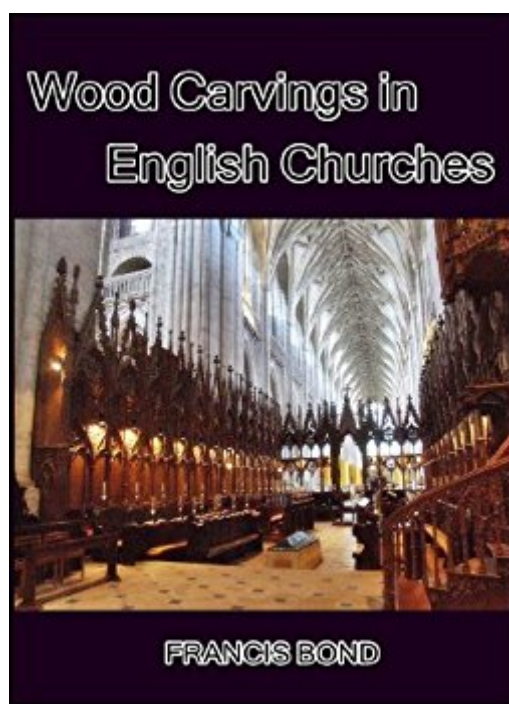# Wood Carvings In English Churches

Synopsis

In all churches of monks and canons, whether secular canons or canons following the Augustinian, Premonstratensian, Gilbertine or other Rule, stalls were placed in the choir. These stalls were occupied either by the monks or by the canons and their deputies and by men singers and choristers; there was also a limited lay use. The stalls had seats; these, however, were occupied for but short portions of a service: during the greater part of each service the occupants of the stalls stood or knelt. The seats turned up on a pivot, as may be seen by comparing those of Beverley St Mary with those of Christchurch ; and when they were turned up, a small ledge underneath the seat gave a little support to any one standing in the stall; for his comfort also there was usually a circular projecting ledge behind him, against which he could lean his back; e.g., at Beverley St Mary, but not at Balsham ; also he could rest his hands on the shoulders of the stall, when standing, as at Beverley St Mary and Balsham. An elbow was often provided lower down, for use when he was seated; as in the two above-mentioned churches. Above was usually some form of canopy, varying from a cornice of slight projection, as at Balsham, to such tabernacled spires as those of Beverley Minster . In front of the stalls, except sometimes the front stall occupied by choir boys, was a desk for service books. Every part of the stallwork was carefully designed; and parochial, collegiate and monastic stalls alike were constantly growing in importance and loveliness up to the Dissolution.

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