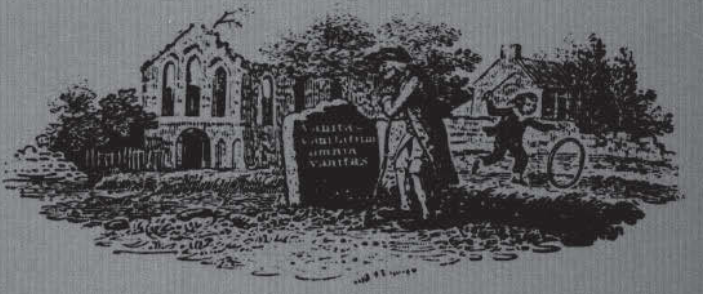
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHURCHES



a report from the churches committee of the CBA presented to the conference on the archaeology of churches held at Norwich on April 13-15 1973

Council for British Archaeology 8 St. Andrew's Place, London NW1 4LB

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHURCHES

A Report from the Churches Committee
of the Council for British Archaeology

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the Conference on the
Archaeology of Churches, held at Norwich
on 13th —15th April 1973

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FOREWORD

In 1966 it became apparent that because of structural weaknesses in the fabric, new foundations would have to be constructed below York Minster. It was immediately clear that the archaeological deposits representing the early history of the church and its site would be destroyed in the process. The opportunity was grasped, and the Minster Excavations Committee has recorded a quite remarkable story starting in Roman times and ending only with the completion of the present structure. It has also demonstrated to archaeologist, churchman and layman alike that church archaeology is possible in standing churches even under conditions of extreme difficulty. It has shown that such excavations have a fundamental role to play in our understanding of the early history of the church in Britain; and it has demonstrated the need for such work when so many churches and church sites are apparently archaeologically at risk, either in alterations, redundancy proposals or development schemes.

The Council for British Archaeology is aware of the problem if only through an increasing spate of enquiries about churches and other places of worship, and about graveyards and church sites. Its newly formed Churches Committee is engaged on a thorough review of the problems posed for archaeologists by the changing spiritual and pastoral needs of the later 20th century, and the consequent alteration or abandonment of buildings and places hallowed from a century to over a millennium.

Besides the fact of the threat, a major problem is complacency amongst archaeologists. Churches are a commonplace and hitherto unthreatened part of the landscape. Their study was carried to great lengths by 19th-century architectural historians and integrated by scholars of the calibre of Clapham, Hamilton Thompson and Baldwin Brown. This has left the mistaken impression that the essential work has been done. There has also been an inevitable reluctance on the part of archaeologists to ask to dig inside churches, and on the part of church authorities to allow excavation. It is only in the light of work such as that at York Minster, and that for long carried out by archaeologists in the Netherlands, Germany and the Scandinavian countries that we can see the lacunae.

The Churches Committee has, therefore, prepared this booklet in the hope that it will draw attention to a need and an opportunity. It hopes thereby to encourage the rapid emergence of a rigorous tradition of church archaeology in Britain in which the highest standards of architectural and archaeological recording and of scholarly criticism are brought to bear on subjects so potent with historical information.

P. V. ADDYMAN
Chairman
Churches Committee of the Council
for British Archaeology

A CHURCH ARCHAEOLOGY: THE PROBLEMS

1. *The C.B.A. Churches Committee*

The Churches Committee of the Council for British Archaeology was established in response to a growing concern felt within the C.B.A. for the numerous and increasing threats to ancient churches. The committee's inaugural meeting was held in January 1972, and its 'aims and policies' were formulated as follows:

(a) To initiate a research policy for places of worship using modern archaeological techniques.

(b) To formulate an excavation and recording policy for churches which are being declared redundant, or are being subjected to some form of structural alteration.

(c) To stress the archaeological, demographic and genealogical potential of graveyards.

(d) To make recommendations for the amendment of the Pastoral Measure and other legislation in so far as these measures may be detrimental to archaeological and historical investigation.

The committee was envisaged as an advisory body to the Executive of the C.B.A., detailed to encourage and co-ordinate the archaeological study of places of worship.

The terms of reference of the committee cover places of worship of *all* denominations in England, Scotland and Wales, This particular booklet, however, is concerned specifically with the situation at present pertaining to England. The committee hopes to see the formation of regional 'off-shoots' to watch over these problems in Wales and Scotland, but in any case, it would probably be fair to say that the scale of church redundancies in those areas is much smaller than in England. In addition, this report is concerned primarily with Anglican churches, wherein lies the vast majority of our ancient and historic buildings or sites; save where an old redundant church has been leased or sold to another denomination, as for example, the small medieval church at Denton in the diocese of Rochester which is now used as a Roman Catholic chapel for the adjoining school. However, Mr. C. F. Stell has provided a contribution dealing with Nonconformist places of worship, and there is also an assessment of the current situation within the Roman Catholic Church.

2. *The importance of church archaeology*

A church building is of interest and value in many fields of study. This has long been recognised. Students of art-history and of architecture regard the parish church as a prime source. Indeed, the very nature of the building will often make this self-evident. However,

the parish church is also an integral part of a community, and as such may be seen to reflect in some ways the tastes and fortunes of that society; interior fittings such as tombs, plaques, windows or chantries and the like may provide useful demographic and social information. The stages of growth or decline of a particular building may illustrate the fluctuations in the wealth of the settlement as a whole, or in the fortunes of the local patron or benefactor. The complete history of a specific church may not always be apparent from a study of the visible structure, and even a small excavation or possibly merely the presence of a trained observer during minor repairs or alterations may reveal a new and hitherto unsuspected phase in the history of both the church and its village. The siting of a church may also be of interest; an isolated building possibly indicating a 'migrated' or abandoned settlement, and this may sometimes be the only visible indication of the presence of a deserted medieval village.

3. *State provisions for church archaeology*

Through the Ancient Monuments Acts the State has in past years taken into its care a considerable number of disused churches, most of them in ruins but some of them still roofed and glazed and having their original fittings, and through the same Acts, statutory protection has been given to a larger number of ruined churches and to the sites of destroyed churches.

Ecclesiastical buildings *in use,* however, from the beginning have been exempted from statutory control, though they have been included in the list of historic buildings compiled by the Department of the Environment. Nor is there any statutory control in the Redundant Churches Act, 1969. Indeed the present position is that when a Redundancy Scheme proposing demolition is confirmed, neither 'listing' nor 'scheduling' is effective, and demolition may take place forthwith.

The principal contribution of the Act is that it authorises the government to provide money for the Redundant Churches Fund, and the funds provided have been sufficient to preserve all churches of importance declared redundant in the first years of the Fund's existence. *(Redundant Churches Fund, Third Annual Report,* 1971, page 11). In cases where it is decided that it is more appropriate for the State rather than the Fund to take a redundant church into its care, this can be arranged through the Pastoral Measure of 1968 and the Ancient Monuments legislation, and one such church, that at Wharram Percy, Yorkshire, has been accepted by the Department of the Environment in this way and others are being considered.

As regards excavation, funds have been provided by the Department of the Environment for rescue excavations on church sites

and it is clear that the limited funds available for this work will be severely stretched in trying to meet an increasing need for adequate record and excavation. (Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, Department of the Environment).

The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) are recording churches in the course of the preparation of their county Inventories in the cities of York and Salisbury and in Stamford, and will shortly be moving into Wiltshire and the North Riding of Yorkshire. Redundant churches are being photographed, but little has been done so far in recording threatened churches apart from photography. As more medieval churches are declared redundant the Commission expects to do more in the way of historical assessment and measured surveys, but no excavation by the Commission staff will be possible.

B REDUNDANCY

1. *The Pastoral Measure*

On 30th May 1968, there was passed by the National Assembly of the Church of England "a measure. . . . to make better provision for the use, preservation or disposal of redundant churches. . . .", *Pastoral Measure* 1968, No. 1, H.M.S.O.). This Pastoral Measure laid down the channels and procedures that should be observed when a church is considered or intended for redundancy. This procedure, (see below page 25) ensured that churches could not be summarily declared redundant and demolished without proper consideration being given to their architectural or historical value, and without some provisions being made either for the preservation of important features, or at the very least, for the compilation of an adequate photographic and descriptive record.

At the same time, the Pastoral Measure encouraged dioceses to consider their resources and to initiate redundancy proceedings where applicable. This has meant that since the Measure came into effect on 1st April 1969, some 253 churches have been declared redundant. Estimates of the number of churches liable to be subject to the threat of redundancy in the future will, of course, vary according to the authority concerned; the report of the Bridges Commission, *(the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Redundant Churches,* 1958-60, S.P.C.K., 1960), states that returns made to the committee by the dioceses showed that about 370 churches were thought to be ready for redundancy, and that a further 420 or more would probably come up for redundancy before 1980, a total of 790 plus. On the other hand, Dr. Gilbert Cope in *Problem Churches* (Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, University of Birmingham, 1972), estimated that some six thousand churches would have been demolished or put to secular use before the end of the century. However, a more realistic figure might be somewhere in the region of two to three thousand churches in the next ten to fifteen years. If the numbers of churches concerned is even anything approaching this latter figure, archaeologists will need to look to their laurels to ensure that valuable material is not irretrievably lost by the total demolition or the structural alteration of ancient churches.

2. *Redundant Churches*

It should be emphasised when dealing with redundant churches that the problems facing the church are pastoral, as are the reasons why a building may be declared redundant. Population movements may render a specific church unnecessary or too expensive to maintain or to repair, especially in the case of a large medieval church serving an ever dwindling congregation, and the general shortage of

clergy means that the Church as a whole must review its resources and use them as effectively and as rationally as possible, which would not mean spreading its small workforce over a large number of tiny parishes.

A church is declared redundant on *pastoral grounds only,* but, having said that, it does not mean that the Church is unaware of the value and beauty of its buildings or of their role as part of our national heritage, indeed, it was because of these very factors that the Pastoral Measure was formulated. The process of redundancy involves expert advice given to the Church Commissioners by the Council for the Care of Places of Worship and the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches upon the value of a particular building, and whether or not it is important to save it, totally or in part. The terms of reference of these bodies are much wider than those normally considered by archaeologists, and they are concerned with preserving not only ancient churches, but also the better examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture; they are also concerned with the historic development of ritual arrangements; they are by no means insensitive to archaeological considerations.

It has been estimated that there are nearly eighteen thousand Anglican churches in England, over fourteen thousand of which are parish churches; of these some eleven thousand have been listed by the Department of the Environment (three thousand as grade A, six thousand grade B, and two thousand as 'unclassified'). A large proportion of this number of churches in England are medieval in origin or in structure. In addition, quite a number of Victorian churches have been built upon older sites. All these are of interest to the archaeologist. However, the importance of later churches should not be minimised. Sixteenth-century, Georgian, or Victorian churches may be quite priceless as prime examples of the work of specific architects, both local and national, such as Bassett Keeling, Chantrell, Gilbert, or Sloane.

3. *The number of redundancies*

Since the Pastoral Measure came into force, some 253 churches have been declared redundant (see the map and table on pages 14 and 15), of which 151 were listed (25 as grade A, 74 grade B and 52 'unclassified'). The fate of these churches has been varied. Twenty have so far been vested in the Redundant Churches Fund, a body having as its object "the preservation, in the interests of the nation and the Church of England, of churches and parts of churches of historic or architectural interest. . . ." *(Pastoral Measure* 1968, section 45.4). Those churches vested in the Fund include Parracombe, St. Petrock, Devon (diocese of Exeter), a medieval church with a seventh-century foundation, Portland St. George Reforne, Dorset (diocese

of Salisbury), built in 1754-1766 by Thomas Gilbert, and Warburton, St. Werburgh, Cheshire (diocese of Chester), which is probably sixteenth century. These twenty churches will be preserved either totally or in part, as for example, Lightcliffe, St. Matthew, in the diocese of Bradford, built in 1774-1775, where the nave and aisles were demolished owing to their poor condition but the west tower has been vested in the Fund. They will, it is hoped, be eventually open to the public as show pieces where this is feasible, and used for occasional services as is already the case with Portland, St. George Reforne and Parracombe.

At the other extreme, since 1969, licences to demolish have been granted to some 77 churches. The vast majority of these were Victorian structures considered to have little or no merit, for example, St. Mark Cromford (Derby), St. Andrew Pilmoor (York) or St John East Acklam (York); but this was not always the case. The Old Church of Otterbourne (Winchester), was demolished with regret owing to the extent of its dereliction and the danger to the public, on condition that full photographic records were made and that sections of the medieval wall-paintings were removed for preservation by the Winchester Museum.

4. *Alternative uses*

Of the remaining churches, a large proportion still await a final decision upon their future, and efforts are being made to find a suitable secular use. The alternative uses that have so far been sanctioned involve differing degrees of structural alteration, the plans of which must be approved by the Church Commissioners on the advice of the Advisory Board before the use is accepted. The extent of this replanning may be minimal when a church is to be used by another denomination as a place of worship, as in the case of St. Edward, Leyton (diocese of Chelmsford), which is to be used by the Pentecostal Church, or quite major constructions when a building is to be turned into a private dwelling, an undertaking which will involve usually a second floor, drainage and heating systems, and alterations to, or the insertion of windows; nevertheless, leasing for private residential use is quite a common alternative for a redundant church as for example, St. James East Cranmore (Bath and Wells), St. Mary Brentingby (Leicester), or St. Giles Mansell Gamage (Hereford). Other uses include a masonic hall (St. Giles, Colchester), recording rooms and orchestral rehearsing rooms, (Holy Trinity, Southwark), an Elizabethan Theatre (St. George, Tufnell Park, London), or a County Records Office (St. Thomas, Winchester).

A further possible alternative use for a redundant church is that of being sold, leased, or otherwise vested in the Department of the Environment or in the Local County Council, to be preserved by

them as a national monument, community park or picnic area. So far, one church is being transferred to the Department of the Environment: Studley Royal in the diocese of Ripon. The Advisory Board for Redundant Churches has recommended that such a use would be suitable for several other churches too, providing that satisfactory arrangements can be made. There are, however, practical difficulties in taking such a step. For example, the Bedfordshire County Council are interested in taking over the ruined Old Church at Clophill as an amenity area, but the state of the building and the cost of the necessary repairs to render it safe and thus insurable are problems which still remain to be solved.

5. *Some regional examples*

There is much variation throughout the dioceses of England in the numbers of churches being declared redundant, and in the need for such actions (see the map and table on pages 14 and 15). For example, in the diocese of Ripon which has some 264 churches, so far only five have been or are in the process of being made redundant, and one further case is thought likely. The Rochester diocese is smaller in area but has 285 churches, eleven of which face redundancy, with a small number (under five) which may become redundant in the future.

Of Ripon's total of 264 churches approximately three-quarters are medieval, but the five redundancies so far present no great problems. The medieval church of Holy Trinity, Richmond, is to be converted into a regimental museum for the Green Howards; the fine 'Gothic revival' church built by William Burges at Studley Royal is to go to the Department of the Environment;the mid-eighteenth-century church of St. Martin at Allerton Mauleverer will go to the Redundant Churches Fund; and the unexceptional Christ Church, Meadow Lane, Leeds, built in 1823, was demolished in 1972; and St. Andrew, Stourton, Leeds, built in 1898 is likely to be demolished. The further church under threat of redundancy is Victorian and unlikely to cause too many problems from an archaeological viewpoint.

In the compact diocese of Rochester, at least 50% of its 285 churches are medieval in origin if not in structure, added to which, it has some two dozen Stuart and Georgian churches, including the church of King Charles the Martyr, Tunbridge Wells, built in 1678-1684 (grade B), and St. George, Gravesend, rebuilt in 1731-1733 by Charles Sloane (also grade B). Of the rest, eighty or more are Victorian constructions, and nearly fifty were built since the beginning of the twentieth-century. So far, eleven churches are being made redundant; it is hoped that three of these will go to the Redundant Churches Fund: the medieval Old Church of St. Mary, Burham, the grade B medieval church of St. Michael, East Peckham, and possibly St. Andrew, Gravesend, a small nineteenth-century water-side mission. A further

three will be demolished, including Rochester St. Peter, a Victorian church built just outside the city walls, and Chatham St. Mary, a medieval church whose nave and chancel (Victorian 'reconstructions'), are to be demolished, but the tower retained. So far, alternative uses have been recommended for three churches: St. Nicolas, Rochester, a grade A fourteenth-century building adjacent to the cathedral, has already been converted into a Diocesan Office; the grade II ruined chapel at Paddlesworth may be used as a family monument by the farmer whose land it abuts; and a further building will be sold to the Roman Catholic Church.

6. *Rural problems*

Some dioceses are faced with special problems. Salisbury, with 645 churches has so far had twenty-nine cases of redundancy. A further nine churches are in process of redundancy, and eight more are considered likely to be made redundant. Sarum is a large diocese, and comprises a great number of small rural parishes, a diocesan reorganisation is in progress to rationalise this, hence the large number of redundancies to date. Furthermore, the diocese lists over two hundred medieval churches that it considers to be of importance, this list not always being in agreement with that of the Department of the Environment. Of those churches that are redundant or almost so, fourteen have gone or may go to the Redundant Churches Fund; one, Amesbury Cemetery Chapel, has been demolished; and so far an alternative use has been suggested for a further seventeen. Of these alternatives, nine may be leased for domestic use, St. Rumbold, Shaftesbury, as a place of Christian worship and teaching, Holy Trinity, Wareham as an arts centre, Upcerne as a private chapel, and All Saints, Dorchester as a store for the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society. The fate of the others remains to be determined.

Similar difficulties are faced in the East Anglian dioceses, where there are a large number of fine big medieval churches served by small congregations who find great difficulty in bearing the costs of repair and maintenance. The Reverend John Fitch in his booklet, *The Churches of* Suffolk (published by the Suffolk Preservation Society), says that of the 490 churches in the diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, 218 serve congregations of under 250; and of these, 138 have under 200, and 45-50 under 100. Nineteen churches are already redundant or in the course of being made so, and according to Mr. Fitch's own grading system, of the 188 churches which he considers to be of exceptional quality, 78 are threatened, of the 233 'quite good' churches, 109 are at risk, and of the 49 'expendable' churches, 31 may go.

7. *Urban problems*

The problem of dwindling congregations also occurs in urban areas, especially in the centres of towns and cities which are no longer residential areas but which retain their former quota of parish churches. In the cases of later churches of little or no value, it is often as well for demolition to be authorised so that the site may be sold for development; a useful source of funds. But problems arise when the central area of a city contains a large number of fine medieval churches as is the case with Norwich, Salisbury and York. These cities have all been the subjects of pastoral reorganisation schemes.

Salisbury *(see* the *Report of the Salisbury Churches Committee,* 1972) has the problem of eleven parishes containing thirteen churches. These the report would like to see reorganised into five parishes. The sort of problems involved may be seen by the 'central parish' which, apart from the cathedral, will contain three grade A medieval churches: St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Edmund and St. Martin. It is recommended that of the three, St. Edmund be given up, since it will soon need a great deal of money spent upon it to keep it in good repair, it is not the best of the three, and owing to its close proximity to St. Thomas, there will be no great hardship to its existing congregation. It is hoped to retain both St. Martin and St. Thomas, the latter in the role of a weekday church comparable with St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London.

York, the subject of a series of reports and pamphlets since 1967 (see Bibliography), has some eighteen medieval churches within its walls, of which it is suggested only five be retained for regular worship. The fate of the eleven likely redundancies is causing much debate and concern.

The city of Norwich is faced with the greatest problem of the three, being exceptionally well-endowed with 32 medieval churches. The *Norwich City Commission Report* recommends that of these only six be retained in a reorganisation scheme which reduces the number of parishes from fourteen to four. The problem of the remaining 24 churches has led to the foundation of the 'Friends of the Norwich Churches', who are determined to preserve all 24 churches. It is hoped that alternative uses can be found that will be commercially viable.

8. *Nonconformist chapels and meeting houses* (By Mr. C. F. Stell)

The number of places of nonconformist worship in use in England is probably about 15,000, a figure comparable with the number of parish churches and equally subject to problems of redundancy from a variety of causes; the number of Methodist chapels has been reduced by five thousand over the past forty years and significant

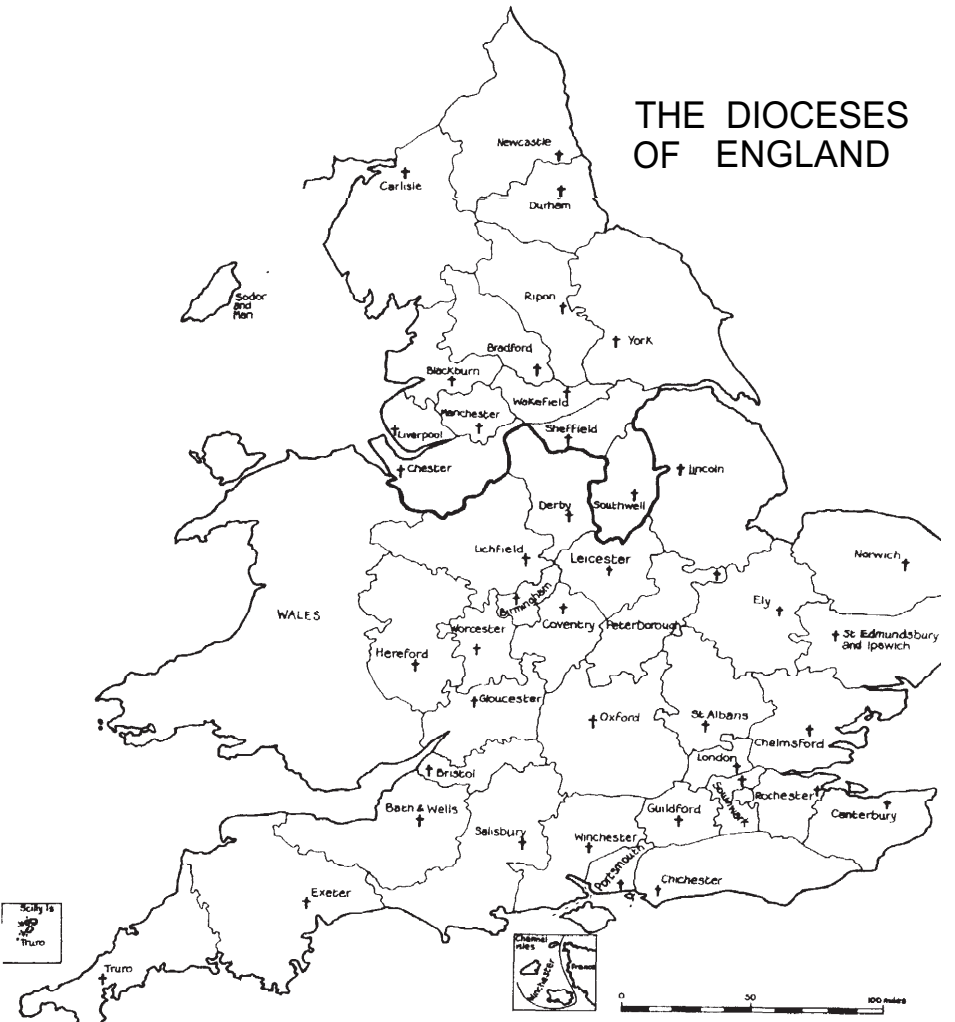

Figure 1: Map showing the dioceses of England

Figure: 2 REDUNDANCIES AND EXCAVATIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Dioceses	*Redundancies (correct to February 1973)*	*Excavations or recordings from 1956-1970 (after Medieval Archaeology)*	
		Standing churches (in use at 1940)	*Ruined or sites of churches*
Bath and Wells	10	0	4
Birmingham	3	0	0
Bristol	1	2	0
Canterbury	10	1	2
Chelmsford	16	1	2
Chichester	4	2	2
Coventry	3	1	1
Derby	2	1	2
Ely	8	0	2
Exeter	7	0	2
Gloucester	3	0	3
Guildford	4	0	1
Hereford	11	1	1
Leicester	3	0	1
Lichgeld	3	0	1
Lincoln	9	0	0
London	14	4	3
Norwich	3	0	11
Oxford	13	0	1
Peterborough	7	2	3
Portsmouth	0	0	0
Rochester	8	0	1
St. Albans	8	2	1
St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich	6	0	3
Salisbury	26	2	0
Southwark	7	0	2
Truro	0	0	2
Winchester	10	1	6
Worcester	3	0	0
Blackburn	0	0	0
Bradford	3	0	0
Carlisle	2	0	0
Chester	10	0	0
Durham	3	2	0
Liverpool	2	0	0
Manchester	5	0	0
Newcastle	3	0	0
Ripon	5	0	1
Sheffield	2	0	0
Southwell	1	0	1
Wakefield	9	0	
York	6	1	3
Totals	253	25	61
Bangor	information not yet available	0	0
Llandaff		0	3
Monmouth		0	1
St. Asaph		0	0
St. Davids		0	1
Swansea and Brecon		1	0
Sodor and Man		0	1
Totals		1	6
Overall totals		26	67

reductions have occurred in other denominations. Although the great majority of closures has involved buildings of nineteenth-century date these included several of notable quality, nor should the existence of earlier structures be forgotten; numerous medieval and later buildings were converted into meeting houses in the seventeenth century, and several remain in use, whilst of the great number of special purpose buildings erected in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, many still survive, the Quakers and Unitarians being particularly wealthy in works of this period.

The multiplicity of denominations concerned, and the high degree of independence of many local congregations creates considerable difficulties in the transmission of information of proposed closures, and the period of neglect which often precedes an application to demolish or convert a listed building greatly impedes the acquisition of satisfactory records. Little serious consideration of the architectural merits of their properties appears to be given by any of the Free Churches, nor does there exist within those Churches any body of informed opinion adequate to safeguard buildings of exceptional historical or visual quality. The urgent need for a detailed study of the architecture of Protestant Dissent was acknowledged by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) in 1968 and a selective examination of several thousand chapels and meeting houses has been proceeding rapidly. The results of this survey will be published as soon as possible. Any further information or queries on this topic will be gladly received by: Mr. C. F. Stell, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London WIX 1AB.

9. *Roman Catholic churches*

The Roman Catholic Church is well aware of the problem of its historic churches and their contents. Attention has recently been drawn to the general problem by the Circular Letter from the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation (Rome, 11th April 1971). The response in England has been uneven. Individual dioceses have appointed Art and Architecture sub-committees within the Liturgical Commission and these are already well established as in Leeds, Portsmouth and Southwark dioceses. Elsewhere the problem is dealt with by the existing diocesan Sites and Buildings Committees, which are not specifically concerned with historic buildings or with ancient works of sacred art. There is, as yet, no central organisation in England and Wales.

C EVERYDAY ARCHAEOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. Alterations to churches in use

As well as being concerned about church redundancies and opportunities for excavation, archaeologists should be aware of the importance of close liaison with the Church authorities whenever an ancient church is being considered for some form of structural alteration and repair work. If an archaeologist is present during this work, valuable knowledge may be gained.

The sort of work envisaged would be the removal of interior fittings or of plaster which might reveal new architectural features, or medieval wall-decoration, or the excavation of foundation trenches for church extensions or vestries; as at the recent extension to the Saxon church of Sompting (diocese of Chichester), where an excavation should have been undertaken, or the underpinning of the south wall of St. Michael, Farndish (diocese of St. Albans), which revealed "Saxon" stonework. Work undertaken on the interior floor of an ancient church or a church on an ancient site is of particular value, since in installing heating systems, for example, evidence may be discovered of earlier stages in the architectural growth of the church. The systematic work of the Landesdenkmalamt of Baden-Württemberg under Dr. Gunther Fehring has shown how dramatically revealing such work can be (see Bibliography).

Cases of alterations may arise either under faculty procedure when dealing with churches still in use, or during redundancy when a church is being converted to a secular use. For example, the installation of drainage systems during a conversion for domestic use may comprise the insertion of pipes both beneath the existing floor level, and outside the present external walls. It should be pointed out too, that work carried out under a faculty may be represented as merely minor, but, if it involves any form of removal of material from floor or walls, interior or exterior, it may reveal valuable information to the trained observer.

2. *Disappearing graveyards* (By Dr. H. L. White)

One of the 'aims and policies' of the Churches Committee relates to the archaeological potential of graveyards.

The investigation of a churchyard above ground level has many different aspects, such as the architectural design of monuments, the art-history of their sculpture, the contribution of their inscriptions to local and sometimes national history and to the reconstruction of economic and social history known as demography, their examples of heraldry perhaps not recorded elsewhere, their epitaphs reflecting religious and sometimes literary and secular thought through the

ages, the palaeography of previous centuries, and the rise and fall of the stone mason's art and of individual masons and engravers, where these can be identified.

In conjunction with documentary evidence of Parish Registers, Burial Books, Wills, etc., there is tremendous potential here for reconstruction of the life of past centuries, in a field that has attracted in the past only limited attention, such as that of the genealogist, often with interest only in a specific family such as his own, or the antiquarian in search of such limited objectives as eccentric epitaphs.

The investigation of a churchyard below ground level is a virtually untouched field, from the recovery of buried monuments (a sequence of seventeenth-century headstones has been recorded 2-3 feet down) to the anatomy of populations of which there is no above ground trace; for the proximity of a churchyard to a church that was the original focus of a settlement of population means inevitably that the sites of many country churchyards must have been in use for centuries before any surviving monuments or the dates of the earliest parish registers.

Current legislation from the Pastoral Measure of 1968, enabling churchyards to be converted to other use (and in 1972 one large graveyard has been taken over by a Local Authority for a Car Park), to "Operation Eyesore" of the Department of the Environment, in which State funds were made available (fortunately for a limited period) in 1972-73 for the 'tidying up' of graveyards including the removal of monuments, sounds only too clearly the warning that opportunities for the present generation of archaeologists may not be similarly available to future generations.

3. *To produce an adequate record. . . .*

The Churches Committee hopes to promote the systematic recording and investigation of churchyards where clearance schemes or general redundancy schemes are to take place. In particular it is concerned to improve the standards of churchyard recording for which provision is already made in the Open Spaces Act of 1906. The recording is often done by unskilled observers, who may deem a monument 'unreadable' simply because it is not in modern script or language or because it is old and requires particular effort to decipher. The provision itself requires only an abstract to be made, from which vital information can be omitted. Success in this field will depend on the training of recorders and much activity, whether professional or amateur, at a local level.

A specifically archaeological manual is needed to show the importance of recording the relationship of memorials within the graveyard, and the need for archaeological observation when graveyards are to be destroyed or translated.

D THE POTENTIAL OF CHURCH EXCAVATION (By Mr. P. V. Addyman)

1. *Past achievements*

In a tradition going back into the early years of the 19th century, architectural historians have analysed the visible architectural evidence for the history of almost every ancient church in the country. The tradition is seen at its best today in the work of the Royal Commissions on Historical Monuments, and has been taken to new heights in a study of the Saxon church at Repton (Taylor, 1971). The principles of structural criticism have recently been spelled out (Taylor, 1972). The knowledge which has accrued from this activity, which at one period almost reached the level of a polite English pastime, forms a major part of the evidence for the history of the church in early England, and for the fates and fortunes of settlements in town and country alike. Throughout, however, scholars have occasionally been aware of a much more detailed and potentially knowable story. They have glimpsed it when alterations within churches have revealed traces of earlier buildings. Sir Alfred Clapham saw such a glimpse in 1930 when a new heating system was being installed in Westminster Abbey. This led to a complete reappraisal of Edward the Confessor's church at Westminster (Tanner and Clapham, 1933). A similar opportunity came when the nave of Hexham Abbey was built in 1908 but was only partly grasped (Baldwin Brown, 1925,167-75; Taylor and Taylor, 1965, 299). In addition to the evidence thrown up by chance there have been limited research excavations to answer particular points, as in the the series carried out by Sir Eric Fletcher and the late Dudley Jackson, and assiduously reported in successive volumes of the *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* A more comprehensive investigation, of the early history of the late Saxon timber church at Greenstead, Essex, demonstrated the great possibilities of such work, though the results remain unpublished. There are various other examples of selective church excavation, though surprisingly few in relation to the importance and interest of the subject.

Excavations on deserted church sites have been far more common. In a vigorous campaign in the first quarter of the century Sir Alfred Clapham and Sir Charles.Peers established the essential facts about early Kentish churches (Peers, 1927; Peers and Clapham, 1927). Large numbers of churches, particularly monasteries, were cleared of their destruction rubble by the Commissioners of Works between the wars, though unfortunately with minimal archaeological supervision and often without a subsequent report on findings.

2. *Present practice*

With the post-war growth of medieval archaeology there is a growing interest in and awareness of the potential of church excavation. The effects can be seen in the annual reports on church excavations in *Medieval Archaeology* (Fig. 2). Three major campaigns stand out, however, for their importance in establishing new standards, a new scale of activity, and a demonstration of the power of archaeology to provide facts previously thought unknowable about the development of a particular church, its relation to its settlement and environment, and about the demographic history of its community.

At York Minster rescue excavations ahead of essential structural engineering have resulted in the recovery of a near-complete ground plan for three successive churches, and very significant information about the history of the site in Roman and Saxon times (Hope-Taylor, 1971). The essential lesson is that comprehensive investigation of buried archaeological deposits can be carried out inside a living church without danger to the fabric, and without the interruption of worship, No major church restoration scheme which involves ground disturbance should henceforth be carried out without such investigation.

The recent campaign of excavations at Winchester included three church excavations. In one the history of the Old Minster was traced from modest origins in the foundation of King Kenwalh in A.D. 648 through a complex history culminating in final and monumental additions in 980 and 994. As a result the Old Minster is now 'the only Anglo-Saxon Cathedral of first rank about which anything substantial is known' (Biddle, 1970). The achievement, which will change ideas about the scale and inspiration of late Saxon architecture, is all the more remarkable for being established largely by study of the robbed-out foundation trenches of the church. It demonstrates the technical standards which will be demanded of church archaeologists (Biddle and Biddle, 1969). Similar, but necessary, technical virtuosity was shown in the excavation of St. Pancras and St. Mary, two neighbouring town churches in Lower Brook Street. St. Mary's emerged in the 10th century, incorporating a pre-existing stone secular structure, and went through something like 18 discernible structural alterations before its demolition in the 15th century or later. Its development was the better understood by being related to the development of the neighbourhood in which it stood, and that of the more favoured church St. Pancras. Clearly church excavation, besides providing a detailed history of the building itself, can reflect in essence the history of its environs. The Winchester excavation has shown that church investigations can never be complete without investigation of adjoining areas.

The village church has long been regarded by local historians as a microcosm of the history of the parish. Much had already been read from the structural sequence discernible in the standing walls of St. Martins, Wharram Percy, Yorkshire, before excavation. The church was investigated as part of a comprehensive study of the deserted medieval village around it. Excavation revealed three phases of the Saxon village church (Rahtz, 1972), followed by various enlargements and, subsequently, retractions, of which only some were reflected in the standing structure. It demonstrated clearly the origins, floruit and decay of the settlement. A second part of the Wharram investigation was the study of the graveyard. By excavation of sufficient burials to provide a statistically acceptable sample there is an opportunity to study the morphological, genetic and disease differences of a medieval population; and to establish mortality rates and other data essential for demographic historians (Beresford and Hurst, 1971, 132-5). The study of later gravestones and memorials serves to add to the picture.

3. *Continental example*

While large-scale architectural clearance schemes have been undertaken in France and Belgium, it is Germany, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries which provide exemplars worth following in Britain. Systematic investigations of churches undergoing alteration have enabled the early history of the church in Baden-Württemberg to be virtually rewritten from archaeological sources. A particular example is the excavation of St. Dionysius, Esslingen (Fehring, 1970), though there are many others. Similarly standards of structural analysis, excavation and publication far beyond anything contemplated in Britain have been achieved in Germany, as in the work on Unterregenbach (Fehring, 1972) and on Kornelimünster (Hugot, 1968). Clearly an acquaintance with these and the very many other post-war excavations in Germany are vital for English church archaeologists. A short bibliography is given on page 28.

While the impetus for German church excavation came from the reconstruction schemes following war damage, very few of the recent excavations have been done for this reason. In some cases they are part of systematic well-funded research schemes as at Corvey and Aachen (Kreusch, 1963). In others they are undertaken as systematic rescue excavations by a state archaeological service.

The Netherlands state service for archaeological research has for many years addressed itself to the problems of churches, with if anything a bias to the solution of major historical problems and questions of town development. The results achieved by this highly professional body are readily available in various volumes of the

Bericht voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek. Facilities for the state to undertake investigations in churches still in use has also led to significant achievements in Denmark, where church investigations got off to an early start with the work of Dyggve around the church at Jelling. At present all church alterations are notifiable to Section 2 of the Danish National Museum, which may then carry out rescue excavations if it seems archaeological evidence is at risk. This happy situation is unlikely to be achieved in Britain because of the 'ecclesiastical exemption' but Danish experience shows what may, therefore, have been lost—and may be lost in future. Danish church excavations are often reported in the pages of *Skalk.* There have been a number of important rescue and research excavations in churches in Norway and Sweden; an excellent example of the high standards attained can be seen in the Lund town excavations (Blomqvist and Martensson, 1963).

E A PROGRAMME OF ACTION

1 *Standards of research*

The committee has three immediate concerns: a policy for research excavation, the establishment of archaeological consultants or representatives on a diocesan level, and the publication of a research and rescue survey and policy report.

A specific research project will be undertaken as a joint venture with the Society of Antiquaries of London to provide a model English example which applies modern archaeological and architectural techniques in the total investigation of a church site. This will involve both excavation and the examination of the standing-fabric of the church, and is to include; *(a)* the provision of complete photographic and drawn records to the highest standard, *(b)* the removal of plaster where necessary, *(c)* excavations within and outside the church, *(d)* a complete record of the churchyard and its monuments, and *(e)* the full consultation of all the surviving church records. It is hoped that this project will be carried out at Deerhurst (Gloucester), where the church is itself of prime importance in Anglo-Saxon architecture, and the site should provide a long continuity of church occupation, In addition, the evidence from air photographs suggests considerable earlier occupation of the locality. As well as this project, it is hoped that others will follow, perhaps at Brixworth (Peterborough), and certainly at other more humble churches.

2. *Local involvement*

In order to ensure that sound archaeological advice is available at a local (diocesan) level, it has been suggested that the Churches Committee should nominate consultants or representatives for each diocesan advisory committee. Such consultants would give an archaeological assessment when appropriate, and exercise a watching brief over proposed redundancies or structural alterations. He or she would also submit an annual report to the Churches Committee. In this way, it is hoped that the committee will be able to act where necessary to organise or co-ordinate rescue excavations, or arrange for observation to be maintained on any operation likely to reveal archaeological material.

3. *Manpower*

The committee realises that there are few church archaeologists in Britain today; certainly too few to attempt even a part of the rescue work needed in the face of accelerating redundancy. It is one of the Church Committee's main aims to encourage and provide for the education of church archaeologists.

4. *National awareness*

The committee's aim is to produce a report upon the problems and potentials of church archaeology along the lines of the C.B.A. report on urban archaeology, *The Erosion of History* (1972). At the same time, the committee hopes to bring about a greater awareness of the historical potential of church archaeology. It must be brought to the attention of archaeologists just as much as to the Church authorities and the general public.

5. *Legislation*

The committee is also to submit proposals for consideration during the forthcoming revision of the Pastoral Measure. Archaeological considerations seem notably absent from the 1968 Measure, and a realistic provision for archaeological and architectural investigation and recording would do much to allay the fears which led to the establishment of the C.B.A. Churches Committee. The committee also hopes to see better provision for church archaeology in future Planning and Ancient Monuments legislation.

ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATION

The Pastoral Measure of 1968 was designed to safeguard the historic churches of England by setting out adequate procedures for redundancy. The stages through which a church must pass in order to be made redundant are as follows:

1. The proposed redundancy is usually initiated at a local level by the *Parish Council* or by the *Diocesan Pastoral Committee.* These bodies, after seeking the advice of the *Council for the Care of Places of Worship* upon the historical and architectural value of the church or churches concerned and their fittings, and after consulting with the *Bishop,* will prepare a draft *pastoral scheme* embodying the intended redundancies.

2. The draft scheme is then submitted to the *Church Commissioners,* who will seek advice upon the contents of the scheme from the *Advisory Board for Redundant Churches.* The Board will advise upon the suitability of the scheme according to the quality and value of the building concerned. It may issue a demolition certificate, approve a suggested alternative use contained in the pastoral scheme, or it may propose that a church should be offered to the *Redundant Churches Fund* or to the *Department of the Environment* for preservation, or that an attempt should be made to find a suitable alternative use for the building.

3. The pastoral scheme is then submitted by the Church Commissioners to Her Majesty in Council for approval.

4. Once the pastoral scheme has been ratified, the church will either be demolished or put to an alternative use according to the contents of the scheme and the recommendations of the Advisory Board, or it will enter into a statutory *waiting period* of one to three years. At the end of this period a church may be vested in the Redundant Churches Fund or the Department of the Environment, or it will become the subject of a draft *redundancy scheme* embodying a proposed use for the building.

   Such a use is to be sought by a *Diocesan Redundant Churches Uses Committee* and/or the Church Commissioners, and is subject to the recommendations of the Advisory Board. If at the end of the waiting period no suitable use has been found, the church **must** be either vested in the Redundant Churches Fund, or demolished.

5. The redundancy scheme embodying the final fate of the building is submitted for approval to Her Majesty in Council.

The Pastoral Measure was intended to protect historic churches from unauthorised destruction. However, since it came into force on 1st April 1969, several practical difficulties have become apparent:

(a) The procedure, as outlined above, may seem cumbersome and provides for the involvement of no less than twelve separate bodies or individuals.

(b) The statutory waiting period, although designed to provide sufficient time for an alternative use to be found, is not always necessary. The Redundant Churches Fund, for example, would prefer that if a church seems likely to come to them it should do so without delay. The care of the redundant church during this period is always a problem: it is an unwelcome burden upon the Diocesan Board of Finance which is responsible for it; and it is often an open invitation to vandals. Much damage may be caused during this 'interregnum', the case of Holy Trinity, Colchester being a prime example. This fine church, famous for its Saxon tower, reached such a filthy and dilapidated condition that it was necessary to organise parties of local young people to clean it up.

(c) It is by no means easy to find an alternative use for an ecclesiastical building. The factors which have led to the declaration of redundancy might make the discovery of such a use most unlikely: if for example, a church is isolated or in a poor state of preservation, or even too large to be economically heated and maintained. Furthermore, not all proposed uses will be considered suitable, nor will all plans for conversion be thought desirable, Consequently, if uses are not found, many good but not exceptional churches which are not thought to be of sufficient merit to go to the Redundant Churches Fund *must be demolished* to comply with the Pastoral Measure.

(d) The safety of the contents of a redundant church is not always assured. If they remain in a church that is closed during the waiting period, they may mysteriously disappear, to find their way to some shop window labelled as 'antiques'. Even if this does not occur, there are great difficulties in finding them homes within the Church, especially the unexceptional articles. Neither does the Measure contain an adequate provision for the recording of the contents of a church or its churchyard prior to their removal.

(e) Lastly, the Pastoral Measure is not designed to cope with the problems raised by churches that are ruins or have been out of use for some time. The historic value of a particular building may argue against its demolition, but its ruinous condition will be a very serious obstacle to its preservation, as in the case of the Old Church at Otterbourne in the diocese of Winchester (see page 10).

SECULAR LEGISLATION

Despite the ecclesiastical exemption (Ancient Monuments Act, 1913, section 22) church buildings and their curtilages are subject to planning controls, but these are somewhat ambiguous. A church cannot be the subject of a Building Preservation Order, but it may be 'listed' by the Department of the Environment as a building of historical and national importance. However, since the ecclesiastical exemption, it is no longer necessary for notification to be given of any intention to demolish or alter a building being used by the Church of England, thus depriving the listing of any real effect.

Nevertheless, normal planning controls still apply to a church. This creates the anomaly of the Local Planning Authority being unable to prevent the demolition of an historic church, but being required to give planning permission for any external improvements or alterations. These latter can include the erection of an extension or a vestry, or of an external heating system, alterations to the roof or the windows (such as double-glazing), or the addition of a clock-dial. More rigid planning controls apply if a church is part of a Conservation Area as designated by the Local Planning Authority, in which instance, for example, there are controls on the painting of the exterior of a church or the height of a boundary fence.

Generally speaking the same conditions that apply to the church, are also relevant to the churchyard. However, a major exception is that a structure in a churchyard may be scheduled and this has been effected upon such structures as churchyard crosses, memorials, gates, architectural fragments, and sundials. In addition, a Tree Preservation Order may be applied to a tree or hedge in a churchyard.

A further aspect of secular legislation as it concerns churches is that a Local Authority *may* provide monies towards the costs of repairing or maintaining historic churches. Whether this aid is forthcoming will vary with the Authority. Some Local Councils (e.g. Hampshire and Surrey) have a definite policy against the allocation of such grants. In other areas, grants have already been made: for example, by the Lindsey, Kesteven, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire County Councils. However, in some cases, the local authority will wish to have a safeguard or control upon how its money is spent, a fact which some churches are wont to regard as a serious threat to their independence. It must be hoped that this fear can be shown to be groundless in order that more local councils may be encouraged to contribute much needed funds for the preservation of our historic churches. A Working Party of the General Synod of the Church of England is at present discussing ways in which government funds may be used for the repair of churches in use for public worship.

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