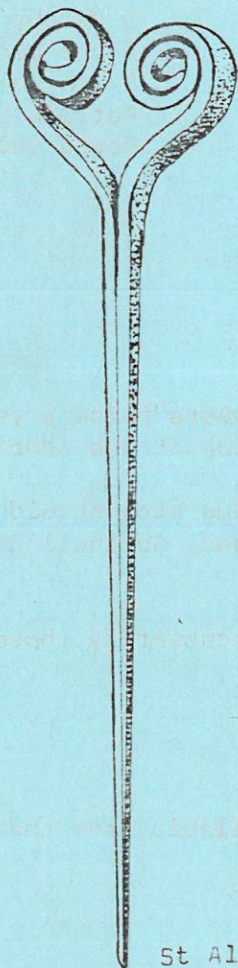


BULLETIN

of the CBA Churches Committee



St Albans Abbey: spiral-headed copper alloy pin (2:1)

Number 17

Winter 1982

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Contributions to the Bulletin (articles, reviews etc) should be sent to The Editor, Mrs Ruth Taylor, 19 Ravenscroft Road, Solihull B92 8AH.

The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publishers.

A list of back issues of this Bulletin is available from the CBA. Requests should be accompanied by an s.a.e.

NOTES

Changes

Chester: Mr J Patrick Greene has resigned as archaeological consultant following his appointment as Director of the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. Mr Rhys Williams, County Archaeologist for Cheshire, has been nominated as his successor.

Conference in honour of Dr H M Taylor

The conference will take place in Cambridge on 24-25 September 1983. Arrangements for the programme, which will reflect themes arising directly from Dr Taylor's own work and interests, are proceeding and details will be available from the Research Officer in due course.

More on chapels

The day school held at Leeds in November 1982 (see Bulletin 16) was attended by about forty-five people. The papers included 'James Simpson, architect' by D Colin Dews, 'A survey of Anglican and Nonconformist architecture in Western Yorkshire' 1550-1800' by Dr L A S Butler, and 'Mill Hill Chapel and Dissenting Gothic' by Ken Powell. A selection of photographs, made available by courtesy of SAVE Britain's Heritage, from the Fall of Zion exhibition was on display, and a map showing the whereabouts of local chapels was provided. Many of those who attended brought publications for distribution or sale.

The Leeds meeting was the first in a projected series which will look at aspects of the nonconformist heritage in different cities and regions. The next meeting will be held in Bristol on 7 May 1983. Further sessions are being planned for Norwich and Merseyside. The Bristol meeting will involve a guided perambulation in central Bristol followed by a coach trip. Anyone wishing to find out more is invited to contact David Dawson at the City Museum, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1RL (telephone 0272 299771).

FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES

Ivor Bulmer-Thomas

The Friends of Friendless Churches was formed in 1957 as a consequence of the decision of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust in the previous year to confine its help to churches in use. Its object is defined as being to save churches and chapels of architectural or historic interest threatened with collapse or demolition or conversion to unsuitable alternative use, and to do so 'irrespective of pastoral considerations'; in another formulation its object is to save such churches and chapels 'falling outside the scope or policy of other organizations'. It is, therefore, by definition a unique body.

The formation of the society led the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to set up in 1958 the Bridges Commission, whose recommendations resulted in the establishment of the Redundant Churches Fund in 1969 with the Honorary Director of the Friends as its first Chairman. It had been hoped that at this point the Friends could be dissolved, but the Fund has no power to decide that it will take over a redundant church; it can take only churches vested in it by the Church Commissioners, who are themselves much influenced by Diocesan Pastoral Committees. It soon became evident that the Friends of Friendless Churches was needed as a

permanent part of the machinery for saving historic churches. To ensure its permanence the society has now entered into an administrative partnership with the Ancient Monuments Society. The Friends and the Fund may be regarded as working on parallel lines, the one voluntary, the other statutory; there is, moreover, no Redundant Churches Fund in Wales, which gives our work in the Principality a special importance, and the Fund's work is confined to Anglican churches.

In the early days the demolition of churches required a faculty, and the Friends were instrumental in securing the Faculty Jurisdiction Measure 1964, which deprived Chancellors of the power to issue faculties for demolition save in two special cases, and gave any interested person or body the right to give evidence in a Consistory Court case. Now the faculty jurisdiction is again under review, and the Friends have particularly pressed upon the Commissioners the need to terminate the 'ecclesiastical exemption' from important aspects of the planning laws. This is bound up with State aid for churches in use, something for which the Friends have campaigned since the foundation of the society, and for many years alone.

Though the Friends have had considerable influence upon legislation, the society's primary work has always been the physical task of saving churches of merit threatened with collapse or demolition or unsuitable conversion. There are about a hundred such churches in England and Wales that the Friends may claim to have saved. They may be divided into the following classes:

- (a) Churches brought back into ecclesiastical use This is what we like best of all. They are typified by St James Bermondsey, built by James Savage in 1828 and with a noble portico, tower, and spire seen by thousands daily as they travel to and from London Bridge; Little Rollright in Oxfordshire near the famous stones; St Allen in Cornwall; and our latest work, Llanelieu in Powys, with an unusual medieval rood screen. They include one small Roman Catholic chapel - Dover St Edmund, which for long was not recognized as an ecclesiastical building.
- (b) Churches now vested in the Redundant Churches Fund This is our second choice. Outstanding among such churches are Ipswich St Mary Quay (which we resolved to save at our foundation meeting in 1957), Wolfhamcote in Warwickshire, and East Shefford in Berkshire (where remarkable frescoes and mural paintings have been revealed). The Fund with its greater resources has been able to do far more than we in the Friends could have done for these churches.
- (c) Churches converted to another use Wareham Holy Trinity in Dorset, used as an artist's studio, and Norwich St Mary Coslany, now the headquarters of the Friends of Norwich Churches, are examples. But usually we find ourselves opposing proposed conversions, especially conversion to domestic use, which nearly always destroys the interior architectural harmony and is a 'common or profane' use' offending those who have known the building as a church.
- (d) Churches leased or conveyed to the Friends This is a development that has taken place since the Pastoral Measure 1968 made it possible, and is likely to be our main activity in the future. There are 18 churches and chapels conveyed freehold or leased for 99 or 999 years to the Friends, or in the process of being so conveyed or leased. Some of them are 'for use as a monument', others 'for use as a shrine or monument or for Christian community purposes'.

Three of them have been scheduled as ancient monuments since we took them over, which, we feel, vindicates our judgement - Eastwell St Mary in Kent, South Huish in Devon, and Urishay Chapel in Herefordshire. These are ruins, but we have some lovely intact churches as well, such as Hardmead and Boveney in Buckinghamshire. We have two residual towers - Lightcliffe in West Yorkshire and Saltfleetby Old St Peter in Lincolnshire. Sometimes we are given the churchyard as well, sometimes not. The latest building that we have been asked to take over is Waddesdon Hill Strict Baptist Chapel.

Such work as is classified above needs money. In the early days we had to rely solely on the gifts of our members. Lately we had an investment income from legacies left to us by departed members. Still more recently we have begun to receive grants from national and local sources. In recent years our income and expenditure have balanced at roughly £40,000 a year. Strangely, not a single penny of the society's funds has so far been spent on administrative or appeal expenses.

We are not an ecclesiastical body and are not allowed by our leases and conveyances to use the churches in our care for worship except occasionally with the consent of the Bishop; nor would we be able to use them for regular worship, though we always encourage local use. Equally we are not an archaeological body, though in our work of repair we try to ensure that all evidence of past history is preserved, and we always give permission to recognized archaeologists to excavate our sites. Mr Shoemith has given in a previous number of this Bulletin (Number 16, Summer 1982), an interim report on his work at Urishay chapel.

I have said that our work in Wales is particularly important because there is no Redundant Churches Fund in the principality. The Government would be quite willing to finance one on the same basis as in England. Our President, the Marquess of Anglesey, and I have done our utmost to persuade the Church in Wales to play its part, but so far in vain. The Historic Churches Preservation Trust likewise does not operate in Wales.

The problem in Wales is fundamentally the same as in England, though the churches are fewer in number, generally simpler, and even more remote. In Anglesey we have rescued Tal-y-llyn church from dereliction and it is used for summer services; in Gwynedd we have repaired Cwm Pennent church and made a grant towards the repair of Horeb chapel, Penmaenmawr, and both are in use; and we have, as already mentioned, repaired Llanellieu church near Talgarth, which will be used in the summer, though the task of revealing the wall paintings which we now know to cover the north and west walls still has to be accomplished. We are now making a start on the repair of Llanfaglan old church which stands dramatically on the sea shore near Caernarvon.

Some years ago we saved Llandeilo-Talybont church, the ancient church of Pontardulais, in West Glamorgan, from collapse. It was difficult to approach even then, and has now been made unapproachable except by a long trek across fields and streams by the extension of the M4. But it now requires further repairs, and there are wall paintings that need preservation. The Welsh Office is taking great interest in the building, which is now scheduled, and it looks as though some practical scheme of consolidation will emerge.

The Cistercian monks erected for their use a chapel on the hillside overlooking the Wye while they were building Tintern Abbey. It later became a parish church, was rebuilt in the 19th century with some old features retained, and was nearly destroyed by fire about nine years ago. The diocese would like to have pulled it down, but we resisted, and it has been kept and consolidated, a dramatic ruin with a wonderful view.

In the same county of Gwent - though in the diocese of Hereford - one of our members rescued Llangua church on the banks of the Monnow in memory of his wife and we hold an endowment from him to provide for its maintenance. The standard we have kept won a pleasing tribute in a recent report of the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches - though it is not redundant but used once a month.

Bayvil, an 18th century church near Nevern in Dyfed, is a church that we have undertaken to take over if it is first repaired by local efforts, as we were assured could be done. We are still waiting, and there are other churches in Wales that we are watching but which I shall not name lest I encourage hopes that we shall do more than we can. What I can promise is that we shall stretch ourselves to the limit in the future as in the past to save all churches of architectural merit or historic interest that are threatened.

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ANGLO-SAXON SCULPTURE AT FLETON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

H M Taylor

Archaeologists and art historians have long been concerned about the continuing deterioration of the Anglo-Saxon carved stones at St Margaret's church in Fletton near Peterborough as a result of the modern industrial atmospheric pollution in that area. Two stones with full-length figures of an angel and an evangelist were moved into the church at a date which is not accurately known but is commonly thought to have been 1901. These are better preserved than the seven which were left outside in the Norman eastern buttresses of the chancel, where they have noticeably deteriorated rapidly in recent years. But even the two that were moved indoors have suffered somewhat by absorbing salts from the walls for lack of insulation.

The stones have been known for well over a century, but their special importance as examples of Anglo-Saxon architectural sculpture was first set out by Sir Alfred Clapham when he not only compared them with the larger collection at Breedon-on-the-Hill in Leicestershire but argued for a date in the 8th century by comparison with other well known sculpture and also with illustrated manuscripts (Archaeologia, 77 (1927), 219-40).

After long negotiation, both sets of stones have been removed, cleaned, conserved by Messrs Harrison and Hill of Little Oakley, set in lead boxes and placed within the chancel. The two full-length figures have been

replaced in their former positions, and the seven external stones, which must originally have formed parts of a decorative frieze or string-course, have been set on the sill of the east window of the chancel, where they serve as a beautiful reredos to the altar.

This work was made possible by private donations and by grants from the Council for the Care of Churches, the Department of the Environment, and the Society of Antiquaries, to all of whom grateful thanks are due not only from the parish but also from art historians and archaeologists. Although the full-length figures have been re-set in their old and rather inaccessible position on the south wall, they are much easier to study in detail as a result of the removal of encrusted grime - and the stones which now form the reredos can be seen in their full beauty, clean and close at hand. For a discussion of the inscription on one of the full-length stones, see E Okasha, Anglo-Saxon England, 11 (1983), 92.

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St. Andrew Dacre, Cumbria

Roger Leech

Excavations and survey were commenced in 1982 as part of a project to investigate the existence and extent of an early Saxon monastic site at St Andrew Dacre (NY 46002665). The rescue excavations were in advance of new housing and a churchyard extension. The project is planned to continue in 1983, from 27 June to 20 August.

To the west of the church, in an orchard to be developed for a new house, excavation provided evidence for a series of boundary features, possibly of the earlier churchyard or of a monastic precinct. Earliest was a boundary ditch, which in alignment was a continuation of the curvilinear boundary of the south side of the churchyard until the mid 19th century. The fill of the ditch, which was cut 0.4-0.6m into the natural subsoil, was rigorously sampled, but no cultural material was present. It is hoped that charcoal samples from the fills will provide a radiocarbon date for its silting.

Sealing the ditch was a well constructed yellow sandstone wall surviving to five courses in height, 1.0m wide. The wall extended to the south-east on an alignment similar to that of the earlier ditch, but whether the part actually examined is the butt end or a corner is at present uncertain. To the north was possibly an entrance into the churchyard or monastic enclosure.

Abutting the above wall was a drystone wall 1.2m wide, blocking the possible earlier entrance. To the east and contemporary with this was a further wall, the foundation of a structure aligned upon the earlier yellow sandstone enclosure wall. Soil layers sealing this structure contained pottery of the 13th - 14th centuries. Later still in date was a narrower wall, 0.5m wide, which abutted the blocking wall (above) and was probably associated with a late medieval structure built against the inside of the churchyard or enclosure wall.

To the north of the church, in an area designated for the extension of the churchyard, excavation was confined to two north-south trenches. Both provided evidence for structures of early medieval date. Stone rubble layers partially sealing these layers were not removed.

Both trenches provided evidence for a mortared wall, sealed by a stone-revetted bank which had been the north boundary of the churchyard until c 1950. The earlier mortared wall contained reused masonry; it was exactly parallel to the north wall of the church and was constructed in a terrace which extended a further 8m to the north and which was cut at least 1.8m into the subsoil. In the west trench, hillwash layers filling the terrace reached 1.5m in depth, sealing a well defined stone rubble layer which was not removed. Pottery indicates that the hillwash deposits date from the 13th - 14th centuries onwards. If this terrace to the north of the church is associated with structures the floors of which were at a similar height to those within the present church, the total depth of archaeological deposits is likely to reach c 2.4m.

At the north end of the east trench were rubble layers and a wall at present undated but associated with a structure of uncertain extent immediately to the south of the ditch recorded as an earthwork to the east of the present churchyard.

Geophysical survey was undertaken within and beyond the churchyard. In the area between the two trenches in the churchyard, resistivity survey indicated an area of regularly defined high resistance readings corresponding probably to a structure aligned on the church and on the north side of the present churchyard extension. Magnetometer and resistivity survey was also undertaken to the north and west of the churchyard. Magnetic and resistance anomalies were again probably derived from collapsed structures which were partly within house platforms surviving as earthworks.

The geophysical survey has produced most promising results and it is hoped to complete this part of the project in 1983 so that the data may be fully available for what may be possibly the final season of excavations in 1984.

A survey of earthworks to the north of the church was completed. At least seven platforms are possibly the sites of buildings; two of the platforms are clearly for rectangular structures on an approximately north-south alignment. Geophysical survey has not yet been extended to cover these particular areas.

Survey to the south of the church was concentrated upon two areas, immediately south of the present churchyard to the north of the beck, and to the south of the beck in the area around Dacre Castle. Immediately south of the churchyard are a ditch and bank, possibly associated with the early medieval drain discovered in 1930, while slightly to the west is a large rectangular platform possibly for a building c 20m in length and aligned NW-SE.

South of the beck a complete survey was made of the earthworks and moat around Dacre Castle. Drystone walled structures recorded in the 19th century to the west of Dacre Castle were found to be still extant and were also mapped.

All survey has been at a scale of 1:500 with construction lines plotted for breaks of slope. The survey of earthworks is now largely complete, but will need to be assessed against the results of geophysical survey for the same areas before further research strategies can be formulated.

A survey of St Andrew's church was also commenced. The phased plan is not yet completed, but will clearly be of assistance in assessing possible relationships between data for structures in situ and otherwise, within the excavation sites and the church itself.

Conclusions At present, insufficient excavation has been undertaken to establish with certainty the existence of the monastery referred to by Bede as being constructed in the 670s. However, the evidence from the excavations within the churchyard extension shows that to the north of the present church a terrace was cut at least 1.8m into the hillside within which was constructed a building(s) at least 16m in length, exactly parallel to the church and abandoned by the 14th century at the latest. The 1983 excavations should resolve whether these features represent the latest phases of the site referred to by Bede.

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St Albans Abbey

Martin Biddle and
Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle

The excavation was designed to last for two seasons and to test the archaeological potential of the site of the monastic buildings of the Abbey, to the south of the nave. The objectives were:

- 1 To locate the Anglo-Saxon monastic buildings of St Albans Abbey;
- 2 To establish their character and their relationship both to their successors and to any possible predecessors;
- 3 To establish the state of preservation and archaeological character of the cellarer's range of the Norman and later monastery.

To meet these objectives an excavation 25.5m east-west and 6.0m north-south was laid out across the known site of the west range of the medieval cloister, close to the south-west angle of the cloister garth (a location further north was prevented by the presence of an underground emergency water supply tank of c 1940 and by a recently laid tarmac path), from 14 June to 25 July.

1 The west range of the Norman and later cloister

The excavation included a small area of the cloister garth, crossed the western cloister walk and the cellar, and included to the west a small area of the abbot's or royal court. The earliest Norman work so far seen was in the east and west walls of the cloister walk, but the two walls were quite different in character and cannot yet be dated relatively or absolutely other than to the 12th century. In the 13th century a considerable part of the east wall of the walk was rebuilt on very deep foundations, owing to the failure of the Norman work over the infilling of a deep pre-Norman structure. In the mid-14th century (perhaps c 1346 in the time of Abbot Mentmore) the walk was vaulted (perhaps re-vaulted) with a tierceron star vault, the collapsed remains of which overlay the latest floor of the walk. A contemporary sketch of the rib pattern was found scratched on the plinth of the Norman west wall of the walk.

The cellar (so far as it lay within the excavation) was only partly cleared this season. It was some 11.5m in width and divided north-south down its axis by a line of massive circular piers on octagonal bases. One of these was uncovered this season, and a second can now be recognized in the records of the 1924 excavation to the south.

The piers had supported a quadripartite ribbed vault which had collapsed in position at the Dissolution. It had diagonal ribs of clunch and the vault was formed with reused Roman tiles laid parallel to the ridge of each compartment. There were no ridge or transverse ribs. The style of the work is Romanesque of the early to mid-12th century. The cellar in this form (which endured to the Dissolution) is an insertion into earlier Norman work, and it is tempting to associate its construction with the reform of the cellar for which Adam the Cellarer (d between 1167 and 1176) was renowned throughout the life of the Abbey.

The voids over the vault had been filled at the time of construction with earth containing quantities of domestic debris, including a considerable quantity of early medieval gritted pottery. Fabric of this kind (which should from its context in the vault of the cellar be dated to the mid-12th century or before) has previously been found only in very small quantities in the city of St Albans. This suggests that the growth of the medieval town on its present site belongs to the later 12th century rather than before. Collaboration between the Verulamium Museum and the Research Committee is thus already producing results of considerable importance for the history of St Albans as a town as well as an abbey.

The use of the cloister garth, the very complex robbing of the medieval buildings, and the subsequent use of the site need not be detailed here. The first season has, however, already fulfilled the third objective of the present work and has shown that there is much of fundamental and not merely incidental importance to be learned from the examination of the Norman and later monastic buildings. It is, for example, possible that the cloister of Paul of Caen (built 1077-88) was much smaller than the great medieval cloister, which only achieved its final dimensions as a result of some unrecorded enlargement in the 12th or early 13th century. This is by no means certain, but there are anomalies in the Norman work which can at present only be explained on such an hypothesis.

2 Buildings earlier than the west range of the Norman and later cloister

As noted above, the east wall of the west walk of the Norman cloister had failed over a subsidence into the infilling of a pre-Norman building. One wall of this earlier building, constructed of flint and mortar, was seen in the side of a deep mid-13th century foundation trench, but cannot be further explored until next season. It seems reasonably certain that this structure is pre-Conquest, but whether it is of Anglo-Saxon or Roman date is unknown. There is a great deal of Roman tile associated with the wall and human bone occurred here and nowhere else in the excavation.

Further west, beneath the floor of the cellar, observation of the side of a cut for a post-medieval drain showed the presence of some 700mm of dense pre-cellar (and hence, perhaps, Anglo-Saxon) stratigraphy.

It seems clear as a result of this first season, that Anglo-Saxon structures, possibly part of the Anglo-Saxon monastery, may lie below the monastic buildings of the Norman and later medieval monastery.

3 Early finds

About thirty sherds of Romano-British pottery, four late 4th century coins, and some Roman bottle glass indicate Roman activity on the site. These finds all came, however, from medieval layers and nothing is yet known of their original context.

A spiral-headed copper-alloy pin of a known 7th century type was also found in a late deposit (see cover illustration). There is a growing controversy over the date of such pins, since some have now been found in 10th century contexts at York. If this is an example of the early type, it is the first find of this date from the site of the Abbey.

These early finds give good grounds for believing that the Anglo-Saxon use of the hilltop may have been both complex and long-lived and that a 'context for Alban' in the Romano-British use of the hilltop may also be within reach of future work.

8 October 1982

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Brixworth All Saints

M Audouy

Between September 1981 and June 1982 archaeological excavations were carried out at Brixworth All Saints Church in conjunction with the long-term study of the site by the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee. The excavations were conducted by the Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit. A trench dug for rescue purposes and funded by the Department of the Environment was followed, in 1982, by two small research excavations funded, respectively, by the British Academy and the Society of Antiquaries.

1 Excavation of the drainage trench: September-December 1981

Excavation commenced in conjunction with a scheme to improve the drainage along the north side of the church. An existing 19th century drainpipe had to be renewed, and this required the digging of a trench along the north side of the choir and nave, and around the west end of the tower and turret. The digging of the drainage trench provided an opportunity for the exposure and recording of the foundations of the church, porticus chambers, and associated stratification.

As a result of this it would appear that the porticus chambers and the narthex were built at the same time as the nave. The foundations showed continuity in type and fabric along the trench. They are composed of ironstone rubble and lime mortar set compactly in a trench about 0.70m deep and 1m to 1.30m wide. The turret, however, rests on a massive squared platform made of large blocks of limestone, including a section of pitched stonework. A construction level and remnants of flooring could be recorded in situ though badly damaged by later repointing and

grave digging. Opus signinum had been used as a floor finish and it rested on an arrangement of pitched stones in mortar. Mortars have been systematically sampled throughout the excavation and are now being analysed for comparison and dating.

2 Excavation of the north porticus and narthex: January-June 1982

(a) Porticus Both easternmost porticus were opened simultaneously. The area involved was about 50m. The foundations were of the same type and composition as the foundations observed in the drainage trench. Thin horizontal layers of silt on the fabric suggest several stages during the construction. The walls consist of a core of rubble and mortar, faced on both sides with horizontal courses of rough-hewn stone. One to four courses remain standing in places, elsewhere removed by grave digging. The fabric includes non-local igneous stone, probably representing reused building material along with several bricks and tiles. Remains of mortar layers have been found, in one case in association with 1m² of pitched stone, probably part of the floor levels recorded during the excavation of the drainage trench. These remnants of flooring were cut by numerous graves, sharing the same east-west orientation. No datable finds were found in the grave fills, although several contained numerous fragments of flooring, including opus signinum. One burial was contained in a stone-built coffin made of large ironstone slabs, with traces of burning. In the absence of other dating, a radiocarbon test of several human bones should provide information on the date of use of the porticus.

Beneath the floor levels several small pre-church features were found, such as gullies and postholes, but these were too fragmentary to allow adequate interpretation.

(b) North narthex: May-June 1982 A trench of 21m² was opened along the north edge of the narthex. The structural remains that were found showed continuity in type and fabric with the foundations and walls recorded from the trench and the porticus excavation. The foundations were even more substantial. The dimensions were:

North foundations: 1.70m wide by 1.74m deep

West foundations: 1.30m to 1.60m wide by 0.90m to 1.60m deep

Within the narthex chamber, all floor levels had been removed by grave digging and other activity. However, a small area of the westernmost porticus lay within the excavation trench and a floor was observed, of the same type as the floor within the porticus previously excavated. On this occasion the opus signinum could be recorded in situ.

The first metre of the stratification beyond the structures consisted of bone earth. Nevertheless, a small area, observed in section only, showed a striking similarity with the internal stratification of the porticus as observed on the north section of the drainage trench, where material was laid directly upon pre-church deposits (a reddish gravelly material). These deposits had been cut by a large shaped ditch running WSW-ENE across the excavated area. The ditch predating the foundations was 2.50m wide at the top and 1.50m deep, which perhaps explains the striking depth of the latter. The foundations were sunk through the soft fill of the ditch, apparently by builders searching for sound footings. The fill was rich in charcoal and animal bones and was sampled for organic material and mortars.

A detailed report on the results of the three projects is now being prepared for publication.

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All Saints Barton Bendish, Norfolk

Peter Wade-Martins

Excavations by Andrew Rogerson for Norfolk Archaeological Unit on the site of the Domesday church (TF 71160560) which was totally demolished in 1788, were carried out in advance of housing development. The area covered by the later church was occupied by inhumation burials cut through a ploughsoil which contained Saxo-Norman pottery. Evidence for the five major construction phases of the masonry church derives almost entirely from foundations only. Few floor levels survived, although the chancel was largely floored with 15th century glazed undecorated tiles.

- Phase 1 Nave and apsidal chancel of same width, with chancel and sanctuary arches measured 16.6m by 6.6m. Mid-11th century.
- Phase 2 The west wall was retained, and a western extension of the same width as the nave and measuring 3.5m east-west was probably a tower. It was supported by seven contemporary buttresses. 12th century.
- Phase 3 The chancel was shortened when the apse was demolished and a straight east end was built further west, and the chancel arch was replaced by a screen further west. The tower was retained but a westward extension measured 4.5m east-west. Early 13th century.
- Phase 4 The chancel was extended back to its original length and a 5.5m square west tower with NW and SW diagonal buttresses was built. 14th century.
- Phase 5 A brick-built chantry chapel was added to the north of the nave. 15th century.

A majority of the excavated burials was pre-church but the series extended into the 18th century, particularly in the east part of the chancel. A 13th-14th century burial in the chancel was accompanied by a pewter chalice and paten.

Two medieval churches survive in the village. St Andrew's includes early 12th century work, while St Mary's, entered in Domesday, contains a fine mid-12th century doorway transferred from All Saints' in the 18th century.

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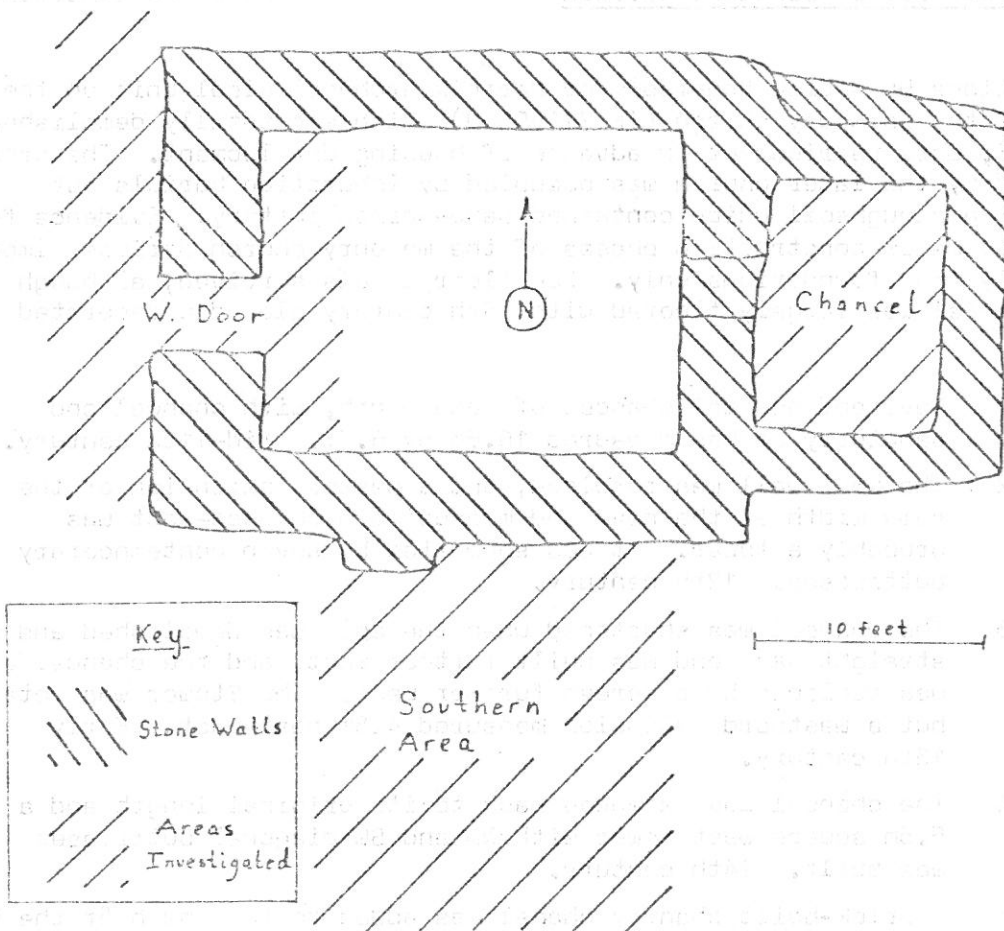


Fig 1: Llanellen, West Glamorgan

Introduction

The Pendragon Society is engaged in excavations which began in 1973 on an enigmatic church site in the Gower peninsula, south Wales, at the invitation of the landowner. The ruins, which lie on an artificially enhanced natural terrace, are by tradition of great antiquity. Local legend has it that there was a church on the site as early as the 6th century. The following summarizes the work to date.

1 Chancel

During this season the chancel interior was excavated down to the natural clay of the hill. While no very significant finds were made, some interesting structures emerged.

One was a grave (F126). This was nothing very exceptional in itself, being of the common size, lined with slabs in the usual way. However, the grave runs under the footings of the east wall of the nave, and is not oriented exactly east-west (the first grave we have found to be even slightly off the normal orientation). This is an indication that the site was of religious significance before the construction of the stone church.

At the same level was discovered a narrow trench (F117), running under the wall at one end, and cut into by a pit at the other. In shape and size this looks likely to have been a beam slot. However, no trace of decayed beam was found in the filling, which was relatively pure, as if the trench had been back-filled deliberately. While not conclusive, this is the best pointer yet to the nature of the older church. (Note that this is a different method of construction to the domestic postholes found further east).

2 West door area

A number of small pits were found just outside the west door. Their nature is unclear at present, although one appears to be a hearth and another may be a grave. The area was principally remarkable for the amount of pottery found. This was mainly within a few inches of the present ground level and, therefore, provides little stratigraphical information; however, we now have sufficient quantities for the main thrust of the typology to be apparent. There appear to be four main types of pot present:

- (a) Mottled green glaze This is characterized by a fine, thin, pink substance, with no grit. It is usually decorated with parallel grooves. It is probably imported French ware of the 13th or 14th centuries, which may explain its comparative rarity on this remote Welsh hillside.
- (b) Light green glaze This has a rather sandwich-like appearance, as the substance has a fairly thick grey layer in the middle and thin surface layers of a pinkish-yellow colour. The difference between the layers is not a difference in material but merely stems from incomplete firing, not reaching the interior of the pot. There are nearly always striations running around the pots.
- (c) Red and black This is made from gritty coarse clay, shading from black on the outside to red on the inside, obviously the product of a more primitive industry than types A or B. It is also very variable, some sherds being almost totally black and quite easily confused with type D below. The rims are not very pronounced, being characterized by very shallow wide fluting on the outside, and narrower fluting on the inside.

- (d) Black Again made from coarse gritty clay, but completely black. The really diagnostic feature for distinguishing from type C is the shaley, rather layered texture of the substance. The rims are very heavy and pronounced, both everted and inverted.

3 Southern area

This area compensated for paucity of finds by producing great complexity of structure. In general the sequence is

- (a) At first some graves were dug into the natural slope of the hill. These have become very distorted and disturbed by later activity, and only the presence of bone fragments allows us to assume that these tenuous structures were once graves.

Then a drystone revetment wall was let into the slope, to shore up the platform on which the stone church was built. This has been severely disturbed. Only the occasional massive block still stands in its original position.

- (b) Then more graves were dug in and around the wall. The wall collapsed during this process leaving what, to the untutored eye, is merely a heap of rubble.

This process is interesting as it continues to add weight to the evidence of religious activity continuing on the site for many years.

5 Summary

Another very productive season. The sequence of events is becoming clearer as more information is unearthed. A considerable body of pottery finds from the upper levels gives some hope that we may be able to link our small piece into the wider picture of early Wales. We now have enough finds from earlier times to be very confident that this site was in occupation in the Dark Ages. The evidence from the glass fragments, possibly 6th century according to Ruth Hurst Vose, even points to the very early Dark Ages. This is a vindication for those members of the Society who predicted this on non-archaeological grounds.

(Editor's note: The 14th season of excavation was directed by Alex Schlesinger and Colin Walls. Excavation continues in 1983.)

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Norton Priory, Runcorn

Patrick Greene and Bevis Sale

Excavation took place during July and August 1982. The first three weeks formed the Teaching Excavation, organized in conjunction with Liverpool University Institute of Extension Studies. The later part of the excavation was supported financially by Cheshire County Council (Planning Department),

The first week consisted of a geophysical survey using the square-array resistivity meter, an EM31 induction conductivity meter, and a proton magnetometer. An important result of the survey was the discovery of the south arm of the moat system which is known to surround the priory. Its

position had been predicted on the basis of mid-18th century map evidence; the survey enabled the moat to be located precisely.

Excavation took place on an area in the south-western part of the site adjoining that excavated in 1981. This continued the programme of research in the part of the monastic complex that lay to the south and west of the medieval kitchens. The south portion of a major building was uncovered. Its west wall proved to be particularly massive - the foundations were 2.5m broad, and consisted of large blocks of sandstone bonded with clay. The south footings, which were largely robbed out, had been much shallower and smaller, as had the east wall. The explanation for the size of the west wall would seem to be that it was constructed over earlier filled-in ditches; its breadth and depth would have enhanced its stability. The walls were constructed as one with the main medieval drain, which runs west across this area, and which was built in the 14th century. Levelling of the area as part of landscaping operations in the 18th century was found to have removed most of the layers within the building.

By good fortune layers to the west of the building survived intact. Of particular importance was a layer associated with the demolition of the building. It consisted of fragments of sandstone roofing slabs, probably discarded during systematic dismantling of the roof in the 16th century. Amongst the roof fragments were hundreds of fragments of window glass, and pieces of lead caum. There can be no doubt that the windows of the building were smashed to remove the lead for melting down at the same time that the roof was being dismantled.

The glass has all become opaque as a result of devitrification, but is nonetheless of great interest. Many of the quarries have survived intact, albeit in a very fragile state, with the original shape identifiable from the ground edges. Many pieces retain traces of painted decoration. Work on the recording and conservation of the glass is proceeding. Elements of decoration identified so far include geometric motifs, foliage including oak leaves and acorns, and a lion's face. It is hoped that a study of the glass will enable a more precise date to be assigned to the building. The discovery of the glass illustrates again the virtue of the long-term excavation of a site such as Norton Priory. It is a class of material which in eleven previous seasons of excavation has been very poorly represented. The quantities recovered in 1982 are, therefore, of particular importance.

The presence of glazed windows provides some indication of the importance of the building. It might tentatively be identified as a hall forming part of the guest quarters; its orientation makes a chapel most unlikely. Other possibilities remain, however, and further excavation will clarify the position.

On the west limit of the museum's fenced area a 2.3m wide trial trench, to the north of the monastic drain, revealed three walls of a completely unsuspected building. This will be worthy of future large-scale excavation; meanwhile an extension of the area managed by the Norton Priory Museum Trust to take in these remains is being arranged.

27 September 1982

