

placed in the College's library. At the College they would all remain, unless the next herald to be commissioned to visit a particular county was authorised to borrow previous visitation records for that county to help him in his task.

Understandably, the reality was liable to be slightly different: it is one of the major long-term strengths of Yorke's *Catalogue* that he has taken enormous care to elucidate the reality of what actually happened and what the many different visitation books actually recorded. For one thing, a number of visitations have been misdated: for instance, as he carefully demonstrates, manuscripts G. 12 and H. 17, relating to Kent and Norfolk, are not of 1592 and 1589 as traditionally believed, but of 1589 onwards and 1576, respectively. Corrections of this sort cannot have been easy to make, since the various manuscripts have in many cases been added to by later hands and given misleading or inaccurate titles and dates.

Underlying these corrections, and going far towards explaining how many of the errors occurred in the first place, is the detailed introduction (pp xix–liii). Under a variety of headings, this sets out almost every aspect of the process of holding and recording visitations. It includes the arcane-sounding matter of 'disclaiming': the formal process, documented from 1558 onwards, of publishing the names of people who claimed the right to bear a coat of arms but who could not make good that claim. In theory, such people could not then call themselves gentlemen.

Briefly touched on in the introduction but covered fully in the catalogue is one aspect of the visitation records that is of exceptional antiquarian interest: the making of church notes. This was a practice that grew and grew in the sixteenth century as the heralds used their time while in each county to make a record of coats of arms on funerary monuments and in stained glass (and in private individuals' archives and seals). These notes gradually became so substantial as to need whole volumes by themselves, and it is a further merit of the present volume that all the visitation-related church notes are also described. Moreover, those manuscripts that contain other, extraneous texts have had them too described in full. For instance, the description of MS D.4 includes seven pages of description of such miscellaneous matters as royal, noble and episcopal funerals or burials (1476 and later), coronations, sections of chronicles, grants of crests, badges and whole coats of arms, and ordinances of war of Francis I of France, 1535. Browsing through this volume will yield all sorts of rewards.

As if all this was not labour enough, Yorke has gone a great deal further. For good measure,

he has listed in Part II (pp 475–538) a great many institutionally-held copies of visitations (in the British Library, Bodleian Library, various county record offices and elsewhere), while in separate appendices he has listed all known visitation commissions, 1530–1603 (pp 541–4), and all the visitations themselves, also in chronological order (pp 545–54). In addition there are sets of biographical notes on the heralds and others concerned in carrying out the visitations (pp 555–78) and, for good measure, summary notices of manuscripts in the College library's presses D to H, which are not otherwise described in the volume.

This whole volume is a remarkable achievement, and the College of Arms is to be warmly commended for overseeing its compilation over what was, perforce, a long period of time and for publishing it in such a well-planned, durable and handsome format – and at a very reasonable price, too.

NIGEL RAMSAY

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*Georgian Arcadia: architecture for the park and garden.* By ROGER WHITE. 280mm. Pp 352, 326 figs, mostly col. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2023. ISBN 97803002499358. £40 (hbk).

Roger White was for many years secretary of the Georgian Group. He is therefore very well placed to chronicle the buildings that populated the great estates in this country. His is the first book to consider in detail all of the myriad buildings constructed in parkland settings. He does so without getting distracted by the history of the great houses these buildings served, by landscape design or by landscape painting. Scholarly focus on these star items had led to a gap in academic coverage of what was an important building type, or types (he itemises more than twenty).

Many of these buildings will, in fairness, already be familiar to art and architectural historians through surveys and monographs. Many readers of this journal will know of the Palladian Bridge at Wilton House in Wiltshire, the Rotunda and Gothic Temple at Stowe, the Darnley Mausoleum at Cobham Hall in Kent. The greater number of the hundreds of buildings that appear in *Georgian Arcadia* are, however, not known either individually or collectively within their type.

The gap in coverage that Mr White's book addresses has, in the experience of this reviewer, led to a practical problem for their conservation. Many buildings in parks and gardens are in pretty poor condition, overlooked, languishing in overgrown parts of estates that are themselves slowly being reabsorbed into nature. To this point probably the only way to get sense of them as a group was through the images in the national register that Historic England maintains of buildings at risk.

It is not an easy thing, given the enormous variety and patchy documentation, to break the link between these buildings and their country house context. The author does this by considering the function of each to give us a history of 'park-and-garden building' types. To give some sense of order, Mr White groups these many types into three categories: buildings for relaxation and entertainment; buildings of sensibility; buildings of utility. The first is self-explanatory. The second comprises all things that relate to aesthetics, from grottoes to ruins, obelisks to mausolea. The third category, 'utility', is something of a hybrid. It comprises farm buildings (though pretty grand ones) and greenhouses (also pretty grand). These are structures that have a clear purpose in estate or parkland and garden management. This category also, perhaps surprisingly, includes chapels and churches. This is not a criticism at all. Where else is one meant to put them? Their utility is spiritual, and their patrons probably did see them as serving an estate purpose. Anyway, this great collection of ancillary buildings is quite varied and architectural history is not a strict Linnean exercise.

Mr White would, I think, bridle just a little at my use just now of the word 'ancillary'. He would or might say that this term unfairly relegates many of these structures to the lower leagues. He would be right. Many of these structures are full bodied architectural works. Filling the photographic frame as forcefully as many do, they hardly appear subservient. Many are full of architectural ambition, experiments bending the language of Palladianism. Probably the best illustration of this is what was probably one of the last of William Kent's works, the lodge at Badminton in Worcestershire, completed under the direction of the architect's assistant, Stephen Wright, who was responsible for the drawings (but the author gives it firmly to Kent). This building was together a lodge, a gate and a banqueting house. The latter is

lifted high in the air, where it appears as a kind of disembodied Chiswick House in miniature. Below is a stout, rusticated base flanked by smaller structures finishing in pyramidal roofs. Leaving architectural piety to one side, this building is a mad, fevered architectural fantasy, the kind of wild building normally found in sketches for stage sets. The Carrmire Gate to Castle Howard (in the chapter 'Arches') is also remarkable, but, instead of soaring, its proportions are squashed flat, leaving politeness to one side or undermining it. This structure is a kind of joke that reminded this reviewer of Velazquez's portraits of court jesters.

Often a history done by building type provides a lot of potential for cultural, social, economic and historical context. This in turn allows a deeper understanding of building form and expression. *Georgian Arcadia* is a history of types that sit within a larger cultural type (the great house in its landscape). The author takes the reader's knowledge of that for granted, and that is fair enough because this book will be one that will sit on the shelf next to the great surveys of country house architecture, as a kind of coda.

As for the look and feel of the book, it is nicely produced, weighty and copiously illustrated with photographs, most in colour and of good quality. The chapters are short and well written. It is a pleasure to read, particularly in a garden over the course of several warm summer evenings. A nicely verdant town garden, even one in central London, will do and in fact provided this reviewer with the perfect spot to enjoy it and reflect on its fascinating subject matter.

Finally, there is one other practical purpose of this book beyond promoting the conservation of these lively, beautiful structures. *Georgian Arcadia* will be of interest to the designers of new garden buildings in historic parkland or in modern estates. As many readers will be aware, the last fifteen or so years have seen a new generation of extreme wealth moving onto historic estates in decline. New owners of considerable means are restoring and modernising great houses, building new ones, enhancing and replanting landscapes, implementing sustainable farming and introducing biodiversity net gains. Alongside that, they are commonly building new buildings for the twenty-first-century arcadia they are seeking to create. And so this book will also find a place in the libraries of the professionals who are working in this market. Their clients will likely draw inspiration

from it too, as they contemplate how to perfect their estates.

CHRIS MIELE

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*Architecture in Britain and Ireland, 1530–1830*. By Steven BRINDLE. 290 mm. Pp ix + 582, 448 ills. Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art/ Yale University Press, London, 2023. ISBN 9781913107406. £60 (hbk).

There are several things that need to be said about this book. The first will be obvious to anyone conversant with architectural and/or art history in that the title under review is very similar to John Summerson's *Architecture in Britain 1530–1830* (1953). First published in 1953, Summerson's volume was one of the first to appear under the over-arching series The Pelican History of Art, a high-quality and scholarly collection established by Nikolaus Pevsner in 1945. Its success was pronounced and the book subsequently passed through nine editions, the last published in 2000. Despite its longevity, Brindle points out that Summerson's formative architectural analysis, ranging between the early-Renaissance and Gothic Revival periods, has fundamentally remained set in aspic, unlike Pevsner's Buildings of England series and Colvin's *Biographical Dictionary* (1995), which 'evolved and grew over time'. Regarding its forebear, Brindle adds '[while] his bibliography grew with each edition, the text was only slightly altered'. As the series title suggested, Summerson's emphasis was on the evolution and development of classical architecture set within the wider canon of art history – it is with this concept that Brindle takes exception, noting 'it was obvious at the time that there were other ways of thinking about architecture'.

In observing the perceived weakness of Summerson, there can be no doubt that *Architecture in Britain and Ireland 1530–1830* offers a differing perspective on the history of our built environment. Furthermore, few can argue that Brindle not only puts his money where his mouth is by heroically reassessing the topic, but also that he does so in some style. The result therefore is a far broader study that steers away from an art history perspective to explore a 'ground-up' view of architectural development,

thereby considering the skill of the architect, the commitment of the builders and the progression of design and style – all set within the wider boundaries of the cultural, social and economic history of the age. In doing so, the author's real accomplishment is to measure the whole canon of three centuries of architectural achievement, not just elitest country houses and compliant churches, but vernacular, industrial and transport infrastructures across Britain and Ireland (although Wales, it seems, gets less of a look in).

Comparison between these two 'standard' histories is a dangerous pastime, but is hard to resist. Both books follow a similar chronological progression of stylistic developments – in Brindle's case 1530 to 1660 (Gothic, Renaissance), 1660 to 1760 (classical) and 1760 to 1830 (neoclassical and Gothic) and both explore the contribution of those responsible for bringing them to fruition. So what does Brindle offer in his book that Summerson does not?

There are a few key areas where Brindle is in the ascendancy. The book profits greatly from Brindle's sharp intellect and astute and perceptive opinion that drives a lively narrative, which in itself benefits from the masses of architectural scholarship published since 1953. Hence, tried and tested architectural themes that have pre-occupied architectural historians for years, such as continental influences, taste and fashion, architects and aesthetics, collaboration, anti-quarianism and architectural education, are explored in new and stimulating ways. Such themes guide the author's pen as he charts the decline of artisan-based architecture and the rise of an 'off the shelf' pattern book approach executed by new types of professional architects. There can be no doubt that Summerson's study still holds relevance today; however, Brindle's treats architecture in a more contemporary way as theatre, as a social experience and as human achievement. Humanising the process, from drawing buildings on paper to creating a structure through the conduit of various trades and skills, is one of the great achievements of this study. Furthermore, bringing Ireland into focus is a welcome supplement and opens new doors for interpretation.

The second point to make is the sheer size of this book. Weighing in at 2.6kg (5lb 11oz) and with 592 pages, the large format makes it unwieldy and very tricky to read without some kind of physical support. This, to my mind, is counterproductive surely a standard text on a subject should, for practicality's sake, be more