

Diana Beckett

case study | **self-publishing**

Reprinting a self-published book to give the author the print quality she wanted

Background

Diana Beckett's childhood home was the background to her life for sixty years. When her mother bought the Winchester house *Byrnelmscote* (renamed *Stapenhill*), in 1953, she was told by the estate agent that it had been designed by architect, Ernest Shearman, for his own use. Intrigued by the resemblance of the gothic style arch that framed the house's porch to that of a church, Diana was inspired to find out more about the man behind the house, and the other buildings he'd created.



She started her research in 2016 with a visit to one of the six churches Shearman had designed. However, frustrated by a lack of information held by RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), Diana decided to write her own account of Shearman's work and publish a book to fill a gap in the records for architectural historians.

Soon after, she enrolled on a course on the Arts and Crafts movement that had inspired Shearman's designs and embarked on a huge learning process supported by art historians. Surviving members of Shearman's family pointed her in the direction of the simple red brick mendicant (Dominican and Franciscan) churches of northern Italy that had also been a major influence on the architect. Then the Covid-19 lockdown of 20/21 gave her the time to write her first book, *Ernest Shearman: Ecclesiastical Architect*.

Solution

Diana's internet search for a local Oxford printer led her to Holywell Press and, in April 2021, she commissioned eight digitally printed 'review' copies of her manuscript to share with prospective publishers. She recalls, "When I came to collect these publisher's copies, Ben took the time to show me some of the other books that Holywell had printed. I was impressed but, rather foolishly, assumed I'd get the same results from another printer. Unfortunately, that wasn't to be the case."

In late summer, having found a book on Arts and Crafts churches with print production she liked, she approached the publishers behind it. Knowing that Shearman had chosen to use bricks with a distinctive mellow purple hue in his designs, image quality and colour reproduction were key to her storytelling. She had high hopes for her self-publishing venture but didn't know enough

Customer Challenge

- First venture into self-publishing
- Limited knowledge of print processes
- Clear vision for the impact she wanted in her book, which was not initially delivered.

I would have saved myself a lot of time and money had I chosen to work with Holywell from the outset. The personal touch and handholding I received was fantastic. There was no judgement, just a clear commitment to print my book to the highest quality.

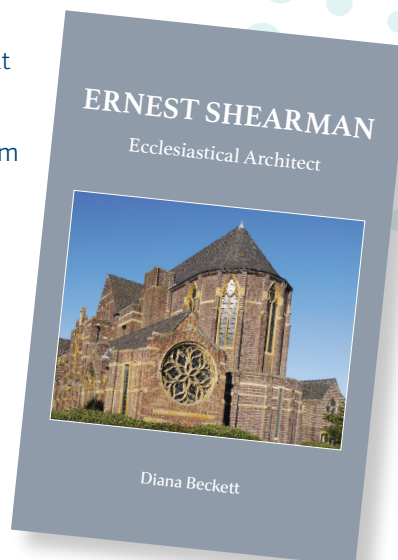
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about printing processes to ensure she'd get the results she wanted. Her publishers set to work to create the artwork and provided a quote for what appeared to be great value book printing.

Sadly for Diana, when she received the consignment of printed books from her publisher, excitement quickly turned to disappointment. Many of the all-important images looked flat and lifeless, and the colours too dark. Not really understanding what had gone wrong, she got back in touch with Holywell Press for help.

"Ben was kind enough to talk me through the issues. My book had been printed on an inkjet digital press, and I hadn't asked for a printed proof which would have highlighted the problems with the images. I'd simply asked the publishers to match the Arts and Crafts Churches book that I liked and, though they claimed to have done exactly that, the result was far from satisfactory.

"I decided to scrap the entire print run and start again – confident that, with Holywell's help, I would get the print quality I wanted."



Results

Holywell's pre-production studio worked closely with Diana on the reprint. Individual images were manipulated to reflect the desired colours and beauty of Shearman's buildings. The book was then printed lithographically on a silk art paper, ensuring sharp text and vibrant images.

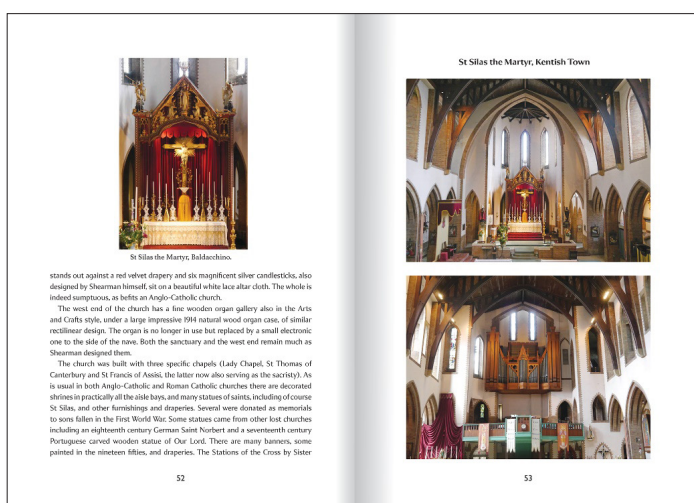
Diana concludes, "I would have saved myself a lot of time and money had I chosen to work with Holywell from the outset. The personal touch and handholding I received was fantastic. There was no judgement, just a clear commitment to print my book to the highest quality.

"When I started this self-publishing journey, I wanted to give a relatively unknown architect the recognition he deserves. Now I'm planning another book with, thanks to Holywell, printing knowledge that will stand me in good stead next time."

Ernest Shearman: Ecclesiastical Architect is available from Amazon.

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get in touch

Need help to self-publish?

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