



CHARLES SPOONER, Arts and Crafts Architect
A NEW book by Alec Hamilton *(published November 2012)*

Charles Spooner was one of the four great names most identified with the Arts and Crafts by no less an observer than C. R. Ashbee: the other three were Sidney Barnsley, Ernest Gimson and W. R. Lethaby. Yet, while they are still revered, Spooner has effectively disappeared.

In this new, large-format architectural biography, Alec Hamilton brings Spooner's work and life back into the light: his churches and church fittings; his houses; his furniture design; his writings and ideas; his friendships and partnerships. And reveals why this shy, diffident, saintly architect, unjustly neglected now, was so loved and admired in his lifetime.

Foreword by Alan Crawford

320 pages 284 illustrations 7 inches x 9 inches (180 x 230 mm)

Full colour throughout

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CHARLES SPOONER Arts and Crafts Architect

Charles Sydney Spooner (1862-1938) taught furniture design at Central School for more than thirty years. He was a member of SPAB's committee for nearly as long. He was a friend of William Morris, Emery Walker, Christopher Whall, Walter Crane, Heywood Sumner – yet he figures hardly at all in any of their records, archives, memoirs or letters.

He made a rather dazzling start: elected to the Art Workers Guild in January 1887 while still a student. He played Jerrybuiltus in *Beauty's Awakening*, the Guild's 1899 pageant (*left*) He was elected to the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society in 1890: he exhibited with them at every exhibition until 1928.

He built seven churches – a modest tally compared to the High Victorians, but, among 'Arts and Crafts architects', almost a high number. For he was a religious man: "On most Sundays he was in his place at the 10 o'clock Mass." He was related to two Archbishops of Canterbury – and Warden 'Spoonerisms' Spooner was his cousin. Yet Spooner was also a Modern: his church of St Paul, East Ham, which he thought his best, looks forward with optimism. And he was a lively designer of small country houses (*below*). In his church furnishings his skills and ability shine most – the muscular altarpiece at St Leonard,



Bridgnorth; the checker-board baptismery at St Bartholomew, Ipswich; and the emotionally charged rood screen at St Anselm, Hatch End (*above*).

This, the first ever study of Spooner, considers all of his work - churches, church furnishings, houses, furniture - and his partnerships, in particular with a yet more shadowy figure, his wife, Minnie Dibdin Spooner, whose illustrations, paintings and glass design are also now considered here for the first time.



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