Hussey Tower, Boston: a Late Medieval Tower-House of Brick

Terence Paul Smith

Hussey Tower, the gutted remnant of a late medieval brick tower-house, stands a little east of South End and a little north of Skirbeck Road, Boston, between a timber yard and the grounds of Boston Grammar School (Fig. 5 inset; N.G.R.: TF 332436). It is in poor condition at the time of writing, and, in a town which is not rich in obvious medieval buildings, deserves a better fate. The aims of the present paper are: (i) to provide an adequate description of the building and (ii) to place it in its context in the history of English medieval brick building.

I DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

The extant building is a rectangular tower of three stages (Figs. 1, 2) with the slightly shorter axis oriented due north-south (Fig. 1); it measures internally 21ft (6.4m) by 17ft 9in (5.4m) with walls fully 3ft 6in (1.1m) in thickness at the first and second stages. From the north-east angle projects a three-quarter octagonal stair turret, giving access originally to each stage and to the roof, communication between stair and each stage being by doorways set in a cant in the north-east angle of each chamber. There is some use of stone in the building for windows and doorways, but the quoins are of brick and there is a use of simple moulded or cut bricks for some openings and for other features. The bricks of the general fabric, which are laid (though not strictly) in English bond, are red and measure 9½-10 by 4½ by 2½in (24-25.5 by 12-12.5 by 5.3cm).

The first or ground floor stage (Fig. 1) is notable for its few windows. There are four openings, three of them blocked and not all of them necessarily original. One original doorway is towards the western end of the south wall; it has jambs and an arch head of stone, the head being semi-circular and cinquefoiled; close to the outer wall face the jambs and head have a hollow chamfer, but any other mouldings are obscured by the blocking. Inside, the doorway has a three-centred rear arch of brick. Further eastwards in the same wall is a further opening — again blocked; at the bottom this has stone jambs but higher up these are continued in brick; it is not certain that this was an original doorway. In the west wall is another blocked opening, without any stone dressings; it is blocked only at the outer wall face and the interior reveals are at right angles to the wall face; there is a marked step up to the ‘floor’ of this opening. It looks as if originally this was a built-in cupboard or press or else a window set in a deep recess, and not a doorway at all.

In the opposite — east — wall, just north of centre, is a further original doorway; it is much damaged at the outer wall face, but the springing for a three- or four-centred arch head of brick remains; the arch head clearly had a plain chamfer. In the south jamb, about halfway up, are three stone blocks in this otherwise wholly brick doorway. Internally, the opening is widely splayed, and has a
segmental rear arch of brick. The north wall has no fenestration at this level, its sole feature being a large fireplace; the jambs have a pair of plain chamfers separated by a hollow; the arch head has fallen. A cantilever portion of brickwork in the north-east angle of the chamber contains a small doorway giving access, via a short passage, to the stair-turret; the doorway is wholly of brick with a four-centred arch head, jambs and arch head being plain chamfered. The remaining hinge pinnacles show that there was a door hung on the south-east jamb; this accounts for the neat curve of the step within the passage (Fig. 1), contrived so that the door could open unimpeded. The passage itself has plain brick walls and a shallow elliptical vault of stretchers on edge.

The chamber at this level was vaulted with a sexpartite vault of brick which has now fallen, only the wall arches and the springings of the ribs remaining. The east and west wall arches are wide and elliptical while the north and south arches, being of narrower span, are pointed; all have a plain chamfer. The ribs also were chamfered, and rose from simple inverted conical stone corbels. The webs were of bricks on edge. The conoids were filled with bricks.

The second stage chamber, which had a solid floor supported on the vault below, has two fairly large windows, both now blocked, one in the middle of the south wall and one at the western end of the north wall. Both are of stone; the southern one certainly, and the northern one possibly, had two lights, though no mullions survive. The jambs have casement mouldings and the lights of the southern window are four-centred and trefoiled with sunk spandrels, the whole enclosed within a square frame; there is a square label but without the usual returned stops (Fig. 2). Above the window is a shallow segmental relieving arch of brick — black and red stretchers alternating to give a banded pattern. This feature is present also over the northern window, which is more effectively blocked, so that fewer details are discernible. Internally, both windows are widely splayed and have flat three-centred rear arches; these have plain chamfers, though the angles of the reveals are unchamfered.

Plate Hussey Tower from the south.
The first floor stage of the adjoining range. The floor of the range was presumably carried in part on the tops of wall posts or brackets standing on the small stone corbels which project from the tower wall; they are too far below the floor level to have supported the floor directly (Fig. 2). (Alternatively, they may directly have supported the floor, with a stair descending from the tower doorway.) The doorway itself is much damaged but its brickwork is of a four-centred arch head, plain chamfered. Internally, the doorway is widely splayed on the north but not splayed at all on the south; the latter reveal is plain chamfered where it joins the main wall face, and the chamfer is continued along the three-centred rear arch. Immediately north of the doorway is a small built-in umbrina, probably for a lamp or candle; it has a three-centred arch head of brick and head and jambs. South of the doorway is a large fireplace with plain chamfered jambs; the archhead has fallen. The flue narrows and runs up close to the north angle of the tower. A doorway in the canted north-east angle gives onto a passage leading to the stair; the passage contains a short landing and then two steps up into the chamber; the passage is vaulted like that below.

On the exterior of the east wall the bonding scars of the eastern range continue at this level, although not to eaves level of the range; the eaves are indicated by a clearly visible, fairly steeply pitched roof scar. The roof scar shows that the roof of the range abuts against the tower at the latter's third stage. Just north of the roof scar is a puzzling doorway leading from the third stage of the tower into mid-air; it is of brick with a three-centred arch head and plain chamfered head and jambs. These features are repeated internally. Just possibly this feature represents a tall window stretching from floor level, although it must be admitted that it does not have the look of a window.

The wall at this third stage level of the tower is thinned all round by one brick, since an offset is provided internally to support the joists, none of which survives. The chamber at this level is lit by two windows, one in the centre of the south wall and one at the eastern end of the north wall. The northern window, which is not quite directly above that of the second stage, has stone jambs and is of two lights, though the mullion is missing. The jambs have double ogee mouldings. The lights have four-centred cinquefoil heads with sunk spandrels, and there is a square label without stops. The southern window appears (Fig. 2) to be similar, although its details are obscured by the blocking. Both windows have relieving arches above them, of alternating black and red headers. The reveals and rear arches match those of the stage below.

In the west wall is a fireplace with plain chamfered jambs but a fallen arch head. The chamber was reached via a short passage, containing two steps up, from the newel stair. The doorway to the passage is of brick with a three-centred head and plain chamfered head and jambs. The passage itself has a vault like that of each of the lower storeys.

The parapet of the tower is crenellated, with stone cusps of common pattern (Fig. 3, A) to both merlons and embrasures; the copings are not returned down the sides of the merlons. At the foot of the parapet runs a string course, which differs in design on different sides of the building (Fig. 3, B1, B2). On the north it is formed by a projecting course of headers on edge with their two exposed angles cut off, giving a triangular sectioned string. On the east face the string is formed by a projecting course of bull nosed headers on edge, giving a semi-circular sectioned string. On the south and west sides projecting headers and stretchers alternate in the projecting course; they all have a semi-circular section but are further enriched by a cable moulding. It is worth noting that the south face was probably the front or principal face of the building (Fig. 2).

At the north-west angle of the parapet a three-quarter octagonal feature something like a tiny solid bartizan occurs. It is corbelled out on a series of projecting bricks starting below the parapet string, and on the bartizan itself there is a projecting course of plain bricks just above the level of the parapet string. The top of the feature is gone, but probably it had small scale crenellations like those of the Rochford Tower in Skirbeck parish. The bottom courses of a similar feature exist at the south-east angle (Fig. 2). The north-west angle is too damaged at this level for any such feature to survive, but it is difficult to believe that there was not such a feature originally. The north-east angle has the stair turret, which rises above parapet level.

The top of the stair turret is damaged so that one cannot be sure of the nature of its parapet. The stair is lit by small brick loops, square headed with plain chamfered jambs, heads, and sills; inside they have spayed reveals, and heads formed by a series of projecting brick courses. The central newel of the stair is circular, built up from semi-circular bricks. The steps are constructed in the usual way of bricks on edge and there are sixteen steps to a complete circle. These are carried on the back of flattish three-centred arches which radiate, like the steps, from the central newel; there are two steps to each arch. A handrail is provided and spirals up with the stair; it is of special purpose bricks and consists of a semi-circular hollow with the hand grip itself formed by a three-quarter roll rising from the foot of the hollow (Fig. 3, C). At the terminations of the handrail at doorways are stone blocks.

The passageways and doorways from the stair to the chambers of the tower have already been described: there is a similar passage — though with no steps up — and a similar doorway to the wall walk behind the parapet. The stair continues above this, presumably originally to the parapet of the turret. Whether the stair descended to a cellar is uncertain; the handrail does not continue below the ground level doorway, but this fact is not decisively against a cellar, as the evidence of Rye House, Herts., demonstrates. But there does not seem to be room for a descent to a cellar. A flat offset runs round the base of the stair turret externally and along parts of the walls of the tower (Fig. 1); it may originally have continued round the entire tower except where the east (hall) range adjoined (vide infra).
II THE DATE OF THE BUILDING: HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The architectural affinities of the building will be considered shortly, but we may look first at some historical considerations which have a bearing on its date. As Pishey Thompson noted over a hundred years ago, 'Hussey Tower is called "Benyntong" Tower in 1564, when the Tower and the pasture under it were rented for 5 l. per annum.' A "Richard Benyntong Toare" is mentioned and stated to be near "vacant ground in Boston Lane", "in the Rental of the Guild of Corpus Christi for 1489." Richard Benyntong, whose name is here associated with the building, was a prominent Lincolnshire man in the middle of the fifteenth century. In March 1436 he is mentioned as Richard Benyntong of Boston, and was collector of customs and subsidies for the town during the 1430's. He frequently appears in connexion with commissions de wallis et fossatis for the parts of Holland; and in this work of fen drainage he was associated with, amongst others, Ralph Lord Cromwell, Treasurer of England from 1433 until his death in 1456. During the 1430's, 1440's and 1450's both men acted as justices of the peace for the parts of Holland. After 1460 Benyntong no longer figures in such affairs, though he seems to have lived on until c. 1475. There is thus good reason to think that the Tower dates from some time before c. 1475; the most likely date for its is somewhere in Benyntong's active years, before c. 1460.

III THE BUILDING IN ITS CONTEXT

The existing building is clearly only a part of a larger structure of which archaeological evidence exists in the bonding scars and the associated roof scar on the east wall. The bonding scars do not quite reach to the eaves level of the former roof, but this is probably of no great significance; presumably the walls at the very top were just not bonded into the tower walls. The evidence indicates a narrower two storey range running eastwards from the tower, its south wall continuous with that of the tower, but the north wall further south than that of the tower (Fig. 2). The wing communicated with the tower at both levels. In 1725 a 'good and substantial gable [was] ordered to be built at the end of the house left standing' after demolition of much of the property. Presumably this was at the eastern end of the two storey range, and if so it implies that it was a cross wing against this end that was demolished. Other buildings referred to at various times are the gatehouse (probably, as Thompson thought, on South End), the brewhouse, the mill house, and the stable.

The building was clearly of tower-house type, with the two storey range forming the hall with the normal domestic services, perhaps contained in a cross wing, at the east end; the 'high' end of the hall was presumably against the tower, with the screens passage at the further end. The function of the tower would be to act as a heightened solar block, replacing the usual solar end of a medieval hall. The tower would have provided accommodation, at least in the upper two stages; the bottom stage, though provided with a fireplace, must have been dim under its heavy vaulting and with so little fenestration; it is likely that it was used simply for storage, and would have been called a cellar.

Tower-houses of this type were fairly fashionable in the later Middle Ages, more particularly during the fifteenth century. A number of them were built, during that century, of brick (Fig. 4). The best known and most magnificent survival is that at Tattershall, only 11 miles (19 kilometres) north-west of Boston, started by Ralph Lord Cromwell c. 1434; but it must have been equalled in magnificence by that built c. 1446 by Sir William Oldehall at Hunsdon, Herts., known to us from the description by

William Worcestre. Not quite in the same class, but still an imposing building, is the tower house at Faulkbourne Hall, Essex, begun c. 1439 by Sir John Montgomery. Tattershall seems to have prompted the building of a number of smaller brick tower-houses, as well as some brick gatehouses of tower-house-like form — for example, at Kirby Muxloe Castle, Leics. (1480-84, unfinished), under the direction of a master mason, John Cowper or Coupere, who is known to have lived and worked at Tattershall. Of tower-houses proper Lincolnshire has four, apart from Tattershall itself — all of them within southern Lindsey or Holland. Besides the Hussey Tower there are: the Tower-on-the-Moor at Woodhall Spa, only 4 miles (6 kilometres) north of Tattershall; Rochford Tower in Skirbeck parish, only 2 miles (3 kilometres) east of Hussey Tower; and Ayscoughfee Hall at Spalding. Of these, Ayscoughfee Hall has been much altered and its precise nature is difficult to discern. But there is at the north end a square building, heightened indeed in the nineteenth century but always of tower-like appearance, with a part octagonal stair turret at the south-west angle. The building has been attributed to Sir Richard Alwyn in 1420 or 1429, but may possibly date from a little later in the fifteenth century.

More important for our present purpose are the Rochford Tower at Skirbeck and the Tower-on-the-Moor at Woodhall. The former retains its four stage tower although the adjoining range has, as at Hussey Tower, been demolished. Both Hussey Tower and Rochford Tower are rectangular on plan with a three-quarter octagonal stair turret projecting at one angle. There are similarities of detail too, notably in the small battlement-like projections at each of the other three angles, which on the Rochford Tower are complete with stone coped crenellations. There are also differences: a greater use of moulded brick for windows, though the larger, more important windows are stone dressed; the extra stage, with medieval paintings on its walls; the trefoiled corbel table at the level of the parapet string in place of the simpler
moulded brick strings of Hussey Tower; and the fact that there is no direct access from the vaulted first stage to the stages above. 29

Similar too is the Tower-on-the-Moor, of which only the stair turret and some other footings remain. 30 Yet it is clear that we have here a tower-house of basically similar type to the Hussey and Rochford Towers. The stair turret is three-quarter octagonal on plan and projects from the west angle of an original tower block, of which only those portions of the walls immediately adjoining the stair turret are preserved. The first stage chamber communicated with the stair via a diagonally set passage opening from what would have been a cant in the chamber, just as at Hussey Tower. Enough remains of the stair to show that the steps were carried on a series of radiating arches, as at Hussey Tower; here, however, there is no handhold.

It is known that the Tower-on-the-Moor dates from the fifteenth century, for it is mentioned in the Tattershall building accounts as a source of bricks for the continuing work there after Cromwell's death. 31 This serves not only to provide a terminus ante quem for the abandonment, and a fortiori for the building, of the tower but also establishes the connexion with the work at Tattershall. In view of this one can hardly doubt Leland's statement that the tower was built by 'One of the Cromweltes'; 32 this must refer to Ralph Lord Cromwell, since a date prior to his time is unacceptable on general grounds and Cromwell himself died without issue; 33 hence the building must date from before 1456, the year of Cromwell's death. It seems likely that work on it would have been begun only after the main work at Tattershall had progressed some way; Tattershall was begun c. 1434, so that a date in the period 1440-1456 seems most probable. There is a tantalizing reference to the building or repair of a house in this general area in 1445-6, possibly the Tower-on-the-Moor. 34 However that may be, a date around that time must be accepted for the Tower-on-the-Moor.

Both Hussey Tower and Rochford Tower are almost certainly copies of the Tower-on-the-Moor; all have a similar plan, which differs from those of other fifteenth century brick tower-houses in the country, for example the Maldon Moot Hall, Essex. 35 Of even greater moment is the method of supporting the steps of the newel stair on a series of ascending and radiating arches, which is notably uncommon. The more usual method is a spiralling barrel vault constructed, against the newel, in a series of 'plough share' forms. This occurs at an early date at Rye House, Herts. (c. 1443 sqq.) 36 and at Someries Castle, Beds. (c. 1448 sqq.), 37 and was followed also in later examples. 38 The radiating arch type seems to have been used for the first time at the Tower-on-the-Moor - Tattershall Castle itself having stone stairs 39 — and its occurrence at Hussey Tower therefore forges the strongest link between the two buildings. It seems beyond doubt that the Hussey Tower must be not much later in date than the Tower-on-the-Moor. This fits well with a date of before c. 1475 for Hussey Tower, probably before Richard Benyon ceased to be active c. 1460. A date in the decade 1450-60 seems most likely; although it may belong to a few years previous to 1450.

That Hussey Tower should have been influenced by the Tower-on-the-Moor is hardly surprising in view of the connexions between Richard Benyon and Lord Ralph Cromwell. Both men, as we have noted, were concurrently justices for the parts of Holland over a long period and both were concerned together with fen drainage works. Cromwell himself owned a brick kiln at Boston, from which the work at Tattershall was in part supplied, and also a staith or wharf from which the bricks were transported by the Rivers Witham and Bain to Tattershall. 40 He even built for himself in 1451/2 a timber framed house in Skirbeck, materials — including bricks — being transported thence from Boston and the bricks used for 'le grounselyng' (ground-sill or footing) of the house. 41 (Fig. 5)

It seems likely that the same architect was responsible for both buildings and for the Rochford Tower. It is not known who he was, though it is just possible that he was the Peter Lyndon employed in 1458 to build a brick turret at the north-east angle of Tattershall College for £3. 5s. 10d. 42 Lyndon was a 'Docheman' (that is, a German), 43 and his continental origin is interesting in view of the Teutonic affinities of the Tattershall tower-house. 44 The square gatehouse tower between the Middle and Outer Wards of the Castle, as depicted in a print of 1727, has a marked similarity to the Hussey Tower and the other tower-houses. 45

Some of the brickwork motives used in the Hussey Tower had already been introduced in earlier brick buildings: the brick built newel stair, the bartizan-like features at the angles of the parapet, and the use of black bricks to form a simple banded pattern in the relieving arches over the windows. Bartizans were never popular in England, but one occurs on the brick tower at Faulkbourne Hall, Essex, which may have been completed by 1450; 46 and a related feature occurred on an angle of the brick gatehouse at Rye House, Herts. (c. 1443 sqq.). 47 Also related are the corbelled out features at the angles of the chancel of Bardney Church, Lincs., built c. 1435 with bricks from Cromwell's brickworks at Edlington Moor. 48 It seems likely, though the evidence has been destroyed, that the direct influence on the Hussey and Rochford TOWERS was from the Tower-on-the-Moor. The 1727 print of Tattershall Castle shows the gatehouse tower already mentioned with a similar bartizan-like feature at least one of its angles; these features were clearly part of the repertoire of the Tattershall builders, who must, presumably, have been responsible for these other buildings in the Tattershall and Boston areas.

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Fig. 5. The medieval brick industry, Boston and Tattershall.
For the cable moulded string course at Hussey Tower I at present know of no parallel, and indeed string courses seem usually to be of stone even in predominantly brick buildings.

The bricks used in the Hussey Tower are a little large by medieval (including Tudor) standards (supra, p.31 for dimensions), though not outstandingly so. There was in any case a fairly wide range of sizes in use during these times. It seems difficult to believe that the Hussey Tower bricks were not supplied from Boston itself. It is, in some quarters even yet, an abiding part of the mythology of the subject that all or nearly all medieval brick buildings in England were supplied from abroad, particularly from Flanders. A review of the historical and archaeological evidence — some of which has been available for a long time now — is sufficient to dispel this old notion. We know that there had been a brick kiln owned by Lord Cromwell in Boston since at least 1431. There can be little doubt that the bricks for Hussey Tower (and for Rochford Tower) came from Boston itself, probably from Cromwell's kiln (cf. Fig. 5).

The building shows no use of diaper patterns in black bricks, such as occur at Tattershall Castle and on the chancel of Bardney Church; the use of darker bricks is confined to the banding relieving arches; a similar absence of diaper work is a feature of the Rochford Tower and of the fifteenth century St. Mary's Guildhall in Boston. This lends some support to the suggestion that the bricks for these buildings were made locally of local materials. In Boston and its neighbourhood, in contrast with the Edlingham Moor area, the local material would have come from the Fens; and R. J. and P. E. Firman have noted that the Fenland materials, 'although they burn red, ... tend to distort when they are vitrified', so that bricks suitable for diaper work were not produced.

IV CONCLUSION

At Hussey Tower, Boston, we have an early example of English brickwork, almost certainly using locally made bricks. This building was of tower-house form, with the tower forming a heightened solar block of the sort found on a much larger scale at Tattershall Castle, which was probably the inspiration behind the Hussey Tower, although the Tower-on-the-Moor, Woodhall Spa, seems to have been the direct model. The building was almost certainly built for Richard Benynton, a contemporary of Lord Cromwell, in the middle years of the fifteenth century, most probably in the decade 1450-60. The architect may possibly have been Peter Lyndon, of continental origin, who was responsible for some of the work at Tattershall College. Of the original house only the tower now remains, and that is in need of attention.

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FOOTNOTES

1 Cf. the comments in M. W. Barley, *Lincolnshire and the Fens*, London, 1952; reprinted with new preface, East Ardsley, 1972, pp. 79-80; it is said that Professor Barley had no need to alter his comments twenty years after the first edition of his book.


4 P. Thompson, op. cit., p.243.


10 F. E. Oldfield, *A Topographical and Historical Account of Wainfleet... in the County of Lincoln*, London, 1829, p.46: 'The Bishop (William Waynflete), it appears, possessed certain land and tenements at Wainfleet... which Richard Aylett and Richard Bennington had devised to him by will, bearing date May 10th, 1475.'

11 Thompson, op. cit., p.243.

12 Loc. cit., where the subsequent history of the site is outlined.


16 Item latitudo calibii lateris dicti turris [at Hunsdon] ex aquilabii lateres... liij pedes; sed... in aquilabii lateres dicti turris sunt viij, boieras mgge latitudinis / Item latitudo dictae turris cum eo ... vocata = in altitudine vt dicatur un fundamento dicte Turris vitra. C. pedes; Harvey, op. cit., pp.49-51. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (subsequently R. C. H. M.), *An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Hertfordshire*, London, 1910, p.210 dates the existing building at Hunsdon House to the sixteenth century; but Mr. N. J. Moore believes that substantial portions of the 1440's building survive (personal communication; discussion of this has been delayed).


19 For discussion of the date and nature of this complex building see W. B. Simpson, *The Building Accounts of Tattershall Castle*, 1434 by years after the first edition of his book. From the material given by J. A. Wight, in *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, Harmondsworth, 1964, p.631, this seems to be a healthy (but not a building of a great merchant's house*), Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Vol. 10, 1975, pp.36-47.

20 Thompson, op. cit., p.321.

21 Personal observation. Excavation by L. Keen and N. H. Hawtry have shown that the tower-house here was about 9m x 9m (39' x 39'), which compares closely with Hussey Tower: D. M. Wilson and D. G. Hurst, *Medieval Britain in 1969*, *Medical Archaeology*, 14, 1970, p.191.


23 Cf. Wilson and Hurst, op. cit., p.191: 'Pottery from the ruins of the S.E. wall suggests demolition in the sixteenth century.'

24 L. T. Smith (ed.), *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543*, vol. 4, London, 1909, p.115: 'One of the Cromwells built a pretty turret caulling the Toure of S. Fisc the Moore.'

25 D. N. B., *sub nomine*.

26 Curzon and Tipping, op. cit., pp.63-4 (the suggestion is Tipping's).
on Sundays would not inevitably result in eternal damnation, led to the development of the ‘tripper’ seaside resorts such as Southend, Margate and Cleethorpes, whilst the leisureed and wealthier classes sought longer periods of recreation in resorts such as Bournemouth. The day trippers are, of course, more than ever with us, although their mode of transport now tends to be the motor car, and it is significant that trip trains are now virtually non-existent in Cleethorpes, where trippers in their thousands used to be debouched virtually on to the beach.

This book offers a useful compendium of the history of the seaside holiday and its social connotations, and it cannot reasonably be expected to cover in detail the history and development of individual resorts. Blackpool, Brighton and Scarborough have been selected as representative of resorts in general, and the local historian who is interested in the Lincolnshire coast resorts will find only half a dozen brief references to Skegness and Mablethorpe and not a single acknowledgement of the existence of Cleethorpes, a notable example of railway enterprise.

There are twenty-six photographs, mainly of Blackpool beach, and the book may be recommended largely as a social study assisting the local historian to place his researches in a wider context. Some two hundred references are listed in a useful bibliography.

E. H. TREVITT
CLEETHORPES


Simpson and Lloyd’s Middle Class Housing in Britain was written in the early 1970’s as a companion to Stanley Chapman’s symposium on the history of working class housing but met with long delays in the press, so much recent work on the influence of aristocratic land ownership in the Victorian city does not appear. Nevertheless, the editors were able to bring together studies of middle class housing in six individual towns (Glasgow, Royal Leamington Spa, Hampstead, Sheffield, Exeter, and Nottingham), then perhaps all the research that had been done in this neglected field. Amongst the most informative and scholarly are their own contributions, in particular Simpson’s ‘West End of Glasgow, 1830-1914’, a meticulously researched piece of urban estate development which takes us from the initial choice of this locality for middle class housing, based upon scenery, climate, and potential for exclusiveness, through each stage of the building process, to a detailed consideration of the housing market drawing upon a sample of over 1,000 house prices and apartment rents from the property pages of the Glasgow Herald and other newspapers, the account concluding with a discussion of the architecture of the buildings and a description of their furnishings and contents.

Jeremy Gould’s well produced monograph examines the inter-war domestic architecture of the Modern Movement, a minority group of young architects who, stimulated by Continental developments, sought to challenge traditional architectural styles with the logic of function and technology. While, as Gould declares, one sector of the market had undergone ‘almost total revolution’ within two decades, the Movement never found widespread acceptance. Very little speculative

Book Reviews

BESIDE THE SEA SIDEBY James Walvin, 176pp., illus., Allen Lane, 1978, £6.75.

This is a succinct account of the growth of holidays by the seaside in England and Wales. The proliferation of railways during the latter half of the nineteenth century, coupled with the introduction of Bank Holidays and the slow growth of the belief that travel and pleasure-seeking...