

# Phoenix Exhumation Ltd

## **The Compton Project Investigations Archaeological of The Compton Family Crypt Compton Wynyates**

Preliminary Archaeological Investigations

PEL/2015/11



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# **Preliminary Archaeological Investigations of the Compton Family Crypt at Compton Wynyates**

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**The Team**



## Summary

On the 10th and 11th October 1998 a rapid archaeological assessment was completed in the church of St. Mary Magdalene. The church is in the grounds of the Marquess of Northampton's ancestral home, which is largely sixteenth century in date. A deserted medieval village (DMV) lies to the north of the house. This would have provided habitation for the staff of the house, gardens and estate. This village, forcibly deserted in the sixteenth century for the construction of the deer park, is likely to have contained a church. If this could be located and examined, it may well contain the remains of the early family, and villagers.

The specific aims of the survey were to :-

- Establish the location, and overall plan of the crypt within the church.
- To ascertain the state of preservation of the structure and of the coffins.
- The identity of those entombed.
- To learn if the crypt and church had been desecrated by Parliamentary troops during the Civil War.
- To discover if the body of the second Earl of Northampton was in the crypt.

The crypt was rectangular in plan, divided into two separate aisles by a massive central column. Two entrances were found, one led into the ceiling at the south end, and the other via a doorway in the north wall.

Within the crypt, were at least twenty-eight separate lead coffins, largely neatly arranged around the aisles. Thirteen of these coffins were identified through their depositum plaques, and dates to the eighteenth century. A separate group of coffins piled in the north-western corner were found to be earlier in date. This assemblage contained two burials of special interest, an *anthropoid* coffin, a style in direct imitation of the Egyptian mummy case and fashionable in England from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The other interment of note, was a *viscera container*. The custom of entombing viscera was in common practice amongst English royalty from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, and used infrequently until the mid seventeenth century. Commonly these containers were used for the remains of those who had died in battle or away from home. Dissection of the body would provide parts for separate burial at its birthplace, place of death, and in the city where the King held his reign. In keeping with this custom, it is possible that this container contains the remains of the second Earl of Northampton, killed at the battle of Hopton Heath in 1643.

The last person entombed in the crypt was Theodosia, wife to the third Marquess, in 1864. Her body was moved upon her husband's death to Castle Ashby so that they could be together. It seems likely that the main crypt entrance, in the roof, was sealed at this point leaving only the northern one for visitations by the family priest.

Preliminary analysis of mortar samples suggest that the northern entrance was blocked up between 1918 and 1933. This possibly coincides with the transference of the church to the local church authority.

A brief structural assessment indicated that the whole church and crypt were re-built during the late seventeenth century, a result of its possible demolition during the Civil War.

This brief study has identified the place of burial of all but one of the Lords of Northampton since 1481, the exception being Sir Thomas Compton, K.B. Before 1500, family members would have been buried in the church in the deserted medieval village, which remains for future archaeological investigations.

## **Background to the project**

The Compton family has a long and distinguished history. The incumbent seventh Marquess of Northampton is in the process of continuing the restoration of the family house and church at Compton Wynyates begun by the second Earl in the 1660s and more recently furthered by the sixth Marquess.

The family church of St. Mary Magdalene was, until 1981, the parish church of Compton Wynyates when the current Marquess purchased it. He is having the church restored and as part of the project, he needed to know the condition of the crypt and the identity of any burials lodged there.

Recently, the Marquess has become the patron of the Earl of Northampton's Regiment in the Sealed Knot, a re-enactment society. Through this organisation he contacted the author and asked me to carry out the examination of the crypt. The project was undertaken on the 10th and 11th October 1998.

## **Project Objectives**

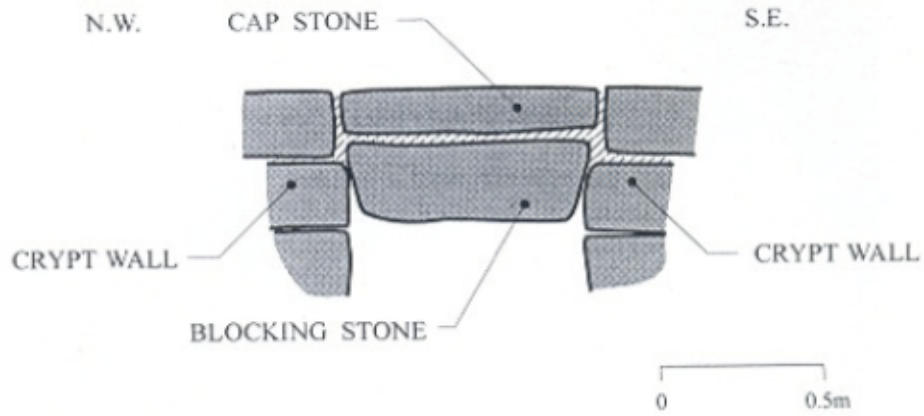
The opening of the crypt was designed with five main research objectives. To establish:

- The location of the crypt within the church and its dimensions
- The state of preservation of the crypt and any burials
- The identity of those entombed
- Whether the crypt had been desecrated by Parliamentary troops during the English Civil War.
- A fifth aim was to investigate whether the body of the second Earl of Northampton, Spencer Compton, who fell at Hopton Heath on May 19, 1642, was in the crypt. Parliament's forces refused to return his body to his family except upon terms of having all ammunition, prisoners, and cannon captured during the battle returned to them (Compton, 1930). This demand was refused and the location of the body of Spencer Compton remains a mystery, although family history reports him to be held in Derby Cathedral. This has never been confirmed, although archaeological investigations of the vaults recorded two unlabelled sealed drums which the excavator attributed as containing the Earl's remains (Butler, 1994).

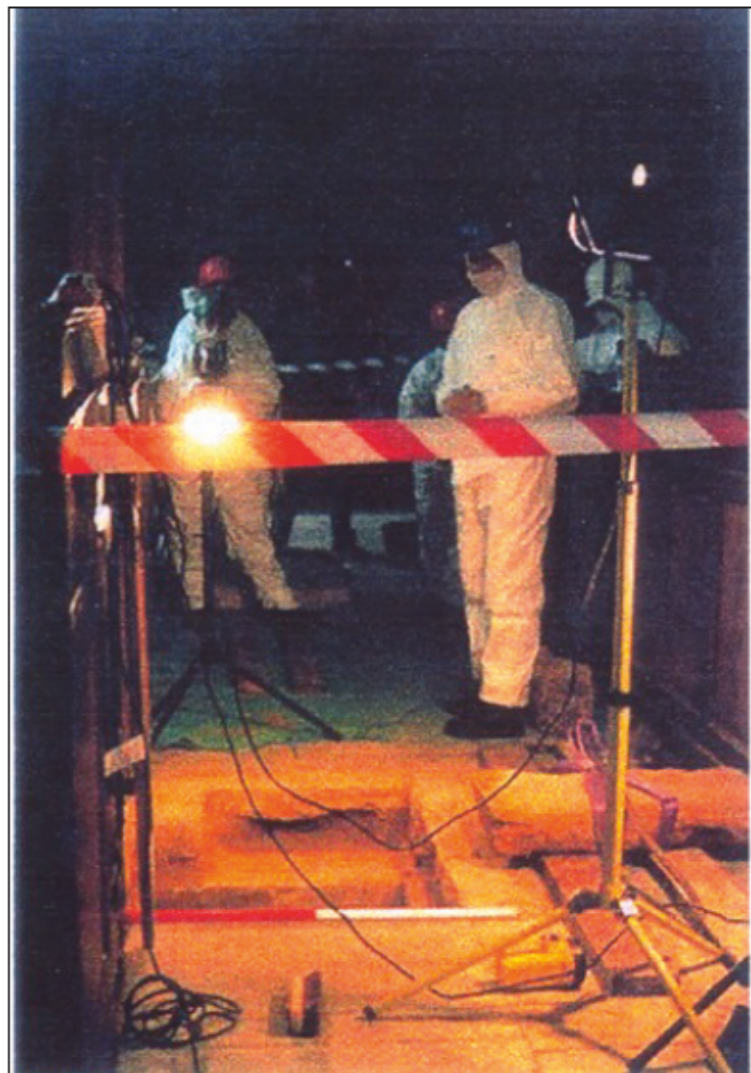
## **Methodology**

A prime consideration in planning the work was the actual opening of the tomb (Plate 1). Three large rectangular stone slabs had sealed the entrance to the crypt. Each measured 1m x 0.9m. A single small stone with an iron ring set into it was located at the western end of this entrance, and was removed by one person. When lifted this provided access to the first stone sealing the tomb (Figures 1 & 2; Plates 1 and 2).

Only one slab was needed to be removed to permit sufficient access to the crypt. Beneath the initial slab, a second stone was wedged and cemented in place (Figure 1, Plate 2). A masonry chisel removed three smaller stones cemented over the top of the second slab, and the stone lifted.



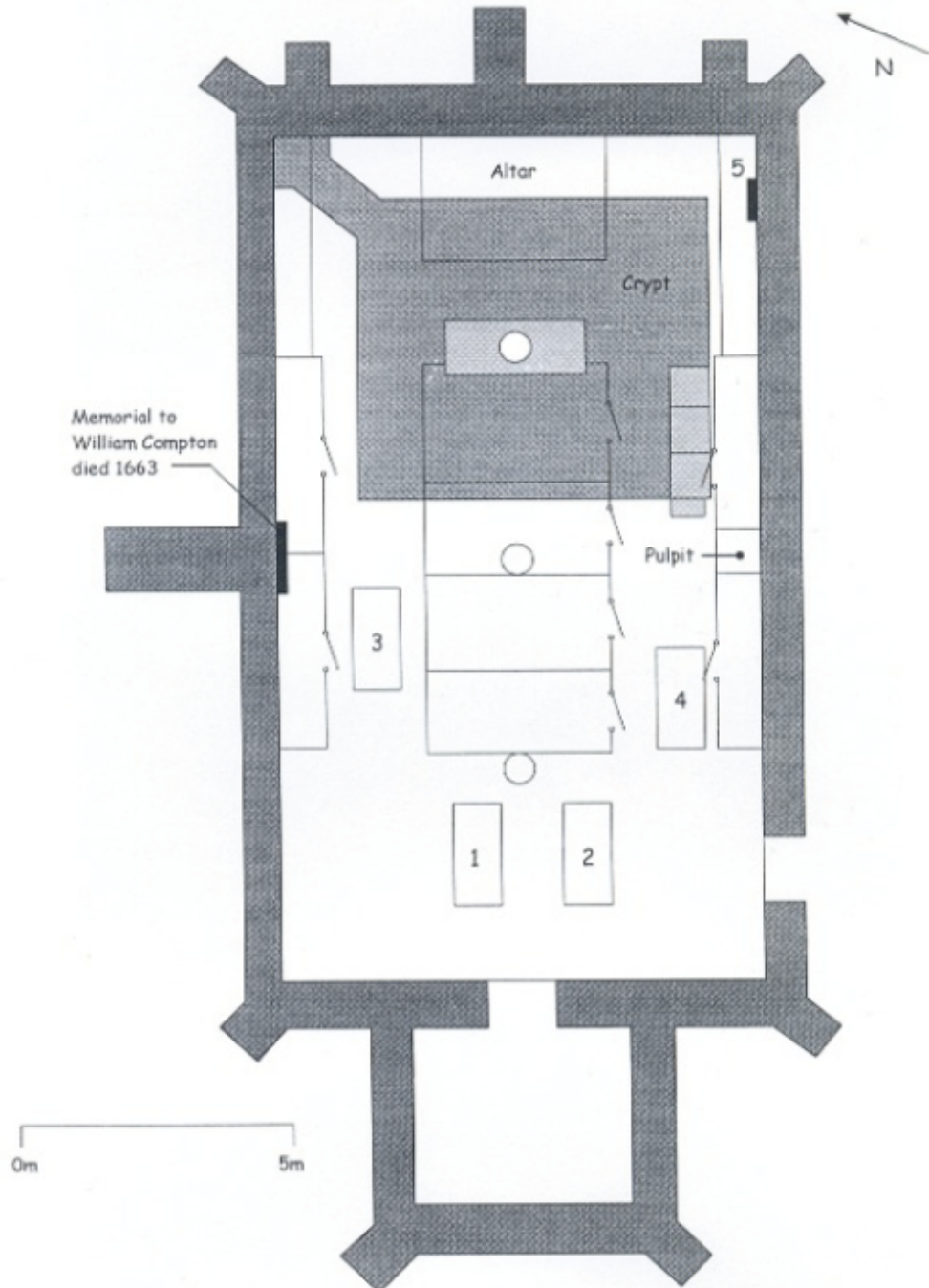
**Figure 1: Schematic Section of Crypt Entrance facing south-west**



**Plate 1: Opening of the Crypt**



To place the crypt in its geographical context, the exterior of the church, churchyard, and interior were planned using a plane table (Figure 2). The crypt was planned at 1:50 using the west wall as a baseline. The coffins were drawn (Figure 3), recording details of their depositum plaques and noting the caskets general condition. This was supplemented by a photographic survey of the crypt and each coffin.



**Figure 2:** Plan of Church showing location and dimensions of Crypt (see Appendix A for key)

## Historical Background

A comprehensive history of the Compton family was written by William 'BIM' Bingham Compton, sixth Marquess of Northampton in the 1930s, and charts the family fortunes. Compiled using primary source material in the family archive in Castle Ashby, the book has provided an invaluable source to the background to this report. It shows the family's involvement with the English monarchy, since the sixteenth century, a factor that allowed them to add to their wealth, estates and prestige.

However, it should be born in mind that there are significant discrepancies between the information carried in the family history and other texts when compared with the depositum plaques on the coffins themselves. This indicates how quickly information can be altered over time.

First recorded as living at Compton is Philip de Cumton in 1204, and as Lord of the Manor by 1236. It is likely that the family took their name from the parish upon the appointment of William de Cumton as the first Earl of Northampton by King James I (Fraser, 1998).

The name Compton Wynyates is Saxon in origin with 'cwm' meaning valley, and 'ton' giving the 'hamlet in the valley' (Ekwall, 1991). Wynyates has a variety of spellings before 1500 and Dugdale in his 'History of Warwickshire' presumes the name derives from the cultivation of vines.

A well-preserved Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) provides visible evidence in the form of earthworks for the earlier origins of this area (SP3234). Known as Compton Superior it is located half a mile to the north of the house. The village was deserted in 1510 when Sir William Compton enclosed some 2000 acres. The majority of the villagers, 20, moved to the estate (SMR, 1999).

By 1307, Knights Templars owned land in the parish. In 1311, the General Order of Vienna under Pope Clement V denounced the Templars, enabling the King to seize all their possessions. By 1393, family documents record the presence of a church, rectory, and glebe at Compton Wynyates.

The first major work on the house occurred in 1481 when Edmund de Compton pulled down the Saxon manor, rebuilding it in red brick. Upon its completion it must have been a grand affair with numerous outbuildings, enclosed by a curtain wall, in turn encircled by a water-filled moat, still clearly visible as earthworks.

The family's close association with the monarchy starts upon Edmund's death, when his son, William, was appointed a Ward of the Court and page to Prince Henry (later to be King Henry VIII). The two remained close friends until William's death in 1528 (Cook, 1984). During his life he virtually completed the house and made considerable purchases of land and property. An inventory of 1523 shows the house surrounded by stables, cowsheds, brewhouses, and sleeping accommodation for outdoor servants and the family priest.

In his will of 1523 he specified that two chantries were to be established. His father and mother who had been buried at the parish church were to be moved to the church near to the house and an alabaster monument placed over them. William also had an elaborate tomb and marble effigy constructed for himself on his death at Compton Wynyates.

William's son Peter was made a Ward of Cardinal Wolsey. He died in 1544 and was buried at Westminster Cathedral. Peter's son, Henry was born in July 1544, later



becoming the first Lord Compton.

Henry, who had received legal training, was able to win a lawsuit brought against him by the sixth Earl of Kent who claimed the manors of Castle Ashby, Yardley, and Hastings. He then began building at Castle Ashby. Henry was one of the Commission of Peers who had judged Mary Queen of Scots at Fotheringay.

A tomb for Henry, erected at Compton after his death in 1589 showed three figures, representing himself and his two wives. The tomb was desecrated and the effigies mutilated and dumped in the moat during the Civil War.

Close links with royalty continued, with visits to Compton Wynyates by Queen Elizabeth I. Her successor King James I and his Queen visited the property, as well as being annual visitors to Castle Ashby during the life of the first Earl of Northampton.

Henry's successor, William, added considerably to the family coffers by marrying a rich wife, a neighbour's daughter Elizabeth Bromfield. His love of Castle Ashby and a desire to improve it combined with a passion for gambling spent much of their wealth. He had an adventurous spirit and applied to join the fleet being made ready to attack the Spanish navy. Queen Elizabeth refused to let him go. In 1601 he helped stop a *coup d'etat* by the Earl of Essex. At the succession of James I, William Compton was one of the regency who signed a letter informing King James VI of Scotland of his accession to the English throne. He was further able to influence the monarchy when he was one of four lords sent to escort James' Queen from Scotland to London. On the death of King James I. William, Earl of Northampton, was one of fourteen Earls who acted as assistant's, to the Chief Mourner (King Charles I).

The Second Earl of Northampton, Spencer Compton, and his sons featured prominently over the following fifty years, during the English Civil War, Commonwealth, and Restoration. A close friend of Prince of Wales, later King Charles I, he was one of two to hold the King's train at his Coronation.

The English Civil War caused the division of many families, but the Comptons were brought closer together as a cohesive force for the Royalist cause.

With the strong castles of Banbury, Warwick, Northampton, and Broughton in Parliament's hands, the Earl of Northampton's home at Compton became a valuable Royalist stronghold in the Midlands.

In the months leading up to the battle of Edgehill in October 1642, the King's army achieved victories over Parliament's forces, led by the Earl of Essex. Lord Saye and Sele's house at Broughton was captured and shortly afterwards Banbury Castle. The latter was left in the governorship of the first Earl of Northampton, whose son William held it until the end of the wars (Foard G, 1995).

Tragedy hit the family on 9th March 1643 during the Battle of Hopton Heath. A successful parliamentary siege of the town of Lichfield resulted in Henry Hastings and the Earl of Northampton marching to Stafford to offer aid. The forces met at Hopton Heath. The Earl of Northampton found that he was out numbered three to one. He charged the enemy twice, resulting in their rout. However, during the second charge, the Earl's horse tripped in a rabbit hole, pitching him into the thick of the enemy. Regaining his feet, the Earl continued fighting until a blow from a halberd felled him.

His eldest son James succeeded him and reported that Parliament refused to return the body except under unreasonable terms. A request to allow the Earl's surgeon to embalm the body was similarly refused, although it is suggested that Parliament eventually

acquiesced to this request (Hyde, p107). Some sources, including a family history, suggest the Parliamentarians interred his body with that of the dowager Countess of Shrewsbury at All Hallows Church, Derby, later Derby Cathedral.

The new Earl had military success at the Battle of Cropedy Bridge, 1644, where he played a lead role in the defeat of Parliament forces (Bennett, 1990).

The house at Compton Wynyates was besieged and taken by Parliament's troops on June 8, 1644 (Foard, 1995, p40). It was garrisoned by 400 troops until the end of the war, despite repeated but unsuccessful counter attacks by the family.

Parliament made two attempts to recover Banbury Castle. The first, in July 1644 headed by Colonel John Finnes and resulted in a thirteen-week siege.

After receiving increasingly pressing requests for help from the beleaguered garrison at Banbury, the King at Newbury sent James Compton, Earl of Northampton with three regiments of horse to the castle's aid. The King, thus weakened, was attacked and forced to retreat from Newbury. James Compton lifted the siege of Banbury Castle by October 25 and the following months were spent repairing the castle. William Compton, younger brother of James Compton, was knighted for his defence of Banbury Castle (Wedgewood, 1983). The brothers spent the winter months striking at Parliament. On January 25, 1645, the Comptons with 300 members of the Banbury garrison launched a night attack on their home at Compton Wynyates. They captured the stables and the outbuildings and held these for three days before they were driven back.

The second siege of Banbury Castle, led by one Colonel Whalley, began six months after the Battle of Nasby in May 1645. The well supplied garrison was commanded by Sir William Compton, assisted by his brother Sir Spencer Compton and maintained a strong defence. After fifteen weeks the besiegers had advanced to the castle walls. Hearing of the King's surrender at Newark to the Scottish army, the garrison capitulated and Sir Charles Compton, who had been with his mother at St. Albans, negotiated honourable terms. Following the removal of soldiers from Compton Wynyates during June 1646, the House of Commons ordered the works slighted. Banbury Castle was demolished in May 1648 and £2,000 was paid to its owner Lord Saye and Sele, for its loss.

The period of the Commonwealth was not kind to those who had favoured the royalist cause. Sir William Compton and Spencer Compton were given two months to leave the country. James Compton, Earl of Northampton, remained in the country, an uncomfortable position for a Royalist Commander. The next few years he spent regaining control of the family estates, sequestered during the war and in applying for moderation of the fine imposed on the family by Parliament. The fee initially was set at £21,455 12s 11d but after much remonstrance he managed to have reduced to £14,153 0s 6d in 1650. During this period, James married the daughter of a buccaneer, Lady Isabella Sackville. The couple lived primarily at Castle Ashby but began the restoration of Compton Wynyates, including repairing the church.

Sir Charles sent the first two years of the Commonwealth living abroad, probably with his close friend the future King Charles II. Upon his return to England he spent much of the time living with his mother and sisters at his house at Grendon, Buckinghamshire. His brother, Spencer, remained abroad for the rest of his life, dying at Bruges on October 6, 1656 at the age of 27.

After the war, Sir William Compton travelled abroad for two years before returning to England to claim his property at Erith. In 1648 he became one of the plotters planning to take up arms on behalf of the sovereign. With the Earl of Norwich, Sir Charles Lucus and Sir George Lisle he joined forces gathering in Kent to make an ultimately



unsuccessful stand at Colchester (Hyde, p397). The surrender negotiated by him was probably the reason he escaped the death penalty imposed on the others.

A few months later he was again petitioning for the return of the Erith estates, which were finally granted him upon payment of a fine of £660.

In 1651, shortly after his marriage and the same year that Prince Charles went into exile in Holland, Sir William was again scheming for the return of the King.

Between 1652-1659 he became one of the six men known as the "Sealed Knot", a group which made eight clandestine attempts to restore the King. Sir William's association with the group resulted in his being imprisoned in 1655 and 1658 for high treason against Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector. However, by August 20th 1659, he was amongst a force of 1500 Royalists supporters marching from Holyhead to Chester to welcome the arriving Prince.

Upon the restoration, the family were again prominent friends of the King. By 1688 the family's allegiances had moved behind William, Prince of Orange and they became instrumental in the fall of King James II.

Sir Charles's brother Henry had a short military career and subsequently chose to pursue a career in the Church. He quickly rose to become Bishop of Oxford and as such played a central role in the downfall of King James II. Following the revolution of 1688, James II embarked on an orgy of retribution against the Protestant ideal, culminating in the suspension of the Bishop of Oxford. This led in September 1688 to William, Prince of Orange making his claim on the English throne, citing the Bishop suspension as a 'flagrant piece of injustice'. By December 17th that year, William and his wife Mary had reached Westminster and agreed for the King to withdraw to Rochester, from where he left for Paris. By February 1689, William and Mary had been jointly crowned.

Restoration work at Compton Wynyates continued on an *ad hoc* basis depending on whether or not it was the preferred residence of the family (Appendix E). Between 1774 and 1837 the house remained derelict because of severe financial difficulties of the family. The fourth Earl, George, rebuilt the stable in 1701 and made numerous alterations to the house. His work was continued by the fifth Earl, James, whose work can be traced easily by his habit of carving his initials into the new works.

Despite favouring Castle Ashby the sixth Earl, George, completed an inventory of Compton Wynyates followed by one of Castle Ashby. His wife was the first Compton buried at Castle Ashby Church and from this point, there are few additions to the crypt at Compton Wynyates. Severe financial problems continued during the lifetime of the eighth Earl of Northampton resulting in his allegedly ordering his agent, one Mr Birrel, to pull down the house to save the cost of maintenance. Luckily the agent refused and merely blocked up the windows to avoid window tax.

The ninth Earl of Northampton was a prominent military man and was created the first Marquess in 1812. He was involved with the defence of the realm against Napoleonic invasion. He was very committed to Castle Ashby and only visited Compton Wynyates once with his wife. Saddened by its state, he took no steps to repair it.

His son, Spencer, was educated at Cambridge like his father, and campaigned hard with Wilberforce for the emancipation of the slaves. He married Margaret Clephane of Carslogie who had inherited Mary Queen of Scots' ring, a gift for her family's part in helping the Queen escape. Like his parents, Spencer and his wife lived mainly at Castle Ashby. On visiting Compton once in 1837 he found the house badly neglected. He repaired the roof, opened many windows, and renewed the plastering of many of the

interior rooms.

The fortunes of Compton Wynyates only seemed to change during the life of the third Marquess, Charles, and his wife, Theodosia (or Dosia). She fell in love with the house and embarked on a series of alterations advised by Sir Digby Watt (Appendix E). The work ended on her death in November 1864. On her wishes, she was buried in the Crypt at Compton, although later her body was moved to Ashby Church upon the death of her husband.

The fourth Marquess, William, was devoted to Castle Ashby and he implemented revolutionary changes to the church there.

His son, William, who married the daughter of the second Baron Ashburton, succeeded him. The couple had two sons, William 'Bim', Spencer (Spenny), and a daughter Margaret. The sons took an avid interest in Egyptology and for two years excavated in Egypt under the direction of Messrs. Percy Newbury and Howard Carter.

Breaking from a Cambridge tradition, 'Bim' attended Oxford and read modern History. He received a first class honours degree. During the First World War, the brothers served in the Household Cavalry at Paschendale. Bim was briefly evacuated to England after receiving a minor wound. His brother Spencer was killed during a reconnoitre patrol and his body never recovered.

In response to the depression and high taxation of post-war England, Bim tried various schemes to maintain the family's fortunes. To avoid taxation he sold Castle Ashby to a company entirely owned by himself. Compton Wynyates was modernised installing central heating and electric lighting. In 1921 he married Lady Emma Tynne. Bim intended for them both to be buried at Compton Wynyates but was interred instead at Castle Ashby.

### **A Study of The Church of St. Mary Magdalene by Nick Armour, BA**

The church at Compton Wynyates is as fascinating as it is enigmatic. A church is recorded in 1279 with Philip de Compton as its patron. The present church is described in the County's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as being largely re-built around 1665 on the foundations of the previous church, destroyed during the English Civil War. The record feels that it is unlikely that the demolition of the tower was total, with much of its fabric incorporated into the remodelling. Apart from the tower, which may have been resurfaced externally, there is little evidence of the plan or character of the earlier church. The interior, which is plastered throughout, contains no obvious clues, although on the exterior a substantial buttress on the north side may be related to problems caused by earlier construction phases (SMR, 1999).

It would appear that since the building has so little repair joins or differences in masonry or building techniques that it has been almost entirely re-built since 1665 and is almost entirely one period. There are, however, some interesting questions to be asked.

We must first consider why there is a church at Compton Wynyates. It seems that the location for the house was chosen as it could be well fortified, especially before the advent of cannon, through being protected by the elements on three sides. It had clear views across the Edgehill plain and a plentiful water supply for the moat and protracted siege situations. However, as a place of general habitation it was unsuitable: it was too far from cultivated land and too small to contain a village. The original settlement called Compton Superior (now deserted), was located half a mile to the north of the house and survives today as well preserved earthworks. This site has always been known on the estate as 'Lower Compton', and the sixth Marquess referred to the area surrounding the



house as Upper Compton.

The DMV would have provided the original centre of habitation and undoubtedly there would have been a parish church, possibly founded by Philip de Compton in 1279. Early Comptons would have attended services and have been buried here. The Lord's private oratory chapel in the house would have provided provision for daily prayer.

This system was normal from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. However, proprietary chapels belonging to the nobility and built within their estates have been in evidence since the Anglo-Saxon times when to have a proprietary church was considered a symbol of rank (Friar, 1998).

The church at Compton Wynyates is a rather different proposition but as there is so little remaining of the original structure it prohibits the statement of supposition as fact.

Previously it has been thought that the present church is built to the south of an earlier one (Compton, 1930). However, after consideration of the available evidence it seems likely that an earlier church would have been on the site of the DMV rather than in the vicinity of the house. By the fourteenth century, it is recorded as being complete with a Rectory, and Glebe.

Architecturally there are a number of sixteenth-century features that do not belong to a mid-to-late seventeenth-century building. The crypt itself appears to be of a size and style – long, narrow, barrel vaulted – commonly used during the sixteenth century. Earlier vaults tended to be small chapels dedicated to a saint but incidentally also used for burial (Friar, 1998). The lack of shelving, alcoving and general absence of superfluous decoration would indicate this one of the earlier crypts. The stairwell in the northern corner (Figure 3) was probably the original entrance and access to the steps made via a doorway in the church nave. The entrance let into the floor of the nave was possibly added later, during the 1665 rebuild. All of this suggests that the crypt be earlier than the 1665 church restoration. The crypt also shows a second phase of construction in the roof vaulting possibly completed by the fifth Earl (Figure 4; Plates 4 and 7).

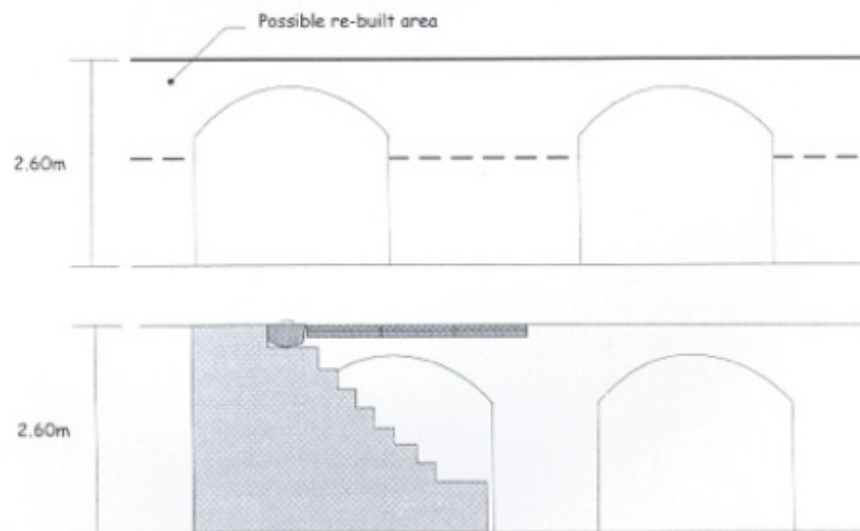
This supposition is further supported by several other factors, namely the windows that are of a similar period to the restored church and are late perpendicular with trefoil heads. An original element of the windows survives in the south-west wall of the nave opposite the door. In the left hand corner of this window is a piece of stonework with deeply incised bird motifs within the triangular spaces created by the trefoil curves. They are noticeable primarily because inside similar spaces on the remainder of the windows are blankly carved. However, the external sides of the windows facing the house have similar bird motifs carved in much lighter relief. The differences are surely due to them having been copied from the earlier example inside. It appears that elements of the windows in the rear-facing wall are very probably original, possibly in situ.

The characteristic lozenge shaped terminals to the label hood mouldings can be found on buildings from the early to late sixteenth-century, although the examples on the church are much more decorated and are again probably copies from an original. However, the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at neighbouring Tysoe also has similar decoration, dated circa fifteenth century.

This would seem to indicate that the Church at Compton Wynyates was built during the sixteenth century. The arcade dividing the church is possibly even earlier, being of a style known as Early English and dated from around 1350 AD. However, as the crypt has been constructed with a column supporting one of the arcade pillars both must have a contemporary date of construction.



Historical sources add further information. The DMV was demolished in 1510 to make way for a Deer Park. This village would have had a church. Upon the abandonment of the early medieval village, the church is likely to have been demolished, possibly reusing the building materials in the construction of a new ecclesiastical building close to the house. During the sixteenth century, the house was undergoing extensive expansion under the patronage of King Henry VIII.



**Figure 3: Crypt Cross Section**

Providing material for this work, brickworks were built in the grounds of the house (SMR No. 2094, 1999). It is tempting therefore, to suggest that the original church was also made of brick with stone windows and doorway.

Upon his death in 1528, Sir William Compton left provision in his will for the offices of two chantries and for the bodies of his parents to be moved there and alabaster monuments erected (Compton, 1930).

This is interesting since, although it is not stated where these chantries were to be created, there must have been a church nearby. It therefore appears that there was already a chapel at Compton Wynyates or had been recently built, perhaps for the bequest of William Compton.

It is unlikely to be an accident that the crypt is so perfectly proportioned within the church and located directly front of the alter, the best place for receiving the grace of God. Perhaps the church was built as a chantry chapel using an arcade salvaged from the demolished parish church to split the nave, separating the family and parishioners. Alternatively, an earlier smaller naved building may have been enlarged and a crypt put into the earlier fabric, similar to many dual-naved Welsh churches (Blair, 1996).

In conclusion, there is some evidence to show that the church as it stands now probably shares the same plan as an earlier church in the same location. Probably largely destroyed by Parliamentary forces during the English Civil War the church was rebuilt by the third Earl in the late seventeenth century using parts of the original design as reference, including windows and some decoration. It seems from these remnants and from historical sources that the original church was built to this plan between 1480-1520.

It may itself replace an earlier building.

The implications of this are enormous. If the church was built during the sixteenth century to replace the lost Compton Superior parish church, then many generations of the Compton family may still be interred in the floor of the church in the DMV.

## Results

The crypt continued at least twenty-eight separate internments and the remains of at least three other individuals identified by loose skulls.

The crypt is rectangular, measuring 6.80m x 5.80m (39.44 square metres) and is located beneath the nave of the church with the entrance adjacent to the pulpit (Figure 2). A massive central supporting column divides the room into two aisles (Figure 3 & 4). Entrance was via a rectangular hole let into the southern corner with eight steps. The steps were all 0.25m in depth and height, with the exception of the final step, which was 0.5m deep and 0.60m high.

A piece of graffiti 'J.C.' on the southern face of the column probably belongs to the fifth Earl, James Compton (Appendix E), who completed numerous works on the house and church in the eighteenth century. On all his changes he carved his initials. It seems likely that the crypt was also subject to his desire to improve and restore the estate. Perhaps he installed the very different vaulted roof and column?

A second, blocked entrance with narrow, steep stairs was found in the northern corner (Figure 3, Plate 7).

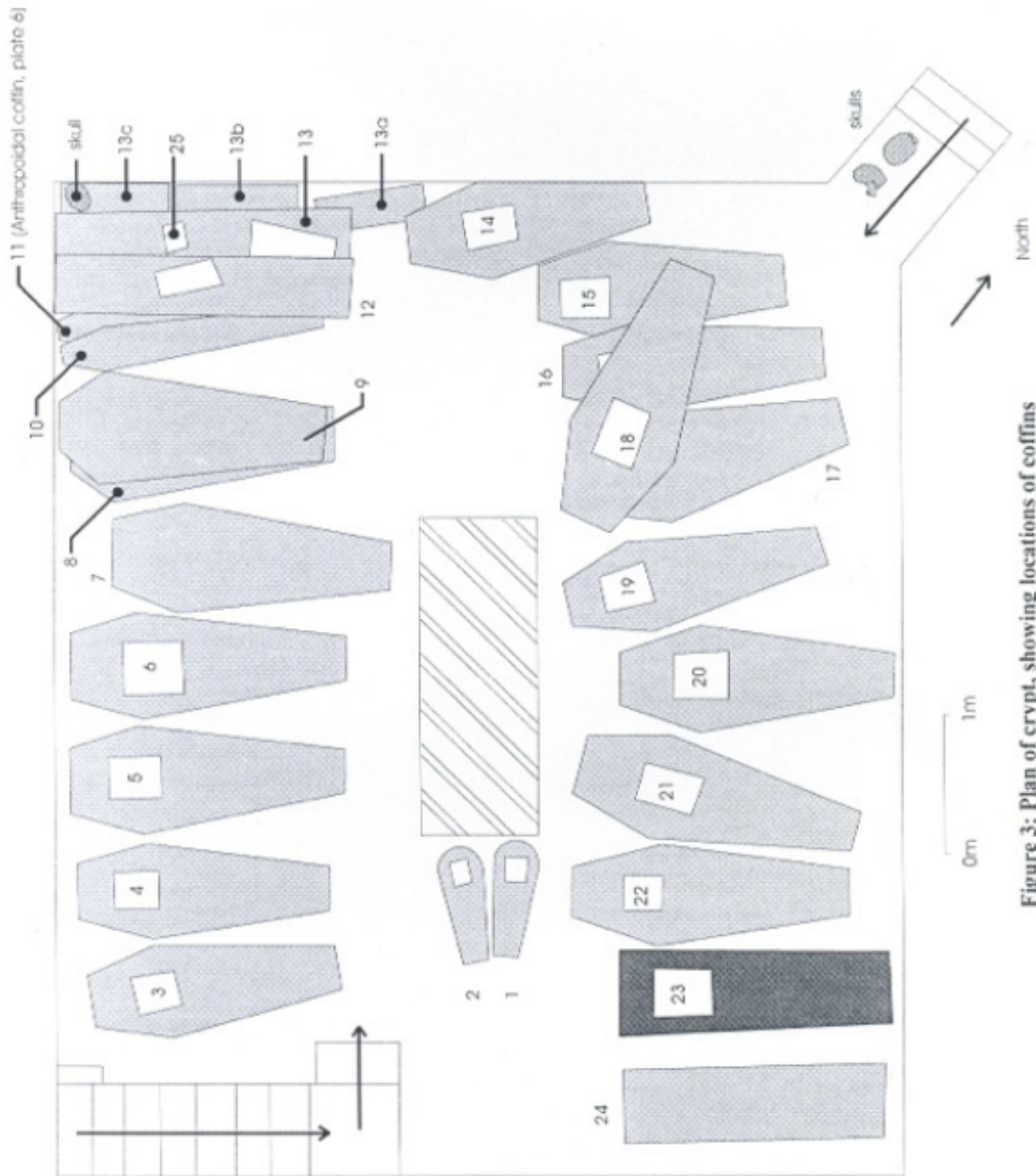
Two possible reasons for a second entrance are:

1. The northern entrance was the original entrance, contemporary to the sixteenth century church. It was possibly blocked up between 1918 and 1939 when the parochial church council took over the care of the church. The fifth Earl, James, possibly inserted the second entrance during the late seventeenth century during his programme of alterations.
2. Both entrances are contemporary. The northern entrance used for visitation by the family and their priest, the other entrance for additional interments.

The inhumations were found neatly aligned along each aisle (Figure 3). In the north-west corner of the crypt at least nine lead coffins and one lead cylinder (Plate 3; burial 25) had been piled up. All the coffins in this group were found to be at least seventeenth century, possibly grouped together in a re-organisation of the crypt in the eighteenth-century.

One of these coffins is anthropoid in form (Plate 6; burial 11). This is a style fashionable from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

The lead cylinder (Plate 3; burial 25) is similar to viscera containers used in France during the thirteenth century and in Britain in the fifteenth century.



**Figure 3: Plan of crypt, showing locations of coffins**

**Figure 4: Plan of the Crypt, showing the locations of the coffins**



## Identification of individuals

Coffin typology was based upon the methodology used in the Spittlefields report, based upon the work of JWS Litten (Reeve & Adam, 1993). The reason behind the elaborate nature of lead coffins seems to be twofold: an obvious statement of wealth and prestige backed up by a more practical matter of preventing the smell of decomposing corpses from disturbing the congregation above.

The general construction of coffins for use within crypts seem to be of a style known as 'Triple-shell', this being a wooden coffin encased in a shell of lead with a lead Depositum plaque welded onto the lid. An outer wooden shell would be elaborately decorated with plush upholstery held in place by brass upholstery pins, brass fitting (cornets etc) and a brass Depositum plaque.

Until the late seventeenth century (1660-1675), coffins were trapezoidal in shape, with gable lids. These gave way to single-break, flat-lidded coffins, shaped at the shoulders (Litten, p.99).

The majority of coffins were of the familiar 'coffin-shaped' design, with a flat-break lid. Two exceptions, coffins 23 and 24 were rectangular in shape, a style typical of Italian imports (Litten pers com).

Little can be deduced of the structure of the coffins from this evaluation other than to identify surviving outer wood coverings. From those, whose lids had burst it was possible to identify a fibrous material, although whether this was wood forming an inner layer or fabric forming coffin lining was impossible to determine.

Where the coffins were intact, it would seem probable that the majority were triple-shelled. Those coffins that had collapsed are likely to be only double shelled, 'shell and case'.

### Coffin Number 1

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Trapezoidal
Condition:	Good, expect for small holes
Depositum Plaque:	Iron (largely unreadable)

Identity of Individual: Male, 1 or 2 years old, died 1746

George Cumpton. Good condition. Son of 'Mr Charles', brother to George, 6th Earl.

### Coffin Number 2

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Trapezoidal
Condition:	Fair, apart from the foot end, which had begun to shred.
Depositum Plaque:	Iron (largely unreadable)

Identity of Individual: Male, 2 or 3 years old, died 1746

James Cumpton died December 27, 1746 aged 5 years, three months. Coffin originally covered in wood with decorative bronze fittings. Son of 'Mr Charles', brother to George, sixth Earl.

### Coffin Numbers 3 to 6

These coffins were identified as containing the four unmarried daughters of the fourth Earl, George and his wife Jane, youngest daughter of Sir Stephen Fox. Together, they had four sons and six daughters.

#### Coffin Number 3:

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
 Shape: Trapezoidal  
 Condition: Good  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?), fair condition

Identity of Individual: Female, 81 years old, died 1746

Lady Margaret Compton, born in 1704, died 1786 (family history) aged 81 years. She appears to have spent most of her life at Ashby embroidering with Pen (see below, coffin number 4). When the contents of Castle Ashby were sold to pay debts, she bought some pieces of furniture with her own money. She spent her last years living alone at her house at Richmond. She moved in very fashionable society, even in her old age. Horace Walpole mentions meeting her at balls and dinner parties between the years 1776 and 1781 and she appears to have been a frequent visitor at Princess Amelie's house.

#### Coffin Number 4

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
 Shape: Trapezoidal  
 Condition: Fair  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?), fair condition

Identity of Individual: Lady Penelope (Pen), 64 years old, died 1762

Lady Penelope (Pen) Compton born 16th January 1697, aged 64 years, died 27th December 1762, unmarried. She spent the first thirty years of her life at Castle Ashby where she and her sister, Margaret worked on the embroidery that covers the walls of King William's room there. She died before its completion in 1772 when it was presented to their nephew, the eighth Earl.

#### Coffin Number 5

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
 Shape: Trapezoidal  
 Condition: Fair  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?), fair condition

Identity of Individual: Lady Jane Compton, aged 56 years old, died 1749

Lady Jane Compton, born september 1693, died 8th may 1749, aged 56, unmarried. She lived with her father and her unmarried sisters until his death. She then lived with her stepmother in London.



### **Coffin Number 6**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Good – The wood covering on coffins six and seven were the best preserved in the crypt.  
Depositum Plaque: Tin (?), fair condition

Identity of Individual: Lady Elizabeth?, 54 years old, died 1743

Lady Elizabeth (Betty) Compton, born 30th March 1688, died unmarried January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1743, aged 54 years. She lived with her parent's until her father's death, and then probably with her stepmother and sisters at Northampton House in Bloomsbury square.

### **Coffin Number 7**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Good – The wood covering on coffins six and seven were the best preserved in the crypt.  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

Although no plaque was visible the provenance suggests that the coffin contains the wife of the fourth Earl, George Compton. A loose plaque near coffin 12 is that of the Countess Anne Compton and may have been moved.

### **Coffin Number 8**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Unclear as largely beneath coffin number 9.  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

### **Coffin Number 9**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Good  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

### **Coffin Number 10**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Unclear, as coffin hidden at base of pile  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

**Coffin Number 11 (Plate 6)**

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Anthropoid
Condition:	Fair, only the upper portion of coffin was visible from beneath the pile of coffins.
Depositum Plaque:	None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

Coffin was in shape of a woman.

Anthropoid coffins are almost exclusively associated with the burial vault in direct imitation of the Egyptian mummy case (Litten. P.92). These became fashionable in the fifteenth century, and continued in style up until the last decade of the seventeenth century. The lead case would be fashioned, tightly fitting the corpse, often eviscerated and wrapped. Commonly, over the years, the lead will ease, with the lid settling on the contents and highlighting the outline of the body within. The Depositum plaque is either soldered or incised above the chest.

**Coffin Number 12**

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Unclear
Condition:	Fair, badly dented
Depositum Plaque:	None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

The identity of the individual is unclear. A loose depositum plaque near to the coffin is the Countess Jane Compton. The two maybe associated, but clarification would be require examination of the incised plaque. The plaque may have been moved from coffin 7.

**Coffin Number 13**

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Unclear
Condition:	Fair. The coffin was in a heap at the rear of the crypt and hard to examine.
Depositum Plaque:	Tin (?), fair condition. Unattached to coffin and may not belong to the individual.

Identity of Individual: Female, 39 years old, died 14th October, 1661.

The Countess Isabella (?). Born 6th October 1622, died October 14th, 1661. The daughter of Richard, third Earl of Dorset, she owned five castles: Skipton, Appleby, Pendragon, Brough, Bordan, as well as vast acres of land and other houses. She married the third Earl of Northampton in 1647 and after eight years of marriage the couple remained very devoted to each other. Dying in 1661 in their house at Lincoln fields her body was buried at Compton Wynyates. Her heart is reported to be buried at the Sackville Chapel in Withyham Church, Sussex. They had six children:

Lord Compton (born 1649, died a few days later)

William, Lord Compton (born 27th May 1661, died September 1661)

Lady Anne (born 14th July 1655, died 1660)

Lady Isabella Compton (born 16th December 1656, died March 3rd 1657)

James, Lord Compton (born 1659, died 1662), buried at Compton

Lady Alatheia Compton (born 1660, died 1678 aged 18 years, married Sir Edward Hungerford).

#### Depositum Inscription

*"Countess of Northampton, wife to James Earl of Northampton heir to ? second daughter of Richard Earl of Dorset and by her mothers side, who was sole daughter and heir to George Earl of Cumberland and co heir to that estate. Died 14th October 1661, had issue by said James Earl of Northampton, three sons. First son died soon after he was born. Second son, William Lord Compton of ? died the eleventh year of his age."*

#### **Coffin Numbers 13a, 13b, 13c**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Unclear  
Condition: Unclear  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: ?

Three small child sized lead coffins largely hidden by pile of coffins in the corner of the crypt.

#### **Coffin Number 14**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Poor condition. The lid had split at the head end, showing part of the skull.  
Depositum Plaque: Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: Colonel Henry, 25 years old, died 1625

Colonel Henry. Born 1600. Son of Sir Henry Compton K.B. and second wife Mary. He was killed in a duel in 1625. His skull appears to have been trepanned possibly a result of an autopsy. The duel was with an intimate friend, Lord Chandos, over a lady. A tragic incident since both had agreed their seconds should stop the fight upon the first sight of blood. The family history records him buried at East Grinstead but his coffin is in the crypt.

#### Depositum Inscription

*"Expecting the glorious resurrection within this coffin rests the body of Henry Compton of Bramphlete Esquire who came to an untimely end in a single dual provoked by the worst, an inconstant friend, honour swaying him to malice..... his adversary wittingly to spare, so proved his fate, his life often ventured in home and abroad in war was carried to heaven by honour."*

### **Coffin Number 15**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Top collapsed and corner seams have split because of weight of the coffin on top (coffin 17)  
Depositum Plaque: Loose tin (?) – largely unreadable

Identity of Individual: Unknown

The identity of the individual is unclear. Lid is split open and coffin full of water.

### **Coffin Number 16**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Poor. Lid has collapsed through weight of coffin top (coffin 17)  
Depositum Plaque: Tin (?) –largely unreadable

Identity of Individual: Identity of individual is unclear.

### **Coffin Number 17**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Good  
Depositum Plaque: None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

Individual is unknown, as beneath coffin 18.

### **Coffin Number 18**

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
Shape: Trapezodial  
Condition: Good  
Depositum Plaque: Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: Male, 67 years old, died 1754.

James, fifth Earl of Northampton, born 2nd May, 1687, died 2nd October 1754, aged 67 years. On March 3rd 1716, he married Elizabeth Shirley, only daughter of the Hon. Robert Shirley of Staunton Harrold (Leicestershire). The couple were given Compton Wynyates by his father as their home and completed considerable work to the property (Appendix E).. They had three sons and five daughters, all of whom died young.

Elizabeth died on March 13th, 1741 at their Brook Street house and buried at Compton. Following her death James lived in considerable seclusion for the rest of his life. He refused a dukedom by King George II two years after his wife's death, as he had no surviving sons.

His last public occasion was at the funeral of Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1751 where he was one of the assistants to the Chief Mourner.

Succeeded by his brother George who had four sons, and five daughters:

A son, born 1718, died unnamed  
George, born August 1719, buried at Compton 1719



Elizabeth, born 1720, died April 20th 1721, buried at Compton

James, born 6th July 1723, died November 28th, 1739

Jane, born between 1724 and 1728, died May 9th 1749

Anne, born between 1724 and 1728, died December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1746, buried at Compton.

Charlotte, born August 8th, 1729, married December 19th, 1751 to Hon. George (afterwards first Marquess) Townsend, died September 3rd 1770

Mary, born and died 1731, buried at Compton

### Coffin Number 19

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Trapezodial
Condition:	Good
Depositum Plaque:	Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: Elizabeth, Countess of Northampton. Female died 1740.

Elizabeth, Countess of Northampton, wife of the fifth Earl, died March 13th 1740. Descended from the ancient Ferrars family. Her brother Robert inherited all his mother's property, and in 1711 their paternal Shirley grandfather was created Earl Ferrars. Robert was given the new title of Viscount Tamworth. When Robert died, Elizabeth inherited Tamworth castle and all her mother's property, and became heiress to her grandfather's barony of Ferrars of Chartley, though the Earldom would go to one of his sons. On her marriage in 1716 her husband managed her maternal estates. At the same time 'Mrs Shirley's house' in Charles Street near St. James Square became 'Lord Compton House'.

### Coffin Number 20

Coffin Type:	Triple-shell (?)
Shape:	Trapezodial
Condition:	Good
Depositum Plaque:	Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: George, 6th Earl. Male, 66 years old, died 1758.

George, 6th Earl, died December 6th, 1758, aged 66 years old. In the army or militia in his early days, in 1719, he was referred to as 'Major Compton'. He ordered an inventory to be made of the contents of Compton Wynyates in 1754. The following year an inventory was taken of Castle Ashby. George had no children.

His youngest brother, 'Mr Charles' was appointed Consul General in Lisbon in May 1728. He married Mary, only child and heiress of Sir Berkeley Lucy, Bart. of Broxbourne, Hertfordshire and they had five sons (three died in infancy), and five daughters.

George had no children but 'Mr Charles':

Mary, born November 11th, 1728, died 8th May, 1782

Jane, born January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1730, died January 1757, aged 27 years old.

Catherine, born 4th June, 1731, died June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1784 aged 53 years old

Charles, born 9th December, 1732, died 6th December, 1733

Anne, born 1733, died in infancy

Elizabeth, born 11th September 1734, died 25th March 1819 aged 85 years

Charles, born 22nd July 1737, became the seventh Earl of Northampton

Spencer, born 5th August 1738, became the eighth Earl of Northampton

James, born 8th October 1744, died November 1747 aged 3 years. Buried at Compton.

George, born 12th November, 1745, died November 1747 aged 1 year. Buried at Compton.

### Coffin Number 21



Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
 Shape: Trapezoidal  
 Condition: Good  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: Anne, Countess of Northampton

Anne, Countess of Northampton, born 1740, died 18th May 1763 aged 23 years. Married to Charles, seventh Earl. Another plaque on the coffin refers to a child, 'Right Honourable Charles, died 20th November 1755, aged 5 years old'.

### Coffin Number 22

Coffin Type: Triple-shell (?)  
 Shape: Trapezoidal  
 Condition: Poor. Lid seams have burst, and lid partially collapsed.  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: James, Third Earl of Northampton

James, third Earl of Northampton, died 15<sup>th</sup> December 1681 aged 60 years.. He married Countess Isabella in 1647, and Mary Noel in January 1663. James and William seem to have been the only members of the family to feature in politics during the Commonwealth, William being one of the six called the 'Sealed Knot'. James must have also been involved in some way as shortly after October 1651 he was imprisoned for his implications in a Royalist plot. A man of principle he was imprisoned again in June 1653 for refusing to meet a compensation claim resulting from the action of a subordinate in the Civil War. In 1655 he was again committed for refusing to pay taxes.

Repairing the damage caused by the Civil War, James began re-building the church in April 1665 through to December, spending £358 17s 3d and employing twenty masons and labourers, and up to five carpenters.

During his marriage to Isabella, they had six children, five of whom died young. His marriage to Mary produced a son and a daughter.

### Coffin Number 23

Coffin Type: Unknown  
 Shape: Rectangular  
 Condition: Fair. Eastern end of coffin very degraded (shredded)  
 Depositum Plaque: Tin (?)

Identity of Individual: Charles, seventh Earl. Born 1737, died 1763 aged 26 years old.

Charles, seventh Earl, born 1737 and spent his childhood in Lisbon. Died December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1763 four months after his wife. The lid of the coffin seems to be wider than the case by 0.1m and covered in fabric. Rectangular, plain coffins are Italian in fashion (Litten, pers com).

He married Lady Anne Somerset, daughter of the fourth Duke of Beaufort, who was four years younger than him. Horace Walpole says of them "she is rather handsome". He also records that Charles had much of the dignity and the coldness of the Comptons as he says that the earl refused to marry her unless the dowry was increased to £18,000 from £10,000. It was suspected that he wanted to marry an 'old flame' he had met in

Florence a few months earlier. The Duchess of Beaufort's brother hurriedly made up the £8,000 difference.

They had one daughter, Lady Elizabeth who was born on 25th June 1760. She was only two when her parents went abroad and never knew them.

The Foreign Secretary appointed Charles in May 1761 as special Ambassador to Venice. Four months after his wife's death in Naples, he died on the 18th December 1763. Both were buried at Compton Wynyates.

#### **Coffin Number 24**

Coffin Type:	Unknown
Shape:	Rectangular
Condition:	Good, except for lid splitting around seals. Coffin was full of water.
Depositum Plaque:	None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

The provenance and diagnostic Italian shape suggests that this coffin contains Lady Anne. Flooding of the crypt may have moved the plaque. Examination of the incised plaque may identify the individual.

The coffin possibly represents a foreign import. This was an attempt by the English undertakers to profit by re-boxing the original (Litten, pers com).

#### **Coffin Number 25** (Figure 3; Plate 3)

Coffin Type:	Viscera Container
Shape:	Cylindrical
Length:	0.20m
Diameter:	0.20m
Condition:	Good
Depositum Plaque:	None visible

Identity of Individual: Unknown

Viscera containers were in common use for the nobility throughout France during the Middle Ages (twelfth to fifteenth centuries). The practise was to bury the heart, entrails, and the body in three separate locations. Whenever possible: the heart at the birthplace, the entrails at the place of death, and the body in the city where the King of France had reigned.

English royalty followed a similar practice until the thirteenth century, although evisceration continued more sporadically for royal corpses until the mid-fifteenth century. Viscera were frequently without monuments. An exception was for Eleanor of Castile, King Edward I's wife who died near Lincoln. Before taken to Westminster her body was eviscerated and embalmed and her viscera interred in Lincoln cathedral where Edward put up a separate tomb.

The presence of viscera in the family crypt at Compton Wynyates presents an exciting quandary with three possibilities presenting themselves. It is among coffins dating from the seventeenth century by which point evisceration was no longer generally practised. Countess Isabella, who died in 1662, was reported to have been eviscerated (see coffin 13), so there is evidence for the practice being continued by the Compton family into this

period. Her heart, sources suggest, is in Withyham Church, although not proven and this may be the occupant of the viscera container in the Compton Wynyates crypt. The plaque identifying her body was loose and it is possible this was detached from the viscera chest. The practise of evisceration however, would dicate that her heart returns to her birthplace. Her body is likely to be in the crypt at Compton Wynyates.

Alternatively, it may belong to the occupant of the anthropoid coffin (burial 11). Part of the process involved evisceration before placing the person in a shroud and in the coffin (Litten, pers corn).

A third, more exciting possibility is that it contains the remains of Spencer Compton, second Earl of Northampton, who fell at the Battle of Hopton Heath in 1643. Parliament's forces captured his body and refused to return it to his family. His successor, son James, was able to negotiate the right for his father to be embalmed by his personnel surgeon (Hyde, 1967). This process is likely to have included the removal of his heart. Its safekeeping during the remainder of the Civil War is likely to have been Banbury Castle, held by his sons. After the Civil War the recovery of the family home would allow the completion of the burial process with the restoration of the viscera container to its rightful place, the family crypt.

It has been alleged by Clarendon and other sources that Spencer Compton's mutilated body was displayed around Derby by Parliament's forces before being interred in All Hallow's Church, later Derby Cathedral (Hyde, 1967). This mutilation could be a result of the evisceration process conducted by the surgeon.

The Countess of Cavendish vaults in Derby Cathedral were built by Besse of Hardwicke, the dowger Countess of Shrewsbury in the mid seventeenth-century. Recent archaeological investigations revealed two unlabelled drums, one of which is suggested by the excavator as containing the remains of the second Earl of Northampton (Butler, 1994). It is not inconceivable, bearing in mind the evidence of evisceration, bearing in mind the evidence of evisceration continuing in the family tradition even after this point that Spencer Compton's heart was returned to his birthplace at Compton Wynyates.

The quest of identification of the contents of the container could be partially be resolved by DNA testing. This would at least ascertain the sex of the individual whose remains are within the casket.

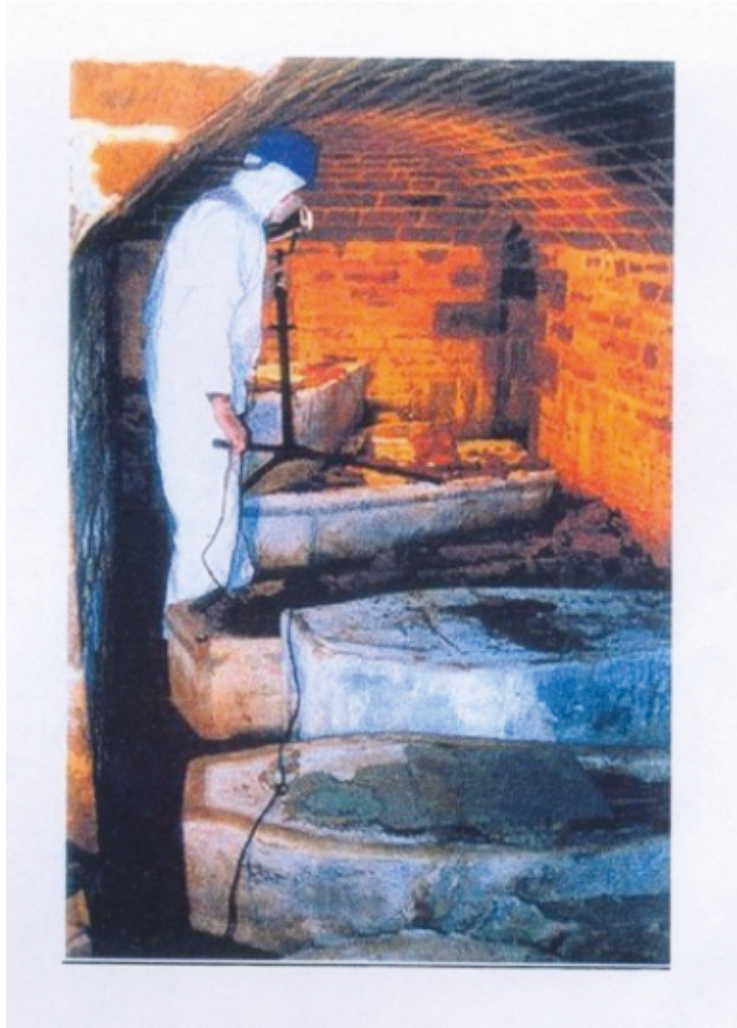




**Plate 2: Blocked Up entrance**



**Plate 3: Stacked Seventeenth-century coffins and viscera container.**



**Plate 4: Coffins in east aisle**

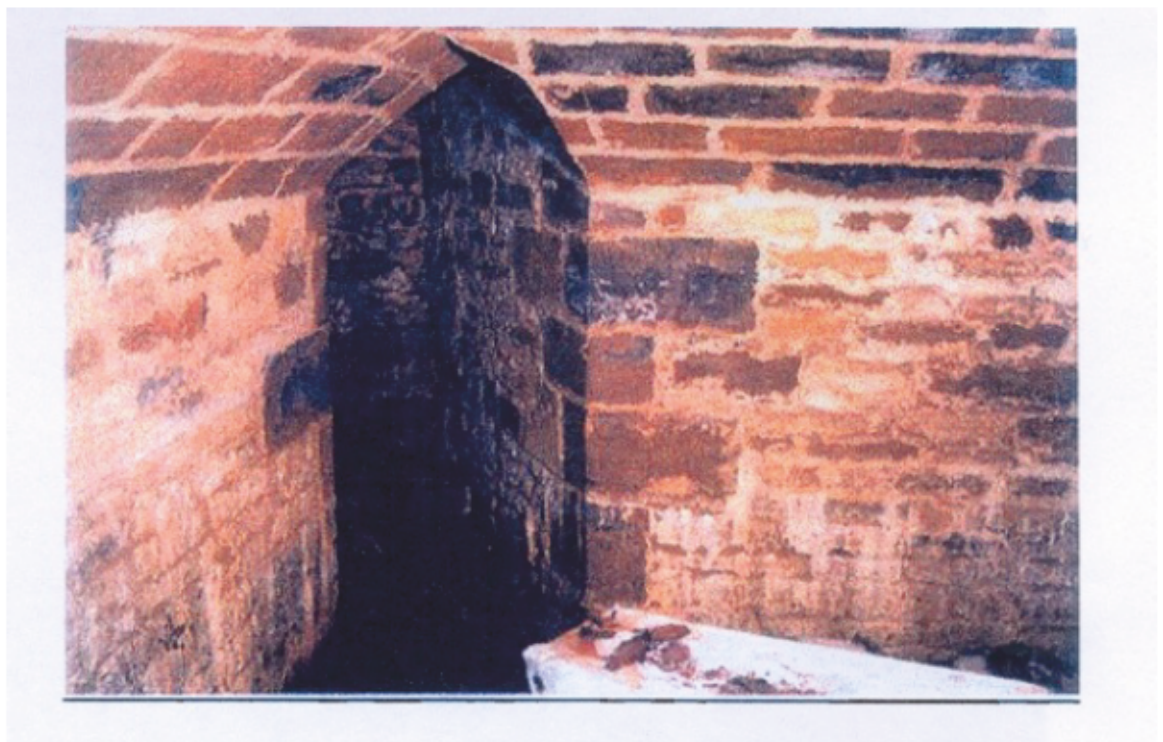


**Plate 5: Damage to three coffins caused by the weight of coffin 17**





**Plate 6: Anthropoid coffin number 11**



**Plate 7: Bricked up entrance. and repair of vault roof**

## Summary of results

The evaluation successfully achieved its objectives.

It has demonstrated the present crypt has been in use for over two hundred years. The crypt was located within the centre of the church, with access via a rectangular entrance in the southern corner of the ceiling of the vault. The ceiling was found to be of the traditional barrel vaulting (Figure 4), divided into four separate vaults, typical of the styles found in the sixteenth century (Litten, 1991). This early style in a structure potentially rebuilt in the seventeenth century is confusing. It can possibly be attributed to the fifth Earl who, we know completed major works at the house and church (Appendix E). He had access to the original plans and would have desired to restore it to its original state in keeping with the rest of the Church.

Alternatively, the crypt may be part of the original church, partially demolished by Parliament forces during the War. The latter explanation assumes the church was rebuilt on the original footings and that not all elements were destroyed. If this is the case, it would also explain the original features found in the window mouldings during the brief building survey by Nick Armour.

The majority of the coffins appeared to triple-shelled, single-break, flat-lidded, and shaped at the shoulders. A style which came into fashion during the eighteenth century (Litten, 1991).

The coffins in the heap at the northern end of the crypt appear from the depositum plaques to be seventeenth century or earlier in date. Being of this period they should be trapezoidal in shape with gabled lids (Litten, 1991). The chaotic nature of the pile, however, made it impossible to determine individual coffin shapes.

Dating the anthropoid coffin is more problematical, since this style had not been in vogue for two hundred years before the majority of the coffins deposited in the vault. It could represent an early Compton, perhaps the wife of Edmund de Compton whose body was moved to the church by her son around 1525.

The condition of the coffins varied considerably. Where they had been stacked, the lead shells were found to be crushed and split (Plate 5). Those coffins not stacked are generally in good condition, apart from general deterioration of the lead. The crypt is below the water table and has frequently been flooded over the centuries. This has caused considerable damage to the outer wooden cases.

Of the coffins encountered forty-six percent were identified from their depositum plaques. Further information on these individuals was gained from the family history (Compton, 1930). The remainder were unidentified, although by examining the family history there are twenty-eight individuals who could be represented, including the fourth Earl, George Compton (Appendix D).

Burial of family members before the mid-sixteenth century would have possibly been in the floor of the Deserted Medieval Village (DMV).

Some, such as Edmund de Compton and his wife, were moved and placed beneath monuments in the church (destroyed by Parliamentary troops) and could be represented by the numerous loose bones found in the crypt.

The analysis of documentary records and from a study of structural components suggest that the third Earl needed to complete considerable amounts of work on the church following the restoration of the monarchy. It now appears to be primarily seventeenth



century in style. However, elements are undoubtedly earlier, such as the crypt. The lower walls of which are built using local light coloured stone, whilst the roof are of another dark red, rough-hewn stonework (Plates 4 and 7). Possibly, the third Earl did not complete a thorough restoration of the crypt, merely making it functional. The full restoration was left to the fifth Earl who recorded his work with his initials 'J.C'. This work must have been completed before 1727 as after his accession to the Earldom he used 'J.N' to record his work.

This combined with the numerous questions in the design and materials of the main church discussed earlier supports the idea of the destruction of the earlier church at least to the level of the crypt, during the Civil War. Possibly, after the foiled attempt to recapture their house in 1645. During this attack, they were successful in occupying the outbuildings, and presumably the church, which they held for three days. The church and its tower would have been an ideal location from which to position a cannon to fire upon the house. Upon repelling the attack Parliament may well have decided to protect against further intrusions. One such way would have been to remove the church. Results achieved by packing the crypt full of gunpowder and standing back.

The crypt would have been consequently filled with church rubble and quite unusable until its restoration in 1665 by the third Earl. The mutilated statues recovered from the moat (currently in the church), offer tangible proof that the church was desecrated by parliamentarian troops.

Additionally, the burial of William Compton in the church floor following his death in 1663 with a suitable wall memorial offers further evidence that the crypt was not in use at this point (Figure 2; Appendix A). By the death of the third Earl in 1681, the crypt was at least back in function as he, and his wives were buried there.

The evaluation has uncovered at least four phases of work to the church and the crypt.

1. The initial construction of the church and crypt seems to be during the sixteenth century as part of the final remodelling of the house undertaken by Edmund de Compton, and completed by his son William. The entrance appears to have been via a doorway in the northern corner of the crypt. The coffins would have needed a more accessible entrance, probably in the roof.
2. Destruction of the church in 1645 by Parliamentarian troops.
3. Rebuilding of the church and crypt in 1665 by the third Earl.
4. The crypt appears to have been reorganised during the early eighteenth century, probably under the orders of the fourth Earl, George Compton, who wished to place at least five of his children, wife, and himself in the crypt. Coffins of this period are neatly laid out while earlier coffins are piled in the north-western corner of the crypt.

The latter phase of organisation seems to have been completed during the lifetime of Mary (Noel) Compton, second wife to the third Earl, James, as his coffin was 'kept in the main body of the crypt. The coffin of his first wife, Isabella is in the more general pile. However, where is Mary's coffin? she loved Compton Wynyates and would have almost certainly have been interred there. She may occupy one of the coffins without a plaque.

The last recorded addition to the crypt was in 1864 when the wife of the third Marquess was placed there (Compton, 1930). Her stay there was brief as upon her husband's death in 1877 her body was moved to Castle Ashby. It would seem likely that the entrance in the crypt's roof was sealed at this point, perhaps leaving the doorway



entrance for visitations by the family and priest. Mortar samples taken from northern entrance show that 'Frogged bricks' were used (Doig; Appendix F). This style of brick only came into use between 1918 and 1933. This possibly coincides with the transference of the church to the local church authority.

There are still many questions to be asked. There are twenty-eight individuals recorded as buried at Compton Wynyates and who have not yet been identified (Appendix D). The fourth Earl, George Compton has all his family in the crypt and he was meant to be there but his coffin was not found.

More detailed work involving closer examination of all the coffins will undoubtedly produce a comprehensive inventory of individuals, achieved by inspection of the incised lead depositum plaques.

The final objective, the location of the body of the second Earl of Northampton, although romantically derived, we believe we are some steps towards achieving. The exact location of Spencer Compton's body is unclear, although reports suggest that Parliament kept his body after his death in 1643. The discovery of a viscera container in a stack of seventeenth century burials, physically groups it with coffins of the right period to be the third Earl's remains. This is supported by Clarendon's report that parliament allowed the Earl's body to be embalmed (Hyde, 1967).

The discussion surrounding the viscera container in the crypt has raised some interesting questions about Spencer Compton's body. Although we have documented evidence for the evisceration of Lady Isabella Compton, it is unlikely her heart would be buried in the same crypt as her body. This leads to the question of whose organs maybe contained within the casket. Possibly, it is the remains of 'Mr Charles' or his wife who died in Italy and were repatriated, evisceration forming part of this process. As has been suggested previously, it is possible that Spencer Compton's heart was taken to Compton Wynyates, via a short stay at Banbury Castle during the Civil War, in the tradition of the heart returning to the birthplace. This would not contradict either historical records or Butler's supposition of the Earl's internment at Derby Cathedral.

DNA testing may go some way towards suggesting an identity for the organs contained in the casket. However, in consideration of the fact that the evisceration drum in Derby Cathedral is also unlabelled, DNA testing would also have to be completed on these remains. It is likely that the true resting place of the third Earl will always be something of a mystery.

## **Potential for further Work**

The evaluation has added considerably to our knowledge of the Compton family. It has also highlighted the need for urgent 'First Aid' to the crypt to prevent further damage by flooding to the coffins and the structure of the crypt and church.

Priorities for further work would be:

### **1. Restoration of the crypt to minimise damage by future flooding**

To achieve this it would be necessary to remove all coffins and clear the crypt of accumulated silts.

This would allow a detailed examination of the coffins to produce a complete inventory of individuals. It would also allow a typology of coffin styles and materials for future references. This would be the first comprehensive study of a private vault. Previous work at Spitalfields has concentrated on wealthy merchants. This work would be the first to allow a study of costume, diet, and health of an aristocratic family spanning two hundred years.

### **2. Construction of coffin shelves.**

This would maximise space and minimise damage by flooding. Opening the northern entrance would improve access to the crypt.

### **3. Building Survey**

A complete building survey of the church, recording architectural features, and constructional details to establish the building's history.

### **4. Geophysical survey.**

The estate at Compton Wynyates remains a time capsule, never having been disturbed since the late seventeenth century. A geophysical survey around the house would be non-intrusive and provide a detailed plan of the curtain wall, outbuildings and moat. Sample geophysical transects could be completed whilst the work in the crypt is underway.

A survey on the site of the DMV would allow us to test our hypothesis that there is an original church on the site. If present, it would have huge ramifications as many pre-sixteenth century Compton's are likely to be buried within the floor of the nave.

### **5. Excavations**

Excavations within the moat could follow the geophysical survey. This would entail the excavation of sections through the moat to record the nature of the backfill, reputedly, deposited during and after the Civil War. It is likely to be rich in architectural fragments from the church, material from the garrison and family, all of which are likely to be well preserved due to water logging.

Excavations could complement the geophysical survey in the grounds of the house and on the site of the DMV. This would allow the probable identification of those buried on the site.

Such an excavation combined with the requirement of universities for archaeological students to complete a certain amount of field training would significantly mitigate any

costs.

#### **6. DNA Analysis**

DNA analysis of the material within the viscera container to ascertain the gender of the individual contained.

#### **7. Collation and archiving of the family records at Castle Ashby**



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Appendix A: Compton Wynyates Maps And Plans

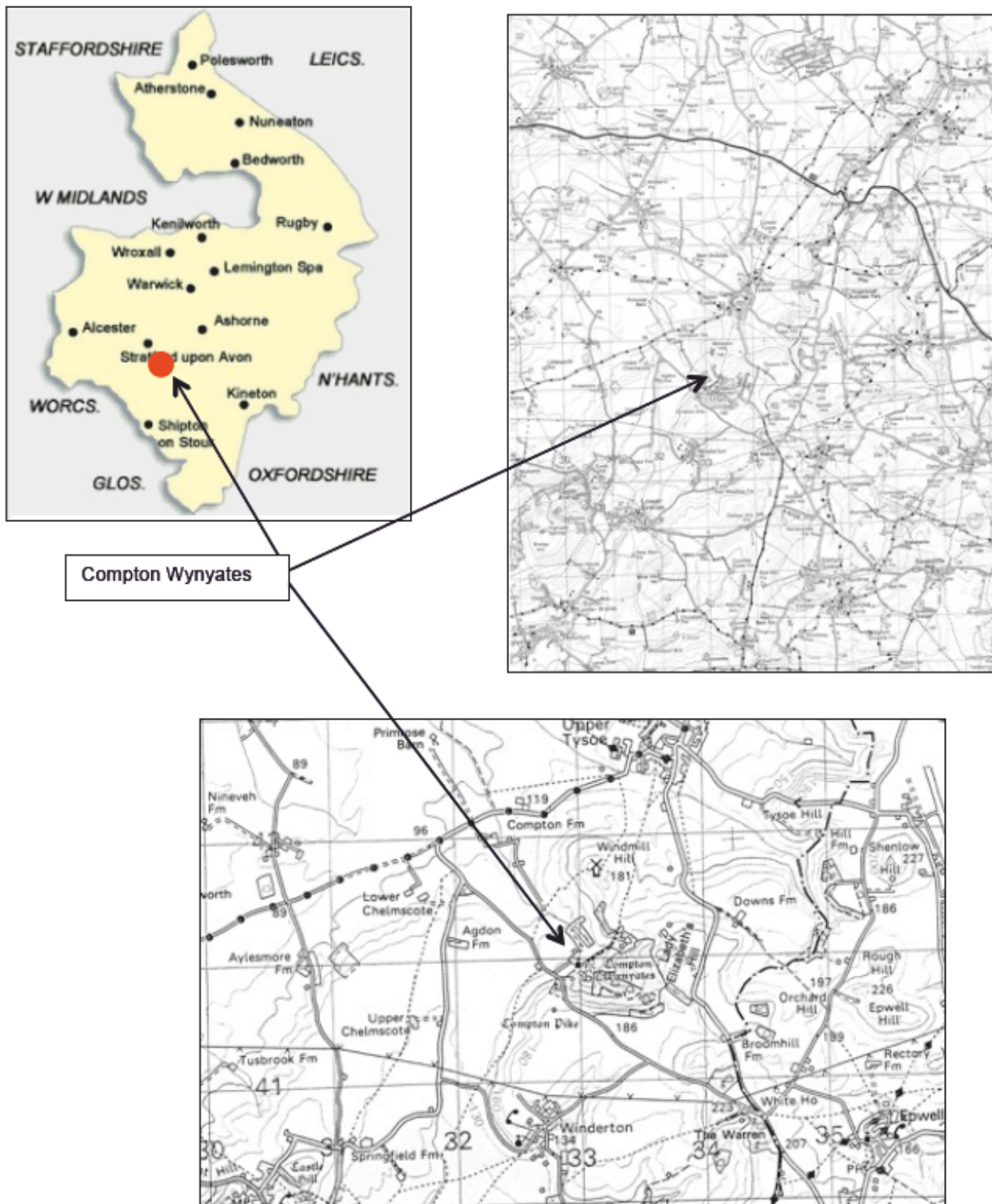
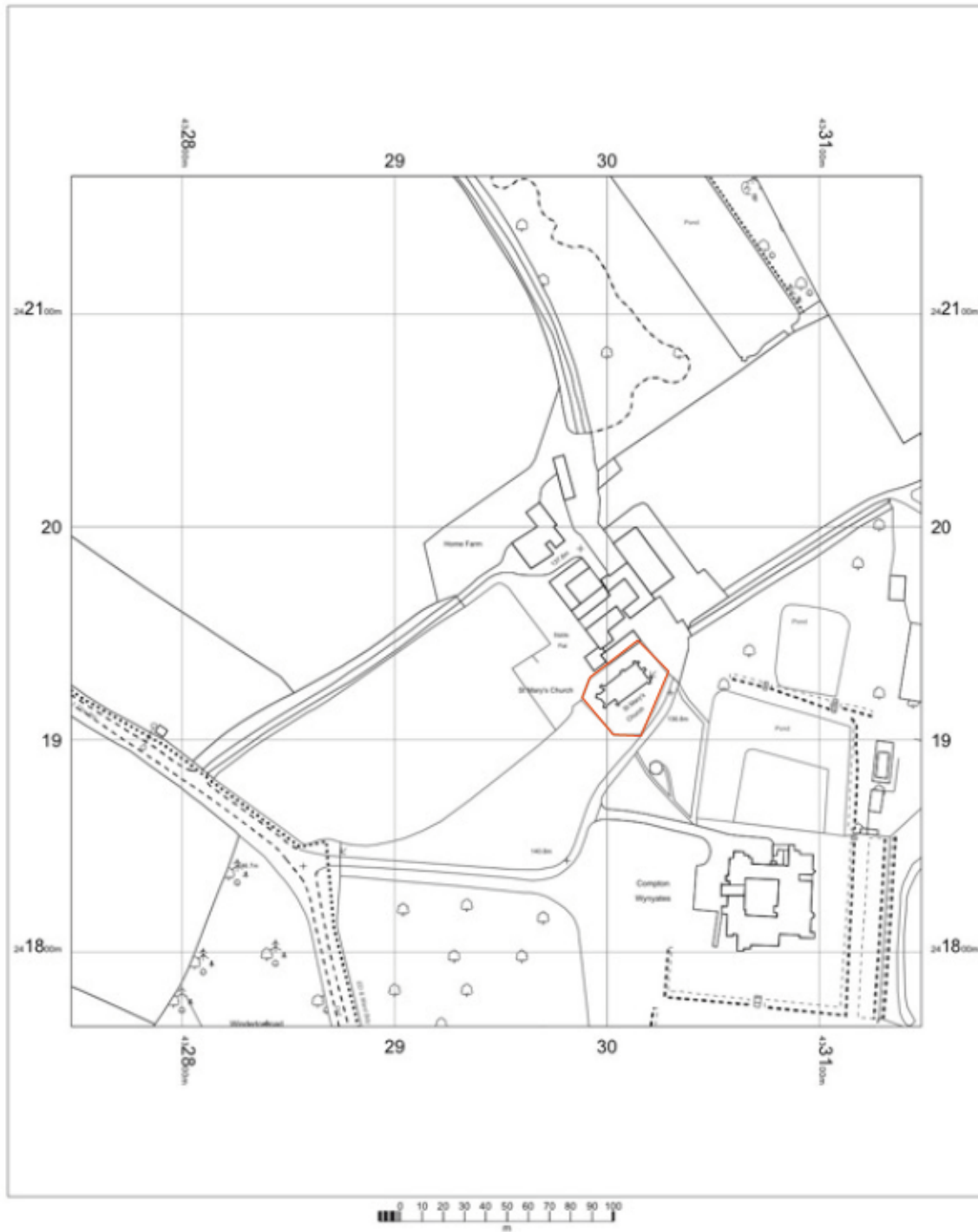


Figure 5: Location maps of Compton Wynyates

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**Figure 6: Location plan of Compton Wynyates and St Mary's Church**

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**Appendix B: Memorial Inscriptions on memorials in the Church (see Figure 2)**

1. "To the memory of Rose, wife of HUGH HIGGINS, who departed this life September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1840 aged 62 years."
2. "SACRED. To the memory of John Beryl, 32 years agent to the Marquess of Northampton at Compton Wyniates. Who died October 15th 1834 Aged 64 years.

Also of Hannah Berril, wife of John Berril who died October 31st, 1834 Aged 41 years.

Also of Augusta Matilida Beryl. Daughter of John and Hannah Beryl Who died December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1834 Aged 1 year and 6 months"

3. Inscription on floor vault:

"Sir William Compton Knt. Master Generall of ye Ordinance Privy Colts Seller to King Charles of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sonne to Spenser Earl of Northampson, lyeth here interred. He died ye 18 of October, 1663, ErATIS SVE38."

Inscription on Wall Memorial

HERE LIETH THE BODY OF SR WILLIAM COMPTON, THIRD SON TO THE RIGHT HONBLE SPENCER EARLE KNT OF NORTHAMPTON INGAGED IN THE EIGHTEENTH YEAR OF HIS AGE IN THE CIVIL WARS FOR KING CHARLES THE FIRST BY WHOM HE WAS MADE GOVERNOR OF BANBURY CASTLE ANNO 1645 AND IN THE YEAR 1648 MAIOR GENERAL OF HIS MATIES FORCES AT COLCHESTER AND UPON THE HAPPY RESTAURATION OF CHARLES THE SECOND ADMITTED ONE OF THE KINGS MOST HONBLE PRIVY COUNCEL AND MASTER GENERALL OF ALL HIS MAIESTYES ORDINANCE. HE MARRYED THE RIGHT HONBLE ELIZABETH LADY ALINTON WIDDOW OF THE RIGHT HONBLE WILLIAM LORD ALINTON OF HORSEHEATH IN THE COVNTY OF CAMBRIDGE WITH WHOM HE LIVED TWELVE YEARS AND DEPARTED THIS LIFE IN THE 39TH YEARE OF HIS AGE THE 18TH OCTOBER ANNO DOMINI 1663"

4. Inscription on Wall memorial:

"HERE LYETH THE BODY OF MRS DOROTHY BAKER WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE 4TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1675"

5. Inscription on Wall Memorial:

"IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM COMPTON 5TH MARQUESS OF NORTHAMPTON M.P. FOR SOUTH-WEST WARWICKSHIRE, KNIGHT OF THE GARTER.

KNT OF GRACE OF ST. JOHN OF JERELSALEM LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY.

BORN 1851, DIED 1913.

AND OF MARY, HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER OF THE 2ND BARON ASHBURTON

BORN 1860, DIED 1902.

THE FIRST OF THE FAMILY SINCE 1768 TO COMPTON WYNYATES THEIR HOME, THEY CHERISHED AND ADORNED IT WITH MANY MARKS OF THEIR LOVING CARE.

**Appendix C: Date of Death and Place of Burials of the Lords of Northampton**

NAME	DATE OF REIGN	PLACE OF BURIAL	COFFIN NUMBER
Lord Edmund de Compton	1481 to 1493	Tomb erected for him and his wife at Compton Wynyates.	
Sir William Compton	1493 to 1528	Possibly at Compton Wynyates as this was the main family residence	
Peter Compton	1528 to 1544	Westminster Abbey	
Henry 1 <sup>st</sup> Lord Compton, K.B.	1544 to 1589	Tomb erected for him and his wife at Compton Wynyates, remains possibly moved to crypt.	
William, 1 <sup>st</sup> Earl of Northampton, K.G.	1589 to 1630	Tomb erected for him and his wife at Compton Wynyates, remains possibly moved to crypt.	
Sir Thomas Compton, K.B.	1572 to 1626	Not Known	
Sir Henry Compton, K.B.	1585 to 1648	Compton Family Crypt	14
Spencer Compton, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Earl of Northampton, K.B.	1630 to 1643	Viscera in container in Family Crypt?, Body in All Hallows Church, Derby?	25
James, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl	1660 to 1681	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	22
George, 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1681 to 1727	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	??
Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington, K.G.	1673 to 1743	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	8
James, 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1727 to 1754	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	17
Elizabeth Compton (wife to 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl)	To 1740	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	19
George, 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1754 to 1758	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	20
Charles, 7 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1758 to 1763	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	23
Spencer, 8 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1763 to 1796	Family crypt at Compton Wynyates	??
Charles, 9 <sup>th</sup> Earl, 1 <sup>st</sup> Marquess	1796 to 1828	Died in Switzerland, buried at Avenches with 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife. No will	
Spencer, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Marquess	1828 to 1851	Castle Ashby Church	
Charles, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Marquess	1851 to 1877	Castle Ashby Church	
Theodosia (Dosia) Compton	To 1864	Initially in Family crypt at Compton Wynyates, later moved to Castle Ashby in 1877	
William, 4 <sup>th</sup> Marquess, K.G.	1877 to 1897	Castle Ashby Church	
William, 5 <sup>th</sup> Marquess, K.G.	1897 to 1913	Died in Acqui. Buried at Castle Ashby with his wife.	
William, 6 <sup>th</sup> Marquess, K.G.	1913 to	Castle Ashby Church	

**Appendix D: Identity of Persons Buried in Family Crypt at Compton Wynyates**

NAME	BORN	DIED	COFFIN NO.	COFFIN TYPE	AGE	NOTES
George Cumton		1746	1	Triple-shell	1 or 2	Son of 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl
James Cumton		1746	2	Triple-shell	5	Son of 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Lady Margaret Compton	1704	1786	3	Triple-shell	81	Daughter of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Lady Penelope Compton	1697	1762	4	Triple-shell	64	Daughter of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Lady Jane Compton	1693	1749	5	Triple-shell	56	Daughter of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Lady Elizabeth Compton	1688	1743	6	Triple-shell	54	Daughter of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
			7	Triple-shell		No Plaque
Spencer Compton	1673	1743	8	Triple-shell	70	Brother of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
			9	Triple-shell		No Plaque
			10	?		No Plaque
			11	?		Coffin shape of Woman
Countess Jane Compton			12	?		Coffin on side
Countess Isabella Compton	1622	1661	13	?		1 <sup>st</sup> Wife of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl
			13a	Triple-shell ?		Child coffin
			13b	Triple-shell ?		Child coffin
			13c	Triple-shell ?		Child coffin
Colonel Henry	1625	1652	14	Triple-shell		Died in duel
			15	Shell&Case		No plaque
Anne Compton	1724-1728	1746	16	Shell&Case	18 – 22	Daughter of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
James Compton, 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1687	1754	17	Triple-shell	67	
			18	Triple-shell ?		No plaque
Countess Elizabeth Compton		1740	19	Triple-shell ?		Wife of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
George Compton, 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1692	1758	20	Triple-shell ?	66	
Countess Anne Compton	1738	1763	21	Triple-shell ?	25	Wife of Charles, 7 <sup>th</sup> Earl
James Compton, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl	1621	1681	22	Triple-shell	60	
Charles Compton, 7 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1737	1763	23	?	26	Special Ambassador to Venice in 1761
			24	?		No plaque
Spencer Compton, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Earl	1601	1643	25		42	Viscera Container



**Appendix E: Persons meant to be buried in the family crypt but not identified**

Name	Born	Died	Age	Notes
Henry Compton		1526		Son of William & Warburgh
Peter Compton	1628	1628		Son of Sir Henry Compton, K.B., place of burial unknown
George Compton	1629	1674	45	Son of Sir Henry Compton, K.B., place of burial unknown
John Compton	1630	1659	29	Son of Sir Henry Compton, K.B., place of burial unknown
Lady Mary (Noel) Compton		1719		2 <sup>nd</sup> wife to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl
Lord James Compton	1659	1662	3	3 <sup>rd</sup> son of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Isabella
Lord Compton	1649	1649		1 <sup>st</sup> son of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Isabella
Lady Isabella Compton	1656	1657	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> daughter of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Isabella
William, Lord Compton	1653	1661	8	2 <sup>nd</sup> son of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Isabella
Lady Anne Compton	1655	1660	5	1 <sup>st</sup> daughter of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Isabella
Lady Juliana Compton	1665			1 <sup>st</sup> daughter of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Mary
James Compton		1672		2 <sup>nd</sup> son of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl and Lady Mary
Stephen Compton				Son of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl, died in infancy
Lady Jane Compton		1721		1 <sup>st</sup> wife of 4 <sup>th</sup> Earl
4 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1664	1727	63	Family records indicate that he was buried at Compton
Unnamed son of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1718	1718		
George Compton	1719	1719		Son of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Elizabeth Compton	1720	1721	1	Daughter of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
James Compton	1723	1739	16	Second son of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Jane Compton	1724-28	1746	18 to 22	Second daughter of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Anne Compton	1724-28	1746	18 to 22	Third daughter of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Mary Compton	1731	1731		Fifth daughter of 5 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Charles Compton	1732	1733	1	Son of Charles Compton, brother to 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl
Anne Compton	1733	1733		Daughter of Charles Compton, brother to 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl
James Compton	1744	1747	3	Charles Compton son, family records show he was buried at Compton
George Compton	1745	1747	2	Charles Compton son, family records show he was buried at Compton
George, 6 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1692-93	1758	65-66	Family history show he was buried at Compton
Anne Compton, wife of 7 <sup>th</sup> Earl	1733	1763	33	Died in Naples, family history suggest she was buried at Compton with her husband

### Appendix F: Index of work carried out at Compton Wynyates

DATE	WORK BY	DETAILS OF WORK
1204	Philip de Cumton	Recorded as living in parish
1236	Philip de Cumton	Recorded as being Lord of the Manor
1396		Lease for Church, Rectory & Glebe
1481	Edmund de Cumton	On succession from his father he pulled down old manor and re-built using a modern material brick.
1512	William de Cumton	Purchased Castle Ashby as a wedding present
1520	William de Cumton	Completed works at Compton, possibly using material from Fulbroke Castle. He also created tow cantries, and expanded a small chapel near to the house to accomadate them.
1646	Order of Parliament	Defences of Compton slighted, the moats filled in and the battlements destroyed.
1665	3 <sup>rd</sup> Earl, James	Began repair of damage inflicted during the wars at Compton and Ashby: rebuilding most of the buildings in the great court and Church.
1699	4 <sup>th</sup> Earl, George	Laid floor in the little hall; re-built stables which had been destroyed during the wars. He also seems to have reorganised the crypt.
1701	4 <sup>th</sup> Earl, George	Rebuilt the stable-block and probably other outbuildings destroyed in the wars.
	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	James loved Compton Wynyates and completed many repairs usually leaving his initials etched on his handy work. He died with no heir, and the Earldom passed to his daughter. Until 1812 the Earldom had no second title, although the eldest son was always called Lord Compton.
1716	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	Installation of Box Pews in the family church; oak alter rails around Communion Table.
1720	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	Installed new fireplace in the dining room and panelling in the style of the existing James I panelling around the room.
1723	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	Installation of rainwater heads around the house (house chapel, council chamber, the barracks). These are all marked with his initials 'J.C', and a date.
1727	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	Upon his succession the initials changed to 'J.N.' (pipework around the chapel roof, and pipeheads round the courtyard).
1727 - 1732	5 <sup>th</sup> Earl, James	James comleted his major piece of work at Compton Wynyates, copying his father's work at Ashby Castle. He filled the recess in the east front, which had previously a paved area, blocking three windows in the great hall. He also installed a new chimney flue and the present fireplace. Under the new part of the wing, he built a crypt with Roman cross vaulting inbrick on square pillars. In the east wing in the upper-floor rooms he installed sash windows – replacing the Tudor windows in the drawing , dining, morning, and combe room. He bricked up the big doorway into the dining room, and in the south wall of the great hall, installing the present doorway and wooden arch leading into the staircase.
1754	6 <sup>th</sup> Earl, George	Completed an inventory of Comton Wynyates and Castle Ashby.
	8 <sup>th</sup> Earl, Spencer	Spencer favoured Castle Ashby, and his wife is the first of the family to be buried there.
1774	8 <sup>th</sup> Earl, Spencer	Spencer ordered Compton Wynyates to be demolished to save money. However, his agent, Mr Birrel, only had the windows blocked up, thus saving on the window tax.
1837	2 <sup>nd</sup> Marquess, Spencer	Spencer visited Compton Wynyates with his wife's sister Anna Jane, and her Italian maid, Teresa, and found it in a terrible state. Sadden by its condition, he left the property in disrepair.
1859	3 <sup>rd</sup> Marquess, Charles	Charles and his wife Theodosia (Dosia) took a special interest in the house. They painted the walls of the great hall, screen and doors white. The gallery between the screens, minstrel gallery, and present windows bewteen the ministral gallery and great hall were plastered over. Their chief alteration was the replacement of the Georgian sash windows on the ground and first floors with Tudor-Gothic ones, in keeping with ones elsewhere in the building. Sir Digby Watt advised them throughout.  The torture room was broken up into two bedrooms and a dressing room. The main staircase was entirely re-built, the big bay window inserted and a ceiling made of plaster designs mainly copied from the gallery ceiling at Canonbury house.
1860		A passageway built at the head of the stairs to the drawing room. In the drawing room the Goergian panelling was replaced with Elizabethan panelling, doorways and a chimney piece was inserted from Canonbury house.  The remodelign of the Morning and Combe rooms in imitation Gothic style were planned had Threodosia lived longer.
1919 - 20	6 <sup>TH</sup> Marquess, William Compton	Installed central heating & electric lighting at Compton Wynyates

## **Appendix G: Mortar Analysis by Tom Doig**

### Sample 1

This sample was taken from around the flagstones sealing the southern entrance let into the roof of the crypt.

This is a good quality mortar although it contains rather a high percentage of sand. It has not been fully mixed and the lime context is beginning to break down. I would suggest that it was manufactured between the mid to late 1800s.

### Sample 2

This sample was taken from the stairs leading down from the southern entrance.

This sample is mainly of clay/sand with a small amount of lime added. Typically, it would have been used to level stone (there is no sign of vegetable matter contamination) steps or plinth which is not expected to carry a great load. The sample was not intended to set as a solid mass rather it would be expected to flow to the contours of the surface that it was supporting. Clearly, it has been laid in a very damp environment. It is difficult to give a date for this sample although, from its condition, it has clearly been located underground and it is possible that the adjacent structures would assist in identifying its probable date.

### Sample 3

This sample was taken from the crypt walls.

This sample of mortar shows a very low content of lime. It could be suggested that the original lime content was adequate but that the mortar had been laid before the lime and had time to set. If so, it is likely that condensation has leached out the lime. This mortar is typical of a wall rendering and I would suggest an early date of pre 1800. It is possible that it is earlier, 1600 – 1700, although a chemical analysis would be needed for confirmation.

### Sample 4

This sample was taken from the bricked up northern entrance.

This is a relatively modern mortar, certainly post 1918. Although probably locally made it is a very good mix and has hardened well. It contains one or two pieces of brown stone and may have contained a few sticks of natural wood. The shape follows a frog in the brick. I would suggest that it was manufactured in the period between 1918 – 1939.

## **Conclusion**

In general, and as a group, the samples show the evolution of some kind of underground structure, accessed by stone steps, which were originally constructed pre 1700, and has experienced regular maintenance certainly upto the 1930s.



**Appendix H: Oasis Summary Sheet (Oasis ID: phoenix1-163146)**

PROJECT DETAILS					
Project Name:			The Compton Project: Archaeological Investigations of The Compton Family Crypt, Compton Wynyates		
Short Description:			Between the 10th and 11th October 1998 Phoenix Exhumations Ltd completed a rapid archaeological investigation in the church of St. Mary Magdalene. The church is in the grounds of the Marquess of Northampton's ancestral home, which is largely sixteenth century in date. The specific aims of the survey were to: 1) Establish the location, and overall plan of the crypt within the church. 2) To ascertain the state of preservation of the coffins. 3) The identity of those entombed. 4) To discover if the body of the second Earl of Northampton was in the crypt. 5) To learn if the crypt and church had been desecrated by Parliamentary troops during the Civil War. The crypt was rectangular in plan, divided into two separate aisles by a massive central column. Two entrances were found, one led into the ceiling at the south end, and the other via a doorway in the north wall. Within the crypt, were at least twenty-eight separate lead coffins, largely neatly arranged around the aisles. Thirteen of these coffins were identified through their depositum plaques, and dates to the eighteenth century. A separate group of coffins piled in the north-western corner were found to be earlier in date. This assemblage contained two burials of special interest, an anthropoid coffin. The other interment of note, was a viscera container. A brief structural assessment indicated that the whole church and crypt were re-built during the late seventeenth century, a result of its possible demolition during the Civil War.		
Project Dates:	S t a r t	10 <sup>th</sup> October 1998	E n d	11 <sup>th</sup> October 1998	
Previous work:	No		Future work:	Yes	
Associated Project Reference Codes:			COMW98		
Type of Project:			Archaeological Evaluation of the Compton Family crypt.		
Site Status:			Grade 2 listed building		
Current land use: (list all that apply)			Family Church		
Planned development:			Restoration		
Monument types/period (list all that apply)			Post Medieval church and crypt		
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (List all that apply)			Post Medieval coffins and furniture		
PROJECT LOCATION					
County:		Warwickshire		Parish: Compton Wynyates	
HER for region:			Warwickshire		
Site address: (including postcode)			Compton Wynyates House, Compton Wynyates CV35 0UD		
Study area (sq m or ha)			39.44sqm		
National Reference	Grid	Easting (6 figures)	SP 433000	Northing (6 figures)	241900
Height OD	Max OD			Min OD	
PROJECT ORIGINATORS					
Organisation:		Phoenix Exhumation Ltd			
Project brief originator:		Simon Bray			
Project design originator:		Dawn Keen			
Sponsor or funding body:		Land Owner			
ARCHIVES	Location and accession number		Content (eg. Pottery, animal bone, database, context sheet etc)		
Physical			Coffin Furniture		
Paper			Evaluation		
Digital	Phoenix Exhumation Ltd		Report, illustrations		
BIBLIOGRAPHY					
Full title:		The Compton Project: Archeological Investigations of The Compton Family Crypt, Compton Wynyates			
Report No.:		PEL/2015/11			
Series title and volume:					
Page numbers:		45			
Author(s)		Dawn Keen			