



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**St Lawrence's Church,
Snarford, Lincs**

**NGR: TF 0510 8242
Site Code: SNC 99
LCNCC Accn. No.: 137.99**

Archaeological Investigation and Recording

**Report for
The Churches Conservation Trust**

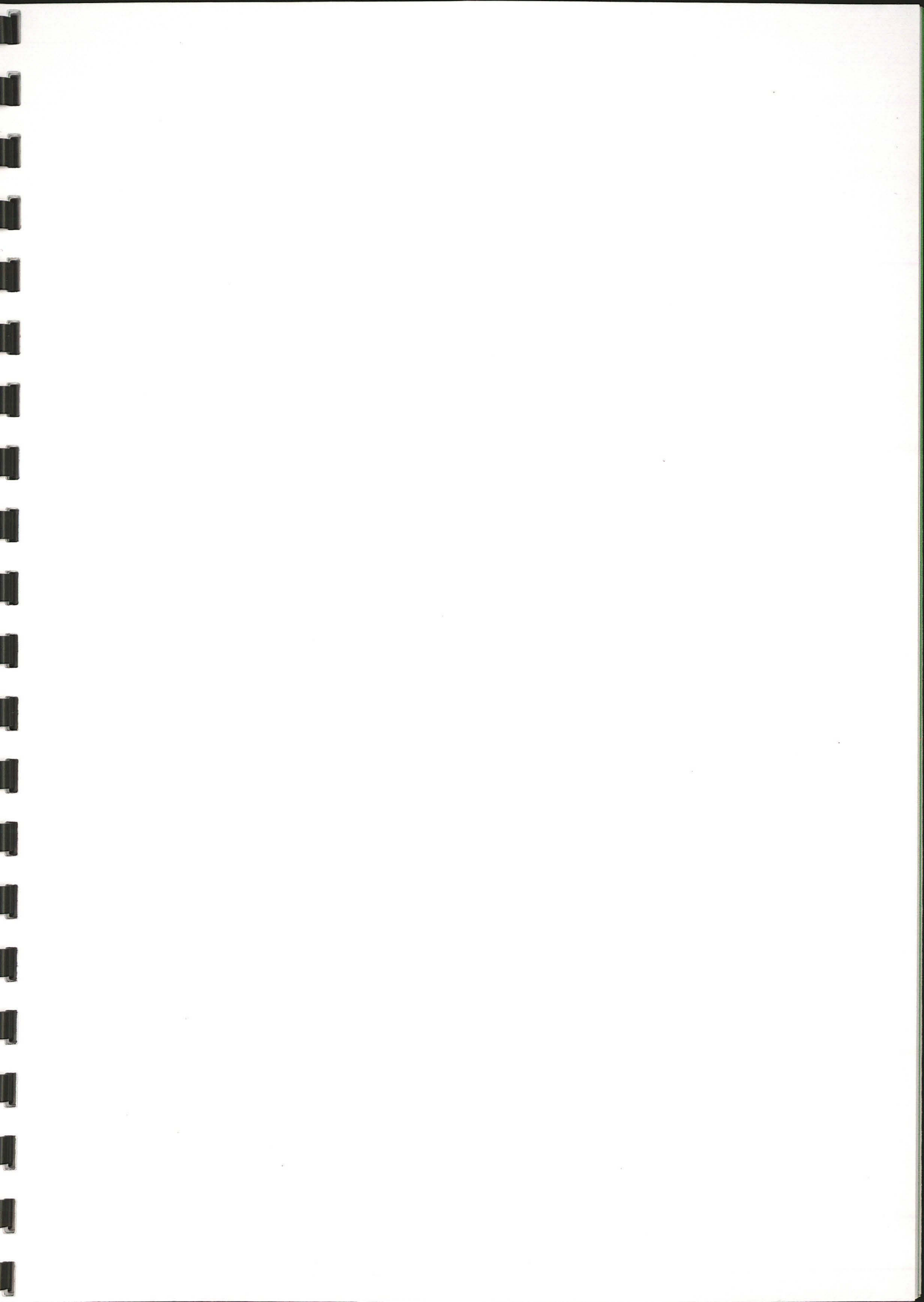
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St Lawrence's Church, Snarford, Lincs

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Summary

Archaeological work carried out in the north side of the nave at St. Lawrence's Church, Snarford, consisted of the investigation of the church floor and the recording of the nave walls.

The archaeological investigation of the floor beneath the pew platform provided evidence of a series of graves adjacent to the centre aisle and traces of a former pew platform. A large quantity of finds were recovered from the sieved floor material, the majority of which were associated with earlier building work in the church.

Three blocked entrances were recorded in the nave walls; two along the northern wall and one in the eastern wall.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by the Churches Conservation Trust to undertake an archaeological investigation of the church floor in the north nave following the removal of the pew platform and to record the walls exposed here when the wood panelling had been removed.

The purpose of the archaeological work was to:

- establish the presence, extent and quality of archaeological remains;
- record any archaeological features non-intrusively;
- record and interpret any blocked openings in the nave walls.

The work was carried out in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

Site Location

The church of St Lawrence is located in the village of Snarford, approximately 11 miles to the north of Lincoln (Fig. 1). It was once situated in the heart of the village, but is now surrounded by open fields and a farmhouse.

Snarford Church

The church of Snarford was originally built in the twelfth century, although following extensive rebuilding in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the tower is the only part of the church dating to

this period (Pl. 1). The Norman tower arch was replaced with a pointed arch as part of this rebuild (Pl. 2).

The history of the church is varied; it flourished during the fifteenth century, but following the gradual abandonment of the village it fell into disrepair. During the Tudor period, the St Paule family moved to the village, building a large manor, and renovating the church, converting part of it into a family chapel where they could house a tomb and several monuments. It is not known when the St. Paule family monuments were moved into the church, and no records were found in the Archives.

A number of faculty papers concerning alterations to the church are held in Lincolnshire Archives. A letter dated 23rd May 1827 sent from the Archdeacon of Stow to the churchwardens admonishes them as,

“certain repairs necessary to be done in and about your church and its appearance hath not been effected and specifically that the chancel of the church hath been illegally separated from the Body of the Church by a partition...” (Fac/11/16)

The letter ordered the churchwardens to remove the partition and make the necessary repairs following its removal as well as those repairs already needed. They were allowed six weeks to begin the repairs and a further five months in which to complete them after commencement.

A petition of 1874 led by the Reverend James Marshall Bury, the clerk and Rector of Snarford Church, states that the church is in a bad state of repair and needs restoration. A number of proposals for alterations were put forward, including the insertion of two windows in the south wall and one in the east wall of the chancel; a partition between the north and south portions of the chancel; new seats and a new communion rail and table; to re-roof the tower; to place the font in the tower; to build a porch at the south side of the church; to increase the number of pews, and to add a new buttress at the southern corner of the chancel. A series of drawings were produced showing the proposed alterations (Fig. 2).

A Citation with Intimation from the Consistory Court of Lincoln dated 15th July 1874 grants the request for the above alterations, which it is assumed were carried out.

In 1931 the north wall of the chapel was completely rebuilt, and three buttresses added.

Method

The pew platform and supporting joists had been removed from the north side of the nave revealing a very dusty surface covered with a large quantity of rubble, roof tile and wood from the pew platform (Pl. 3). This loose material was removed by a team of two archaeologists until a firm floor surface was revealed. 50% of the loose debris was sieved. The firm floor surface was trowelled by hand and the cleaned surface was recorded using colour photographs and planned at a scale of 1:50.

Three sections of wall were exposed by the removal of the wood panelling from the north side of the nave at St. Lawrence's Church. These were recorded using colour photographs and section drawings at a scale of 1:20.

Results

The Floor Surface

Following the removal of the pew platform and the supporting joists, a large quantity of loose material remained. This was extremely mixed and represented a number of different deposits. A single context number (**100**) was allocated to the loose material that was removed.

50% of layer **100** was sieved, producing a large quantity of artefacts. Much of this material was associated with building work carried out in the church. Window glass, window lead, roof tile, brick, wall plaster, floor tile and stone were represented, although a lot of this material was discarded.

Animal bone was also recovered from the sieved material. In general these represented the remains of small animals such as mice, voles and birds, that lived beneath the pew platform and in the rafters.

Notable among the artefacts recovered were a Scandinavian-style lead head from a knife or similar object, dating to the medieval period (Pl. 4-6). A fragment of tombstone with a Lombardic inscription was also recovered, probably 15th century in date (Pl. 7).

The removal of the loose debris from the north side of the nave revealed a series of floor deposits and an area of disturbance thought to be caused by grave cuts adjacent to the centre aisle (Fig. 3; Pl. 8 & 9).

Most of the nave floor is covered by a compact layer of orange-brown sandy silt (**101**). This layer also contained debris from earlier building work.

An area of disturbed material, measuring approximately 0.85m wide, was recorded adjacent to the aisle (**102**). This was a very mixed, loose deposit of grey-brown sandy silt containing frequent brick, stone, tile and plaster. Human bone was also recovered from this material. This area of disturbance is probably caused by a series of grave cuts.

Immediately north of this deposit was a narrow band of darker material (**103**) measuring 0.18m in width, surviving intermittently along the length of the aisle. **103** runs parallel with the aisle, and is thought to be the traces of an earlier pew platform.

Two patches of plaster (104) remain in situ on the floor at the eastern end of the nave. It is possible that these are the remnants of a former floor surface which has now been almost completely destroyed.

A number of large stones remain in situ towards the western end of the nave (105). The ground is disturbed at this end where a number of tree roots have pushed their way into the church. A deposit of compact grey-black silty loam (106) containing tree roots was visible here (Pl. 10).

The Walls

The wood panelling extended to a height of 1.20m, above this level the walls were covered with plaster. Large sections of the wall behind the panelling were covered with wall plaster, and patches of mortar were also recorded. The church walls were made of limestone, varying considerably in size.

Small blocks of wood were visible at varying intervals just below the top of the wood panelling and approximately 0.50m above the floor surface. These were probably used to attach the wood panelling to the wall.

The removal of the wood panelling also revealed three blocked openings. Two of these were located along the northern wall, and one in the corner of the eastern wall (Fig. 4).

Opening 1 is located in the north wall of the nave, directly opposite the existing entrance to the church (Pl. 11 & 12). This blocked entrance is clearly visible in the exterior wall face, and closely resembles the existing south door opening, although the moulding has been removed (Pl. 13). Opening 1 measured 1.28m in width, and has been blocked with a number of large dressed stones and a row of red bricks. A block of flat roof tiles have replaced the left door jamb. The present doorway dates to the 14th century, so it can be assumed due to the symmetry of these doorways that Opening 1 also dates to this period. This entrance is shown blocked on a drawing of the exterior of the church commissioned by the Reverend James Marshall Bury in 1874.

The second opening in the north wall of the nave (Opening 2) was located 0.52m away from the east wall (Pl. 14). This opening measured 1.12m in width (including the door jambs), and also represents a former entrance. The chamfered door jamb at the eastern edge of the doorway has survived well, although the western jamb is more fragmentary. A chamfered threshold was visible at floor level, and despite being slightly broken, had survived well (Pl. 15). Opening 2 had been blocked with large dressed stone blocks and mortar (Pl. 16). Once again, this blocked entrance can be seen in the exterior wall of the church, but not clearly. Modern pointing was recorded here, indicating that repairs have been carried out here subsequent to the initial blocking of the doorway. No records stating the date when this opening was blocked have been recovered, nor is it known whether this entrance dates to the fourteenth century when the church was rebuilt. The opening either blocked or unblocked is not visible on the 1874 drawing.

Opening 3 is situated in the eastern wall between the nave and the chancel and butts up to the corner with the northern wall of the nave (Pl. 17 and Pl. 18). This opening measured 0.70m, with the fragmentary remains of the southern jamb remaining. It had been blocked using a combination of large dressed stone blocks, small stone fragments and mortar. This opening is not visible on the east side of the nave wall (Pl. 19). As for Opening 2, modern pointing was visible. The position in the corner is awkward but may have provided access to a rood screen. Faculty records together with a series of drawings dating to 1874 show a stove in the corner of the nave, with a dotted line leading to what is considered to be a possible flue for the escape of heat and fumes. It is possible that this opening was reused as a chimney or flue.

Conclusions

The results of the archaeological investigation at the church indicate that a number of alterations have been made to the church since it was initially built in the twelfth century. The presence of the disturbed ground adjacent to the centre aisle, together with the presence of a number of human bones, suggests that there were several burials here.

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June 2000

Acknowledgements

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The Figures and Plates

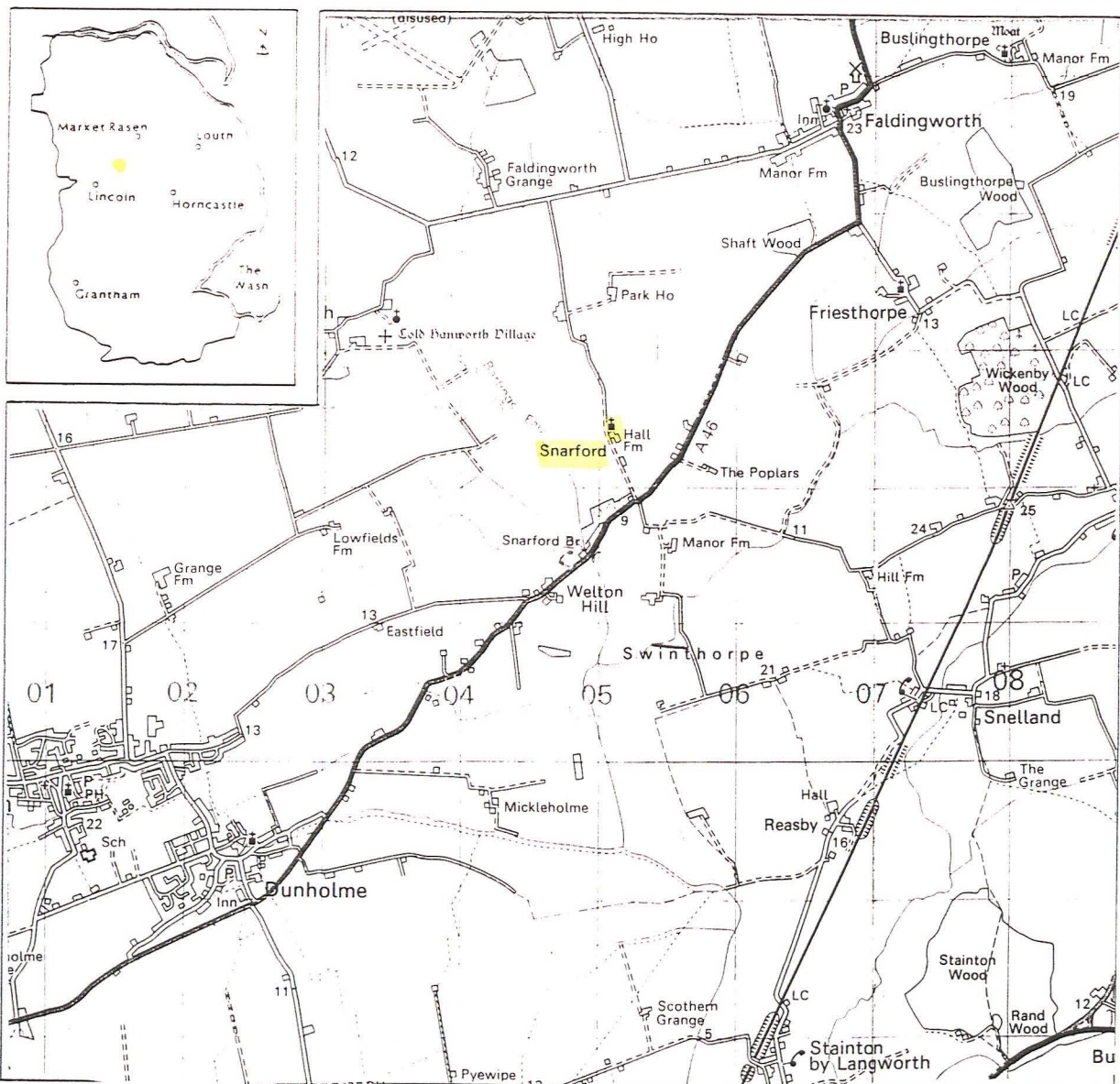
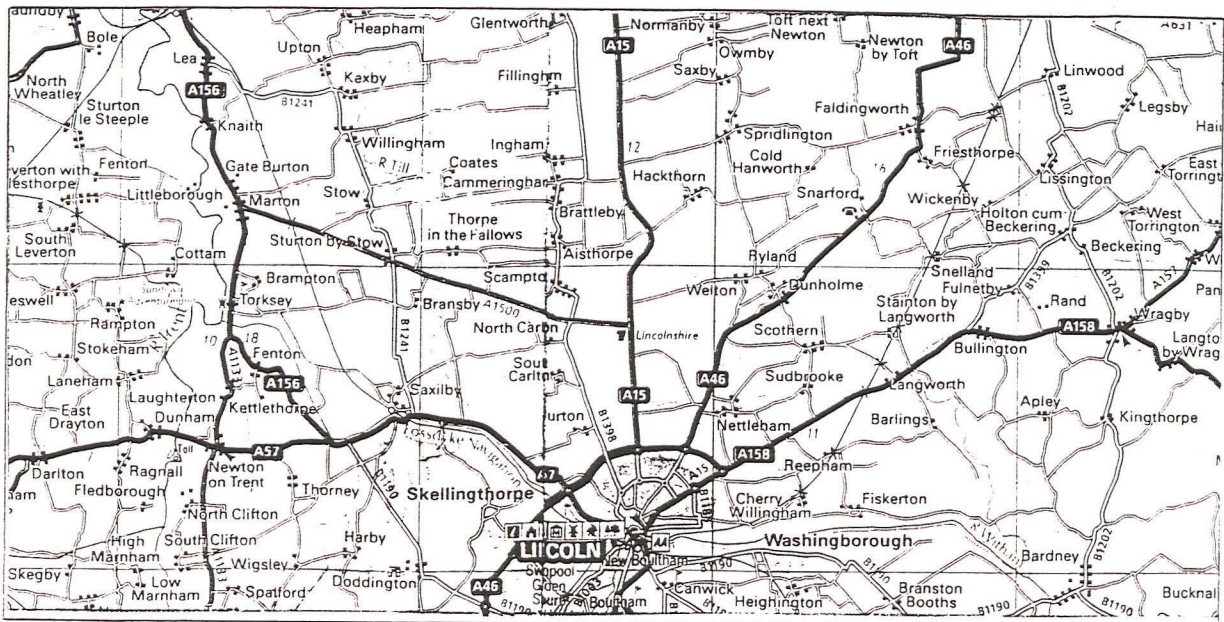


Fig. 1 Location of Snarford Church (based on Ordnance Survey map. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL50424A).

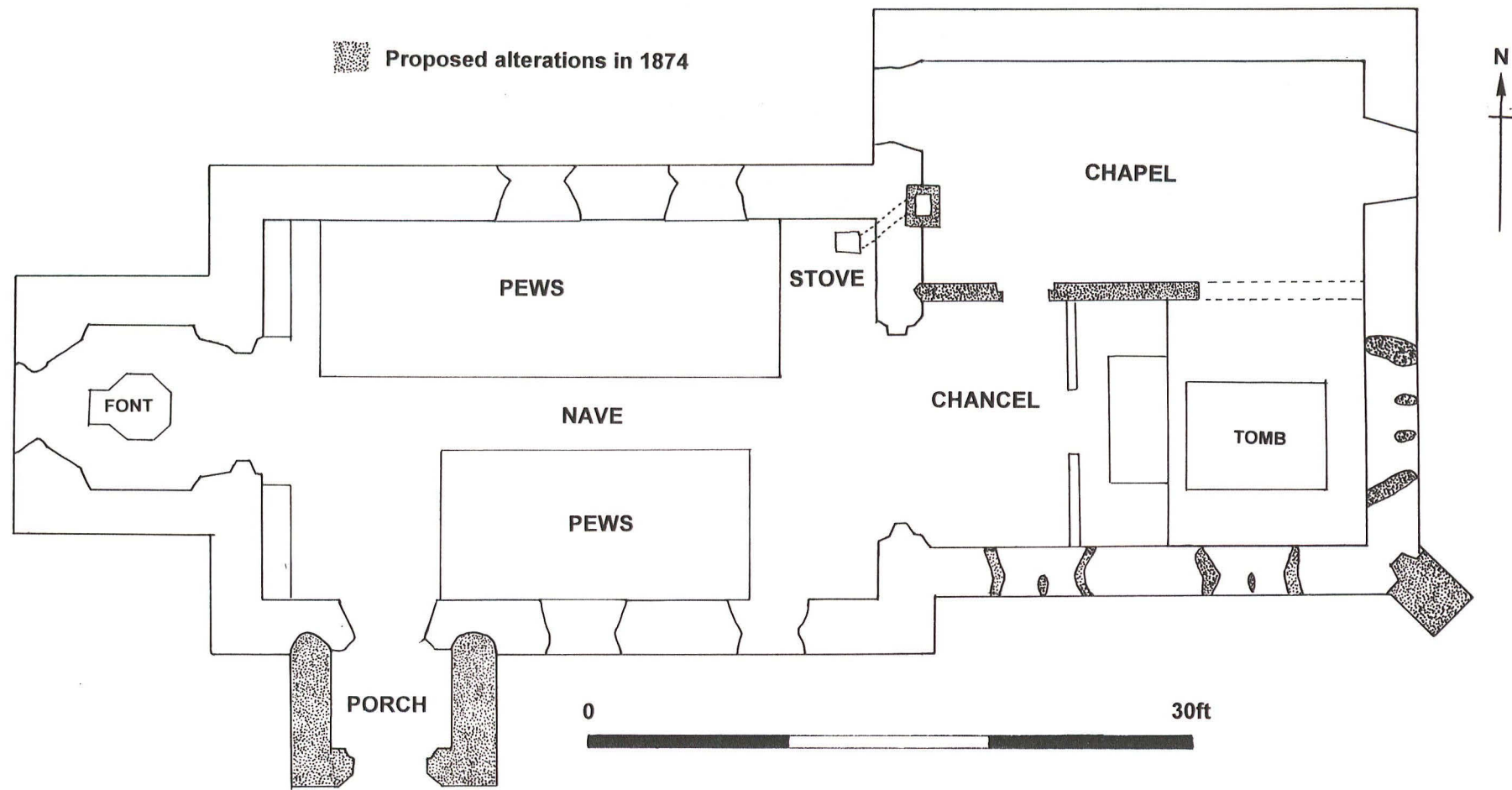
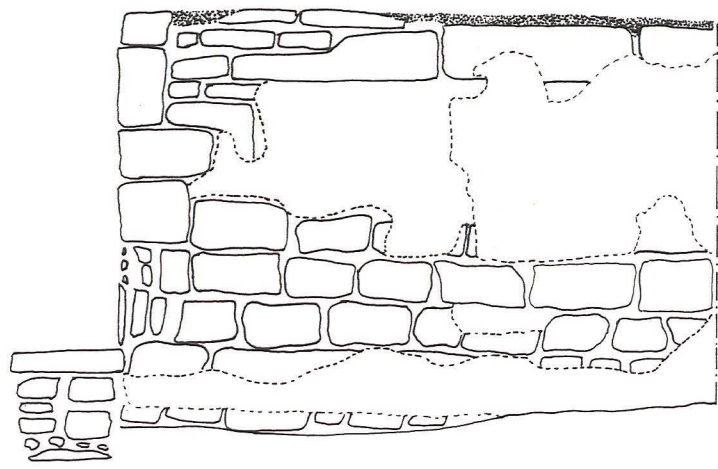
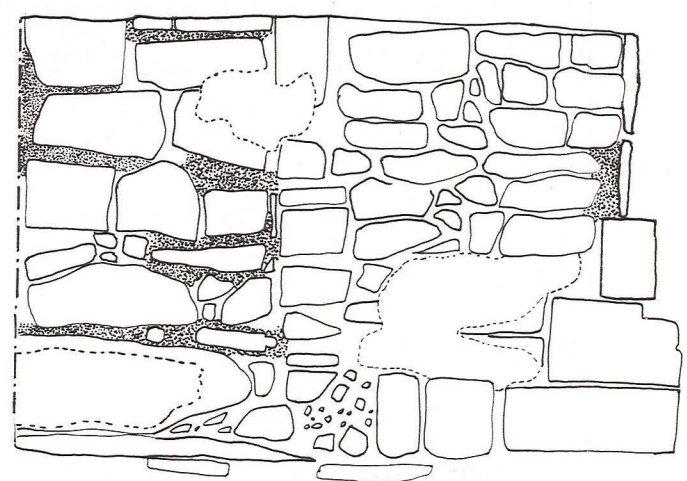


Fig. 2 Plan of church showing alterations proposed by Reverend James Marshall Bury, 1874 (based on plans produced for Reverend James Marshall Bury, 1874 Faculty Paper.)

(a)

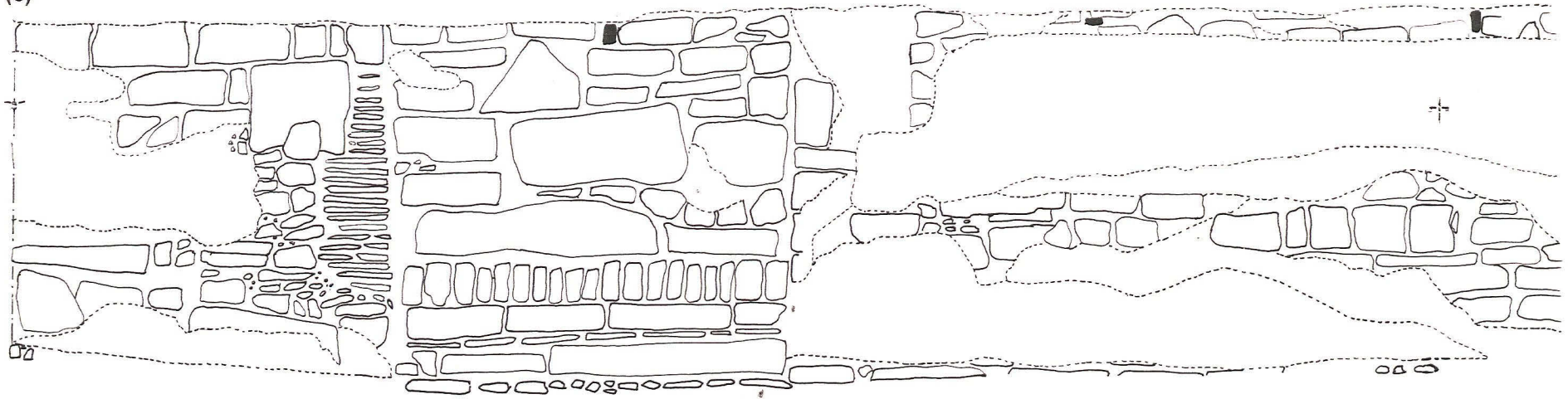


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


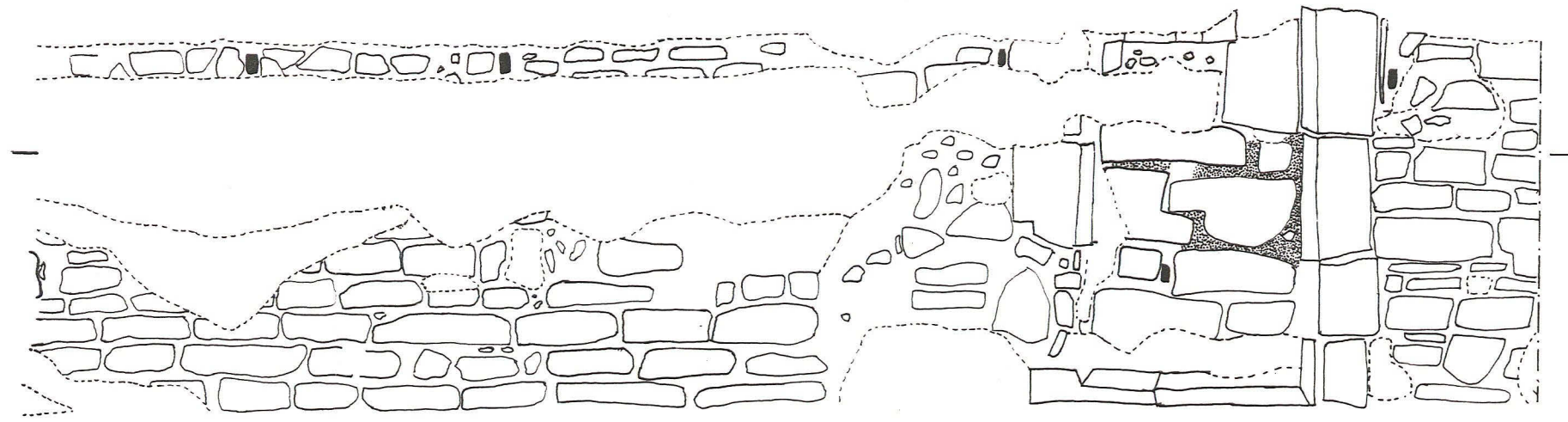
Opening 3

(c)



Opening 1

-  Modern pointing
-  Wooden block
-  Outline of area covered in plaster



Opening 2



Fig. 3 (a) East-Facing Wall of North nave; (b) West-Facing Wall of North nave;
 (c) South-Facing Wall of North nave.

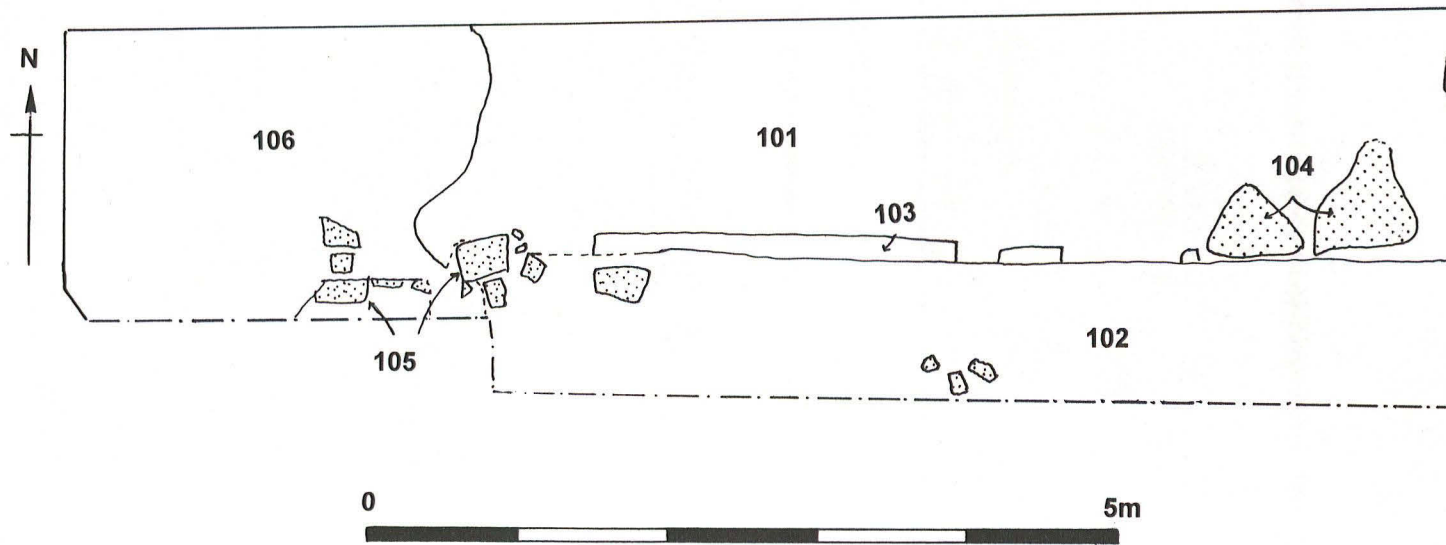


Fig. 4 Plan of floor surface in the north nave following the removal of the loose material



Pl. 1 Snarford Church

Pl. 2 The Norman tower arch and the replacement pointed arch





Pl. 3 The north side of the nave during the removal of the pew platform, looking east

Pl. 4 Scandinavian-style copper alloy decorated terminal (height 21mm), front view





Pl. 5 Scandinavian-style copper alloy decorated terminal (height 21mm), side view

Pl. 6 Scandinavian-style copper alloy decorated terminal (height 21mm), side view





Pl. 7 Fragment of 15th century grave slab with Lombardic lettering

Pl. 8 Floor surface following the removal of loose, silt material and tree roots visible against the wall, looking W

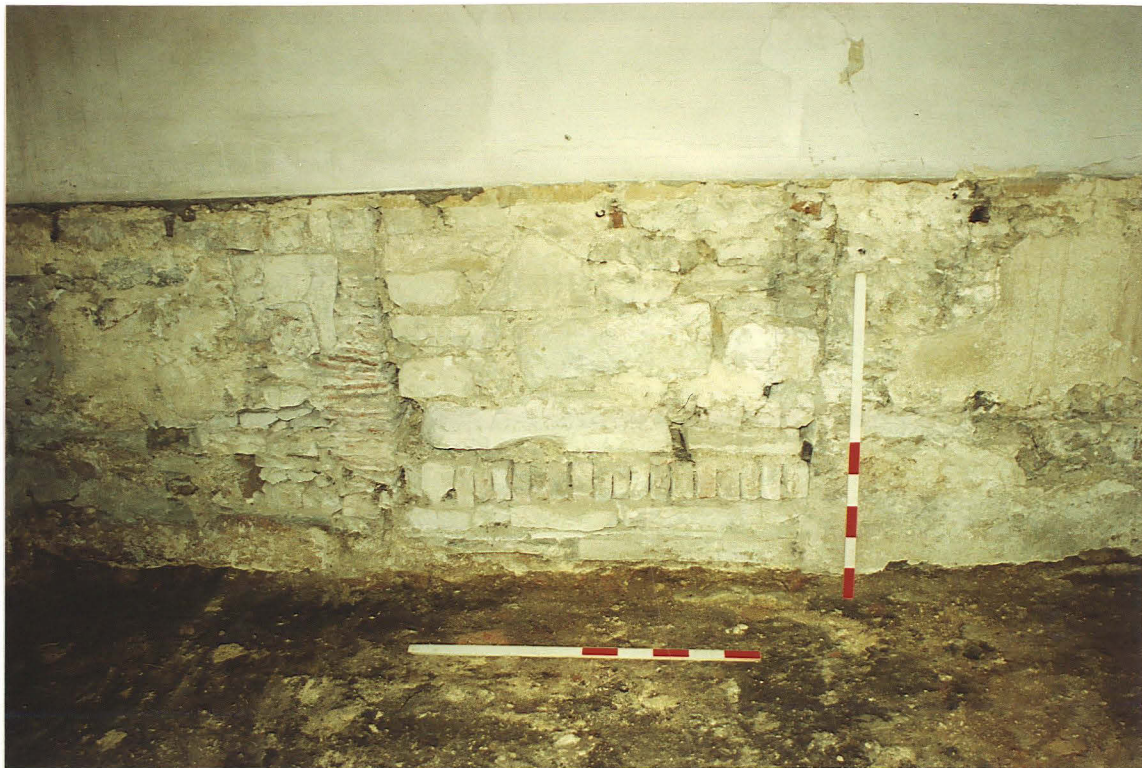




Pl. 9 Floor surface of the north side of the nave, looking east

Pl. 10 Disturbed surface at western end of nave, with tree roots clearly visible





Pl. 11 Opening 1, blocked doorway in north wall of the nave

Pl. 12 Opening 1 clearly visible in the wall face





Pl. 13 Opening 1 visible in exterior wall of Snarford Church

Pl. 14 Opening 2 in north wall of nave





Pl. 15 Chamfered door lintel at base of Opening 2

Pl. 16 Opening 2 seen in exterior wall of the church





Pl. 17 Opening 3 visible in corner of east wall, butting against northern wall of nave

Pl. 18 Opening 3 in east wall





Pl. 19 East side of nave wall, Opening 3 is not visible here