

ROOD STAIRS OF THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

JOSHUA SCHWIESO

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the English Reformation in the 1530s it was common for parish churches to have a screen across the entrance to the chancel, a rood group (Christ on the cross flanked by St Mary and St John) hanging above or in the chancel arch, and a rood loft or gallery below these figures from which they could be accessed. These lofts were reached either by stone stairs built into the adjacent wall, or by wooden stairs or ladders.

The carved rood figures were destroyed throughout England and Wales between 1548 and the early 1560s following an Order in Council against idolatry of 1547 (Cardwell, 1844, 48). The lofts were also the targets of reforming zeal and very few survive. The Elizabethan government ordered the screens, but not the lofts, to be retained (Frere and Kennedy, 1910, 108). Unfortunately many screens fell victim to subsequent neglect or iconoclasm, a surprising number being removed during Victorian restorations.

Some 70 medieval screens survive in the diocese of Bath and Wells, together with remains of some 20 others, though little remains of the lofts other than their floors. These screens have received scholarly attention (e.g. Bligh-Bond and Camm 1909) unlike the 'rood stairs' by which the vanished lofts were reached. This neglect is regrettable. Stone stairs, or parts of them, survive in 200 of the 482 churches of medieval origin in the diocese, and the existence of another 21, now vanished, can be demonstrated from 18th and 19th century records.

The state of knowledge in this diocese is a microcosm of that in England as a whole – the few surviving screens are well studied whilst the more durable, and common, access stairs have received little scholarly attention. This paper aims to remedy this neglect by examining all the extant rood stairs in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Following a brief consideration of the factors that led to the erection of screens and lofts, the surviving rood stairs are described employing a typology first

developed on samples from 3 English counties (Schwieso 2005). This leads to an analysis of the location, dating and distribution of stair types. The paper concludes with suggestions as to what light this casts on the functions of rood lofts. An appendix gives details of all stairs. Monasteries and cathedrals have been excluded, except for Dunster and Stogursey, churches that also served as parish churches. In addition, two parish churches have been included which were in the diocese until the 1880s, Clayhanger and Holwell.

ORIGINS OF ROOD STAIRS AND THEIR LOCATION IN CHURCHES

Roods appear in churches before the conquest (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 96) though they were not then always located at the junction of nave and chancel as became the norm in the later Middle Ages. The increasing importance of the consecrated host, and the desire to distance lay people from the holy of holies, led to the increasing use, and importance, of chancel screens from the early 13th century (Cragoe 2005). This screening of the chancel in turn made it difficult to see crucifixes placed at the high altar and hence the habit grew of placing roods above the chancel arch where the laity could easily see them. The same growth of transubstantiation theory (Cross and Barnwell, 2005, 13) led to the veneration of the rood itself, with its image of the body of Christ. This stimulated the construction of galleries or lofts, to allow the rood to be cleaned, veiled during lent, and to provide space for votive candles and even a small altar. The chancel screens proved to be useful supports for the rood figures and lofts, though in large buildings the rood and its loft could be independent structures high above the screen if the chancel arch was of great height (Vallance 1936, 66).

TYPES OF STAIR

Introduction

Some small churches, consisting merely of nave and chancel, may have never had more than a ladder by which to reach the loft, and may not even have had a loft. No ladders or wooden stairs survive in England, though a few still exist in Wales, as at Llanwnnog (Wheeler 2006, 139).

Stone stairs were never freestanding, being enclosed by, or cut into, the structure of the church. They appear in the nave or aisle sidewalls nearest to the chancel arch, in the pier or spandrel of the nave arcade or, less commonly, in the walls of the chancel or its chapels. When there is a central tower the loft may be reached from its access stair or even, in big churches, from the first floor of the tower.

The screen in an aisled church would run between or just in front of arcade piers or the chancel arch. Often there was space for the loft to pass beneath the next arch to the west. If the arcade was too low for this, two strategies were employed. Firstly, the arch could be distorted so as to provide enough space for the loft, as at Combe Florey. Secondly, a passage or 'creep' could be formed through the spandrel of the arcade as at Halse.

The following typology distinguishes firstly

between stairs that rise in a largely straight flight ("simple") and those that rise in a spiral ("complex"). It then distinguishes in each of these categories between more and less elaborate architectural treatments of the stairs. Rood stairs are virtually unmentioned by mediaeval sources so the various distinctions made below are based purely on the physical layout of the stairs. There is a loose correlation between the complexity of stairs and the architectural sophistication of the church in which they occur.

A note on data. The research produced far too much data to be included in this paper. Key summary information is displayed in two maps, 6 tables, and the Appendix. The raw data has been put on a CD, which is available at the Somerset Archives.

'Simple' Stairs

Wall Stairs

Simple stairs could be fitted within the thickness of the church wall. They almost inevitably rise as a straight run, though in small buildings they may curve, not having to rise very far. Occasionally, as at Weston Bampfylde (Fig.1), these stairs start from a window bay. This awkward arrangement would



Fig. 1 Weston Bampfylde



Fig. 2 Broadway

have required a wooden stair or ladder across the lower part of the window bay, but the window would have provided light to both screen and loft. A few stairs rise in an open recess (e.g. Broadway Fig. 2).

There are 22 surviving wall stairs in the diocese (frequency data for all types of stair are displayed in Table 1).

Spandrel Stairs

The stair may only have one or two steps, passing through a spandrel of the nave arcade from aisle to nave proper (e.g. Emborough Fig. 3). Clearly a ladder or stair has been lost in such cases since the “lower” doorway is, on average, 6 feet (182.88 cms) from the floor. The churchwarden’s accounts for Somerton refer to the removal of the rood stair c. 1581 and the insertion of a new window (Dunning 1974, 150), though the spandrel passage survives. Twelve spandrel stairs remain in the diocese.



Fig. 3 Emborough

Buttresses

When a wall was not substantial enough to contain a stair it could be widened by a shallow (normally) external buttress. Unlike medieval structural buttresses, which are deeper than they are wide, and

step in as they rise, rood buttresses are normally of the same depth most of the way up and are wider than they are deep. Most have sloping roofs of stone slabs (e.g. Hemington Fig.4), though some are now slated, e.g. Selworthy. Could such churches originally have been thatched? In two cases the buttress is gabled.



Fig. 4 Hemington

At Laverton the stair rises from a three light window within the buttress. As at Weston Bampfylde, this stair would be supplemented by a wooden stair or ladder when in use.

There are 56 buttress stairs surviving in the diocese.

Sloping Buttresses

In some cases, perhaps to economise on material, the buttress steps up or slopes from west to east following the rising stairs, being higher at the upper doorway end than the lower (e.g. Lyng Fig 5).

There are nine such stairs in the diocese, all with sloping stone roofs.



Fig. 5 Lyng

'Complex' Stairs

A straight stair of any length takes up wall space and makes the insertion of windows to light the screen and nave difficult (lofts could be lit by a relatively small high window as at Compton Dundon or by a window at the top of the stair as at Kilve). Spiral stairs reduce the use of wall space, especially where the building is tall, but they are usually too wide to be housed solely within the wall unless placed where several walls meet, so normally have their own turret.

Pier Stairs

Room for a spiral or a newel stair could be found where the chancel arch meets the nave arcade and, or, arch into a chancel chapel (e.g. Pawlett Fig. 6). Sometimes the walls are slightly thickened to accommodate it as at Tickenham.

There are 18 pier stairs in the diocese.

Rectangular Turrets

Turrets project more than 30" (76.2 cm) from the wall and are roughly square, whilst buttresses are shallower and broader. At their simplest, turrets might appear to be little more than thick buttresses. However the ratio between width and depth in



Fig. 6 Pawlett



Fig. 7 Clapton in Gordano

buttresses differs significantly from that between width and depth in rectangular turrets, suggesting that the distinction is appropriate (Schwieso 2005).

The majority of rectangular turrets have sloping roofs (e.g. Clapton in Gordano Fig. 7) and only serve the rood loft. At Chilthorne Domer a rectangular turret continued upwards to the roof, narrowing above the level of the door onto the rood loft, suggesting that the main use of the stair was to reach the loft, roof access being secondary.

There are 24 rectangular turrets in the diocese.

Multiangular Turrets

The most architecturally appealing stairs have multiangular turrets. These may have ashlar quoins (e.g. Cheddar), or be wholly of ashlar (e.g. Stogumber Fig. 8). They normally also access aisle or nave roofs, though a few terminate below roof level (e.g. Huish Champflower Fig. 9). They are normally 5 sided, becoming irregularly heptagonal or octagonal above roof level.

Turret tops may be incorporated into aisle or nave parapets or given independent parapets. These may be panelled (e.g. Cheddar) or crenellated as at Stogumber. These are architectural features in



Fig. 9 Huish Champflower

their own right. At Burrington (Fig. 10) the ashlar octagonal turret is crowned with a small stone spire, with pinnacles on the corners, above a row of quatrefoils, followed by a double tier of cusped blank tracery. Minehead has one of the finest rood turrets in Britain. Though technically multiangular, this huge turret is almost rectangular and contains a magnificent stair lit by 6 windows of varying size



Fig. 8 Stogumber



Fig. 10 Burrington



Fig. 11 Minehead



Fig. 13 Huish Episcopi

(Fig. 11). There are 37 multiangular turrets in the diocese.

Quarter Turrets

Where the rood stair stands at the junction of nave aisle and chancel (e.g. Curry Rivel), or nave and transept (e.g. Chard Fig. 12) the multiangular turret may only have 3 sides, at ground level. In a few cases such turrets are corbelled out above ground level (e.g. Huish Episcopi Fig. 13),



Fig. 12 Chard



Fig. 14 Mells

and project only slightly from the corner of the building.

At Mells (Fig. 14) a neat quarter turret with sloping stone roof stands at the junction of chancel and nave aisle *within* the north chapel. Foyle & Pevsner (2011, 555) regard this north chapel as an addition whilst English Heritage implies that all the arcades are of similar date (NHLE, Mells). It is therefore unclear as to whether the turret was originally outside or not.

There are 22 quarter turrets in the diocese.

Central Towers

A number of lofts were reached from the stairs of the central tower (for convenience two towers which rise above transepts are included in this number). Such towers usually had multiangular stair turrets but as the rood access here was clearly secondary, attention has been focussed largely upon the access doorways. 12 central towers gave access to rood lofts in the diocese.

Other

Two stairs do not fit the above categories. At Priddy there are the remains of a small panelled internal turret, now used as the pulpit (Fig. 15). Similar, though grander, structures survive at Totnes in Devon and Buckminster in Leicestershire. At Batheaston the rebuilt south aisle wall preserves the form of a substantial stair which started in a window bay before becoming a corbelled out quarter turret. Unfortunately the internal arrangements of this unique structure were lost during the mid-19th century rebuilding.

Lost

In 21 cases all that remains is a few steps, a blocked doorway, or a reference in an 18th or 19th century source which gives no indication as to what form the stair took. In such cases the stair is referred to in the Tables and Maps as 'Lost'. (It should be also noted that twelve of the stairs that can be allocated to types are also known only from 19th century sources.)

Other Stair Matters

Multiple Stairs

12 churches have, or had, more than one rood stair, and one seems to have had a rood reached from above the screen loft. The stair types have already been discussed, but the details of, and possible reasons for, this duplication need discussion.

Bruton has three sets of stairs: a pier stair beside



Fig. 15 Priddy

the chancel arch, and damaged wall stairs in north and south nave aisles, one bay from the east. It is not clear whether the stairs were all in use at the same time. The pier stair rises to a higher level than the other two stairs so it is possible that it was the rood loft stair, with the aisle stairs serving lofts on subsidiary (parclose) screens. Alternatively, the two aisle stairs may have served a single screen and associated loft reaching right across the church, which was later replaced by a higher screen and loft further east.

At Glastonbury St John two quarter turrets, one where the north aisle meets the north transept, the other where the same transept meets the north chancel chapel, provide clear evidence of a change over time. The aisle stair leads up to a doorway opening near the top of the aisle wall, which is now blocked by one of the supporting shafts and brackets of the north aisle roof. This seems to have served a loft that ran across the west side of a central tower taken down around 1465 (Dunning 2006, p.38). The chapel stair, accessed from the north chancel chapel, leads to a passage that passes horizontally above the (thickened) arch from the north aisle into the chapel, reaching a doorway high above the east



Fig. 16 Glastonbury

respond of the north nave arcade (Fig 16). It is likely that this replaces the aisle stair

At Watchet there are the remains of two rood stairs. One, with an associated multiangular tower, is in the north chancel chapel. The other, of which only the blocked doorways survive, is further west in the south nave aisle. The current, partially medieval, screen is sited at the east end of the nave, opposite the eastern (north) set of stairs. The westernmost stairs may, as at Glastonbury, have been associated with a lost central tower (Dunning 1985, 167).

Shepton Beauchamp has a quarter turret at the junction of south aisle and chancel, but a door high up on the *north* side of the nave seems to have been reached from a (blocked) pier stair in the northeast chapel. Again, it is hard to work out the exact relationship between these two stairs.

Beckington has two upper doorways to the existing rood stair. The first opens into the upper space of the north aisle, whilst the second, reached by a rough passage from the top of the stairs, exits into the upper north corner of the nave, suggesting a modification of the loft access. Two blocked rectangular openings in the chancel may represent

a further stair to something at rood loft level. Yet again, the exact chronology of these works is unclear.

At Dunster, the parish shared its church with a Benedictine community. In the late 15th century disputes between the two led to the parish taking full control of the nave and creating a chancel for themselves by partitioning off its east end with a magnificent screen, reached by an octagonal stair turret (Hancock 1905, 11). The parish seems previously to have used the space underneath the crossing as its chancel, and a high doorway, reached from the tower staircase, must represent the rood access of this earlier arrangement.

The arrangement at Chedzoy is mysterious. Currently the church has a pier stair to the north, but the 1837 Buckler drawing (SHC, SANHS Piggot Collection) clearly shows a quarter turret in the corner of the south transept and chancel. However, the Wheatley drawing of 1843 shows no turret there (SHC, A/DAS 1/83/1). This area was extensively restructured in 1884 by Butterfield who revealed the arches to a lost 13th century south chancel chapel. Bligh-Bond and Camm (1909, 155) claim that a rood screen and loft were destroyed shortly after 1841. It is possible that Buckler made a mistake but his drawings generally seem to be more precise than those of Wheatley. It seems likely then that this rood stair was removed when the screen and loft were destroyed, between the date of the two illustrations.

Two churches have stairs to the north and south of the building. At Combe St Nicholas a handsome pair of matching multiangular towers stand between north and south nave aisles and chancel chapels, and give access to the respective aisle roofs as well as to the (lost) rood loft. The likely explanation is that each of the aisle and chancel chapel roofs needed their own access because nave and chancel have steeply pitched roofs. At Banwell this secondary function is even more obvious. Handsome twin multiangular turrets flank the chancel. The north turret gives access to the rood loft, to the north aisle roof, and finally to the steeply pitched roof of the clerestoried nave. The south turret does the same for the south aisle roof and the south side of the nave roof, but is solid at ground level and its stair can only be accessed across the rood loft (which was thus effectively protected from destruction at the Reformation).

In four churches with a central tower, there is evidence of more complicated arrangements. Unfortunately all these churches have lost their lofts

and screens, making understanding the mediaeval layout difficult. At Crewkerne a door reached from the ringing chamber opens in the south spandrel of the chancel arch. This is surely the rood loft door but it is so high that the loft must have been hung well above the screen. However, a second door at a much lower level in the upper south wall of the chancel, reached from the tower stair, is at the same height as four massive brackets on the inner corner of each of the tower piers, suggesting that there was another loft beneath the tower. Clevedon has access to a (lost) loft in front of the western tower arch from a nave sloping buttress stair. However, a spandrel stair passes through the eastern tower arch from the chancel to the area beneath the tower, entering this space at a similar height to that of the western doorway. Did one loft extend right under the tower, or was the rood loft moved from the eastern arch to the western arch at some time? A similar layout occurs at Wedmore where a loft in front of the western tower arch was accessed from the tower stair whilst a second stair passed through the spandrel of the westernmost arch of the north chancel chapel, east of the tower. As at Clevedon, both doors are at a similar height and could have served a single platform running back from the rood loft into the west part of the chancel. Finally, at Axbridge a rood loft to the west of the central tower (loft and screen both lost) was reached from a multiangular rood turret on the south aisle. However, there are also two doorways exiting from the central tower stair at much the same height as the upper doorway of the multiangular turret. One of these opens into the upper part of the north transept, the other into the upper part of the chancel. Again these arrangements would fit two consecutive rood lofts or a single large platform under the central tower running back from a rood loft in front of that tower.

Evidence for the function of these particular platforms is lacking but they could have accommodated organs as at St Mary-at-Hill, London (Littlehales 1905), a first floor chapel as at Tenby in Wales (Thomas 1966), or a chantry as at Grantham, in Lincolnshire (Cox and Harvey 1907, 97).

Squint Passages

A few stairs are reached from squint passages – walk through passages linking the end of an aisle with the chancel. At West Pennard the passage is of considerable size: at Churchill it is no larger than a doorway. At Portbury and at Pilton, the exact

arrangement is not clear: the upper door is above the passage but no lower door is now visible.

Churches without Rood Stairs

There are about 482 churches in the Diocese of Bath and Wells with medieval predecessors, and perhaps 10 more that have vanished without trace. Of the 482, there is evidence that 221 have or once had at least one rood stair.

What of the other 260 odd churches? In most of them the likely location for a rood stair has been partially or wholly rebuilt. Of the 121 churches that definitely had medieval screens (Bligh-Bond and Camm, 1909) some 35 have no remaining stair. Another 7 have neither screen nor stair but there is a *ceilure d'honneur* above the chancel arch, evidence of a rood (and thus a loft?). 4 churches without stairs or screen have either windows to light the rood, brackets to support a vanished loft, or evidence of mutilation of the chancel arch for screen and tympanum. There are other hints of vanished stairs. Muchelney has 2 chancel chapels, each with a deep panelled arch between them and the adjacent nave aisle. The arch on the south rests on shafts rising from bases at ground level but in the otherwise identical northern arch there are no shafts, merely blank walls that would permit a wooden stair to a loft.

Thus it is possible that stone rood stairs have been lost by rebuilding and, or, that some churches had wooden stairs. However, Lunnon's (2010) study of a deanery in Norfolk led her to suggest that at the Reformation some churches had only lofts, others only screens and some neither. So some churches may never have had rood lofts or stairs.

ANALYSIS

There are remains of rood stairs in 200 churches, though as some churches had more than one stair, and there is documentary evidence of 21 stairs that have since disappeared, a total of 235 stairs exist or once existed. Data is complete only for 101 of these, so the totals in the following analyses vary between tables.

Orientation

Table 1 shows that overall there are over twice as many stairs on the north of churches as there are on the south. The predominance of northern over southern location holds for every stair type. Rood stairs thus differ from porches, which are more

TABLE 1 – STAIR TYPE * ORIENTATION

		North	South
		Simple Stairs	Wall
	Spandrel	9	3
	Buttress	41	15
	Sloping Buttress	7	2
Complex Stairs	Pier	14	4
	Rectangular Turret	15	9
	Multiangular Turret	24	13
	Quarter Turret	16	6
	Central Tower	7	5
	Other	0	2
	Lost	16	5
	Totals	164	71

often on the southern than on the northern side of a church (Wall 1912, p. 53).

Could there be a preference for placing stairs to the north, so as to minimise the wall space lost for windows on the brighter side of the church? To test this hypothesis a more detailed study was carried out, comparing the orientation of the 24 rectangular

turret stairs with that of the porch in these churches. Of the 14 with a stair to the north, eleven had southern porches, two were entered from the west, and one from the north. However, of the ten with the stair to the south, nine had a southern porch and one a northern porch. There seems, then, no simple relationship between porch and stair position.

Access

Table 2 shows the location in the church of lower doorways. It can be seen that over 80% of the stairs were accessed from the nave and its aisles, and only 8% from the chancel or its chapels. The nave was, of course, the domain of the parishioners. Graves (2000, 161) claimed that in Norfolk access was also predominately from the nave whereas in Devon it was more often from the chancel and suggested differences in the use of the rood loft in these two counties. This issue will be considered in the discussion section below.

The figures do not suggest any difference between the nave and chancels in terms of the types of stair found in each.

Stair Details

What of security arrangements for the actual stairs? 126 of the stairs that are still open have doors or evidence of lower doors (it has been assumed that if there is a door now, there probably was one originally). Eight apparently had no doors, these latter almost inevitably being small wall stairs.

TABLE 2 – STAIR TYPE * LOCATION OF ENTRY

	Nave	Aisle	Crossing	Transept	Chapel	Chancel
Wall	14	4		2	1	1
Spandrel	1	3		4	3	1
Buttress	46	6		1		3
Sloping Buttress	9					
Pier	4	8		1	5	
Rectangular Turret	14	7		2	1	
Multiangular Turret	6	30				1
Quarter Turret	2	11		7	1	1
Central Tower	2		4	6		
Other	1	1				
Lost	15	4		1		1
Totals	114	74	4	24	11	8

Most of the doors opened inwards but where space inside the stair was restricted, as at North Wootton, the door opened outwards. Only four of the current doors appear to be medieval, the finest being at Stogumber. This is carved and has its original lock plate and handle. It is rarely possible to tell from the doorway whether or not there was a lock as a simple bolt or latch would use the same wall fittings as a lock.

Nine stairs, which are not central tower stairs, have clear evidence of upper doors. In 45 churches the stairs continue beyond the rood loft to the roof. Of these, 12 were Central tower stairs, 21 Multiangular turrets, ten Quarter turrets, and two Rectangular turrets.

The 170 lower doorways measured had average widths of 21.6" (54.9 cm), median 20.9" (53.1 cm), mode 20" (50.8 cm). The 120 upper doorways measured were on average 22.3" (56.6 cm) wide, median 21.75" (55.3 cm), mode 20" (50.8 cm) were similarly constricted. The smallest room door size in the UK is 24" (61 cm), anything smaller being regarded as suitable only for cupboards (Door Sizes 2016). With regard to doorway heights, only 6% of the 161 lower doorways that seemed to retain their medieval height were the current British standard height of 78" (198.1 cm), their average, median and mode being around 67" (170.2 cm).

Of the 54 stairs whose widths were measured, 23 (42.5%) were below 24" (61 cm) wide, the current norm for loft stairs, and 96% were below the current standard stair width of 32" (81.3 cm). Of 80 sets of stairs where the risers were measured, nearly 60% were above the current UK building regulation height of $8\frac{5}{8}$ " (21.8 cm) (Stair Sizes 2016). If we suppose that the average medieval person was smaller than we are, the narrowness might not matter but the high risers would make them even more awkward to climb than they are today.

Of the 192 stairs where evidence remains, 88 have no window at all, 76 have one window, 24 have two windows, three turrets have three windows and one has six. The normal window is a slot or loop about 5" (12.7 cm) wide and 20" (50.8 cm) high. A few turrets have small quatrefoils (Glastonbury, Durleigh), or traceried windows (Greinton, Ruishton, Minehead), and occasionally the stair rises from (Laverton, Batheaston), or into (Kilve, Porlock), a window bay. Where the rood stair also gives access to a central tower, the stairs have external or internal loops or quatrefoils. In general, then, stairs are poorly lit.

Further evidence relating to stair use comes

from the height above floor level of the lower doors (Table 3). Current floor levels may not, of course, be identical with those of the middle ages, but the likelihood is that floor levels have risen rather than fallen over the centuries. Table 3 shows that the average heights above floor level for most types of stair were such as to require augmentation by a short ladder or open stair in the body of the church. A set of stone steps below the lower doorway survives at Walton in Gordano and another at Stoke sub Hamdon, but their general absence points to these auxiliary steps being of wood. Starting the stairs some way up the wall reduces the length of stair needed to reach the loft. In the case of spandrel stairs, which begin 8 or more feet (243.8 cm) above floor level, a ladder would have been needed, such as that purchased by the wardens of St Mary's, Chester, in 1541 (Vallance 1936, 73). Were such wooden accessories fixed, suggesting frequent use of the rood loft, or of a more temporary nature, being brought out only on special occasions?

The majority of stairs that were examined were not extensively worn, and some of those that showed wear (e.g. at Glastonbury) still served to access the roof, which might account for wear. However, many stairs seem to have been unblocked and, or, repaired during 19th century restorations, so their present condition may not reflect their state

TABLE 3 – STAIR LOWER DOOR HEIGHTS ABOVE FLOOR

	TYPE	NO.	Average
Simple Stairs	Wall	66	25"
	Spandrel	11	83"
	Buttress	37	21"
	Sloping Buttress	6	22"
Complex Stairs	Pier	8	29"
	Rectangular Turret	20	17"
	Multiangular Turret	33	11"
	Quarter Turret	18	18"
	Other	0	0
	Central Tower	10	12"
	Lost turret	11	21"
	Total	170	23"

TABLE 4 – STAIR TYPE * CHURCH SIZE

		Church size	
		1-3	4-8
Simple Stairs	Wall	16	5
	Spandrel	7	3
	Buttress	50	5
	Sloping Buttress	7	2
Complex Stairs	Pier	10	7
	Rectangular Turret	14	10
	Multiangular Turret	15	20
	Quarter Turret	8	11
	Central Tower	5	6
	Other	1	1
	Lost	15	3
	TOTAL	148	73

Church Sizes Key

- 1 = nave & chancel
- 2 = nave & chancel, aisle OR nave & chancel, transept OR nave & chancel, chapel
- 3 = nave & chancel, aisles OR nave & chancel, aisle, chapel OR nave & chancel, transepts OR nave & chancel, central tower, transept
- 4 = nave & chancel, aisle, chapels OR nave & chancel, aisle, transepts OR nave & chancel, aisle, chapels OR nave & chancel, aisle, chapel, transept OR nave & chancel, aisles, chapel
- 5 = nave & chancel, aisles, transepts OR nave & chancel, central tower, transepts, chapel OR nave & chancel, aisles, chapels
- 6 = nave & chancel, central tower, transepts, chapels OR nave & chancel, aisles, chapels, transept OR nave & chancel, aisle, chapels, transepts OR nave & chancel, aisles, central tower, transepts
- 7 = nave & chancel, aisles, chapels, transepts OR nave & chancel, aisles, chapel, central tower, transepts
- 8 = nave & chancel, aisles, transepts, central tower, chapels

when they went out of use. Quite a number of the doorways had been repaired at the same time.

From the above discussion, it appears that these stairs do not seem suitable for frequent use, especially by people in elaborate costumes such as priests.

Size of Church

Table 4 relates the type of the stair to the size of church. It seems reasonable to suppose that the more architecturally grand the stair, the more it would have cost, and that bigger (richer) churches should have grander stairs. Data on medieval parish income is hard to gather, so a crude comparison was made between stair type and church size, as measured by the elaboration of the building in terms of aisles, transepts, central towers, and chapels.

The summary table shows that all stair types occur in small and large churches but that there is a partial relationship between church size and stair elaborateness in the direction predicted. Wall stairs occur in the ratio of 3:1, buttresses in the ratio of 10:1, rectangular towers in a 3:2 ratio between small and large buildings. On the other hand multiangular turrets (3:4) and quarter turrets (2:3) are more common in large churches than in small ones.

Geographical Distribution

Fig 17 Map 1 shows that churches with surviving rood stairs are spread over the whole diocese. They are relatively scarce in the far west on Exmoor and the Brendons, where there are relatively few settlements with churches, and in the southeast where there seems to have been a lot of rebuilding. This may relate to the relative poverty of both these areas in the middle ages.

Turning to types of stair turret, it is hard to discern any significant differences in distribution (Fig 18 Map 2). Starting with the 'simple' types, wall stairs and buttress stairs (the latter the most common of all) occur across the diocese whilst stairs through spandrels are largely found in the eastern part of the diocese, and sloping buttresses mainly in the centre and south of the diocese. Turning to 'complex' types, multiangular towers are also widespread whereas rectangular towers tend to appear in the south, southwest and north west, pier stairs tend to be found in the north and north east whilst quarter towers tend to occur in the north west and central south. These latter concentrations may reflect the fact that medieval parishioners tended to use works known to them as patterns when commissioning new works (Badham 2015, 95).

Map 1: Location of Churches with evidence of Rood Stairs
Numbers as Appendix

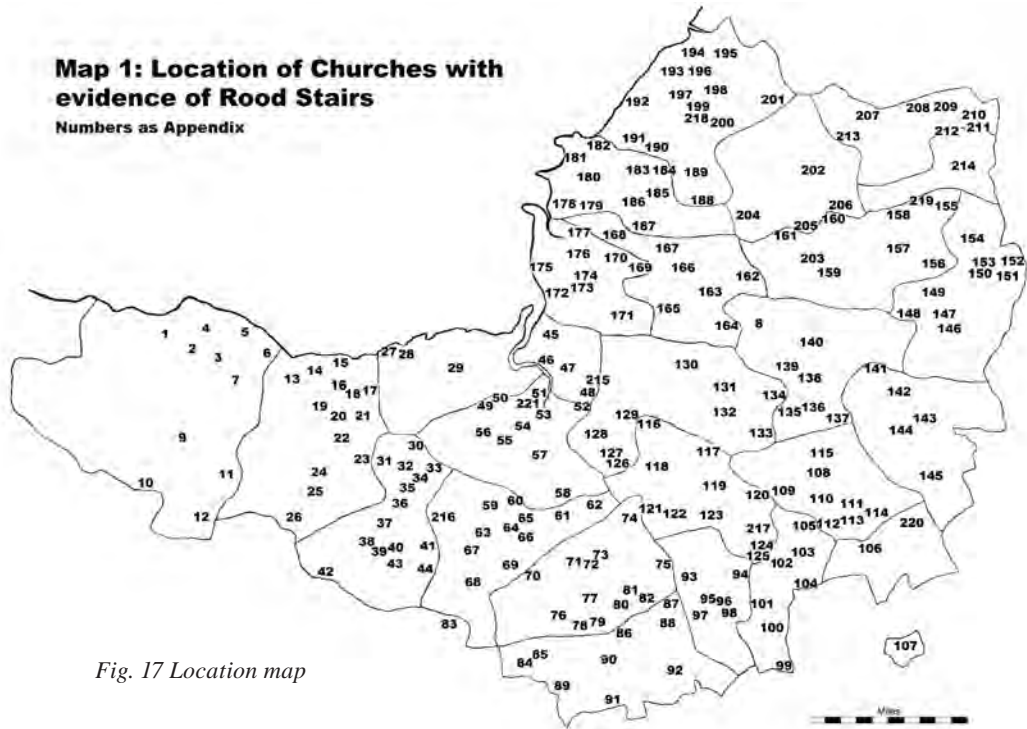
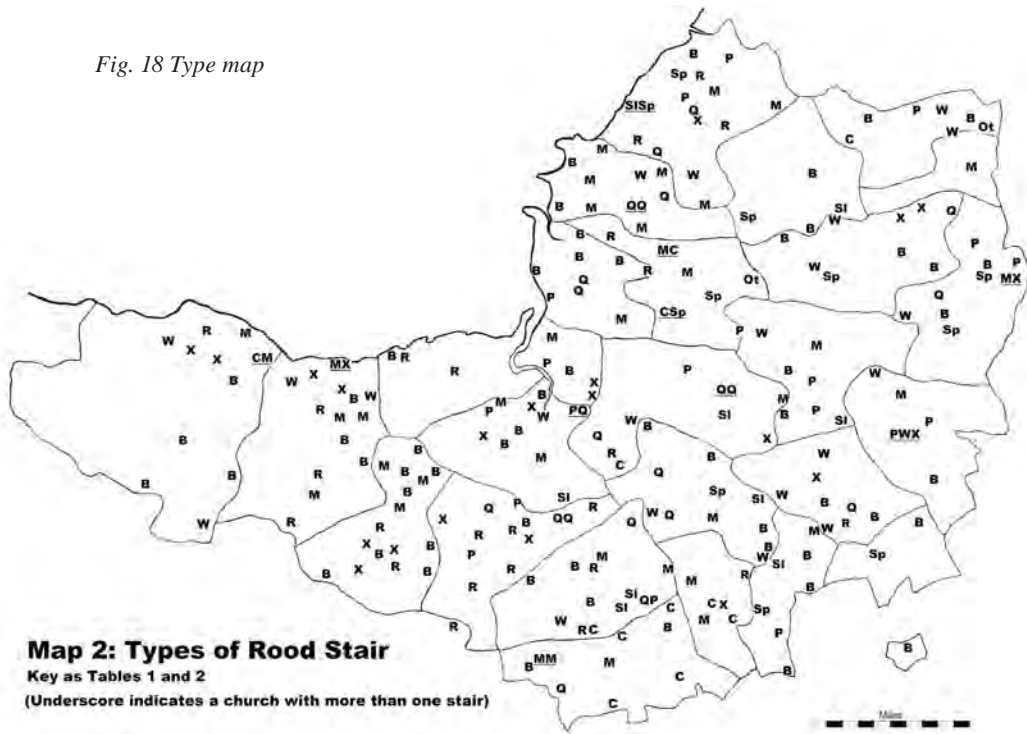


Fig. 17 Location map

Fig. 18 Type map



Map 2: Types of Rood Stair
Key as Tables 1 and 2
(Underscore indicates a church with more than one stair)

TABLE 5 - STAIR TYPE * RURAL DEANERY

		Rural Deaneries																									
		12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	1
	Dunster																										
	Wiveliscombe																										
	Quantoxhead																										
	Wellington																										
	Pawlett																										
	Bridgwater																										
	Taunton																										
	Ilminster																										
	Crewkerne																										
	Martock																										
	Marston Magna																										
	Milborne Port																										
	Cary																										
	Ilchester																										
	Glastonbury																										
	Shepton Mallet																										
	Bruton																										
	Frome																										
	Midsomer Norton																										
	Axbridge																										
	Burnham																										
	Locking																										
	Portishead																										
	Chew Magna																										
	Keynsham																										
	Bath																										
Wall		2	2				1		1					3	2	1	1	2	1	2			1	1			2
Spandrel												1	1		1				2	1	2			2			1
Buttress		4	3	1	8	1	3	1	3	2		3	2	2	4		2	1	2	3			4	2	1	2	2
Sloping Buttress							1		2			1			1	1								1	1		
TOTAL 'SIMPLE' STAIRS		6	5	1	8	1	5	1	6	2	0	5	3	5	8	2	4	3	5	6	2	4	3	5	4	4	0
Pier						1	2	2	1			1			1	2	2	2			1	1		2		1	
Rectangular Tower		1	3	2	2			7	2		1				1						1	1		3			
Multangular Tower		2	4		2		2	1	2	3	2	1			1	1	1	1	1	1		2	2	5	3		1
Quarter tower							1	3	2	1			1		2	3			1	1		2	3	2			
TOTAL 'COMPLEX' STAIRS		3	7	2	4	1	5	13	7	4	3	2	0	1	3	6	3	3	4	1	4	6	8	10	0	1	1
Other																											
Central Tower		1							1	4	2					1					2						1
Lost		2	3		3	2	1	2			1			1		1		1	1	2				1			

Grouping by rural deaneries suggests some weak relationships (Table 5). There are roughly equal numbers of 'simple' and 'complex' stairs overall but they are not evenly distributed. A few rural deaneries, most notably Taunton and Locking have a predominance of complex turrets whereas Ilchester and Wellington have more simple stairs. It is hard to read much into these figures.

Date

Few documentary records relate to the building of rood stairs in the diocese. Almost the only direct evidence comes from Glastonbury where a rood loft was provided in 1439 together with a turret to the north of the church (Dunning 2006, 144). Hence dating has to be based on associated architectural features and fittings (though very often the dating of these is itself somewhat speculative).

For 69 churches, the stair turret can be seen either to be an integral part of the adjacent walling which can be dated either architecturally or through documentary sources, or to be related to a datable screen. (Appendix). One or two turrets appear to be 14th century such as Othery, Raddington and Ruishton. At North Cadbury the rood stair appears to belong with the church, which was rebuilt around 1417 (Orbach and Pevsner 2014). The aisle at Huish Champflower is dated to c.1534 (Dunning 1985, 88), that at Halse to 1546 (Dunning 1985, 80), showing that screens and lofts were being erected right up to the Reformation. Table 6 shows the average dates for the types of stair. 'Simple' stairs are perhaps very slightly earlier than 'Complex' stairs but there is no major difference between dates of the two.

Doorway arch and jamb mouldings support the preceding argument. Of the lower doorway arches, 36 are two centred, 110 four centred, nine have an ogee moulding and 12 are simple rectangles. These doorways have chamfers, wave mouldings, or simple rebates. The upper doorway mouldings tend to be simpler. 15 were two centred, 64 four centred, 44 were simple rectangles and only one had an ogee moulding. All this points to the 15th and 16th centuries.

Overall, the evidence points to rood stairs in the diocese being constructed between 1400 and the 1540s, the majority being built post 1450.

DISCUSSION

Contemporary documents refer to a range of activities occurring in rood lofts: attending to the rood, and the candles burning in its honour

TABLE 6 – STAIR TYPE * DATE

	TYPE	NO.	RANGE
Simple Stairs	Wall	5	15th C.
	Spandrel	0	
	Buttress	13	1400–1490
	Sloping Buttress	2	15th Century
Complex Stairs	Pier	0	
	Rectangular Turret	6	1350–1500
	Multangular Turret	27	1400–1546
	Quarter Turret	10	1450–1500
	Other	0	
	Central Tower	6	Late 14 th C. – c.1500
	Total	69	

(Huitson 2014, 72), masses and choral services (Long 1922, 66) especially on Palm Sunday and Easter (Williamson 2006, 205), playing of organs (Dunning 2006, 144), storage of the valuables of parishioners or guilds (Hannah 1936, 200), storage of Easter sepulchres (Huitson 2014, 152), and the keeping of chained books (Willoughby 2008, 177). Vallance (1936, 71) suggested that vestments for services in the loft might be stored there but there is no supporting documentary evidence. What does the Bath and Wells evidence suggest? It would certainly appear that most stairs would have been inconvenient for users. Even if one supposes that medieval people were smaller than modern individuals, their dimensions do not suggest regular use, at least by priests in bulky or valuable vestments. Stair windows are small so for the most part stairs are poorly lit. The height above floor level of the lower doorway would suggest a need for some sort of additional, apparently temporary, steps within the body of the church. The general picture then is of poorly lighted, constricted stairs reached by small doorways, in other words of stairs that were not frequently used by elaborately vested clergy. Indeed Vallance (1936, 70) doubted that the gospel was often sung in lofts because of the steepness of most rood stairs. This does not, of course, mean that priests or organists never used rood lofts.

On the other hand, the very existence of so many stairs, involving substantial expense particularly when they only served the rood loft, together with the fact that a door frequently restricted access to the stairs, both suggest that these were structures of some importance. Since most stairs are structurally part of the nave, we might surmise that their uses involved the laity more than they did the clergy. It has already been shown (Table 2) that over 80% of stairs were accessed from in front of the screen, 10% from a transept, which may have served as a chantry or private chapel, and only 8% from the chancel or a chancel chapel. Vallance (1936, 70) thought that this was typical of English rood stairs in general. It is of course possible that some rood stair doorways were actually located in small private chapels in the end of the aisles, but these would still have been lay owned. It would seem then, that the Somerset laity usually had better access to the rood loft than the clergy.

Some of this was probably relatively secular, some more sacred. The use of lofts for the storage of valuables, and occasionally ecclesiastical 'props' by the churchwardens has already been mentioned. Huitson (2014, 72) argues that the wear on many stairs does suggest some sort of frequent use, perhaps to tend candles burning before the rood. Whilst piscinae at loft level show that some English churches had altars in their lofts, there is no evidence of such in Somerset. However, maintenance of lights in front of the rood, and the cleaning and shrouding of the rood at Lent, would all have been lay activities.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that almost half of the mediaeval churches in the diocese once had rood lofts reached by stone stairs. Others may have been lost, some may have been reached by wooden steps or ladders, and a few may never have had a loft. Some of these stairs were little more than stone ladders but many were architectural features in their own right. They range from simple stairs burrowed into walls with no external features other than a tiny window, to elaborate turrets of ashlar providing access both to the rood loft and the church roof. Despite the paucity of contemporary documentation relevant to Somerset, the location and nature of surviving stairs suggests that they were more for the use of the laity than the clergy. In a small number of

cases the stairs were associated with very elaborate high-level arrangements perhaps including upper chapels under central towers. Many were built between 1450 and the 1540s supporting the claim of Eamon Duffy (1992) and others that the pre-reformation church was far from moribund at the reformation.

As far as can be ascertained this is the first comprehensive survey of rood stairs in Britain and so it is not possible to say to what extent the survival rates and architectural nature of stairs in the Diocese of Bath and Wells compare with those of other dioceses. Graves (2000) suggested that rood lofts in the Diocese of Norfolk were used more by the laity, lofts in Devon (Exeter Diocese) more by the clergy. This suggestion was based on two observations: firstly that Norfolk rood screens rarely had doors and that Norfolk lofts were mainly entered from the nave, whereas Exeter Diocese screens usually had lockable doors, and their lofts were more likely to be entered from the chancel. If Graves is correct then Bath and Wells rood screens were more like those in Norfolk than in neighbouring Exeter Diocese. However, Graves was extrapolating from a small number of observations so it is uncertain what weight can be put upon these suggestions.

It does seem however, that the current research can shed light on a persisting issue in the discussion of rood lofts, namely their primary purpose. Pugin (1851) saw them as constructed for the singing of various sections of the liturgy. Bond (1908) reported Micklethwaite (no source given) as seeing the growth of choral services during the later Middle Ages as the stimulus for rood lofts, though Bond contented himself with detailing a variety of uses to which they were put in practice. Vallance (1936) endorsed this choral origin as did Cook (1956) though the latter also remarks on the use of the loft in servicing the rood and its lights. Howard and Crossley (1919) on the other hand saw the primary purpose of lofts as the servicing of the rood, with choral uses as secondary. Graves (2000) emphasises the role of personal devotions to the rood by laypeople, in the use of rood lofts. The current research, with its finding that rood stairs are generally inconvenient to use, and mainly entered from the nave, would support the view that rood lofts were mainly used by the laity and hence for servicing the rood figures.

APPENDIX

Map No.	Name	Type	Entry from	Oriented	Lower door	Upper door	Date	Dated from	Notes	Sources
1	Porlock	W	Na	n	Yes				Creep	
2	Luccombe	X	Na	n	Yes					
3	Wootton Courtenay	X	Ai	n	Yes					
4	Selworthy	R	Ai	n	Yes	Yes				
5	Minehead	M	Na	s	Yes	Yes	1529	Na window		Orbach & Pevsner, 2014, 35
6	Dunster 1	C	Na	n	Yes	Yes	1443	Ct		Orbach & Pevsner, 2014, 267
6	Dunster 2	M	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	post 1498	screen		Orbach & Pevsner, 2014, 267
7	Timberscombe	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
9	Winsford	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
10	Hawkridge	B	Ch	n						
11	Brompton Regis	B	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c. 1490	Ai		NHLE
12	Brushford	W	Na	n	Yes					
13	Withycombe	W	Na	s	Yes	Yes	c1500	screen		NHLE
14	Old Cleeve	X	Na	n	Yes					
15	Watchet 1	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c.1498	Ai & Cp		Dunning 1985, 167
15	Watchet 2	X	Ai	s	Yes	Yes				
16	Williton	X	Na	n					Door visible 1850	Glynn 1994, 378
17	Bicknoller	W	Na	s	Yes					
18	Sampford Brett	B	Tr	n	Yes					
19	Nettlecombe	R	Na	s	Yes	Yes			Adapted for pulpit	
20	Monksilver	M	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ai to west		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 459
21	Stogumber	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ai and Cp		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 579
22	Elworthy	B	Ch	n						
23	Tolland	B	Na	s	Yes				Much rebuilt	
24	Clatworthy.	R	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
25	Huish Champflower	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	1534+	Ai		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 369
26	Raddington	R	Na	s			c1400	screen	rod beam & tympanum	Dunning 1985, 143
27	East Quantoxhead	B	Na	n	Yes		late 15th C.	screen		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 290
28	Kilve	R	Na	s	Yes		15th C.	Na window	In window bay	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 385
29	Stogursey	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes	c1500	porch		Dunning 1992, 155

ROOD STAIRS OF THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

30	West Bagborough	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes					
31	Lydeard St Lawrence	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes					
32	Combe Florey	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes				arcade arch distorted	
33	Cothelstone	B	Na	n	Yes						
34	Bishops Lydeard	M	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ai			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 121
35	Ash Priors	B	Ai	n			15th C.	Ai			NHLE
36	Halse	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c.1546	Ai	creep		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 336
37	Milverton	R	Ai	s	Yes					There 1837	Glynn 1994, 232
38	Langford Budville	X	Na	n						There 1862	Glynn 1994, 202
39	Runnington	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes	Late Perp	Na			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 545
40	Nynehead	X	Tr	n		Yes					
41	Bradford-on-Tone	B	Ai	n	Yes						
42	Ashbrittle	B	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ai			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 96
43	Wellington	R	Ai	n						Lost in rebuild 1847	Plan in ICBS 03938
44	West Buckland	B	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	Early Perp	Ai			NHLE
45	Huntspill	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c1450	Ai & Cp			Dunning 2004, 109
46	Pawlett	P	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
47	Puriton	B	Na	s							
48	Cossington	X	Na	n	Yes						
49	Charlinch	P	Na	n							
50	Cannington	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	late 15th C.	Ai			Dunning 1992, 89
51	Chilton Trinity	B	Na	n	Yes					Reused for pulpit	
52	Chedzoy 1	P	Tr	n	Yes	Yes					
52	Chedzoy 2	Q	Tr	s						Probably demolished c 1842	SRO Pigott, 1838
53	Bridgwater	W	Cp	n			1420	screen			Bligh-Bond & Camm 1909, 150
54	Durleigh	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
55	Goathurst	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
56	Enmore	X	Na	n						There 1783	Dunning 1992, 44
57	North Petherton	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	1500–1530	Ai			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 496
58	Lyng	Sl	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
59	Cheddon Fitzpaine	Q	Ai	s							
60	West Monkton	P	Ai	n	Yes						

61	North Curry 1	Q	Tr	n	Yes	Yes					Also serves central tower
61	North Curry 2	Q	Tr	s					Stair on plan 1880		SRO D/D/Cf 1880/9
62	Stoke St Gregory	R	Tr	n	Yes	Yes			Now entered from outside		
63	Taunton St Mary	R	Cp	s					Top dem after 1827		Glynn 1994, 338
64	Ruishton	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes	mid 14th C.	Turret window			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 544
65	Thornfalcon	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Rood window		
66	Creech St Michael	X	Ai	n		Yes			Gallery to loft		
67	Trull	P	Cp	n	Yes				Tympanum		
68	Pitminster	R	Ai	s	Yes						
69	Thurlbear	R	Ai	n	Yes	Yes					
70	Bickenhall	B	Na	n					There 1845 before rebuild		SRO County Negative Library 30791
71	Curry Malet	B	Na	n	Yes						
72	Isle Abbots	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes	early 16th C.	Ai			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 382
73	Fivehead	M	Na	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Na wall	Brackets		NHLE
74	Curry Rivel	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	post 1485	Ai & window			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 35
75	Kingsbury Episcopi	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes					
76	Broadway	W	Tr	s	Yes	Yes					
77	Ilton	B	Na	s	Yes						
78	Donyatt	R	Ai	n					There 1850		SRO A\DAS/1/138/1 & 2
79	Ilminster	C	Tr	n	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ct			Wickham 1965, 41
80	Stocklinch Ottersey	Sl	Na	n							
81	Barrington	Sl	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Lost window 1840s		Glynn 1994, 20
82	Shepton Beauchamp 2	P	Cp	n							
82	Shepton Beauchamp 1	Q	Ai	s	Yes						
83	Churchstanton	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
84	Whitestaunton	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
85	Combe St Nicholas (N)	M	Ai	n		Yes	15th C.	Ai & Cp			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 216
85	Combe St Nicholas (S)	M	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Ai & Cp			Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 216
86	Kingstone	C	Ct	s	Yes	Yes					
87	South Petherton	C	Ct	s	Yes	Yes					
88	Lopen	B	Ch	n	Yes						

ROOD STAIRS OF THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

89	Chard	Q	Tr	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Ai & Tr	creeps	NHLE
90	Cudworth	M	Ai	s	Yes				There 1843	SRO Pigott, 1838
91	Winsham	C	Ct	s	Yes	Yes			Painted rood	
92	Crewkerne	C	Tr	s	Yes	Yes	15th C.	loft brackets	Second upper door	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 233
93	Martock	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes				
94	Chilthorne Dorner	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
95	Stoke-sub-Hamdon	C	Na	n	Yes	Yes	late 14th C	Ct		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 591
96	Montacute	X	Na	s	Yes					
97	Chiselborough	M	Na	s					There 1837	SRO Pigott, 1838
98	Odcombe	C	Ct	s	Yes	Yes				
99	Closworth	B	Na	n					There 1837	SRO Pigott, 1838
100	Barwick	P	Na	n						
101	Preston Plucknett	Sp	Tr	n	Yes	Yes				
102	Ashington	Sl	Na	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Na wall		NHLE
103	Marston Magna	B	Na	n		Yes	15th C.	Na wall		Currie and Dunning 1999, 137
104	Trent	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
105	Queen Camel	M	Ch	s	Yes	Yes	1500	screen	Door with Ch arch	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 538
106	Charlton Horethorne	Sp	Ai	n	Yes					
107	Holwell	B	Ai	n						
108	Lovington	X	Na	n						
109	Babcary	W	Ch	n	Yes					
110	South Barrow	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
111	North Cadbury	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Ceilure	
112	Weston Bampfylde	W	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Brackets	
113	South Cadbury	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Na & Ch	Now pulpit access	NHLE
114	Blackford nr Cadbury	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Loft Brackets	
115	Alford	W	Na	n			15th C.	screen	Now contains pulpit	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 92
116	Greinton	B	Na	n						
117	Compton Dundon	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Rood window	
118	High Ham	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	late 15thC	Ai & Ch	Rood beam & ceilures	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 356
119	Somerton	Sp	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Stair removed 1581	Dunning 1974, 150
120	Charlton Adam	Sl	Na	n	Yes		14th C.	window & Na wall		NHLE
121	Langport	W	Tr	n	Yes		Late 15th C.	Tr		Dunning 1974, 34

122	Huish Episcopi	Q	Tr	n	Yes	Yes					
123	Long Sutton	M	Ai	s	Yes		c1493	Ch Cp	Ceilure & creep	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 403	
124	Yeovilton	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes					
125	Limington	W	Na	s	Yes						
126	Othery	C	Tr	n			late 14thC	Ct		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 511	
127	Middlezoy	R	Tr	n	Yes				Ceilure		
128	Westonzoyland	Q	Tr	n	Yes				Rebuilt 1930s	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 680	
129	Moorlinch	W	Na	n					In window recess – gone		
130	Meare	Sp	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Squint from loft		
131	Glastonbury St John 1	Q	Ai	n	Yes		1439	Documents	Earlier stair	Dunning 2006, p.38	
131	Glastonbury St John 2	Q	Cp	n	Yes		after 1465	Documents	Later stair & bridge over Ai	Dunning 2006, p.38	
132	Street	Sl	Na	n					There 1829	Glynn 1994, 330	
133	Baltonsborough	X	Na	n					Turret 1840s	Glynn 1994, 16	
134	West Pennard	M	Ai	s	Yes		early 16th C.	Cp	Door in squint passage	Dunning 2006, 151	
135	West Bradley	B	Na	n			15th C.	Na wall		Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 499	
136	East Pennard	P	Ai	s					Pulley for rood lights?		
137	Ditcheat	Sl	Na	n	Yes	Yes			Bridge across Ai		
138	Pilton	P	Ai	n					Door in squint passage?		
139	North Wootton	B	Na	s	Yes		15th C.	Na wall		NHLE	
140	Croscombe	M	Ai	n	Yes		1507–9?	Ai & vestry		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 481	
141	Chesterblade	W	Na	n	Yes						
142	Batcombe	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	Pre 1540	Ai parapet	Stair blocks window	Orbach & Pevsner 2014, 111	
143	South Brewham	P	Ai	n	Yes						
144	Bruton 1	P	Ai	n	Yes						
144	Bruton 2	W	Ai	n	Yes						
144	Bruton 3	X	Ai	s	Yes	Yes					
145	Charlton Musgrove	B	Na	n		Yes					
146	Nunney	Sp	Tr	n							
147	Whatley	B	Na	n	Yes				Bracket		
148	Leigh-on-Mendip	W	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Ceilure & creep		
149	Mells	Q	Ai	n	Yes						
150	Lullington	Sp	Tr	s	Yes						

ROOD STAIRS OF THE DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS

151	Beckington 1	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c1425	upper north Ai	2 upper doors	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 217
151	Beckington 2	X	Ch	n	Yes	Yes				
152	Rode	P	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Much rebuilt	
153	Laverton	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
154	Norton St Philip	P	Cp	s	Yes					
155	Wellow	Q	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
156	Hemington	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Na wall		NHLE
157	Radstock	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes			Much rebuilt	
158	Camerton	X	Na	n	Yes					
159	Emborough	Sp	Ai	n	Yes					
160	Cameley	W	Na	n	Yes					
161	East Harptree	B	Na	s		Yes	late 15th C.	Na window	Ledges for loft	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 490
162	Priddy	Ot	Na	s					Internal Turret	
163	Rodney Stoke	Sp	Cp	n	Yes	Yes				
164	Wookey	P	Ai	n	Yes	Yes				
165	Wedmore 1	C	Tr	n	Yes	Yes				
165	Wedmore 2	Sp	Cp	n	Yes	Yes				
166	Cheddar	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Ceilure & 2nd door	
167	Axbridge 1	M	Ai	s	Yes	Yes	early 15th?	Ai parapet		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 81
167	Axbridge 2	C	Tr	n	Yes	Yes	early 15th?	Ct	2 upper doors	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 82
168	Loxton	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
169	Weare	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
170	Biddisham	B	Na	n			15th C.	Na wall?		NHLE
171	Mark	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	late 15th C.	Ai & Cp		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 421
172	Burnham-on-Sea	P	Cp	n		Yes				
173	Brent Knoll	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	late 15th C.	Ai		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 131
174	East Brent	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	late 15th C.	Ai		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 281
175	Berrow	B	Na	n						
176	Lymphsham	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
177	Bleadon	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes	15th C.	Na wall		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 223
178	Uphill	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes			Shares pulpit access	
179	Hutton	M	Na	n	Yes		15th C.	Na	Shares pulpit access	NHLE
180	Worle	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	post 1440	Ai & Cp		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 724

181	Kewstoke	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
182	Wick St Lawrence	M	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
183	Puxton	W	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
184	Congresbury	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	1450-90	Ai parapet	Loft brackets	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 478
185	Churchill	Q	Ai	n	Yes	Yes			Door in squint passage	
186	Banwell 1	Q	Ch	s	Yes		c.1430-1450	Ai & clerestory		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 88
186	Banwell 2	Q	Ai	n			c.1430-1450	Ai & clerestory		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 88
187	Winscombe .	M	Ai	s			later 15th C.	Ai & Cp		Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 719
188	Burrington	M	Ai	n	Yes	Yes	c.1500	Ai	Figured loft bracket	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 432
189	Wrington	W	Ai	n	Yes		post 1450	Ai & Cp	Bracket	NHLE
190	Yatton	Q	Tr	n	Yes		c1450	Ai & Tr	Brackets	Foyle & Pevsner 2011, 732
191	Kingston Seymour	R	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
192	Clevedon 1	Sl	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
192	Clevedon 2	Sp	Ch	n	Yes	Yes				
193	Weston-in-Gordano	Sp	Tr	s	Yes	Yes			Bracket	
194	Portishead	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
195	Portbury	P	Na	n		Yes			Door in squint passage?	
196	Clapton in Gordano	R	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
197	Tickenham	P	Cp	s					Squint loft to Ch	
198	Wraxall	M	Ai	n	Yes					
199	Nailsea	Q	Na	n	Yes				Brackets	
200	Backwell	R	Ai	s	Yes	Yes			Loft bracket & window	
201	Long Ashton	M	Ai	s	Yes					
202	Stanton Drew	B	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
203	Chewton Mendip	W	Na	n	Yes	Yes				
204	Ubley	Sp	Cp	s	Yes	Yes				
205	Hinton Blewett	B	Na	s	Yes	Yes				
206	Clutton	Sl	Na	n					There 1834	SRO Pigott, 1838
207	Keynsham	B	Ai	n						
208	North Stoke	P	Na	s	Yes	Yes			Brackets	
209	Langridge	W	Na	n	Yes					
210	Swainswick	B	Na	s						
211	Batheaston	Ot	Ai	s						
212	Charlcombe	W	Na	s	Yes					
213	Queen Charlton	C	Tr	n	Yes					

214	Widcombe	M	Na	n					
215	Woolavington	X	Na	s	Yes				
216	Norton Fitzwarren	X	Na	n				Turret dest 18th C.	Bligh-Bond & Camm 1909, 179
217	Podimore	B	Na	n	Yes				
218	Chelvey	X	Na	n					
219	Dunkerton	X	Na	s	Yes				
220	North Cheriton	B	Na	n	Yes			there 1877	SRO D/D/Cf 1877/3
221	Wembdon	X	Na	n				Door removed 1824	Dunning 1992, 334
222	Wells St Cuthbert	W	Ai	s	Yes			Only lower door remains	
	Stair Types							Entry From	
	Wall	W						Nave	Na
	Spandrel	Sp						Aisle	Ai
	Buttress	B						Crossing	Ct
	Sloping Buttress	Sl						Transept	Tr
	Pier	P						Chapel	Cp
	Rectangular Turret	R						Chancel	Ch
	Multiangular Turret	M							
	Quarter Turret	Q							
	Other	Ot							
	Central Tower	C							
	Lost	X							

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Badham, S., 2015. Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the dead in the Late-Medieval English Parish. Donington.

Bligh-Bond, F. and Camm, B., 1909. *Roodscreens and Roodlofts 1*. London.

Bond, F., 1908. *Screens and galleries in English Churches*, London.

Cardwell, E., ed. 1844. *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England*, Volume 1. Oxford.

Cook, G. H., 1970. *The English Medieval Parish Church*. London.

Cox, J. C. and Harvey, A., 1907. *English Church Furniture*. London.

Cragoe C. D., 2005. 'Belief and Patronage in the English Parish before 1300. Some Evidence from Roods'. *Architectural History*, 48, 21-48.

Cross, C. and Barnwell, P. S., 2005. 'The mass in its urban setting'. In: P. S. Barnwell, C. Cross, and A. Rycraft, eds. *Mass and Parish in late Medieval England: The Use of York*. Reading, Berks.

Currie, C. R. J. and Dunning, R. W., eds. 1999; *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset: Volume VII*. London.

Door Sizes 2016. <http://www.jbkind.com/info-centre/standard-door-sizes> (accessed 2 Feb 2016)

Duffy, E., 1992. *The Stripping of the Altars; Traditional religion in England 1400-1580*. London.

Dunning, R. W., ed. 1974. *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset Volume III*. Oxford.

Dunning, R. W., ed. 1985. *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset Volume V*. Oxford.

Dunning, R. W., ed. 1992. *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset: Volume VI*. Oxford.

Dunning, R. W., ed. 2004. *The Victoria History of the*

- County of Somerset: Volume VIII.* London.
- Dunning, R. W., ed. 2006. *The Victoria History of the County of Somerset: Volume IX.* London.
- Frere, W. H. and Kennedy, W. M., eds. 1910. Visitation Articles and Injunctions, Volume III: 1559-1575. London.
- Foyle, A. and Pevsner, N., 2011. *The Buildings of England: Somerset; North and Bristol.* London.
- Graves, C. P., 2000. *The Form and Fabric of Belief: An Archaeology of the Lay Experience of Religion in Medieval Norfolk and Devon.* *British Archaeological Reports, British Series No. 311.* Oxford.
- Glynne, S. (ed. M.McGarvie), 1994. *Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes for Somerset.* Taunton.
- Goulding, R. W., 1898. *Records of the Charity known as Blanchminster's Charity ... until the year 1832.* Louth
- Hannah, I. C., 1936. 'Screens and Lofts in Scottish Churches'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.* 70, 181-200.
- Hancock, F., 1905. *Dunster Church and Priory.* Taunton.
- Howard, F. E. and Crossley, F. H., 1919. *English Church Woodwork.* London.
- Huitson, T., 2014. *Stairway to Heaven: The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces.* Oxford.
- ICBS. Incorporated Church Building Society Archive at <http://www.churchplansonline.org/> accessed 12/04/2015
- Long, E. T., 1922, 'The Church Screens of Dorset'. *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club.* 42, 61-80.
- Littlehales, H., ed. 1905. *The medieval records of a London city church (St. Mary at Hill) A.D. 1420-1559: transcribed and edited, with facsimiles and an introduction.* London.
- Lunnon, H. E., 2010. 'Observations on the Changing Form of Chancel Screens in Late Medieval Norfolk'. *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* 163, 110-131.
- NHLE (National Historic List for England) <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> accessed on 12/02/2016
- Orbach, J. and Pevsner, N., 2014. *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset.* London.
- Pugin, A. W. N., 1851 rep. 2005. *A Treatise on Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts: Their Antiquity, Use and Symbolic Signification.* Leominster.
- Schwieso, J. J., 2005. 'Rood Stairs – an analysis based upon a systematic sample from three English counties'. *Church Archaeology,* 7-9, 51-65.
- Stair Sizes 2016. <https://www.tkstairs.com/information-help/building-regulations/domestic-building-regulations-explained> (accessed 2 Feb 2016)
- SRO Piggot. Somerset Record Office Piggot Collection
- Taylor, H. M. and Taylor, J., 1965. *Anglo-Saxon Architecture, 1 & 2.* Cambridge.
- Thomas, W. G., 1966. 'The Architectural History of St. Mary's Church Tenby'. *Archaeologia Cambrensis,* 115, 134-165.
- Vallance, A., 1936. *English Church Screens.* London.
- Wall, J. C., 1912. *Porches and Fonts.* London.
- Wheeler, R., 2006. *The Medieval Church Screens of the Southern Marches.* Woonton Almeley, Herefordshire.
- Wickham, A. K., 1965. *Churches of Somerset,* Dawlish.
- Williamson, M., 2006. 'Liturgical Music in the late Medieval parish; organs and Voices, Ways and Means'. In: C. Burgess and E. Duffy, eds. *The Parish in Late Mediaeval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium.* Donington, 177-242.
- Willoughby, J., 2008. *The Provision of Books in the English Secular College.* In: C. Burgess and M. Heale, eds. *The late Medieval English College and Its Context.* Woodbridge, 154-179.