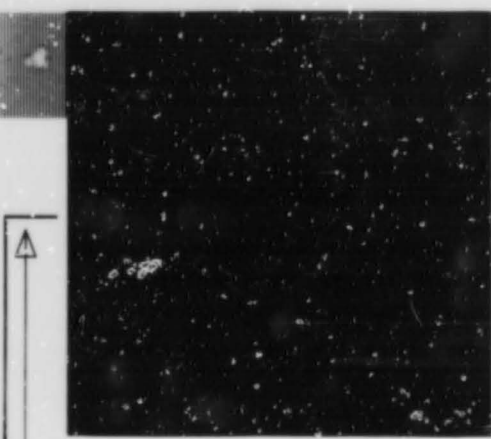
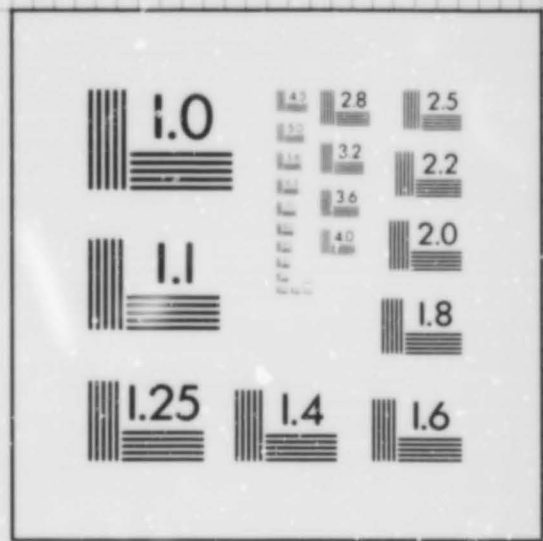


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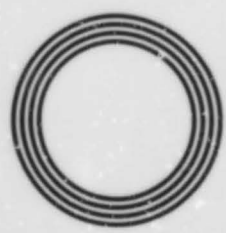
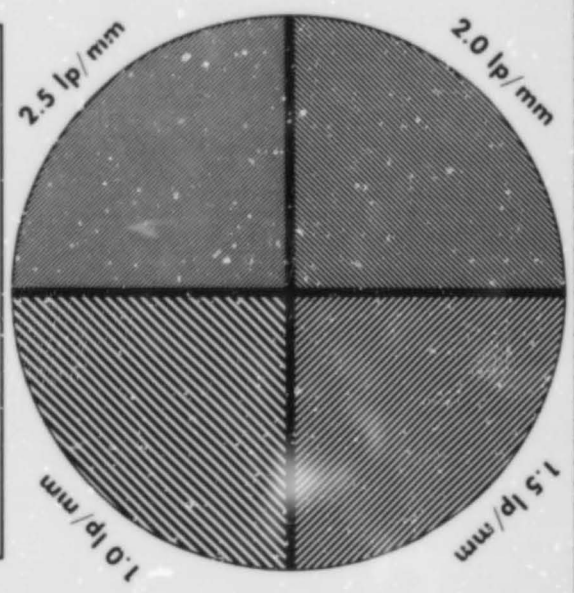
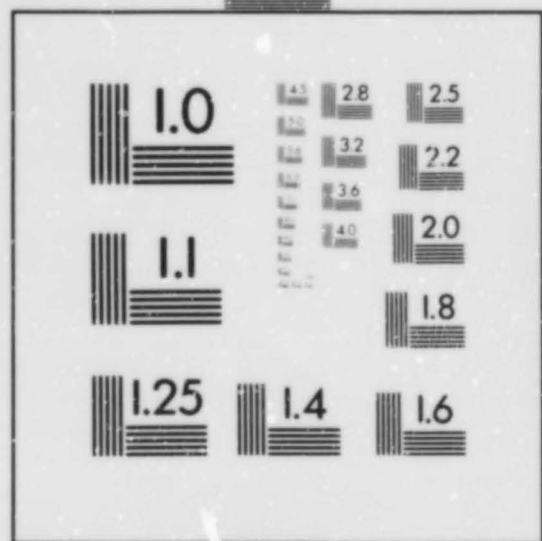
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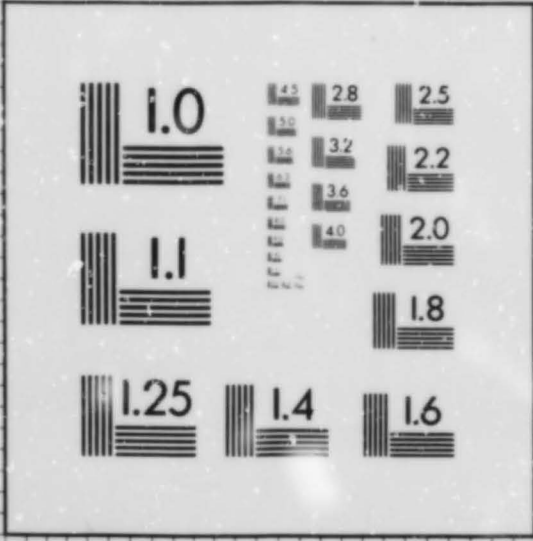
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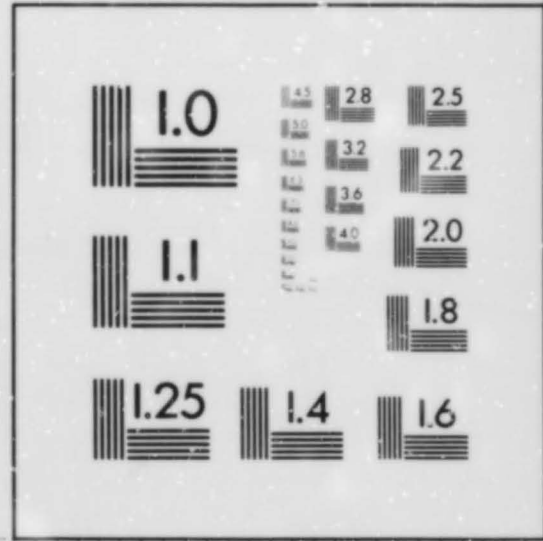


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**The Ruined
and Disused
Churches
of Norfolk**

by Neil Batcock

**East Anglian Archaeology
Report No. 51, 1990**

**Norfolk Archaeological Unit
Norfolk Museums Service**

I: A2

EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY
REPORT NO.51, 1991

Published by
The Norfolk Archaeological Unit
Union House
Gressenhall
Dereham
Norfolk NR20 4DR

in conjunction with
The Scole Archaeological Committee Ltd.

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Typeset in Plantia by Spire Origination, Norwich

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ISBN 0 905594 03 7

This volume is published with the aid of a grant from
the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England

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Plate CCLXXXIX	Thurgarton (Cotman)	Plate CCCLIII	Great Hautbois (Cotman)
Plate CCXC	Thurgarton (detail)	Plate CCCLIV	Hopton (exterior)
Plate CCXCI	Thurgarton (porch corbel)	Plate CCCLV	Hopton (exterior)
Plate CCXCII	Thurgarton (Ladbroke print)	Plate CCCLVI	Hopton (tower)
Plate CCXCIII	Tottington (exterior)	Plate CCCLVII	Houghton (exterior)
Plate CCXCIV	Tottington (Ladbroke print)	Plate CCCLVIII	Houghton (window)
Plate CCXCV	Tottington (exterior)	Plate CCCLIX	Houghton (nave window)
Plate CCXCVI	Tottington (interior)	Plate CCCLX	Houghton (nave quoins)
Plate CCXCVII	Tottington (interior)	Plate CCCLXI	Houghton (exterior)
Plate CCXCVIII	Tottington (exterior)	Plate CCCLXII	Houghton (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCXCIX	Tottington (exterior)	Plate CCCLXIII	Islington (interior)
Plate CCC	West Tofts (exterior)	Plate CCCLXIV	Islington (exterior)
Plate CCCI	West Tofts (exterior)	Plate CCCLXV	Kempstone (exterior)
Plate CCCII	West Tofts (exterior)	Plate CCCLXVI	Kempstone (chancel arch)
Plate CCCIII	West Tofts (exterior)	Plate CCCLXVII	Mannington (exterior)
Plate CCCIV	West Tofts (interior)	Plate CCCLXVIII	Mannington (exterior)
Plate CCCV	West Tofts (interior)	Plate CCCLXIX	Mannington (exterior)
Plate CCCVI	West Tofts (interior)	Plate CCCLXX	Morton (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCVII	West Tofts (tower)	Plate CCCLXXI	Morton (interior)
Plate CCCVIII	West Tofts (glass)	Plate CCCLXXII	Morton (nave)
Plate CCCIX	Wiggenhall (exterior)	Plate CCCLXXIII	Morton (exterior)
Plate CCCX	Wiggenhall (interior)	Plate CCCLXXIV	Morton (tower)
Plate CCCXI	Wiggenhall (lectern)	Plate CCCLXXV	Morton (interior)
Plate CCCXII	Wiggenhall (Kervil monument)	Plate CCCLXXVI	Oxwick (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCXIII	Wiggenhall (benches)		

Plate CCCLXXVII	Little Ringstead (exterior)	Plate CDXXXVIII	E. Walton (exterior)
Plate CCCLXXVIII	Roudham (exterior)	Plate CDXXXIX	E. Walton (exterior)
Plate CCCLXXIX	Roudham (exterior)	Plate CDXL	E. Walton (interior)
Plate CCCLXXX	Roudham (exterior)	Plate CDXLI	Whitlingham (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCLXXXI	Roudham (Ladbroke print)		
Plate CCCLXXXII	Roudham (exterior)	Plate CDXLII	Wood Norton (exterior)
Plate CCCLXXXIII	Sco Ruston (chancel)	Plate CDXLIII	Wood Norton (interior)
Plate CCCLXXXIV	Sco Ruston (nave)	Plate CDXLIV	Wood Norton (exterior)
Plate CCCLXXXV	Sco Ruston (tower)		
Plate CCCLXXXVI	Shotesham (Ladbroke print)	Category IV	
Plate CCCLXXXVII	E. Somerton (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDXLV	Bastwick (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCLXXXVIII	E. Somerton (exterior)	Plate CDXLVI	Beachamwell (exterior)
Plate CCCLXXXIX	Southery (exterior)	Plate CDXLVII	Burgh (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCXC	Southery (interior)	Plate CDXLVIII	W. Caister (exterior)
Plate CCCXCI	Southery (nave)	Plate CDXLIX	W. Caister (exterior)
Plate CCCXCII	Southery (exterior)	Plate CDL	W. Caister (nave and tower)
Plate CCCXCIII	Thorpe-by-Norwich (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLI	W. Caister (Ladbroke print)
		Plate CDLII	Edgefield (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCXCIV	Tivetshall (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLIII	Garboldisham (tower)
Plate CCCXCV	Tunstall (exterior)	Plate CDLIV	Garboldisham (Ladbroke print)
Plate CCCXCVI	Tunstall (exterior)		
Plate CCCXCVII	Tunstall (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLV	Gillingham (exterior)
Plate CCCXCVIII	S. Walsham (general view)	Plate CDLVI	Gillingham (tower)
Plate CCCXCIX	S. Walsham (exterior)	Plate CDLVII	Gillingham (tower)
Plate CD	S. Walsham (exterior)	Plate CDLVIII	Gillingham (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDI	S. Walsham (exterior)	Plate CDLIX	Hainford (exterior)
Plate CDII	S. Walsham (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLX	Hainford (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDIII	Wiggenhall (exterior)	Plate CDLXI	Heigham (Holl brass)
Plate CDIV	Wiggenhall (interior)	Plate CDLXII	Hindolveston (tower)
Plate CDV	W. Wretham (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLXIII	Hindolveston (exterior)
Plate CDVI	W. Wretham (tower)	Plate CDLXIV	Hindolveston (interior)
		Plate CDLXV	Great Melton (Ladbroke print)
Category III		Plate CDLXVI	Great Melton (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDVII	Antingham (exterior)		
Plate CDVIII	Antingham (interior)	Plate CDLXVII	Panxworth (tower)
Plate CDIX	Antingham (tower)	Plate CDLXVIII	Pudding Norton (nave)
Plate CDX	Bawsey (exterior)	Plate CDLXIX	Pudding Norton (tower)
Plate CDXI	Bawsey (exterior)	Plate CDLXX	Pudding Norton (tower quoins)
Plate CDXII	Beachamwell (exterior)	Plate CDLXXI	Great Ringstead (exterior)
Plate CDXIII	Beachamwell (exterior)	Plate CDLXXII	Great Ringstead (tower)
Plate CDXIV	Beachamwell (exterior)	Plate CDLXXIII	Rockland (exterior)
Plate CDXV	Bickerston (Martin)	Plate CDLXXIV	Rockland (tower)
Plate CDXVI	Burgh Parva (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLXXV	Rockland (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDXVII	Castle Rising (exterior)	Plate CDLXXVI	Thorpe Parva (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDXVIII	N. Elmham (exterior)		
Plate CDXIX	Gasthorpe (exterior)	Plate CDLXXVII	Wallington (exterior)
Plate CDXXX	Gasthorpe (tower)	Plate CDLXXVIII	Wolterton (exterior)
Plate CDXXI	Gasthorpe (piscina and font)	Plate CDLXXIX	Wolterton (tower)
Plate CDXXII	Gasthorpe (Martin)		
Plate CDXXIII	Kirby Bedon (nave and tower)	Category V	
Plate CDXXIV	Kirby Bedon (tower)	Plate CDLXXX	E. Beckham (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDXXV	Mintlyn (exterior)	Plate CDLXXXI	W. Beckham (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDXXVI	Oxborough (exterior)	Plate CDLXXXII	Burnham Sutton (exterior)
Plate CDXXVII	Oxborough (Martin)	Plate CDLXXXIII	Burnham Sutton (tower)
Plate CDXXVIII	W. Raynham (exterior)	Plate CDLXXXIV	Foulden (exterior)
Plate CDXXIX	Little Ryburgh (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLXXXV	Hackford (exterior)
		Plate CDLXXXVI	Hempton (corner)
Plate CDXXX	Saxlingham Thorpe (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDLXXXVII	Rockland (general view)
Plate CDXXXI	Great Snarehill (quoins)	Category VI	
Plate CDXXXII	Great Snarehill (quoins)	Plate CDLXXXVIII	Fincham, St Michael (tomb by Martin)
Plate CDXXXIII	Great Snarehill (window)		
Plate CDXXXIV	Stanninghall (tower)	Plate CDLXXXIX	Markshall (Martin)
Plate CDXXXV	Stanninghall (Ladbroke print)	Plate CDXC	Sidestrand (Ladbroke print)
Plate CDXXXVI	Surlingham (interior)	Plate CDXCI	Thetford (fragments)
Plate CDXXXVII	Surlingham (Blornefield)		

I. Bagthorpe, St Mary

Identification TF 7599 3221. *County no.* 1725. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Lynn. *Deanery:* Heacham and Rising. *Parish:* Bagthorpe. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1970. *Ownership and Access:* leased to Norfolk Churches Trust.

Location and Setting

Bagthorpe is a very small community, 2.5km east of Great Bircham. A few houses line the small road to East Rudham. Standing among them is the Victorian church of St Mary, appearing more like a chapel than a church. The flint west wall of the churchyard flanks the road.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, north vestry and nave with minimal south porch (Pl. CXXXI). Masonry is coursed flint with limestone dressings.

Chancel and Vestry. There is a continuous base course of stone-capped flint and the flint walls have a limestone wall-plate. The three-light east window is Decorated in style, with reticulate tracery (Pl. CXXXII). Beneath it, on the outside, is a stone stringcourse which terminates in a ball-flower motif just short of either corner.

The south wall is utterly featureless, apart from a cusped piscina on the inside. A small vestry enlivens the north wall. The chancel base course continues round it. The north wall has corbelled eaves and a gable, and is pierced by a cusped ogee window. On the inside, there are five stone corbels apparently salvaged from the old church. The chancel arch has no capitals or bases, but has a continuous double wave-moulding to west and convex mouldings to east. Both east and west faces have hood-moulds with terminals carved in the form of praying bearded figures of St James.

The roof is arch-braced, resting on stone corbels carved with shields. A bell-cote with two pointed openings and trefoil surmounts the chancel arch.

Nave. The masonry of the nave is identical to that of the chancel. A base course and a stringcourse below the windows continue round the outside walls. A large buttress with two set-offs marks the junction of nave and chancel on the south side. Three smaller buttresses divide the south wall into four bays, each pierced by a single window except the west bay. Each window is a lancet with hood-mould and trefoil cusped head. The

middle window is blocked with flint (Pl. CXXXIII).

The north wall is identical, but none of the windows are blocked. In the west bay is a shallow porch, providing barely enough space to open the door. The south doorway has a hollow-chamfered hood-mould. Diagonal buttresses support the west corners. The two-light west window is Decorated in style. High above it is a small lancet window. There is a small stone cross on the gable.

The roof is arch-braced, resting on corbels carved with donor escutcheons.

Interpretation and Dating

Until 1853, there was a small medieval church (Pl. CXXXIV), with no chancel, described by Blomefield as 'a very little, mean edifice, without any monument' (Blomefield, 1807, VII, 40). Martin, writing in 1754, remarked 'very bad roof and slovenly kept' (Martin, 1771, 1, 59).

This situation was remedied by the Rev. S.R. Cattley, who had the whole church pulled down (Pl. CXXXV), and a new one built in its place of exactly the same size. Work was begun in June 1853 and finished in January 1854. The architect was W.J. Donthorne.

Causes of Abandonment

The population of the parish reached a peak of 90 in 1891. Now there are less than 30, which has made it a struggle to fill the church. Gradually, the roof fell into disrepair, and was leaking so badly that the church had to be closed in 1970. In 1979 it was declared redundant, and leased to the Norfolk Churches Trust. The roofs have since been repaired, and the fabric tidied up.

Church Contents

Ceramic: floors are laid with brick and pammments.

Glass: east window, scenes from life of Christ, c. 1854.

Metal: iron chest in vestry; 2 iron stoves.

Stone: Norman font, square with corner shafts and cushion capitals; one of the sides of the bowl is carved with a circle and interlace; it is set on a modern stone base (Pl. CXXXVI). Ledger slab, Robert Barber (d.1797), west end of nave. Marble wall tablet, George Chad (d.1849), nave south wall.

Wood: In chancel: plain altar table, two candlesticks, crucifix, 19th century chancel rail.

Condition

The church is in very good condition. The chancel roof has been re-slatted, and the eastern half of the nave relaid. Gutters and downpipes are in good order.

Churchyard

The churchyard forms a rectangle around the church, with fence and hedge on three sides but a flint wall to west, by the road. There are many 19th and 20th century headstones (latest 1975) and a few dating to the 18th century. Parts of the churchyard are well-tended and the paths kept clear; there are some mature oak trees.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The church is a small Victorian building, of average quality, built on the site of an equally small medieval church. The Norman font is the best feature.

Further References

Blomefield, 1807, VII, 40.

Bryant, 1900b, 1.

Cautley, 1949, 170.

Cox, 1911, 1, 71.

Martin, 1771, 1, 59.

Messent, 1936, 19.

Mortlock and Roberts, 1985b, 4.

Pevsner, 1962b, 80.



Plate CXXXI. Bagthorpe, St Mary from north

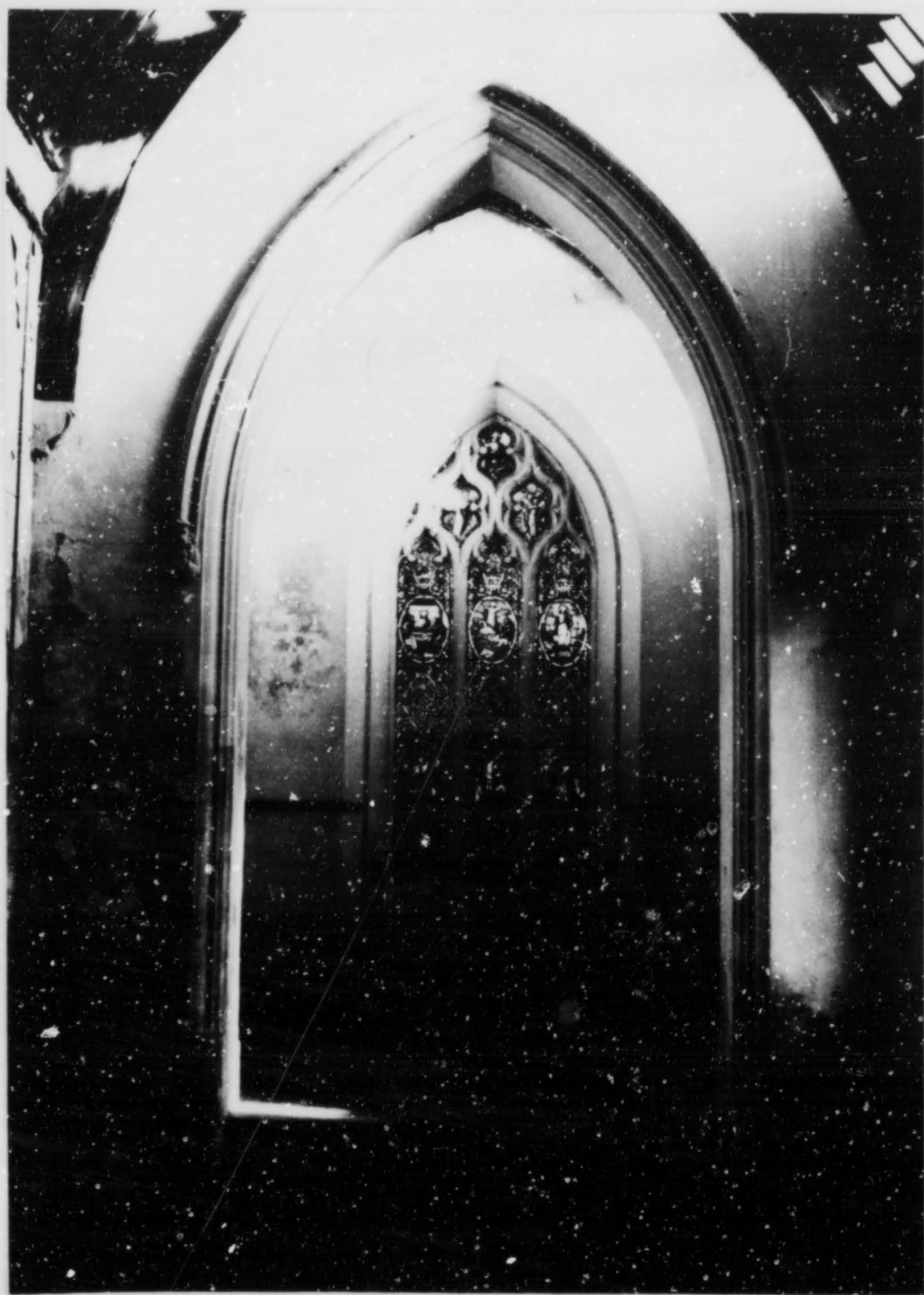


Plate CXXXII. Bagthorpe, St Mary, (interior) looking east

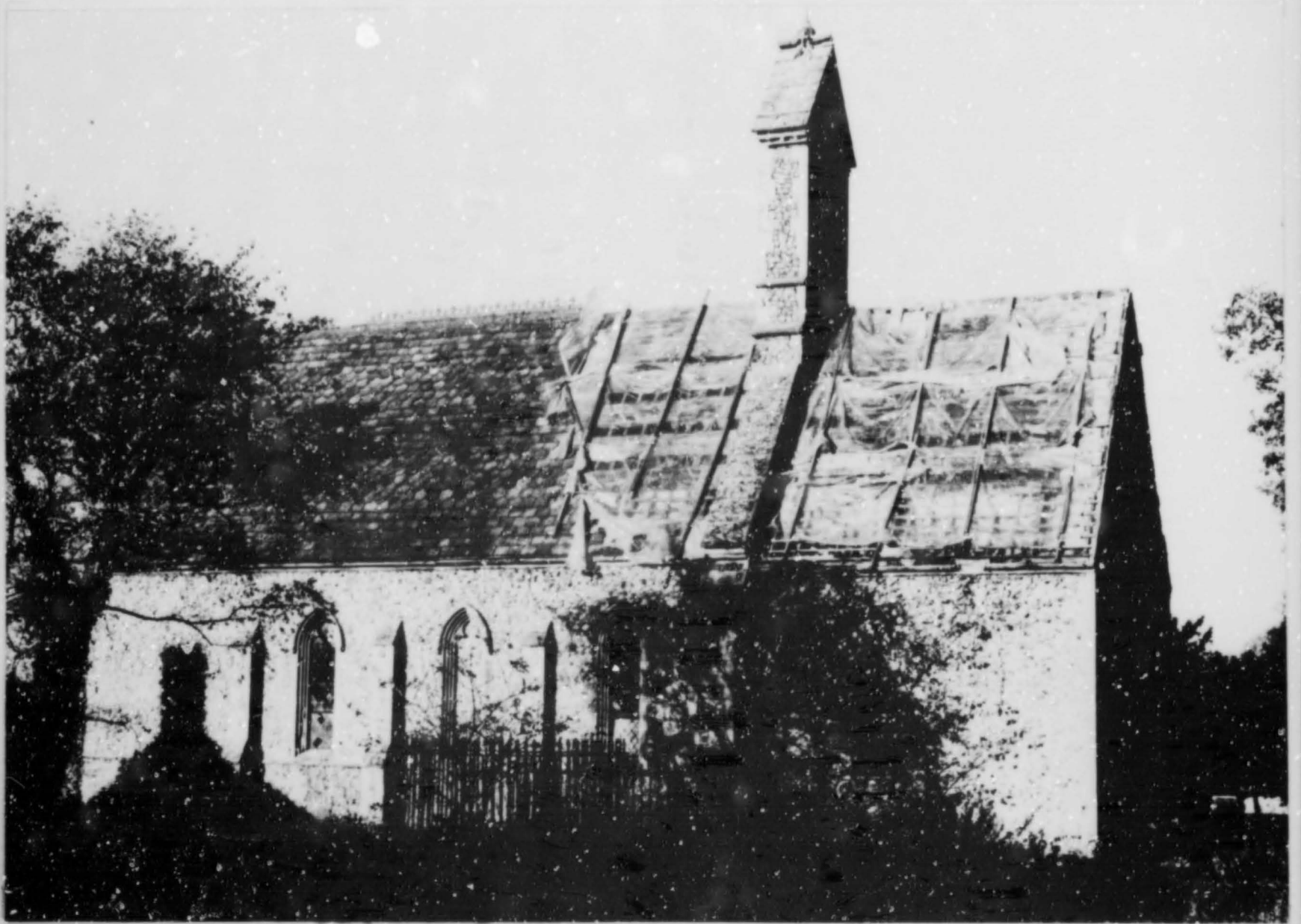


Plate CXXXIII. Bagthorpe, St Mary, view from south

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BAGTHORP CHURCH

Plate CXXXIV. Bagthorpe, St Mary, by Ladbrooke (1831)



Plate CXXXV. Bagthorpe, St Mary, demolition in June 1853



Plate CXXXVI. Bagthorpe, St Mary, Norman font

2. Barmer, All Saints

Identification TF 8090 3361. *County no.* 1990. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Lynn. *Deanery:* Burnham and Walsingham. *Parish:* Barmer. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1977. *Ownership and Access:* leased to Norfolk Churches Trust.

Location and Setting

Barmer, whose village and church are mentioned in the Domesday Book, consists of a couple of farms and some cottages about 5km south-east of Docking. The church stands completely isolated over 400m from the nearest habitation, 150m east of the B1454 Docking-Fakenham road. A clump of trees on the top of a hill, surrounded by cornfield, marks the churchyard and camouflages the church. An unmarked track across the cornfield leads to the flint-walled churchyard (Pl. CXXXVII).

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, nave, north aisle and round west tower.

Chancel. The chancel is entirely of the 19th century. It is built of smoothly faced flint with limestone edgings. The east wall is pierced by three stepped lancets, with shafts, capitals and bases, in 13th century style, on inner edges (Pl. CXXXVIII). On the inside, there is also a stone stringcourse beneath the window.

The south wall has two single lancets, separated by a priest's door with horizontal lintel and carved corbels. On the inside, there is a cusped piscina in the south-east corner, with a sedilia next to it. The north wall has two lancets, and a pointed-arched aumbry near the east wall on the inside.

The chancel arch is the only pre-Victorian feature. It is a plain pointed arch with chamfered edges, and a chamfered plinth and base. Above the arch, on the nave side, is a set-off. The roof is scissor-braced. There are stone gable crosses above the chancel east wall.

Nave. Rougher than the masonry of the chancel, the nave is built of flint in imprecise courses. The quoins of all four corners are made of large flints. Two lancet windows pierce the south wall, each with round-headed single splays on the inside. Beneath the eastern one, on the inside, is a niche with a black marble shaft resting on three octagonal

pillars. Further west, the south doorway is a plain chamfered arch, chamfered on the outside with a plain hood-mould. All along the eaves is a row of stone corbels.

On the north side is a three-bay arcade. The stone piers are octagonal, with Decorated moulded capitals and bases. The responds at either end of the arcade are thinner than the free-standing piers. The arches are double-chamfered. The nave roof is scissor-braced.

North Aisle. The aisle, like the chancel, is Victorian and has identical masonry. There are three two-light windows, Decorated in style, in the north wall, and slightly taller two-light windows in the two end walls. The aisle roof is a single lean-to.

West Tower. The round west tower is built of coursed flint. There are no floors inside. Three small stone-lined rectangular windows light the belfry, which has a single bell. At the top, the parapet is of 19th century workmanship. The tower arch is plain and pointed, with very large stone jambs, all with diagonal tooling, and a chamfer round the arch only. South of the arch, on the nave side, is a niche with four-centred head and a rebate for a door.

Interpretation and Dating

The church has suffered from both neglect and major restoration, making interpretation difficult. Chancel and north aisle were in ruins in the early 19th century. Only the nave and tower are medieval and they appear to be contemporary. A late 12th century date seems most likely. The lancet windows are only slightly pointed, and are set within round-headed splays. Both tower arch and chancel arch are plain and unmoulded. The tower arch responds have diagonal tooling; the rather monolithic stones used are reminiscent of Late Saxon work, but may be a late survival. No freestone is used in the nave quoins, just large flints. There is not sufficient evidence to indicate two phases of work (*e.g.* mid-11th century and late 12th century).

The only major addition was a north aisle, in the first half of the fourteenth century. There followed a period of decline, and chancel and aisle fell to ruin, probably by the late 16th century. In 1602 it was recorded that 'the Church there ys very ruinously decayed in every part thereof' (Tymms, 1866, 75).

By the 19th century, services were infrequent in the truncated church (Pl. CXXXIX). In the second half of the 19th century, the church was used only as a mortuary chapel, with dual function as mausoleum for the Kerslake family. The eastern

half of the nave contained catacombs; the wooden south door was replaced by an immense steel one.

Finally, a complete restoration took place in 1885-6 (architect F. Preedy) to make the church fit for divine worship. The walls blocking nave arcade and chancel arch were removed, also the old foundation walls of aisle and chancel, and a new north aisle and chancel were built; the floor of the nave was levelled down and a new floor built, and the Kerslake tomb relaid. The nave was also reroofed (NRO, FCB/9, 13, 226). The bill for this work, £662, was paid by Rev. E.K. Kerslake. Chancel and nave were refloored with concrete in 1959.

Causes of Abandonment

The population of the parish is small, and has been for a long time. In 1801 only 15 souls resided here; this had risen to a peak of 64 by the time the church was being restored in 1885, although the provision of 120 seats seems very optimistic. By 1971 the population had gone down to 45. Not only is the overall parish population small, but also the church stands in an isolated site. The nearest house is over 400m away. These are not conditions conducive to keeping a church in regular use. In 1978, the church was declared redundant and leased to the Norfolk Churches Trust.

Church Contents

Ceramic: Victorian tiles cover the chancel floor, mainly red and black, some green glazed, some red decorated with yellow foliage or interlacing circles. Part of the nave and aisle are tiled, the rest concreted.

Metal: brass plaques to Thomas Kerslake (d.1869) and Caroline Kerslake (d.1877); in chancel, brass cross and two candlesticks; cast-iron south door; above the door is an iron tympanum with armorial crest and inscribed 'Ad Finem Fidelis', the Kerslake family motto; iron flower stand.

Stone: round font, of Ancaster stone, probably late 19th century; raised stone slab under east bay of arcade; ledger slab to Kerslake family.

Wood: Most of the furnishings date from the 1885 restoration: altar table, two choir banches, a lectern, and 100 rush-bottom chairs in the nave. The chancel rail was installed in 1926; almsbox.

Condition

The church is in excellent condition; walls pointed, slate roofs intact, gutters and downpipes in good condition.

Churchyard

The churchyard is surrounded by a neat flint wall, capped with brick. There is a gate on the west side, from which a track leads downhill to the road. Most of the churchyard is clear of undergrowth, but there are only a few headstones, all 19th and 20th century (latest grave 1975). The shape of the churchyard is curved on the south-west side, but rectilinear to north and east - certainly not a circular enclosure.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The site is interesting from the point of view of the relationship of the church and churchyard to a hill settlement going back at least to Middle Saxon times. The church itself has been extensively restored, with late 19th century chancel and aisle. The floor of the nave has been laid with graves, and was last relaid in 1959. Nave and round west tower appear to be Transitional in style, i.e. late 12th century - fairly rare for a parish church. The arcade is good Decorated work. The 19th century chancel and aisle are built in Early English and Decorated style respectively, competent but not spectacular.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, VII, 2.

Bryant, 1900b, 7.

Cautley, 1949, 171.

Cox, 1911, 1, 71.

Messent, 1936, 21.

Mortlock and Roberts, 1985b, 5.

Pevsner, 1962b, 81.

Tymms, 1866, 75.



Plate CXXXVII. Barmer, All Saints, from south-west



Plate CXXXVIII. Barmer, All Saints, view from south-east



BARMER CHURCH

Plate CXXXIX. Barmer, All Saints, by Ladbrooke (1831)



Plate CXL. N.Barningham, St Peter, from south-west



Plate CXLI. N.Barningham, St Peter, interior looking west



Plate CXLII. N.Barningham, St Peter, chancel, sedilia, south wall

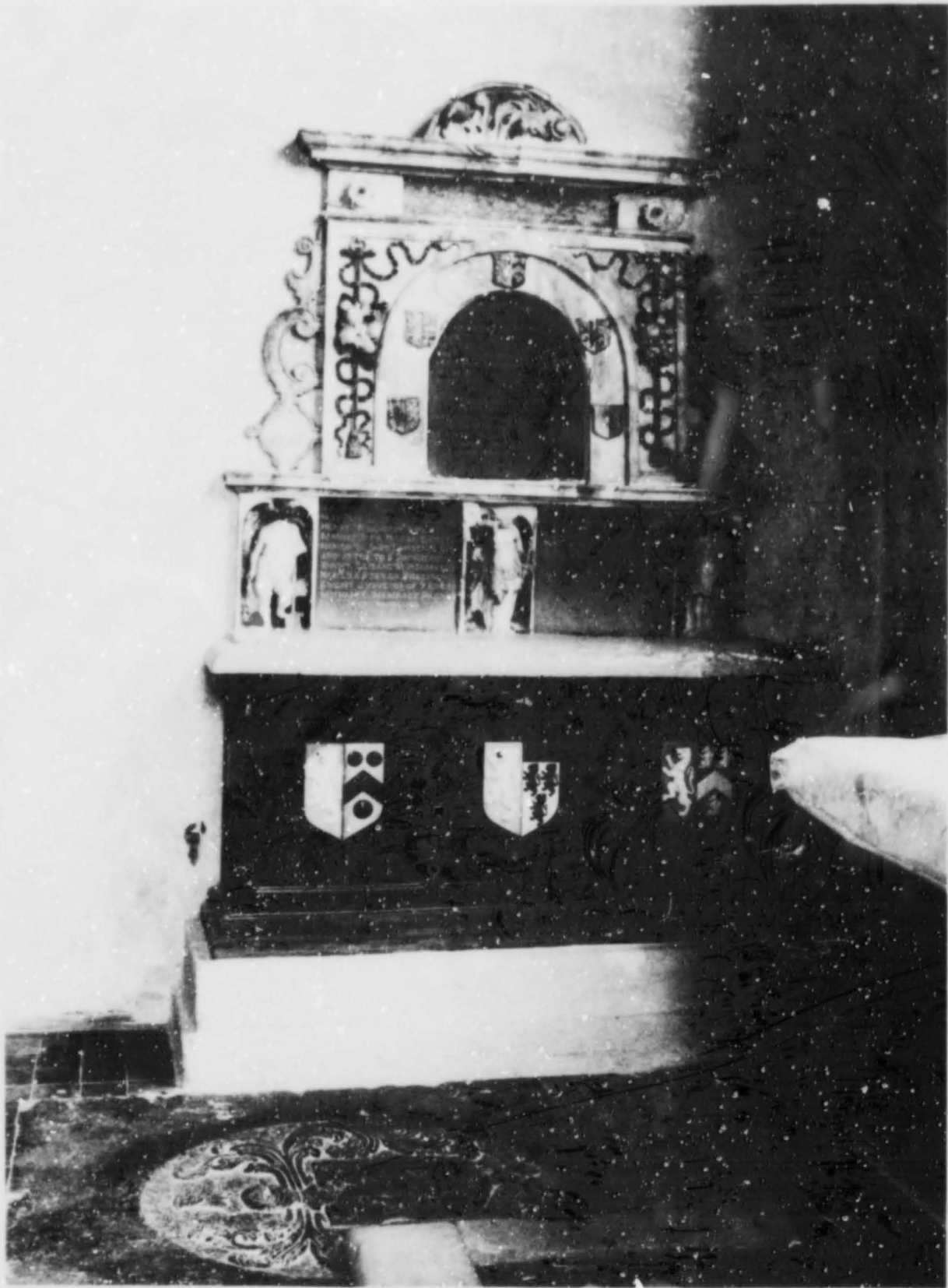


Plate CXLIII. N.Barningham, St Peter, monument to John Palgrave (d.1611)

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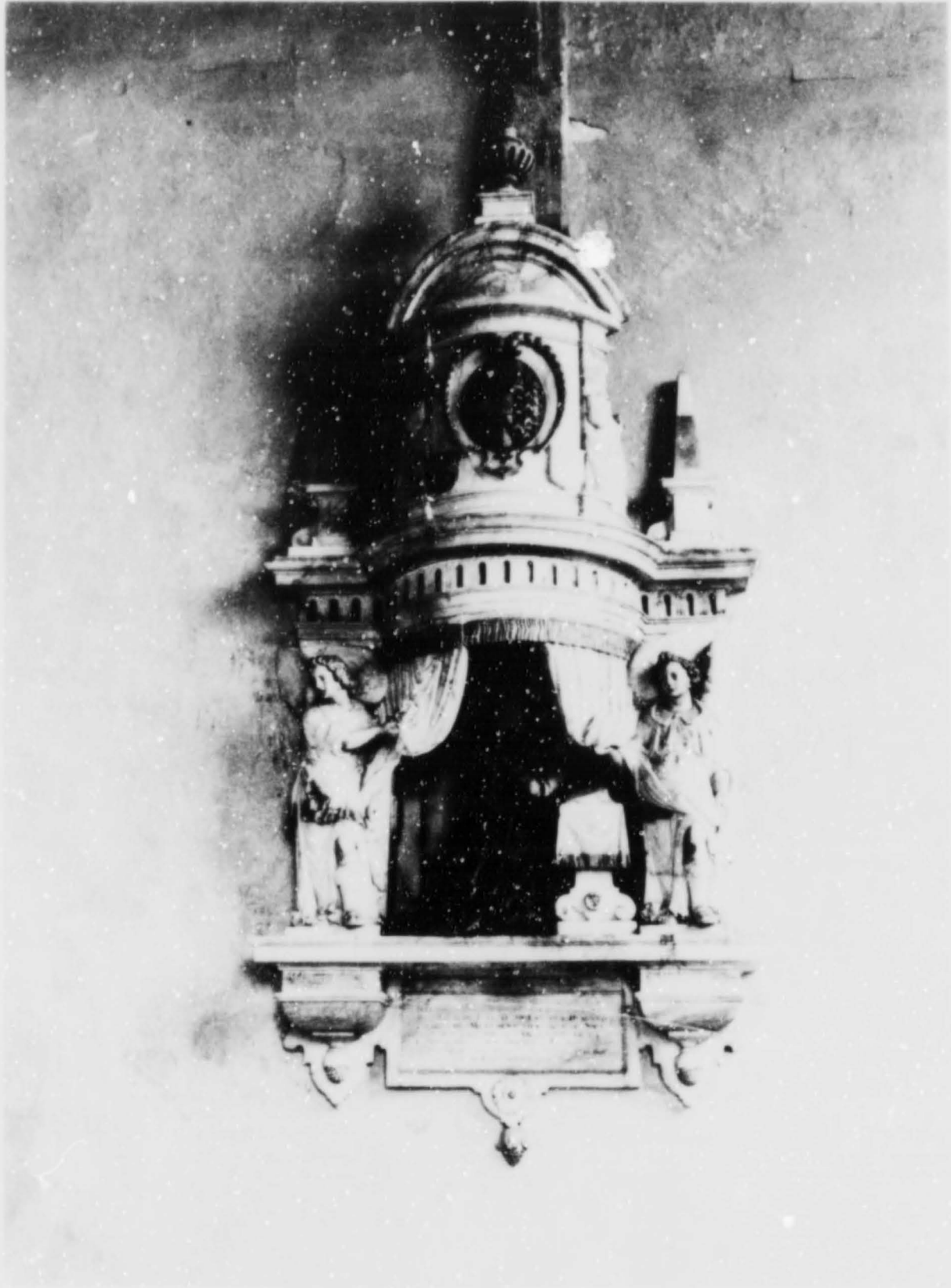


Plate CXLIV. N.Barningham, St Peter, monument to Margaret Pope (d.1624)

4. Barton Bendish, St Mary

Identification TF 7098 0544. *County no.* 4513. *Diocese:* Ely. *Archdeaconry:* Wisbech. *Deanery:* Fincham. *Parish:* Barton Bendish. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1974. *Ownership and Access:* vested in Redundant Churches Fund since 1976.

Location and Setting

The small village of Barton Bendish possesses two parish churches, as it did at the time of Domesday; indeed, until the late eighteenth century it boasted three medieval churches, all in close proximity (see Barton Bendish, All Saints). The village lies 1km south of a Roman road, now the A1122 from Downham Market to Swaffham, about 10km east of Downham. Until 1929 the 'Devil's Dyke' formed the eastern boundary of the parish (hence 'Bendish'). The parish church of St Andrew stands in the nucleus of the village; St Mary's is more isolated, 300m south-west, picturesquely framed by a clump of trees.

Architectural Description

This report differs in some important details from that found in *East Anglian Archaeology* 32 (Rogerson, 1987, 59-63), since more details of the masonry fabric were brought to light after the stripping of the external rendering in February 1989. The church consists of chancel, north vestry and nave. The principal material is coursed flint, except the western part of the nave which consists largely of re-used limestone blocks. All roofs are thatched (Pl. CXLV).

Chancel. The walls are built of roughly coursed small flints. A plinth of flint, capped with chamfered limestone, continues round all external walls. Until 1989, patches of rendering covered much of the walling; the east wall, and the eastern part of the north wall, were freshly rendered in the mid-1970s. The top 0.5m of north and south walls contain much brick, and represent a heightening of the walls.

The east wall is pierced by a superb three-light Decorated window, with reticulated tracery (Pl. CXLVI). The main lights have cusped ogee heads; the reticulations contain ogee quatrefoils. Both tracery and mullions have ogee profiles, with a fillet, and the window jambs have continuous sunken quadrant mouldings. The

hood-mould consists of a roll with frontal fillet; its terminals are excellently carved human heads, a king to north, a queen to south. On the inside there is a small square aumbry south of the window. At the corners are medium-sized limestone quoins. The corbelled-out eaves consoles are both carved with miniature Atlas figures, bearing the roof above with their arms. The gable wall is capped with stone, and surmounted with a gable cross.

Near the east wall, the chancel south wall is pierced by a three-light Perpendicular window. Each light has a cinquefoil head, the spandrels are blank, and the window is enclosed by a plain-chamfered square hood-mould. On the inside, the window is contained within a four-centred rear-arch with concave chamfer; the reveal forms a sill-sedile whose bench contains six carved stone panels, each a quatrefoil containing a rosette. Next to the window is a delightful priest's door, with cusped ogee head; the hood-mould, which follows the ogee profile, springs from lion head terminals and is surmounted by crockets and crowned with a generous finial. There are indications of a blocked opening above. More obvious signs of a blocked opening can be seen 0.5m west of the door, where there is the clear vertical break of the eastern reveal of a blocked doorway; intriguingly, this doorway would have been the exact size of the priest's door; the arched head of the blocked opening follows the precise profile of the priest's door, suggesting that this feature has been relocated further east. The west reveal of this blocked doorway has been obscured by the east jamb of another window: this is two-light and in the same Decorated style as the much grander east window. The hood-mould again has a remarkably life-like portrait head of a man to east, a woman to west. The bottom 0.5m of the window has been blocked with re-used limestone pieces. On the inside a wall arch, springing from the priest's door to the chancel arch, oversails the window; this is a four-centred arch, but, strangely, only three-quarters of the arch is completed before it runs into the chancel arch.

An identical wall arch, pierced by an identical two-light window, is reflected in the north wall. The label-stops of the window again have carved faces, a rather sad-looking man and woman. The bottom 0.5m of this window is blocked too. Another 0.5m east of the window, on the outside, part of a low pointed doorway can be made out; the western half of the doorway is blocked in flint, while the rest is concealed by the vestry wall. On the inside, the door to the vestry has a four-centred arch with square label and a carved leaf in each spandrel. The label-stop to east depicts the head of a man, that to west a

woman with plaited hair. East of the door is a spacious aumbry, with ogee head, panelled in wood.

The chancel arch is double-chamfered. It springs from large polygonal corbels with scroll mouldings. The three-sided plaster ceilings of chancel and nave are canted upwards so as not to cut across the top of the chancel arch.

North Vestry. The vestry has a thatched gable roof at right-angles to the north wall of the chancel. The masonry is mainly flint, with interspersed pieces of re-used limestone. East and west walls are both pierced with a small cusped window in limestone. The north wall has a shallow pointed niche, outlined in brick, with a plain brick hood-mould; a board has been set into it, painted to resemble a three-light window. The gable above has been recently heightened by 25cm. Quoins at the corners are of squared limestone.

Nave. The nave is only slightly wider and longer than the chancel. Apart from the west end, the masonry is broadly similar to the chancel; occasional pieces of conglomerate interspersed among the flint are more noticeable in the nave. Until 1989, many patches of rendering remained. A flint and limestone plinth proceeds along the base of north and south walls. Oddly, the nave walls are 0.5m lower than the chancel walls. Quoins at all corners are of medium-sized limestone blocks. The eaves consoles are moulded, but less elaborate than in the chancel

Just west of the nave south-east corner, a piece of wall about 1m wide has been patched and filled with a mixture of re-used limestone, brick and flint; it marks the site of the rood-stair. Next to this blocking is a broad two-light Decorated window. The design of the tracery of this window is extremely unusual. The two main lights are distinctly asymmetrical, each surmounted by a lopsided combination of two mouchettes and a quatrefoil; the inner mouchettes are lower than the outer ones. The head of the window has a kind of four-petal motif, with the bottom petal split in two by a supermullion to make two mouchettes (Pl. CXLVII). The hood-mould is plain. On the inside, the rear-arch is poorly formed, but on the west side the leading edge has a keel moulding; the rear-arch continues down to form a ledge seat. The bottom 0.5m of the window is blocked. Just west of this, there is evidence of a small pointed window, now blocked.

There is a change in masonry 2.5m west of this window. On the inside it is marked by a set-off in the masonry of some 15cm. A vertical crack and a slight set-back mark the break on the outside. The east jamb of the south doorway corresponds with the

line of the break. The doorway itself has a four-centred head with continuous mouldings on the west jamb; there is a return of 1.6m from the ground, suggesting that the stone above formed the east jamb of the window, now gone. On the inside, the east springing of the rear-arch of this former window can be seen. West of this break, the wall is much thinner and smoother than that further east. The masonry consists of re-used pieces of limestone, including jambs and archivolts.

The north wall mostly mirrors the south wall of the nave. It is pierced by a two-light Decorated window of different tracery design to its counterpart in the south wall. It has achieved symmetry, but is still peculiar in its form. The cinquefoil main lights are both surmounted by an inordinately large mouchette, squeezing out any room for more forms save a small eyelet and an elongated quatrefoil in the interstice between the two main lights. As elsewhere, the bottom 0.5m of the window has been blocked. On the inside the rear-arch continues down to the ground, and the keeled leading edge survives in its entirety. Further west there is a vertical masonry break opposite that on the south side. Again, there is the east jamb of a window, with the return for its sill 1m from the ground; on the inside, the eastern edge of the rear-arch survives. West of this point, the wall is thinner and smoother.

The west wall is also constructed of re-used limestone blocks, including pieces of tracery. At the base, there is a high plinth with roll-moulded limestone capping. The west quoins are of squared limestone, with eaves consoles like the east corners of the nave. A triple row of nineteenth-century bricks at eaves level marks a change of masonry in the west wall; below, the masonry consists of limestone blocks; above it is unrendered flint. This gable is capped with a bell-cote containing a single bell, a simple arched structure in stone surmounted by a cross. Lower down, there is a two-light window with circular eyelet and hood-mould; next to it, the sill of an earlier window is visible.

We now come to the spectacular Norman west door (Pl. CXLVIII). The arch is of two orders. The inner shafts consist of continuous bobbin motifs. The outer shafts have a stylised beak-head decoration, progressing from wide 'beaks' at the bottom, to narrow ones at the top. Each shaft has a capital carved with stringy volutes, except the capital of the inner north shaft which appears to be decorated with small rosettes. The imposts are chamfered and quirked. The inner order of the round-headed arch continues the bobbin theme; the outer order has genuine beak-head decoration. The hood-mould comprises a thin order of dog-tooth decoration, capped with an order of semi-circular

incisions.

Interpretation and Dating

There are three principal phases of construction; the chancel, the nave and the west end. We know from Domesday Book that there were two churches in Barton Bendish in the eleventh century, one of them almost certainly St Mary's (Doubleday and Page 1906, 2, 127). However, nothing of this church survives. Leaving aside the west door, which came from another church, the earliest part of the present fabric is the chancel. The excellent east window has reticulated tracery, and carefully carved label stops. The two-light windows of north and south walls conform to this design. A date of c. 1340 would be fairly acceptable.

Two factors show that the nave belongs to a different phase from the chancel. Firstly, the walls are significantly thinner than those of the chancel, 70cm as opposed to 90cm. Secondly, the style of the windows is different in the nave. Gone are the superbly carved label stops, and the neat reticulate tracery. Instead, we have two windows which are broadly Decorated in form, but eccentrically rustic in design and execution. The tracery of both is oafishly ill-proportioned, and the peculiar asymmetry of the nave south window seems preposterously provincial. Whoever designed the windows was clearly out of touch with main stream architecture and so a late date - perhaps c. 1370 - would not be too great an embarrassment. It is perhaps significant that John Lovel was buried in the middle of the church in 1372 (N.R.O. NCC Wills 23 Heydon). The fact that the burial is specified as being in the 'church' rather than the chancel indicates that John Lovel was buried in the middle of the nave. There is a large rectangular tomb slab in the floor of the present nave, just east of the west door. Could this be the site of John Lovel's tomb?

As with the chancel, there is good reason to believe the nave extended further west - in this case considerably further west. Firstly the opening filled by the present south door was originally a window opening, of which only the east jamb survives. This feature is echoed in the north wall. It would be extremely unlikely for a fourteenth century nave not to have been provided with north and south doors, so these must have taken up a bay, which extended west from the present west wall. These figures are purely hypothetical, but if we allow 1.4m for the window on the site of the present south door, a 2.8m length of wall from this window to an original doorway, a doorway 1.4m wide, and

a length of wall 1.2m long from the doorway to the south-west corner of the nave, then we may conjecture a nave some 14.2m long (external measurements). We then have a nave more comparable in proportions to those of St Andrew's and All Saints' (in their fourteenth century phases, St Mary's has a reconstructed length/breadth ratio of 2.4:1, St Andrew's 4.8:1; the figure for St Mary's accords well with other fourteenth century naves, e.g. West Harling 2.4:1, Babingley 2.2:1).

Important alterations were made to the chancel in the fifteenth century. It was extended to east, which involved adding a new south window, resetting the east window and moving the priest's door further east. The north and south walls were thickened by means of wall arches, and a new north doorway was added opposite the relocated priest's door; the plaited hairstyle of the lady carved on the label of the north doorway indicates an early fifteenth century date.

During the digging of a soakaway south-west of the church in 1979, the foundations of a wall running east-west were discovered. It was constructed of flint and chalk and was 90cm wide; only a 1m length of the foundation was uncovered. This presumably belonged to a porch, perhaps part of the Phase 2 church. Forby (see below) records that 'the old entrance on the south side turned to the use of a vestry'. The excavation for a soakaway also uncovered a burial outside the priest's door; it was accompanied by a pewter paten. At the south-east corner of the nave, foundations of a small turret for a rood-stair were found.

There was also a west tower, which collapsed during the reign of Queen Anne (Blomefield, 1807, VII, 282); Bryant specifies that this took place during a storm c. 1710, and he is followed by Cox and Cotton (Bryant, 1904a, 16; Cox, 1911, 2, 89; RCF, 1987). Thomas Lovel left £1 towards new bells in 1421 (RCF, 1987) which suggests the tower had recently been completed. The tower may have been planned as part of John Lovel's nave campaign of the 1370s. No doubt the collapse of the tower led to the destruction of the western part of the nave. The eastern half of the nave could still be used; perhaps a temporary boarding was used to cover the west end.

A description of the church, as it appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century, has survived in the form of a note, probably in the possession of Blomefield originally, dated to 1731 (NRO, NNAS c3/2/12). It shows that the remains of the tower could still be seen, that the south porch and rood-stair still stood, and that a dilapidated vestry adjoined the north wall of the chancel (presumably where the present vestry

stands): 'St Mary ... is an exceeding small building without any tower. The Church and Chancell are thatched Between which is a very ancient [stairway] going up to the Rood all of freestone. The south porch is small and tiled, only one small light at the west end. The ruins of the tower at the west end appear not a foot above the earth. It was large and the church look to have been longer than it now is ... a vestry n. side cha[ncel] dilapidated. Exceeding unusual door in the cha[ncel].'

More permanent repairs could be carried out in 1789 after the church of All Saints had been demolished. A Faculty of 1787 united St Mary's and All Saints' and the 1789 Faculty to demolish All Saints' (NRO, FCB/4, 6, 127) included permission to repair St Mary's. The Rev. Robert Forby described these repairs in a memorandum in the parish register (NRO, PD350/7(s)): the sale of bells and material from All Saints' brought in £56.15s.6d. which defrayed in part the £80 spent on repairs to St Mary's over the summer of 1789; a cupola was built at the west end to house a bell (Pl. CXLIX), which previously had been hung within the church; roof and windows were repaired, a new reading desk and pews provided, and the floor repaired; in addition, 'the old entrance on the south side (was) turned for the use of a Vestry. An entrance was made at the west end where a beautiful Saxon Arch was erected, formerly the North Entry of All Saints church.' An old gravestone was removed from the south doorway and placed in the chancel, north of the communion table.

A further structural alteration took place in 1858 when the upper part of the nave west wall was rebuilt in flint; the west window dates to this reconstruction. About this time a vestry was built onto the north wall of the chancel; Bryant (1904a, 16) refers to it as 'modern'. The stone bell-cote was added in 1871.

Causes of Abandonment

For some time, one parish church has been adequate for the needs of this small village. Having reduced the stock of churches from three to two in 1789, it was decided to abandon a second church in 1974. St Andrew's was retained as the parish church because it was larger and more conveniently located in the centre of the village. St Mary's lost out, being smaller and more isolated.

Church Contents

Glass: west window, Christ healing the sick, 1858.

Paint: wall painting, south wall of nave, half wheel and female figure (St Katharine ?), probably fourteenth century.

Stone: font, octagonal, 1857; floor slabs, sanctuary floor: fourteenth century coffin lid with cross; ledger slab Simon Tiffin (d.1708); two large unmarked slabs, one in middle of chancel floor, one by west door of nave; wall tablets: chancel: P. Jenney (d.1819), south wall; S. Read (d.1944), north wall; nave: north wall, H. Berney (d.1870), M. Gotobed (d.1953).

Wood: altar table, 1633; plain nineteenth century prayer-desk, lectern, altar-rails, harmonium; seating mainly low box pews; four plain benches, one dated 1637.

Condition

The church is in very good condition after a series of repairs in the 1970s and 1980s.

Churchyard

The attractive churchyard forms a rectangle around the church. There is a brick boundary wall. Most of the churchyard is under grass, and kept free of weeds. There are a few eighteenth century headstones, but they are mostly of the nineteenth century.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The site has already given an indication of its archaeological potential with recent discoveries of the fourteenth century priest's burial and the uncovering of the remains of the rood-stair and south porch. In addition to this, there is undoubtedly much more below-ground evidence west of the church in the form of the west end of the nave and the west tower. Architecturally, the church is an attractive example of fourteenth century Decorated, with some fine carved details and wall-painting.

Further References

Blomefield, 1807, VII, 282.

Bryant, 1904a, 16.

Cautley, 1949, 172.

Cox, 1911, 2, 89.

Doubleday and Page, 1906, 2, 127.

Mortlock and Roberts, 1985b, 6.

Pevsner, 1962b, 82.

Rogerson, 1987, 59-63.



Plate CXLV. Barton Bendish, St Mary, from south-east



Plate CXLVI. Barton Bendish, St Mary, chancel east window

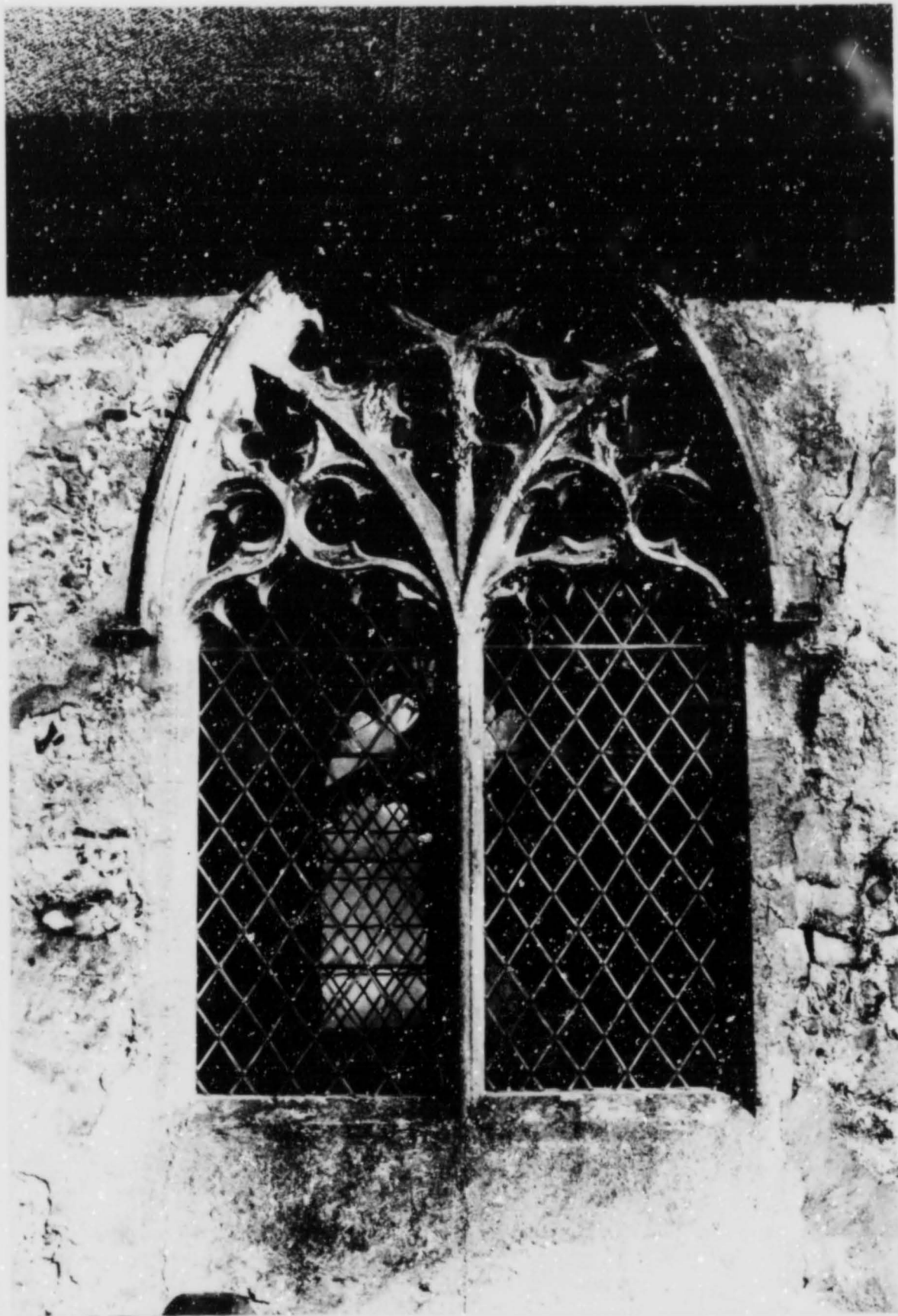


Plate CXLVII. Barton Bendish, St Mary, nave, south window



WEST DOORWAY BARTON ST MARYS CHURCH

Plate CXLVIII. Barton Bendish, St Mary, west doorway by Cotman (1858)



BARTON BANDISH

Plate CXLIX. Barton Bendish, St Mary by Ladbrooke (1832)



Plate CL. Brandiston, St Nicholas, nave from south



Plate CLI. Brandiston, St Nicholas, nave west window

I: D3



Plate CLII. Brandiston, St Nicholas, from north-east

I: D4



Plate CLIII. Brandiston, St Nicholas, north aisle east window

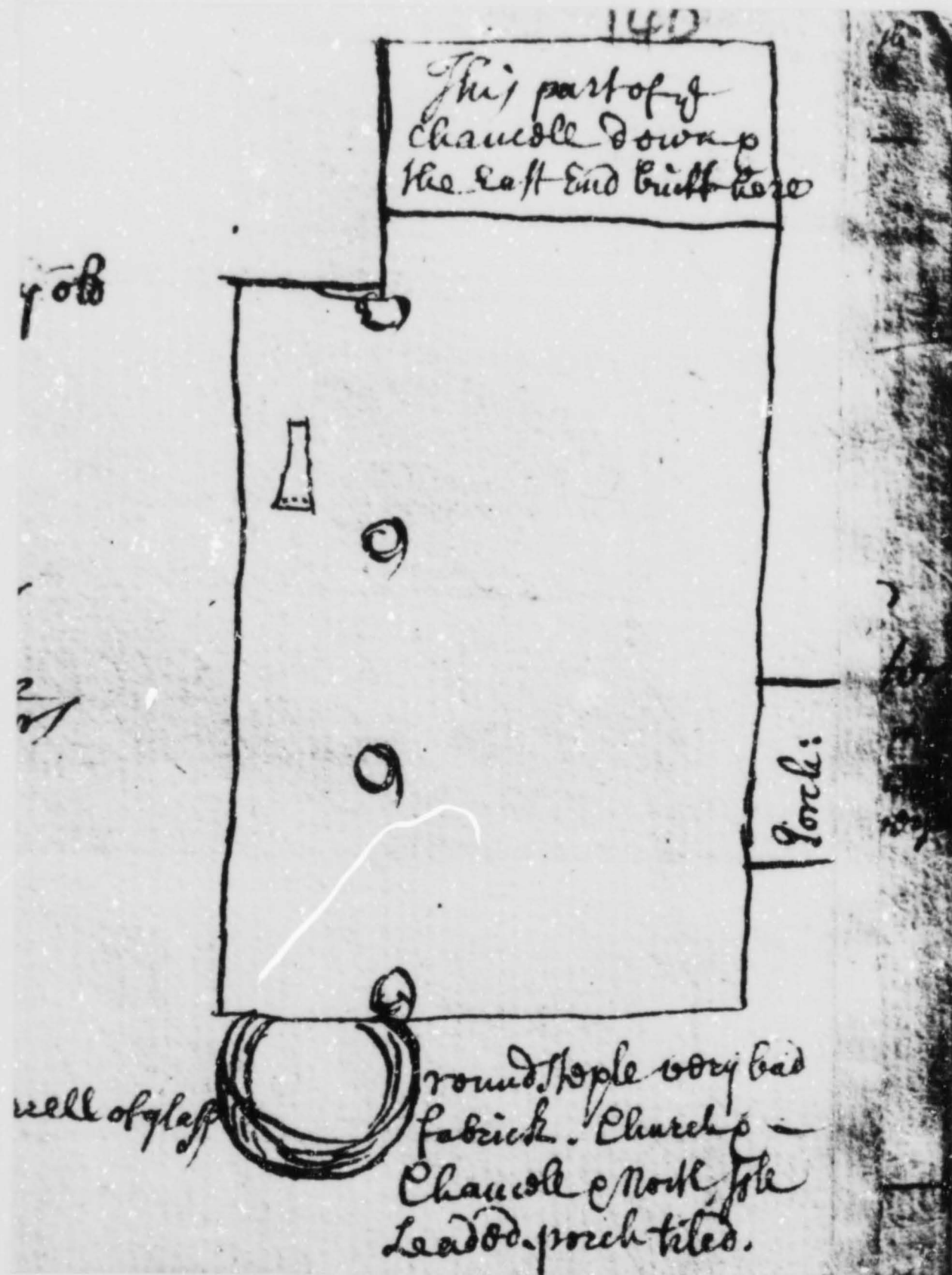


Plate CLIV. Brandiston, St Nicholas, plan by Martin c. 1750

6. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas

Identification TG 3555 0586. *County no.* 10280. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norwich. *Deanery:* Blofield. *Parish:* Buckenham St Nicholas. *Status:* parish church, now vested in the Redundant Churches Fund. *Date last in regular use:* before 1968.

Location and Setting

The church is approached along minor roads from Brundall and lies towards the bottom of a hill which gently slopes down to the flat marshes which border the River Yare. The site is totally isolated, although a barn and a couple of cottages lie 250m to the east; there is no village as such. The church is approached from these cottages along a farm track. An enveloping hedge surrounds the churchyard and partially obscures its entrance (Pl. CLV).

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, aisleless nave with north vestry (formerly porch), and octagonal west tower. Materials are principally of coursed flint with limestone dressings. Roofing material consists of slates over the nave and vestry and felt over the chancel; in 1952 the lead of the church roof was sold to provide money to repair a crack in the tower. Ladbrooke's drawing shows lead over the chancel and pantiles over nave and porch (Pl. CLVI).

Chancel. The chancel is much restored. The western 2m of its south wall is of similar character to the nave south wall (with its brick base courses) and includes a three-light Perpendicular window (restored). East of this point the wall appears original, except for two added buttresses. This section is pierced by two Y-tracery windows, which look original, as does the five-light east window (intersecting tracery, with ogees). The north wall of the chancel appears to have been largely rebuilt, although the bottom 1m is probably original; above this the wall is set back some 8cm and rendered; such masonry as can be seen looks very haphazard, with much evidence of brick, and must be a rebuilding. At the west end of this wall is a three-light Perpendicular window matching the one on the south side, again probably a restoration.

The interior appearance is entirely Gothic, since the early nineteenth century restorations have thoroughly disguised any genuine medieval work: chancel arch, windows

and their surrounds, are all nineteenth century work.

Nave. The south wall of the nave appears to have been entirely refaced in the nineteenth century: the bottom three courses visible are of nineteenth century brick, and the walling above consists of flint with occasional pieces of the same brick (as a whole, the wall is extremely flush and straight, in contrast to the walling of the chancel); the windows are of the same period, very Gothic, as are the buttresses. However, the south-west corner seems to have old quoins of limestone, identical to those of the west tower. The south doorway is Norman in style; the stones themselves appear to be original, but have been reset, not too carefully, since one of the two massdials is only 0.3m from the ground on the west jamb (Pl. CLVII). When digging a dry trench recently, half a millstone was found outside the doorway used as a step.

The north wall of the nave has not had such a thorough-going restoration. East of the projecting vestry are two two-light windows, nineteenth century in date. Between the windows is a mass of masonry 1m wide and projecting 6 or 7cm, rising to a height of 1.5m; above this there is some repair work with freestone and much brick; above 2m from the ground there are marks of gable-shaped bricks capping this projection, which must have been some sort of chapel (Pl. CLVIII). There is a straight vertical joint between this masonry and the walling east of it. Perhaps this work relates to the 'new aisle' for which John Dik, priest in 1509, left £20 for stonework and £16 for timber in his will (Blomefield 1807, VII, 215).

The north-west corner of the nave is dressed with limestone quoins, similar to those of the south-west corner and of the tower. Some 2m further east is a straggling but almost vertical line of large, cut blocks of ironbound conglomerate, presumably either quoins of door jambs.

Vestry. Attached to the north wall of the nave is the vestry, a small square structure which used to be the north porch (see Ladbrooke's drawing) but was converted to its present use later in the nineteenth century; its windows date from this time. Its walls form a straight vertical joint with the nave. A surprise awaits the visitor to the vestry, for inside it the medieval north doorway is well preserved, with an order of shafts, and archivolt of keeled rolls and dog-tooth ornament (Pl. CLIX).

Tower. Up to belfry level the externally octagonal tower is round on the inside, but the belfry stage is octagonal inside and out. Nevertheless, it is probably of one build. On the outside, the angles of the neatly coursed flint walls have small limestone quoins, which

become nook-shafts in the belfry stage; this stage has tall lancet belfry openings, each with chamfered inner face and framed by a single continuous roll-moulding (Pl. CLX; main text Pl. XXVII). Alternate openings are blocked. The tower is topped by a low crenellated parapet. At ground level, the west doorway is imitation Norman, with chevron mouldings and scalloped capitals. It is clearly an insertion, presumably of the nineteenth century restoration: parts of the shafts are falling to pieces, and will not last very long; the softness of the stone was also observed by Cautley (1949, 180). Bryant records a restoration of the tower in 1820, but Cox mentions a series of drawings made in 1813 which include a view of a Norman west doorway (Cox 1911, 2, 7); either Cox is slightly wrong about the date of the drawing, or the doorway was set just prior to 1813 (or Cox is mistaking the west for the south doorway).

The small doorway in the south-east face of the tower leads to a first floor lined with brick pigeon-holes, probably an eighteenth century conversion.

Interpretation and Dating

The earliest dateable feature is the south doorway, which belongs to the first half of the twelfth century. Unfortunately it has been reset; however, the conglomerate quoins in the north wall of the nave may belong to this period, as may the original core of the nave. Tower and north doorway of nave are clearly Early English, probably early thirteenth century; the Norman nave was probably extended by 2m to west. The chancel east window with its intersecting tracery is equally clearly late thirteenth century, along with the two Y-tracery windows. Presumably the chancel original walls belong to this period too. There are no original Perpendicular features, although Ladbroke shows that the three-light windows of the chancel must be based on originals.

The whole church was thoroughly restored in the first half of the nineteenth century: the dates '1823' and '1824' frame the east window; the altar steps date to 1824; and the plaque on the west wall of the nave displays the date of '1841' by which time the nave had been restored as well; finally, the date '1843' can be found inside the tower and vestry.

Causes of Abandonment

Fewer than fifty souls inhabit the parish; there is no village as such, merely a scattering of houses and farms over a wide area. The parish was consolidated with Hassingham as

early as 1739 (NRO, FCB/2, 30). The church ceased to be used by 1968, and in 1979 was vested in the Redundant Churches Fund.

Church Contents

Glass: east window, mostly vandalised, but some cherub heads of 1823.

Metal: brass tablet, north wall of nave, 1915.

Stone: superb font, octagonal, eight figures of saints and apostles within ogee arches on bowl, angels against stem, fifteenth century (main text, Pl. XLIX); floor slabs: chancel: two thirteenth century coffin lids with carved foliate crosses; four ledger slabs, one 1658, the rest 1660; nave: ledger slab, 1732; wall tablets: chancel north wall, A. Newbury (d.1707); communion rail: 1840s; tower arch screen: 1840s.

Whereabouts of Contents

Font cover: Strumpshaw church.

Condition

From a state of severe dilapidation in the 1970s, the church has been put into good repair in the 1980s.

Churchyard

It is very overgrown south of the church, but quite well tended on the north side: the latest grave had fresh flowers on it and the grass had been kept fairly low.

Archaeological Record

An alabaster tablet depicting the martyrdom of St Erasmus was found wrapped up in sedge, about 2ft below the pavement of the chancel in 1840, dated to the late fourteenth century (Beauchamp 1847, 243-251). A copper gilt crucifix was found at the same time (Dawson Turner 1847, 300-304). Both are now in the St Peter Hungate Museum, Norwich.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The octagonal west tower, with its tall lancet windows, is outstanding and unusual. Toft Monks is the only other Early English example in the county (Billingford, Edgefield and

Kettlestone are also octagonal, but later). The intersecting tracery of the east window is very fine too. The church as a whole, whilst not outstanding, is yet of interest and some antiquity, going back to the twelfth century and incorporating a Norman doorway.

The site would prove to be interesting from an archaeological point of view; there are medieval graveslabs both in church and churchyard; but the interior of the church was probably lowered in the nineteenth century.

Further References

Beauchamp, 1847, 243-251.

Blomefield, 1807, VII, 215.

Cautley, 1949, 180.

Cox, 1911, 2, 7.

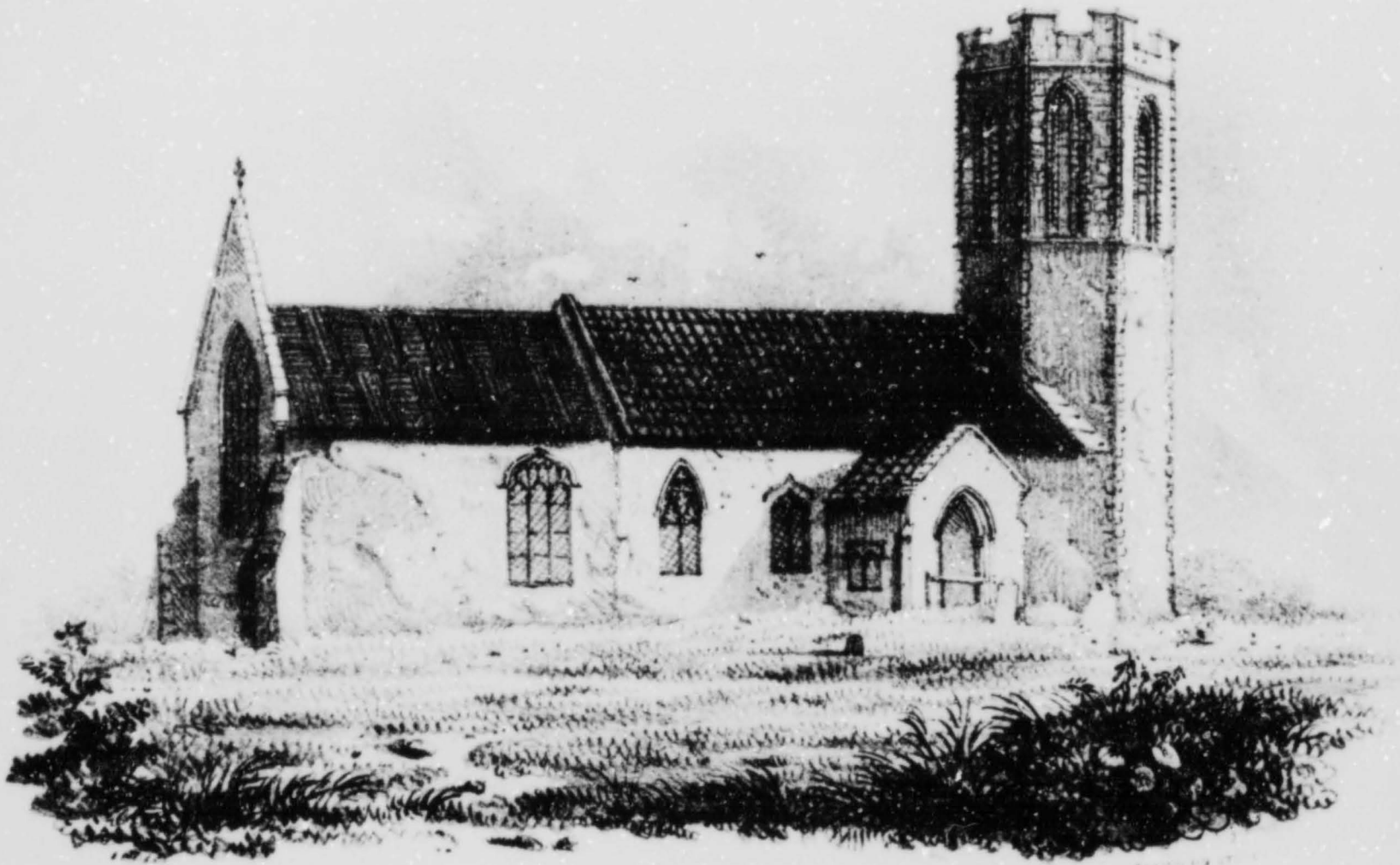
Dawson Turner, 1847, 300-304.

Mortlock and Roberts 1981, 21.

Pevsner, 1962a, 104.



Plate CLV. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas, from north



BUCKENHAM CHURCH

Plate CLVI. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas by Ladbrooke (1824)



Plate CLVII. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas, south wall of nave and chancel



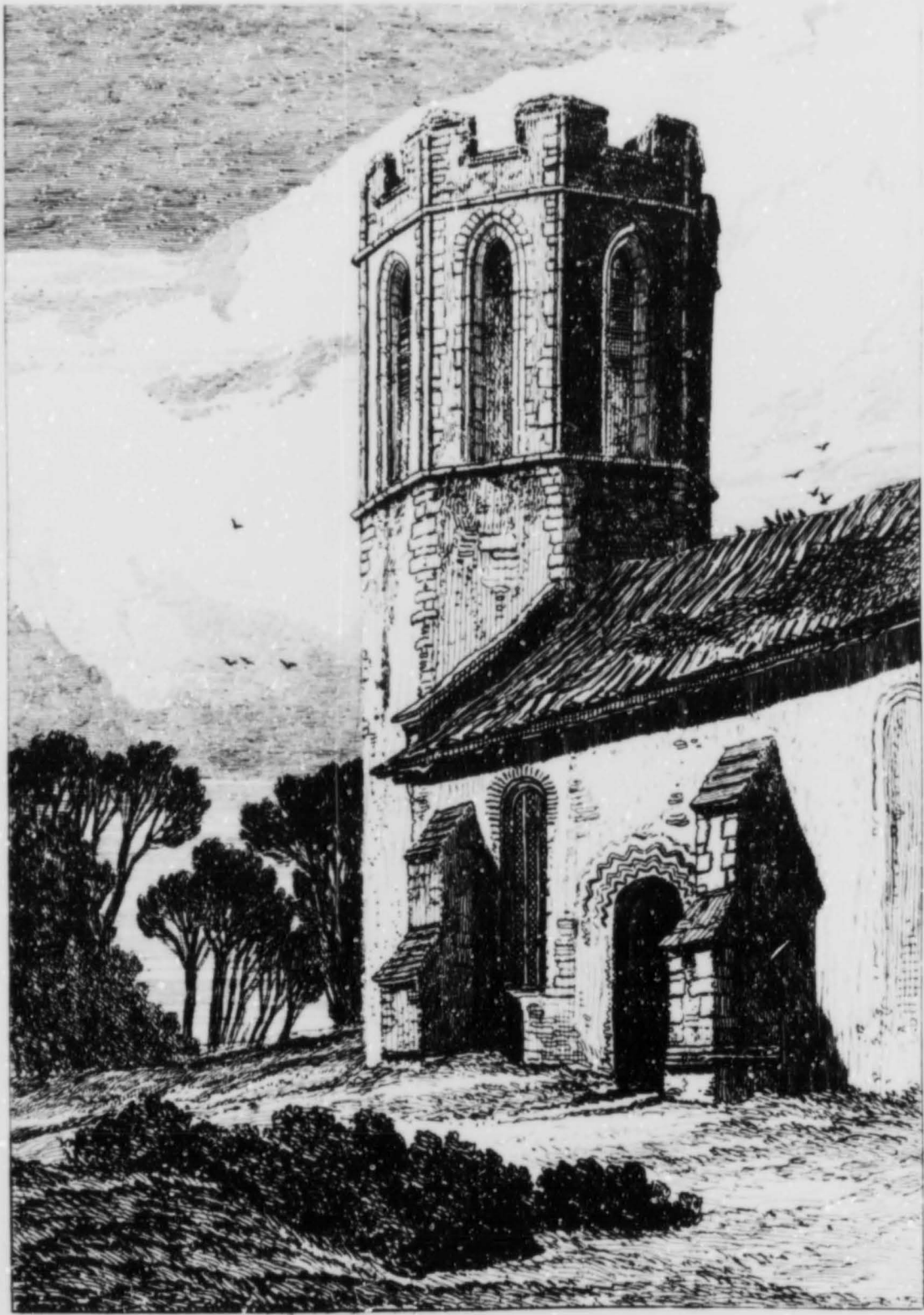
Plate CLVIII. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas, nave north wall



Plate CLIX. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas, nave north doorway from north AA52/5605

I: 22

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TOWER OF BUCKENHAM CHURCH, NORFOLK.
Engraved from a drawing by Robert & J. Cotman.

Plate CLX. Buckenham Ferry, St Nicholas by Cotman (1838)

7. Cockthorpe, All Saints

Identification TF 9813 4222. *County no.* 1888. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Lynn. *Deanery:* Holt. *Parish:* Cockthorpe. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1978. *Ownership and Access:* leased to Norfolk Churches Trust.

Location and Setting

Cockthorpe is a small village near the coastline of North Norfolk, on the higher ground above (and south-east of) Stiffkey and 5km west of Blakeney. The village is clustered around the small lane from Stiffkey to Langham; flanking the lane is the churchyard south wall.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, nave, south aisle, south porch and square west tower. Despite having an aisle, it is still quite a small church. Materials are principally mortared flint with limestone dressings (Pls. CLXI, CLXII).

Chancel. The chancel was built at the same time as the nave: on the north side, it can be seen that there is the same change in size of the flints at 1.5m from the ground as in the nave. Unfortunately the east quoins do not survive, since the chancel was shortened at a later date; a piece of north wall 1.5m high continues east of the present east wall by some 1m. It now has small limestone quoins (larger stones in the south-east corner, a couple being large uprights). The only window in the north wall, near to the junction with the nave, has been blocked with flint and brick (the upper part of the north wall has been repaired in the same materials); the stone jambs are still visible, but the head has gone. The east wall has a three-light window (each with cinquefoil heads) set within a four-centred arch each with hood-mould; the main lights each have an ogee head; all upper lights have been blocked. The masonry is very patchy in the south wall; both windows have been blocked with brick and flint. The eastern window is a tall rectangle, with hood-mould; its jambs are visible, unlike the one further west. On the inside, both of these windows show up as niches with flat two-centred heads. The pantiled roof has a polygonal boarded ceiling inside.

Nave. All four corners of the nave are visible (joined by the aisle on the south side), and have quoins of medium to large uncut flints; they show that the walls of the original

aisleless nave have reached about 5m in height. Because of the south aisle, only the north wall of the nave is visible. The masonry is of medium to large uncut flints in wide mortar beds, with very clear horizontal courses; the lowest 1.5m of wall has slightly smaller flints, crowded more closely together than those above, but this may represent a renewed season of building rather than an alteration. The wall has been heightened by 2m at a later phase; this later wall leans back from the walling below, and is composed of flint with occasional dark orange bricks, and brick quoins. A pointed north doorway with stone jambs at the western end of the north wall has been blocked with eighteenth century bricks and pieces of stone and flint. There are no windows. On the south side three two-light windows pierce the nave clerestory, each window with a square head and hood-mould, each light with a simple trefoil head. Between the windows the masonry is of medium-sized flints, mostly uncut; at the ends are small limestone quoins; the whole clerestory looks as if it has been thoroughly restored, probably in the nineteenth century. Above the window is a concave stone cornice, with two carved gargoyles. The upper of the two rooflines visible in the east wall of the tower would have met the nave wall at this cornice; but the nave wall has subsequently been raised by some 0.5m. On the nave east wall, a higher roofline for the chancel is visible. Inside the nave there is a big recess for the blocked north doorway, with a four-centred arch decorated with concave and convex mouldings.

The chancel arch is extremely fine with a hood-mould, two continuous moulded outer orders, separated by a deep hollow from the inner moulded order, which is supported by polygonal capitals and half-columns, and bases. The arch-braced nave roof is also excellent; wall posts, carved with half-columns and polygonal capitals, rest on carved wooden corbels; on the north side a wall plate decorated with quatrefoils and supported by longitudinal arched braces survives.

Aisle. The south aisle abuts the nave cleanly. Its masonry is of small chipped flints, crowded into courses which are not very regular, with limestone quoins at the corners. The window in the south wall has been blocked and filled with flint and brick (seventeenth century?) into which a smaller window of two lights has been inserted; each light has a cinquefoil head and blocked upper lights, and there is an enveloping hood-mould which is too large for the window; it seems that the window originally came from elsewhere (perhaps the chancel) before its insertion here. On the inside, the window reveal is very large with a pointed segmental rear-arch. The two-bay arcade

which divides nave from aisle is supported by a single octagonal pier with moulded capital supporting double-chamfered arches (which die into the end walls, Pl. CLXIII). On the east wall, the Calthorp monument blocks a large four-centred window arch, Pl. CLXIV; below this monument (about 1m from the ground) and filling the corners of the east end of the aisle, are two stone corbels, now used for holding pot plants.

There is also a small angle-piscina with column, moulded capital and trefoil arch head, by the reveal of the south window. The whole aisle roof was replaced in the 1970s and felted on the outside. The flooring is of pammets, as throughout the rest of the church.

Porch. The construction of the porch is rather curious. It has a very fine south face, with smooth knapped flints with galleting and small stone quoins, enclosing a beautiful stone doorway with four-centred arch and hood-mould, polygonal capitals, jambs with half-shafts and pedestal bases. The east and west walls are less straightforward. The lowest 0.6m of wall, in flint, seems contemporary with the south wall, but there is a coping of brick (seventeenth century?) at this point, and there is a vertical pier of brick at the southern ends of the walls; the rest is a filling of flint with occasional bricks. It could be that the upper sides of the porch were wooden originally, but the wood was later replaced by the flint and brick blocking. Inside, the doorway leading into the south aisle has a simple chamfered pointed stone arch, with a post-medieval wooden door. The roof is pantiled, with a plastered flat ceiling inside. A tiled bench lines the side walls of the interior.

Tower. The tower has been recently (1977) repointed, leaving little of its flint masonry exposed between the thick pointing joints; the whole tower has a pale, ghostly cast, because of the white cement used. There are limestone quoins at the corners (no buttresses) and a stone chamfered base course. As far as they can be traced, the flints of the tower walls are small to medium in size, cut and chipped, closely packed and straight coursed. The top of the tower has a crenellated parapet, with stone copings, and surmounts a concave stone cornice which sprouts a carved gargoyle on north and south sides. Two-light belfry windows mark the stage below. The north and south windows have simple Y-tracery and a hood-mould, and are blocked by brick (eighteenth century brick on the north side, twentieth century on the south side). The west window is of different design, with no hood-mould but most of its tracery is missing (blocked by flint in the lower part, brick in the upper); the fragments which survive suggest a cusped quatrefoil

head. The east window is also difficult to decipher, being blocked with brick; it appears to have two round-headed lights separated by a wide chamfered stone mullion. Below this window two earlier rooflines are visible, the upper one belonging to the phase of the nave before the clerestory was raised; the lower one is so steep it must belong to a phase before the clerestory existed.

There are two more windows in the tower, both simple lancets with chamfered stone jambs: one in the west wall at ground-floor level, and one in the south wall at first-floor level (blocked with modern brick). Inside, the small pointed tower arch has straight jambs and a slight chamfer at each edge.

Interpretation and Dating

The main fabric of nave and chancel is probably, by analogy with other monuments. Norman (although the chancel arch is Perpendicular), late eleventh or twelfth century: the large flint quoins, the clear horizontal coursing of the masonry, are well known in other Norman monuments in the county. To these elements, the tower has been added, probably in the late thirteenth century (simple lancet and Y-tracery windows); the aisle may also belong to this phase, with the Early English character of its pier and piscina capitals. The lower roofline visible in the east wall of the tower no doubt fits this arrangement (which also shows that the nave had no clerestory, or just a very low one, at this time). Finally, there have been two Perpendicular phases, the first belonging to the construction of the nave clerestory (the upper roofline marked on the tower) up to the stone cornice, the second to the construction of the present nave roof, with a heightening of nave walls and lowering of roof pitch. The porch, which belongs to one of the Perpendicular phases had been erected by 1480, since in his will of that year Thomas de Ringstede ordered that his body should be buried at the door of the church porch (Blomefield, 1808, IX, 218). Further alterations took place in 1558, for we read in the will of James Calthorp of that year that he ordered the south aisle to be re-roofed, that he should be buried there, and that a new window should be made in it depicting himself and his wife; and that also the chancel gable should be built (Lee-Warner, 1884, 164). It seems likely that he was responsible for shortening the chancel and building the present east wall, with its window; and that his is the large stone tomb chest set against the window of the south aisle, which necessitated the insertion of a new window. Unfortunately, none of the original glass has survived.

Causes of Abandonment

The small size of the village has led to the abandonment of the church for regular services. Since 1977 it has been leased to the Norfolk Churches Trust. As early as 1743 the parish was consolidated with Blakeney and Glandford, since 'the inhabitants of the said Parishes are few and inconsiderable there being only three farme houses and two cottages in the Parish of Cokethorpe' (NRO, FCB/2, 69). The village is of similar size today.

Church Contents

Metal: brass cross and plate, iron chandelier, all nineteenth or twentieth century.

Stone: octagonal font with shields around bowl, claimed to be fifteenth century but looks more recent. Floor slab, chancel, 1681. Tomb chest, south aisle, James Calthorp (d.1559); top slab undecorated, sides divided into series of panels, two bearing escutcheons set within traceried geometric motifs; adjacent floor slab with indent. Monument to Sir James and Barbara Calthorp, east wall of aisle; inscription on white marble, framed by red, grey and white marble; surmounted by broken curved pediment embracing achievement; escutcheon below inscription, which reads:

TO GOD AND POSTERITY

IN ASSURED HOPE OF A JOYFUL RESURRECTION
RESTETH HERE THE BODYES OF Sr IAMES CALTHORP
KNIGHT, AND DAME BARBARA HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER
TO IOHN BACON OF HESSET ESQR; BY HER HE HAD
8 SONS AND 6 DAUGHTERS, IN WHOSE SEVERALL
MARIAGES AND ISSUE THE ANCIENT GLORY OF Ty
NAME AND FAMILY (RESTING THEN CHEIFLY AND
ALMOST SOLELY IN HIMSELF) DID REFLORISH AND
IS DILATATED INTO MANY OF THE BEST HOUSES
IN THIS COUNTY, HE WAS BURYED THE 16th DAY OF
IUNE ANO DNI 1615, AND OF HIS AGE 57; THE SAID
DAME BARBARA SURVIVING HIM AND MUCH COMFORTED WITH
THE SIGHT OF 193 OF HER CHILDREN
AND THEIR OFFSPRING, AT THE AGE OF 86 YEARS EX-
CHANGED THIS LIFE FOR A BETTER UPON THE 3D

DAY OF NOVEMBER ANO DNI 1639

Behold children are the Inheritance of
the Lord and the fruit of the womb his
reward. PSA. 107. V.3

Wood: at the front of the nave are four pews with carved poppy-heads on the bench ends; one of them is dated by inscription to 1649. The other pews are all nineteenth century. In the chancel are modern fittings: lectern, chairs, altar table with 2 candlesticks; there is a small harmonium.

Condition

The church has been recently (1977) restored by the Norfolk Churches Trust: the aisle has been re-roofed, tower repointed, new gutters fitted, and a drainage trench constructed around the whole church and lined with tiles. The interior is whitewashed and clean; three iron tie-rods (not new) help to stabilize the nave walls. In all, the church is in very good condition.

Churchyard

The southern boundary of the churchyard consists of a sturdy flint wall, flanking the road. Trees frame the rest of the churchyard, with a small bank as well on the west side. There are many magnificent early eighteenth to nineteenth century head-stones, with carved skulls, hour-glasses and cherubs, and exceptionally clear, legible inscriptions (main text, Pl. LVIII); also a chest tomb west of the porch. A stone coffin without a lid, containing a skeleton, was found just east of the south aisle in 1977 when the dry trench was being dug.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

This is a modest but fine church. It is of some antiquity, going back to Norman times, with an Early English arcade and tower. The fifteenth century roof is of exceptionally good quality, as is the porch and chancel arch. The Calthorp tomb and monument are also of excellent quality, and the gravestones in the churchyard are some of the best in the county.

Further References

Blomefield, 1808, IX, 218.

Bryant, 1898, 32.

Cautley, 1949, 188.

Cox, 1911,1, 205.

Lee-Warner, 1884, 164.

Mortlock and Roberts, 1981, 28.

Pevsner, 1962a, 116.



Plate CLXI. Cockthorpe, All Saints from south-east



COCKTHORPE CHURCH

Plate CLXII. Cockthorpe, All Saints by Ladbrooke (1826)



Plate CLXIII. Cockthorpe, All Saints, interior, nave looking into south aisle



Plate CLXIV. Cockthorpe, All Saints, monument to James Calthorp (d.1639)

8. Corpusty, St Peter

Identification TG 1150 2940. *County no.* 7367. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norwich. *Deanery:* Ingworth. *Parish:* Corpusty. *Status:* parish church, now disused. *Date last in regular use:* 1965. *Ownership and Access:* Diocese of Norwich.

Location and Setting

The church forms an impressive landmark, standing isolated on a hill overlooking the River Bure and the combined villages of Corpusty and Saxthorpe, which lie some 0.8km to north. It is the highest point for miles around, giving an excellent view of the surrounding countryside (Pl. CLXV). The west boundary of the churchyard is contiguous with the B1149 Norwich to Holt road; combined with its isolation, this makes the church all too accessible to vandals.

Architectural Description

The church comprises a west tower, south porch, and aisleless nave, with no clear junction between nave and chancel on the exterior. Apart from the porch, it appears to be all of one build, constructed of small uncut flints in neat (if somewhat undulating) courses, with limestone quoins, copings, jambs and arches.

Chancel and Nave. Nave and chancel form one body (and one build) on the exterior (Pls. CLXVI, CLXVII). The corners are strengthened by diagonal buttresses, similar in type to the tower but with only two set-offs. Both north and south walls are pierced by identical, evenly spaced windows (with hood-moulds): two-light, with ogee cinquefoiled heads on the main lights which support angled supermullions forming two large mouchettes and a small quatrefoil, with elongated daggers in the interstices (Pl. CLXVIII). The east window is much larger, with four lights, and a more rectilinear design with vertical supermullions; it has had small repairs undertaken in brick. On the interior, the church is very plain apart from a fine chancel arch with shafted responds. Next to the chancel arch, the archway into the rood stair in the south wall of the nave survives, with a carved label-stop (defaced). The upper opening from the rood stair is also visible, but the stairway itself has been removed; it protruded on the exterior of the church, where signs of blocking are evident, and a simple buttress has been added. Opposite the stair, on the north side of the nave, there is a blocked doorway; from the

inside it can be seen to have been of two orders, with half-shafts and capitals; on the outside there is evidence of blocking, and traces of an arch turned in brick remain. This must be the chapel of St Mary, mentioned by Blomefield and described as 'ruinated' (Blomefield, 1807, VI, 364). At the west end of the north wall there is a pointed doorway, with wooden door slightly ajar, but with the opening bricked up on the inside. Inside the chancel, there is a small piscina with cusped ogee head in the south wall, and adjoining sedilia; in the north-east corner there is a carved corbel-head supporting a roof truss of the arch-braced roof (possibly original medieval). The nave roof is a crude affair, probably built in 1779 when its lead was sold to raise money for repairs; both roofs were retiled (with pantiles) in 1974 by the Norfolk Society and Friends of Friendless Churches.

Porch. The only addition to the main fabric is the south porch, which does not bond in with the nave. Masonry of east and west walls is similar to the rest of the church, but the flint facing of the south wall is much neater, with carefully knapped flints: this is probably due to the desire to enrich the appearance of the walling around the main entrance to the church. The south doorway has a pointed arch of two chamfered orders, the inner one rising from corbelled capitals; above the hood-mould is a blocked statue niche. The north and south walls are pierced with square-headed two-light windows with accompanying hood-moulds, each having an ogee cinquefoil head.

Tower. Large diagonal buttresses, with three set-offs, support the western corners of the tower, but medium-sized limestone quoins suffice on the eastern side. The very plain tower walls are broken only by two cornices, marking the top and bottom of the belfry stage (Pl. CLXIX). Above this stage is a crenellated parapet (with stone copings) and a carved gargoyle on the south face. The tracery of the pointed belfry windows has not survived, but remaining fragments show that each window had a central mullion with cusped upper lights and a hood-mould; the west window has been blocked in brick, the other three boarded in wood. Just below the west belfry window, a small rectangular window has been similarly blocked in brick. However, the window at ground-floor level in the west face does survive, of three lights (each with ogee trefoiled heads) with supermullions and four batement lights.

Interpretation and Dating

The church is all of one build, apart from the porch, which cannot be much later. It must date to the second half of the fourteenth century: the east and west windows are clearly

Perpendicular; north and south windows of nave and chancel are more Decorated in type, suggesting a period of transition from Decorated to Perpendicular tracery forms.

Causes of Abandonment

The church stands isolated, a hill climb away from the village of Cornusty. Saxthorpe church, 1km to the north, is nearer and more convenient for the parishioners. It has not been used since 1965.

Church Contents

Stone: the font looks nineteenth century, although Cautley thought it to be fifteenth century (Cautley, 1949, 188); it has been smashed by vandals. In the chancel floor is the ledger slab of Edmund Pooley (d.1650), now broken.

Wood: chancel screen, largely nineteenth century, but with some original fifteenth century work. Cautley also mentions a seventeenth century communion rail, but there is no sign of it today; most of the nave benches survive, but some have been broken up; they are fairly dull, probably early twentieth century.

Condition

Deterioration over the last 15 years has been quite rapid, due mainly to vandalism. Most of the window glass has been smashed (there are some fragments of painted glass in the south-east window of the nave), and many of the floor pammments have been removed or smashed; some of the wooden fittings have been broken up, as has the font. Lower walls are very damp, and the internal plastering is in poor condition. Bird droppings festoon the interior. On the positive side, the roofs have recently (1974) been re-tiled, masonry is in good condition, and window tracery survives intact.

Churchyard

The churchyard is still used, and has been kept fairly clear of encroaching brambles, brackens and nettles. There is an interesting variety of nineteenth century headstones; one just south of the tower dates to 1798. Remnants of a flint boundary wall survive on north and south sides, the other sides being marked by a low hedge.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The site is intriguing, being entirely isolated, and the highest point for miles around; there is no evidence of the village site being next to the church originally. The remains of a north chapel lie below ground. The church itself is interesting, although not of exceptional scale. Window tracery is an interesting mixture of Perpendicular and late Decorated forms; the motifs of north and south windows of nave and chancel are rather unusual; the chancel arch is excellent.

Further References

Biomefield, 1807, VI, 364,

Cautley, 1949, 138.

Cox, 1911, I, 152.

Pevsner, 1962a, 118.



Plate CLXV. Corpusty, St Peter, from south

I: F5



Plate CLXVI. Corpusty, St Peter, from south-east



CORPUSTY CHURCH

Plate CLXVII. Corpusty, St Peter by Ladbrooke (1825)

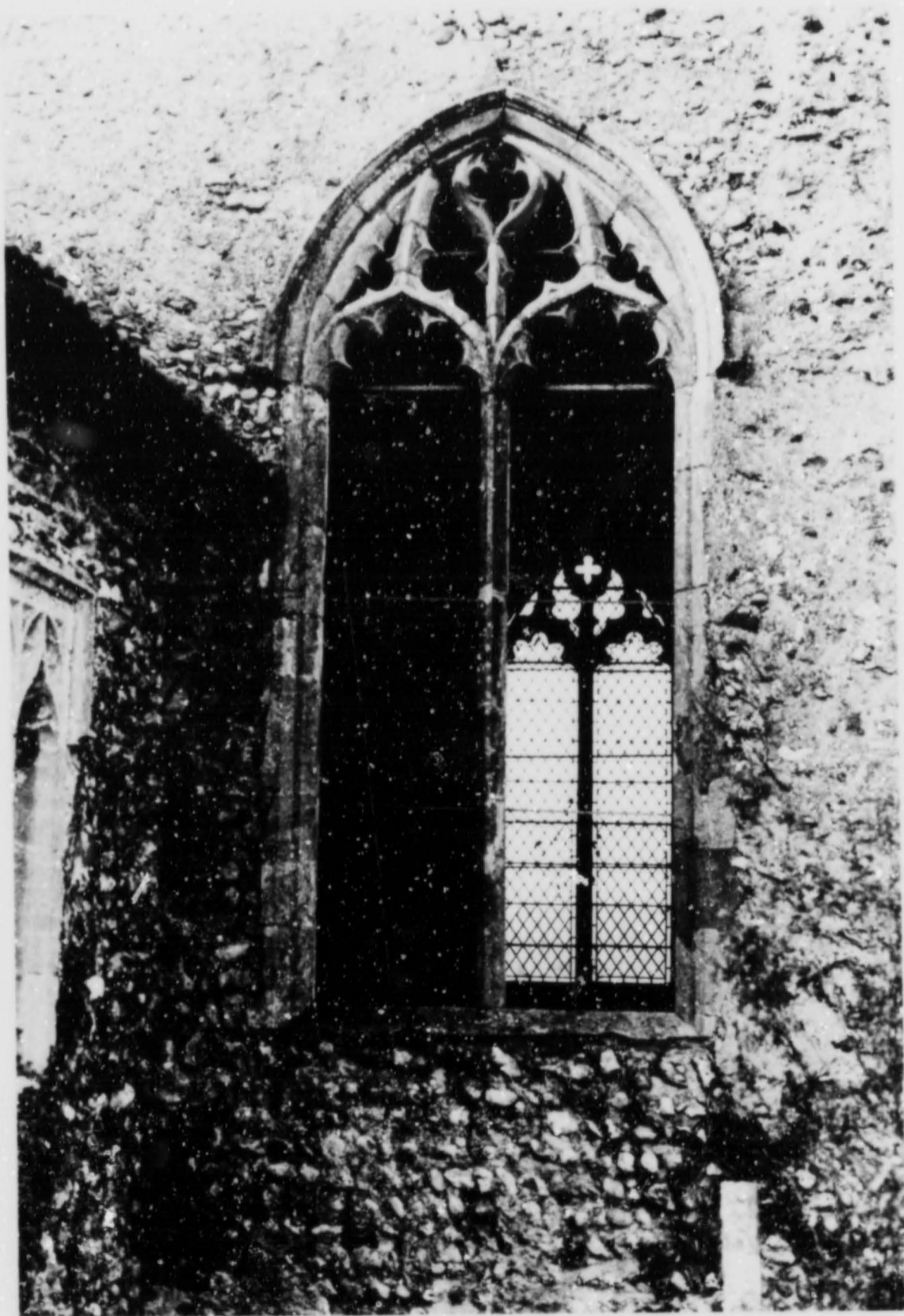


Plate CLXVIII. Corpusty, St Peter, nave window



Plate CLXIX. Corpusty, St Peter, from south-west

9. Coston, St Michael

Identification TG 0621 0620. *County no.* 8886. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norfolk. *Deanery:* Hingham and Mitford. *Parish:* Coston. *Status:* parish church, now vested in the Redundant Churches Fund (since 23.5.79). *Date last in regular use:* c. 1970. *Ownership:* Redundant Churches Fund. *Access:* across private paddock.

Location and Setting

Coston is best reached by lane from Kimberley, which is 2km further south and stands at the crossroads of the B1108 Norwich to Watton Road and the B1135 Dereham to Wymondham road. It is situated in a very gentle valley formed by the River Yare, which flows along the northern boundary of the parish. The village comprises precisely four buildings: the church, the Rectory house immediately north of the churchyard, Coston Hall (a farm 250m east of the church), and a bungalow 200m north-west of the church. To reach the church it is necessary to cross a small enclosed paddock which adjoins the east side of the churchyard.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, aisleless nave, west tower and south porch (Pl. CLXX, main text Pl. XXVI). Apart from the shortening of the chancel and the addition of the porch, the church is entirely of one period, Early English. Walls are constructed of small flints, chipped but not knapped, cramped close together in (but sometimes undulating) courses. All window facings, doorways, quoins etc., are in limestone.

Chancel. The chancel is almost identical in style to the nave, but there are some perplexing differences. Both north and south walls have two lancet windows with hollow chamfers (the western one on the south side surmounts a blocked low-side window): but the windows are slightly wider than those of the nave, and there are no hood-moulds. They rest on a stringcourse which has a different profile to that of nave and tower, just a simple chamfer; and it butts onto the stringcourse of the nave. The clearest evidence that the chancel is of a different date to the nave, however, is that the chancel walls overlap the east nave buttresses. The chancel is therefore later in date than the nave, but cannot be much later: the masonry is identical, and the windows are very similar indeed. It is probable that the chancel originally extended further east; the present east corners

are built of eighteenth century brick, but some flintwork at the bottom suggests that north and south walls were originally longer. Most of the east wall is rendered, but it can be seen that the gable is brick. There is a small square-headed east window of three lights with cinquefoil heads. The chancel roof is of slightly shallower pitch than that of the nave, with a small chamfered stone cornice. Slates cover the roof, whereas the nave is pantiled. Most of the south side of the church is rendered.

The east wall of the chancel is rather curious. Its three-light east window is set within a pointed rear-arch, evidently a remodelling after the chancel had been shortened. About 0.8m from the floor, and either side of the altar table, are small corbels, two to north and one to south. Their round, moulded design is similar to the chancel arch corbels. Presumably they were set here as statue pedestals, but may have originally supported wall-posts for an earlier roof.

Throughout, the church has a neat brick floor. A step marks the progression from nave to chancel, and a further step right at the east end marks off the altar area; a scar against the wall at this point marks the former presence of a Communion rail.

Unlike the nave, a parchment scroll stringcourse runs below the sill-level of the windows, suggesting that its crude counterpart on the exterior may have been recut; it does not return along the east wall. The inner arch of the double hollow chamfered chancel arch springs from moulded corbels carved underneath with a charming tied knot motif (Pl. CLXXI). The inner face of the north chancel arch respond is pierced by a narrow low doorway leading to the rood stairs, which open out into the nave in the upper corner of the nave east wall. Below the window in the north wall at this corner, the wall has been cut back, which may have been to accommodate a former pulpit at this point. Opposite, on the south side, there is a cusped trefoil piscina and hood-mould beneath the window.

Nave. The nave is wider than the tower by 1m on each side. The west corners have angle buttresses of similar design to the tower, except the west facing buttresses are a mere 0.7m high, the north and south buttresses running into the west wall of the nave. At the junction of nave and tower the lower stringcourse of the tower descends vertically by over 1m, to continue horizontally around the nave at about 1.5m from the ground. Tower and nave are clearly in bond. A row of three heads can be seen carved into the stone corbel which forms the headstone of the north-west corner of the nave. At the west end of both north and south walls, there is a pointed doorway with continuous wave

mouldings and a hood-mould formed as a continuation of the stringcourse; the south doorway has a carved human head at the junction of hood-mould and stringcourse. The angle buttresses at the east end of the nave are identical to those at the west end; half-way between, there is a single buttress on either wall, although the north one has been heightened in brick (probably eighteenth century); the south one has its original gable-shaped coping. Both north and south walls have two lancet windows, east of the middle buttresses. Each window has a double concave chamfer, and a hood-mould (the eastern of the two south windows has carved heads at the label-stops). The sills of these windows are right on top of the stringcourse. Looking at the gable-shaped scar on the east wall of the tower, it can be seen that the nave originally had a steeply pitched roof.

The rear-arches of north and south doorways are similar to the tower doorway; the door itself, comprising four planks, is old, as are its hinges and bolt. The rear-arches of the windows have a hollow moulding which starts off as small foliate spurs (both in chancel and nave).

The rather crude nave roof consists of four large tie-beams, cambered and braced, supporting the principal rafters (Pl. CLXXII). It is clearly not the original roof: some of the wall-posts cut across windows, and there is a steeper roofline visible from the exterior.

Porch. The pantiled porch is an addition, built of flint with brick quoins and upper walls. Diapering in brick is visible in the east wall. There are small square chamfered brick windows (blocked) in east and west walls. The south face has been largely rendered; the entrance has a chamfered flat two-centred arch.

Tower. Like the rest of the church, the tower is on a modest scale. The west corners have shallow angle buttresses, with base mouldings, stone facings and two set-offs, for the lowest 5m; above this point (and on the east face above the nave roof) there are small limestone quoins. There is a lancet window at ground-floor level in the west wall. A stone staircase of parchment scroll profile encircles the tower at about 3m from the ground, making a special loop below this lancet to avoid bisecting it. Just over 1m below this stringcourse, there is a dark belt of knapped flint which contrasts with the masonry of the rest of the tower. Another lancet pierces the west wall at first-floor level. Above this is the belfry stage, marked by another stringcourse of identical profile to the one below. The four belfry windows all have Y-tracery.

A concave stone cornice, with an animal head gargoyle on north and south sides,

marks the top of the belfry stage. It is surmounted by a crenellated parapet, constructed of knapped flint with stone crenellations and copings. Three stone shields are set into the flintwork of each face, and each crenellation has a shield set within cusped flushwork. On the interior, the tower arch is no more than a doorway 2m high, with hood-mould to east and flat two-centred rear-arch to west. The tower floors are very decayed.

Interpretation and Dating

Tower and nave belong to the same building campaign; the chancel was added, but very soon afterwards. All features are consistently Early English in style; taking into account the Y-tracery of the tower and the wave mouldings of the doorways, a late thirteenth century date is appropriate. The church has been a personal possession of the Archdeacons of Norfolk since 1267 (Blomefield, 1805, II, 672), and it is tempting to attribute the building of so unified a church to a personal project undertaken by one of the Archdeacons towards the end of the thirteenth century; by the fourteenth century the Archdeacons were resident in Coston too.

There have been several additions and alterations. The flushwork parapet of the tower is late fourteenth or fifteenth century. The south porch was added, probably in the sixteenth century. Finally, the chancel was shortened, probably in the eighteenth century. A restoration took place in 1850.

Causes of Abandonment

The abandonment of the church is due entirely to the near total absence of population within the parish. It was consolidated with Runhall as early as 1855. Services finally ceased about 1970.

Church Contents

Metal: brass tablet 1914-18 war, nave east wall; two old oil stoves; iron flower stand.

Stone: large plain octagonal font; floor slabs: three at east end of nave, one with figure indent; trapezoid slab by font.

Wood: plain chancel rails with hinged doors beneath chancel arch, nineteenth century, on site of former rood-screen; oak altar table with Jacobean legs; two candlesticks; hexagonal pulpit, Jacobean in style; nineteenth century benches; harmonium.

Condition

The church is in reasonably good condition, both inside and out. Problems include a crack in the east wall of the chancel, the dilapidated nature of the porch, and the decay of the floors in the tower. There is a bad leak affecting the north side of the nave west wall, with the plaster greatly deteriorating here. On the outside, the south gutter leaks, and the eaves of the nave roof at the south-west corner are decayed. There are no gutters at all on the north side, and some of the windows on this side are broken.

Churchyard

The churchyard is bounded by a ditch to south and east and by wire fence on the other sides. There are no headstones at all north of the church, the area being used for grazing and fenced off from the rest of the churchyard by hurdles. South of the church, the churchyard is undisturbed, with many fine nineteenth century headstones, several of the first decade of that century. At the south-east corner, surrounded by iron palisades, is a stone obelisk some 3m high to C. Cadywold (d.1885).

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

Coston church is that rare creature, a structure built more or less in one go, and hardly altered since. It is rarer still (especially in Norfolk) as a thirteenth century church which fully retains its Early English character; later Archdeacons of Norfolk must have resisted the temptation to insert large Decorated or Perpendicular windows. The scale of the church is small, but this increases its rarity, since the survival of small thirteenth century churches is far from common. There are also a few touches of real quality: the 'knot' corbels of the chancel arch, the delicate window and door mouldings, the splendid flushwork parapet of the tower.

The archaeological potential of the site is immense, mainly due to the connection between the church and the Archdeacons of Norfolk; the Rectory to north stands on the site of the old palace of the Archdeacons; according to Bryant (1905b, 79), 'a portion of the old moat remains, which formerly enclosed the Rectory and Church.' Inside the church, the floor slabs in the nave may mark the burials of former Archdeacons.

Further References

Bryant, 1905b, 79.

Blomefield, 1805, II, 672.

Cantley, 1949, 189.

Cox, 1911, 2, 109.

Pevsner, 1962b, 125.



C A S T O N C H U R C H

Plate CLXX. Coston, St Michael by Ladbrooke (1826)

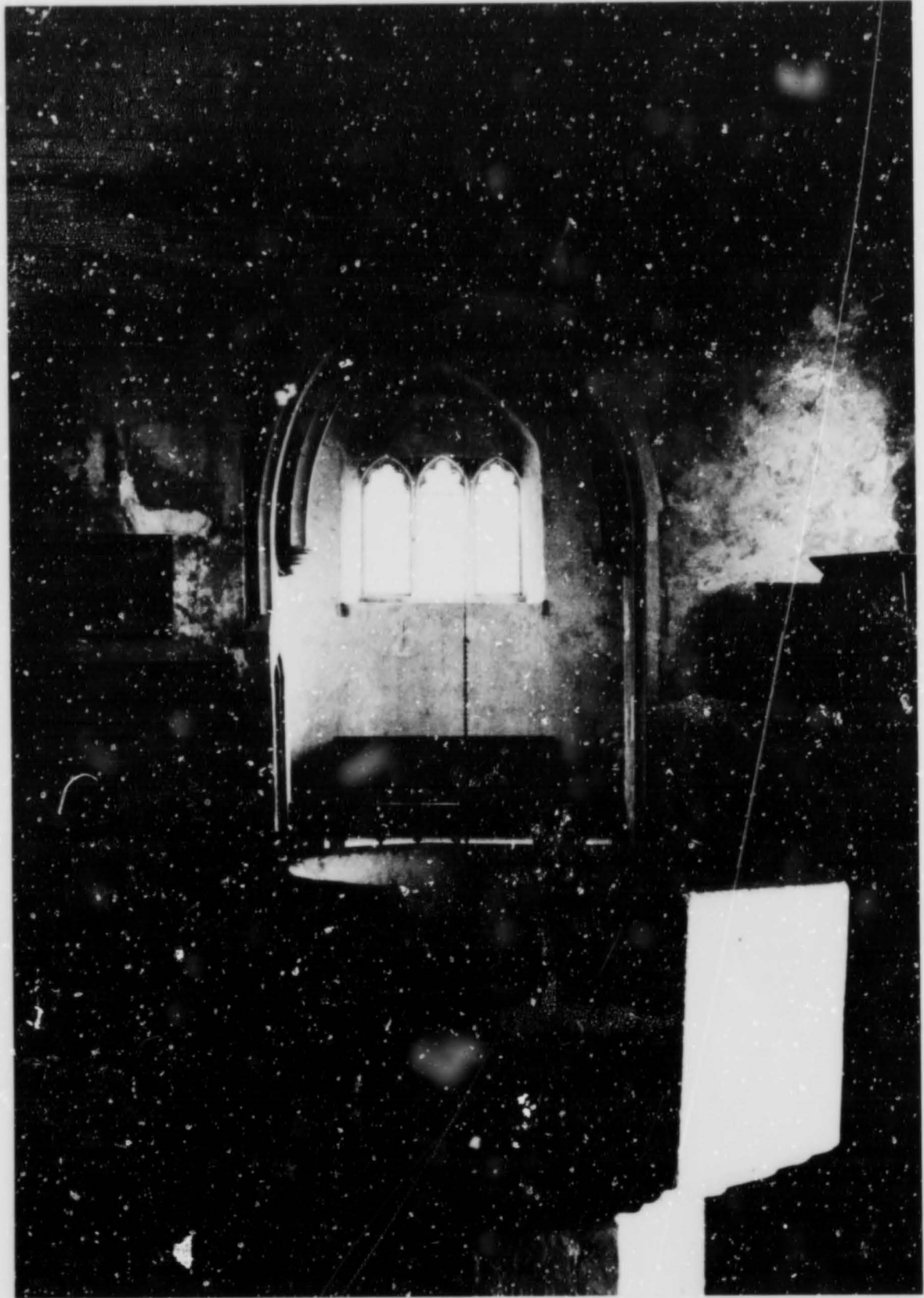


Plate CLXXI. Coston, St Michael, interior looking east



Plate CLXXII. Coston, St Michael, interior looking west

10. Crownthorpe, St James

Identification TG 0830 0311. *County no.* 8934. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norfolk. *Deanery:* Humbleyard. *Parish:* Crownthorpe. *Status:* parish church, now disused. *Date last in regular use:* 1966. *Ownership and Access:* Diocese of Norwich, leased for use as workshop.

Location and Setting

Crownthorpe has no apparent village of its own, but merges with Wicklewood to west. The church can be seen just west of the B1135 Wymondham to Dereham road, about 3km north-west of Wymondham. From this road, a lane branches west towards Wicklewood, and after 150m a short track leads up to the church. Today the church is merely a shell, with no internal fittings, no glazing in the windows and presents a rather forlorn appearance (Pl. CLXXIII).

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, aisleless nave, west tower and south porch. There is no architectural distinction, either inside or outside, between the nave and the chancel; all lie under the same slate roof.

Chancel. There is no clear division between chancel and nave, but east of the large blocked arch the masonry appears to be not so neatly coursed, and the flints are more chipped, suggesting that a long chancel of different phase to the nave belongs here (Pl. CLXXIV). Right at the east end of the north wall, there is a lancet with double hollow chamfered jambs. The east wall has diagonal buttresses at the corners, and is pierced by a triple lancet plate-tracery window, with chamfered jambs and hood-mould of bulbous profile. Moving to the south side, there is a lancet near the east wall, opposite that on the north side, with a square low-side window beneath it (and separated by a chamfered transom; Pl. CLXXV). Further west is a two-light Perpendicular window with hood-mould. Masonry here is of small chipped flints, similar to that of the north wall. Further west is another huge blocked arch, analogous to the one on the north side, and presumably leading originally into a south chapel (which Blomefield found 'in ruins'; Blomefield, 1805, II, 399). The archway retains only its east jambs, and has been blocked with flint masonry into which a large square-headed three-light Perpendicular window

has been set; like the west window, this has supermullions rising from the ogee heads of the main lights. East of the large archway, there is some brick patching, presumably made necessary by the removal of the south chapel walls. West of the archway, the flint masonry is in clear horizontal courses identical to that of the nave north wall.

About 1m east of the north chapel opening, a vertical crack in the plaster suggests this could be the position of a former junction between nave and chancel. The north wall has only one further window, near the east wall, a lancet with a hollow moulding set into the rear-arch. There are identical rear-arches belonging to the two windows on the south wall of the chancel, the more easterly one being a lancet with low-side window below, the one further west with a two-light Perpendicular window, clearly squashed into what would originally have been the space for a single lancet. The east window of the chancel consists of three stepped lancets, set within an enclosing pointed arch which rises from a stone stringcourse of rounded profile (which runs the width of the east wall). The window looks fairly recent in date, and it should be observed that Ladbrooke (1820s) shows a window of Intersecting tracery in its place (Pl. CLXXVI). Fortunately, the double piscina at the east end of the south wall is not a restoration; it is Early English, with a round central column, moulded capital and double chamfered arches (Pl. CLXXVII).

The interior of the church is very bare, stripped of its furnishings (main text, Pls. XLII, XLIII). The roof remains intact, and consists of a series of spindly hammer-beams and arch braces running the length of the interior (nineteenth century in date). Flooring consists of a passage of red pammets along the axis of the church, flanked by wide platforms of wooden planks (somewhat decayed) designed to bear the pews. By the east wall, there is a narrow platform raised by a step and paved in red, yellow and black tiles; it was formerly preceded by a communion rail, whose scars are visible in the wall to north and south.

Nave. The nave extends 0.7m on either side of the tower; they do not appear to bond together. West corners of the nave are supported by diagonal buttresses. The masonry of the north wall consists of medium-sized uncut flints set in very neat horizontal courses in thick beds of mortar (Pl. CLXXVIII). Near to its west end is a small stone pointed doorway with plain chamfer. Further east is a large pointed archway rising to the full height of the nave wall; the arch is very plain, with just a chamfered edge on the tall stone jambs. The archway has been blocked with flint masonry, into which a double

lancet window has been centrally placed. Immediately east of the east jamb of this archway, a cusped piscina with plain trefoil head is set into the wall; presumably, this remains *in situ*, near to the east wall of a large north chapel (now disappeared).

In the nave, the doorways face each other towards the west end; that on the north side retains its wooden door, and is set within a rectangular opening; the south doorway is set within a flat two-centred rear-arch and has had its door removed. Further east the two chapel openings are clearly visible. On the north side, the wide pointed arch has been cut straight through the wall; it is blocked, but the double lancet window piercing the blocking undoubtedly comes from the former chapel. The same can be said of the similar blocked opening on the south side opposite, but this time the archway is carefully built in stone with arch, capitals and responds identical to that of the tower arch; the Perpendicular window set within the blocking comes undoubtedly from the former south chapel (Pl. CLXXIX).

Porch. A plain pointed doorway with chamfer and hood-mould towards the west end of the south wall forms the only entrance into the church; a holy water stoup is set in the wall immediately east of it. Both have been enclosed by the addition of a porch, constructed in flint but not in bond with the south wall of the nave; it has diagonal buttresses at the outer corners. The south doorway of the porch is particularly fine, with two continuous hollow mouldings, a hood-mould, and responds consisting of base, half-column and crenellated capitals; the arch around the doorway is built of alternating brick and flint.

Tower. The west tower is built of small uncut flints in neat straight courses, with occasional brick-lined putlog holes. There are no buttresses, the corners being strengthened by medium to large limestone quoins; one of the quoins in the north-west corner is incised with a bench-mark. The west wall is pierced at ground-floor level by a large three-light Perpendicular window; it has supermullions rising from the ogee heads of the main lights. Some of the cusping of the tracery has been restored, but it is largely original. A hood-mould lines the head of the arch, the upper half of which is surmounted by a relieving arch turned in flint and brick. The next stage of the tower begins some 9m from the ground, marked by a stone stringcourse. Above the string, the masonry changes: rounded pebbles are used, again neatly coursed. North, south and west faces are pierced by small sound-holes, rising directly from the stringcourse; on the north side, the sound-hole is about 0.5m square with tracery shaped like four cusped leaves; the tracery

does not survive in the west sound-hole, which has been extended down into the stringcourse (and is now filled with chicken wire); the south sound-hole is obscured by thick ivy, which covers most of this side of the tower. The east face is marked by the scar of a steeper pitched roof, with a ridge some 2m higher than today's; Ladbroke's drawing (1820s) shows a thatched nave roof at just such a pitch still intact. A further stringcourse marks the base of the belfry stage, from which rises a two-light window in each face. Each window has a single chamfered mullion rising to the apex of a four-centred arch; the brick in which it is constructed looks seventeenth century. Above the windows, the top 2m of the tower is constructed of a patchwork of large square limestone blocks and flint. A gargoyle set into the south face at this level bears the date 1714, presumably contemporary with the rest of the patchwork masonry around it.

From the inside it can be seen that the tower west window is as wide as it could possibly be, extending across the whole interior width of the tower (Pl. CLXXX). Similarly, the tower arch itself is set almost flush with the inner north and south walls of the tower, allowing maximum light from the west window into the nave. The tower arch responds have thin half-columns, resting on moulded bases and supporting polygonal capitals; the moulded outer orders of the arch are enclosed by a hood-mould.

Interpretation and Dating

The chancel (*i.e.* everything east of the blocked chapel arches) can be dated to the thirteenth century: the piscina and the east window of north and south walls are Early English. If the interesting tracery shown in Ladbroke's drawing represents the original east window, then a very late thirteenth century date is probable.

The walls of the nave are probably older, for two reasons. Firstly, the masonry of the nave is different to that of the chancel; it is likely that an earlier, narrower chancel was replaced in the thirteenth century by a wider chancel with walls flush with the nave; this is a fairly common occurrence in medieval churches, and it is very unlikely that the nave should postdate a chancel of the same width. Secondly, the north chapel opening, with its adjoining simple cusped piscina, probably dates to the thirteenth century. The archway evidently cuts through a pre-existing wall. One cannot date this wall precisely, but the character of the masonry (largish flints set in wide mortar beds in very straight horizontal courses) looks typically Norman, most likely twelfth century but possibly late eleventh century.

After the thirteenth century work, the next phase of building belongs to the fifteenth century. West tower, south chapel and south porch were all added at this time, and the similarity of their late Perpendicular features (arches, windows) suggests they belong to an integral scheme of reconstruction.

Later work includes the belfry windows (probably in the seventeenth century), and the tower parapet (in 1714). In 1743 the roof of nave and chancel were level in height and both thatched (Martin, 1771, I, 237); by the 1820s (Ladbroke) the nave was still thatched, but the chancel had a lower tiled roof; the whole roof has been at this lower pitch since it was rebuilt and slated in 1844. It is not known when the north and south chapels were demolished, but they had gone by the eighteenth century.

Causes of Abandonment

There appears to be no village of Crownthorpe in its own right. The only houses in the parish lie along the road west of the church, and link up with Wicklewood, whose centre is only 600m west of Crownthorpe church. There are only 52 people currently on the church roll of the combined parish of Wicklewood with Crownthorpe, most of whom live within the old parish boundary of Wicklewood. Crownthorpe was the church which lost out in this situation, especially in view of the cost of repairs which would be necessary to keep the church in good order. It was declared redundant in 1974.

Church Contents

Stone: there are some good eighteenth and nineteenth century monuments on the nave and chancel walls. On the north wall, from west to east:

- i) white marble scroll on grey marble (by J. Stanley), Ann Watson (d.1867).
- ii) white on grey marble, frame and architrave, William Buckle (d.1762) and his wife Hannah (d.1776; Pl. CLXXXI).
- iii) white marble fluted pilasters, architrave supporting an urn, black ground; tablet with inscription removed.

South wall, west to east:

- i) red-yellow peppery marble ground, white marble plaque supporting an urn, Thomas Coatingsby Watson (d.1813) and his wife Ann (d.1845; Pl. CLXXXII).
- ii) monument removed.

Ledger slab in the floor of the middle of the nave, William Engledow and Margaret his

wife (d.1734). Octagonal hole for font at west end of nave. Ledger slab south of it: Abel Nash (d.1809); another north of it: William Buckle (d.1771); square stone west of it: T. Coningsby (d.1785).

Wood: Remains of the Victorian octagonal pulpit lie broken at the west end; it contained three richly carved eighteenth century Flemish panels (Pevsner, 1962b, 127).

Condition

The church is in a state of deterioration. Although the roof is intact, some of the slates have slipped and chinks of light are visible in places from inside; the ridge coping has fallen off in places too. Gutters and downpipes are non-existent. A wide crack has appeared below the chancel east window. Windows are all unglazed. Much plaster has fallen off the north chancel wall; a profusion of creeper is growing on the outside of this wall, and has besieged the whole of the east gable. There is also ivy growing up the south-east corner of the tower.

Churchyard

The churchyard contains several early nineteenth century headstones of good quality. South of the church, the churchyard is rather overgrown with saplings and brambles; it is bounded by a shallow ditch and bank. North of the church it is difficult to determine its extent, since there is no clear boundary; only a meagre three headstones indicate that this part is a churchyard at all.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The nave is probably twelfth century, to which a thirteenth century chancel has been added; no doubt the earlier chancel remains to be discovered below ground. Similarly the north and south chapels (thirteenth and fifteenth century respectively) lie beneath the ground outside the church, giving the church a rather unusual cruciform plan. Features of quality include the thirteenth century double piscina and fine tower, south chapel and porch arches. There is also a good set of eighteenth and nineteenth century wall monuments.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805, II, 399.

Cautley, 1949, 190.

Cox, 1911, 2, 109.

Martin, 1771, 1, 237.

Pevsner, 1962b, 127.



Plate CLXXIII. Crowntorpe, St James, from south-west



Plate CLXXIV. Crownthorpe, St James, from north



Plate CLXXV. Crownthorpe, St James, south wall



Plate CLXXVI. Crowthorpe, St James by Ladbrooke (c. 1835)



Plate CLXXVII. Crownthorpe, St James, piscina, chancel south wall



Plate CLXXVIII. Crownthorpe, St James, nave north wall

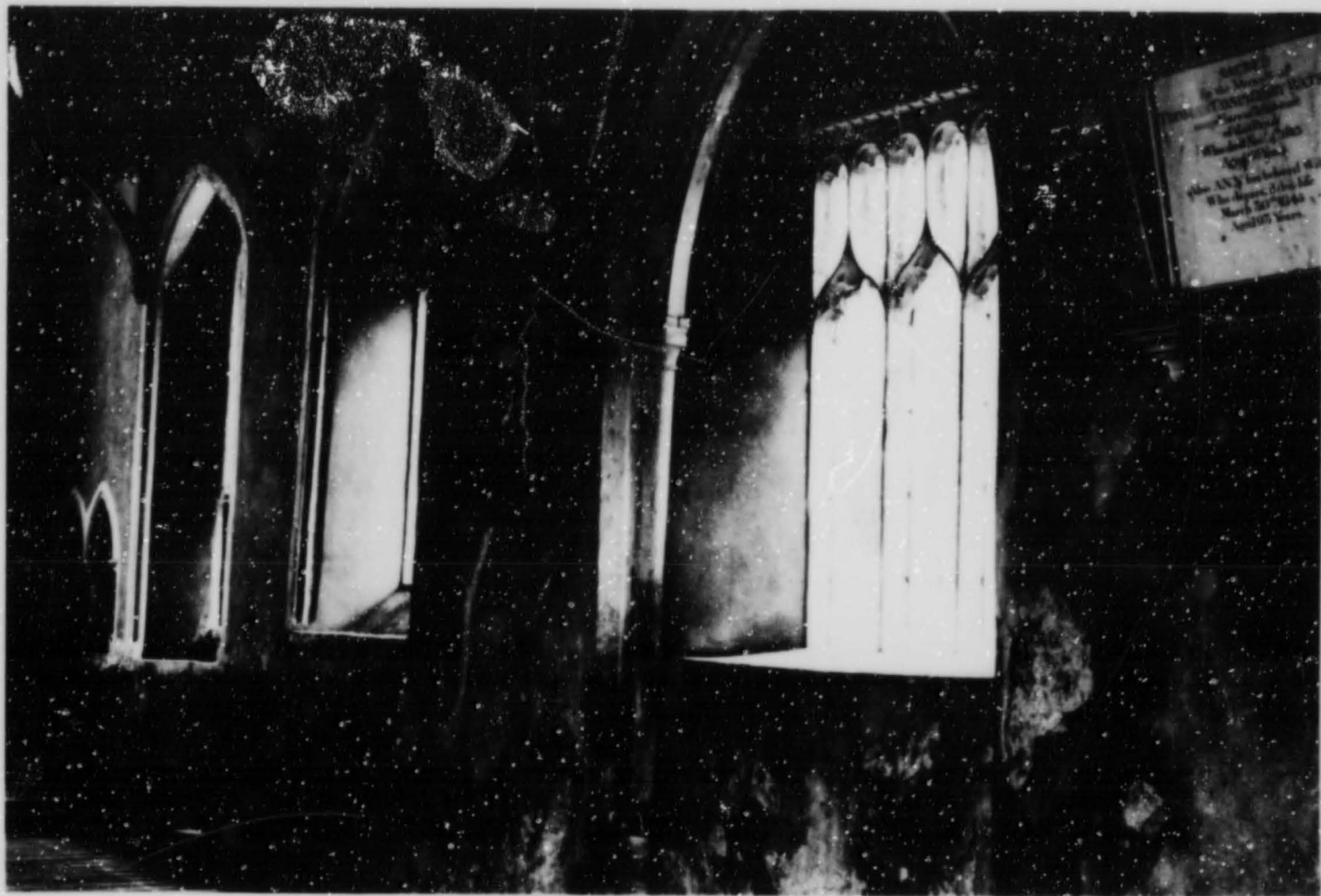


Plate CLXXIX. Crownthorpe, St James, interior south wall, chancel and nave



Plate CLXXX. Crownthorpe, St James, nave looking west

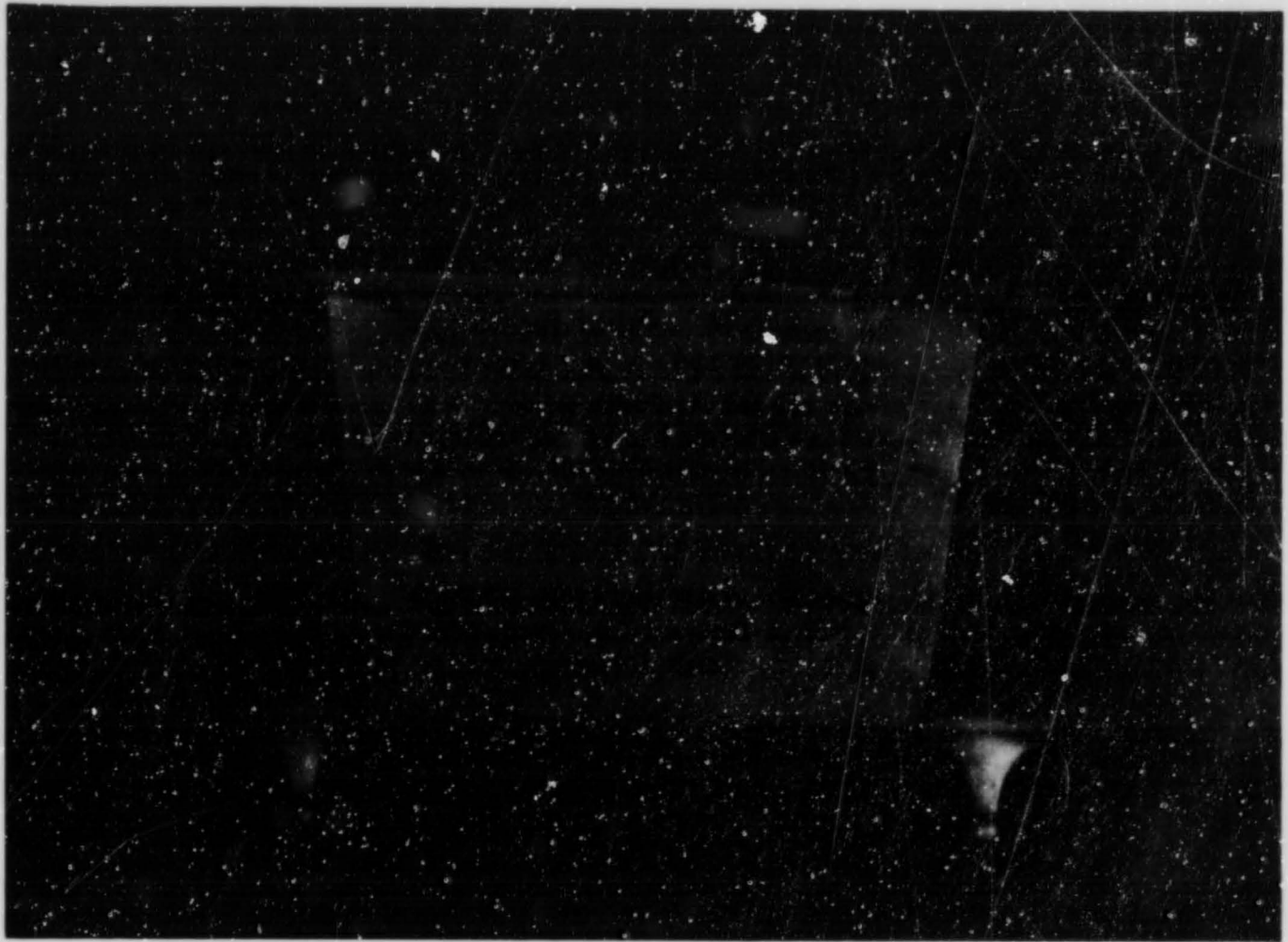


Plate CLXXXI. Crownthorpe, St James, monument to William Buckle (d.1762)



Plate CLXXXII. Crownthorpe, St James, monument to Thomas Watson (d.1813)

11. Dunton, St Peter

Identification TF 8794 3031. County no. 2004. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Lynn. *Deanery:* Burnham and Walsingham. *Parish:* Dunton. *Status:* parish church, now redundant and in the care of the Norfolk Churches Trust. *Date last in regular use:* 1978. *Ownership and Access:* leased to Norfolk Churches Trust.

Location and Setting

The sparsely populated parish of Dunton is located 4km west of Fakenham. The northern part of the parish is occupied by Sculthorpe airfield; the River Wensum forms the southern boundary. Dunton is now a shrunken village with only a handful of cottages and farms. The church stands immediately west of a small road which leads, 400m to north, to the A148 Lynn to Fakenham road. Earthworks to west and south-west of the church give an indication of the original extent of the village.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, nave, west tower and south porch (P1. CLXXXIII). *Chancel.* Masonry consists of coursed flint with limestone dressings. At eaves level, there is a brick cornice (19th century). The roof is covered with imbricated slates. The east wall has diagonal buttresses with two set-offs. The lower 1m of the wall is about 10cm thicker on the inside. A large four-light window with intersecting tracery pierces the wall. On the inside of the south-east corner, there is a column piscina with octagonal bowl, stem and base. The south wall has two windows, separated by a plain painted priest's door. East of it, the two-light window has a four-centred head, set within a segmental pointed rear arch, with its sill lowered on the inside to form a seat. The window has cusped main lights with cusped oculus. West of the priest's door, the window is of similar type, but with square head. The north wall has few features save a two-light window identical to, and opposite, the eastern of the two windows in the south wall.

The roof contains some old timbers, but largely re-worked. It has arched braces and a collar, and the wall-posts rise from carved stone corbels. These carvings, from east to west, are: angel, oak leaves, head (the head on the north side is missing). Octagonal responds with moulded base and capital support the double-chamfered tower arch, all in limestone.

Nave. Like the chancel, the nave is constructed of flint with a brick eaves cornice. A peculiarity of this church is that north and south nave walls are of very different design. Both have diagonal buttresses at the corners, but those on the north side are much taller. The lowest 1m of the south wall is about 15cm thicker, with an exterior set-off (covered with imbricated slates). The north wall possesses a buttress halfway along, which the south wall lacks (Pls CLXXXIV, CLXXXV). The south wall is pierced by two windows and a doorway. The eastern window has a stilted four-centred head, set within a segmental rear arch headed in brick with chamfered stone leading edges; the three-light window has cusped ogee main lights supporting six upper lights. On the outside the label stops are carved with animal heads. Inside, there is a simple cusped piscina east of this.

Further west, there is a window with Y-tracery set within a segmental pointed rear arch. The exterior hood-moulded is deeply undercut, with human faces carved on the labels. Finally, there is the south doorway: quite simple, with a continuous hollow chamfer, and hood-mould identical in type to the Y-tracery window; the labels are carved with female faces. At the extreme eastern corner of the north wall, there is a bulge reinforced by a buttress: This encompasses the rood-stair still totally intact, with its four-centred doorways on the inside. Further west, there are two identical two-light windows: each set within a four-centred arch, with cinquefoil cusped main lights. Opposite the south doorway there is a blocked north doorway: continuous concave chamfer, but no hood-mould.

Looking at the west wall, some plaster removed on the north side of the tower arch has revealed a narrow vertical break between nave and tower; however, the masonry either side of the break is identical in appearance (Pl. CLXXXVI). The roof is a very plain 19th century affair, with five principal rafters reinforced with iron tie-bars. Looking at the east face of the tower from the outside, the old roof-line is clearly marked: it was steeper and some 2m higher than the present roof.

West Tower. The sturdy tower has at its western corners, diagonal buttresses with three set-offs. A base frieze continues around the tower, including the polygonal stair-turrets at the south-east corner. A four-centred arch leads into the stairway on the inside. The tower arch is quite tall, and takes up the full width of the tower. Its jambs are plain, just a simple chamfer, and the double hollow-chamfered arch rises from polygonal corbels; the latter have blank shields carved on them.

The west wall at this stage has two openings: a door surmounted by a window.

The door has continuous mouldings and is set within a segmental rear arch. Above it, the two-light window has drop-tracery (four upper lights) set within a four-centred head. Both the door arch and the window arch are surmounted by a decorative relieving arch of alternating brick and knapped flint. On the outside, a stone stringcourse with concave moulding separates this level from the first floor. Above the string course there is a square sound hole (except on the east side); each sound hole is divided into four squares, each containing a cusped quatrefoil (Pl. CLXXXVII). Above this level are the belfry openings. Much of the tracery has gone from north and south windows; those that remain are two-light with a cusped oculus. There is little in the way of a parapet, but the tower is capped with a couple of course of brick.

South Porch. The porch is of flint with plain limestone quoins. East and west walls are pierced by a single small cusped window. The doorway consists of a double hollow-chamfered arch springing from small polygonal corbels; the corbels are decorated with a single shield in the manner of the tower arch. A masonry bench lines east and west walls.

Interpretation and Dating

The sequence is fairly simple. Chancel and nave are late 13th or early 14th century (intersecting tracery of chancel east window, Y-tracery in nave south wall); the north wall of the nave was rebuilt in the 15th century, when the west tower was added; to this phase also belong the windows in the chancel north and south walls. The porch also belongs to this latter phase, although it was rebuilt in 1896 (according to a brass plaque inside). The nave was re-roofed in 1854 (Bryant, 1900, 33).

Causes of Abandonment

Dunton is a small and sparsely inhabited parish. The increasing scale of farm mechanisation in the area has led to a drastic fall in local employment, and consequent reduction in population. The church was declared Redundant and leased to the Norfolk Churches Trust in 1978.

Church Contents

The altar area of the chancel has a black-and-white marble floor arranged around a ledger slab of 1847, (no doubt the date of this paving). The rest of the chancel has stone

paving, panments and large ledger slabs (dating to 1638, 1757, 1764, 1781, 1802, 1805, 1814, 1834). The rest of the church has a panment floor, apart from the wooden framework on which the pews stand. The plain square font stands on an octagonal stem, but it does not seem to be of great antiquity. There is a pillar piscina in the chancel. There are a few wall monuments. In the chancel: on the north wall, white marble with carved sword, 1857 (by Patteson, Manchester); on the south wall, marble with carved shield, 1834 (by Smith, Fakenham). In the nave: small brass plaque, 1896; 1914-18 war plaque.

There is some interesting 19th century stained glass. In the chancel: east window, 1863: 'I was naked and ye clothed me, I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.' (given by the guardians of Walsingham Union); window in north wall, 1882: 'she is not dead but sleepeth'. Nave: south wall, peacocks and geometric designs; north wall, east window, Gabriel with Mary and Elizabeth, 1896 (Pl. CLXXXVIII). Perhaps the most unusual feature is the complete wooden rood left (erected in 1910), with ten carved figures, and a screen below. Other wooden fittings include a modern altar table, pine benches and book-rests in the chancel, 6 plain benches in the nave (probably from the 1859 re-seating), a wooden chair and dresser, and 2 lecterns (one revolving); an odd feature is that these lecterns are both set on octagonal stone cross-bases, of unknown origin. The wooden south door is medieval, with iron studs. In the tower is a single wall, dated 1794. The church has electric lighting, but no heating.

Condition

The church is in generally sound condition. The interior has been cleared up admirably; the nave south wall shows signs of damp. On the outside, walls and roof are fairly clean; most of the rainwater goods are in reasonable condition, although there is a rather odd iron downpipe emptying into a water-tank at the nave south-east corner. A concrete gully surrounds the church.

Churchyard

The churchyard forms a compact rectangle around the church. The eastern boundary, which flanks the road, has a well-built flint wall capped with brick (1896); the remaining boundaries are formed by hedgerow. Two large Scots Pine stand at the north-west corner, and a large oak tree stands near the gate in the east boundary wall. Many 19th

century headstones are in place; some have been pulled up and placed in piles near the church. There is an unusual large octagonal stone south of the porch.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

St Peter's at Dunton is modest and typical of many in the county: a church with a late 13th century core, 15th century additions, and 19th century renovations. It is in a good state of preservation. Aerial photographs taken in 1977 show house platforms etc., to west and south-west of the churchyard - presumably belonging to the larger medieval village of Dunton.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, VII, 86

Bryant, 1900, 33

Cox, 1911, 1, 79



Plate CLXXXIII. Dunton, St Peter, from south-east



Plate CLXXXIV. Dunton, St Peter, from south-east



Plate CLXXXV. Dunton, St Peter, from north-west



Plate CLXXXVI. Dunton, St Peter, interior looking west



Plate CLXXXVII. Dunton, St Peter, tower from west



Plate CLXXXVIII. Dunton, St Peter, interior looking east

12. Feltwell, St Nicholas

Identification TL 7123 9089. *County no.* 4939. *Diocese:* Ely. *Archdeaconry:* Wisbech. *Deanery:* Feltwell. *Parish:* Feltwell. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1976. *Ownership and Access:* Redundant Churches Fund.

Location and Setting

Feltwell is a village on the Fen margin in the south-west corner of the county. The spacious and attractive parish church of St Mary stands in the middle of the village. Another church, dedicated to St Nicholas, stands at the north-west corner of the village, by the road from Methwold. Apart from its notably absent chancel, and collapsed west tower, this church is in an excellent condition, and is surrounded by an immaculate churchyard.

Architectural Description

The church consists of nave, north and south aisles, south porch, and partly collapsed west tower.

Chancel. The chancel was demolished in 1861. Its site was cleared and levelled, and slabs laid over the foundations, in 1980. The east wall of the nave is a blocking of reused pieces of limestone, brown conglomerate and brick. It is pierced by a three-light drop-traceried window with four-centred head and hood-mould (main text, Pls. LIX, LX).

Nave. The lack of chancel gives the three-bay nave a stunted appearance. The piers of the south arcade are keeled quatrefoils in plan, with simple stepped bases set on square plinths (except the western pier which has a water-holding base). The moulded, keeled capitals support double-chamfered arches (main text, Pl. XXVIII). On the north side, square plinths support octagonal bases and polygonal quatrefoil piers (each shaft being a half-octagon (Pl. CLXXXIX)). Again, the arches are double-chamfered. It appears that all the arches and most of the piers have been rebuilt. Observing the north arcade, the responds at either end are made of pale buff Barnack stone, as are bases and lowest courses of the freestanding piers; the rest of the piers, capitals and arches are made of soft chalky limestone, smoother and less weathered than the Barnack stone. Whilst the chalky limestone has a smoother, less weathered appearance, it is nevertheless very soft, and bits have broken away in places (e.g. capital mouldings).

Above every arch of both arcades is a clerestorey window. Each window is two-light, with cusped ogee main lights and drop-tracery set within a four-centred arch and hood-mould. The south clerestorey is stunningly unusual on the outside. The wall is neatly faced with dark flint; the clerestorey window arches are built of alternating brick and flint. Flanking each window is a square flushwork panel, six altogether. Moving from east to west: the first is filled with chequerboard flushwork surmounted by an iron bracket for a sanctus bell. The next two contain the crowned initials of a donor, Thomas Deye (large capital T and capital D). The fourth panel contains the name John (o: Iohicd?). Do, with a large capital D; the fifth has a large letter S, with crown above. The last panel has a shallow round-headed niche containing two flushwork quatrefoils (main text, Pl. XXXVI). The neat appearance of the masonry of this clerestorey suggests it is a nineteenth century restoration, although the panels are medieval. The north clerestorey is plain, mainly of coursed flint, but the middle section has been rebuilt in brick. On the inside the window arches are surrounded by slightly protruding quoining (probably made of brick, but now completely plastered). The impression is that the clerestoreys have been largely rebuilt, like the arcades below them (Pl. CXC).

At the extreme east end of the nave north wall, next to the blocked chancel wall, an octagonal shaft can be seen recessed into the wall. No doubt it was discovered during the demolition of the chancel. Its chevron decoration indicates a Norman origin, no doubt a nook shaft belonging to a former chancel arch (Pl. CXCI).

South Aisle. The walls of the south aisle are a mixture of materials, mainly flint but including pieces of limestone and brown conglomerate. The east wall is noticeably neater, mainly of regularly coursed flint. It is pierced by a segmental-headed two-light Decorated window of nineteenth century workmanship, like all the aisle windows. A buttress with two set-offs, faced in limestone, continues the line of the east wall to south. The south wall has a single two-light window, set within a segmental arch and hood-mould, with Perpendicular style drop-tracery. There is a cusped piscina to east of this window on the inside. The south doorway has two plain chamfered orders and a hollow roll hood-mould, set within a (renewed) mitred rear-arch. At the south-west corner is a buttress identical to that at the other corner; the west window is of the same type as that in the south wall.

North Aisle. Both end walls on the north aisle are a mixture of flint, limestone, conglomerate and brick. The two-light window in the east wall is very similar to the

clerestorey windows, with drop-tracery and four-centred arch, but no hood-mould. Corner buttresses are like those of the south aisle, but shorter. The north wall, above a low plinth of flint, has been entirely rebuilt in brick; an inscription over the north door dates this work to 1830. Piercing the eastern part of the wall is a three-light window, Perpendicular in style, with drop-tracery, through-mullions and four-centred arch and hood-mould: quite close in type to the clerestorey windows; the same quoining effect which surrounds the clerestorey windows is evident on the inside of this window too. On the outside, just west of this window, is a buttress with three set-offs built of brick and flint, belonging to the 1830 restoration. The north doorway itself is medieval, with a pointed limestone arch and hood-mould like the south door; it has been set within a round-headed rear-arch. The north aisle west wall has a two-light window within a segmental arch, no hood-mould, and is identical to the south aisle east window.

Porch. The Tudor south porch is built entirely of brick (Pl. CXCIV). East and west walls each have a single window with square hood-mould, blocked. The outer corners have diagonal buttresses. Moulded bricks form the continuous moulded orders of the four-centred arch and hood-mould. Inside, brick benches line the side walls. The oldest rood can be found in the porch; it has carved wooden spandrels (the remaining roofs of the church are of no great antiquity).

Tower. The round west tower had an octagonal belfry stage until it collapsed in 1898 (main text, Pl. LIX). The tower survives to nave roof level on its eastern side, but the western half has collapsed to within 2m of the ground (Pl. CXCII). The lower half of the tower is built of very large blocks of brown iron-bound conglomerate, with occasional bits of limestone and flint; the coursing is reasonably clear, and the mortar joints very wide. Through the collapse of the tower, it is possible to see that the conglomerate blocks form a facing to a core of flint and chalk pieces. The upper part of the tower is faced in flint on the outside; there is a square opening high up in the east face, presumably looking into the nave originally.

Conglomerate masonry extends north and south of the tower by about 1.5m forming the original west wall of the nave. On the inside, the large tower arch is round-headed (Pl. CXCIII). The squared limestone jambs have distinctive diagonal tooling. On the nave side there are two nook-shafts forming an outer order, with simple Attic bases and cushion capitals (Pl. CXCIV); the chamfered impost supports an arch with a thick roll moulding. A low lean-to roof makes the space inside the tower a little annexe to the

nave.

Interpretation and Dating

The oldest part of the church fabric is twelfth century Norman work. This can be found in the west tower, with its splendid tower arch. The conglomerate of the tower is continued along the west wall of the nave, showing the Norman nave to have been the same width as the present one. It was also the same length, as shown by the presence of a Norman shaft at the end of the north arcade.

This nave was extended to south in the early thirteenth century by the aisle with its three bay arcade. The north arcade dates to the fifteenth century. Blomefield records how the church was repaired and partly rebuilt in 1494 after a fire (Blomefield, 1805, II, 194) but he seems to be mistaking St Nicholas's with St Mary's. This is a pity, since the splendid clerestorey of St Nicholas's would accord well with such a date. The porch is Tudor of the early sixteenth century.

Extraordinary restorations took place in the nineteenth century. There is no record of when the arcades, and much of the piers and clerestoreys, were rebuilt, but this must have taken place in 1830. In that year, new roofs were built because the old lead ones were in such a bad state, and the north wall of the aisle was rebuilt (NRO, FCB/6, 10, 148); this programme must have involved much more, since the window in the aisle north wall has been constructed in identical fashion to the clerestorey windows. Further changes took place in 1861, when the chancel and vestry were demolished (NRO, FCB/7, 11, 328).

The final truncation of the church took place in 1898, when the tower split and collapsed. It may be significant that the tower was being repaired at the time, but fortunately the workmen were having their breakfast. A.J. Orange relates how 5 year-old Bert Willingham received a good hiding on account of this collapse. Young Bert was collecting milk for his uncle; while passing near the church the roar of the collapsing tower caused him to drop the can of milk and run home. His excuse for returning with neither can nor milk, that he had been frightened by the church falling down, was not received well, and he was punished for telling lies. (Orange, 1970, 1, 13). The remaining fragment of octagonal belfry was later removed.

Causes of Abandonment

Feltwell is a village big enough to support a single parish church, but two churches are more than is required in terms of congregation and upkeep. St Mary's is the larger and more central of the two, and has therefore been kept in use at the expense of St Nicholas's. The two parishes were consolidated in 1805. In 1861, it was decided to enlarge St Mary's and remove the chancel of St Nicholas's; St Nicholas's was to continue as a mortuary chapel (NRO, FCB/7, 11, 328). The church was finally vested in the Redundant Churches Fund in 1976.

Church Contents

Metal: a large oil-lamp chandelier hangs in the middle of the nave. Organ at end of north aisle. Three bell-tongues, restored, have been hung on the west wall.

Stone: at the end of the north aisle is a large medieval stone sarcophagus with floriate cross, found 1830 when the north aisle was rebuilt. Also in the north aisle is a gravestone, found recently at the south-east corner of the chancel is a slab of pinkish-grey Sussex marble removed from the porch where it was used until recently as a step, but possibly formerly a tomb slab or altar slab. The octagonal stone font is modern. The floors are of black and red tiling throughout.

Wood: there are plain late nineteenth century benches in the nave. The altar table retains its coverings and fittings. The reading desk with poppy-heads next to the altar appears to be medieval. Altar, pulpit and chancel rails are all nineteenth century. The wooden south door is old.

The bible on the table at the back dates to 1718.

Condition

The church is in very good condition. Roofs, windows, rainwater goods, are all sound.

Churchyard

The churchyard is very well maintained. The grass is kept fairly low. The path to the south porch is kept clear, and lined by a floral border. The whole churchyard is surrounded by a flint wall. Many nineteenth and twentieth century headstones are visible. In 1980, the site of the former chancel was cleared and levelled, with slabs laid over the line of the foundations; the area has been made into a garden, and a seat provided. East

of the church, seven skeletons were discovered sticking out from beneath a robbed building underneath the churchyard wall.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

The church is in essence Norman, with additional thirteenth and fifteenth century aisles. The chancel foundations are outlined in stone, but no doubt evidence for an earlier Norman chancel lies below ground. The architectural authenticity of the church has been marred to some degree by rather drastic nineteenth century restoration. However, the survival of the flushwork donor panels in the south clerestorey is fortunate, since they are unique.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805, II, 194

Cox, 1911, 2, 60

Mortlock and Roberts, 1985b, 42

Orange, 1970, 1, 13

Pevsner, 1962b, 159



Plate CLXXXIX. Feltwell, St Nicholas, pier, north arcade



Plate CXC. Feltwell, St Nicholas, north arcade



Plate CXCI. Feltwell, St Nicholas, north arcade east end

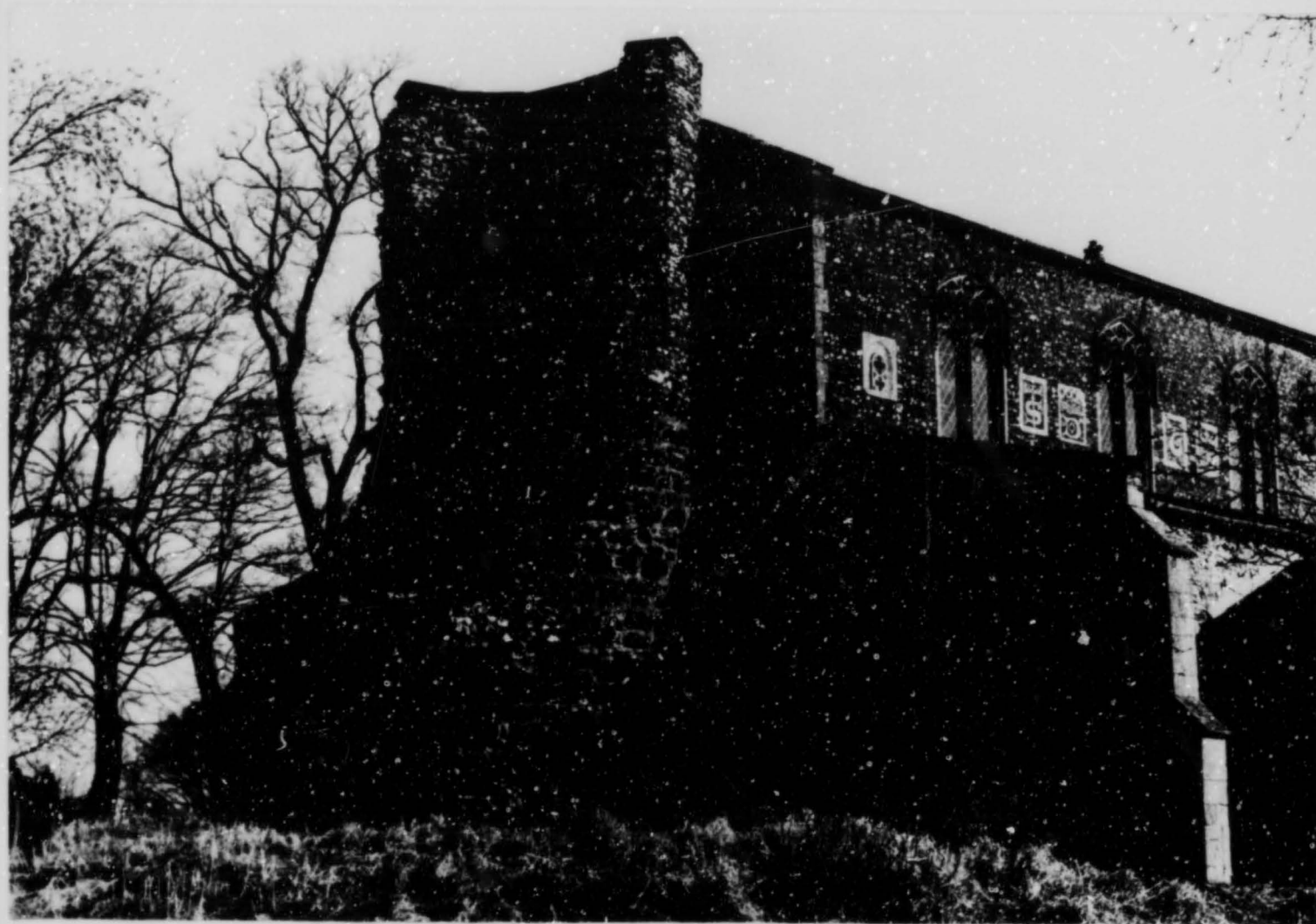


Plate CXCII. Feltwell, St Nicholas, from south-west



Plate CXCIII. Feltwell, St Nicholas, tower arch, looking west



Plate CXCIV. Feltwell, St Nicholas, tower arch north respond



Plate CXCIV. Feltwell, St Nicholas, south side from south-west

13. Forncett, St Mary

Identification TM 1662 9383. *County no.* 10075. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norfolk. *Deanery:* Depwade. *Parish:* Forncett St Mary with St Peter. *Status:* parish church, now disused. *Date last in regular use:* 1979. *Ownership and Access:* Diocese of Norwich.

Location and Setting

The village of Forncett is situated about 3km west of Long Stratton. Its two churches and many of its houses flank its main north-south street just west of the River Tas. Both churches are set back a little on the east side of the street. St Peter's has a more open aspect and there are slightly more houses in its vicinity. St Mary's, 1km to north, is rather hidden away in a less developed part of the village. A broken gate leads into an overgrown churchyard. A dilapidated porch and numerous broken windows complete the sad picture.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, south vestry, nave, north porch and west tower. Building materials are principally coursed flint with limestone dressings, with peg-tile roofing.

Chancel. A thorough 19th century restoration has resulted in most walls being refaced. The east wall has diagonal buttresses with two set-offs. The four-light east window has tracery in Geometrical style with ogee main lights, and a rear-arch with angle shafts and capitals. The pointed arch head is turned in alternating limestone, tile and flint. The gable is capped with limestone coping and surmounted by a gable cross. A chamfered plinth and stringcourse at sill level continue round north and south walls.

The south wall is pierced by a two-light window, Decorated in style, with arch turned in flint, tile and limestone. There is a small square stone piscina on the inside. The rest of the outside wall is obscured by the vestry, but on the inside there is a flat two-centred arch to house the organ, with two lancets above.

The north wall has a two-light window echoing that to south. Further west there is a buttress with two set-offs (which is not enveloped by the stringcourse), followed by a small lancet. Moulded corbels define the eaves.

Inside, the 19th century arch-braced roof is supported on either side by four carved corbels with polished shafts and capitals. The chancel arch (with hood-mould

above) is similarly supported by blue-grey marble shafts with foliate capitals.

Vestry. The south vestry is part of the same 19th century campaign. It has a small diagonal buttress at the corner, and a two-light east window with chimney above; a little fireplace nestles within the south-east corner. The south wall is pierced by two lancets, and the west wall has a doorway with continuous chamfer. The doorway from vestry to chancel is decorated with nailhead motif.

Nave. The flint masonry of the south wall contains some herringbone work. The wall is pierced by two windows. The easterly one is of two lights with drop-tracery set within a depressed two-centred arch and hood-mould; the lower jambs have been partly destroyed. The other window is in even worse condition, with no tracery and most of the jambs gone. Between the two there is a blocked pointed window. The south doorway has chamfered jambs and moulded four-centred head.

The two windows in the north wall are of identical design but are in better condition. The north door is the same as the south, and also has a small holy water stoup with four-centred head. The wooden door has linenfold panelling. The masonry is of flint in clear, wide courses. All the quoins are of medium-sized limestone blocks.

The roof is scissor-braced, of 19th century workmanship.

Porch. The roofing materials have gone from the north porch, leaving the timbers to rot. The windowless side walls (flint with a little brick) have limestone quoins at the corners. The porch arch is double-chamfered with hood-mould, and the arch head is turned in flint and medieval brick.

Tower. The alternation of dark cut flint and pebbles gives the tower a speckled appearance. Quoins are plain limestone. At ground storey level, the tower arch has simple chamfered jambs and a four-centred arch with four chamfers. The west window is three-light with drop-tracery.

The second storey has a window opening into the roof-space on the east face of the tower, and a small cusped window (with hood) on the west face. The belfry stage is raised above a concave stringcourse. Each face is pierced by a two-light window (ogee main lights) with four-centred head. A concave stringcourse separates this stage from the fine crenellated parapet with flushwork panels to north and west.

Interpretation and Dating

Along with St Peter's, a church stood here at the time of Domesday. The masonry of the

nave, with wide courses, is typical of the 11th and 12th centuries; but there are no surviving features of this period, such as window openings. The Perpendicular windows of the nave may be contemporary with the construction of the tower, for which we have better evidence: a bequest for the construction of the tower in 1432 (Cattermole and Cotton, 1983, 247). The porch must have been added at about the same time. A very thorough restoration took place in 1869, which appears to have involved the total reconstruction of the nave, as well as the addition of a vestry.

Causes of Abandonment

Fornsett remains rather a small village for the possession of two parish churches. St Mary's, only 1km north of St Peter's, is the smaller of the two, and stands at the less accessible end of the village. Nevertheless, it seems that the church has been allowed to dilapidate to an unnecessary degree over the past decade. It was last used in 1979.

Church Contents

Ceramic: nave and chancel paved with 19th century red and black tiles.

Metal: iron fireplace, heating grilles down nave, chancel rails.

Stone: 19th century font; tomb slab, chancel, Mary Dix (d.1808); slab in porch.

Wood: plain altar table; 2 choir benches, a few chairs.

Whereabouts of Contents

Choir stalls at North Wootton.

Jacobean pulpit and chancel rails in Diocesan store.

Organ illegally removed.

Condition

Very neglected: no roof on porch, some roofing tiles fallen from chancel and nave. Most of leaded window glass smashed (partly replaced by perspex sheets). Gutters rusty and missing in places. Tracery and window jambs vandalised in places, especially on the south side. Ivy gaining hold on south side of tower.

Churchyard

A similar story of neglect: overgrown with brambles, various saplings, broken gate. Some

graves tended (latest 1986). Hedge boundaries.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

This is one of two Domesday churches in the village. The fabric of the nave goes back to the 11th or 12th centuries, with the tower added in the 15th century and the chancel rebuilt in 1869. It is greatly to be regretted that it has suffered such recent neglect.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, V, 230.

Cattermole and Cotton, 1983, 247.

Cautley, 1949, 198.

Cox, 1911, 2, 81.

Messent, 1936, 85.

Pevsner, 1962b, 162.

14. Frenze, St Andrew

Identification TM 1352 8043. *County no.* 11006. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norfolk. *Deanery:* Redenhall. *Parish:* Frenze. *Status:* parish church, now Redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1976. *Ownership and Access:* leased by diocese to Norfolk Churches Trust.

Location and Setting

There is no village at Frenze. The small parish comprises a hall, a church, a few farms and a thin scattering of houses. Both hall and church together can be found off a by-road north of the Diss-Scole road, at the end of a metalled track leading to Frenze Hall. The church, within its churchyard, stands next to cowsheds and a large barn.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel and nave in one, and south porch.

Chancel and Nave. Internally, St Andrew's, claimed to be the smallest parish church in Norfolk, is a plain rectangle. There is no architectural distinction between chancel and nave. (Pl. CXCVI). The east wall, constructed of coursed flint, has two low external set-offs capped in chamfered brick. At the eastern corners are heavy diagonal buttresses, made of flint with limestone dressings. The east wall is pierced by a three-light Decorated window with reticulated tracery (Pl. CXCVII).

The south wall has merely two windows: to east, a plain lancet, slightly further west a two-light window with cusped Y-tracery. A plump buttress separates the two. There is a slimmer buttress further west. Near the west end is the south doorway, a pointed arch with continuous double chamfer, set within a segmental pointed rear arch. The north wall precisely echoes that to south; the only perceptible difference being that the two-light window has a reticulated head. The west wall has diagonal buttresses at the corners. Whilst the masonry is of coursed flint, the putlog-holes are lined with brick, and a certain amount of brick is dispersed throughout the gable wall. The wall is pierced by a two-light cusped window (tracery comparatively recent). The roof is mostly scissor-braced; but towards the west end there are two massive tie-beams. The western tie-beam projects through the wall, and is pegged on the outside. The function of these beams is undoubtedly to stabilise the walls and roof to take the weight of the bell-cote above. The latter is quite pretty, with cusped ogee arches above the wooden louvres. The

lower part is leaded, and the whole is capped with a tiled pyramidal roof and weathercock. The rest of the roof is tiled too, and the east end has a small gable cross. *South porch.* This is built of brick, save the south wall which is faced in flint. Darker bricks are used to create lozenge and cross motifs in the east and west walls. These latter are each pierced by a two-light window set within a four-centred arch. Inside, the nave south doorway has three statue niches set above it. The porch has diagonal buttresses at the corners. Its outer doorway has half-column responds, polygonal capitals and a triple-chamfered arch. Like the nave, the roof is tiled.

Interpretation and Dating

In architectural terms, the church has suffered some unfortunate depredations. It has, in essence, a medieval core of the 13th and 14th centuries (windows, doorways), to which a pleasant Tudor porch has been added. It was, however, a larger church originally, and has been truncated on one or possibly two, occasions. It is clear that the chancel has been shortened. Tom Martin's drawing (mid 18th century) shows a church which extended 3m or so further east, with another two-light window and a buttress east of the (still extant) lancet window. In 1827, a Faculty was granted to remove 14 feet of the chancel, because it was in bad repair, and rebuild the east wall (N.R.O., FCB/6, 10, 101); they may have retained the old east window. There is also the possibility that the church has been shortened to the west. The presence of brick in the gable, and use of brick to line put-log holes, makes the west wall different in construction to the rest of the church; also, there is an awkward 'blocking' at the south-west corner: just a hint that the church may have continued further west, or had a west tower. If so, it must have been removed before Martin's drawing, perhaps as early as the late 15th century when the porch was built. The bell inside the bell-cote dates to 1707, which may be when the latter was constructed. There was an important restoration in 1901, when the church was re-roofed (Cox, 1911, 2, 188).

Causes of Abandonment

The parish is small and thinly populated; Thelveton church and Scole church are only 2km away, as is Diss, with several churches. St Andrew's was closed in 1976 through lack of people to attend it. There are occasional services now organised by the Norfolk Churches Trust.

Church Contents

Much of the floor area is filled with tomb slabs and brasses; elsewhere, the flooring is herringbone brickwork, save the easternmost 1.5m of the church; this has a step and the raised flooring consists of red, cream and black Victorian tiling (interspersed with large marble slabs containing brasses). The brasses in this raised area are as follows: to south, tomb slab to Maria Blenerhaysett (d.1587), four brass shields, two heraldic plaques, and an inscription; in the centre, brass to Radulphus Blenerhaysett (d.1475), in plate armour, feet on a lion; to north, brass of Anne Duke (d.1551), her husband's brass reaved. Further brasses have been re-set in the east wall: Sir Thomas Blenerhaysett (d. 1531), inscription only (superb enamelled brass depicting Sir Thomas was in the church, and illustrated by Cotman in 1816; by 1864 it had gone, although it was said to have been seen in a curio shop in Germany in the 1920s); also a brass inscription to Dame Margaret Blenerhaysett (d.1561), and another to Thomasin Platers (d.1560) (Pls. CXCVIII, CXCIX; main text Pl. XLIVa).

In front of the altar step, there is the brass effigy of John Blenerhaysett (d.1510) in plate armour, (Pl. CC); (two of the surrounding four shields have gone); with next to it, the brass effigy of Jane Bienerhaysett (d.1521) (Pl. CCI). Next to the pulpit, there is the small brass to Thomas Hobson (in a shroud). Further west, near the north door, is the brass effigy of Johanna Braham (d.1519). Around the font, there are four tomb slabs, two having indents. In the porch there are two medieval stone tomb lids, trapezoidal in shape, with carved crosses (largely erased) (Pl. CCII; main text Pl. XLIVb). The church also contains ledger slabs to Richard Nixon (d.1666) Richard his son (d.1678), William Cooper (d.1693) and William Smith (d.1795). There are altogether three lost effigies: to George Duke and to William Platers (gone by the 18th century), and to Sir Thomas Blenerhaysett (stolen between 1816 and 1864).

The font is especially fascinating. It is octagonal, with a reeded system, and each of the eight faces of the bowl is carved with a different type of tracery, all of them current in the first half of the 14th century: two-light intersecting; Y-tracery; two-light reticulated with cusping; two-light with mouchettes; three-light reticulated; two-light with 'petal' motif; three lancets set within an arch. In other words, the font displays a repertory of tracery types available to a builder in the Decorated period (Pl. CCIII). There is a very fine early 17th century pulpit and tester, carved with shallow incised decoration. In the same style is the family pew, with blind arches and shallow carving like

the pulpit, plus a little balustrade round the top. Next to the pulpit there is a medieval bench-end (carved with a monkey), and a modern copy on the other side. The adjacent reading desk also makes use of a poppy-head bench-end. At the west end of the church there are three 17th-century benches (Pl. CCIV). Other fittings consist of an altar table with Purbeck marble slab on top (found in floor when church was restored), plain 19th century altar rails and lectern, two 19th century chairs, four iron candleholders, and a faded panel of Royal Arms (Pl. CCV).

Condition

The church is being maintained in an excellent condition throughout. The south wall does lean somewhat, but is well buttressed.

Churchyard

The churchyard forms a rectangle around the church. It is completely fenced round (iron fence with brick piers to west, wooden fence elsewhere, gate at south-west corner). The grass is kept reasonably low, and there are some fairly recent graves (latest 1978).

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

Architecturally, the church is a very modest structure of the 13th and 14th centuries, with Tudor porch. It was certainly longer to east originally, and may also have been longer to west too. The main interest lies in the exceptional quantity (and quality) of its Late Medieval and Tudor brasses: six effigies, and many inscriptions. The family pew and pulpit give a Jacobean feel to the interior.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, I, 140

Bryant, 1915, 152

Cox, 1911, 2, 188

Pevsner, 1962b, 165



Plate CXCVI. Frenze, St Andrew, from south



Plate CXCVII. Frenze, St Andrew, (interior) looking east



Plate CXCVIII. Frenze, St Andrew, brass of Anne Duke (d.1551). BB76/5678 copyright Royal
Commission on Historical Monuments (England)

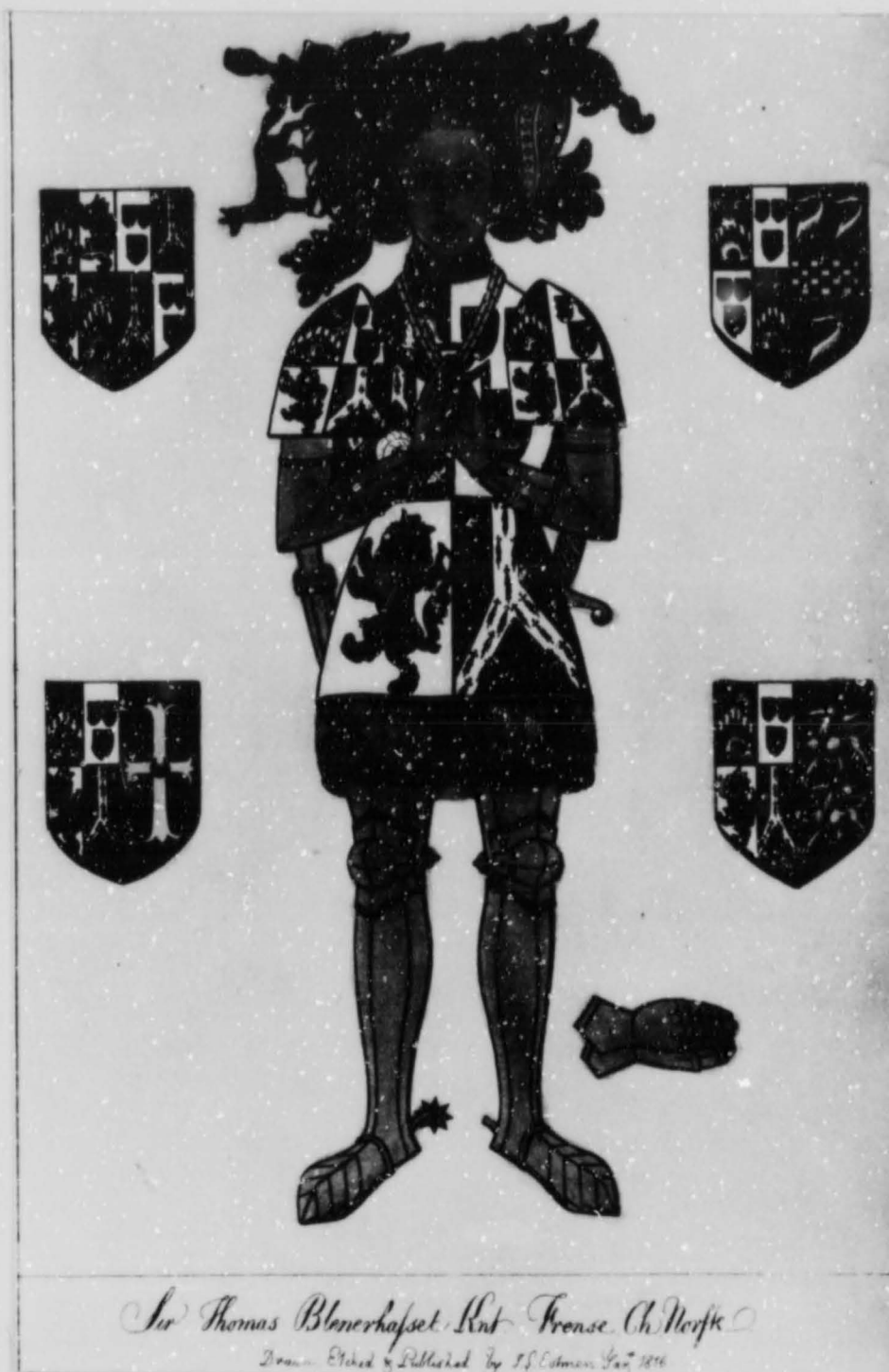


Plate CXCIX. Frenze, St Andrew, brass of Sir Thomas Blenerhaysett (d.1531) by Cotman (1816), now missing



Plate CC. Frenze, St Andrew, brass of John Blenerhaysett (d.1510) by Cotman (1815)



Plate CCI. Frenze, St Andrew, brass of Jane Blenerhaysett (d.1521) BB76/5676 copyright

2: D3

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)



Plate CCII. Frenze, St Andrew, brass of Johann Braham (d.1519) BB76/5674 copyright Royal
Commission on Historical Monuments (England)

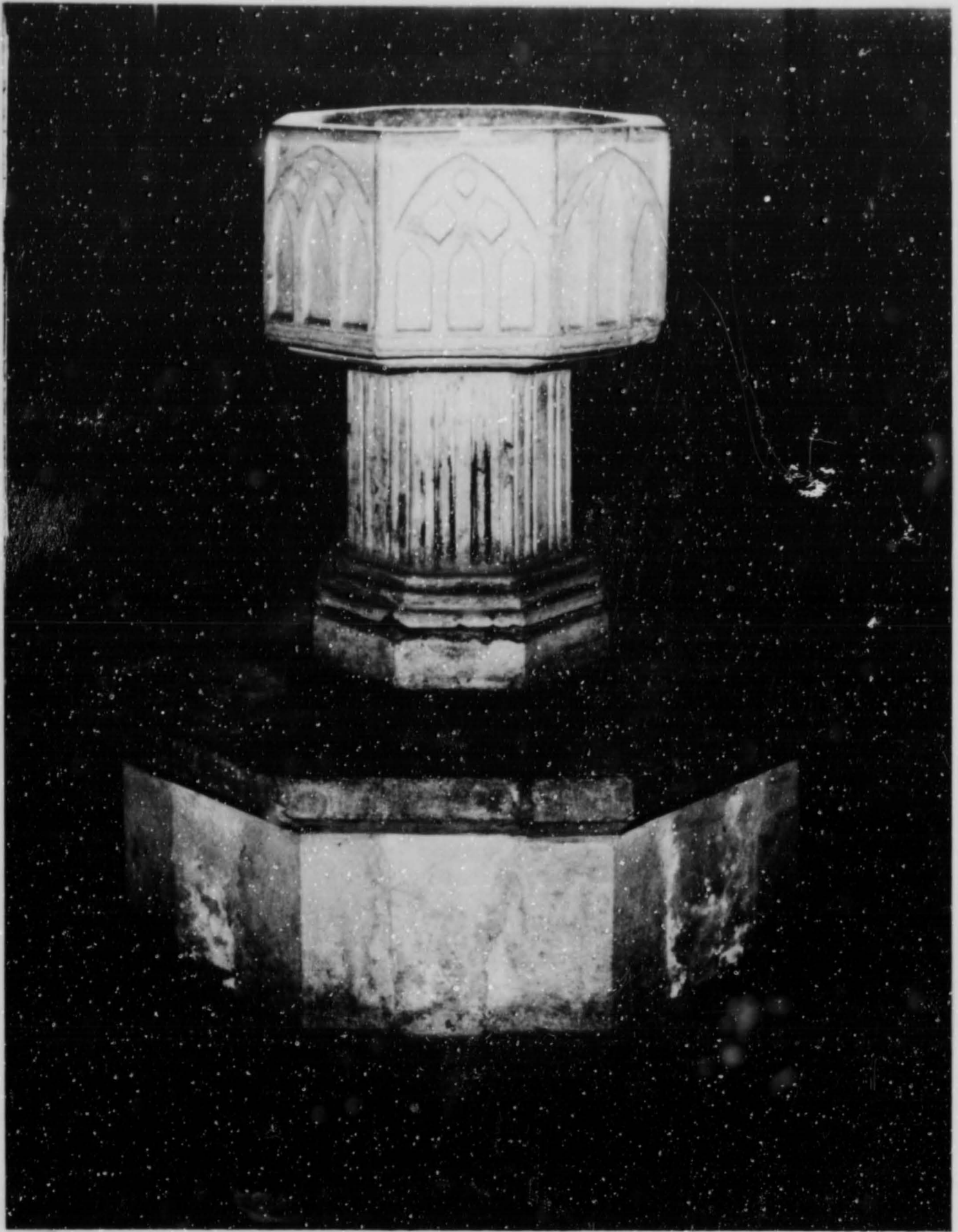


Plate CCIII. Frenze, St Andrew, font, BB76/5666 copyright Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)



Plate CCIV. Frenze, St Andrew, pulpit



Plate CCV. Frenze, St Andrew, royal arms. BB76/5686 copyright Royal Commission on
Historical Monuments (England) 2: D7

15. Gunton, St Andrew

Identification TG 2290 3413. *County no.* 6819. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norwich. *Deanery:* Repps. *Parish:* Gunton. *Status:* parish church, now Redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1976. *Ownership and Access:* Redundant Churches Fund.

Location and Setting

The setting of Gunthorpe church is one of the most memorable in the county: an 18th century park with Hall, lakes and woodland. The portico of the church was designed to be seen from the Hall, where it has the appearance of an Antique temple in a sylvan setting (Pl. CCVI). Gunton Park is only 8km south of Cromer, and the church can be approached by entering the park (take the Suffield road off the A140), fetching the key from the lodge, passing by the lake, skirting the Hall (now divided into apartments) and reaching a wood. A woodland track leads to the church.

Architectural Description

There is no architectural distinction between chancel and nave; both are contained within the same rectangular space in the 18th century fashion. At the west end there is a gallery, preceded by a circular narthex with square vestry to north and stair-well to south. The whole is fronted by a giant Tuscan portico. It is constructed almost entirely of pale, buff brick, rendered in parts. Stone is sparingly used.

Exterior. The plinth course is of carefully squared stone. 1.5m from the ground there is a stringcourse, above which are a row of large niches: three blind windows in the east wall, a row of four coved niches along either side wall (main text Pl. XXXIX). A brick stringcourse divides this level from the clerestory, which is pierced by four rectangular windows in north and south walls (all except the westernmost cut into the stringcourse), echoed by three blind windows in the east wall. Above this the moulded brick entablature continues round all four sides of the church, interspersed with small stone paterae. The east end is capped by a plain pediment in moulded brick, pierced by a small circular window.

The west front is more grandiose (main text Pl. XXXVIII). It comprises a portico with four giant Tuscan columns at the front, two at the side, all rendered. The pediment is like that on the east side, but without an opening. The portico is raised on three steps.

A spur wall on either side, surmounted by an urn, divides the churchyard from the entrance to the church.

Inside the portico, the rendered west wall of the church is pierced by a doorway (plain moulded jambs and large consoles) and a window on either side (leaded). There are blind panels above.

Interior. Architecturally, the chancel/nave is a box - but a magnificent one (main text Pl. XL). Three large windows in either side wall flood the church with light; a smaller fourth window lights the gallery. A delicate plaster frieze below window level unites the interior, continuing round north, east and south walls and providing the base for the west gallery.

The east wall is magnificently panelled in wood up to the frieze. Four fluted columns with composite capitals, all in wood, appear to support the frieze. The two middle columns flank a painted altarpiece. Above the frieze, four plaster pilasters divide the clerestory into a series of panels. These panels continue along either side wall; but below the frieze there is not such rich panelling, merely a wooden dado. It is worth noticing that a small step is all that separates nave from sanctuary.

Like the east wall, the entrance to the church beneath the west gallery is quite magnificent (main text Pl. XLI). Again, the effect is achieved through the quality of the wood carving. A superb panelled door is flanked by richly carved consoles and architrave surmounted by luscious swags. Either side of the door a carved fluted pilaster with composite capital appears to support the frieze, neatly echoing the similar treatment of the east wall. The gallery itself has a wooden fluted columnar balustrade, and is supported by brackets with hanging plaster roses. The organ occupies the central part of the gallery.

Perhaps the most unifying aspect of the interior is the fine plaster ceiling. Although this collapsed in 1976, it has been replaced by an accurate copy. A heavy cornice defines the rectangular ground, wherein is placed an oval decorative band and a central circlet of feathers. Below the gallery there is a circular vestibule, which also provides access to a rectangular vestry to north and a stairway to the gallery to south. The vestibule has a fine plaster ceiling with a circlet of palm leaves.

Interpretation and Dating

The medieval church of Gunton was totally demolished and replaced by one designed by Robert Adam in 1769. It was built on the site of the old church (see below), with a

prominent portico designed to be seen from the Hall.

Causes of Abandonment

The population of Gunthorpe has been quite small for centuries. In 1757 the parish was consolidated with Hanworth (NRO, FCB/2, 3, 78), and the church soon fell into disrepair. The Faculty of 1766 granted permission to rebuild the church since it was 'greatly out of repair' and that 'you do intend to pull down and rebuild the same in a substantial and handsome manner at your own cost and charge'. (NRO, FCB/3, 4, 19). It remained in effect a chapel for the Harbord family and their staff at Gunton Hall. The church was declared Redundant in 1976 and vested in the Redundant Churches Fund in 1977.

Church Contents

Metal: brass cross and candlesticks; 3 brass plaques to Suffield family; 4 iron candle holders.

Paint: altarpiece, copy of 16th century Florentine painting; Royal Arms, 1715; 5 hatchments to the Harbord family.

Stone: tiny marble font (on wooden stand); paving, black and green marble; tablet on south wall, Cecilia Suffield (d.1911); exterior, east wall, Alice de Grey (d.1665).

Wood: family pews at west end, with doors; plain benches, 19th century.

Whereabouts of Contents

Communion plate (1679 and 1775) and alms dish at Hanworth church.

Condition

Very sound condition. Ceiling replaced since 1976. Some peeling paintwork.

Churchyard

The spur walls extending north and south from the portico define the western limits of the churchyard, which surround the church on three sides. A brick wall marks the eastern boundary, woodland north and south. There are many evergreen shrubs, an ilex to north and large pines to east. The most recent burial is that of Doris Harbord (d.1980).

Archaeological Record

A raised mound east of the church marks the site of the chancel of the medieval church. In digging the grave for Doris Harbord within this area in 1980, the gravedigger encountered a length of walling about 1m long in an east-west direction.

The medieval church had a steeple and 3 bells in 1552 (Walters, 1941, 278).

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

Writing about Gunton church, Walter Rye provides a reminder about how subjective the assessment of architecture can be: 'The old church was pulled down by the Harbords, who, not satisfied with wrecking Thorp Market, built, immediately adjoining their seat, a mausoleum-like edifice, which is unworthy of notice, and, I understand, contains no monuments.' (Rye, 1889, 301). Few today would agree with him. Gunton is an outstanding example of 18th century church design, combining a bold marshalling of exterior masses with the unifying control of interior details. Robert Adam was the outstanding architect of his generation, and Gunton is of special interest as one of the very few churches he designed. The church is also of importance in terms of its contribution to the landscape of the park. It is clear that there are some surviving below-ground remains of the medieval church, especially east of the present church.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, VIII, 122.

Bryant, 1900, 104.

Cox, 1911, 1, 171.

Messent, 1936, 96.

Pevsner, 1962a, 157.

Rye, 1889, 310.

Walters. 1941, 278.



GUNTON CHAPEL

Plate CCVI. Gunton church by Ladbrooke (1832)

16. Hales, St Margaret

Identification TM 3835 9610. *County no.* 10523. *Diocese:* Norwich. *Archdeaconry:* Norfolk. *Deanery:* Loddon. *Parish:* Haies. *Status:* parish church, now Redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1967. *Ownership and Access:* Redundant Churches Fund, key available locally.

Location and Setting

The church is in an isolated location, 1.5km south of the present village of Hales. A small road leads east off the A146 Norwich-Beccles road, and after 0.5km the churchyard is reached. The church of St Margaret is regarded as an 'exemplary' Norman parish church, having been little altered since the 12th century (Pl. CCVII).

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, nave and round west tower. Chancel and nave are thatched.

Chancel. The chancel terminates in an apse. The curve of the apse is divided on the outside into five panels by slim limestone buttresses set on chamfered plinths; there is an angle roll on the lowest 1.5m of the buttresses. A chamfered stone stringcourse, carved with a succession of saltire crosses, continues round the chancel, including the buttresses, at 2m from the ground. Above the stringcourse, and flanked by the buttresses, each panel has a pair of blind arches (apart from the axial panel, which either had three blind arches or a window flanked by blind arches); the blind arches are round-headed, with roll-mouldings, and spring from chamfered imposts (Pl. CCVIII); the central pillar of the pair is chamfered to resemble half an octagon. The arches are carefully made in limestone, whereas they enclose a fill of flint masonry like the rest of the chancel.

Three windows have been inserted into this fabric: a Y-tracery axial window, and a lancet to north and south in the last panels in the apse. West of these panels, there is a much stouter buttress, marking the springing of the apse. The blind arches continue for another panel west of this, then there is another slim buttress and a short length of wall with no blind arches before the nave is reached.

Inside, there are little statue niches either side of the east window. The south window has a sill sedilia with small piscina bracket. On the north side there is a rectangular aumbry with wooden shelf. The chancel arch is double-chamfered, with no

responds. The chancel ceiling is a semi-circular barrel-vault (presumably plaster).

Nave. The nave has no buttresses or blind arcading to compete with the chancel. For the most part it consists of plain expanses of flint masonry; the horizontal coursing is clearly delineated, and there are occasional pieces of conglomerate and Roman brick. Each corner has limestone quoins, given angle rolls up to 1.5m from the ground.

The south wall has a Y-tracery window near its east end; the window reveal is cut away towards the chancel arch (perhaps to accommodate the rood). Slightly further west, and only visible on the outside, is the only surviving Norman window in the nave; it has a small round-headed opening (blocked with brick) flanked by a round shaft on either side supporting a cushion capital, chamfered impost and roll-and-quirk arch (Pl. CCIX); strangely, the bases of the shafts appear to be inverted cushion capitals. The window opening has been extended downwards at a later date. Halfway along the south wall is a much larger window, two-light with cusped Y-tracery.

Towards the west end we arrive at the superb Norman south doorway (Pl. CCX). It has essentially three orders (two round shafts and a jamb); these stand on a raised plinth with angle-rolls. Round shafts and inner jambs are surmounted by cushion capitals, and a fourth capital, of attenuated cushion form, rises from a nook-shaft which almost forms a fourth order to the doorway. Including the hood-mould, there are in fact five orders of arch decoration: the inner order is a simple roll and hollow moulding; secondly, a dentil motif; thirdly, chevron; fourthly, a large roll and hollow; lastly, a lozenge pattern. The rear arch of the doorway has a stilted semi-circular head.

The nave north wall has no trace of Norman windows. By the chancel arch is the small four-centred doorway of the rood-stair; the stairs were lit by an external window, now blocked. There are two windows further west, a cusped lancet and a Y-tracery window set within a four-centred arch. Then we come to the north doorway - similar to, but even more magnificent than, its counterpart to south. This time there is no nook-shafting; the bases are raised on inverted chamfered imposts. There are two orders of round shafts, each rising from a base consisting of an inverted cushion capital (Main text, Pl. XXV). Unlike the south side, the capitals on the shafts are ornately carved with volute and scallop motifs, and with chip-carved stars; the latter continue either side of the outer order. Above the chamfered impost there are again five decorative orders to the arch. The innermost order consists of chevron; secondly, a row of chip-carved stars and zigzag; thirdly, an order of bobbins, surmounted by a row of star patterns again;

fourthly, an order of chevron; lastly, a further order of chip-carved stars, studded with roundels (17 in all). Above the apex of the arch there is a piece of wood and a few scars to suggest the former presence of a porch.

Tower. From the outside, the round tower has a fill of masonry where it joins the west wall of the nave to smooth over the angle. On the inside there is a round-headed tower arch with billet-decorated imposts. It is partly blocked by a small doorway to the wooden stairs leading into the west gallery. Inside the tower it is possible to see the two 'basket' windows - one to north, one to south, both blocked. They were originally double-splayed, but the outer splay has been filled in. It is clear from the impression left in the masonry that they were constructed by placing two round wicker baskets in the wall as it was being built, as a form of crude centring, to leave a round, double-splayed window. Today the ground floor of the tower has a single lancet window to west, set within a four-centred arch.

The tower has four storeys (Pl. CCXI). At first-floor level, there is a narrow round-headed opening to north, west and south, while to east there is a blocked triangular-headed doorway formerly communicating with the nave. At the next level, there is a slightly larger, and pointed, window with plain chamfer, again to north, west and south. Perhaps this was the original belfry stage.

The fourth storey is patched with brick. The east and west faces each have two lancet windows, lined in brick. To north there is a single opening, with cusped ogee head; while to south there is no opening at all, although there is ample evidence of patching here. The low parapet has a chequerboard pattern of brick and flint.

Interpretation and Dating

It has been suggested (Kent, 1927, 187) that the round tower with its double-splayed windows and triangular headed doorway is of Saxon workmanship. It is true that the tower displays little of the lavish use of carved stone found elsewhere in the church. But the idea that these features have been carefully grafted onto an earlier church is absurd. The chancel and nave are clearly of one build, and can be confidently assigned to the second quarter of the 12th century. The tower is either contemporary with this phase, or a slightly later addition to it. It is possible that a more conservative team of builders were contracted to build the tower; or it may be that funds had dwindled by the time it came to constructing the tower, ruling out the extravagant use of carved stone. A third

possibility is that the carved stone elements came ready-made from the quarry or building yard without provision for a tower; this would have to be provided, according to their own manner, by the builders on site; it may also explain one or two eccentric elements of the fabric, such as the sporadic use of angle rolls on the salient angles of some of the quoins.

Additions to the fabric have been remarkably few: a north porch (Pl. CCXII), now gone, and possibly the fourth storey of the tower.

Causes of Abandonment

The church is stranded in a very isolated location, a full 1.5km away from the moderate-sized village of Hales. Regular services ceased in 1967. Hales and Heckingham were united in 1973, and the latter continued in use as the parish church, being nearer the centre of population. Hales church was vested in the Redundant Churches Fund in 1974.

Church Contents

Ceramic: brick flooring.

Metal: brass sconce; 2 iron candelabra.

Paint: foliate scroll, east window, 14th century; St James the Great, nave south-east window, 14th century; St Christopher, nave south wall, 15th century; 13th century foliate scroll above.

Stone: octagonal font, 15th century, four lions at stem, angel heads supporting bowl, bowl with alternating panels of roses and angels bearing shields (Pl. CCXIII); altar mensa, marble; floor slabs: Petrus Lawes (d.1722), Mary Lawes (d.1710), chancel; William Browne (d.1834), marble trapezoid slab. nave.

Wood: 1897 sanctuary chair, altar rails, harmonium, lectern, pulpit; 18th century west gallery; 17th century font cover, with silhouette of head inside; medieval rood-screen, lower part only, 6 panels, red and green paint, one panel with cusped decoration.

Whereabouts of Contents

Bell, c. 1320, by Thomas de Lenne, now in King's Lynn Museum.

Condition

The church is in very good condition.

Churchyard

The churchyard is a little overgrown in places. Some graves still tended (latest 1982). Shrubs at boundaries. Wooden gate on north side.

Archaeological and Architectural Assessment

Hales church is one of the most important 12th century churches in the country owing to the quality of its carved decoration and the absence of serious subsequent alteration to the fabric.

Further References

Blomefield, 1805-10, VIII, 16.

Cautley, 1949, 203.

Cox, 1911, 2, 41.

Kent, 1927, 187.

Messent, 1936, 98.

Pevsner, 1962b, 183.

RCF, 1983a.

Taylor, 1965, 278.



Plate CCVII. Hales, St Margaret, from south-east

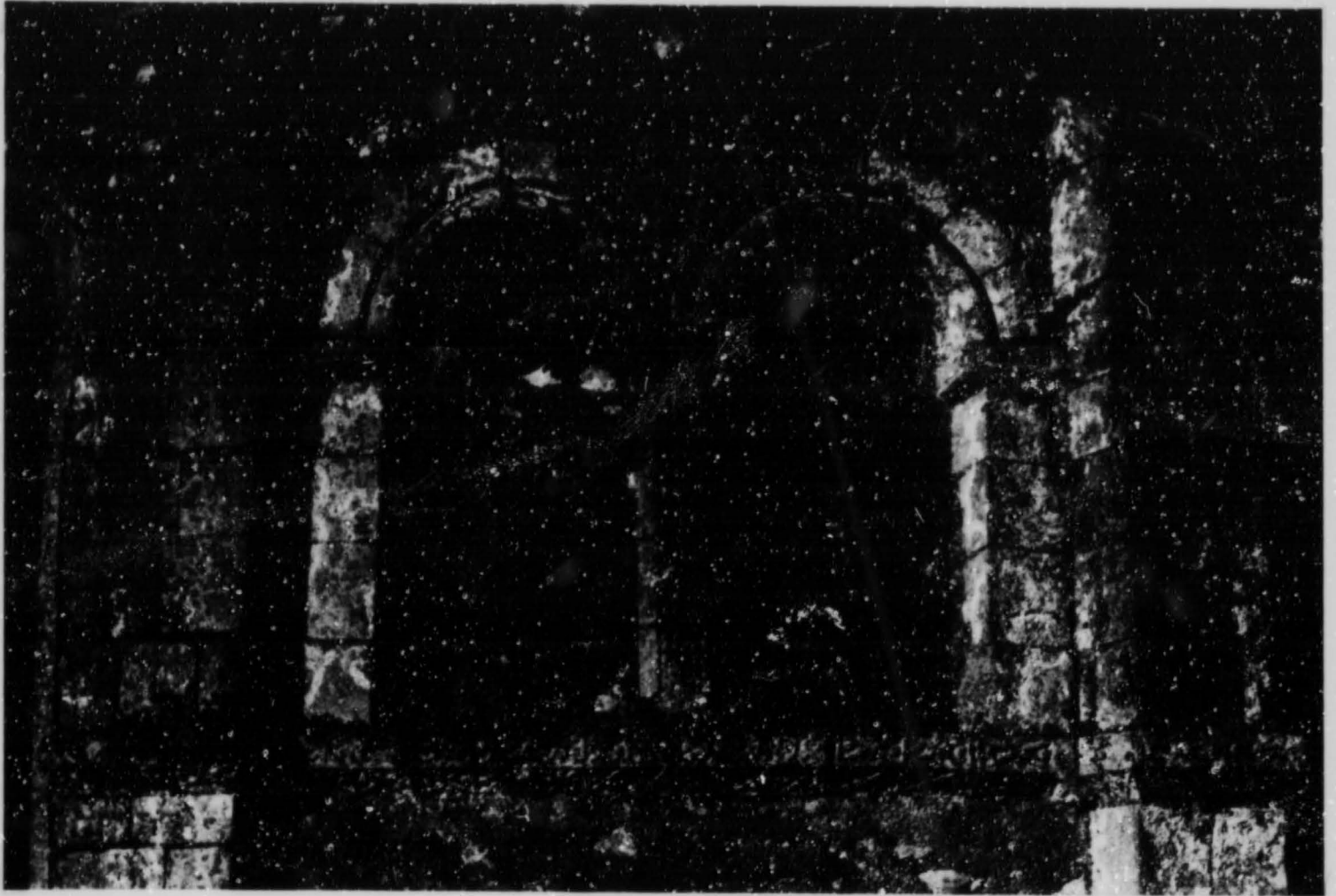
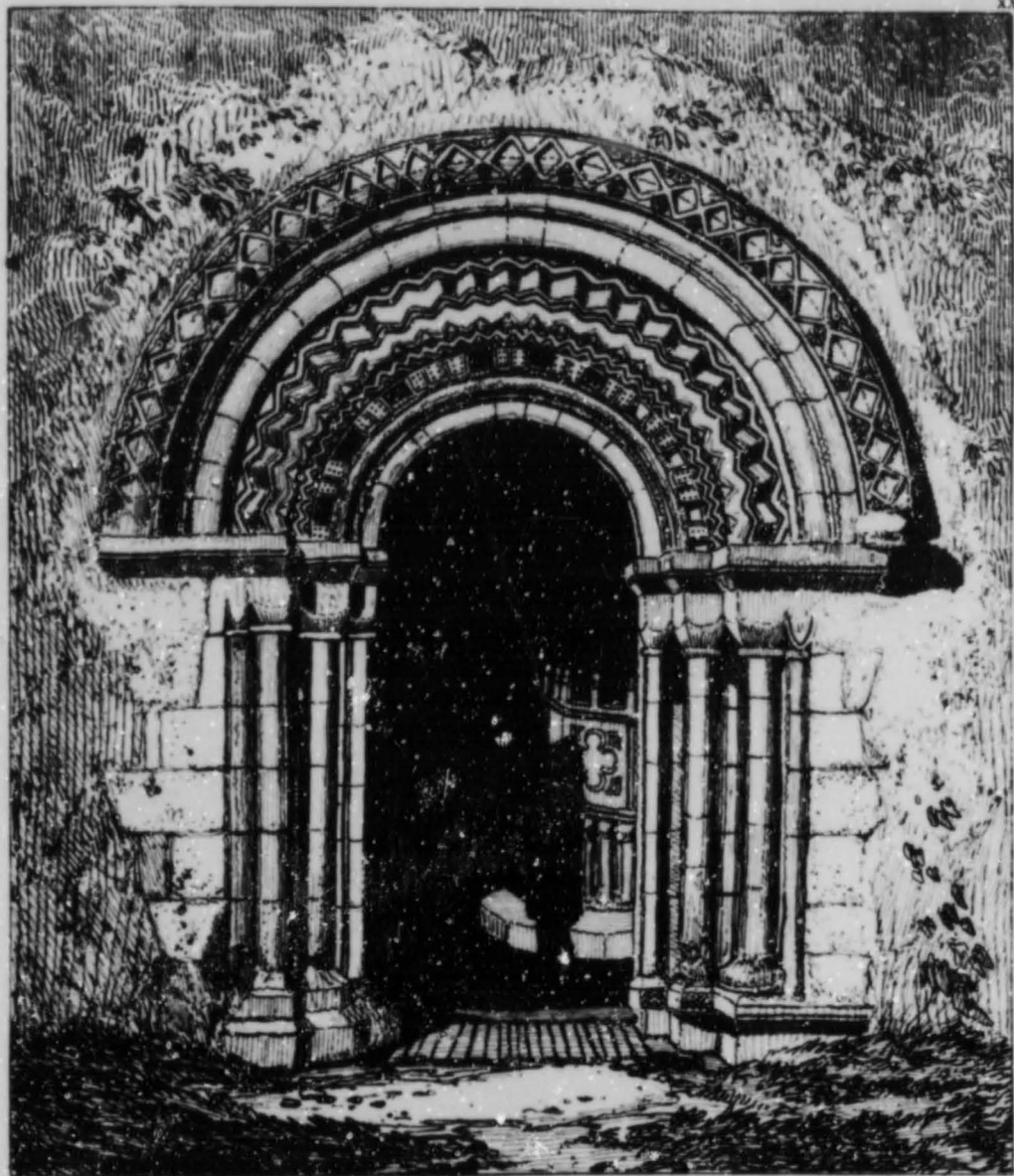


Plate CCVIII. Haies, St Margaret, chancel blind arcading



Plate CCIX. Hales, St Margaret, nave south wall window



SOUTH DOORWAY HALES CHURCH NORFOLK.
From Engraving published by J. H. Colburn & Co.

Plate CCX. Hales, St Margaret, south doorway by Cotman (1817)



Plate CCXI. Hales, St Margaret, tower from south-west



HALES CHURCH

Plate CCXII. Hales, St Margaret by Ladbrooke (1823)



Plate CCXIII. Hales, St Margaret, font, AA55/2904 copyright Royal Commission on
Historical Monuments (England)



Plate CCXIV. W.Harling, All Saints (interior) looking east



Plate CCXV. W.Harling, All Saints (interior) looking west



Plate CCXVI. W.Harling, All Saints, nave south wall



Plate CCXVII. W.Harling, All Saints, nave south wall, east window



Plate CCXVIII. W.Harling, All Saints, from north-west



Plate CCXIX. W.Harling, All Saints, nave north window

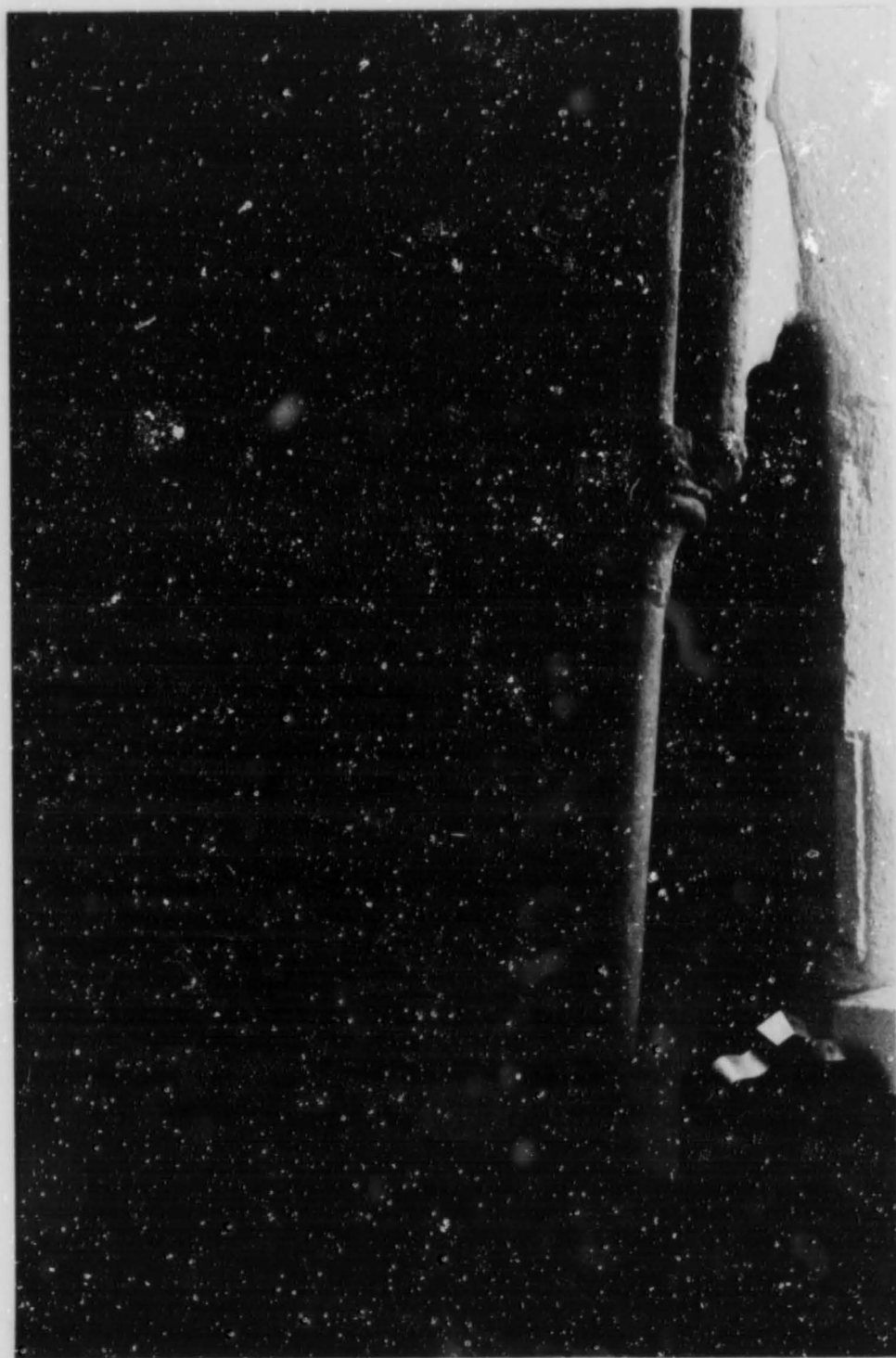


Plate CCXX. W.Harling, All Saints, piscina, nave south wall



Plate CCXXI. W.Harling, All Saints, porch from south



Plate CCXXII. W.Harling, All Saints, porch label-stop



Plate CCXXIII. W.Harling, All Saints, tower from north

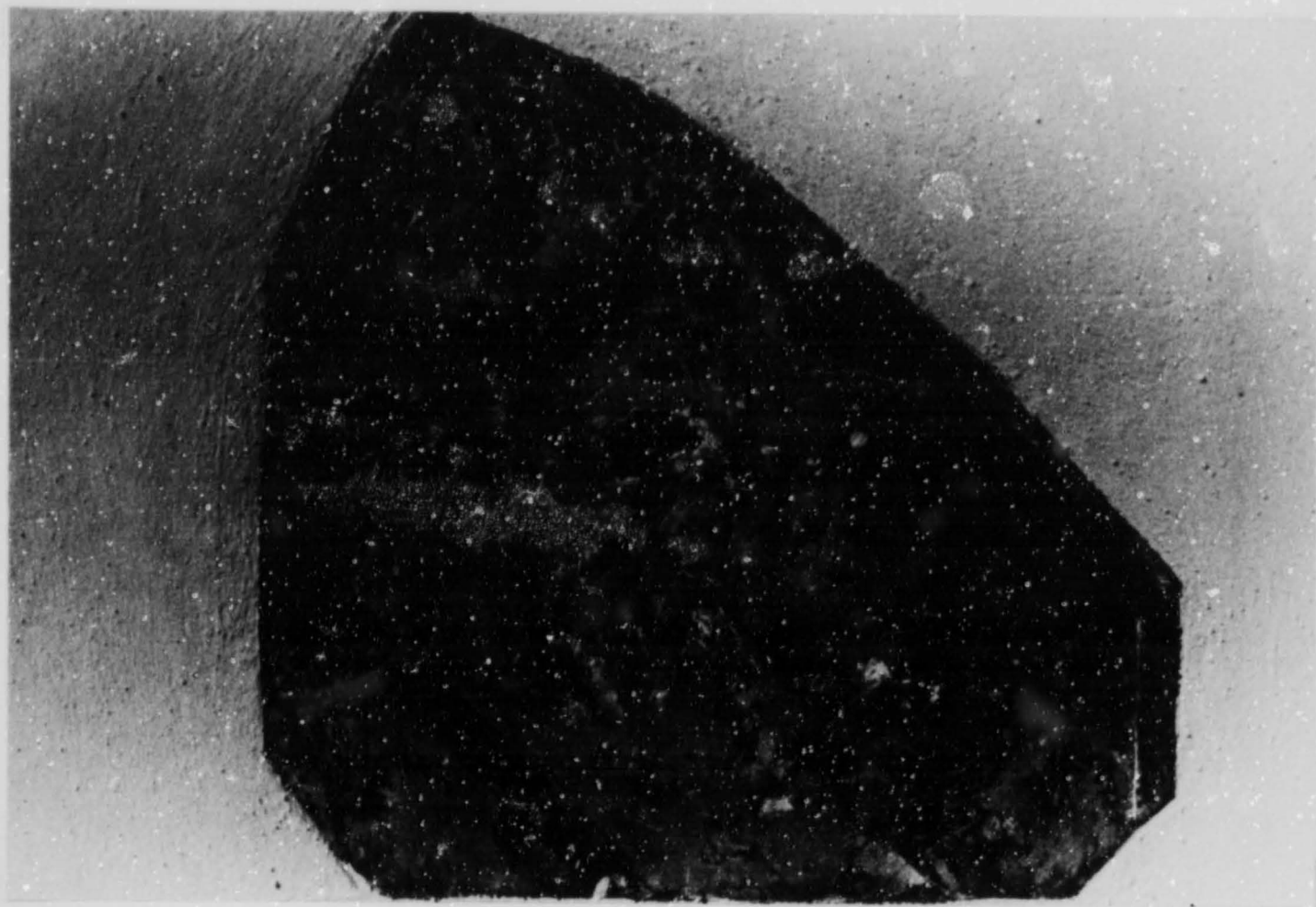


Plate CCXXIV. W.Harling, All Saints, painted plaster, chancel south wall



Plate CCXXV. W.Harling, All Saints, monument to Richard Gipps

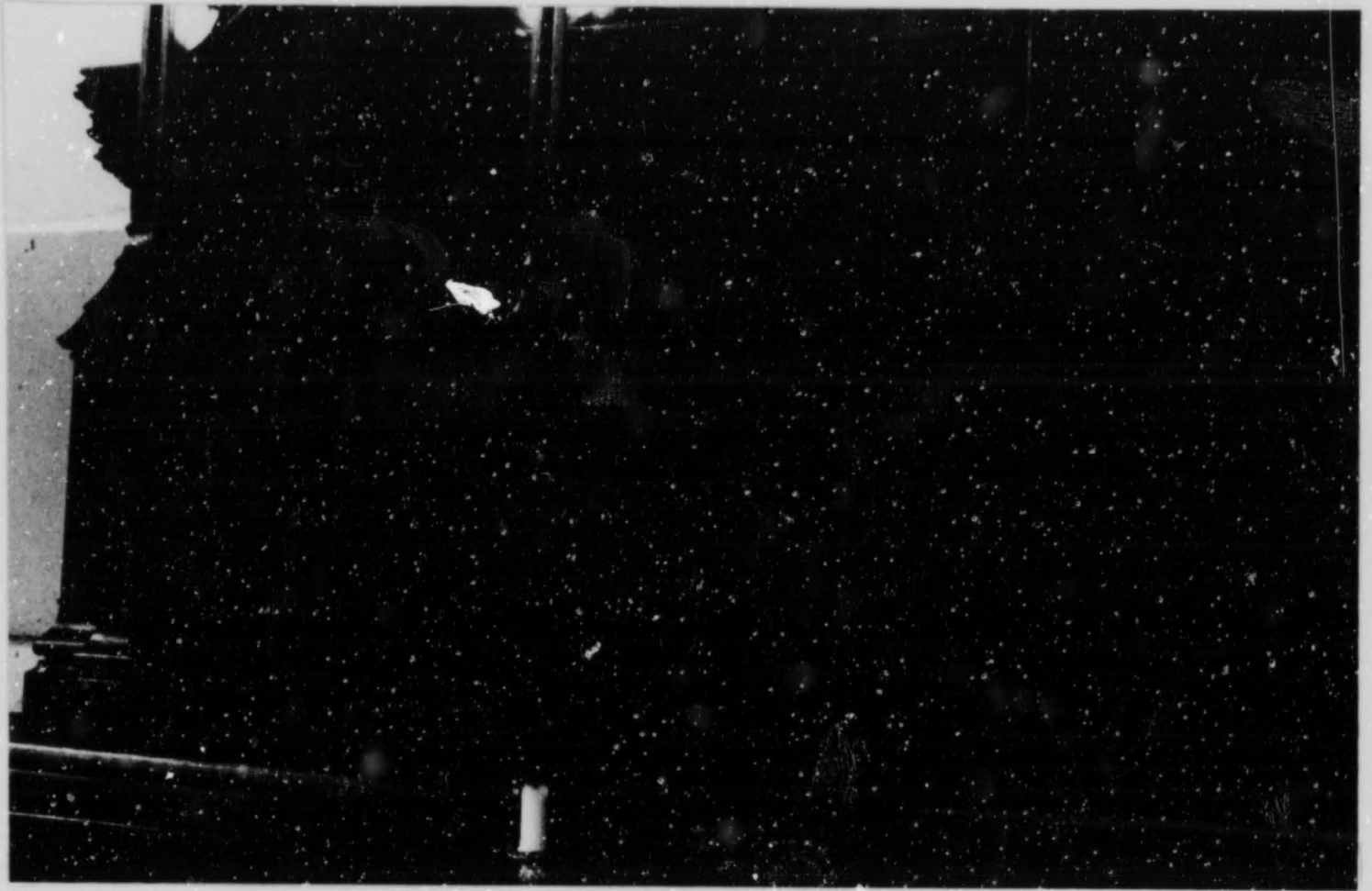


Plate CCXXVI. W.Harling, All Saints, reredos incorporating Flemish panels

18. Hockwold, St Peter

Identification TL 7249 8801. *County no.* 5471. *Diocese:* Ely. *Archdeaconry:* Wisbech. *Deanery:* Feltwell. *Parish:* Hockwold with Wilton. *Status:* parish church, now redundant. *Date last in regular use:* 1974. *Ownership and Access:* Redundant Churches Fund.

Location and Setting

Hockwold-cum-Wilton is a village at the south-west corner of the county. The Little Ouse River, dividing Norfolk from Suffolk, forms the southern boundary of the parish. To west are the Hockwold Fens, stretching towards Cambridgeshire. The village itself is on the slightly rising ground of the Fen edge. It is really two villages, Hockwold and Wilton, now merged together and without separate identity. Wilton church stands towards the eastern end of the village, Hockwold church at the western edge. Wilton church, being marginally the more 'central' of the two, has been retained as the parish church of the combined villages. Although it is the more exciting of the two, architecturally, Hockwold church is not so well placed. It stands next to the grounds of Hockwold Hall (now an hotel), flanked to east by the B1112 Lakenheath-Feltwell road.

Architectural Description

The church consists of chancel, nave, south aisle, south porch, and west tower adjoining the aisle (Pl. CCXXVII).

Chancel. The chancel east wall is built of coursed flints, with brick patching in the upper parts. Its corners are strengthened with diagonal buttresses with two set-offs. A chequerboard base course, in flint and limestone, extends across the east wall and round the buttresses. The three-light Perpendicular east window has a stilted, somewhat unclearly shaped head, three-centred rather than four-centred, with through mullions and four batement lights. On the outside, the window arch is made of medieval brick. Above it is a small stone oval opening, now blocked.

The south wall is built mainly of flint, but is very patched with stone and brick, and partly rendered. It is pierced by two large two-light windows, nineteenth century in date but Perpendicular in style, with four-centred arch, hood-mould and drop-tracery; the outline of an earlier window, with stone voussoirs, can be made out east of the western window. Below the eastern window, on the inside, is a piscina and sedilia in three steps,

with cusped ogee arches, crenellated label and blank shields in the spandrels; it is made of soft white limestone, and is partly restored (Pl. CCXXVIII). About half-way along is a small priest-door, with mitred four-centred arch and hood. Immediately east of the door is a two-stepped buttress, which partly masks the vertical set-off behind it; east of the buttress, the chancel wall is set back by 10cm. On the north side, there is a buttress with two set-offs at the same point as in the opposite wall. There is no set-off east of the buttress, but a line of limestone quoins can be seen; the quoins have been reddened due to the heat generated by a stove whose chimney formerly adjoined the quoins. There are two windows identical to those in the south wall, also of the nineteenth century. There is a small arched aumbry on the inside at the east end of the wall. The north wall has been thoroughly restored in brick and flint; a piece of stone bears the date 1857.

The arched braces of the roof spring from moulded stone corbels. Some of the braces appear to be original, but the roof was largely restored in the nineteenth century, with the addition of collars. The chancel arch is very crude, with wide half-octagon responds, feeble moulded capitals and no bases. On the nave side a hood-mould survives of what must have been a much wider arch. A corbel in the angle between chancel and aisle on the outside, and some patched masonry on the inside, suggests a former rood-stair at this point.

Nave. The nave is separated from the south aisle by a four-bay arcade. The sturdy octagonal piers rest on thick octagonal stepped bases, and the double chamfered arches spring from plump moulded capitals (Pl. CCXXIX). The clerestory wall above is built mainly of flint, with numerous pieces of reused limestone in the lower part. It is pierced by four late Perpendicular windows, each of three stepped lights set within a mitred four-centred arch (Pl. CCXXX).

The nave north wall has no arcade, but reflects the four bays by having two tall windows, a doorway, and another tall window, occupying the bays from east to west. The wall itself had been extensively restored; most of the eastern part has been rebuilt in masonry that looks late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, using flint and brick. At the junction with the chancel there is a large buttress with three set-offs, in knapped flint with limestone edgings, no doubt of the later nineteenth century. In the same technique further west is a buttress with two set-offs, with a tall two-light window between; each light has a cinquefoil arch, set within a square head; on the inside, it can be seen that the window is enclosed within a four-centred arch.