

was to operate the clause in the statutes which provided for a finance committee with two lay members. We did not need any legislation to do either of those things; the possibility was there and only needed to be used. In the last quarter of a century I think that most chapters have done something similar, bringing lay expertise into their administration and financial care. As regards the buildings the recent Care of Cathedrals Measure requires Chapters to have a specialised committee to advise on the care of the fabric and provides external controls on what can be done. That has been an important statutory change. I believe that there is much of what the Commission would like to happen which can be done by the cathedrals themselves without the setting up of new statutory bodies such as the proposed, and I think cumbrous, Greater Council.

I agree with the desire to bring cathedrals into closer association with their dioceses, but rather than establish a new layer of control, which will have its own expense, I suggest that much could be achieved by a yearly or, if desired twice yearly, meeting of the administrative chapter with the Bishop's Council which is the standing committee of the diocesan synod.

More attention should be given to the bishop's role as visitor. Visitations are of two kinds. One is where the visitor is called in because of some dispute within the chapter or in the enforcement of the Care of Cathedrals Measure; the other is where he makes a general inspection and enquiry to see how the statutes are being observed and how the life and mission of the cathedral are being carried out. In both he needs the help of assessors. In relation to the first they will probably be experts, legal or other. In relation to the second they could be persons appointed by the Bishop's Council and this would help with the question of accountability. Where legislation might be needed would be to give more force to such directions as the Bishop with his assessors might make. The standard period for such a general visitation would be every five years.

I have heard it said that this Report provides a good check-list for what cathedrals should be doing. Some simplification of the 1963 and 1978 Cathedrals Measures and the 1978 Dioceses Measure, some requirement for consultation with the Bishop's Council, and some strengthening of the bishop's authority as visitor would, I believe, make possible all that is necessary.

*TREASURES ON EARTH*

By PETER BURMAN (ed)

Donhead (1994) 304pp (hardback £30)

ISBN 1-873394-10-1

A review by Peter H. B. Allsopp  
Chairman, Bath and Wells Diocesan Advisory Committee

The key to this excellent book lies in its subtitle – A good housekeeping guide to churches and their contents. As one would expect from a work edited and introduced by Peter Burman – formerly secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches – it is a carefully prepared and practical guide. His introduction could be usefully read by every churchwarden charged with the care of the fabric of his church.

Fifteen chapters are devoted to the parts and contents of churches, from bells and books, through painting in various forms, heating and lighting, metal-work and sculpture, etc., to woodwork; a comprehensive collection. Two other chapters by the editor contain his introduction to the care of the fabric and a very valuable conclusion and sources of advice.

This is a book to use, of which I have not yet read every word. My comments are therefore to be thought of as suggestions for the future.

The effects of heating are referred to in individual chapters, but greater stress on the risks attached could have been put in the main section on heating and ventilation. The wishes and expectations of worshippers to be warm are contrasted with the well-being of the building, but to avoid litigation, worshippers should perhaps be advised to wear an extra jersey. This chapter and that on sculpture have most useful glossaries, which would be a useful addition to some other chapters.

For the layman, the historical explanations are absorbing (see particularly those on bells and decorative plasterwork). Since each chapter deals with a topic covered in detail in specialist works, its author deserves praise for the distillation of his subject. Further reading can be undertaken after reference to the full bibliography.

Excellent detailed explanations carry the risk that a PCC, to save money, may be persuaded by an enthusiast to allow DIY treatment, creating more problems than are solved. The faculty jurisdiction, properly applied, is a safeguard, but what if it is ignored? I found little reference to it and it is absent from the index. In the editor's two chapters there is advice on the independent expertise available.

Good advice regarding the use of experts is in the chapter on lighting, where those with a vested interest, e.g. lighting manufacturers, are contrasted with true independents. DAC recommendations to use the latter can be unpopular.

The only subject not having its own chapter is the care of stonework – jointing, mortar-mixes, etc. – though touched on in the introduction and the chapter on sculpture. This is a minor lack in a work to be highly recommended.

304 pages, hardbacked, for £30 is not unreasonable, but may deter many for whom the book is intended and to whom it would be invaluable. A cheaper paperback edition would attract a wider market – non-experts on DACs (and everyone is a non-expert in something), leaders among NADFAS church recorders, some churchwardens, and DAC chairmen (I wish the book had been available when I took post!).

As the preface says, *The various forms of rot,, woodworm and so forth are not greatly interested in varieties of religious dogma, and the problems which beset our buildings – sacred and secular – will generally be found to have their origins in a failure of basic maintenance.*