

## NORWICH TOUR—EASTER 1977

It speaks volumes for the success of a tour when people want another one in twelve months, rather than in the customary two years, and when 'first-timers' spoke repeatedly of the friendliness shown. Both of these are due to Miss Beck's excellent organisation and unfailing good humour.

Our traditional late start resulted in a very brief look at Cambridge, a loss to be remedied in a future tour. Arriving at Norwich by lunch time next day our first visit was to the castle. Only the huge keep now remains of what must have been a fearsome and extensive fortress. A number aspired to the battlements and dungeons. We could see clearly that Norwich is a city of churches, 34 of them, mostly medieval. The first evening was devoted to a talk by Mr Alan Carter, in charge of the Norwich Survey. He showed how History and Archaeology could marry comfortably to reveal the city's past. The great enthusiasm for conservation shown by Mr Carter and his assistants who were our guides all the next day could well set an example for us here in Liverpool.

After a lecture next morning in the Public Library we spent all too short a time in the huge church of St Peter Mancroft. A Norman foundation, the present building dates from the fifteenth century, and is the burial place of Sir Thomas Browne, author of *Religio Medici*. At the Guildhall one of Mr Carter's assistants took us in hand and showed us places we had heard about the previous evening, either modernised as in London Street, being repaired like Bacon's house in Colegate, or left in the original state like cobbled Elm Hill. Norwich is rich in fine buildings now in civic possession. After an excellent lunch in the Stuart Hall we were shown around Blackfriars' Hall by the architect in charge of restoring this fine old Dominican church. Nearly half of us took the evening off to see 'The Taming of the Shrew', perhaps not just as Shakespeare wrote it, but nevertheless a pleasing diversion.

Friday morning was devoted to the Cathedral with its spire second only to Salisbury's, and its Bishop's throne set at the east end facing the congregation, an arrangement common before 1100. The beautiful Caen stone of the cathedral looked as fresh as if new; on some arches there were traces of painting and, overhead, there were many bright bosses for which the cathedral is famous. The cloisters showed weathering of the stone and here the bosses were dull and dusty, showing their true age. The dean welcomed us at 'Visitors' Corner' and was presented with a copy of Yates's *Map of Lancashire*, though he confessed to being a Cheshire man. He and his wife led us through the small exhibition, 'Vision of God—a search for meaning', with sections on the building of the cathedral, on the personal devotion of the anchoress Julian of Norwich and others, a sharply contrasting display on the theme 'Is God Dead?' with an emphasis on man's inhumanity in the twentieth century, and, finally, a section on 'God is alive' concentrating on more hopeful contemporary examples of care and love.

After lunch at leisure in the Visitors' Centre we set off for home via King's Lynn and Newark, and tea at Buxton. From here to Macclesfield via the Cat and Fiddle was the most spectacular scenery, bright in the evening sunshine. Writing of the 1967 tour to Northumbria I wrote, 'We unblushingly look forward to the next time'. Ten years later I feel we would still say the same.

*Hilda Edwards*