figure?*

A: We don't know: the figure may have come from the walltomb in the Candle Chapel.

*Q: Why are the arms of Isabella of Castile found four times in the Chapter House?*

A: Because she was Queen at the time it was built and a compliment to the reigning monarch and/or archbishop was usual. Other examples can be found, though the most certain identification is of Henry IV by the SS badge on his collar.

*Q: Was the interior ever painted?*

A: Fairly certainly it was: documentary evidence re the quire, and traces of paint in the Chapter House, nave and crossing prove it.