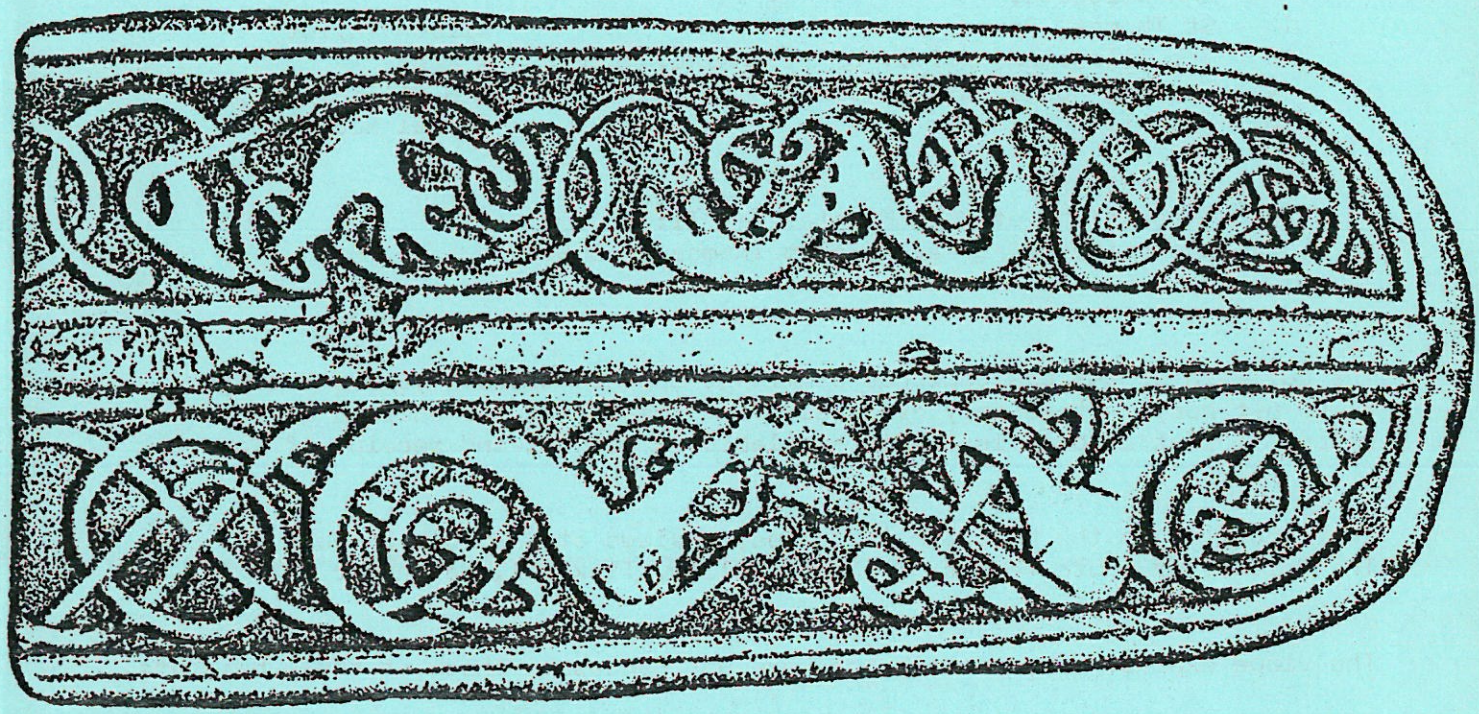
BULLETIN

of the CBA Churches Committee



Early 9th century grave cover found at
Repton, Derbyshire in 1984 (1:6)

Number: 22 Summer 1985

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The Bulletin of the CBA Churches Committee appears twice a year and costs £1.00 per copy. It is only available from the CBA at the address given below. A list of back issues is available on request and receipt of an sae.

Contributions to the Bulletin (articles, reviews etc) should be sent to The Editor, Mrs Ruth Taylor, 30 Castle Close, Tickhill, Doncaster DN11 9QT

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

The quality of reproduction of some of the photographs in this issue is not as good as we would wish. However, we trust you will find them of use.

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N O T E S

Changes

London Mr John Schofield has been appointed archaeological consultant to the DAC.

Truro Professor Charles Thomas has been appointed archaeological consultant to the DAC.

Conference on religious sites in the landscape

Further details are now available of the conference on the theme of religious sites in the landscape, organized jointly by the Society of Landscape Studies and the CBA Churches Committee. It will be held from 21 to 23 February 1986 at the Kennedy Theatre, Institute of Child Health, Guilford Street, London WC1. Speakers will include Dr L V Grinsell on the christianization of prehistoric and other pagan sites, Dr C S Briggs on Bronze Age burial and ritual in upland Britain, K Adams on the Saxon monastery and village of Crayke, and Dr T C Darvill on prehistoric ceremonial landscapes. Full details are available from the CBA office.

Sculpture from Bermondsey Priory

In May 1985 David Beard of the Department of Greater London Archaeology of the Museum of London excavated a small sculpture on the site of the Cluniac Bermondsey Priory. It was found in the 12th century backfill of a robbed-out foundation trench. The sculpture, of oolitic limestone, is 270mm high, 360mm wide. Professor George Zarnecki has commented briefly on a photograph of the relief as follows '... puzzling from every point of view. It is so small that I suppose it was part of church furniture rather than architecture. The subject is presumably Christ but there is no nimbus.... It is certainly Romanesque, c 1100, and in style very un-Cluniac, rather Lombard.'

C A S E S

Repton 1985

Martin Biddle and
Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle

The 1985 excavations - the twelfth successive season - surpassed even 1984 in the range and significance of the results obtained. As the programme begins to approach its conclusion, perhaps in 1988, the major themes of Christian church and Viking fortress are reaching the long-planned and logical climax of their investigation. In 1985 work again took place on three sites: by the church of St Wystan, in the Headmaster's kitchen garden, and in the Vicarage garden.

In the angle between the chancel and north aisle of St Wystan's church excavation since 1979 has examined, first, the late and post-medieval structures in this area north of the crypt, and, second, the long series of superimposed burials which comprised this part of the cemetery in the Late Saxon and earlier post-Conquest centuries. The earliest graves over about half the area nearest to the church were examined in 1985. These graves displayed a wide range of burial practices (wooden coffins, some iron-bound; earth graves with head niche; side stones forming head niche; and stone packing) of kinds known elsewhere in the late Saxon period. Grave 245 contained a silver penny of

'jewel-cross' type of the reign of one of the sons of Cnut (not yet cleaned for full identification), dating c 1035-7. But Grave 529 contained no fewer than five silver pennies and a gold ring. This grave lay with its head-end cut down tight against the foundations of the east wall of the north porticus, now the north aisle of the church, and was thus demonstrably later in date than the foundations. Grave 529 was also the earliest grave in its area and thus marked the beginning of this part of the cemetery. The five coins were all 'three-line' issues of the 860s and 870s, two of King Burgred of Mercia (deposed 873-4) and one of the first type of King Alfred of Wessex (871-99); the other two are not yet clean enough to be legible. The group as a whole is very similar to the other parcel of five pennies found in 1982 among the bones of the mass burial in the Vicarage garden and dated numismatically to 874-5.

The significance of the new discovery is twofold: it demonstrates, what we have long argued on other grounds, that the basic structure of the Anglo-Saxon church of St Wystan is pre-Viking; second, it provides an unquestionable example of the deliberate burial of a parcel of coins in a 9th century grave. It therefore supports the suggestion that the five coins from the mass burial in the Vicarage Garden formed part of the furnishing of the central grave around which the mass burial was originally laid. It also suggests that the other Anglo-Saxon coins found in the Repton graves, such as the 'jewel-cross' penny from Grave 245, may be a later reflection of this same practice. The custom of depositing coins in graves is very much a Scandinavian feature in the 9th and 10th centuries. The gold ring from Grave 529 is paralleled in the grave finds at Birka (Sweden). It therefore looks very much as if Grave 529, like the mass burial under the mound in the Vicarage garden, is a Viking burial. Its position north of the crypt is precisely comparable with the burial with the Viking axe discovered south of the crypt in 1922. If this is so, the later Repton burials with coins may reflect the survival of a Scandinavian practice in the Danelaw.

A second observation of particular importance in this part of the excavations in 1985 concerns the stone used in building the church. The gradual removal of the burials has shown the presence of layers of stone chips and other building debris close to the church. So far as can yet be seen, these earlier layers contain chips of red-brown Bunter Sandstone alone. The distinctive 'tea-green' Keuper waterstone, of which the crypt and most of the Anglo-Saxon and later church is built, seems to be absent from these layers. The sunken stone building under the mound in the Vicarage garden is built exclusively of Bunter Sandstone: the Keuper green stone is conspicuous by its absence and this has prompted the idea that the stone originally used for building at Repton was Bunter Sandstone and that Keuper green stone was only introduced later.

The massive stone drain running east-west north of the crypt has now been shown to be earlier than the crypt and any visible part of the church. It must, therefore, relate to an earlier church and it is striking that it seems to be constructed mainly, perhaps exclusively, of Bunter Sandstone. These observations suggest that the putative first church - the church to the east of which the crypt was originally constructed as a detached mausoleum - was also perhaps built of Bunter Sandstone. If this should prove to be the case, the Bunter Sandstone blocks forming a distinctive band of walling some 2m (6ft) high around the east end of the present church, above the Keuper green stone lower walls of the crypt and north and south porticus, may not represent a distinct period of construction - the so-called 'brownstone church' - but rather the simple reuse of blocks available from the partial or complete rebuilding of the 'first church' when that was reconstructed and extended, incorporating the crypt within the structure.

The 1985 season has fully justified the six seasons of arduous and meticulous excavation of the later structures and cemetery north of the crypt. In the remaining two or three seasons we shall remove the remaining burials and will then devote our work entirely to the underlying construction and occupation levels in which several periods of activity, including a major building, can already be discerned.

By the end of the 1984 season, it was clear that the excavation in the Headmaster's kitchen garden had located a major cut into the cliff of the River Trent, running back as much as 32-34m (105-112ft) into the heart of the Viking defended enclosure. Recognizing that this might be a Viking dry dock (a slip or noost), the Headmaster and Mrs Jewel very generously gave permission for the opening of a major excavation in the north half of their kitchen garden. Since this required the use of the south half of the garden for dumping soil, the whole garden has been disrupted and we are very conscious of the generosity of the Jewels in allowing this to happen.

The work in 1985 took place in two stages. In the first, the garden soil was stripped by machine and the farmyard and associated buildings of the Augustinian priory were cleaned and recorded. In the second stage, the filling of the underlying cut was partly removed by machine, the work subsequently continuing by hand with a mechanical hoist for soil removal. The outline of a huge parallel-sided cut, 10.6m (35ft) wide, 25.4m (83ft) long from the top of the cliff, and over 4m (13ft) deep was uncovered running exactly as predicted after the last season at an angle to the river and pointed a few degrees upstream. The filling, which could not be entirely removed in 1985, contained great quantities of human bone as well as pottery, which appears to date to the later 12th century. It seems possible that the hollow left by the long-abandoned slip was filled in by the Augustinian canons with the spoil derived from levelling the site for their priory church and cloister in the cemetery immediately east of the parish church of St Wystan. Because the lower levels of the cut have not been emptied, its original shape is not yet known, but in an experiment to test the feasibility of the theory that it was in origin a slip dock for Viking ships, a full-size cross section of the Gokstad ship of c 850 was constructed and set in the deepest point yet reached in the excavation. This showed that a ship with a beam of c 5.2m (17ft) and a draught of about 1m (3.3ft) could easily have been drawn up the cut and covered for the winter by a gabled roof braced from the sides of the cut. This interpretation remains, however, no more than a plausible hypothesis. At present we have no more than a very large and regular cut filled in the 12th century. Only the next season will show whether this is, or is not, a Viking noost for the maintenance and protection of a long ship throughout the winter months of 873-4.

In the Vicarage garden, by kind permission of the Vicar and Mrs Barker, work continued on two sites. The mound which contained the mass burial excavated in 1982 has now been fully removed. This season work concentrated on the sunken stone building covered by the mound and on the cemetery of late Saxon graves which clustered around the mound to east and west. The purpose of the sunken building is still undefined, except that it is a chapel. Excavation of the eastern compartment showed that the original plaster floor had been heavily worn before being levelled up with sand to take a new plank floor, the surface of which had twice been covered with plaster containing flecks of red tile - a version of the red plaster floors copying Roman opus signinum cement which occur widely in Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical

buildings. The original floor was hollowed towards the centre, but the reason for this is not yet known. In the western compartment, there was evidence for comparable floors but very little had survived subsequent disturbance.

The use of the building may still elude definition but there is no doubt of its distinction (glass windows, moulded stucco on its walls) or of the wealth of those who used it. A whole range of rich artefacts has been found around the building in previous years: this year the finest so far was an intact silver disc brooch, gilded, its face carved with a griffin surrounded by interlace, one of the finest metal objects from 8th century England yet known.

When the eastern compartment of the sunken building was prepared for the mass burial in c 873-4, it was refloored with a thick deposit of clean red Keuper marl - the only use of Keuper material in a building otherwise constructed entirely of Bunter Sandstone and Bunter clays. The red colour of the Keuper marl may be significant in relation to the careful preparation and closing of the mass burial. Equally significant is the quantity of broken stucco, broken sandstone ashlars, and broken stuccoed sandstone fragments found in and under the levelling of Keuper marl. These demonstrate, as suspected before, that the upper part of the sunken building was at least partially demolished before the placing of the mass burial in its eastern compartment. Other considerations suggest that the building was levelled to the ground, its sunken eastern compartment then forming the equivalent of a chamber tomb in which the mass burial was placed and the whole then covered by the mound. Examination of the stones from the kerb which crowned the mound and of those which filled the pits dug through the mound at the western corners of the building showed that these, too, were derived from the dressed Bunter sandstones of a building whose architectural detail included pilaster strips - presumably the demolished building below the mound.

After the construction of the mound, and possibly much later, a series of burials was cut into the mound and laid at its periphery, on all sides but especially to east and west. A relatively large number of these burials were in elaborate iron-bound wooden coffins; one had been carefully translated, the feet alone being missed and left in position; and another, next but one to the translated burial, wore a garment, possibly long-cuffed gloves, which left a mass of gold thread covering each arm from wrist to elbow. This looks like a group of high-status burials, and the way they cluster about the mound raises important issues in the interpretation of the mound itself, and more especially of the mass burial it contained. A professional symposium for medical and forensic specialists held during the season to discuss the results obtained by the physical anthropology team studying the bones from the mass burial has emphasized the lack of evidence that the persons in the mass burial were put to the sword or had died of wounds received in battle. From these and other conclusions a new hypothesis has begun to emerge to account for the more than 249 bodies in the mass burial. This suggests that, rather than Mercian, they are a Viking population and represent those of the Great Army of 873-4 who died of disease while in camp at Repton during that winter. Only further analysis will show whether this hypothesis can be maintained but, if it were correct, it might help to explain why in the late Saxon period a group of persons of relatively high status chose to be buried around the mound containing the mass burial. If these later graves were those of Scandinavian settlers of this area, they might look back to those buried in the mound, and not least to the then

perhaps still remembered name of the central burial around whom the mass was placed, as to the founding fathers of their settlement. It is clear at least that the later cemetery is significantly related to the mound with the mass burial, and that the interpretation of the one cannot proceed independently of the other.

Just to the east, against the churchyard wall, a second excavation in the Vicarage garden also encountered the cemetery just discussed and showed how it related to the churchyard as a whole and to the definition of the western boundary of the churchyard. Initially burials continued right across the area, linking the present churchyard to the cemetery around the mound. Burials with iron-bound coffins were, however, limited to the western part of this trench, nearest to the mound, emphasizing the concentration of 'special' burials on the mound itself and its periphery. Burial continued here for some time but was then brought to an end by the cutting from north to south right across the area of a broad, shallow, and flat-bottomed ditch. This ditch defined for the first time the western boundary of the churchyard and its line is followed, 1.5m (5ft) to the east, by the present churchyard wall. This was perhaps built in the 17th century but probably followed a hedge or fence on the eastern lip of the ditch. The cutting of the ditch could be dated by pottery found in its primary silt to the later 12th century. Representing a desire for order and the strict definition of consecrated ground, such a development seems characteristic of the development of canon law in the 12th century. The obvious moment for the imposition of new order at Repton is the grant of the church of St Wystan to the Canons of Calke by the Countess of Chester in 1159, with the purpose that they should build their mother house in Repton. The filling of the abandoned cut by the Trent to gain more level ground and the ordering of the churchyard look very much like different aspects of the coming of the canons.

During the excavations, Dr H M Taylor continued his work on the church itself and completed within the season a set of elevation drawings of the exterior of the medieval church to explore and demonstrate the complex development of the post-Conquest fabric. At the same time, plaster was stripped from the northern passage to the crypt and a full record made of the complex structure of the north-east and south-west walls of the passage, comparable to that made for the south passage in 1983. The nature and location of the entrance(s) to the crypt in its first, mausoleum, stage, remain obscure. The west wall shows features not yet satisfactorily interpreted, however, which clearly bear upon this problem, and there begin to be hints that the north and south passages are not simple, unitary structures but may themselves be of more than one period of construction. Further work in the crypt is needed in future seasons.

+ + + + +

Once again in 1985 we are deeply indebted to all those who have made the work possible and especially to the Headmaster and Governors of Repton School for permission to excavate in their grounds; to Rev Paul Jenkins, Housemaster of The Hall, for allowing us to live in his house; and to Rev Julian Barker and Mrs Barker for permission to work in their garden, and to Mr Barker and the Parochial Church Council for permission to work on the church itself. Our work would not have been possible without generous support from Earthwatch/The Center for Field Research, the Avenue Trust, the Society of Antiquaries, Mr and Mrs David Burnham, and many other donors, including a large number of our own volunteers who paid their own way and even contributed over 'the going rate'. We owe a special debt to the members of the Douglas Heritage Society who covered the excavations after the 1984 season, uncovered them in July, and covered them again in September 1985, and to many friends at the Douglas Construction Co in Birmingham and Lichfield who helped our work in endless ways.

The 1986 season will last for five weeks from 28 July to 31 August.

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St Andrew Dacre, Cumbria

Rachel Newman

The first mention of Dacre occurs in AD 731, when Bede refers to a monastery 'which being built near the River Dacre has taken its name from the same'.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle relates that a peace was concluded 'aet Aemotum' in AD 926 by Athelstan, King of England, who took homage from the kings of the Scots and Cumberland. William of Malmesbury, writing in the 12th century, places the site of the treaty specifically at Dacre. It is unlikely that he would have done so without having access to some documentary evidence.

Massive stone-lined drains, which converge as they issue from the presumed medieval boundary bank, were discovered in the south of the churchyard in the 1920s. These were re-excavated in 1985 and proved to be constructed of reused almost certainly Roman masonry. An 8th-9th century stylus was found in the fill. The drains lay above a fragmentary occupation level which in turn was over a deep V-shaped ditch.

Two fragments of stone cross-shafts were recovered in the 19th century, one dated to c AD 800 from west of the church, the other dated to c AD 900-50 from the east end of the church. A further fragment of 10th century cross-shaft was found to the west of the church during the 1982 excavations.

Carlisle, Heversham, and Dacre are the only recorded pre-Viking monasteries in north-east England and Dacre is the first to be excavated.

The excavations (Figures 3 and 4)

In 1982 trial trenches were undertaken on two sites: (a) to the west of the church a medieval, possibly 14th century, structure was constructed over earlier boundary features, the earliest of which is undated; (b) to the north of the church, medieval and earlier features were revealed.

The western half of the area available to the north of the church was examined in 1983. An occupation area belonging to an aceramic period was excavated immediately north of the ancient boundary wall of the churchyard. Finds included window glass, a millstone, Samian ware, and a Middle Saxon loomweight. Further north, on the upper terrace, a timber building of post-in-posthole construction was identified. This also apparently belonged to an aceramic phase and is the first structure of its type identified within the region. Other finds of early date included two stycas dated AD 848-54 and two further fragments of loomweights. Three more stycas were found in 1985, one a particularly early example.

The uncovering of further areas in 1984 and 1985 demonstrated more clearly the complex sequence of stratigraphy on the site from the prehistoric to the medieval period. Slight traces of a possible prehistoric phase in the form of ephemeral gullies and stakeholes cut into the subsoil were recovered from the northern part of the site. The majority of flints found at Dacre came from this area.

A circular timber structure was found securely sealed beneath the aceramic occupation area excavated in 1983 to the north of a ditch (see below). No dating evidence was associated with it, but the surrounding levels produced Romano-British coarseware. This structure seemed to have been terraced into the hillside.

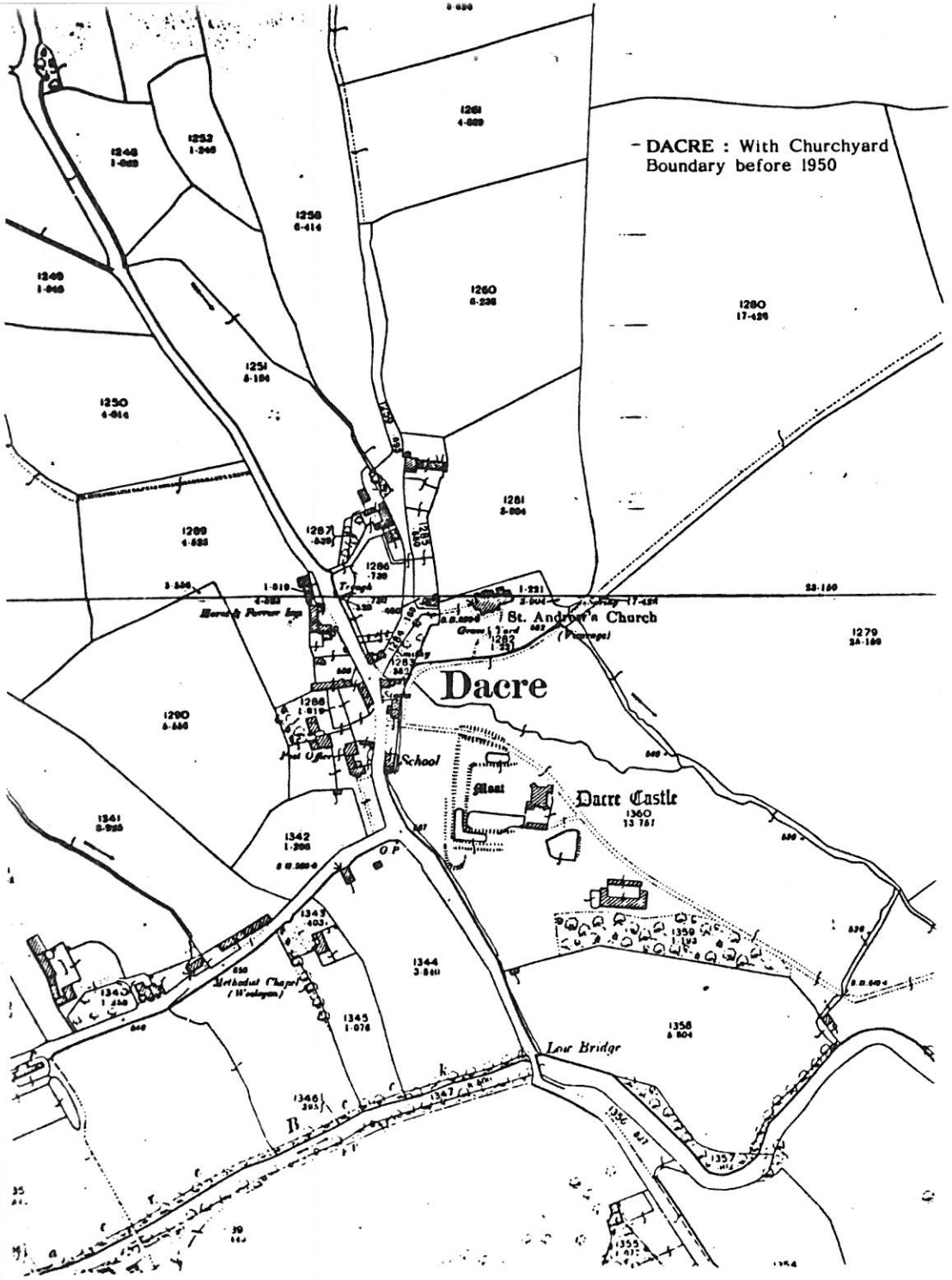

Figure 2 St Andrew, Dacre

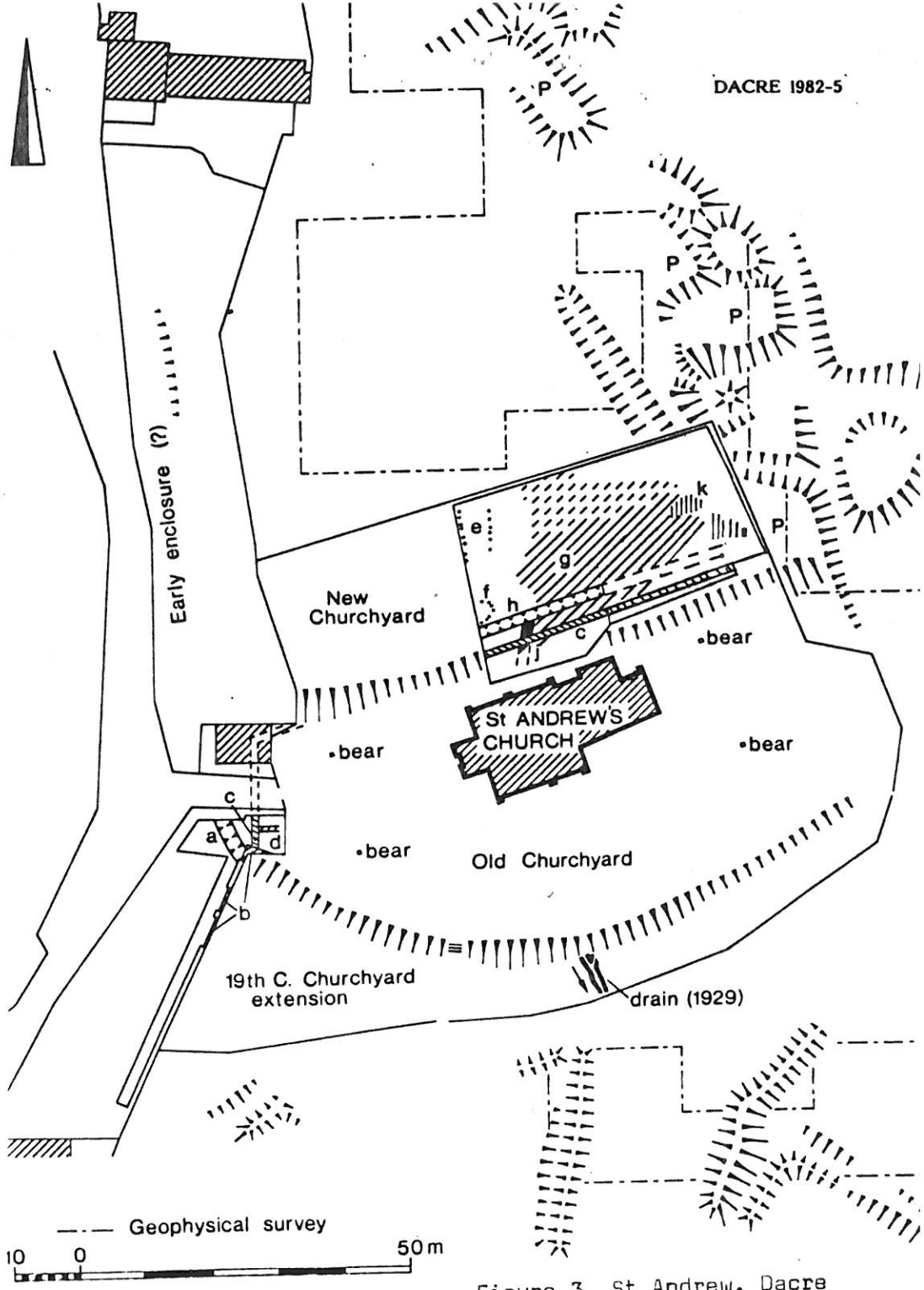

Figure 3 St Andrew, Dacre

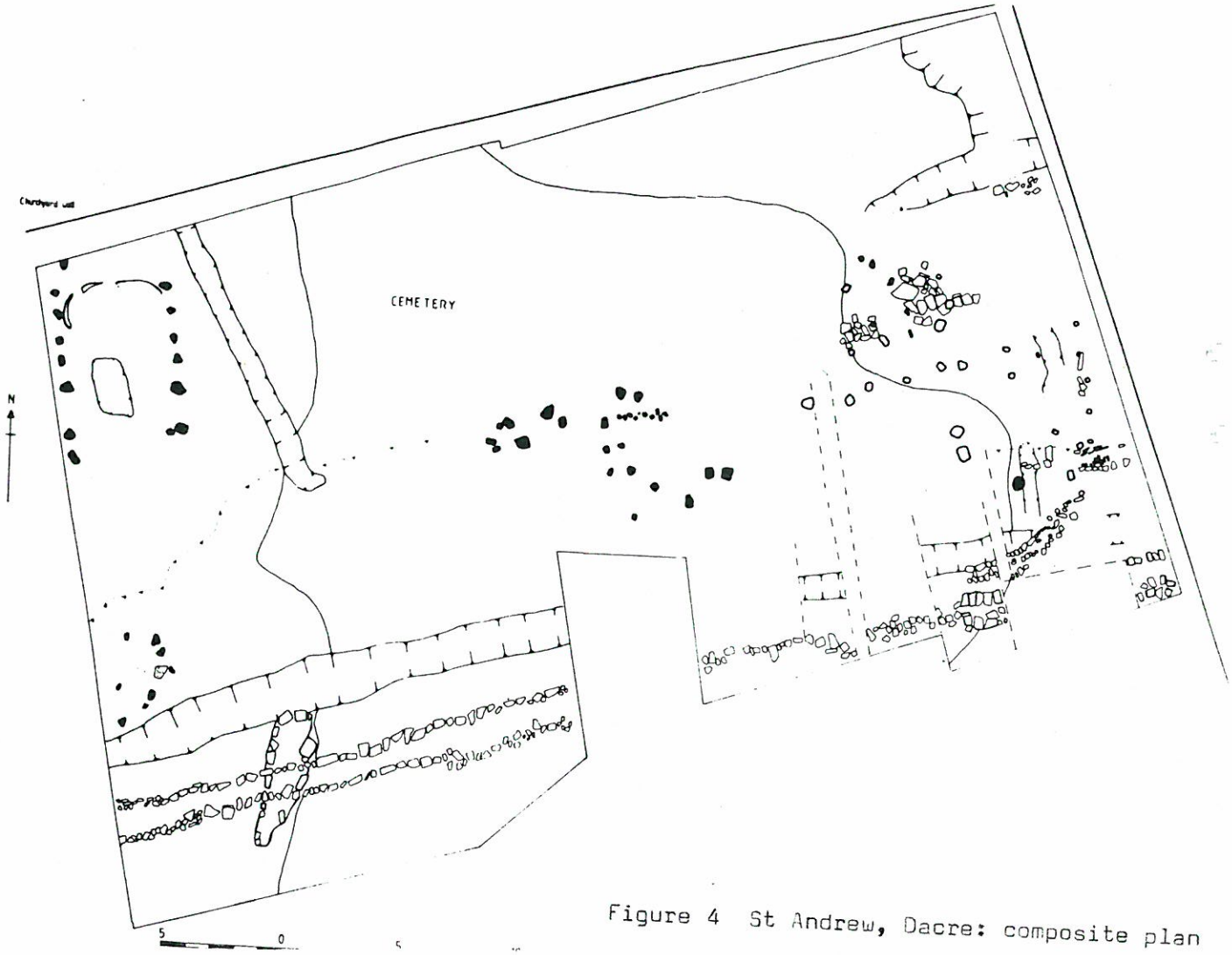

Figure 4 St Andrew, Dacre: composite plan

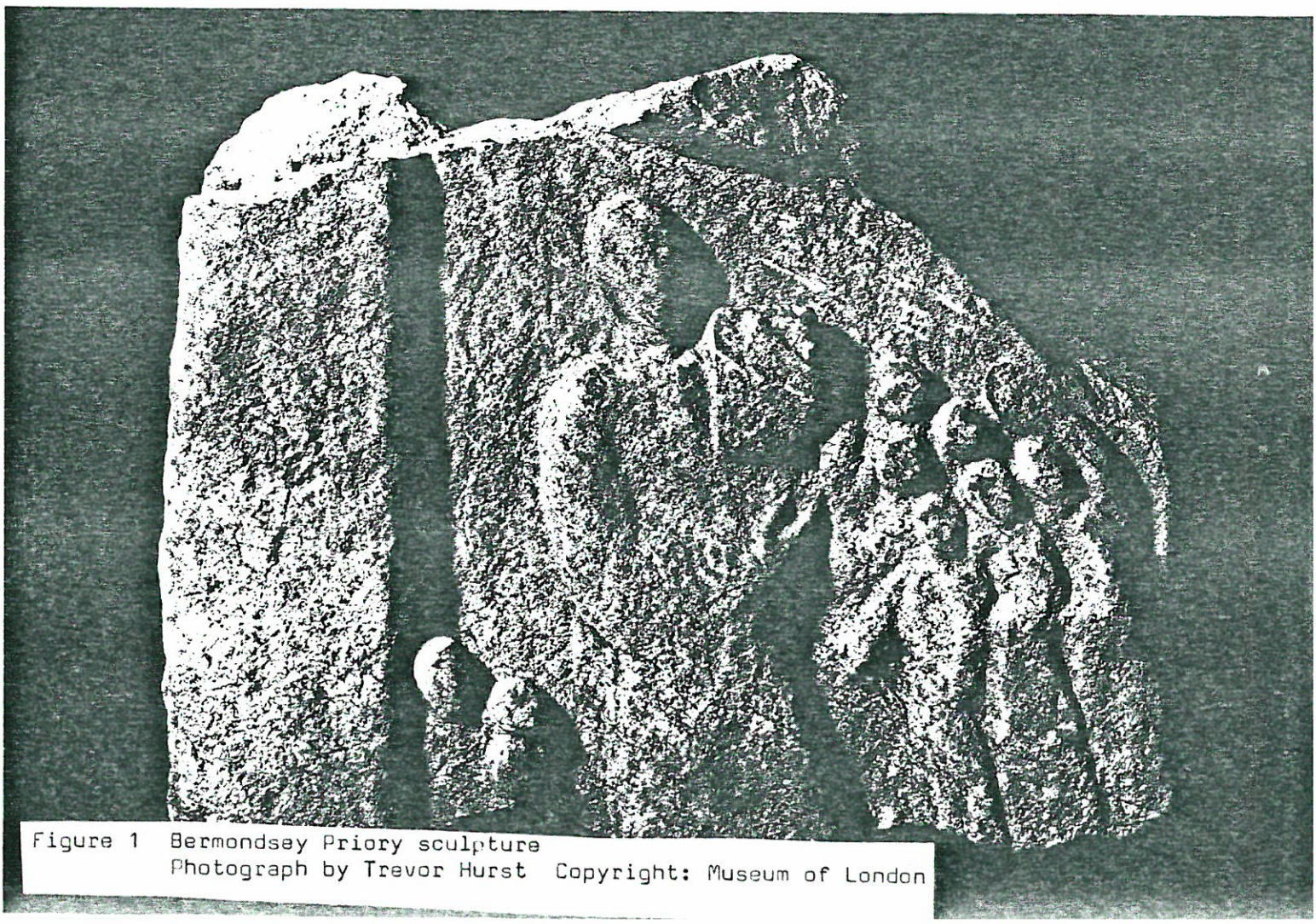

Figure 1 Bermondsey Priory sculpture
Photograph by Trevor Hurst Copyright: Museum of London

A substantial cemetery was recognized to the east of the early structures. All the graves were aligned approximately east-west and there were no grave goods associated. There seems little doubt that the people buried were Christian. The graves were clearly sealed by late medieval activity and there was no pottery whatsoever in the cemetery levels. More than 180 graves have been identified, many of which contained iron coffin fittings, on first analysis similar to those found at Monkwearmouth. No clear boundary was found either to the west or north, but several ephemeral ditches aligned north-south seemed to define the eastern extent of the cemetery. Graves were clearly sealed by the later churchyard boundary bank and ditch to the south and it seems that the cemetery extended further to the south. At least three phases of burial exist, two lying parallel with the church, the third and possibly earliest lying more truly east-west, at right-angles to the probable early wall (see below). Unfortunately, bone preservation was minimal. It is clear that the cemetery had been abandoned and forgotten before the northern boundary to the medieval churchyard was established.

A group of postholes, possibly representing a structure aligned north-south, was excavated within the cemetery area. These seemed to cut the cemetery levels.

A spread of rubble, either a demolition or a levelling phase, was revealed in the south-western part of the site, and this overlay a possible wall, slightly more than 1m wide, formed by angular stones with a cobble core. It was aligned true north-south as opposed to later boundary features which were parallel to the church, slightly north of true east-west. This possible wall ends abruptly at the southern lip of a ditch (see below), although there are suggestions that it turned eastwards rather than being cut by the ditch. There is no evidence of it to the north of the ditch. It was traced southwards until it was seen to be destroyed by 18th-19th century burial activity.

A bank, clearly linked with a ditch to the north, was excavated in the southern part of the site. The bank became less distinct to the east and the ditch was destroyed in the south-eastern corner by a later ditch associated with medieval features. Both ditch and bank produced material of the 8th-12th centuries, the earliest of which consisted solely of metalwork, including three bronze pins, a clasp, a bronze strap-end, and a buckle. The known stone churchyard wall was built on top of this bank and it was dated to the early 13th century by numismatic and ceramic evidence. It is thus broadly contemporary with the surviving chancel of the church. This wall continued beyond the eastern extent of the excavations, but the eastern part excavated seems later in date, possibly being connected with later medieval features to the north. It became clear in 1985 that the ditch had almost completely silted before the stone wall was constructed on top of the bank.

A large quantity of worked red sandstone was found within the make-up of the medieval wall and lying on the earlier bank. Enough was recovered to suggest that a monumental building was being quarried for stone c AD 1200. The chancel of the present church also contains many pieces of red sandstone. These may come from an earlier church or some other large stone buildings, presumably pre-Conquest, in the near vicinity.

Medieval features were identified at the eastern end of the site, apparently continuations of the earthworks seen in the field to the east. A ditch and the edge of a platform were excavated and in 1985 traces of a number of stone and timber structures were discovered to the south forming the remains of a farmstead immediately outside the churchyard. All seem to date from the 14th-15th centuries.

Discussion

The excavations at Dacre proved beyond doubt that most of the major features excavated belong to the period between the end of the Roman empire and the Norman takeover in 1092. The general assemblage of artefacts from this period in the region has been greatly increased by the excavations, as has our understanding of building techniques used. The weight of evidence gathered (traces of a monumental stone structure in the vicinity, demolished by AD 1200, the massive stone-lined drain reusing Roman masonry, the large pre-Conquest cemetery containing coffined bodies, the relatively large number of 9th century coins, and the high-class metalwork from the pre-Conquest period, including a stylus) suggests that the present churchyard lies above the monastery referred to by Bede. Thus the present uniqueness of the site in the region as the only excavated environs of a pre-Conquest monastery ensures its important contribution to our knowledge of the period and that immediately following the Norman Conquest.

August 1985

(Editor's note: With the departure of Dr R H Leech to the RCHME in Southampton in 1984, the direction of the Dacre excavation passed to Ms R Newman who was responsible for the 1984 and 1985 excavations. The report on the 1984 excavations (Bulletin 21 (1984), 12-14) should have been attributed to Ms Newman. The final report on the Dacre excavations will be jointly produced by Ms Newman and Dr Leech.)

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St Mary Sompting, Sussex

Fred Aldsworth

One of the best-known church towers in Sussex, that of St Mary's, Sompting, has recently been the subject of close examination. There has never been much doubt but that the masonry of the tower dates to the 11th century AD, but there has been much debate about the date of the rare example of a 'Rhenish helm' spire which it supports. No other Anglo-Saxon or early Norman tower in this country has a contemporary spire of this type but there are indications that they may have formerly existed at St Benet's, Cambridge, and at Flixton, Suffolk. This type of spire is also known in model form in England as it was used in the design of three Anglo-Saxon censer covers, now in the British Museum.

Cecil Hewett (1978; 1980) considers that the framework of the roof, a square-planned and pyramidal spire rising from the apexes of four gables, dates from somewhere between c 950 and c 1050 but Cartwright (1830) states that the spire was reduced in height, ie replaced or rebuilt, in 1762.

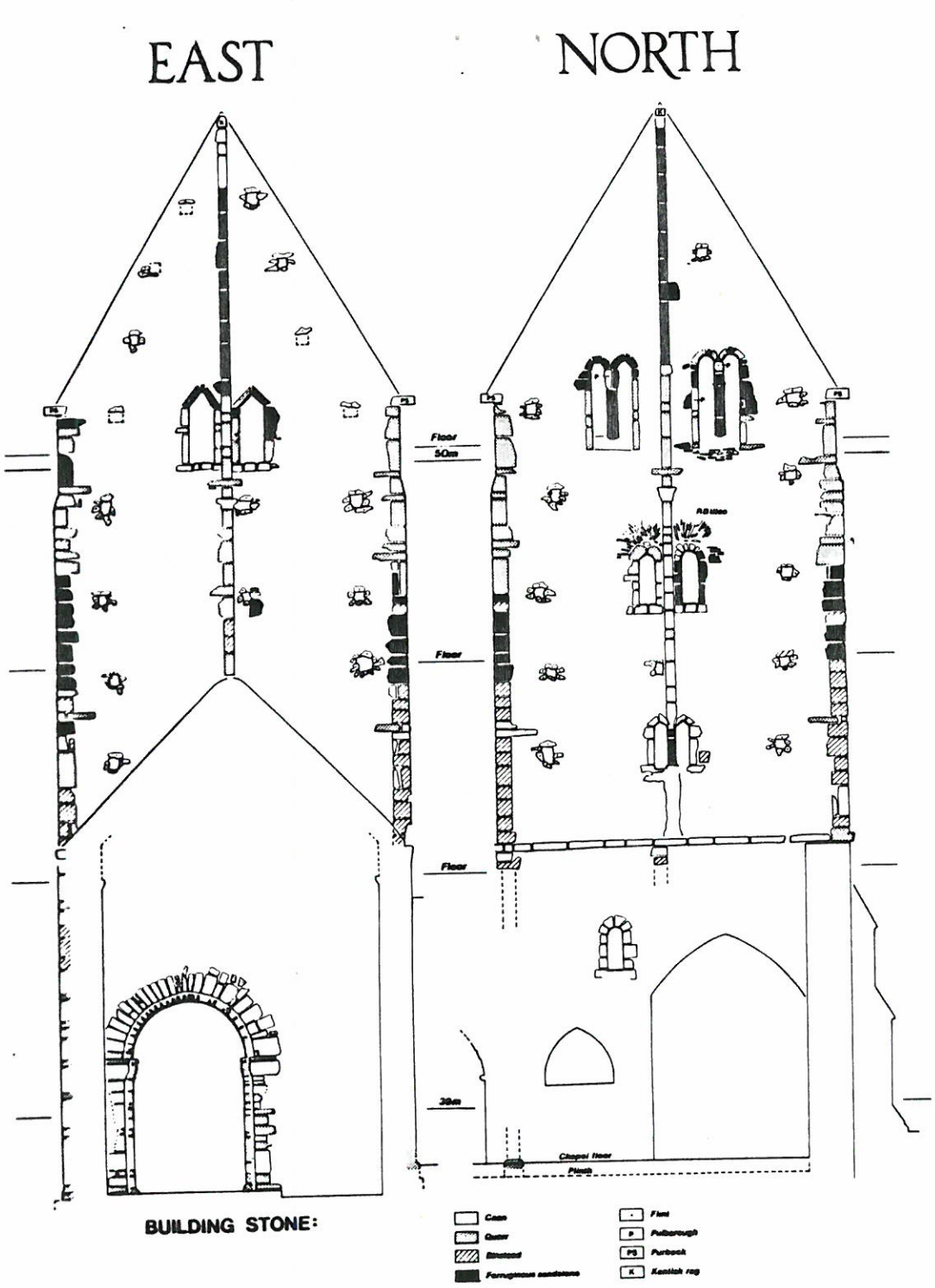

Figure 5 St Mary, Sompting

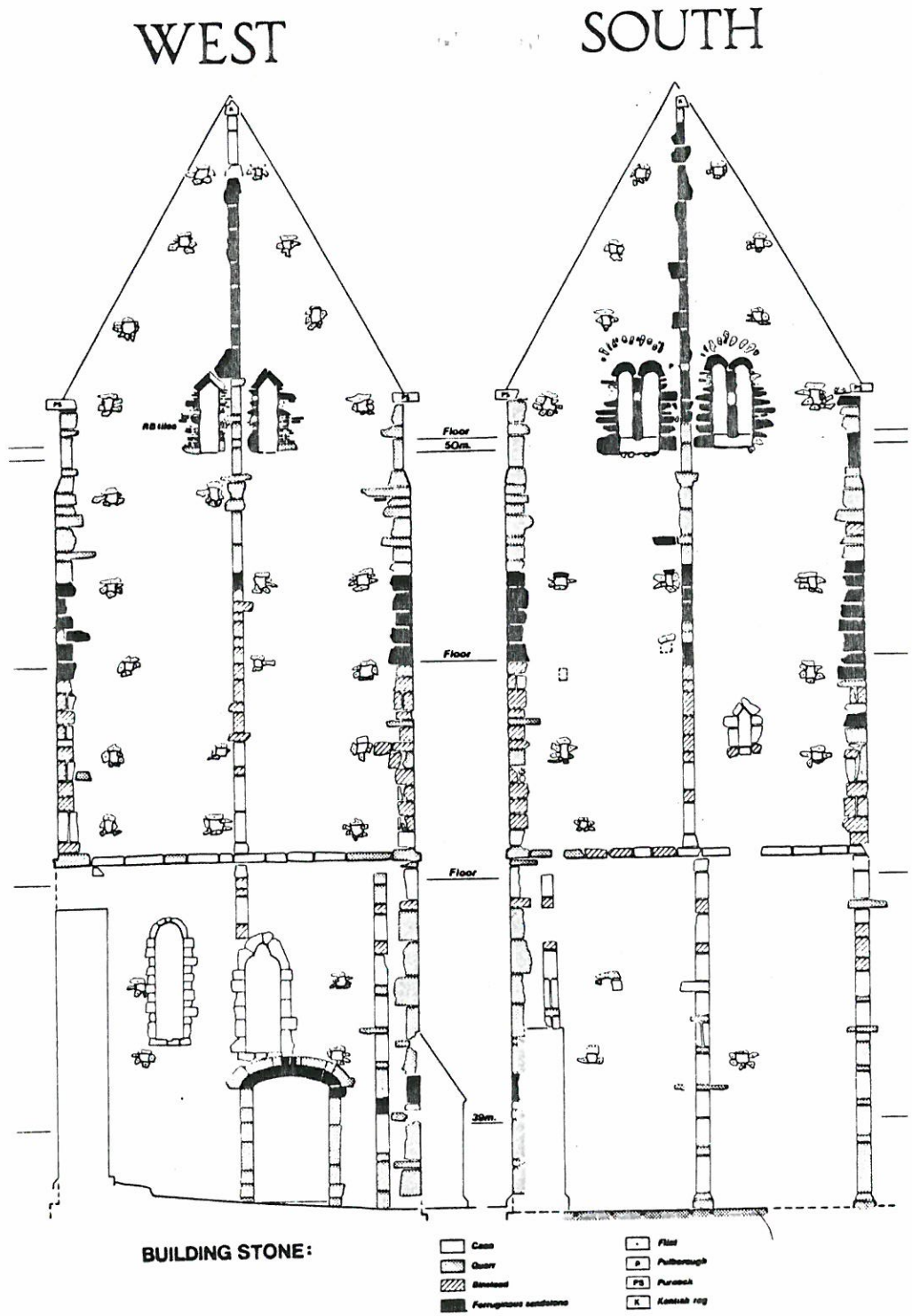

Figure 6 St Mary, Sompting

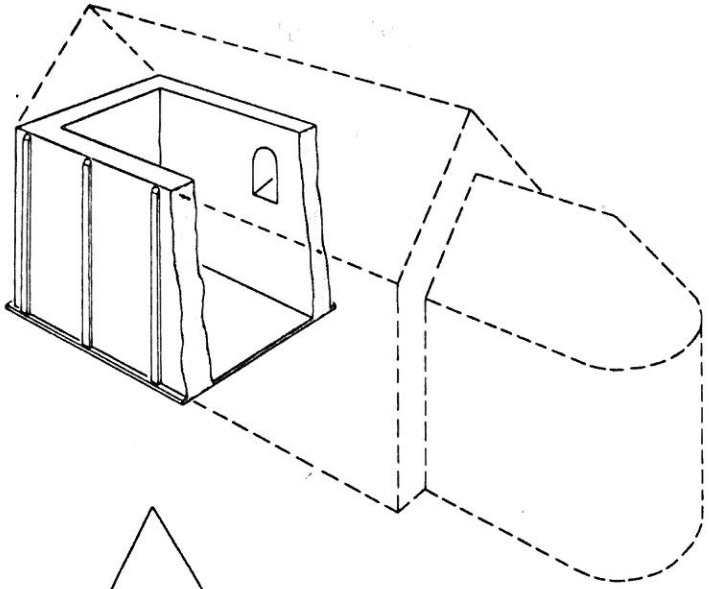

Figure 7 St Mary, Sompting: period 1, Anglo-Saxon

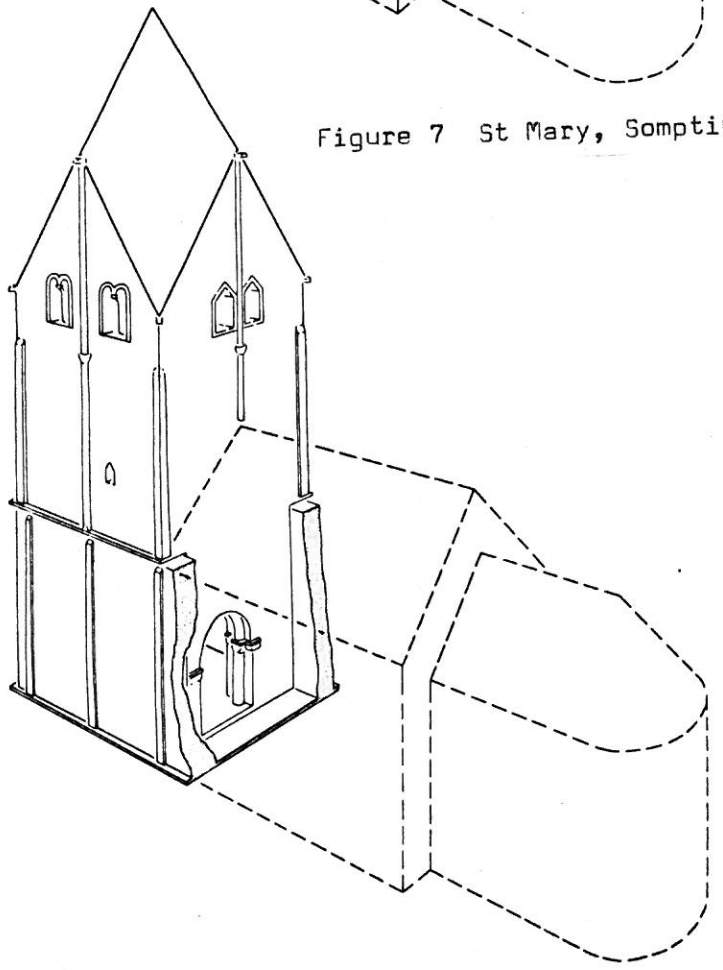

Figure 8 St Mary, Sompting: period 2, 11th century

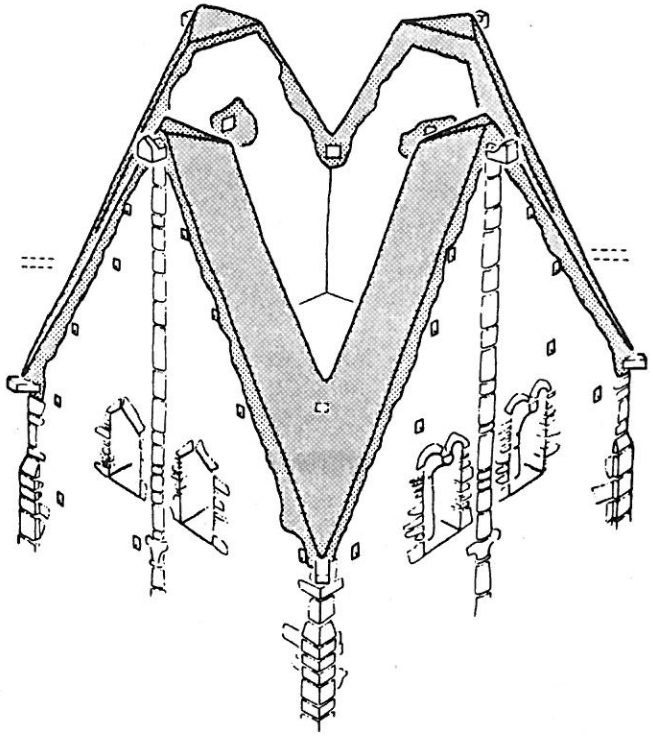

Figure 9 St Mary, Sompting: stippled area indicates that part of gables rebuilt to carry helm spire. The corbels are all inserted.

The opportunity for re-examination arose out of the need for reshingling, which was last undertaken in 1922-3 at a cost of £128 - the cost in 1984 was in excess of £12,000. The tower was scaffolded and, following a site discussion with the architects, Richard Andrews and Ian Stewart, and a number of eminent experts, including Cecil Hewett and Dr H M Taylor, the fabric of the tower and the framework of the spire were the subject of detailed study by Fred Aldsworth of the West Sussex County Council and Richard Harris of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum. The work is receiving the support of the Margary Research Fund.

The external and internal elevations of the tower have been photographed and drawn at a scale of 1:20 to include details of all the ashlar work, windows, and doors, as well as mortar changes which indicate alterations and repairs. The types of stone used in construction have been identified by Martyn Owen of the British Geological Survey, and include Quarr, Binstead, and Ferruginous Sandstone - all from the Isle of Wight, as well as Caen from France (see Figures 5 and 6).

No definite conclusions have yet been reached about the precise dating of certain elements in the tower but the following sequence of events seems to have taken place. The lowest level of the tower appears to have originally formed the west end of the nave of an Anglo-Saxon church with plinth, pilaster strips, long and short quoins, and a double-splayed window in the north wall (Figure 7). It is not clear whether the horizontal string course dates from this or the next phase, but it would appear that the tower was added above the west end of the nave in the 11th century - Richard Gem (1983) argues for a date between c 1050 and 1090 and probably after the Conquest. It is likely that at the same time the dividing wall with surviving tower arch were inserted between the nave and tower (Figure 8). The arch was, for some unknown reason, displaced southward from the centre of the wall and appears to incorporate, as square capitals, four earlier stones carved in relief to show large volutes or horns and bunches of grapes.

The tower includes raised quoins, half-columnar shafts, and windows with roll mouldings - all indicative, as Gem argues, of a later 11th century date, but what is the date of the roof?

A close examination shows that the framework is essentially of one date and the work of one craftsman. In the original form it contained no reused material, but it is unique in England and, therefore, difficult to date. Samples of timber have been sent to Harwell for radiocarbon dating and, until the results of this analysis are known, Richard Harris, who has been recording the framework, is not prepared to put a date on it. However, it is clear from the masonry that the roof is not contemporary with the stonework on which it sits. The internal elevations of the tower, which are plastered to the very top, show quite clearly that the walls have been cut back, after plastering, to accommodate the roof - the corbels have all been inserted using stone, Kentish Rag and Purbeck stone, not used elsewhere on the tower, and the transoms, forming the main crossframe of the roof, were also inserted, though now reduced in length and supported on concrete beams (Figure 9). Wall anchors and purlins have similarly been inserted using a distinctive lime mortar mix which elsewhere in the belfry, as for example in repairs to the windows, incorporates 'modern' (ie 18th or 19th century) bricks. Although the surviving putlog (ie scaffold) holes and half-columnar shafts appear to indicate that the original form of the roof may have been a helm-spire, it is clear that major modifications were undertaken at a comparatively recent date prior to the introduction of cement and before S H Grimm drew the church in 1789.

Cartwright's suggestion that the spire was altered in 1762 seems the most likely date when all this occurred, but no supporting documentary evidence has yet been found and the results from Harwell are eagerly awaited.

Reprinted from Sussex Archaeol Soc Newsletter 46, August 1985.

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The tower of St Michael at the Northgate, Oxford

Brian Durham

The Oxford Archaeological Unit has recently begun a survey of the tower (Taylor 1965). The pretext is a scheme by the parish to make Oxford's oldest building accessible to the public, with a museum on the first floor and a staircase to a rooftop viewing platform.

The first stage of the archaeological work has been to record the interior stonework of the upper two storeys, the only part which is accessible ahead of the contract. Tim Morgan has drawn four elevations, like that illustrated (Figure 10), and the main recording problem is immediately evident. The walls are made of irregular Corallian ragstone, randomly laid, and so thick with mortar that the individual stones cannot be properly defined. Much of this mortar must date from the restorations of 1875 and c 1900, but it is indistinguishable from the remainder. The tower is now structurally sound and the architects for the new scheme do not propose to touch the mortar, so it would be irresponsible for us to rake out the joints. Hence, there is a relatively large proportion of mortar to stone on the elevations.

The mortar obviously makes masonry analysis very difficult. One looks in vain for evidence of coursing or lifts which might identify rebuilds. Instead, it has been necessary to resort to points of comparison.

The bell openings seem to be original. Their hollow-chamfered imposts are consistent throughout the tower and also match those of the ground and second floor doorways. Furthermore, the arched heads of all the doors and windows, and also the unrestored bell-openings, have a distinctive construction. The arches are formed mostly of stones sloping at 45 degrees, as if the builder was more used to forming triangular-headed windows. The round shape, therefore, does not result directly from the voussoirs but from mortar shaped over the centring. A visual survey of the external elevation suggests that this construction occurs in at least six of the eleven unrestored openings of all types, reinforcing the impression from the imposts that the whole thing is of one build. This is also supported by the evidence of the north-west corner where the 'long and short' quoin stones are continuous all the way up.

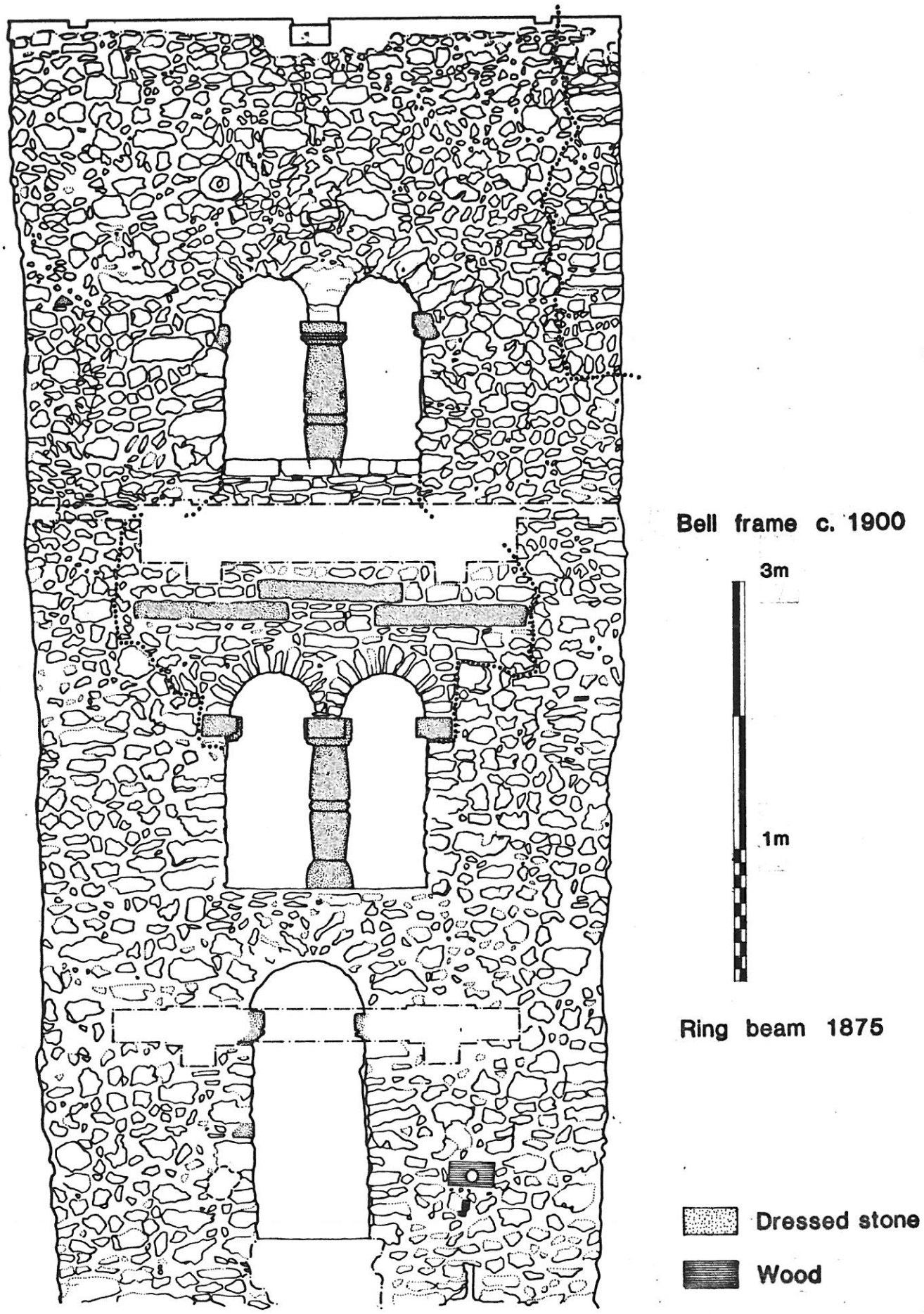

Figure 10 St Michael at the Northgate, Oxford: inside elevation of the north wall of the third stage and belfry. The door is about 8m above ground.
Survey by Tim Morgan for OAU

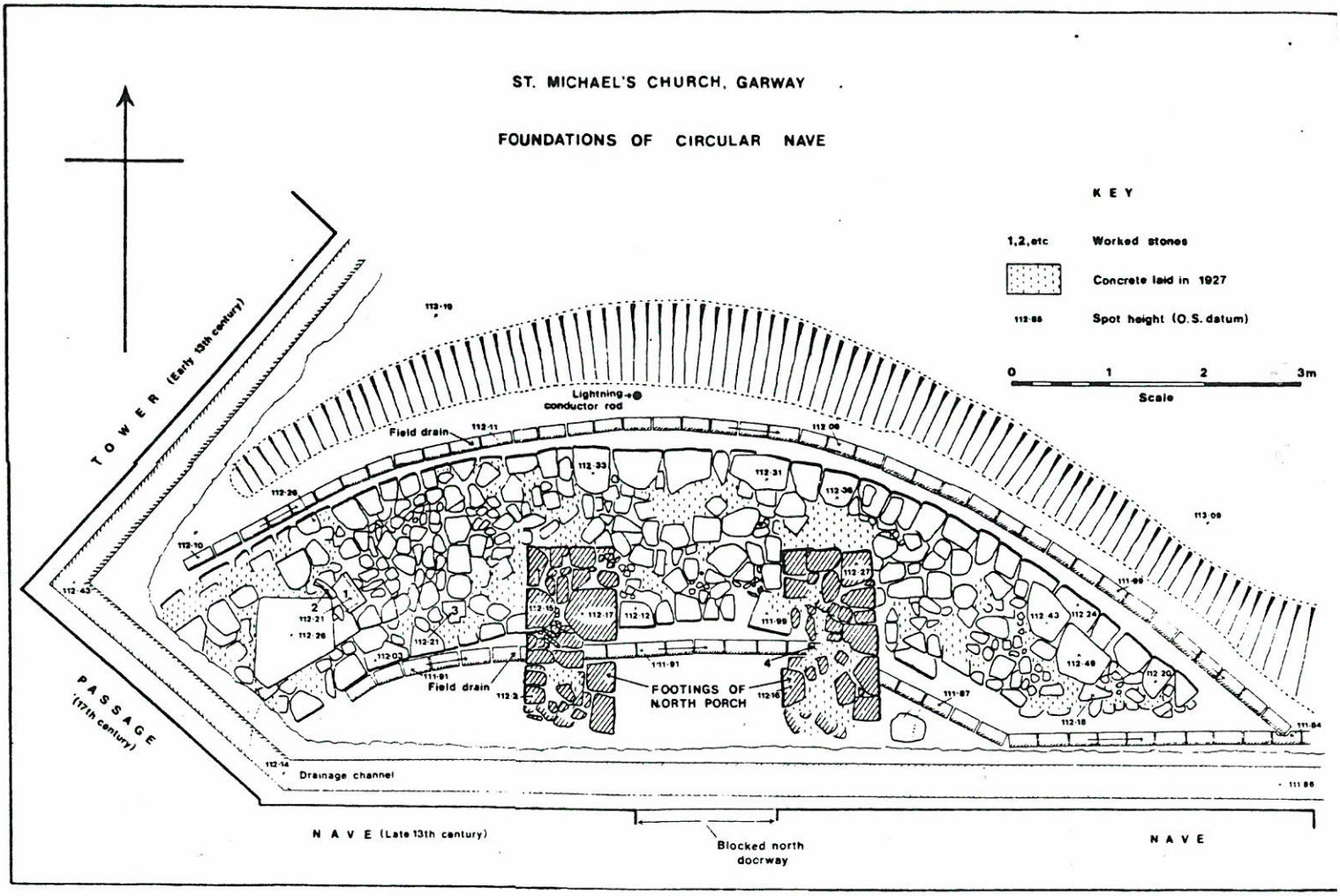

Figure 11 St Michaels church, Garway

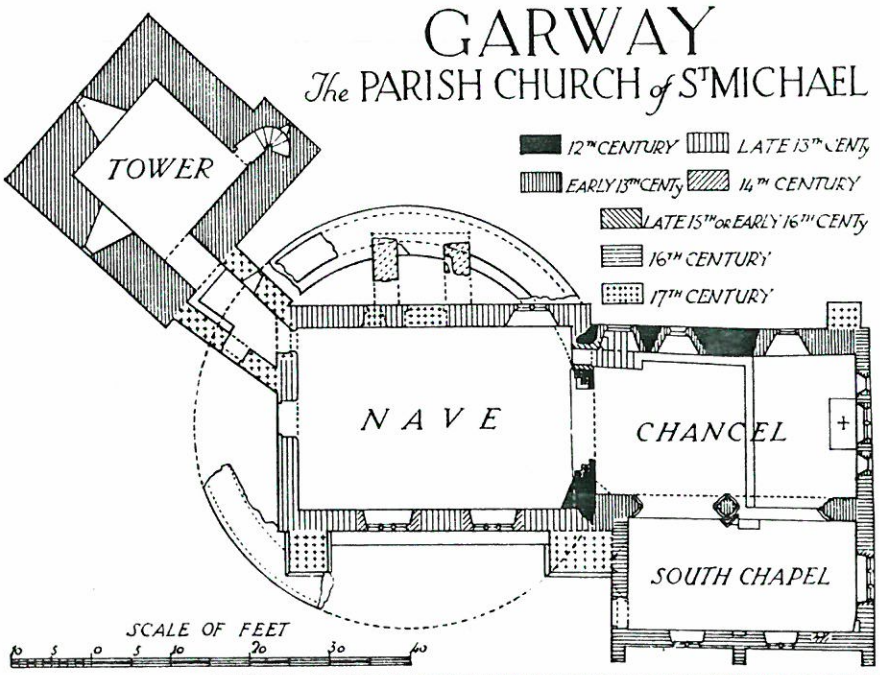

Figure 12 From RCHME Herefordshire, Vol 1, SW (1931)

The provisional sequence is, therefore, uncomplicated, but this makes it all the more difficult to explain the second-floor door above two windows in the north wall. Perhaps it led to a parapet along the north wall of the church functioning as the town wall. But the lower windows in the north face of the tower would be totally exposed. Perhaps, therefore, the tower was not built until after the town wall had been diverted and if the date is really c 1050 the town wall diversion must have been at least fifty years earlier than we suspected (Durham 1983). The tower would then have faced on a graveyard within the walls, and the lower windows would be secure. The upper door would perhaps have led to the diverted defences but it is still very strange that there is no sign of where the tower and town wall joined.

We are, therefore, moving towards an acceptance of the tower as part of a church, rather than a free-standing defensive tower as illustrated previously (Durham 1983). The remaining recording may substantiate this.

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Knights Templar church, Garway, Hereford and Worcester — R Shoesmith

The foundations of part of the circular nave of the preceptory of the Knights of the Temple at Garway (SO 455225) were cleared and consolidated on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (Figures 11 and 12). Much of the circular nave lies underneath the present parish church, but the foundations on the north side were exposed and examined in 1927 by members of the Woolhope Club. The preceptory was probably founded in the latter part of the 12th century and the decorated arch which joined the round nave to the chancel still survives inside the present, mainly 13th century, building. The conservation works have ensured that this important monument, which had become totally obscured by vegetation, can be fully appreciated by visitors to the church.

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St Thomas, Ramsey — Alison Taylor

St Thomas's church, Ramsey, is c 1180 and has an unusual form, suggestive of a hospital or hostel, presumably for the former Abbey next door. As the pews were being temporarily removed and considering hypotheses for an earlier church on the site, a test trench (Figure 13) was cut through the western part of the nave in February 1985 by Cambridgeshire County Council, on behalf of the HBMC. A predecessor to the south door was identified in the present south wall. This door, and traces of a corresponding one later identified in the north wall, seems incompatible with the present plan of the church. No architecture was found in the trench but a sondage revealed 1m of dumping down to the water table.

This material looks as though it came from a ruin nearby. We argue that this hypothetical ruin was King Cnut's unsuccessful Holy Trinity Church (recorded in the Ramsey Abbey Chronicle).

A report is held by the County Archaeologist and our interpretation will be published in Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc.

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The Gilbertine priory of St Andrew, York

R Kemp

Trial excavations in the disused Redfearn National Glass plc factory, 46-54 Fishergate, York (SE 60655115), began in February 1985 in advance of redevelopment for housing and a hotel complex (Figure 14).

The location of a Gilbertine priory of canons was attested by the 1852 edition of the Ordnance Survey map, which shows the area between Blue Bridge Lane and the line of Kent Street as 'Stone Wall Close' and notes that in this area was the site of St Andrew's church and the priory of St Andrew. To the north and south of Stone Wall Close are walls clearly marked in red and labelled 'remains of Priory wall'. The south wall along Blue Bridge Lane is still standing, albeit in a rather dilapidated form. The foundation date of the priory was also noted on the map as being AD 1202.

Some verbal information on the chance finding of skeletons was forthcoming at the start of excavations but no firm locations could be established, and hence it was a blank area of some 15,000m^2 which had to be considered for the location of the priory complex of which some 12,000m^2 lay within the site available.

Trial excavations began on 11 February in the form of two expandable transects east-west (trench 1) and north-south (trenches 2 and 4) across the available area.

Within the first eleven days the north wall of the priory church had been located. This wall was over 2m wide, built of Magnesian Limestone rubble and on pitched foundations. To the south of this was a thick spread of very high-quality decorated medieval window glass at a depth of no more than 20cm below the modern concrete factory floors. To the south of this spread, a massive robber trench of similar dimensions to the intact north wall indicated the location of the south wall and delineated a structure c 7m in internal width (see Figure 15).

Meanwhile, trench 1d had been excavated and had established that the area immediately south of the church did not contain the cloister. The transect was thus continued north from the church.

In this trench a flat mortar surface 2031, 2m wide, was encountered (Figure 15) and north of this a right-angle junction of robbed walls (2043 east-west and 2038/2040 north-south). North and west of this junction a black garden-type soil lay at a depth c 20cm lower than the flat mortar surface. This area can be interpreted as the south-east corner of the cloister walks and

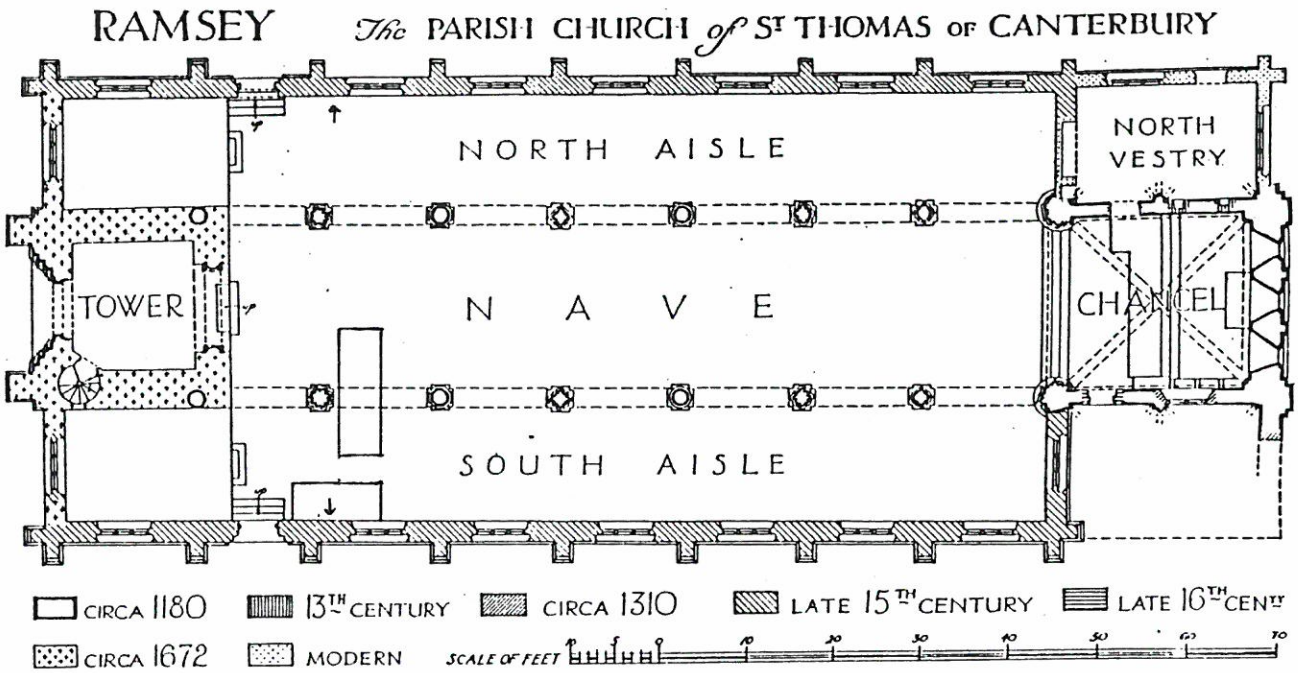

Figure 13 St Thomas, Ramsey: the two boxes indicate the position of the trenches and the two arrows the newly discovered doorways

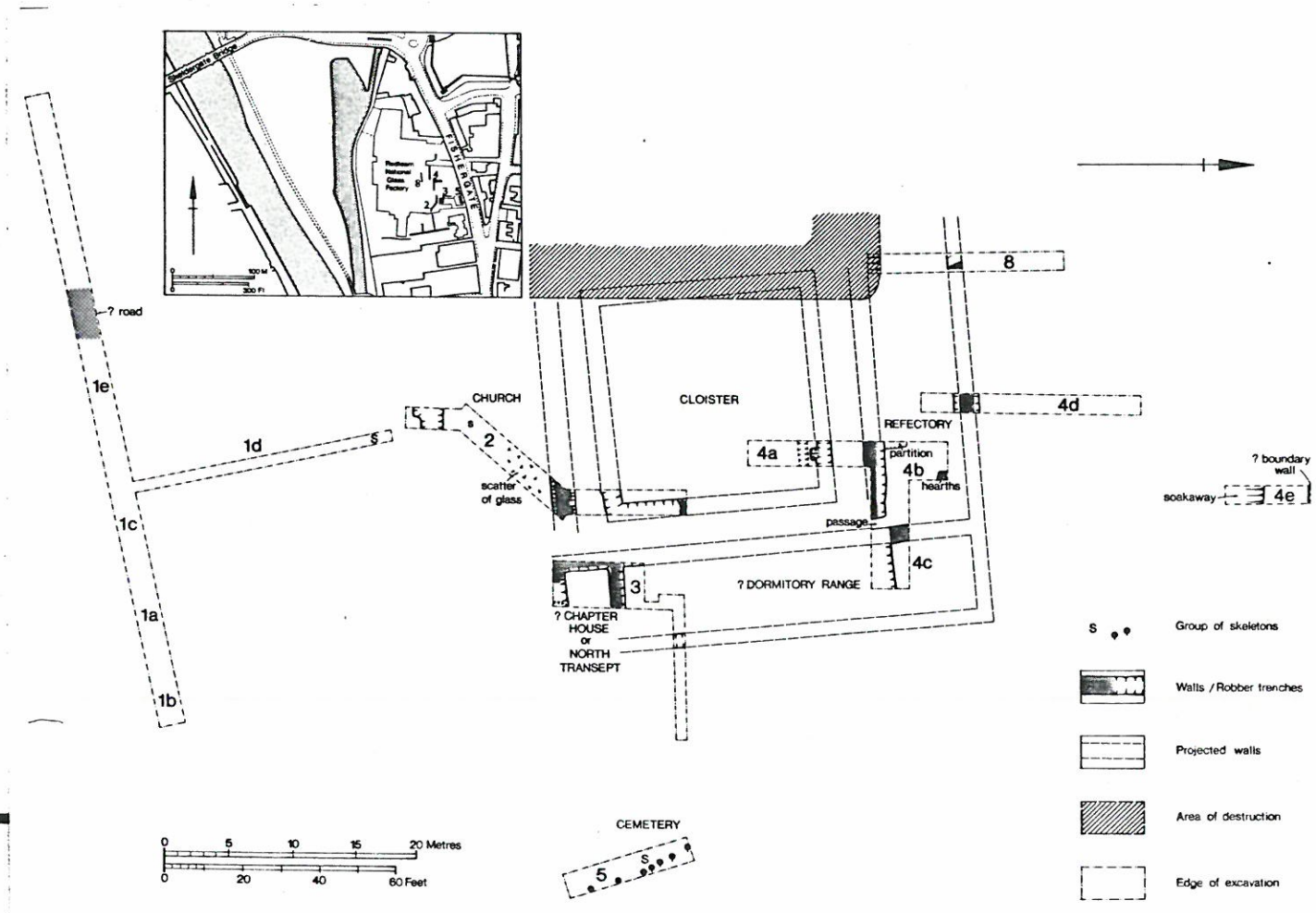

Figure 14 Gilbertine priory, York: location of trenches opened showing walls and robber trenches of the priory. Inset: location plan of site

Figure 15 Gilbertine priory, York: trench 2 from the south. The north wall of the church is in the foreground. The scale is on top of the south cloister walk beyond (2031) and beyond this the south-east corner of the cloister walls

the dark soil as the cloister interior levels. The higher flat mortar surface can be seen as the south cloister walk. The east wall of the cloister 2038/2040 had survived only to its foundation raft, which was constructed in particularly distinctive evenly sized cobbles set in fine yellow limestone dust, a technique that was to reappear in the north cloister wall in trench 4a.

Trench 4 was cut in the next available space to the north of trench 2 and located the black garden-type soil of the cloister interior (see Figure 14). To the north of this a wall raft using the same distinctive construction methods described in trench 2 crossed the trench east-west, and beyond this another raised mortar floor was interpreted as the north cloister walk.

The north, east, and south cloister walls had been completely robbed of all stone and only the foundation rafts survived; likewise, an internal buttress had been completely robbed. This buttress had been supported upon eight postholes, which appear to be piling or 'needling'. The buttress seems to have been a later addition and thus may have intended to counteract subsidence that had already taken place.

To the north of the north cloister walk was the core of another major wall c 1.50m wide and completely robbed of all its facing (4018) (see Figure 16). Another wall parallel to this (4090), a further 7m to the north, was also robbed in a similar way, suggesting the two to be of common construction but both quite different to the cloister interior walls.

This north range has been interpreted on analogy with other Gilbertine houses (most notably Watton) as being the refectory. Floor levels survive intact and are being excavated at present. The latest phase appears to have consisted of a complicated series of internal partitions across the structure, based around a large central padstone. This phase of use of the refectory marks a change in use of the area as all postholes and beam slots of the partition phase cut through rich silt occupation deposits associated with a large tiled hearth which itself was a replacement to an earlier hearth.

In trench 4d the north refectory wall is crossed and north of this an area of dark medieval soil and a selection of rubbish pits and ditches points towards another garden or waste ground. To the north of this, trench 4e encountered firstly the robbed remains of the priory boundary wall thought to be part of that shown on the 1852 map. This line had been predicted and was within 1.50m of the projected position. Within the precinct wall a large soakaway was located and excavated. This had been cut into natural as far as a gravel stratum, possibly to facilitate drainage. The filling of this feature, however, did not reflect its function during use.

Thus a north-south transect has now been built up through the priory crossing the whole available site.

Details of other elements of the priory have also been located now in other trenches. Firstly, trench 8 has located the continuation of the north wall of the refectory and associated with this a stone-lined channel and ? cesspit.

Trench 3 to the east of the church has located three walls of a room (Figure 17) which have now been excavated down to construction levels. The location of this room suggested initially that it was the chapter house as it seemed

to be the first structure north of the church in the east claustral range. However, no contemporary burial has been found within the room and, considering the general popularity of the chapter house for burial, this seems strange. An alternative interpretation, therefore, could be that of a small north transept to the church, but until larger areas have been excavated no new light will be shed on these problems.

Also in trench 3 a large robber trench running parallel to the east cloister walk was picked up in a very narrow trench and is provisionally interpreted as being the east limit of the east range. West of this wall are floors and east are dark soily deposits, suggestiong exterior levels outside the priory. To the east of trench 3, trench 5 was located in order to verify reports of stone coffins found during the construction of a petrol station in the late 1920s.

Skeletons were located at a depth of c 1.50m below modern floor levels. Of the eight skeletons examined, seven had been carefully laid out in a row and at regular spacings. The most interesting fact about these skeletons, however, was that their alignment reflected the modern angle of Fishergate, showing this to have been in existance at least as a line during the life of the priory and probably forming the priory boundary (see Figure 14).

The west range of the priory is believed to have been destroyed by a cellar beneath the glass factory production area.

Trench 1d to the south of the church revealed a road or hard-standing running around the outside of the church, through which were cut five skeletons. Beyond this to the south there was evidence of 13th-14th century ploughing or agriculture over the remainder of the site. So far only trial trenches have been excavated. However, by this the broad outline of the layout of the priory has been established with the main elements of the complex. Fuller excavations are now planned, to allow the complete priory and its relationship with earlier deposits to be established.

The excavations have also located Anglian deposits, below and around the area of the priory. The possibility that the priory was sited here because of a long tradition of use, perhaps represented in ecclesiastical terms by the parish church of St Andrew, may also be elucidated in further excavations.

July 1985

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Furness Abbey survey 1985-7

J H Williams

As part of a general HBMC policy of making detailed structural surveys of monuments in guardianship as a prelude to possible consolidation works the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit at the University of Lancaster has been commissioned to undertake a detailed archaeological analysis of the standing fabric at Furness Abbey over a period of eighteen months, commencing September 1985. The detailed examination of the fabric will be the responsibility of Mr J Wood, who has recently joined the Unit specifically for the project. A photogrammetric survey currently being undertaken by the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, York University, will form the

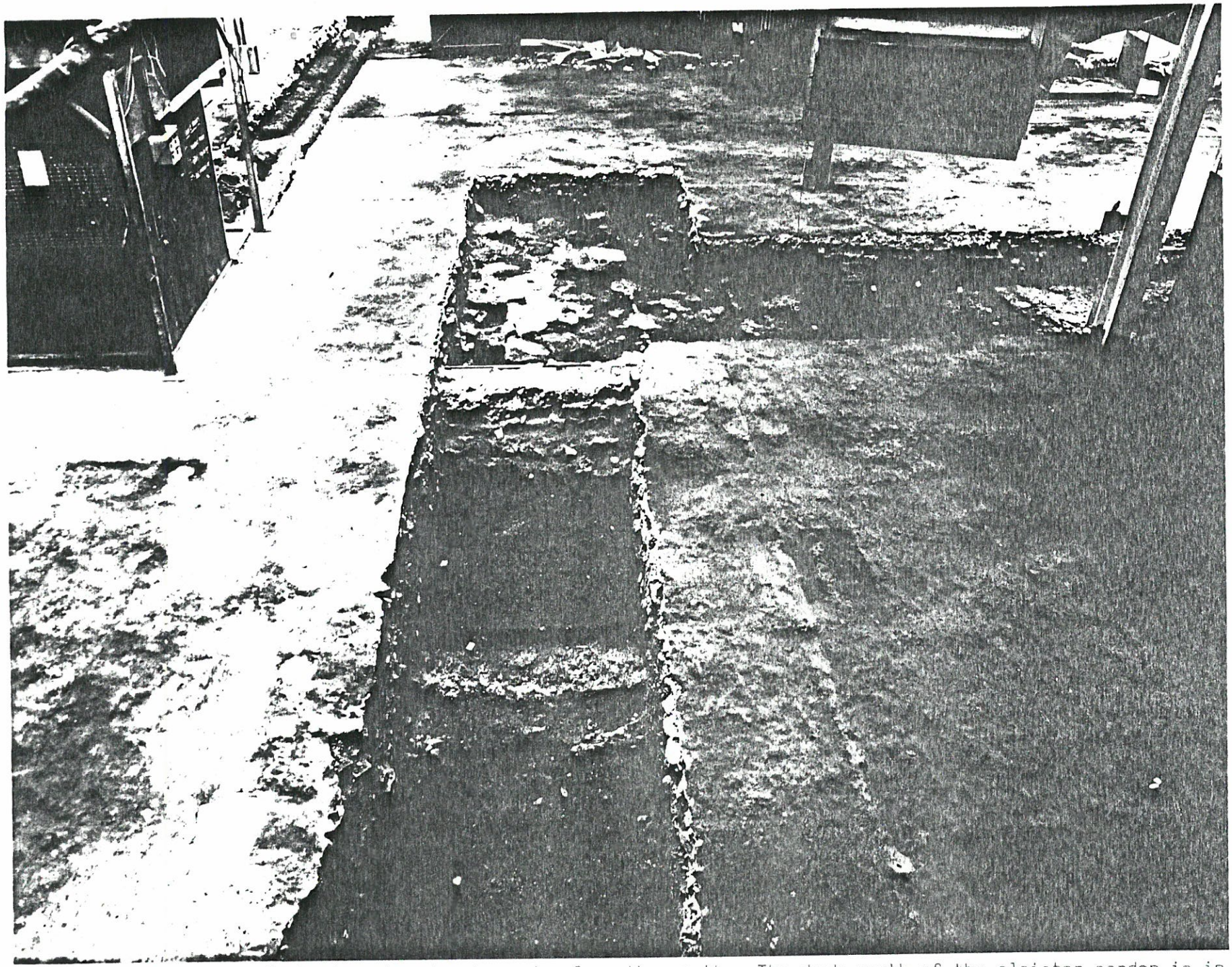

Figure 16 Gilbertine priory, York: trenches 4a, b, and c from the south. The dark earth of the cloister garden is in the foreground with the robbed cloister wall and internal buttress. Beyond this the s refectory wall (4018) has been robbed of its facing but the core remains. Floor levels of the refectory can be seen and the n wall of the refectory (4090) is just visible in trench 4d to the top left hand corner of the photograph.

Figure 17 Gilbertine priory, York: trench 3 from the south-east. The levels represent the completion of construction of the chapter house/north transept. Large reused blocks in the foreground attracted stone robbers who removed the south wall of this room in the post-dissolution period.

basis for the recording of the structure. It is hoped to produce stone by stone elevations of the whole of the abbey complex, together with detailed drawings of the architectural mouldings. A further important element of the project is an analysis of the structural development of the abbey. To help with the provision of a chronological framework for all building work up to the present day, Mrs J Martin is compiling an archive of all documentary sources relating to the abbey. Some excavation may be necessitated by consolidation works; limited excavations were undertaken in July 1985 in advance of a proposed works compound and are reported on separately below.

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Furness Abbey 1985 — Rachel Newman

An excavation was undertaken by the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit in July 1985, in advance of building work between the museum and the railway. Although limited to a small area ($30m^2$), the excavation revealed an intriguing sequence involving four stone structures which date from the medieval monastic occupation to the present.

The earliest feature was a well constructed drain, 1.5m wide, of local red sandstone ashlar with massive rough-hewn capping stones. Inside, there was a clay lining which had collapsed on a fill of clean silt. Unfortunately, this failed to produce any secure dating evidence. The drain was aligned north-south for 7m, then turned sharply eastwards towards the Mill Beck.

Further south, the fragmentary remains of a wall of unworked red sandstone were uncovered, lying immediately above the subsoil. It was aligned east-west and had been disturbed by a post-medieval wall to the north.

Although there was no dating evidence clearly associated with either of these features, the layers above and around them contained only medieval pottery. A relationship between the wall and the drain was not established, but it seems likely that they both belonged to the monastic period of occupation. The drain presumably served buildings in the outer court of the abbey, beneath the present museum car park and the area to the north. The apparent presence in that area of buildings requiring such a substantial drain (completely separate from the abbey's main drain) is of some significance.

The corner of a building lay across the centre of the area, overlying the drain. It was constructed of roughly worked facing stones with a rubble core. A small portion of a north-south wall and a longer length of wall aligned east-west were excavated. Once again, no clear dating evidence was associated, but the wall was stratigraphically above the certain medieval features and was butted by layers containing 18th century pottery.

Three sides of a small building, two aligned east-west and the third north-east-south-west, were situated in the southern part of the trench. It was built of roughly shaped sandstone blocks mortared together. A possible doorway in the north wall had been blocked. Pottery associated suggests that it was a 19th century construction and it seems likely that it was connected with the railway station nearby. There was some evidence of its demolition to the north, in the form of the hardcore for a modern car park.

September 1985

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BOOK REVIEW

Derek Phillips, Excavations at York Minster, Vol II: the cathedral of Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux

228pp, 46 figs, 150 pls Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1985 Price £45.00

This is a remarkable and most important book. It is fully illustrated by photographs and line drawings which not only supplement the text but also provide a permanent record of fabric that is no longer accessible. The book records in detail the discoveries that were made beneath York Minster during the years 1966 to 1973 when extensive strengthening of the foundations had been found necessary as a work of urgency to save the building from collapse. Special methods were, therefore, necessary for archaeological investigations and recording, as and when areas became available in the progress of the engineering work. Large open spaces were never available but work had to be carried out in over sixty limited and widely separated areas, often by day and night, to allow the repairs to go ahead without interruption. Special methods of survey were needed to link all these areas to a single grid and more reliance than usual had to be placed on photographic recording.

Before the work began it was expected that remains would be found of the Anglo-Saxon stone church built soon after the baptism of King Edwin of Northumbria in 627 (Bede HE, ii. 13), but instead it is now proved that beneath the present cathedral the earliest church is the one built by Thomas of Bayeux, Archbishop of York from 1070 to1100, and that it rests on the remains of the Roman principia, with an angle of about 45 degrees between the axes of the two buildings.

In addition to providing a comprehensive record of what was found in the excavations, the book presents a closely argued interpretation of the plan, and also of the superstructure of the 11th century Anglo-Norman cathedral, in spite of the limited amount of upstanding fabric. Moreover, the author has given careful consideration to the special purpose of the timber-laced foundation in giving secure support to the long nave and chancel, which were placed diagonally across the rigid foundations of the Roman headquarters with intervening spaces of much less stable material.

The opening chapters give a fascinating account of the conflicting interpretations which have been made of fragmentary discoveries beneath the present cathedral since the first discovery of the timber-laced foundations by John Browne, of York, after a disastrous fire in 1829, and of the way in which evidence found in the 1930s, but not published, might have led at least in part to the present conclusive interpretation of the remains as being those of Archbishop Thomas's church. The author's close contact with the architect and the engineers is evident throughout the book and gives much support to the interpretations which are advanced for the structure.

Archaeologists may be surprised by the almost complete absence of drawn sections in support of time sequences, but this is surely to be explained (as noted above) by the use of photography rather than drawing, to satisfy the engineering requirement for very rapid recording. The very high quality and the ample provision of the photographic records will ensure that the book will continue to give an enduring record of this remarkable building.

H M Taylor

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CBA PUBLICATIONS ON CHURCHES AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The church in British archaeology (Research Report 47) by Richard Morris

The report discusses the academic purpose of the archaeological study of churches, examines the nature of the available evidence, and suggests what there is to be gained from the investigation of churches in the future.
Price £17.00

Recording a church: an illustrated glossary by Thomas Cocke et al

A comprehensive and fully illustrated list of the terms used to define the architectural and decorative features and the furnishing of medieval and post-medieval churches.
Price £1.75

How to record graveyards by Jeremy Jones

A handbook which includes all the information necessary for individuals and groups who wish to carry out surveys of their local churchyards.
Price £1.50

The Anglo-Saxon church: papers on history, architecture, and archaeology in honour of Dr H M Taylor (Research Report 60) edited by L A S Butler and R Morris

These papers were given at a conference in Cambridge in 1983 and are augmented by additional essays. They fall into five categories: the geography and archaeology of relic cults in Anglo-Saxon Europe; Christian origins and early church architecture in Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia; the iconography of Anglo-Saxon churches; their dating and building; and aspects of their reconstruction.
Publication date March 1986 Expected price £19.50

Hallelujah! Recording chapels and meeting houses

This volume was compiled jointly by members of the CBA's Nonconformist Working Party. It draws attention to and gives guidance on the part local societies and individuals can play in the study and recording of this much neglected aspect of the national architectural heritage.
Price £2.95

Recording old houses: a guide by R W McDowall

Information and practical guidance on the recording of buildings, whether in the course of purely historical study or as an aid in the making of planning decisions.
Price £1.95

Historic buildings and planning policies by David Peace

This booklet describes the legal framework within which threats to historic buildings are dealt with; it also draws attention to deficiencies in the machinery and suggests remedies.
Price £1.60

All the above publications are available at the prices shown, post free, from the CBA, 112 Kennington Road, London SE11 6RE. If possible, please send payment with your order.