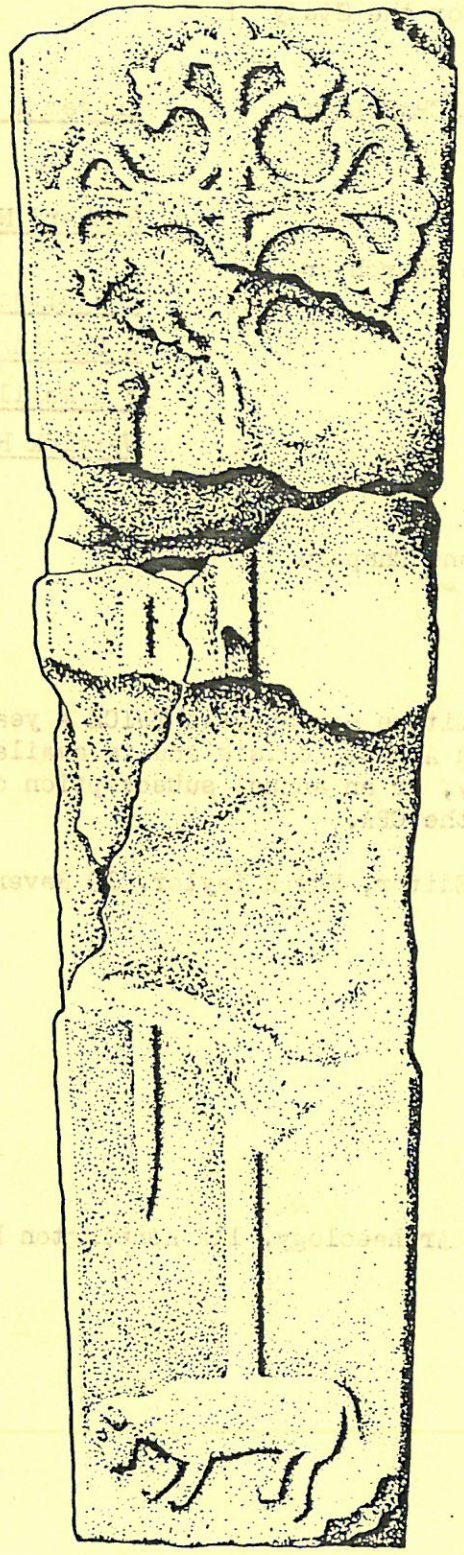
BULLETIN

of the CBA Churches Committee



St Peter, Warmsworth

Number 11

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The Bulletin of the CBA Churches Committee now appears TWICE a year. It is sent free of charge to Diocesan Archaeologists and is available to others for the sum of 60p per copy, or an annual subscription of £1.00. All subscriptions should be sent to the CBA.

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NOTES

Chapels and Meeting Houses: ecclesiology in the free churches

Nonconformist places of worship lack the popular attraction which generations of writers have accorded to other ecclesiastical buildings. They nevertheless form a large and important component of the British architectural heritage. They are of great significance as social documents as well as objects of much structural and visual interest.

This legacy is at risk. Rising costs of maintenance, declining congregations, and other factors leading to reunion or amalgamation are causing redundancies on a massive scale. No regular provision is made by nonconformist denominations for the preservation of the best of their buildings. As a result many are being destroyed, while in others the harmony between fabric and fittings is being broken by works of internal conversion.

To emphasize and explore these factors the CBA organized a one-day conference at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 3 November 1979. The day began with a magisterial overview from Christopher Stell, which included illustrations of a rich selection of buildings. From the general we were then moved to the very particular: Dr Clyde Binfield concentrated on just one building: the Fairhaven Congregational church at Lytham St Annes, begun in 1907. Dr Binfield considered the reasons for its construction, the design and sources of inspiration, the fund raising. This was a fascinating piece of socio-religious research. From one building we were then introduced to one town, by Dr Ian Sellers, who considered the lost and remaining nonconformist buildings of Warrington.

After lunch came several delightful lectures. These included one by Roger Thorne on the location and recording of forgotten chapels in Cornwall. This included some penetrating comments on the distribution of chapels in relation to settlement, and the differing strengths of various denominations. David Butler discussed Quaker meeting-houses in the Lake Counties, and Richard Haslam reviewed the development of chapel architecture in Wales, taking a broadly chronological approach and comparing examples from north and south Wales by using two projectors. Sadly, the momentum of the day was checked by Philip Hayden's paper on Baptist meeting-houses in the Cotswolds. Hitherto, all speakers had kept more or less to time (30 minutes), whereas Hayden talked for an hour. The audience became restive. Aware that time was running out, Marcus Binney then talked briefly about some aims and methods in the preservation of chapels, and John Brandon-Jones outlined the scope of State Aid for places of worship in use. A short discussion, skilfully co-ordinated by Chairman Asa Briggs, brought the meeting to a close.

The CBA's Working Party on Nonconformist Places of Worship (an offshoot of the Churches Committee) will be meeting in the near future in order to review the suggestions for a co-ordinating body, society, or analogous organism which were made at the conference. All those who attended the conference will be kept informed of developments.

International Society for the Study of Church Monuments

In September 1978 a symposium on the subject of monumental effigies was held at the Tower of London. Its initiators were Mr A V B Norman, Master of the Armouries, and Mr Claude Blair, Keeper of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Those present voted for the formation of a society for the study of church monuments.

The Society's aims are to promote the study, care, and conservation of funerary monuments and related art of all periods and countries. This includes not only sculpture in the round or in relief, together with its architectural framework, but also flat memorials, as well as both stained glass and wall painting associated with burials. For too long these forms of memorial have

been studied in isolation from each other: brasses in particular have received much more attention than carving in three dimensions.

The Society aims to serve the needs of those actively involved with church monuments whether in a professional or private capacity: it will enable them to meet, notably at a symposium which will be held every two years; it will keep them in touch with recent publications and research through the medium of a newsletter. This will appear at least twice a year and will enable members to exchange information and ideas. A list of members, giving brief details of their interests in the field of church monuments, has already been issued. Further details are availble from the Secretary, International Society for the Study of Church Monuments, c/o The Armouries, H M Tower, London EC3N 4AB.

An abbreviated version of the paper read at the symposium by Harry Tummers, lecturer at Nijmegen University, on 'Methods of dating thirteenth century effigies' will appear in the next Bulletin.

PARASITE EGGS AND CHURCH ARCHAEOLOGY

Andrew K G Jones

The purpose of this short article is to ask archaeologists and other workers to consider taking samples from ancient human burials for parasitological investigation. Suitable samples will not only give evidence of the range of intestinal worms harboured by the host, but will also help in the elucidation of some of the problems currently facing those working on parasite remains from archaeological deposits.

For many years it has been known that under suitable conditions recognizable eggs and cysts of certain parasites of man and animals can survive in archaeological deposits. As early as 1910, M A Ruffer reported a large number of calcified eggs of the blood fluke Schistosoma (Bilharzia) in the kidneys of two XXth Dynasty Egyptian mummies. Slightly nearer home, both the Grauballe and Tollund corpses, recovered from peat bogs in Denmark, contained identifiable eggs of the human whipworm, Trichuris trichuria.

In this country, tapeworm hydatid cysts (large calcified cysts formed by the developing worm) have occasionally been found associated with human skeletons of Roman and later date. Hull, London, Southampton, Winchester, and York have all produced archaeological deposits, usually pits, which contain large numbers of eggs of common parasites of man and domestic animals. Almost certainly these scattered records do not accurately reflect the frequency with which parasite remains occur in archaeological deposits; rather they are related to the distribution of parasitologists prepared to examine archaeological material.

The identification and interpretation of parasite remains from pits has been hampered by the possibility that the deposits might be composed of faecal material from a wide range of animals other than man, and thus eggs of parasites which infest wild or domesticated animals may be present in addition to human worm eggs. Documentary evidence indicates that mixing of faecal material is possible; many medieval records mention the public nuisance caused by dung-hills in towns and it seems quite likely that quantities of animal faeces became admixed with human excreta in such easily accessible middens. It is therefore impossible to be certain that a group of parasite eggs recovered from a pit come from one species of host animal, let alone that they were of human origin. This uncertainty is further compounded when the biology of the worms is considered. Some of the commonest parasites, for instance the whipworms (Trichuris spp), occur in a wide variety of host animals - eg mice, rats, dogs, pigs, and man; all produce eggs of a similar

shape and size. Fortunately, by accurately measuring large numbers of eggs and applying statistical methods, modern whipworm eggs can be identified to species.

While it might be reasonable to assume that ancient and modern parasite eggs are the same size, it is conceivable that ancient parasite eggs have suffered post-mortem changes in shape. Furthermore, it is possible that egg shape has undergone minute evolutionary changes during the past thousand years or so, although evidence from insect fragments recovered from ancient deposits suggests that this is unlikely.

The problem, therefore, is to obtain samples of parasite ova which are unlikely to contain a mixture of species. Samples from the gut region of waterlogged burials should produce groups of human worm eggs. Such samples can then be studied and egg dimensions compared with samples from cess pits and other egg-bearing archaeological layers. Groups of well sealed burials from a number of sites need to be examined for parasite remains. The dimensions of such eggs will fall, it is to be hoped, within the size range of modern human intestinal worm eggs, so that eventually it will be possible to recognize with certainty human worm eggs from cess and other deposits. If the proposed study should prove that conditions of burial do substantially alter egg shape, palaeoparasitology will need some fundamental rethinking!

Almost certainly a few of the many burials excavated each year contain preserved parasite eggs. Sadly, from the parasitological point of view, the majority of human graves are deliberately sited to avoid waterlogged areas; nevertheless, waterlogged graves are encountered occasionally. There are two kinds of burial likely to contain preserved parasite ova: firstly, inhumations placed in damp or waterlogged soil where preservation of materials such as textile and plant debris is observed and, secondly, well sealed coffins, usually of lead, in which body fluids have been retained.

Examination of suitable burials would not only solve some of the technical problems outlined above but would also provide a wealth of information on the history of infectious diseases and would give a better understanding of standards of health in the past. In some cases parasite remains may point to the cause of death of an individual.

Burials from churches would be particularly interesting to study as there is a chance of knowing who the person was, their age at death, and their social status. I would be very glad to co-operate with anyone likely to be excavating churches or cemeteries which may produce waterlogged burials in a suitable condition.

Although the prospect of investigating the contents of suitable burials, in particular partly decomposed bodies, is less than appetizing, if parasite remains were preserved the information they would provide would be more than sufficient to compensate for any personal discomfort.

Environmental Archaeology Unit
University of York
York YO1 5DD

(Telephone: 0904 59861 extension 5531)

C A S E S

Hexham Abbey — Richard N Bailey

The restoration of the Abbey church at Hexham in 1907-1908 was an archaeological disaster. It was widely recognized that Temple Moore's new nave was to be built on the site of the main church of St Wilfrid's monastery: this was clear both from the position of the crypt and from the arguments which had been advanced in the sumptuous publication of Hodges (1888). The preparatory work of clearing the area gave ample opportunity for a systematic investigation of the medieval walls and foundations which began to emerge, but this opportunity was never grasped. Hodges undoubtedly kept a record but he was not continuously on the site nor, to the evident frustration of his correspondents, could he be persuaded to publish his observations in a considered form. Only in 1923 did he provide Baldwin Brown with a composite plan and section, though it was not until the 1960s that this vital document was disinterred by Dr and Mrs Taylor. Apart from those drawings, our record of what was found relies upon a few contemporary photographs, the fitful correspondence of local antiquaries, and the (often ambiguous and contradictory) paragraphs of Hodges's guidebooks. It is therefore little wonder that the information has been interpreted in a wide variety of ways (contrast Taylor and Taylor 1965, Gilbert 1974, and Bailey 1976).

It seemed unlikely that archaeologists would ever again have the chance to investigate what lay sealed below Temple Moore's nave. In March 1978, however, the Abbey's architect recommended that an area of uneven and fractured paving in the south-east corner of the nave should be lifted and relaid on a new bedding. This was designed both to provide a level surface in the nave and to take pressure off the roofing slabs of the south passage of the crypt below (marked a on plan, Figure 1). As archaeological consultant to the diocese I was given warning of this work and, with the ready co-operation of my colleagues on the DAC and the Abbey authorities, I arranged for these repairs to be preceded by archaeological excavation. This was carried out in June 1978. Subsequently, cracking was discovered in the roof of the north passage and a second excavation took place in September to remove the paving and bedding overlying this area. It was thus possible, in the two excavations, to take out a strip, some 3m broad, across the entire width of the eastern part of the nave.

Both excavations were funded by the DoE and I here gratefully acknowledge the help given by both Dr Gem and Mr Halsey. A full report by the present writer and Miss D O'Sullivan appears in Archaeol Aeliana, 5 ser, 7, 1979, 145-57, and this is accompanied by an important paper in which Mr Eric Cambridge re-assesses the extent of post-Conquest building to the west of the transepts (ibid, 158-68). Since the full reports are now available, it will be sufficient here to draw attention to the main discoveries and deductions.

Most of the northern half of the excavated area was covered by a raft of concrete laid down in 1907. This could not be removed without risk of damage to the crypt below, though it was possible to pierce through at certain critical points to establish the exact relationship between the lines of the crypt-passage and the above-ground structures, a correlation which had not hitherto been attempted. The only feature on this north side to which attention need be drawn was the re-use of two large fragments of decorated Roman stone in the foundations of the 13th century north-west crossing-pier. Since Hodges, in several publications, held that the use of Roman stone was diagnostic of pre-Conquest structures at Hexham it is useful to have the proof that this is not an infallible rule.

HEXHAM 1978

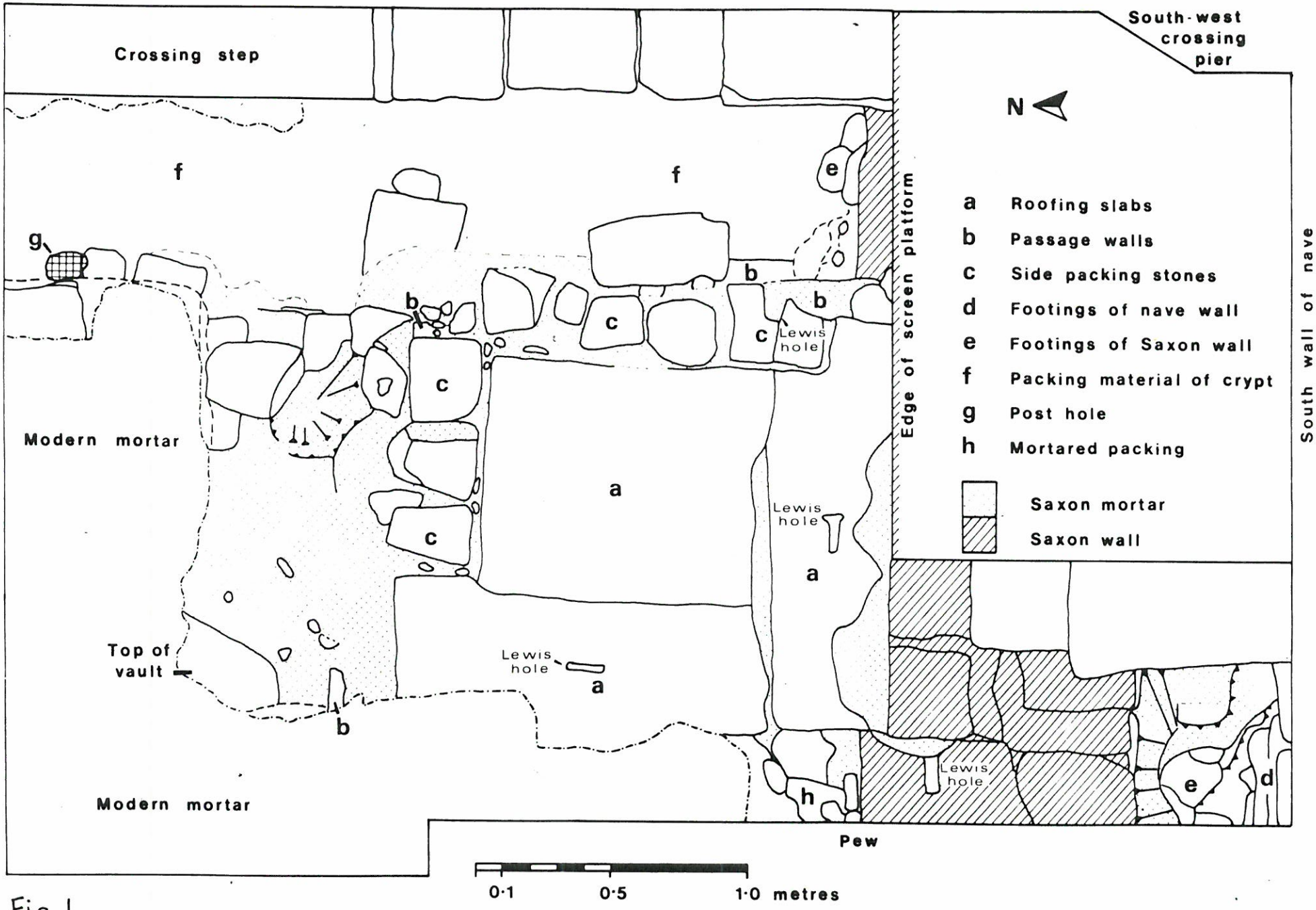

Fig 1

The accompanying plan (Figure 1) shows the southern half of the excavated area to the north and west of the platform on which stand the remains of the 13th century screen. The principal discoveries here can be summarized under four heads:

i) The building of the crypt

The crypt was apparently built within a large hole whose eastern lip lies somewhere beneath the present crossing. This hole was back-filled against the rising walls with a stony, yellow-brown packing containing mortar and limestone chippings (feature f of plan). The eastern end of the main crypt-chamber was massively buttressed with mortared rubble which, at the maximum permitted depth of excavation (1.22m), seems to have extended some 0.6m east of the (presumed) line of the east wall of the crypt chamber. This mortared buttressing merged westwards with a thick layer of hard creamy mortar which apparently filled the gap between the curving roof of the main chamber and the flanking south passage. Only at one point was it possible to reach the roof of the main chamber where this hard mortar had been removed by the Temple Moore builders.

ii) The main south wall of Wilfrid's church

The most unexpected feature of the entire excavation was the discovery of a substantial wall, nearly 1.0m broad, running east/west through the excavated area. This wall had, in fact, been visible since 1908 but was not recognized because its sole surviving lower course had partly been incorporated into the so-called 'Saxon paving' and partly overlaid by the 13th century screen platform - the wall's northern face forming the northern face of the screen platform. This wall passed over the southerly leg of the south passage of the crypt, its lowest course providing the roof of the passage at this point.

On the north side the wall rested on offsets, whilst on the south side it had substantial mortared foundations (e) which were partly cut by the offsets and foundations of the present nave wall (whose lower courses at this point are medieval in date).

The dating of this wall depends upon its relationship to the crypt, which is securely tied to the 7th century on documentary grounds. In the full publication it is argued that the wall was built at the same time as the crypt: this conclusion depends in part upon the evidence of the mortar bonds but mainly upon the fact that the foundations of the wall penetrate below the top course of the passage-wall.

The recognition of this wall as part of the 7th century structure carries several important implications for our understanding of the Wilfridian building. It seems likely that the wall is set on the line of the foundation which is conveniently marked 'j' in publications of Hodges' plan. It follows that foundation 'j' carried a continuous wall and not a series of arcades: Wilfrid's church was thus not a basilican structure. The foundations on the south side of the newly discovered wall suggest that the Wilfridian ground-level was at the level of the modern nave; it is therefore unlikely that the crypt was (as I have argued) half-subterranean. Now that we know the depth of foundation 'j' and can be certain that it carried a continuous wall, it becomes even more difficult to accept the line of foundations 'g' as contemporary with it. In his paper Eric Cambridge convincingly demonstrates that 'g' is part of a post-Conquest structure.

Finally, the discovery of this wall involves a radical re-interpretation of the arrangement of the crypt. We must, for example, now envisage the exit on the south side as lying outside the nave, either in a porticus or (less likely) completely outside the church.

iii) The so-called 'Saxon paving'

This cannot belong to the Wilfridian building since it incorporated the lowest course of the Saxon wall. There were discontinuous traces of mortar bedding for an earlier floor below the level of this paving.

iv) Post-hole for an altar cross?

The post-hole marked 'g' on the plan penetrated some 0.2m from the top of the yellow-brown packing. It could be interpreted as the remains of a scaffolding pole but, if so, it is strange that no others were found. Lack of associated holes also seems to rule out the possibility that it is the remains of a ciborium. Since it is on the centre-line of the crypt (and thus presumably on the centre-line of Wilfrid's church), it seems reasonable to suggest that it once held a cross set behind the altar.

A comprehensive set of mortar samples were taken and are now being analysed. It is hoped to publish the results of this analysis in a future volume of Archaeol Aeliana.

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Lichfield — P R Wilson

i) St Michael (SK 124095)

In March 1978 a rescue excavation was carried out in advance of a proposed extension to the north-east corner of the church. The area excavated was 6.9m by 4.5m, the dimensions of the proposed vestry. Forty-nine complete or partial skeletons were found; one of them was crouched, all of the others being extended inhumations. One burial was lain with its head to the east suggesting a possible priest burial, although no chalice or paten were found. The burial sequence suggested seven phases of use for the area of the cemetery excavated. The burials sealed a single undated post-pit. Quantities of tile and other building material were also found.

ii) St Mary (SK 119097)

It is proposed to convert St Mary's Church in the Market Place into a heritage centre for Lichfield, leaving the choir for liturgical use. It is known that a church has stood on this site from at least 1296. The conversion will necessitate some additions to the basically 19th century interior. In July of this year the church architects had an exploratory

hole dug in the south aisle to examine the foundations and subsoil. The opportunity was taken to examine the archaeology at the same time. The most notable discovery was that of three graves, the skeletons being buried with their heads to the west in the normal Christian manner. Previously it had been thought that St Mary's had never had right of burial and that all burials took place in the cemeteries of St Michael's and St Chad's. Subsequent investigation of the parish registers revealed fourteen entries recording burials in St Mary's in the 19th century; obviously it is not possible to say if these were the burials found.

Further observation will take place of any other excavation by the developer.

Raunds (SP 999733) A Boddington

Introduction

The site is located in the north-west corner of Raunds, off Rotten Row. Trial trenches by David Hall in 1975 revealed graves of potentially Saxon date and these finds prompted large-scale excavation by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit, commencing in October 1977. The site has planning permission for warehouse development.

Work prior to March 1979 has concentrated on an area of 2500 square metres immediately adjacent to Raunds. This has revealed two phases of a Saxon stone church, the latter phase apparently converted to manorial use in the early medieval period. Expansion of the manorial buildings continued throughout the 13th and 14th centuries until the abandonment of the complex at the end of the 14th century. The phases outlined below (Figure 2) are provisional as are the dates.

Phase I

This was the earliest phase identified by March 1979, but there is evidence of earlier structures. It is represented by a small stone church divided into nave and chancel, and constructed with narrow (0.45m wide) walls of rough-hewn oolitic limestone cemented with a gingery mortar. The nave is 4.6m long internally and 3.2m wide with a floor constructed of fragments of limestone. The chancel, 1.9m long and 2.9m wide, had thin mortar floors and a stone setting at the east end which may represent an altar base. Above this the walls retain their plaster face. Dating evidence has not yet been obtained for this phase, but a pre-conquest date seems likely.

Phase II

The Phase I building was demolished and replaced by a larger church, again divided into a nave and chancel. The walls (0.9m wide) were constructed in courses of flat bedded limestone, above a foundation of up to four courses of pitched limestone with some ironstone fragments. The nave measures internally 4.5m in width and 7.5m in length, whilst the chancel is 3.4m wide and 4.6m long. Floor levels survived only in the nave, where they were composed of thin layers of broken fragments of limestone in a matrix of sandy loam. Presumably the chancel floors were at a slightly higher level and had been destroyed by later construction. Pottery from the foundation courses suggests a post-conquest date for the construction of this phase.

The cemetery

The cemetery lies to the south and east of the church and whilst presumably in use during both phases, the majority of burials are probably of Phase II date. Eighty-three graves have been excavated within an area of c 800 square metres. It is estimated that this represents approximately half of the surviving graves. The plan shows the graves on an east-west alignment to be in rows, extending southwards from the church. There is very little intercutting and the burials are laid in a supine position with the head to the west. Whilst there has been no evidence of wooden coffins, one stone coffin lay immediately south of the church and two other burials lay beneath decorated Saxon grave slabs (Figure 3). There are two examples of adults being buried in rough stone cists, and one infant burial was laid within a well made cist of six large slabs of roughly hewn limestone. Of greater interest are nine examples of burials having stones placed over parts of the body, in most cases a single slab being used. There is no doubt that the majority of these stones are deliberately and carefully placed, and this is particularly well illustrated by two instances. One has a roughly diamond-shaped stone placed symmetrically over the knee-caps, and the other has a large circular stone covering the head; however, before this latter stone was placed in position a layer of clean clay was used to cover the skull, presumably to protect it from damage. Pillow stones beneath and around the skull are a common feature, with foot stones occurring less often.

Phase III

This is a phase of conversion from ecclesiastical to manorial use which is not fully understood. The chancel and the east part of the nave were demolished and a wide (1.1m) wall was inserted across the former nave. At the south end this wall was keyed into the existing church wall, being set 0.4m into the north face. However, at the north end it cut through the church wall completely and returned east where its line was continued by a robber trench. Other robber trenches delineating the east and south sides show the room to have been 8.0m long and 3.4m wide. It is unfortunately not clear whether the west part of the nave remained standing during this phase, as suggested by the south end of the above mentioned wall, or whether it had been demolished as suggested by the north end. It is not possible to draw a firm conclusion on this point, but taking into account all the evidence it is perhaps preferable to see the west part of the nave as having been demolished.

The last two phases (IV and V) are concerned solely with the expansion of the manorial buildings and their abandonment in the late 14th century and details are not given here.

An illustrated booklet, Raunds 1979, which was prepared for a series of open days held in the late summer, is available from Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit, County Hall, Northampton NN1 1DN, price 40p.

St Peter, Warmsworth — J R Magilton

The excavation of St Peter's (Figure 4) begun in November 1977 and abandoned due to persistent vandalism in March 1978, can hardly be described as successful.

The parish is situated 3 miles south-west of Doncaster on the edge of the Magnesian Limestone belt running north-south through the centre of South Yorkshire, and its former parish church, lying against the straight eastern parish boundary, is over half-a-mile distant from the present village centre,

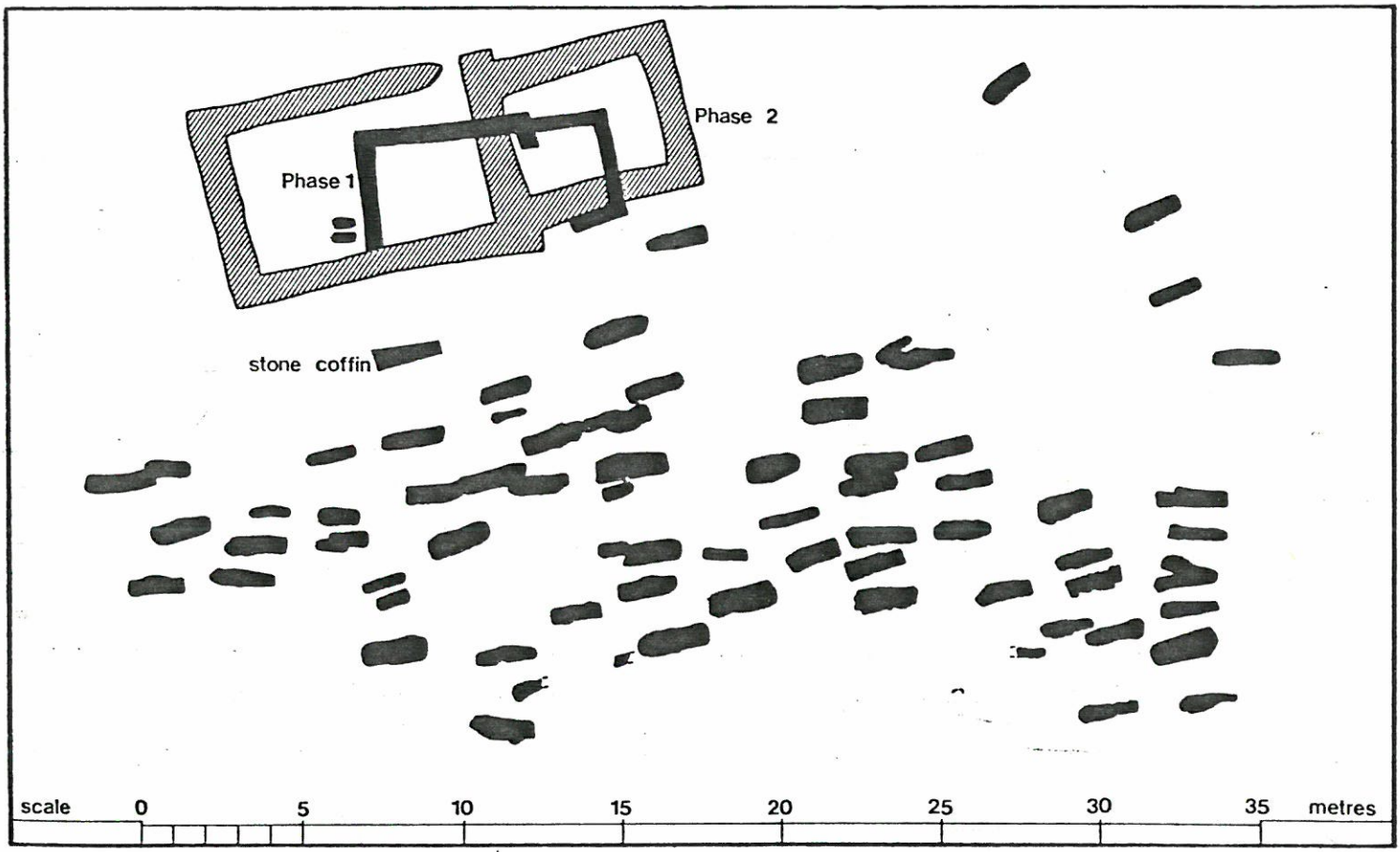


Fig 2 Raunds, Plan of churches with southern area of the cemetery, as revealed by March 1979

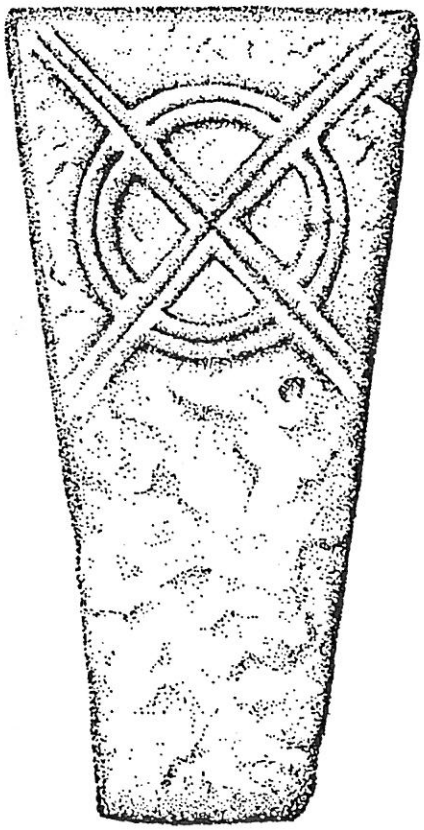


Fig 3 Gravestones from Raunds

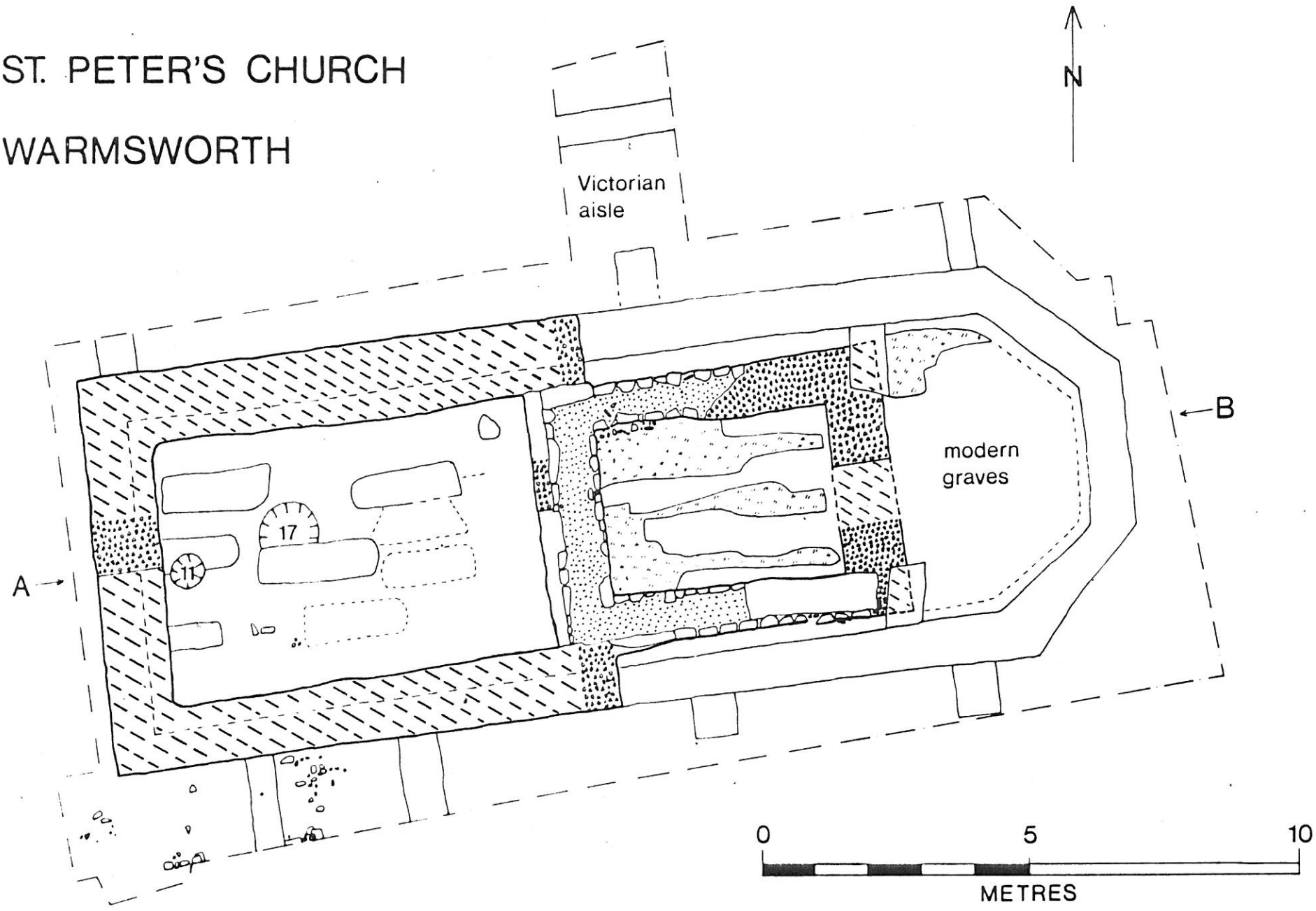


Fig 4 Sketch plan of excavations: heavy stippling - foundations of first church; broken hatched lines - assumed line of first church foundations; light stippling - chancel of second church; outline - modern graves and foundations of 19th century church

which contains a 17th century or earlier free-standing belfry in the former parsonage yard. The present parish church, Byzantine in inspiration, was constructed near to the village in 1942 and the old building gradually became ruinous and its graveyard overgrown, a process accelerated by vandals from the nearby housing estate. In 1977 Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council agreed to take over responsibility for the churchyard and to landscape it as a recreation area. As this work involved the levelling of a grass mound concealing the remains of the church and its medieval predecessors, Doncaster Museum and South Yorkshire County Council agreed to excavate the church in advance of its destruction.

The final parish church, built c 1810 and described in 1876 as having a 'simple meeting-house appearance', was enlarged by the addition of a north aisle and south porch in the 1850s. It replaced 'a still meaner edifice, called the "Red Church"', the footings of which were revealed in the course of excavation, along with those of its precursor.

The 1810 church was found to have occupied precisely the same site as earlier churches, and its eastern half, of which the limestone rubble foundations survived, directly overlay the footings of the medieval church. It was, however, 4m longer than earlier buildings, and enclosed within its western half the remains of the medieval and later chancels. The square chancel of the 18th century and earlier churches, which was narrower than the nave by the width of the nave walls, was of two periods, with the later walls built of limestone ashlar with a rubble core bonded with gypsum mortar. The pinkish colour of the mortar may explain the traditional name of 'the Red Church', which 19th century historians took to refer to a brick structure. Nineteenth century graves had destroyed all floor levels of this period within the chancel, and the siting of the 1810 nave walls precisely along the line of earlier wall-fottings makes it unclear whether the nave was also rebuilt using gypsum mortar. There is no direct evidence, either documentary or archaeological, to date this rebuilding, but the use of gypsum mortar as a building medium does not generally occur in the locality before the 17th century.

The nave had a series of earth and mortar floors, the latest of which contained a small sherd of Cistercian ware, but there was a suggestion that these floors had been replaced by limestone flags at some stage. There were no burials sealed by the floor although here, as in the chancel, a number of 19th century burials had been cut through it.

The earliest church located, with foundations of limestone chippings, some of which had been tooled and were perhaps derived from ashlars broken during manufacture, was found beneath the gypsum walls of the chancel, and sections of the 19th century nave walls at the west end and at the eastern extremity of the north and south walls were removed to reveal similar footings. The east wall, dividing nave from chancel, appeared to have been continuous and, although circumstances did not allow an examination of the junction of nave and chancel walls, there is no reason to assume that the chancel was an addition to an earlier nave. There remains a possibility of an earlier church on the site, since the footings of the east wall of the chancel contained fragments of a human hand and suggest that the graveyard at least pre-dated the earliest building excavated. Fortunately the foundations are sufficiently deep to escape disturbance by municipal gardeners and will survive for re-examination at a later date.

Despite the unsatisfactory and incomplete excavation, some interesting fragments of 12th century and later churchyard monuments were recovered, of which a portion of Magnesian Limestone grave-slab decorated with geometric motifs similar to those on the tympanum at Braithwell Church, S Yorks, and

which can be paralleled by a grave-cover, now lost, from St George's Church, Doncaster, is perhaps the most significant. An almost complete but fragmented foliate cross grave cover was recovered from the chancel area of the 19th century church, and this, together with the other architectural fragments, is to be incorporated in the Lady Chapel of the present parish church (see cover illustration). As is often the case in church archaeology, insufficient pottery was recovered to date the phases of building activity, but the architectural fragments and the earliest documentary reference to a priest at Warmsworth c 1170 all point to a 12th century or earlier date for the church's foundation.

The most important conclusions about Warmsworth are beginning to emerge from Dr David Hey's historical research, originally undertaken to examine the problems of the siting of the church and village, which were already distant in the early years of the 14th century; this is a question which excavation has failed to clarify, but is becoming clearer now that the manorial and parochial organisation of this part of Yorkshire, based on the mother church of St Peter's at Conisbrough, is better understood.

The full excavation report and the results of Dr Hey's research are to be published as a Doncaster Museum monograph in 1980.

Wells Cathedral — Warwick Rodwell

Excavations for CRAAGS and the DoE were undertaken to the south-east of the Cathedral, in 'The Camery', during the period April to July 1979, in advance of drainage and other works. The area investigated lay in the angle between the south transept and the east cloister and adjoined on the south the excavation undertaken in 1978 (see Bulletin, 10, (1979), 16-18).

The sequence of structures is complex and the following summary by period should be regarded as provisional. The accompanying sketch plans (Figures 5 and 6) indicate the more important phases.

1) Prehistoric In parts of the site the lowest archaeological level is a buried soil containing many flint flakes and implements of mesolithic and neolithic date. Two neolithic pits.

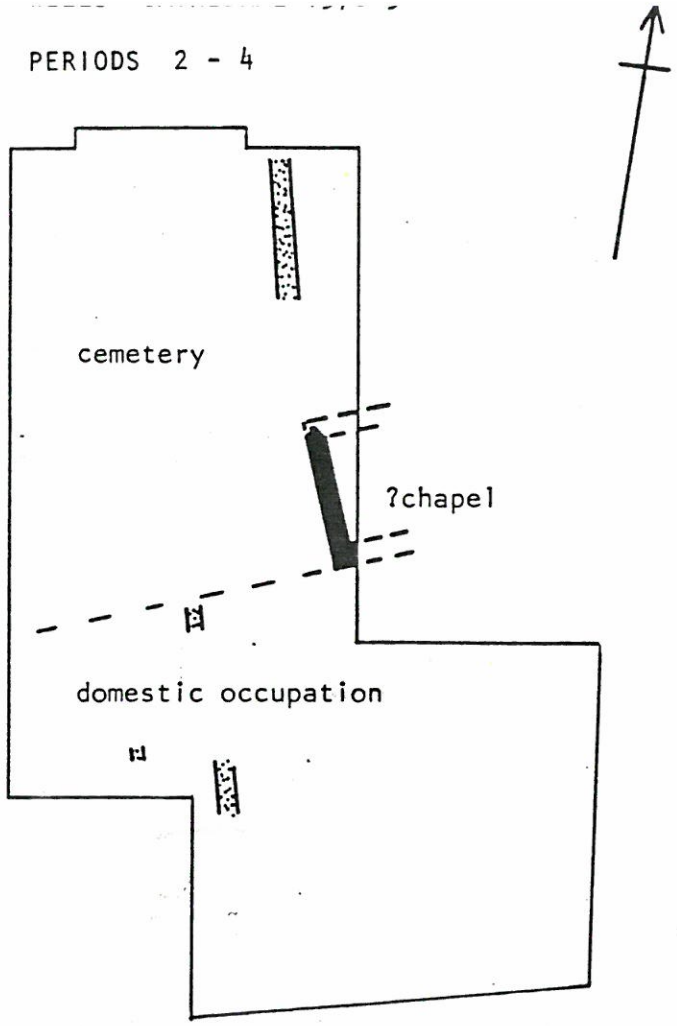
2) Roman Over the southern part of the site is a scatter of domestic debris of 1st to 4th century date, associated with postholes. On the northern end of the site finds of plaster, brick, and window glass show that a Roman masonry building exists nearby.

3) Early post-Roman to Middle Saxon? A cemetery of east-west inhumations was established at the north end of the site. An undated north-south wall overlay one burial but was clearly respected by all others. Burial continued here until the late 12th century.

4) Middle Saxon? The west wall of a hitherto unknown building, presumably a chapel or mausoleum, aligned 20° north of east, was found overlying graves against the eastern edge of the excavation.

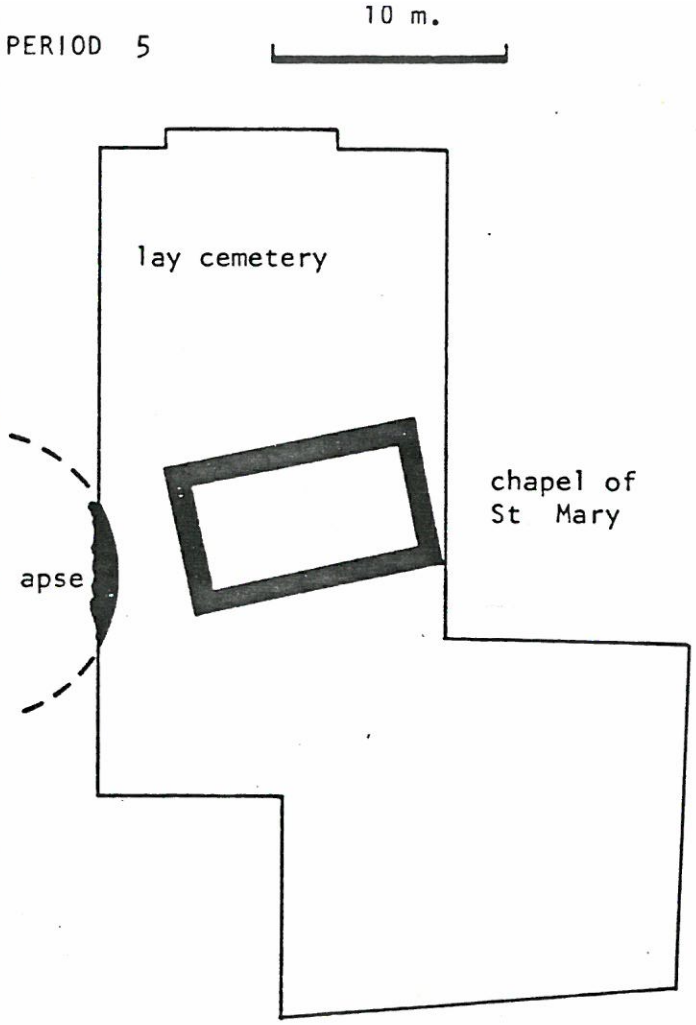
5) Later Saxon The above building was demolished and its foundations incorporated into the east wall of a new chapel. This was a simple rectangular building c 11.0 x 6.5m, following the previous alignment. West of this, and at least partially contemporary, is the foundation of a massive curved

PERIODS 2 - 4

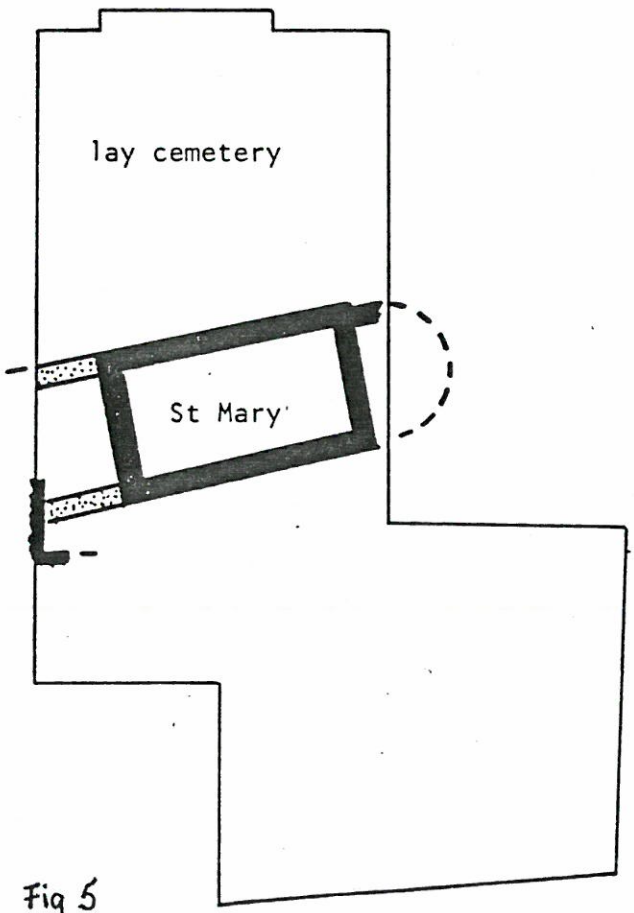


PERIOD 5

10 m.



PERIOD 6



PERIOD 7

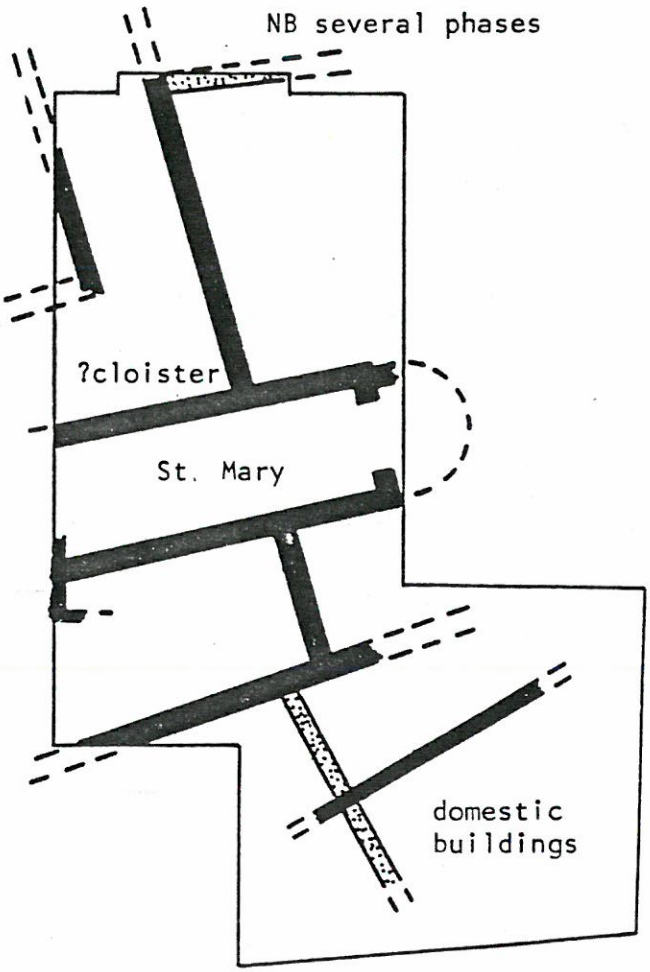


Fig 5

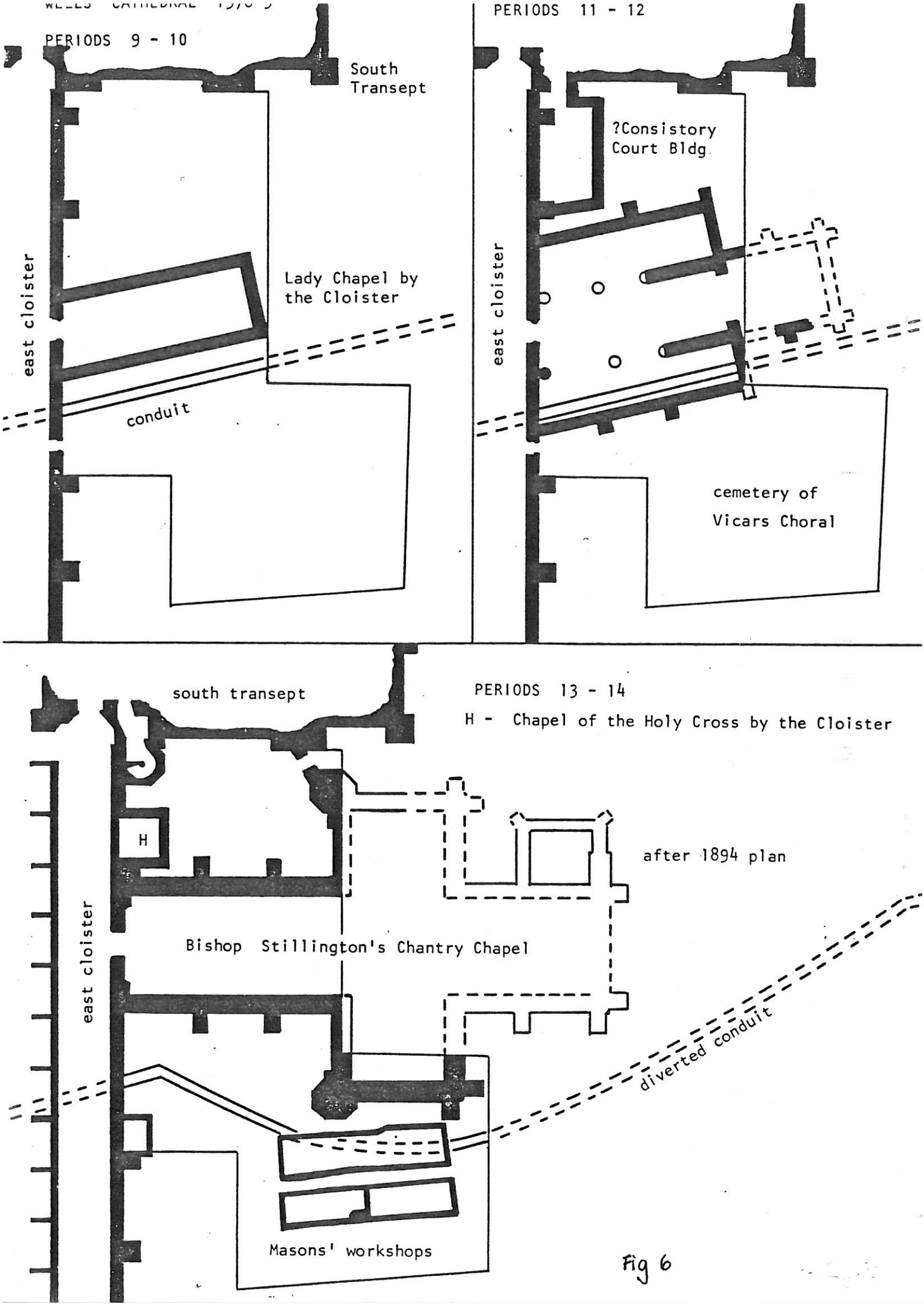

PERIODS 9 - 10
South Transept
east cloister
Lady Chapel by the Cloister
conduit
PERIODS 11 - 12
?Consistory Court Bldg.
east cloister
cemetery of Vicars Choral
south transept
PERIODS 13 - 14
H - Chapel of the Holy Cross by the Cloister
H
after 1894 plan
east cloister
Bishop Stillington's Chantry Chapel
diverted conduit
Masons' workshops

Fig 6

wall, most likely to be an apse on the eastern end of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral (which must lie entirely beneath the cloister). The considerable depth of the curved foundation (cut c 2.0m into the natural) implies either great height or a void on the inside of the curve: ie a crypt. Later the apse was squared off.

6) Late Saxon The chapel, which may with reasonable certainty be identified with the recorded Saxon chapel of St Mary, was extended both to the west, linking it with the squared-off apse, and to the east. The latter possibly represented the addition of a small apse (not excavated).

7) Saxo-Norman Giso, the last Saxon bishop of Wells, is recorded as having erected a cloister and domestic buildings for the communal life of the Canons. It is probably his work which appears in the form of walls running out from the Lady Chapel to the north and south. Domestic debris of the 11th century was found on the south side.

8) Norman In the 1080s Giso's buildings were demolished, but the Lady Chapel remained. New building works took place, after an interval, and a dedication is recorded in 1148. Fragments of chevron and billet ornament, fluted capitals, and twisted columns from a small arcade are likely to belong to this period. A fragment of curved walling, apparently the southern side of another apse, is assignable to the Norman period and is embedded in the foundation of the south transept of the present cathedral.

9) Early English I By 1180 the new cathedral had been begun and demolition of earlier structures must have been in progress. The old Lady Chapel was, however, retained yet again, and a grant for its restoration is recorded in 1196.

10) Early English II In or by the 1220s the present cloisters had been laid out and the demolition of all earlier buildings in the area completed, except that of the Lady Chapel. Excavation has indicated that the planning of the east cloister presupposed the removal of the chapel, but that a new building was allowed for in the spacing of buttresses, etc. This was surely the site for an intended chapter house (cf Salisbury). A close examination of the walls and roofs of the cloisters has shown that, far from being originally a lean-to wooden structure, it had high walls, gabled roofs and, probably, stone vaulting. Clearly, Jocelin's cloisters, assuming they were completed, were no less monumental than the rest of his work.

11) Early English III The Lady Chapel, saved yet again from demolition, was the only surviving element of the Saxon and Norman cathedral and was now joined up with the cloister, becoming known as 'The Lady Chapel by the Cloister'. It was later extended, first by the addition of a north aisle, then by a south aisle in c 1276, and finally by a new east end. The interior became filled with burials contained in stone cists. The majority were probably the burials of priests (three had pewter mortuary chalices, two had iron belt buckles and several yielded traces of leather, cloth, and gold braid).

12) 14th Century To the north of the chapel a new building was erected, in the angle between the south transept and the east cloister. The purpose of the building is unknown, but it could possibly have been a meeting room for the Consistory Court.

13) Early 15th Century When the cloisters began to be rebuilt the structure just mentioned was demolished and the stair-turret to the upper cloister range (east) was erected.

14) Late 15th Century In 1477 the Lady Chapel by the Cloister was finally demolished and work began on its replacement by Bishop Stillington's chapel; the nave and westernmost sides of the transepts fell within the excavated area. There were three associated internal graves. Stillington's Chapel was completed in 1486, and by 1500 a small square building, which is now interpreted as the 'Chapel of the Holy Cross by the Cloister', was erected alongside. This was fully excavated.

15) Mid 16th Century The Chantries Act of 1547 paved the way for the destruction of both these chapels. Demolition started in 1552. Thereafter the site became a quarry for building materials until it was laid out as a formal garden in the 18th century. One episode of particular interest intervened, however. In the 17th century (probably at the time of the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685) an act of iconoclasm has been detected during excavation: a trail of broken window glass, fragments of statues and alabaster sculptures, lying parallel to the south wall of the transept, suggests that internal monuments were being broken up and hurled through the medieval stained-glass windows.

The Graves and Cists

The burials as a group are of considerable interest. Over 260 articulated skeletons have been excavated, and the disarticulated remains of some hundreds of burials recovered. The total number of persons represented may be in the order of 1000. The vast majority belong to the Saxon lay cemetery which had passed out of use by c 1180. Less than 50 burials are assignable to a later date and these are likely to be mainly of priests of the 13th and 14th centuries. An interesting range of coffin and cist types was recorded.

Other Finds

The most important category of material is the medieval floor tiling. Some intact sections of decorated pavement were recovered from graves and demolition layers.

Other finds were few, but included a small fragment of inscribed tombstone (?sub-Roman), Merovingian vessel glass, a 10th century decorated tombstone and various Norman, Early English, and later medieval sculptural fragments of high quality.

BOOK REVIEW

Steven T Blake, Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels AD 773-1883
210 x 150mm, 42pp, 11 pls. Cheltenham Borough Council Art Gallery and Museum Service. August 1979. Price £0.85p.

In 1832 Henry Davies wrote of Cheltenham that 'few towns of equal extent in the Kingdon possess so many churches and chapels, or can boast so efficient and devoted a body of clergy, both in and out of the Establishment'. Between 1801 and 1871 the town's population increased from 3,076 to 53,159 and the number of its places of worship increased correspondingly from one Anglican church and four Nonconformist chapels in 1800 to fifteen Anglican churches, at least twenty Nonconformist chapels, a Catholic church, and a Jewish

synagogue by 1883. Dr Blake's excellent booklet provides a history of church building from Saxon times to the late 19th century, but pays particular attention to the remarkable expansion in the Regency and Victorian periods.

The parish church of St Mary's had only 190 seats for the poor and soon became overcrowded. As the town's population grew this situation helped to encourage nonconformity and necessitated the erection of extra Anglican churches. Eight nonconformist chapels, a nondenominational chapel and a Catholic chapel were established before the second Anglican, Holy Trinity, was actually started in 1820. This and two others in the 1820s were proprietary churches. The money with which to build a church was raised by selling a certain number of shares in the building, each shareholder (or 'proprietor') receiving one or more pews within the new church according to the number of shares he or she had purchased. Unfortunately this still meant that the poor were inadequately provided for and Cheltenham had to wait until 1831 for its first 'free' church.

Cheltenham's population continued to grow, and four more churches (using both the 'proprietory' and 'free' systems) were added between 1837 and 1854. In the middle of the century the problem of overcrowding at St Mary's was tackled and, after a great many problems and abortive schemes, finally surmounted. The story is completed by the magnificent efforts of John Middleton, an architect responsible for building five Anglican churches in Cheltenham between 1860 and 1883.

The subject is dealt with in strict chronological sequence, each church and chapel being described in order according to its date of foundation. Dr Blake deals essentially with the origins of each church and not its subsequent history. He sets out to show how each church came into being and why, rather than writing an exhaustive ecclesiastical ar architectural history of each of Cheltenham's religions.

Dr Blake handles the financial viccissitudes of church building with great skill. Where religious and other factors also played a part he weighs them all up very competently and invariably produces a balanced account. The whole booklet is well referenced and shows how diligently Dr Blake has consulted source material in both public and private hands.

The booklet was written to accompany the Exhibition Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels, held at Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum between 18 August and 6 October 1979. It does not in fact directly refer to the exhibition at all and anyone expecting to find a catalogue of items displayed in the exhibition, which was very good, will be disappointed. The exhibition included church plate but, since interior fittings and moveables are outside the scope of this booklet, this subject gets no mention at all. The architectural features of the churches and chapels are not investigated in depth but Dr Blake's summaries are adequate, provided that the reader is familiar with the basic terminology of late 18th and 19th century ecclesiastical architecture. There is neither glossary nor index.

Stuart Davies