

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Thomas Fulljames, 1808-74: Surveyor, Architect, and Civil Engineer

by B. G. Carne
1995, Vol. 113, 7-20

© The Society and the Author(s)

Thomas Fulljames, 1808–74 Surveyor, Architect, and Civil Engineer

By CANON BRIAN CARNE

Presidential Address delivered at the High School, Gloucester, 25 March 1995

A writer on early Victorian architecture has commented that its complete story ‘rather resembles one of those endless novels typical of the period, over-complicated in plot and subplot and crowded with quaintly named characters’.¹ The subject of this paper, Thomas Fulljames, was one of those characters, very well-known at least in this county in his day, but largely forgotten since then.

After his death on 24 April 1874 at the age of 66 there appeared in the *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, on 2 May, the following appreciation:

Thomas Fulljames, late of Foscombe and formerly of Hasfield Court, . . . was a native of Gloucester, and . . . held for a long period the county surveyorship of Gloucestershire; having received his professional education under Rickman, the celebrated architect, he pursued an honourable career in that profession till his retirement only a few years ago. Retiring, sensitive, and unassuming in his habits and character, his circle of general acquaintance was by no means large; but his high feeling of honour and integrity, emphatically without reproach, and the sincerity and kindliness of his friendship, drew around him a numerous array of attached and appreciative friends . . .

There was a revival of interest in Fulljames when, in 1970 and 1987, records were deposited at the County Record Office by the Astam Design Partnership.² The records had been in the attics of the firm’s former premises at 17 College Green, Gloucester, and they included a great many dating from the time of Fulljames. The drawings and associated papers, including a number of working documents, show the extent of Fulljames’s practice and reveal how he evolved from being, in 1830, a follower of Rickman to becoming the county’s most ardent and spiky High Victorian.

Family Background

The Fulljames family came from Kent.³ Thomas’s father, Trophimus, was baptized at Orpington, where his own father, Thomas, was a schoolmaster. After marrying Margaret Pringle, Trophimus moved to London and a son, Trophimus, was baptized in 1805 at the church of St. Peter-le-Poer. His next son, Thomas (the later architect), was born at Walworth (Surrey)⁴ on 4 March 1808. The family moved to Gloucestershire shortly afterwards and the young Thomas was baptized at Hasfield on 15 September.

The elder Trophimus was a land surveyor and the move to Gloucestershire was undoubtedly due to the fact that his eldest brother, Thomas, also a land surveyor, had established a practice in the county by the mid 1790s. In Langley’s *Hundred of Desborough* (1797) there is a map drawn in 1796 by T. Fulljames of Gloucester. Thomas was commissioner or surveyor for possibly

thirty inclosure awards in Gloucestershire. The predilection within the family for Christian names beginning with the letter 'T' has made it difficult to separate the activities of Trophimus from his brother Thomas.⁵ Both brothers probably surveyed estates, roads, rivers, enclosures, and public works within the county and beyond⁶ and both were employed for a time by Matthew Robinson Boulton of Great Tew (Oxon.).⁷ In 1813 Trophimus formed a partnership with William Womack, another land surveyor based in Gloucester.

Thomas Fulljames, the land surveyor, prospered in Gloucestershire. In 1797 he married Sophia Greaves at Hayes (Kent). By 1800 he was lord farmer of the manor of Ashleworth and in 1806 he purchased Hasfield Court.⁸ By 1826 he had built up an estate of 200 acres and in 1844 he purchased the Hasfield manor estate, which included land in Corse and Ashleworth.⁹ He became a Justice of the Peace in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. There were no children of his marriage. The standing of the Fulljames family was further enhanced by the marriage at Hasfield in 1818 of Harriet, sister of Thomas and Trophimus, to James Wintle.¹⁰ The Wintles later moved to Saintbridge House, near Gloucester.¹¹

While Thomas and Harriet Fulljames prospered their brother Trophimus did not. His family increased in size and he moved from Hasfield to Gloucester. Tragedy struck in 1820. On 4 February Margaret Fulljames died, aged 39, and later that year Trophimus faced huge debts through the failure of his partnership with Womack. A firm of estate agents and auctioneers was called in to value the contents of the family home in St Mary's Square.¹² The widowed Trophimus sought new employment in London, where he set himself up as a vendor of leather. Apparently things did not go well. On 21 June 1824 Trophimus wrote to M.R. Boulton commenting on his failure to find permanent employment and soliciting Boulton's help in securing the means to support his family.¹³ Trophimus moved from London and he died in 1864 in the city of Wells (Somerset), at the home of Henry Livett, a general practitioner with whom he had lodged for a number of years.¹⁴

Thomas's Education and Training

The young Thomas Fulljames attended the Crypt School in Gloucester during the time Richard Solloway Skillern was master there.¹⁵ It is not known if Thomas remained at the school after the break-up of the family in 1820, but his well-being and future were the concern of his uncle and aunt at Hasfield Court. Uncle Thomas had met the architect Thomas Rickman at the Oxfordshire home of M.R. Boulton and in his diary for 13 October 1820 Rickman recorded¹⁶

Came back to dinner. I had much talk with Mrs. Fulljames about taking her nephew apprentice. He was at home, a nice lad. I asked 200 guineas and they are to consider of the subject.

Rickman visited Hasfield Court early in 1821, and the details of the apprenticeship were settled – a premium of 200 guineas and £63 a year for board, washing, and shoe cleaning. The articles were signed on 26 March 1821 and the young Thomas, aged 13, entered Rickman's newly-opened Birmingham office, which was managed by Henry Hutchinson. There was no standard pupilage agreement in those days, but it was generally for a period of five years, after which the pupil could become a salaried employee of the practice.

Thomas Rickman¹⁷ (1776–1841) was the greatest of the pre-Victorian Gothicists but was equally happy working in the Grecian style. He is chiefly remembered as the nomenclator of the English Gothic styles.¹⁸ By 1820 he was becoming well-known as a church architect, and for the next fifteen years he was one of the busiest architects in England. Fulljames's years in his office gave him vast experience and the discipline of hard work and, through Rickman's competence in both Classical and Gothic styles, a training in the Regency mould of eclectic architects.

Architectural Practice

In June 1829 Fulljames, aged 21, stayed with his uncle and aunt in Cheltenham. Following Rickman's example, he had begun sketching churches. He also took the opportunity to visit Charles Hanbury-Tracy's new house at Toddington Manor.¹⁹ Apparently there was a difference between Thomas and his uncle about his future. The following January he was back in Birmingham to see Rickman, who recorded²⁰

Tom Fulljames and H. and M. Hutchinson . . . dine with us. Tom shewed us his King's College which does him credit and several other designs but his uncle now is keeping him from architecture.

It was probably in 1830 that Fulljames opened an office at 1 Barton Street, Gloucester. (The office was moved to College Green in 1847.) To some extent the conflict between being a surveyor, as his uncle presumably wished, or an architect, as he appears to have wanted, was resolved by combining the two professions. In 1831 he was appointed County Surveyor and a year later Diocesan Surveyor. The appointments, which required his skills both as surveyor and architect, inevitably determined the scope of his practice, but he did receive commissions for institutions outside Gloucestershire and for private houses. He also had a concern for the fabric of Gloucester Cathedral, undertook a considerable amount of 'restoration' work on churches, most of which were in the county, and produced grandiose designs for bridging the River Severn. In 1838, four years after its foundation, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.²¹

Fulljames took several pupils including possibly Francis Niblett²² (1814–83) and certainly James Piers St. Aubyn²³ (1815–95). Frederick Sandham Waller²⁴ (1822–1905), who became a pupil in 1839, progressed to being Fulljames's executive assistant, his co-designer, and, in 1846, his partner. Fulljames needed a partner, for his work had steadily increased over the years. In October 1845 he had written that 'the days are at this time of extreme pressure much too short for me even without borrowing largely from the night'.²⁵

Waller was a son of William Waller, architect, of Burford (Oxon.), and in 1845 he married a daughter of Samuel Hitch, the medical superintendent of the Gloucester lunatic asylum at Wotton (in the later Horton Road). Waller's partnership with Fulljames was broken in 1862 when a hunting accident prevented Waller from working. After his recovery he managed a private asylum which his father-in-law had opened at Sandywell Park, Dowdeswell, but in 1866 he resumed his partnership with Fulljames. In 1868 Waller's son Frederick William (1846–1933) joined the practice, and Fulljames gradually became less active as a partner. On his death in 1874 the firm was renamed Waller & Son. Nicholas Kingsley has commented²⁶ that the difference in the styles of Fulljames and F. S. Waller was most marked in the early years of their partnership.

Fulljames was one of the last generation of eclectic architects in the Regency mould. His natural Gothic style was picturesque, and he was as much at home in the Classical manner. Waller is more 'muscular' and more convinced in his approach to Gothic . . .

Marriage

In December 1840, at Lancaster, Fulljames married Catherine Kirkes, daughter of the late Morecroft Kirkes, a naval officer, and his wife Annie.²⁷ Through his marriage Fulljames obtained some commissions. In the years 1847–9 he designed a Gothic vicarage house at Lancaster, and in the 1850s he designed the Custom House Arcade at Liverpool under the provisions of the will of his mother-in-law.²⁸

The newly-married couple took up residence in Maisemore, probably at Spring Hill. The 1841 Census shows that they employed three servants living in.²⁹ After his uncle's death in 1847 Thomas acquired the lease of Ashleworth manor and, by arrangement with his aunt, he and his wife moved to Hasfield Court to share the house with her and two of his sisters. According to the 1851 Census the household included five servants and two grooms. Thomas's aunt died in 1858 and left the Hasfield Court estate to him. In 1864 he sold the estate,³⁰ and in 1866 and 1867 he built Foscombe, an elaborate and magnificently situated house, in Ashleworth. In 1873³¹ he owned over 600 acres, mostly in Ashleworth, with a total gross value of £1,225 a year. There were no children of the marriage. Thomas died at Foscombe in 1874 and was buried under a Gothic tombstone in Hasfield churchyard. Catherine died in 1891.

County Surveyor

Thomas Fulljames had the good fortune to be appointed on 28 June 1831, at the age of twenty-three, 'General Surveyor of the County for all County purposes' by the Gloucestershire magistrates.³² He succeeded John Collingwood, who had been appointed the first holder of that post in 1817.³³ It is not possible to judge the competition that Fulljames faced nor to assess the influence that his uncles Thomas Fulljames and James Wintle, both of whom became magistrates, had in his selection. His yearly salary, in addition to professional fees at the rate of 5 per cent, was to be

20 guineas with a power to charge for his journeys and daily expenses, it being at the same time understood that he is to make no charge for journeys when called upon to inspect or superintend any work in the County Gaol or Shire Hall or for attending magistrates when there assembled, and that his daily expense shall not exceed one guinea.

Fulljames attended meetings of the magistrates to give reports, to submit accounts, and to receive commissions. Visiting committees of magistrates were appointed to supervise particular work and to make day-to-day decisions. Under the magistrates Fulljames was responsible for the repair of a number of bridges³⁴ and for the maintenance of the county prison, houses of correction, and lunatic asylum. The asylum, opened at Wotton, near Gloucester, in 1823,³⁵ was run jointly by the county and city magistrates and a group of private benefactors.

In his first twelve months as surveyor Fulljames supervised work at several of the county bridges and at the Northleach house of correction. He was certainly industrious and at the Quarter Sessions following his appointment he submitted plans, costed at c. £6,000, for extensions to the asylum. That work was delayed, however, by civil disorder in Bristol, the magistrates regarding the rebuilding of the house of correction at Lawford's Gate, destroyed by the mob on 30 October 1831, as a more urgent task for Fulljames.³⁶

Fulljames was kept busy by his work for the county and in 1847 the magistrates appointed him to the River Severn Commission in the place of his late uncle Thomas.³⁷ As the work of the Justices increased so did that of their surveyor. The numbers of patients in the asylum grew steadily as more and more pauper lunatics were admitted and by 1855 the building, originally designed to accommodate 24 wealthy patients and their servants, 25 charity patients, and 60 pauper patients, housed 55 private and 344 pauper patients. Some rebuilding work was required after a fire in 1832 and a chapel was built in 1849, but there had been no significant enlargement of the kitchen, washhouse, or laundry facilities by the early 1850s. New work was consequently necessary.³⁸

Fulljames regularly inspected the fabric of the county gaol, at Gloucester, and the houses of

correction. The greatest challenge for the magistrates was the ever-increasing number of convictions and committals,³⁹ and in the years 1844–50 Fulljames built a new convict prison, on the ‘Pentonville’ separate system and incorporating large three-storeyed cell blocks, next to the county gaol. Two of the wings built at that time remained in use in the late 20th century.⁴⁰

The surveyor’s work at the Shire Hall was also continuous. Much of it concerned the accommodation of the magistrates and of prisoners, but in 1849 Fulljames designed a Grecian-style case for a new organ in the assembly room.⁴¹ Another project that Fulljames undertook was the provision of new accommodation for the county militia following a report in 1854 that the existing buildings at Cirencester and at Gloucester, where the armouries and storehouses were within the county gaol, were insecure and inadequate.⁴²

All of this made a great deal of work for Fulljames. No doubt it was one thing to receive professional fees for his work, but his small retaining fee and the low level at which his expenses were paid must have proved increasingly irksome. After twenty years the matter of his expenses should have been reviewed, especially as Fulljames must have employed others to undertake some of the work. The crisis came in 1857.⁴³ The police and finance committees had instructed the county surveyor and chief constable to report on the county’s police stations, £30 to be paid to the former and £10 to the latter for expenses. Early in 1857 Fulljames submitted his report with a bill of £92 8s. to cover his expenses. The committees eirenicly recommended that ‘to the original £30 there should be added £25 for drawing and engrossing the fair copy of the report and for all correspondence connected therewith’. At the Easter Quarter Sessions Fulljames spoke in support of his original claim and tendered his resignation as surveyor. The magistrates decided to offer him £55 in settlement and provisionally accepted the resignation. A month later they appointed James Medland as their new surveyor.⁴⁴ A year later Fulljames wrote to the county chairman to accept the £55 having received an opinion ‘that he might waive what he considered to be a just claim without infringing any principle involving his professional character’. In 1859 the magistrates requested Fulljames to return to the Clerk of the Peace all plans, drawings, and documents relating to his work as county surveyor and concerning county buildings or works. Fulljames’s response to this request has not been recorded, but he evidently retained many records and they are now in the safe custody of the County Record Office.

Other Institutional Work

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 created opportunities for architects in the design of the new workhouses that were required all over the country. George Gilbert Scott, Fulljames’s junior by three years, became, in partnership with W.B. Moffatt, a specialist in providing new workhouses but Fulljames does not appear to have ventured with any success into this particular field. In 1837 he submitted a design for the new workhouse at Bideford (Devon) but, although his was the least costly plan, the contract went to Scott and Moffatt.⁴⁵

Fulljames did design a number of Gothic-style almshouses, at Gloucester, South Cerney, Mitcheldean, and Staunton-on-Arrow (Herefs.). He also designed schools in the same style, most impressively at Staunton-on-Arrow, but also at Hasfield, Ashchurch, Cam, Mitcheldean, Stinchcombe, Great Tew (Oxon.), Bredwardine and Letton (both Herefs.). He also provided designs, in a not very inspired Classical style, for the Albion Hotel and the County of Gloucester Bank in Gloucester and for Theresa Place, an imposing ashlar-faced terrace built on the Bristol road just outside the city by Samuel Lysons of Hempsted Court in 1836.⁴⁶ Fulljames similarly used the Classical style in 1848 for the new Newnham town hall. Most of his buildings and those of his partner Waller were, however, in Gothic style. They included the Cambray

Saline and Chalybeate Spa at Cheltenham (1833–4) and the Gloucester probate registry (1858–60) in Pitt Street, a building described by Verey as in ‘fanciful Gothic revival’ style.⁴⁷

Although Fulljames did not venture into workhouse design, his experience as County Surveyor led to commissions on asylums outside Gloucestershire at Denbigh, Abergavenny, and Stafford. The commission for the new Denbigh asylum, the largest of these projects, was evidently obtained through Samuel Hitch, medical superintendent of the Gloucester asylum until 1845. Hitch, one of the principal founders of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in 1841,⁴⁸ was particularly concerned at the lack of treatment for the mentally ill in the northern and central counties of Wales, a matter on which he wrote to *The Times* (15 September 1842). Following the letter, a local benefactor gave land at Denbigh for an asylum and a committee was formed to build a hospital with Hitch’s advice and assistance. The committee chose Fulljames to provide the plans for, and supervise the building of, a 200-bed hospital. Work began in 1844 and the asylum, known as the Hospital for the Insane Poor of North Wales, opened in 1848. It is a fine, impressive building on three floors in Tudor Gothic style. It is set around an inner quadrangle, which was bisected, as was the whole hospital, into male and female sections, with service accommodation at the rear. The building still stands, although it has recently ceased to be a hospital. Over the years it has been enlarged and adapted and Fulljames’s elegant and decorative cupola, the building’s central feature, has been replaced by a tower.

Fulljames’s visits to Denbigh led the town corporation to ask him to design new butchers’, butter, and vegetable markets for the town. The buildings were probably completed by July 1846, but the cost of the work had so embarrassed the corporation that it was unable to pay Fulljames his fees in full on completion of the work.⁴⁹

Although Fulljames ceased to be County Surveyor in 1857, his interest in asylums in Gloucester did not end. In the previous year the agreements under which the county and city had joined with private subscribers in building and running the asylum at Wotton were dissolved, and in 1858 the subscribers commissioned Fulljames’s firm to convert Barnwood House, in the nearby village of Barnwood, as a private asylum.⁵⁰

Diocesan Surveyor

Following his appointment as Diocesan Surveyor in 1832 and until his resignation in 1870 Fulljames’s practice had the task of surveying benefice property in Gloucester diocese. It would appear from surviving records⁵¹ that Fulljames did most of the surveying although Waller undertook some of the work from time to time.

As Diocesan Surveyor Fulljames was consulted when repairs or alterations were proposed to buildings belonging to the livings of the parish clergy. More especially on a change of incumbent Fulljames acted for the new incumbent in assessing the dilapidations and repairs needed to the benefice property, the cost of which was the responsibility of the previous incumbent or his executors. The work included surveying the benefice house, the land and buildings constituting the glebe, and, in the case of rectories, the chancel of the parish church. If the value of the dilapidations was contested a surveyor was employed to arbitrate between the parties and if disagreement persisted, as at Meysey Hampton in 1853,⁵² solicitors were engaged. Sometimes the difference between the parties was considerable. At Kempsford in 1855 Fulljames valued the dilapidations at £930 and the surveyor acting for the previous vicar put them at £347. An independent umpire awarded the new vicar £785 in compensation.⁵³

On a number of occasions Fulljames himself was called on to arbitrate in disputes concerning benefice property in other dioceses. That work necessitated visits to places as far afield as Hartland (Devon), in 1859, and Raithby (Lincs.), in 1864.⁵⁴

Domestic Architecture

Fulljames's work as Diocesan Surveyor led to numerous commissions from members of the clergy. Within the cathedral close at Gloucester, where he surveyed the bishop's palace and other houses,⁵⁵ Fulljames supervised the restoration and remodelling of the deanery, begun in 1863.⁵⁶ Among the houses Fulljames surveyed was that of Dr. Edward Evans, a residentiary canon, who also engaged Fulljames to work on his house at Pembroke College, Oxford, where he was Master.⁵⁷

Within Gloucester diocese Fulljames did work for many of the parish clergy. At Hartpury he drew up specifications for the repair of the vicarage house in 1838 and of the chancel in 1852.⁵⁸ For some clergy he designed completely new houses. They were picturesque and commodious buildings reflecting the confidence of the Church of England and the status of the parish clergy in those days. While the vicarage house he designed at Haresfield for the Revd. H.C. Niblett in the late 1830s was an 'excellent romantic Tudor composition',⁵⁹ most of the parsonages he or his partner designed were in Gothic style. At Stinchcombe the house Fulljames designed in 1836 for the Revd. Sir George Prevost, Bt., was built in stone with mullioned windows and 'delightful and extremely scholarly Gothic fireplaces'.⁶⁰ At Lydiard Millicent (Wilts.) an imposing new house was designed in the mid 1850s by Fulljames or his partner for the Revd. Christopher Cleobury, Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford.

Several wealthy members of the laity figured among Fulljames's clients but his ideas for the repair or enlargement of their houses were not always accepted. His plans for Hardwicke Court c. 1840 included the addition of new wings and a portico and colonnade across the front of the house but they were rejected.⁶¹ Perhaps the most important house that Fulljames worked on was Great Tew Park (Oxon.), the home of Matthew Robinson Boulton (d. 1842). When Boulton bought the Tew estate in 1815 parts of the manor house had been demolished and he set about enlarging it. Fulljames, whose father and uncle worked as land agents for Boulton, designed the Gothic library added to the house in 1834. The two-storeyed extension, the design of which was inspired by the work of Hanbury-Tracy at Toddington Manor, has mullioned windows, a central canted bay with a quatrefoil parapet and a hammer-beam roof with elaborate stone corbels. Boulton's son and heir also employed Fulljames as his architect and in the 1850s Fulljames and Waller designed a number of cottages for the Tew estate as well as a large Tudor-style extension to the manor house, begun in 1856.⁶²

The house for which Fulljames is best remembered is Foscombe, in Ashleworth, which he built for his own use. Completed in 1867, it is a large and irregular building, with turrets, a castellated tower, and grouped chimneys. Most of the windows have Gothic tracery and there is a Gothic conservatory. The house, the decoration of which is enriched by realistic animal sculpture, has been described as 'fully Gothic'.⁶³

Church Architecture

Fulljames's work as a church architect began at the outset of his professional career in the early 1830s. By that time church congregations were increasing in size and in many places there was a need to build new churches or enlarge existing ones. There was also a renewed interest in liturgy and ritual and a widespread desire to re-order church interiors. The alterations made to the interiors of medieval churches since the Reformation were deemed by many to be undesirable and there was a patriotic revival of interest in what was believed to be the native flowering of architectural styles in medieval days. For many Victorians the Gothic Revival became a Cause, a burning conviction that Gothic was the true and only architecture for Christian Englishmen.

Fulljames and many other church architects of his day were technically good but they were backward-looking at their aim to re-medievalize, to recreate a past age rather than to conserve existing detail. Inevitably they destroyed the historical integrity of many churches and produced an unmedieval tidiness and rigidity. Often their technical skills were not matched by an inspiration and sensitivity which would have made their work some compensation for the fabric and detail destroyed at their hands.

Fulljames's work was mainly devoted to restoring and enlarging parish churches. That part of his practice was handled later by Waller, who also took over from Fulljames the biennial 'audit' of the fabric of Gloucester Cathedral. When Waller left the practice in 1862 Fulljames resumed responsibility for the cathedral fabric, but he resigned as cathedral architect in 1865 and George Gilbert Scott, who had acted as consultant to the dean and chapter for some time, was appointed in his place.⁶⁴

Before his partnership with Waller, Fulljames was responsible for the design of only two new churches. St. Luke's (1838–41), at High Orchard on the south side of Gloucester, was a simple brick building with stone dressings and was built for Samuel Lysons of Hempsted Court.⁶⁵ St. Matthew's (1842–4), at Twigworth just outside the city, was in a similar 13th-century style, 'elegant and prim'.⁶⁶ Neither can be compared with Woodyer's confident hand in the richness of Highnam or the simplicity of Lydbrook, with Niblett's pleasing Romanesque church at Framilode, or with Street's *tour de force* at Toddington.

It is not possible in this address to comment on all the many projects that Fulljames undertook. Instead his approach to church restoration will be illustrated by detailed consideration of his plans for Almondsbury, Swindon, and Hawling churches.

St. Mary's church, Almondsbury, was among the earliest endowments given by Robert FitzHarding to the Abbey of St. Augustine, which he founded in Bristol in 1140. According to tradition the church was consecrated in 1148⁶⁷ and part of the present fabric dates from that time. The position of the porch on the west side of the church and the presence until 1836 of an Early English lancet window in the south wall of the nave indicate that the nave walls are those of the Norman nave. Similarities of style between the chancel interior and the Elder Lady Chapel of Bristol Cathedral (formerly the abbey church of St. Augustine) suggest the possibility that the masons who built the chapel c. 1215 were also responsible for rebuilding the chancel at Almondsbury and adding the transepts with their unique half-arches.

Several engravings and descriptions of the church in the late 18th century give an idea of what the church, 'in the improved style of Norman architecture', looked like at that time.⁶⁸ There were

two aisles of the same height and length with the nave; a lofty spire in the middle, with cross aisles on each side, and the whole covered with lead. The chancel is handsomely wainscotted six feet high . . .⁶⁹

A west gallery had been recently erected for the singers and Georgian curved altar rails jutted into the second chancel bay. By the early 1830s the feoffees of the Church Lands Charity were concerned about the state of the church and in 1836 they commissioned Fulljames, then aged 28, to survey and report on its condition. Fulljames came to the opinion that

the arrangement, dependance and intimate connection of one part with the other renders it more than probable that a greater failure in either would endanger the whole fabric; that by a judicious reparation, removing and rebuilding the insecure portions, a proper application of counteracting weights and ties, the present evil may be remedied and the prospective one prevented.

It appears that there were substantial cracks on each side of the tower and the nave piers, arches and walling above were leaning heavily from the perpendicular. Fulljames reported that the weight of the roofs and the decay of the rafters rendered parts of the building precarious and insecure. His diagnosis alarmed the feoffees, and his proposals to strengthen the tower and spire, improve the general appearance of the building, and render the church 'more airy, lighter and permanently secure' blossomed into a major restoration of the church. A Faculty, granted retrospectively, sanctioned six alterations: the construction of a parapet around the nave roof in place of falling caves; the pulling down of the partition walls or screens running the length of the interior; the insertion of an arch and screen between the church and belfry to support the tower; the rearrangement of pews to increase the seating; the provision of a new pulpit; and the repaving of part of the floor. The Faculty failed to indicate the full extent of Fulljames's 'restoration', which removed and raised the church roofs, slate being substituted for lead and the whole being placed on uninspiring hammer beams, replaced the internal Norman walls in the nave with arcading matching that in the chancel, and altered the position of windows and of columns in the nave to achieve symmetry. In addition the chancel was purged of its post 13th-century accretions, steps and new floor levels being introduced to give prominence to the High Altar.

Some indication of the transformation effected by Fulljames is given by an account of the church in 1845.⁷⁰ Its author could recollect

when the church was for the most part Norman, the arches low and heavy, and the chancel disfigured by a Grecian screen, which blocked up the fine east window. Within the last few years, however, the whole church and chancel have been extensively repaired and altered to Early English, the east window, which is of three lights with deep recessed mouldings and disengaged columns, opened and some good painted glass put in.

We must give credit to Fulljames in that the structure of the building is now substantially as he left it. Although we cannot indulge in romantic dreams about what the interior was like before the restoration, it is clear that whatever 'excitement and uplift'⁷¹ existed before 1836 did not survive his hand. He aimed to achieve symmetry wherever possible in the building and so compromised its architectural history. The 13th-century chancel was his model, yet he imported a version of the hammer-beam roofs of a later period.

In 1843 Fulljames was employed by the rector and leading inhabitants of Swindon to undertake alterations to the parish church of St. Edward in a style 'as near as may be to the style of the original structure'. For several years there had been mounting concern about the safety of the church's hexagonal Norman tower and about the inadequacy of the seating in the building. The proposed alterations, which included rebuilding the south aisle,⁷² were contentious and led to a scholarly debate between the pseudonymous Plantagenet and Siward in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.⁷³

What was at issue was the difference between controlled conservation and the widespread sweeping away of the evolutionary stages in the development of a building. Plantagenet deprecated the proposed alterations and argued against the removal of the massive internal walls and piers of the nave and the substitution of 'pillars of light and meagre character'. He pleaded that if a larger church was necessary for the increased population of the parish a new one should be built. In defence of the proposals Siward, perhaps Fulljames himself, maintained that in rebuilding the aisle the architect intended to add a south transept to increase the accommodation. That

the sittings thus procured might be made convenient for the very necessary purpose of hearing and seeing, and also to increase still further the capacity of the church, he proposed a substitution of Early English pillars and arches, in strict accordance with the style of the chancel and south

aisle, for two low and massive Norman piers and narrow arches, which, excepting their mere antiquity, have nothing interesting to recommend them, and which, with the opposite nave walls, present a great obstruction both to hearing and seeing . . . When Mr. Fulljames's plan is executed, you will pass . . . through a Norman tower into a uniform Early English building, instead of being presented with a mixture of Norman and more recent styles, in which the Norman remains would appear only as unmeaning obstructions to the main purposes for which churches are ever either erected or enlarged.

Several later writers have expressed regrets about what Fulljames did at Swindon.⁷⁴ Their concerns can be summarized by the view of A. Harvey who wrote in 1906 that, when the church was rebuilt in the mid 19th century, 'its history was falsified by the construction of thin and over-elaborate arcades of late Norman character'.⁷⁵

St. Edward's church, Hawling, was fortunate to escape the full Fulljames's treatment. The church, which had been rebuilt in Georgian Classical style c. 1764,⁷⁶ was surveyed by the firm of Fulljames & Waller in 1868.⁷⁷ The report was uncomplimentary about the building and described as shortcomings its low-pitched nave roof and the round-headed Georgian windows. The font and pulpit were 'wholly out of character', the chancel was 'very unsightly', and its roof was 'of the commonest kind adopted for cottages or farm sheds'. Suggestions to give the church 'a more consistent and ecclesiastical appearance . . . and to give such accommodation as is required in order to be enabled to conduct the Services in a proper manner' included providing new roofs for the chancel and nave, erecting a vestry and organ chamber on the south side of the chancel, raising the chancel floor, and altering the east window and the windows on the north side of the nave.

It is not known if the cost of the proposed alterations, estimated at £500, alarmed parishioners or if there was a reaction against the criticism of their building, but the church was not gothicized. The Georgian windows, the font, and the pulpit were spared. Some repairs were made and the chancel floor was raised and tiled, thereby diluting the church's Georgian character.⁷⁸

Civil Engineer

Apart from the duties Fulljames, as County Surveyor, had in maintaining the county bridges, he also ventured into the world of civil engineering in schemes connected with the River Severn. The earliest scheme was a plan in 1840 for a railway and harbour at Grange Pill.⁷⁹ With its swift and high tides and its rocks and treacherous sandbanks the Severn estuary was both a hazard to navigation and a formidable barrier to cross.⁸⁰ In 1841 Fulljames reported on proposals for improving navigation to a committee representing owners of land adjoining the river⁸¹ and in 1844 he presented a report to the Severn Commissioners on the state of brooks flowing into the river at Queenhill.⁸² In 1847 Fulljames became a member of the commission in succession to his uncle and namesake.

Through his work Fulljames acquired a detailed knowledge of the river below Worcester and of the traffic using its lower reaches. With that knowledge, he attempted to solve the problem of providing a fixed crossing of the estuary. In 1845, in response to a request from the Aust Bridge Company for designs for a railway crossing, Fulljames submitted two drawings of suspension bridges carrying a double-track railway between Aust and Beachley. As was common among contractors of that day Fulljames added the letter 'C.E.' to his name even though he was not a member of any professional body of civil engineers. The company submitted both designs, together with comments on their viability by James Walker, F.R.S., to the Admiralty.⁸³ One design, for a structure supported by four double piers placed on rocks and three single piers standing in deep water, was open to objection because one of the supports would have been in the middle of the navigable channel and because of the extraordinary difficulty of building such

a crossing. The other design,⁸⁴ in which the span of the openings was increased to 1,100 ft. by doing away with the intermediate single piers, was preferred by Walker and accepted in principle by the Admiralty⁸⁵ despite the problems which would be caused through extending the length of the suspension chains. It is very unlikely that Fulljames produced working drawings or a feasibility study for such a bridge and it is perhaps fortunate for him that the scheme was allowed to gather dust on the company's shelves. He did not address the problem of how the piers were to be founded in the river bed and he appears to have been unaware that such long chains could not have supported the heavy loads of railway traffic.



Fig. 1 Thomas Fulljames's design for a barrage across the River Severn, 1849 (Newport Museum and Art Gallery)

Such was the urgency of finding a solution to the problem of constructing a crossing that Fulljames returned to the challenge in 1849. His knowledge of the river, its tides, and its shipping led him to design a barrage extending from Aust to Beachley. His design (Fig. 1), which he illustrated in a large water-colour now in Newport Museum (Gwent), incorporated a two-tier viaduct, arcaded, castellated, and turreted in the style of the 13th century. The upper level would carry a double-track railway and the lower level a carriage way. The estuary above the barrage would be formed into a lake of consistent depth, thus improving access to the canal at Sharpness, and the water level controlled by sluices in the barrage. As with his 1845 designs Fulljames seems to have presented his new idea only pictorially.

Conclusion

Attempts to locate a portrait or photograph or any diaries or correspondence of Fulljames have proved unsuccessful. He would surely have been well-remembered had he brought to fruition his intention in 1840 to produce a collection of copperplate engravings of all the

Gloucestershire churches.⁸⁶ His existing memorials are, however, not only a Gothic tombstone at Hasfield and a memorial window in Ashleworth church but also the buildings on which he worked. We may tend towards David Verey's rather sweeping judgement on Fulljames's 'restoration' of churches and regret that at times his work was ill-advised, but we may be grateful for his legacy of confident parsonage houses with their competent detail. Much of his institutional work has also survived and Gloucestershire has many a fine Victorian Gothic school of his design. The purpose of this address has been simply to recall and honour this somewhat forgotten and 'quaintly named character'.

Acknowledgements

Warm thanks are due to the very many people who have been most generous with their time, knowledge, and experience. They include Mr. Humphrey Chamberlayne of Ashleworth, for information about the Hasfield and Ashleworth estates; Dr. Martin Crossley Evans, for undertaking extensive research at the record offices in Chester and Liverpool; Mr. Roger Cucksey, Director of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, Gwent; Mr. Patric Dickinson, Richmond Herald, whose great-great-great-grandmother was first cousin to Thomas Fulljames; Mr. Ralph Emanuel, particularly for his help in understanding the restoration work at Almondsbury; Mr. Brian Frith, F.S.G.; Mr. Nicholas Kingsley, Birmingham City Archivist; Mr. John Rhodes, Director of Gloucester Museum; and Mr. David Smith, Gloucester County and Diocesan Archivist.

Notes and References

ABBREVIATIONS:

Glos. Colln. = The Gloucestershire Collection, in Gloucester Library.

Verey, *Glos.* = D.C.W. Verey, *Gloucestershire* (2 vols., The Buildings of England, ed. N. Pevsner, 1970).

1. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Early Victorian Architecture in Britain* (1954), vii.
2. Glos. R.O., D 2593.
3. Mr. Patric Dickinson has traced the family back to the marriage in 1706 of Richard Fulljames of Wrotham (Kent).
4. Census papers for 1871, s.v. Ashleworth (Foscombe).
5. F. Steer and others, *Dictionary of Land Surveyors and Local Cartographers of Great Britain and Ireland 1550–1850* (1975), 108, 275, 489.
6. Gloucester Diocesan Records (in Glos. R.O.), G 3/21–5; Glos. R.O., P 209A/IN 3/1; P.R.O., F 17/129, 165; Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, surveys of Ash 1792 and New House Farm, Wrotham, 1794.
7. Birmingham Central Library, archives dept., Matthew Boulton papers 463.
8. *V.C.H. Glos.* 8, 284.
9. *Ibid.*; Glos. R.O., D 1326/T 1.
10. For Wintle, Glos. R.O., Q/CR 16/1; *TBGAS* 99 (1981), 154–5.
11. *Diary of a Cotswold Parson*, ed. D. Verey (1978), 49.
12. Glos. R.O., D 2080, vol. 258.
13. Birmingham Central Library, archives dept., Matthew Boulton papers 463.
14. Census papers for 1861.
15. *Gloucestershire Chronicle*, 2 May 1874.
16. British Architectural Library, diary of Thos. Rickman.
17. H. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840* (1978).
18. In *An Attempt to discriminate the styles of English Architecture from the Conquest to the Reformation* (1817).
19. Birmingham Central Library, archives dept., diaries of D. R. Hill.

20. British Architectural Library, diary of Thos. Rickman.
21. Felstead, Franklin, and Pinfold, *Directory of British Architects 1834–1900* (1993), 333.
22. Cf. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 35–6, 264.
23. B.F.L. Clarke, *Church Builders of the 19th Century* (reprint 1969), 260.
24. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 36.
25. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1381/203.
26. Personal communication.
27. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1326/T 3.
28. *Ibid.* D 2593/2/113.
29. Census papers for 1841, s.v. Maisemore.
30. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1326/T 43–4.
31. *Return of the Owners of Land, 1873* (1875).
32. *Glos. R.O.*, Q/SM 3/3, p. 251.
33. Colvin, *Biog. Dict. Brit. Architects*, 230.
34. *Glos. Quarter Sessions Archives 1660–1889* (*Glos. County Council*, 1958), 18.
35. *Glos. R.O.*, Q/AL 6–25; *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 273.
36. *Glos. R.O.*, Q/SM 3/3, p. 263.
37. *Ibid.* 6, p. 386.
38. F. Bond, *History of Gloucester* (1848), 42; *Glos. R.O.*, Q/SM 3/7, pp. 418, 432.
39. *Glos. R.O.*, Q/SM 3/8A.
40. *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 247.
41. R. Williamson, *Organs of Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Cirencester from the 15th Century* (1991), 87.
42. *Glos. R.O.*, Q/SM 3/7, p. 410.
43. *Ibid.* 8, pp. 104, 107, 180, 274; 8A.
44. For Medland, *TBGAS* 110 (1992), 9.
45. *Trans. Devon Association for Science, Literature, and Art* 50 (1918), 552–3.
46. *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 224; *Glos. R.O.*, D 3117/750–2; *G.D.R.*, T 1/99.
47. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 248.
48. *Glos. R.O.*, D 4183/2/2; *Journal Mental Science* 107, 607–29.
49. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1381/203.
50. *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 247.
51. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1381.
52. *Ibid.* D 1381/105.
53. *Ibid.* 96.
54. *Ibid.* 195, 200.
55. *Ibid.* 79C.
56. *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 228.
57. *Glos. R.O.*, D 1381/79.
58. *Ibid.* 84.
59. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 264.
60. *Ibid.* 1, 418.
61. *Glos. R.O.*, D 2593/2/48; cf. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 262.
62. *V.C.H. Oxon.* 11, 227–8, 230, 233; Astam Design Partnership deposited papers concerning Great Tew Park with Oxfordshire Archives (reference Full. I–III).
63. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 91.
64. Astam Design Partnership Office, *Glouc. Cathedral reports 1853–62*; *Glos. Chronicle* 9 Sept. 1865; *Glos. Notes and Queries* 1, 244.
65. *V.C.H. Glos.* 4, 314; *Glos. R.O.*, P 154/22/IN 3/1.
66. Verey, *Glos.* 2, 39.
67. *TBGAS* 24 (1901), 10; Church-Goer, *Rural Rides* (1850), 260.
68. S. Lysons, *Enchirings of Views and Antiquities in the County of Gloucester* (1791), plate 66; S. Lysons, *Glos. Antiquities* (1804); R. Bigland, *Collections relative to the County of Gloucester* 1 (1791), 38.

69. S. Rudder, *New History of Glos.* (1779), 224.
70. Church-Goer, *Rural Rides* (1850), 257–8.
71. J.J. Norwich, *Architecture of Southern Britain* (1985), vii.
72. *Glos. Notes and Queries* 7, 72.
73. *Gentleman's Magazine* 20, 21–2, 358–9, 472.
74. Glos. Colln. JR 4.22; Verey, *Glos.* 2, 354.
75. *Proc. Clifton Antiquarian Club* 6, pp. 2, 134 sqq.: copy in Glos. Colln. RQ 228.1.
76. Verey, *Glos.* 1, 274.
77. Glos. R.O., D 2593/2/79.
78. D. Verey, *Cotswold Churches* (1976), 189.
79. Glos. R.O., Q/AB 7–8, 15; Q/RUm 172.
80. L.T.C. Rolt, *The Severn Bridge . . . its History and Construction* (Glos. County Council, 1967): copy in Glos. Colln. MF 1.78.
81. Glos. Colln. (H) D 2.4.
82. Glos. R.O., D 2460, box 9.
83. J. Walker, *Projected Bridge across the Severn at Aust Passage* (report to the Admiralty 29 Oct. 1845); Glos. R.O., Q/RUm 196; Glos. Colln. (H) F 1.10.
84. Glos. R.O., D 2593/1/11/2.
85. *London Gazette* 22 November 1845, pp. 5864–5; Glos. Colln. 20540.
86. *Diary of a Cotswold Parson*, 163.