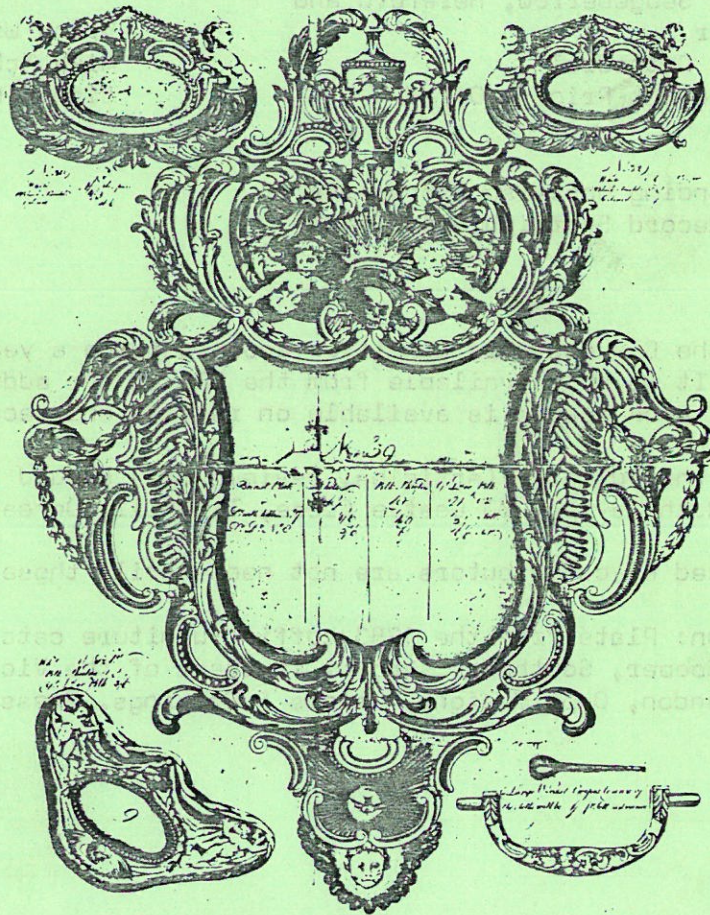


# BULLETIN

of the CBA Churches Committee



Number: 23 Winter 1985

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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 necessarily those of the publishers.

Cover illustration: Plate from the 1783 coffin furniture catalogue of Messrs Tiesby & Cooper, Southwark (Photo: Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Dept Design, Prints & Drawings, Press Mark M 63 E)

## NOTES

### Changes

- Bath & Wells Dr Ian Burrow has resigned as archaeological consultant following his departure to take up the post of Director of the Oxford Archaeological Unit.
- Oxford Tom Hassall has resigned as archaeological consultant following his appointment as Secretary of RCHME. His place is taken by Dr Ian Burrow.
- Worcester Philip Barker has been appointed a member of the DAC.
- CBA Churches Committee Dr Lawrence Butler's term as Chairman of the CBA Churches Committee will end in July 1986. This concludes a long career of faithful service to the Committee which began in 1972 when the Committee was originally created. Dr Butler's successor, subject to the approval of the CBA Council in July, will be Dr Richard Gem.

### Events

A one-day symposium on the subject of photography and the recording of buildings will be held in York on Saturday 14 June. Further information and programmes are obtainable from R Morris, Centre for Archaeological Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.

The CBA's Working Party on Nonconformist Places of Worship and the Department of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Bristol are cooperating in the organization of a conference on nonconformist building, to be held in Bristol over the weekend of 12-13 September 1987. Further details will appear in British Archaeological News.

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### INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISH CHURCHES OF MEDIEVAL WINCHESTER

Derek Keene

Winchester was a city of many churches. In the 12th and 13th centuries it had 57, or more, churches which we may reasonably suppose were essentially parochial in function. This sets Winchester firmly in the same rank as those other provincial cities which in the late 11th and early 12th centuries ranked second after London in wealth and population. Thus Norwich had about the same number of churches as Winchester, and York and Lincoln somewhat fewer. London, with well over 100 churches, had twice as many. Exeter, with a figure in the 20s, seems on all other evidence to have been correspondingly smaller. If Winchester's population at that time was between 10,000 and 15,000, each parish would have contained on average about 50 families, a figure which later medieval evidence suggests was typical for the minute parishes in the centre of London and which, in London at any rate, may not have increased much since the 12th century.

Population and wealth in the early Middle Ages, rather than regional variation in practice, are the explanation for these differences in parochial provision in English towns. The picture is less clear, however, when we attempt

comparison with continental cities. Using the 'English argument', one might understand why Paris, for example, had so many fewer parishes than London, for Paris was relatively insignificant before the 12th century. Cologne is generally supposed to have been about the same size as London in the 12th and 13th centuries but had many fewer parishes with churches which were more spacious, at least initially, than those in English cities seem to have been. But here, too, the explanation may be in the relatively early growth of the major English towns. Clearly, there is much scope for more systematic comparisons on these lines.

Winchester's loss of wealth and population from the 12th century on is clearly reflected in its parish churches and, again, this accords with what we know about the fortunes of Winchester by comparison with other towns. Exeter, for example, had lost four churches by 1500 and is generally supposed to have fared relatively well in the later Middle Ages. Winchester's loss was disastrous. The family of 57 churches had been reduced to 54 by 1300, a time when several churches were held in plurality as chapels dependent on others. On the eve of the Black Death the number was 52 and had fallen to 33 by 1400, 26 by 1500, 15 by 1550, and 12 by 1600. This total was reduced by 4 during the Interregnum and, while this reduction was reversed at the Restoration, only 9 Winchester churches survived the 17th century. Of these six stand today, in whole or in part, but only three of them are still in use as places of worship. To this total of surviving buildings we can add a knowledge of half a dozen excavated structures. The documentary evidence is, therefore, crucial for obtaining an overview of the Winchester churches in the days of their prosperity.

But written references to Winchester churches are only numerous from the 12th century onwards. Only in one instance is there clear documentary evidence of the date and context of a parish church foundation: this was the church of St Peter founded by Aethelwine, reeve of Winchester, within a substantial High Street property, which was probably his, shortly before 1012. A less clear instance concerns the church of St Martin in the Ditch, which was probably the one dedicated during the 930s by the bishop at the request of the citizens. Our dependence on the material remains for the early history of Winchester parish churches is demonstrated by the fact that in the cases of six out of the 10 churches known to have existed before the Norman Conquest our knowledge derives from the evidence of physical remains alone.

These figures give one some confidence in the argument from the fact of parochial status: this states that any church in a city like Winchester which was a parish church (almost all our 47 are explicitly known to have been so) is likely to have come into existence by the early years of the 12th century, since by then canon law was being administered with an increasing effectiveness and care for the rights and incomes of parish churches. Intruders into such a parochial system could not be tolerated and the proliferation of churches to serve growing urban populations, characteristic of English towns in the 10th and 11th centuries, therefore ceased. Urban populations which came into being after about 1100 were served by smaller numbers of churches per head, as was clearly the case with such towns as Bristol, Northampton, and New Salisbury.

There can be little doubt that, in spite of certain limitations on their rights, the Winchester churches were essentially parochial, serving defined communities of citizens who presumably contributed to the upkeep of their fabric and clergy by means of tithes and offerings. In most sources they are

described as churches (ecclesie) rather than chapels (capelle). Two exceptions to this, however, throw some light on their standing. In an episcopal list of churches of about 1270, the only ecclesie in the deanery of Winchester were at a handful of villages well beyond the confines of the city and suburbs, which were served by capelle. A list of the bishop's churches in the city and suburbs compiled in 1284 describes them all as chapels, with three or more probably five exceptions described as churches. These exceptions (St Giles, St Mary in the Vale, St James, and probably St Anastasius and St Faith) all lay in the suburbs and they include the only churches known to have had cemeteries before about 1400. Not all suburban churches had cemeteries before this date: the only ones which did lay outside the suburban limit as it appears to have been defined in the 10th century. The example of St Anastasius reveals this very well: its early cemetery is documented by both excavations and the written record; it lay just outside the ditch defining the western suburb, within which it came to be incorporated about 1100 when the ditch was redug and realigned. It seems that churches within the city as originally so defined had no right of burial, which was reserved to the cathedral and probably also, to a more limited extent, to Hyde Abbey (New Minster) and St Mary's Abbey (Nunnaminster). The burial rights of New Minster, whose cemetery occupied much of the area later occupied by the cathedral cemetery, are specifically mentioned in the records of the move to Hyde in 1110, and St Mary's Abbey appears to have been quite extensively used for burial. But the remains of most Winchester citizens throughout the Middle Ages were laid to rest in the common cemetery by the cathedral. According to a document of 1331 the cathedral priory claimed the mortuary payments at all churches in the city and suburbs and the burial rights at the cemeteries of St Giles, St James, and St Anastasius.

In discussion following this paper, the possibility was raised that the Winchester parish churches may originally have enjoyed burial rights which were suppressed in favour of the cathedral priory, perhaps in the 12th century. The archaeological evidence, admittedly a small sample, does not support this argument. Furthermore, had such a suppression taken place, it is likely that it would also have affected the outlying cemeteries, such as that of St Anastasius, which in the 12th century was certainly regarded as lying within the city. In the late 7th or early 8th century one or two small burial grounds within the walls and well away from the cathedral precinct did go out of use and it was probably only at this period, shortly after the foundation of the mother church of Winchester, that its rights were asserted in this way.

There were other restrictions on the parochial rights of the churches. Archaeological evidence suggests that fonts, and so the baptismal rights which went with them, were not acquired until the late 12th or early 13th century. As late as the 1340s the parishioners of St Peter in Colebrook Street were attempting to create a baptistry at their church. This was probably a special case, however, for St Peter's was within the precinct of St Mary's Abbey, which was thus able to keep a close eye on any threatened erosion of its rights. Another restriction was the cathedral priory's rights of station at certain suburban churches and its right to the custody of the keys and all offerings on the patronal days of those churches, both mentioned in the document of 1331. These rights may have been kept up principally for financial reasons but they show that the stationary liturgy, unifying the mother church with the outlying churches of the city, which had been so important in the 10th and 12th centuries, still had some vigour in the later Middle Ages. The churches in question were those of St Giles (where the

offering box filled by merchants attending the fair would have been well worth having), St Catherine (to which processions were certainly made), St James (which had been the destination of the early medieval Palm Sunday procession), and St Faith. The crosses in the suburban streets of Winchester probably marked intermediate stages in these processions and the city cross in High Street may have fulfilled the same role. Several lanes, both within and without the walls, were described as processional ways, denoting their habitual use for these liturgical purposes.

It will already be apparent that the parochial rights of the Winchester churches underwent some evolution during the Middle Ages. This is of more than legal interest, since it seems to reflect the increasing importance of the role of the local church and the parochial community in the life of the City, perhaps by comparison with the part once played by the great monastic churches. This is manifest in a variety of ways. In the 13th and 14th centuries, for example, it is rare to find localities in Winchester designated according to the parish in which they lay. In the 15th century, however, this was common practice. In London, by contrast, parochial designations are used from the 12th century onwards. After the Black Death, burial in parish churches or their cemeteries became more widespread. At St Pancras there is a reference in the 1360s to the dead being carried to the church. Burial within that church began at about that time and between then and its closure in the 1520s just over 20 burials were made within the church. The adjacent church of St Mary, closed at about the same time, contained a single burial in its latest phase. As more space became available, as a result of depopulation, so churches acquired cemeteries. About 1300 the church of St Petroc was hemmed in by houses but when the derelict church came to be revived in the early 15th century it was provided with a cemetery surrounding it on all sides. In the eastern suburb the parishioners of St John and St Peter habitually used the ancient cemetery of St Giles and it seems only to have been at the very end of the Middle Ages or in the post-medieval period that St John's acquired the burial ground which now surrounds it.

A reduced demand for living space also meant that there was more room for the church enlargements which were a feature of 15th century Winchester. Land prices may have fallen but building costs had gone up, and it seems unlikely that the resources of the 15th century parishes were any greater than those of their predecessors. Ironically, this was the very time when the citizens were seeking to reduce their fiscal obligation to the crown by arguing that the loss of churches demonstrated their poverty. They seem to have been prepared, however, to devote a larger slice of the available cake to those churches which survived. St Mary Tanner Street, for example, was successively enlarged until what would appear to have been virtually the eve of its closure. A western tower was added to St Lawrence and a prime slice of property on the High Street frontage was taken for the new chancel of St Mary Kalendar. These churches housed congregations which were probably no larger than before but simply provided a more imposing setting for the parishioners in both life and death. A similar development, and the increasing cohesion of the parochial community, are suggested by the new internal arrangements which appeared in St Mary Tanner Street at this time. These changes prompt a question about the enlargement of the Winchester churches in the 12th and 13th centuries: was this caused simply by an increase in the size of the congregation, especially, perhaps, as churches passed from a more private to a more public use, or were other considerations equally or even more important? These might include, for example, the desire to increase the

number of altars and so create the setting necessary for the growing quantity of prayers and masses on behalf of souls in purgatory.

A change in mentalities during the later Middle Ages is also apparent in the citizens' attitudes to church closure. In the late 14th century this appears to have been a pragmatic one and the bishop intervened in an attempt to prevent the conversion of redundant churches to secular uses. This contrasts with the citizens' conservative resistance in the 16th century to the bishop's initiative in promoting the closure of churches with the intent of increasing the incomes of incumbents.

Closure involved the union of parishes but this was not always a straightforward process. Livings were often held in plurality for a long time before amalgamation took place. But the unions which came about were not always those which might be expected from the preceding pattern of plurality. A rather different, but still complex, case concerns the church of St Petroc. During the later 14th century both this and the nearby church of St Martin on the Wall went out of use and their parishes were amalgamated with that of St Alphege in the still populous area near High Street. The site of St Alphege, however, was small and offered little scope for expansion. Consequently, early in the 15th century the church of St Petroc, itself in a sparsely populated area, was restored and brought back into use to succeed St Alphege. In this example an important part may have been played by an exceptionally wealthy citizen who lived very close to St Petroc's church.

During the later Middle Ages, therefore, the pattern of parish boundaries in Winchester was in a state of constant flux. Changes did not only accompany unions of parishes. There are several cases where the site of a derelict house in one parish, having been cleared, was incorporated into the garden of a house in the next parish, and so itself shifted from one parish to the next. This helps us identify the underlying principle which determined the extent of parishes in the city. Parishes did not reflect ancient patterns of land ownership but rather clusters of households and they were coterminous with the sites that these households happened to occupy. Whether a house belonged to one parish or another was determined by the distance from its front door to the door of the church, a doctrine which has explicit recognition in London from the 13th century onwards. The method of tithe assessment is one of the underlying reasons why the parish boundaries were established in this way, for tithes in towns were essentially personal payments, paid as a proportion of the rental value of each household and as a charge on wages or commercial profit.

This does not mean that Winchester parish boundaries did not sometimes follow ancient topographical features, such as the west wall of the 11th-12th century royal palace, but this was because of the continuing significance of such features as barriers to movement, rather than as the boundaries of ancient units of land ownership. Parishes and their formation can thus give us an insight into the patterns of local communication within the city.

We cannot, however, use the evidence of the parish boundaries in Winchester to suggest successive stages in the foundation of churches and the formation of their parishes as is sometimes possible for towns with a simpler parochial structure. There is no clear indication that any one of the parish churches occupied a superior position in relation to the others. One church, however, that of St Mary Kalendar, whose prominent site in High Street is now occupied by Woolworths, does seem to have had a special place among the parish churches.

It was one of the four churches known only ever to have been in the patronage of the bishop, and the only one known to have been in his patronage in the 13th century, which had not previously belonged to the cathedral priory. In the later Middle Ages, the bishop was escorted from there to the cathedral for his installation ceremony. The fraternity of Kalendars associated with the church used as their seal a recent episcopal seal of the mid-12th century or earlier. The fraternity included parish priests from other parishes and was perhaps descended from or equivalent to the guild of priests and deacons which had existed in the pre-Conquest city. The close association with the bishop makes it tempting to suggest that at some time the bishop had acted to promote the cohesion and standing of the parochial clergy of the city and that the church of St Mary Kalendar may have been the focus of this action. An episcopal initiative may even lie behind the origin of the church. Such an initiative is perhaps most likely to have taken place at a time when the parochial system in the city was being established or regularized. In this connection it is worth remembering that Bishop Henry of Blois (d 1171) was active in regularizing parochial matters in the rural parts of Winchester diocese and that according to a garbled 19th century record he also made parochial adjustments in the city, around the year 1150. Whether or not the church of St Mary Kalendar acquired its special position at that time will remain a matter for speculation but such speculations would have been more informed had we any knowledge of the physical layout of the church and its surroundings.

By the late 13th century it is clear that the Winchester churches were in the patronage of the religious houses of the city and the shire, and in that of the bishop and the two archdeacons (who seem to have had one each). The bishop had recently made a successful claim to the cathedral priory churches, which made up the bulk of his portfolio, but otherwise this picture had probably changed little since the later 12th century. We can only guess as to the way in which most of these churches were acquired. Some were probably outright gifts, such as the two suburban churches which shortly before 1192, when they were in the possession of a priest, the archdeacon gave to the priory of St Denis near Southampton. Others were probably acquired as part of the property with which they were associated, as was the case with the church of St Peter founded by the reeve Aethelwine which passed to the Cathedral priory with the 'Godbegot' property of which it formed part. Others may have remained to, or been claimed by the religious houses, as lords of the land on which they stood. The case of the Hyde Abbey churches on the abbey's fief within the North Gate of the city suggests that this process took place during the 12th century, for there is good reason to believe that the abbey had no land there before the move to Hyde. Few of the churches are likely to have been founded by the religious houses themselves but these houses came to be seen as appropriate patrons for them. One exception is the single church belonging to Wherwell Abbey (St Martin in Parchment Street), which was close to the abbess's town house and may have originated as her private chapel.

Clearly, it is impossible to be certain of the circumstances in which most of these churches were founded but some suggestions can be made on the basis of the siting of the churches and other evidence. This approach suggests several possible categories of foundations. In the first are the private house chapels, such as the churches of the reeve Aethelwine or of the abbess of Wherwell. The topographical setting of several other churches in the city suggest a similar private origin. In a second category are possible



neighbourhood or community foundations. Two churches in the 13th century had guildhalls close by them, but we do not even know the nature of the relationship between the churches and the guildhalls at this time, let alone any earlier date. Other circumstances which suggest community foundations are the citizens' request which led to the dedication of the church outside West Gate in the 930s, and the location of St Ruald's church on a projecting site at a busy corner in a manner which suggests that it was a public rather than a private foundation and possibly an encroachment onto the street.

Another category comprises the gateway or threshold churches, of which there were four on or close to the city gates. The anxiety and sense of gratitude associated, respectively, with the beginning and the ending of journeys provides adequate explanation as to why such churches should be widespread. It would also be appropriate to make the point of transition from one spatial zone to another by a focus for devotion. In addition, the upper chambers of public gate structures would provide ready accommodation for a church serving a parish of households within and without the gate. It is possible that some of the churches at the suburban limits originated in response to similar stimuli, although they may also originally have served small detached hamlets which came to be incorporated into the city.

The sites of several parish churches, both within and without the walls, were coincident with or adjacent to earlier cemeteries of late Roman and 6th to early 8th century date. It is possible that some of them owe their origin to the continuing religious significance of the site. In the suburbs of a city of Roman origin like Winchester, however, the chances are high that such coincidences are no more than that.

At least one, and possibly three or four, parish churches were originally within the monastic precincts and so may well have begun as oratories subordinate to and served from the great church before they acquired a wider parochial function. The clearest case is that of St Peter in Colebrook Street within the precinct of the nuns' minster but the churches of both St Lawrence and St Maurice appear to have adjoined important points of entry into the New Minster precinct or the later precinct of the royal palace, and St Maurice's at least is known to have been one of the family of lesser churches clustered around New Minster. St Swithun's over Kings Gate, at an important entry into the royal and monastic precinct, may be considered as a possible member of the same category.

The distribution of parish churches within the built up area as a whole broadly coincides with that of the population. The concentration of churches in High Street, for example, is clear. Yet some areas which were populous in the 12th century seem relatively underprovided with churches. An example is the north-west quarter of the city, apparently populous but poor in the 12th century. The provision of churches may thus have been conditioned by local wealth as well as by numbers of people. On the other hand, such areas may have become populous only after the proliferation of churches ceased. This certainly seems to be the case in the east suburb, which had only two churches but probably acquired its large population during the 12th century with the growth of international trade at St Giles's Fair on the hill above the suburb. Of these two churches, St John's in particular profited from this development and became one of the largest and the best endowed in the city.

A special topographical group were the hilltop churches in the suburbs. Whatever the origin of individual churches, it seems likely that by the 12th century they had acquired a special significance as a group. Each was visible from the others and travellers approaching the city would have seen them from a distance. Each of them played a part in the city's processional liturgy. As a group they perhaps came to define the limits of the space which was Winchester and to express the unity of the margins of the settlement with its centre.

Finally, I turn to dedications. The methodological difficulties here are comparable to those concerning origins and siting for, in default of explicit evidence, we are attempting to explore the intentions and attitudes of groups of people in the city (and we are not very sure which groups) through a series of patterns which we think we can detect in nomenclature and topography. The dangers of this are obvious. Even so, the evidence of dedications can be used to throw some light on the cultural identity of the city. In this respect the outlying suburban churches just mentioned have a special significance. All had dedications evoking the pilgrimages which assumed a major role in European culture from the 11th century onwards: these were Giles, James, and Catherine. The last, appropriately, had the most mountainous setting of all the Winchester hilltop churches. Other outlying churches seem to ram the message home: there was St Faith at the limit of the south suburb and, a little further out along the road to Southampton and overseas, the Hospital of St Cross, founded by the hospitaliers and adopted by the bishop. The church of St Anastasius in the west suburb may be in the same category for, rather than Anastasia or one of the numerous Anastasiuses, it may well have commemorated the Resurrection (anastasis) in a verbal form appropriate for those whose minds turned on Jerusalem; it was suitable for a suburb which played a major part in the liturgical celebration of Easter.

Another group of dedications reveals Winchester's position as the chief city of Wessex: these were Swithun, Alphege, Boniface, and possibly Petroc, although in the case of Petroc the determining association may have been the display of the saint's relics in the city in 1177.

Absent from the dedications, by comparison with London for example, is any clear Scandinavian association. A possible exception is the church of St Clement, but in this particular instance the maritime aspects of the saint's cult may be the important ones for the church was in the fish marketing area of the city. Close by was a church of St Nicholas, a dedication commonly associated with sea faring and the fish trade. There was a more distinct functional grouping of dedications connected with the butchers. 'Martinsbeef' presumably slaughtered around 11 November, was a well-known Winchester commodity, and there were clusters of Martin's churches near the shambles in High Street and in the suburb outside West Gate, an important area for cattle trading.

Other groupings are also apparent. There is no obvious explanation for the Michaels around Jewry Street and St Peter Street within North Gate. The group of Johns in the north-east part of the walled city, in the shadow of the suburban church of St John on the eastern hill, may have had some connection with Midsummer festivities.

Last of all, two dedications may reveal a conscious attempt to associate the city of the kings of Wessex with the splendours of the Ottonian or later Reich. These were Lawrence and Maurice. Maurice's companions of the Theban legion are only occasionally apparent in Winchester. Individually, or outside the specific context in which they occur in Winchester, these dedications may not mean very much but, as we have seen, each of these two churches was closely associated with a point of entry into the precinct of the New Minster or that part of the royal palace precinct which was taken over from New Minster. Lawrence came to be a common dedication for imperial churches following Otto the Great's victory over the Magyars on that saint's day in 955. In that battle Otto was carrying St Maurice's lance, which continued to be an important item in the imperial regalia throughout the Middle Ages. The emperor had a lifelong devotion to St Maurice. The imperial city of Magdeburg, for example, houses the major abbey of St Maurice, founded by Otto in 937 and later chosen by him, in preference to existing sees, as the 'home' for the archbishopric to spearhead the mission against the Slavs. The case for arguing that the two Winchester dedications proclaim an imperial theme thus looks very strong. We must beware of pressing too precise an association however, for, while the church dedicated to St Maurice is known to have existed by the 11th century, the church of St Lawrence is not recorded (although it may well have existed) before the 12th.

The study of the Winchester parish churches, then, is not only of intrinsic interest for it can offer insights (admittedly, often tentative and hypothetical) into the city's demographic and economic fortunes, its regional and cultural identity, and the social organization and attitudes of its inhabitants. The material remains of the churches make a contribution towards an understanding of most of these topics. For some subjects they are an essential source and for others, particularly concerning the early stages of the city's development, they are the only evidence available. How to exploit that evidence is a subject for detailed consideration in its own right.

(Editor's note: this paper arises out of the annual meeting of the Urban Churches Working Party, held in Winchester in October 1985)

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POST-MEDIEVAL BURIAL VAULTS:  
THEIR CONSTRUCTION AND CONTENTS  
(Figures 1-7 and cover illustration)

Julian W S Litten

The three ecclesiastical 'Rs' (Reordering, Restoration, and Redundancy) have opened new chapters for the archaeologist, and the present trend of archaeology in churches in use, together with the increasing involvement of diocesan archaeological advisers at DAC level in the matter of reordering and restoration schemes, is to be welcomed. In addition, our knowledge is being constantly expanded due to the opportunities afforded by full-scale excavation on redundant churches destined for alternative use or eventual demolition.

One of the more unusual features encountered during such work are burial vaults and brick-lined shaft burials. As the majority of these structures are post-medieval (1), they have often been dismissed as 'nasty modern

disturbances' and have not, therefore, received the attention they deserve. With the recent emergence of funerary studies it is painful to reflect on the quantity of valuable comparative material that has been denied post-excavation publication.

The burial vault as a purpose-built subterranean chamber for the reception of the remains of the members of a family unit gained respectability during the third and fourth quarters of the 16th century, increased in popularity during the 17th century, and maintained this position until c 1680/90 when the brick-lined shaft became vogue. Although intermural burial ceased between 1850/60 (2) (there remain exceptions, such as the monarchical interments at St George's Chapel, Windsor and the Westminster cardinals), the practice continues, where space permits, in private vaults constructed prior to the official closures.

But what have these recent funerary studies produced to assist us and why do some regard burial vaults and their contents of such importance? Could it not be argued that the vault is more the territory of the historian and antiquarian than the archaeologist?

The collation of information contained in extant reports of vault examinations (3) and the few remaining contemporary publications and pattern books on coffin furniture (4) provide a fairly accurate picture of the type and content of burial vaults of particular periods. The earlier vaults tend to be stone and brick constructions with purpose-built entrance steps and stone-flagged floors (5), whereas the later ones are usually of brick, often internally whitewashed and with a brick or unglazed tile floor, with a distinct entrance via one of the side elevations (usually the east or west) coming into view once the topsoil has been loosened. The brick-lined shaft is easily accessible: one simply lifts the ledger stone. Be that as it may, the ledger is not the preserve of the brick-lined shaft for it is sometimes used as a floor-marker for a vault per se.

It would be misleading to say that vaults of particular periods will be structurally identical: required size, availability of building materials, and site restrictions all play their part and rarely will one meet two examples the same. Nevertheless, there are distinct building patterns: the late 16th century vaults have vertical walls to all elevations with a gently curving roof, somewhat 'flattened' Perpendicular style (6), early 17th century vaults are similar except the roof tends to be flat (7), mid-17th century ones differ in having a slightly barrelled roof (8) whereas those of the 18th century are of the railway-tunnel type whose east and west walls are vertical, with low north and south walls from which springs the barrel-vaulted roof (9). With the advent of the 19th century we return to the expensive early 17th century model. Shelving is rarely met with, usually limited to the large vaults of noble families (10), though by the beginning of the 19th century it became a standard feature, regardless of the occupants' social status (11). It should be remembered that strict observance was paid to the traditional E-W alignment of the corpse: one only has to refer to an aerial photograph of recent excavations at St Augustine's, Bristol, for evidence of that.

The brick-lined shaft was a popular mode of intermural burial within the town churches during the 18th century and arose as a matter of double economy. First, there was the economy of space - there was a heavy demand from the middle classes for intermural burial due to the appalling conditions created by overcrowding in many town churchyards - and, secondly, an economy

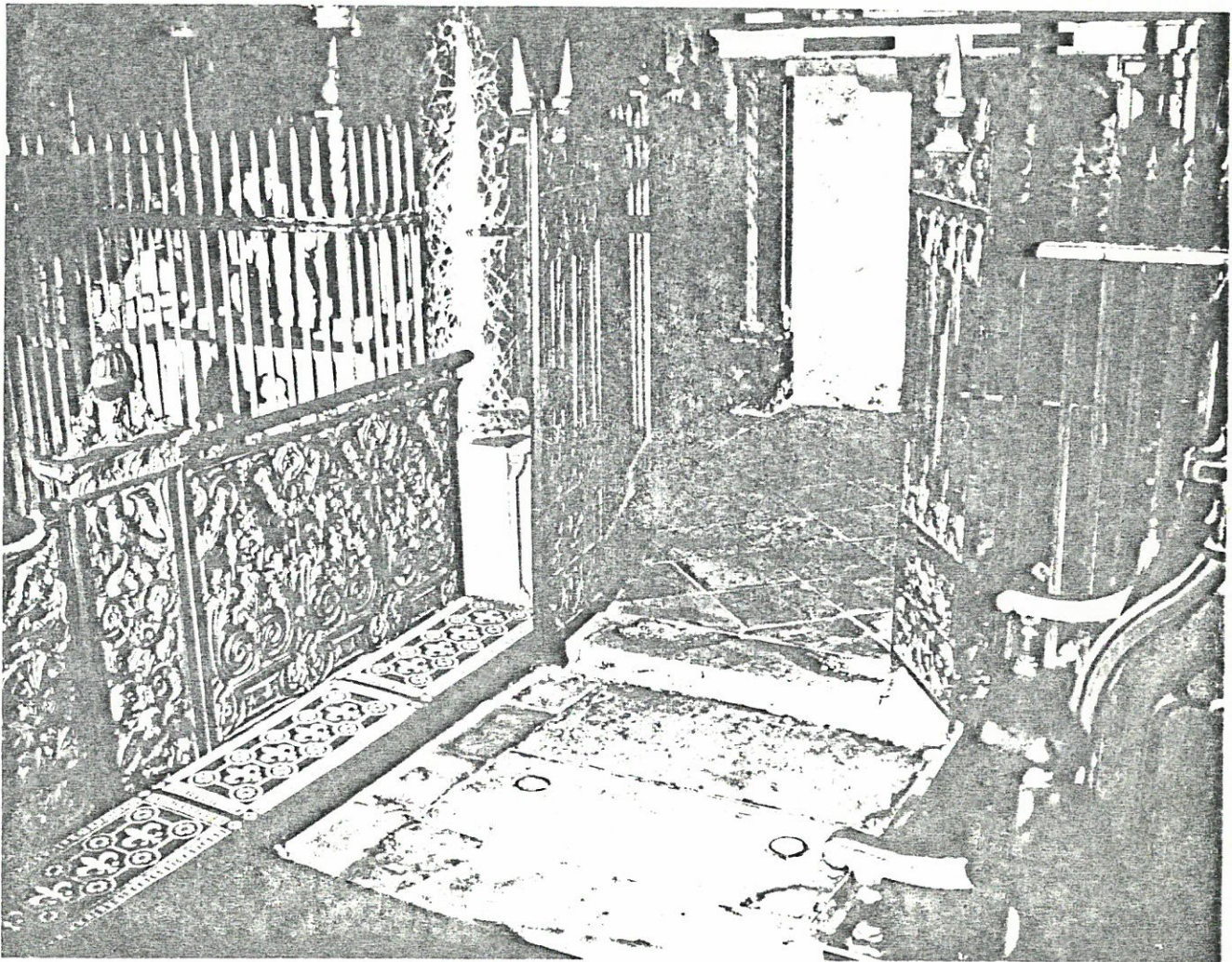
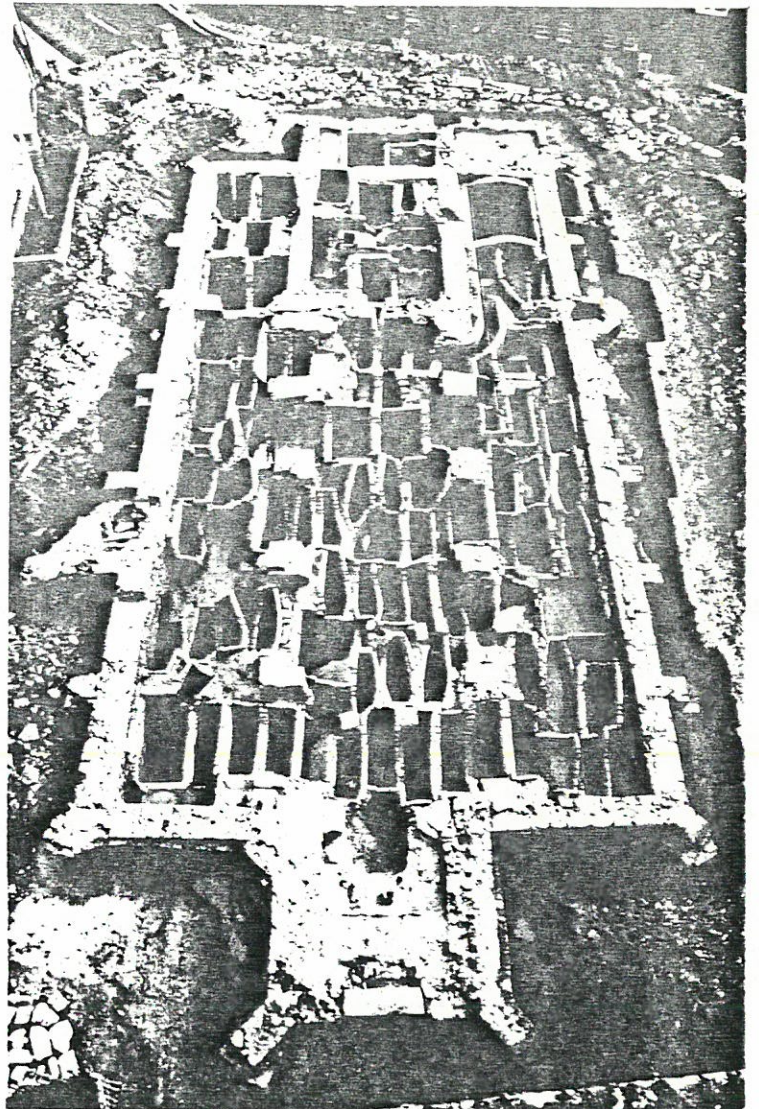


Figure 1 [above] Lydiard Tregoze, St John Vault: the entrance to the 1616 St John vault to the SE of the chancel steps (Photo Fr Timothy Boniwell)

Figure 2 [right] St Augustine, Bristol: an aerial photograph taken during excavations of the site in 1984 showing the E-W alignment of numerous 18th century brick-lined shafts (Photo Eric J Boore)



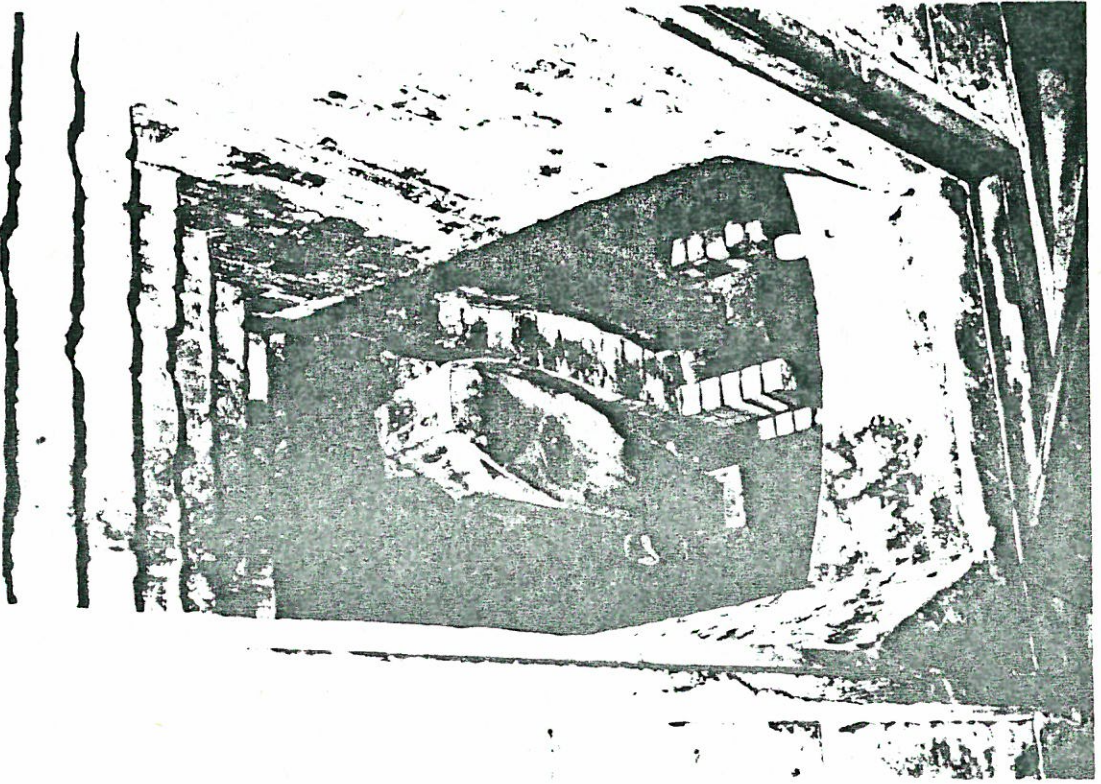


Figure 3 Five hundred years of undertaking: looking down into an early 19th century vault extension containing coffins (clockwise, from top right) of the 18th century, 19th century, 16th century, 17th century, and 20th century (Photo Hazel Stickings)



Figure 4 Kedington, Barnardiston Vault: a photograph of 1918 showing three infants' anthropomorphic coffins and two examples of 18th century decorative lead work

of space within a building already oversubscribed by the corpses of previous generations. As it was, the middle classes were adopting a more nomadic lifestyle as the century progressed and few saw much point in expending huge sums of money on faculties, fees, and bricklayers for large vaults if one could not guarantee that one's progeny were prepared to maintain a particular place of corporate family sepulture.

Our knowledge of coffin types and coffin furniture has been greatly increased in the last decade as a result of the involvement of historians and archaeologists in the systematic clearance of two exceptionally large and important parochial vaults in London (12) as well as through various opportunities for vault examination elsewhere in the country extended by the Council for the Care of Churches and other conscientious institutions and incumbents. There appear to be no distinct regional trends as regards undertaking techniques, and gable-lidded coffins, for example, are no more restricted to any one area of the country than anthropomorphic ones might be. The 'Lancashire' coffin is an introduction of the 18th century, as is the rarer 'fish tail' (13), and the myth of leather-covered outer shells should be quashed before it has time to become established. The earlier vaults will not necessarily contain extant examples of early coffins, for the majority of the 16th century and 17th century vaults had their own charnel pits or cisterns into which were periodically deposited the more decayed shells and bones to make room for others within the main body of the vault (14).

Coffins of the period 1550-1650 tend to be of three basic types: anthropomorphic, rectangular, and single-break. The anthropomorphic shell survived until 1660/70; of lead, it has a lower 'tray' shaped to accommodate the cere-cloth wrapped corpse and a 'lid' similarly bespoke and with crude repousse facial features and defined breasts, arms, legs, hands, and feet with a lead inscription shield soldered to the lid above the abdomen, though it is not unknown for the text to be incised into the lead of the shell itself (15). Such coffins were supplied for both adults and children, the latter resembling skittles. Not all of these shells were necessarily provided with outer wooden cases; those that were are recorded as having been placed in either a rectangular iron-banded chest (16) or a single-break flat-lidded shell (17).

Also in use at this time was the rectangular flat-lidded lead shell, usually with an inner elm coffin; as with its anthropomorphic relation, the soldering is somewhat crude, with distinct flat-iron marks (18). A variant of this is the shell whose sides taper towards the foot end. In either instance the lead inscription plate was quite small, usually not more than 150 x 375mm, and soldered to the lid roughly above the occupant's chin. No known examples with outer wooden shells are recorded; the lead shells of this type at Lydiard Tregoze have their own carrying rings and would not, therefore, have been provided with an outer wooden shell.

By far the rarest coffin of the period is the gable-lidded single-break shell; they are commonly known from contemporary illustrations and by nine extant three-dimensional examples in stone on various sepulchral monuments (19). The three recorded examples, two of lead-lapped wood and one of elm, are in southern England (20) but from the locations of the sepulchral monuments we know that their use was far more widespread.

Without exception coffins within vaults and brick-lined shafts from the late 17th century onwards tend to be single-break flat-lidded and come in four types: single-shell, single-shell double lid, double wooden shell, and triple shell (lead-lapped inner wooden shell with an outer wooden case). From a recent survey of a cache of eight thousand coffins of the period c 1835-1985 (21) little has changed regarding the overall shape since the late 17th century; there was an attempted revival of the gable-lidded tapered-sided shell during the mid-19th century but it did not meet with widespread success.

Before we proceed to consider woods, fabric coverings, and coffin furniture (the nomenclature ascribed to the metal fittings), a word on the use of lead and embalming. Lead was used for no other purpose than to contain the gases and putrescent adipocere associated with the decomposition process and not as an aid of maintaining, for as long as possible, the life-like appearance of the contents. Indeed, some bodies were 'embalmed', but this only entailed evisceration and the sluicing of the cavities with spirits of wine and a surface application of resinous 'creams' as a precaution against coffin explosion and decomposition odour relating to corpses whose burial might be delayed for one reason or another. When this was done the entrails were sealed in a small chest, some 400mm cubed, and straightway deposited in the vault (22). Arterial 'embalming' was not introduced until the mid-18th century; even then it was little more than hygienic treatment and arose as a direct consequence of experiments undertaken by the surgeons John and William Hunter in their attempts to perfect a means of preserving anatomical specimens for medical schools. In the main the average cadaver went to the tomb untreated, clothed in a shroud, and was usually cased and vaulted within three days of death.

The most popular wood for coffins has always been elm; it is eminently suitable for it is so cross-grained as to be nearly unsplittable. Oak was occasionally used but only for exceptionally grand interments. With the introduction of French polishing in the second quarter of the 19th century, however, oak came into its own, for elm was not considered to be suitable. Eventually, waxing took over from French polishing. Veneers appear towards the beginning of the 1880s, though an 18th century example survives (23). Construction-wise, all coffins are butt-jointed with sides internally kerfed (usually seven sawcuts) and bent to shape, the base board fits within the sides and ends, the lid spanning the sides and ends. Once formed, then, the joints are internally sealed with pitch to prevent the escape of any obnoxious liquids. In this way were made the single-shell coffins, the single-shell double-lidded coffins, and the double wooden shell coffins.

The lead was usually what is known as 5lb lead, ie it weighed 5lb per square foot. Obviously, it could not be fabricated until the inner wooden coffin had been made and sealed, for the inner coffin acted as a form for the plumber. At least eight types of manufacture have been recorded, none specific to any particular period or geographic location other than anthropomorphic shells, and they were additionally secured to the inner shell by nails which in turn were soldered over to maintain the watertight conditions required. Some of these coffins are extremely elaborate, with raised panelled sides (24), appliqued lettering (25), and, in the case of those of the mid-18th century onwards, a diaper pattern achieved by cross-hatching with wire wool.





Figure 5 Vale of Sorrows: A mid-19th century engraving of a London parochial vault of the 18th century. The vaults beneath Christ Church, Spitalfields (at present the subject of a full archaeological examination) are far more crowded. Photo Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure 6 Branston, Wray Vault: A late 17th century vault in use until 1839. The two coffins on the north side of the vault are edged with stamped and pierced coffin 'lace' Photo P Wilson

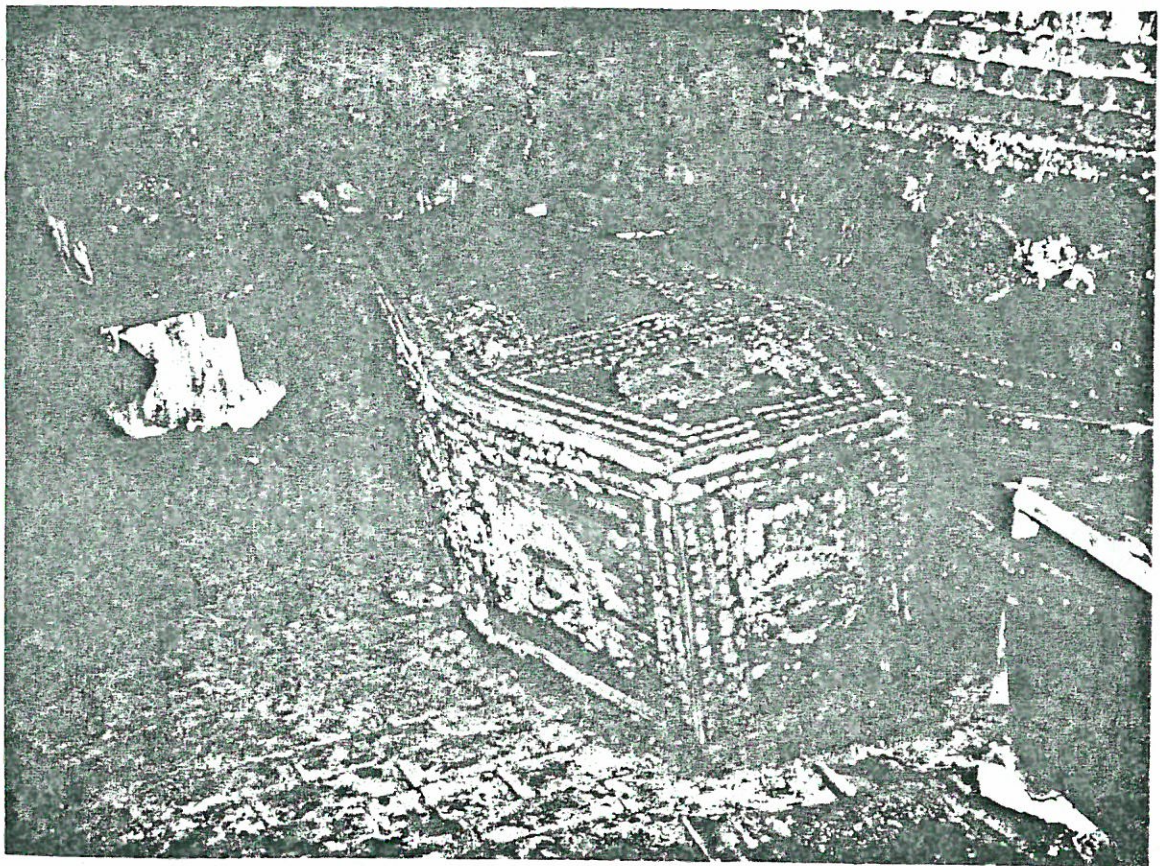


Figure 7 Ilford (Hospital chapel of SS Mary & Thomas), Public Vault: A good example of an 18th century/19th century suburban parochial vault, the floor of brick pavements, the majority of the furniture being black enamelled tin-dipped iron Photo London Borough of Barking Reference Library

The technique of upholstering the outer coffin was, as far as it is known, introduced in the mid/late 16th century and has its origins in the grand fabric-covered travelling trunks used by the nobility. The earliest surviving example is at Exton (Somerset) and is covered with a pitched cambric, a material later used in its original state for the coverings of the inner wooden shells of triple coffins. From the mid-17th century and until the early 19th century velvet was favoured for the better-quality coffin and baize for others: this applied to all coffins, including those destined for earth burial. At first, black velvet held sway but by the early 18th century scarlet was favoured, with purple being reserved exclusively for the royals. And so it remained until the early 19th century when there was a reintroduction of black together with the choice of midnight blue, turquoise (for children only), and, on the odd occasion, an emerald green, the latter looking magnificent if gilt furniture was applied. The earlier fabrics were imported but, with the arrival of the Huguenots, Spitalfields became the centre of the 'black stuff' industry. Faded crimson velvet closely resembles decaying chamois and, to the untrained eye, mistakes can be made in recording. Only one leather-covered coffin has been recorded (26); fabric analysis should always be part of post-excavation work here.

Coffin furniture has its own terminology (27): handles are known as grips, back-plates as grip-plates, coffin plates as breast plates, upholstery nails as pins, lid decorations as motifs, and side decorations as escutcheons. In this section the correct terminology will be used. Very few 16th century outer wooden cases survive but we know that little furniture was used apart from wrought-iron grips, a lead breast plate, and side panelling achieved by the imposition of pins. In the early 17th century the average coffin was provided with black furniture: iron-headed pins, lead breast plate, and wrought-iron grips all painted black and set against black velvet; one particularly fine example was discovered in a small vault at West Ham, Essex, in the summer of 1985 where a skeleton has been outlined on the lid with black-headed pins. The mid-17th century saw the introduction of stamped iron breast plates and similarly manufactured grip plates, the former being a concave oval inscription plate encircled with garlands of flowers, the latter of repoussed winged cherub's heads; the number of pins increased and we see them being used for blank panelling, one, two, or three pins wide depending on the purse of the purchaser.

But coffin furniture, as an art form and manufacture, took off in the 18th century. Grip and breast plates were available in a variety of metals and finishes: gilt copper, copper, brass, silver (tin-dipped iron, though sometimes silver leaf was used), black (which was more expensive than silver, since it was manufactured by painting over the silver finish), and white, really a matt cream paint, for children's coffins. In 1769 Thomas Pickering, a London tinplate manufacturer, patented a method of stamping out coffin furniture and it liberated the industry in general. Lead plates for outer coffins were still available, though stamped iron prevailed. By the end of the 18th century coffin furniture was larded on to the outer shells and it must have looked dramatic: a scarlet velvet covered coffin, the sides, ends, and lid pannelled with three rows of brass-headed pins, a brass inscription plate, four pairs of gilt copper grip plates with cast-iron grips, water-gilded lid motifs, and escutcheons.

The lid motifs were also available in the various metals, as were the escutcheons. The most popular 18th century lid motifs were the vase of

flowers (affixed above the knees) and the Crown of Life supported by two angels (affixed above the face). Escutcheons, small repoussed motifs of winged angel heads, open Bibles, sunbursts, and crossed palms were used as spandrels in the corners of the blank panelling of the sides and, occasionally, on the lids. But there were many designs, all sub-Baroque, and recourse must be made to the extant pattern books for a comprehensive survey.

Hinges, lace, repousse, and three-dimensional coronets are but four of the more unusual items of coffin furniture met with in grander vaults. Hinges were, in effect, angle brackets of brass or plated iron used as an external decorative motif, whereas 'lace' was a narrow stamped and pierced floral garland, usually silvered, used instead of upholstery pins. Repoussed and three-dimensional coronets, painted proper, were usually affixed to the lids of coffins of persons of quality (28).

By the first quarter of the 19th century coffin furniture had adopted a more neo-classical image, though with the introduction of French polishing and the gradual disuse of velvet the amount of applique furniture decreased. By the end of the century the coffin boasted no more furniture than its 16th century predecessor and likewise 'gothic' in detail.

So, is the vault more the territory of the historian and antiquarian than the archaeologist? Recent funerary studies prove that there is a wealth of reference material, previously unrecorded, available for study, including coffin furniture pattern books of the 18th century.

Vaults are probably the last repository of undisturbed masonry and brickwork available for examination; one finds uneroded brickwork, unabraded 17th century floor tiles, perfect mortar samples, types of bedding current, and even the odd reused stone. From the coffins we learn of plumbing techniques, woodworking skills, the imported cloth trade, early veneers, corroborative information from breast plates to compare against the inscriptions on funerary monuments, and, more importantly, base metalwork.

But it should not be forgotten that these vaults are the sepulchres of the dead and that the Christian remains enshrined there should be treated with the utmost respect. Research should be aided by photography to avoid the necessity of removing artefacts from the vault; coffin furniture, and certainly human remains, should be examined in situ and not treated as the spoils of a latter-day Memphis. In support, it should be noted that throughout the recent researches no vault has been entered that has not either been accidentally breached by others or necessarily opened prior to the unavoidable removal of the remains for reburial elsewhere. Vaults should not be regarded as an 'added attraction' to be examined if time permits; indeed, they are often cramped and hazardous to work in and only those with experience should be permitted to enter.

The CBA and Council for the Care of Churches will shortly be producing guidelines on funerary archaeology in churches-in-use, compiled by those who have been actively engaged in this new and exciting avenue of research. Most of all our thanks must go to the many thousands of persons who have so patiently tolerated the temporary disturbance of their rest in the cause of science.

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Notes

For the purposes of this paper 'vault' refers to a subterranean chamber capable of housing a minimum of two coffins side by side and with an internal height of not less than 1.75m. It does not concern itself with the stone and/or brick cists associated with pre-1500 funerary monuments nor the later shallow single-width brick-lined grave capable of housing only one coffin; the latter are correctly termed 'brick-lined graves'. With the late 17th/18th century single-width brick-lined shafts, coffins were not placed directly on top of one another; rather they were separated by means of iron bars spanning the width.

It would be erroneous to state that burial chambers of the calibre of this report were not in use prior to 1500; those that were, such as the 1477/8 Clarence vault at Tewkesbury Abbey, should be regarded as the exception in the history of early intermural interment practices rather than the rule.

A number of the later burial vaults were internally rendered and whitewashed; this manner of treatment should be regarded as a predeliction of those who had the vault constructed rather than the normal practice at any one period.

- 1 The earliest dated purpose-built burial vault of the period covered by this paper is that constructed in 1507 at the request of Henry VII beneath his mortuary chapel at Westminster Abbey. See A P Stanley, Historical memorials of Westminster Abbey, London (John Murray) 1869, 678-86, illus.
- 2 With the passing of the Burial Boards Act 1852 (15 & 16 Vic. c 85 Public Works), Vestries were empowered to provide burial grounds; from then on intermural burial declined and many Orders in Council were obtained over the next few years closing overcrowded churchyards and public and private vaults within the larger town churches.
- 3 Julia Roxan and Richard Morris, Church archaeology in Britain, 1955-1980, in The church in British archaeology (ed R Morris), Counc Brit Archaeol Res Rep 47 (1983), appendix I. For reports on earlier excavations one should consult the indices of the many archaeological journals.
- 4 Four pattern books for coffin furniture of the period 1750-1825 are in the Department of Designs, Prints and Drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum with the pressmarks M 60 H, M 63 E, M 63 F, and M 63 R. Following exhaustive enquiries these appear to be the only survivors of what was once a highly lucrative branch of the Southwark and Birmingham metal trades.
- 5 Obviously many vaults are associated with the endowment of church extensions and restoration schemes whose donors maintained the right of sepulture beneath the geographic boundaries of their gift but, in the main, access steps to vaults beneath the main body of the church were frowned upon, for they limited the amount of space available for sale to other interested parties.
- 6 The east chamber of the St John vault at Lydiard Tregoze (Wiltshire) of c 1590 (B Carne, The St John vault in Lydiard Tregoze church, Rep Friends Lydiard Tregoze, 18 (1985), 28-34) is a good example of this type.
- 7 See the Cavendish vault, Derby Cathedral, of c 1605 and its duplicate extension of c 1810 (Morris, op cit, fig 27).

- 8 See the Roper vault in St Dunstan's, Canterbury (T Tatton-Brown, The Roper chantry in St Dunstan's church, Canterbury, Antiq J, 60 (1980), 227-46, pls xxv-xxviii) of c 1625/50.
- 9 The Lethieullier vault at Little Ilford (Essex) of c 1737 (M Redknapp, Little Ilford, St Mary the Virgin, 1984, London Archaeol, 5 no 2 (Spring 1985), 31-7) is of this type.
- 10 See the c 1810 extension to the Cavendish vault at Derby Cathedral and the west extension to the Poulett vault at Hinton St George (Somerset), constructed in 1814 by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville for John, 4th Earl Poulett.
- 11 The 1832 Bell vault at Milton (Kent) is shelved in a honeycombe fashion; such loculi were to become the mode of sepulture in private cemetery catacombs and are sometimes met with in the larger parochial vaults of town churches.
- 12 St Marylebone parish church vaults were cleared commercially during 1982/3, at which time access was authorised for the study of the coffin furniture. A comprehensive archaeological and paleomedical survey is at present in hand, under the direction of Ms Jex Reeve, of the vault contents at Christ Church, Spitalfields. The Spitalfields Report will, when published, become the standard work of reference on funerary techniques of the period 1740-1850. Later this year the vaults of St Anne's, Soho, will be cleared, under the same terms as St Marylebone.
- 13 A fish-tail coffin was seen in one of the private vaults beneath St Marylebone parish church in February 1983.
- 14 Charnel cists survive in the Roper vault at St Dunstan's, Canterbury, the St John vault at Lydiard Tregoze (Wiltshire), and the Hazlerigg vault at Noseley (Leicestershire).
- 15 Examples of shield breast-plates survive in the Barnardiston vault at Kedington (Suffolk) (W H B, Barnardiston vaults in Kedington church, Proc Suffolk Inst Archaeol Natur Hist, XVI (1918), 44-8, illus) and the Cholmondley vault at Malpas (Cheshire), whilst three examples of incised inscriptions are at St Mary's, Hemel Hempstead (Hertfordshire), one being on open display.
- 16 James I anthropomorphic coffin was so cased, see Stanley op cit.
- 17 When examined by Dean Stanley (Stanley, op cit, 668-70) Elizabeth I's anthropomorphic shell was seen to be housed in a flat-lidded single-break coffin.
- 18 See photographs of the coffin of Elizabeth Culpepper at Hollingbourne (Kent).
- 19 Burton Agnes (Yorkshire) - three versions; Chelsea Old Church; East Barsham (Norfolk); Iwer (Buckinghamshire); Rodney Stoke (Somerset); Steane (Northamptonshire); Alestree monument, Derby Cathedral (an example in wood).
- 20 The two lead examples are in the De La Warr vault at Withyham (Sussex), one being illustrated in I Noel Hume, New clues to an old mystery, National Geogr Mag, 161 no 1 (Washington (NGS) January 1982), 63, whilst the elm coffin of 1608 is at Exton (Somerset) (I Noel Hume, Martin's Hundred: the search continues, Colonial Williamsburg, VIII no 1 (Williamsburg (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation) Autumn 1985, 23).

- 21 These coffins are contained in the loculi beneath the Anglican chapel at All Souls' Cemetery, Kensal Green. These catacombs are not open to the public.
- 22 Viscera chests survive in many vaults, most noticeably the royal vaults beneath Westminster Abbey (Stanley, op cit) and two are illustrated in the photograph of the c 1605 Cavendish vault at Derby Cathedral (Morris, op cit).
- 23 This example was discovered in 1984 during the excavations at St Augustine's, Bristol. In fact the veneer was on the outer face of an inner elm coffin and had been affixed to prevent splitting of the timber caused by too deep a kerf.
- 24 See W H B, op cit, for two examples of this type in the Barnardiston vault at Kedleston. Further excellent examples are in the Culpepper vault at Hollingbourne (Kent).
- 25 Applique lettering has been seen on coffins at Hollingbourne (Kent), as well as in the St John vault at Lydiard Tregoze and the Hazlerigg vault at Noseley (Leicestershire).
- 26 This coffin, of the mid-18th century, was discovered in the lower west range of public vaults at Christ Church, Spitalfields in 1985. The leather was undecorated.
- 27 The nomenclature is common to that found in the extant pattern books and contemporary undertakers' accounts. This terminology is to be resurrected for the forthcoming report on the excavations at Christ Church, Spitalfields.
- 28 Funerary coronets are of stamped brass with brass or wooden baubles; they were exceptionally popular 1750-1825. A pristine example is in the Undercroft Museum at Westminster Abbey on the head of the effigy of the Duke of Buckingham d 1743. The last recorded use of such an item was in 1915 at the funeral of Rosa, Dowager Countess Poulett: the coronet still sits on her coffin at Hinton St George.

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### C A S E S

St Peter, Wootton Waven, Warwickshire

Steven Bassett

The third season of historical investigations at Wootton Waven was undertaken by the School of History of Birmingham University in late June and July 1985. The work of St Peter's church is described here briefly; a fuller account of it, and reports on the churchyard survey and the year's fieldwork, can be found in Bassett 1985.

The season saw completion of the measured stone-by-stone drawing of the north walls of the tower and nave. The resultant drawing (too large to reproduce here) appears as Figure 1 in Bassett 1985. Most of the important aspects of the two wall faces shown in it have already been discussed at some length in the first two reports. In summary, there are three phases of fabric visible in the nave wall below clerestory level, of which the earliest is late Anglo-Saxon or Norman, the second Norman, and the third late 13th century. The lowest three stages of the tower are Anglo-Saxon, of one build and demonstrably

earlier than all phases of the nave. Substantial stubs of the side walls of a north porticus survive, embedded in 19th century buttresses but clearly bonded into the tower. The jambs and probably the imposts of the north tower arch are original elements but (by analogy with the south and east tower arches) its round head may have replaced a gabled one.

It is now clear that the north porticus remained standing until about the start of the 19th century. A view of St Peter's church from the north-east has now been found in a collection of engravings of Warwickshire churches compiled c 1821. It shows a structure against the north side of the tower which can only be the porticus (Bassett 1985, Plate 1). This has a massive lean-to roof which reaches up to within a few centimetres of the string course at the base of the bell chamber. Such a roof cannot have been the original one, since it entirely covered the Anglo-Saxon belfry window still visible in outline near the top of the rubble work. It is most unlikely to have been put on the porticus until the present bell chamber was added to the tower, apparently in the 15th century. Its construction involved heightening the side walls of the porticus very considerably. The end (north) wall, however, is likely to have remained more or less at its former height, which is indeed very much as the engraving shows.

Inside the church work was concentrated in two areas. In the nave a section of 19th century panelling was removed from the east wall, so as to investigate (1) the base of the tower, north of the western tower-arch; (2) the junction made with it by the north arm of the present nave's east wall; and (3) any evidence of the north wall of the first nave. This revealed an interesting structural sequence (Figure 8). No scar survived to indicate the exact junction of the first nave's north wall with the tower. The two had been fully in bond but the scar created by demolition of the nave wall had later been faced over during the first reconstruction (phase 2) of the present nave, which abuts the north face of the tower (Figure 9). Despite the absence of a scar it is clear that the first nave was of the same width as the tower. The foundations of the tower's west wall end abruptly to the north, about 0.80m short of the north-west corner, with the top course and possibly the third one down (the lowest visible) having shattered north edges. The courses in the wall face above and more or less at the same edge, or else project beyond it by no more than half a stone's length. This break in the fabric coincides with the south edge of a trench, filled with a distinctive reddish-brown clayey soil, which runs away west at right-angles to the wall face. To the east it is truncated by the foundations of the present nave. The trench's north edge is hidden by a modern concrete floor, but there can be no doubt that it is the robber trench of the first nave's north wall; measurement and other evidence show that this wall and the north wall of the tower were one and the same.

Two phases of fabric were found in the east wall of the present nave. These showed the same characteristics (stone size, texture and colour of mortar, etc) as the two fabrics found in the same wall's east face on a previous occasion (Bassett 1983, 5-6). They are also certainly the same as the lowest fabrics visible in the exterior face of the nave's north wall, the later of which contains a single-splayed round-headed window. It is this phase 2 work which was extended right across the scar left by demolition of the original nave wall, so as to provide an even, well made face.

In the chancel a survey of the limewash and plaster on the west wall was carried out in February 1985 by David and Mark Perry of The Perry Lithgow



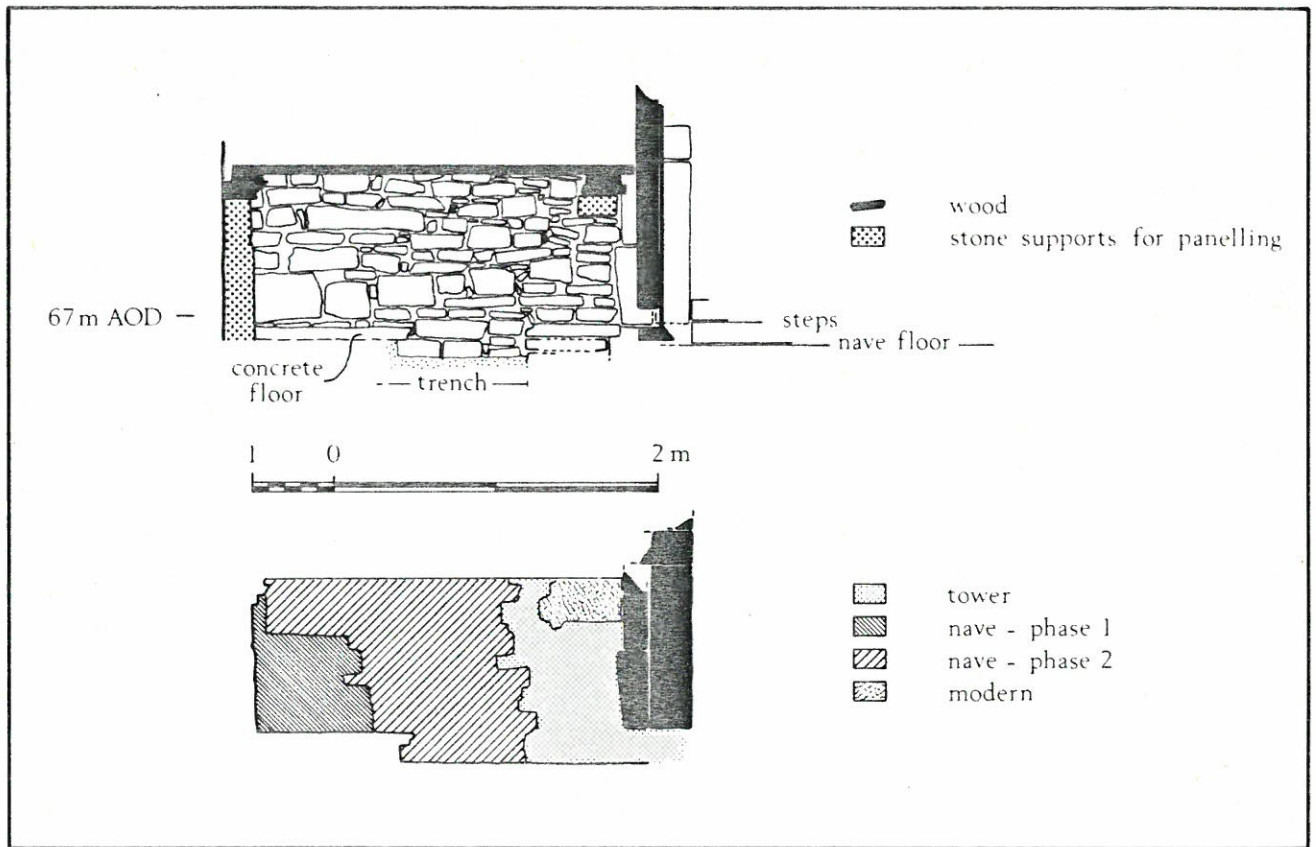


Figure 8 St Peter, Wootton Wawen: east wall of the nave, north of the tower arch  
Elevation and interpretation of fabric behind painting

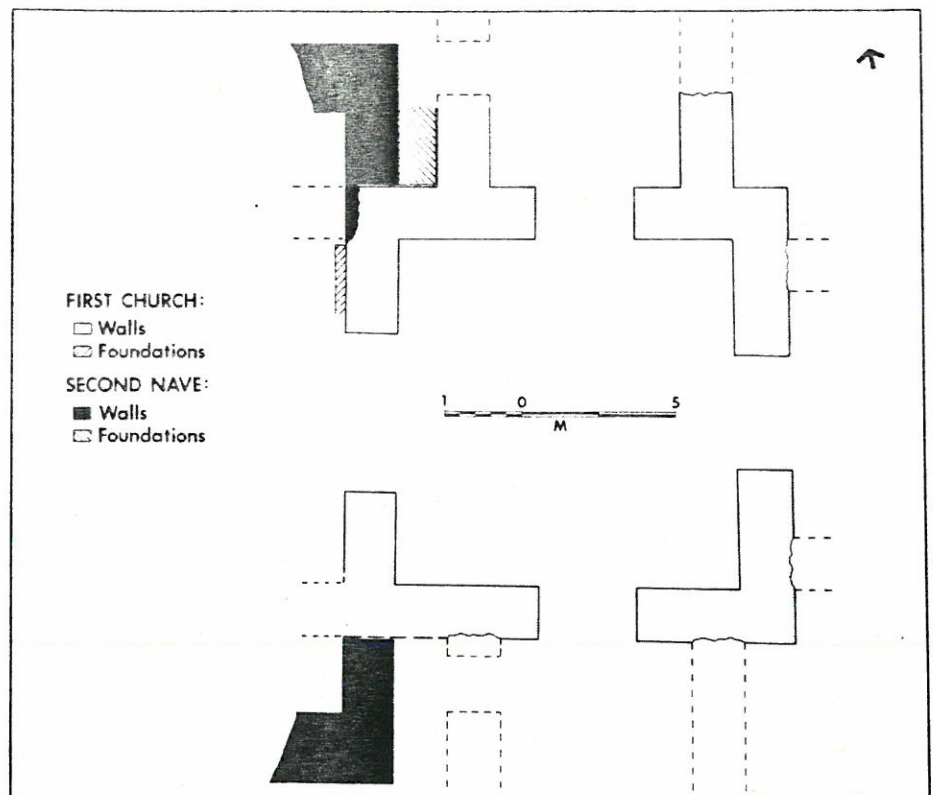


Figure 9 St Peter, Wootton Wawen: plan of the surviving elements of the tower and north porticus, showing scars of contemporary walls, and of the east end of the second nave

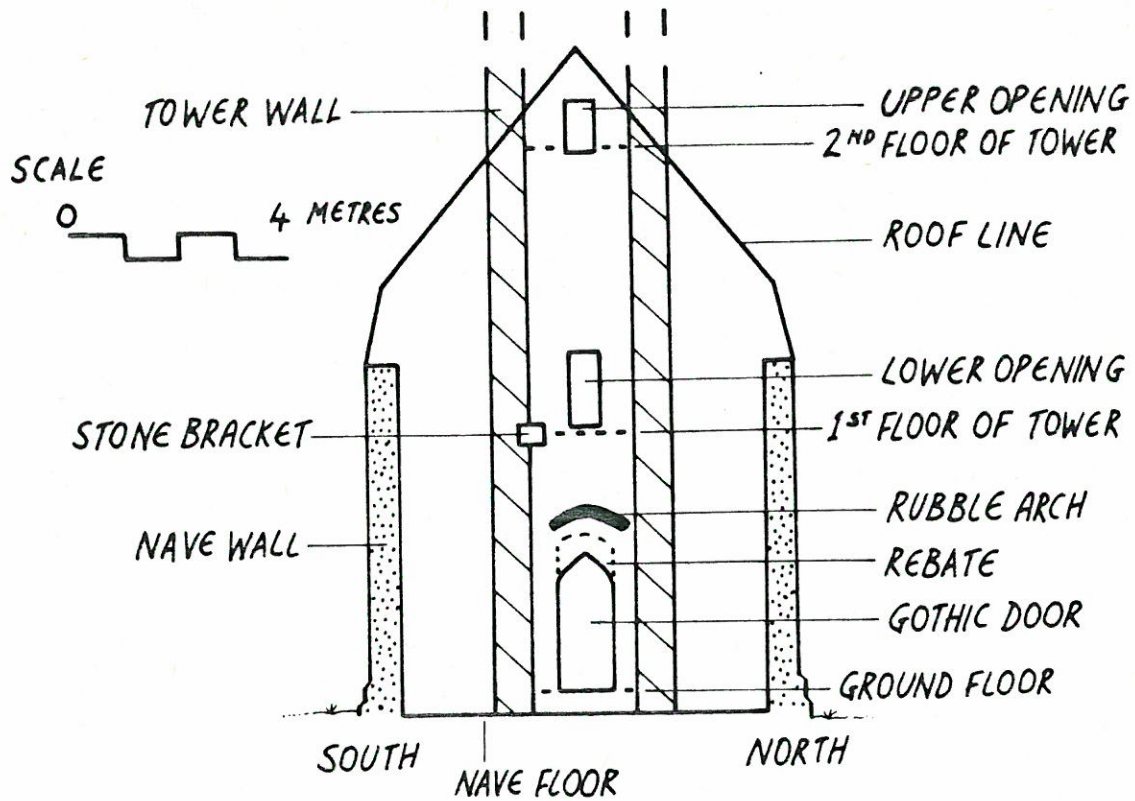


Figure 10 St Mary, Sedgeberrow: elevation of the west wall of the nave. This is a composite elevation showing some features like the tower walls, the floors, and the rubble arch, visible only from inside the church tower (Source: author)

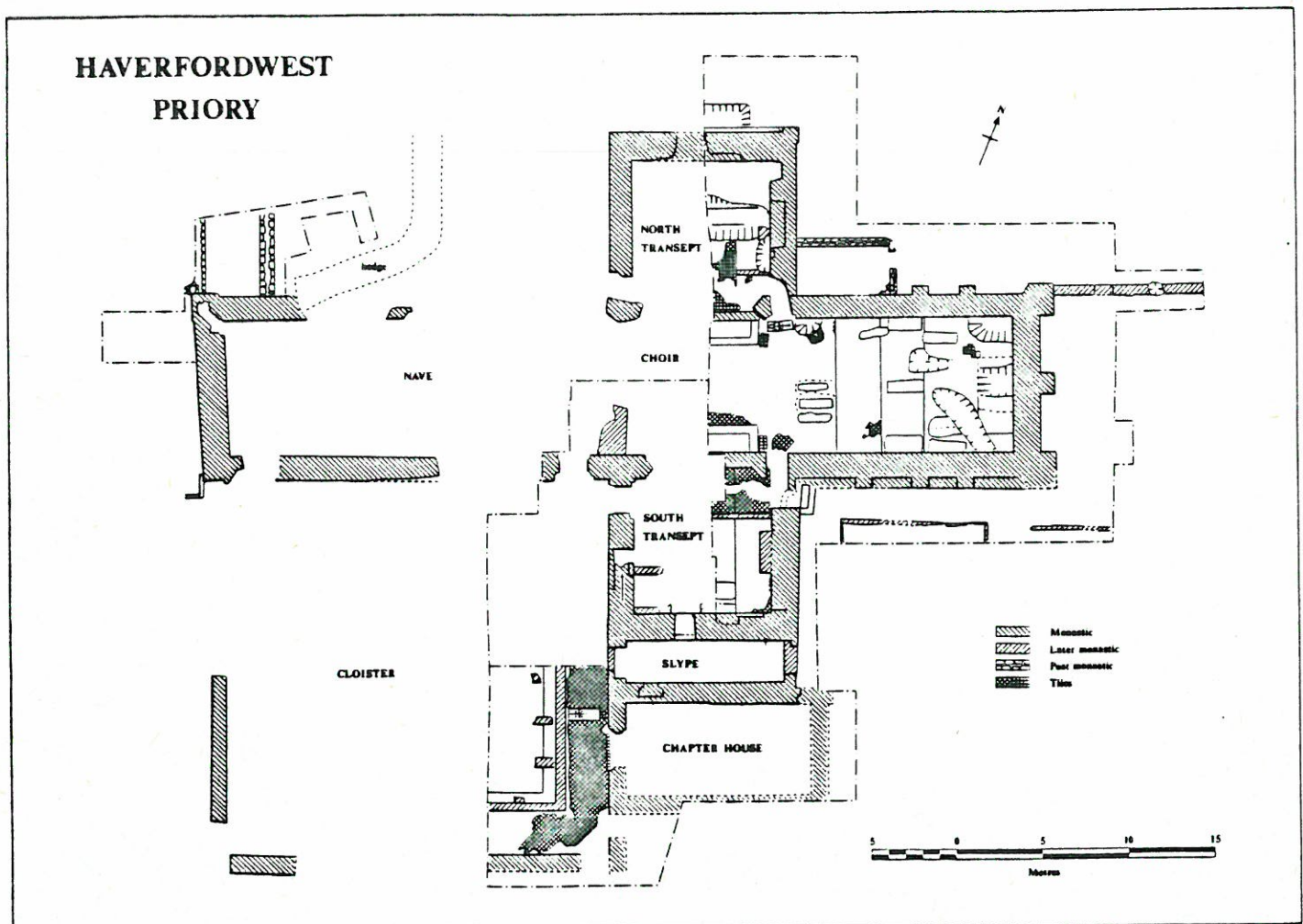


Figure 11 Haverfordwest Priory, Dyfed

Partnership. This indicated that the wall carried a single general layer of mortar of slaked lime and sand, difficult to date but perhaps of 16th century origin. Four successive applications of white limewash had been made to it, none of which had ever been painted. In two parts of the wall this mortar overlay a further mortar on which were found two layers of limewash, both unpainted.

During the summer season the later mortar was removed to a height of about 4m above the 16th century panelling (2m high) which stands against the base of the wall. This revealed the full width of the east face of the tower's east wall as well as the mortar-filled scars of the north and south walls of the original chancel. The latter corresponded exactly to the slight bulges in the limewashed mortar which had been seen as evidence of the former walls' locations (Bassett 1983, 2). When emptied the scars showed that the side walls of the Anglo-Saxon chancel had been 0.69m (27in) wide, which is the width of the walls of the tower and the two former porticus, and the estimated width of the first nave's north wall (Figure 9). The two walls are inset from the east corners of the tower by exactly one wall's width each. At the top of each scar a large rectangular void was found projecting back into the tower wall for at least 0.30m (12in), with its outer edge coinciding with that of the scar. There can be no doubt that these voids secured the chancel's wall plates. One of them still contains a substantial bulk of timber.

The area of the tower's wall face and the scars revealed by mortar removal have not yet been drawn; that will be done in the 1986 summer season. However, it can already be said that the round head of the east tower-arch looks to be secondary (as does the south tower-arch's: Bassett 1984, 4-5), whereas the imposts and jambs are original. The keystone projects beyond the other voussoirs. This projection has been roughly cut in the form of a cross, of which one arm is now missing. The feature is presumably an original one, since it alone accounts for the projecting keystone.

Copies of the two reports on the work done at Wootton Waven in 1984 and 1985 can be obtained from S R Bassett, School of History, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT, priced £1 each (including postage).

#### References

Bassett 1983 (1984, 1985) S R Bassett, The Wootton Waven project: interim report no 1 (2, 3)

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St Mary, Sedgberrow, Hereford and Worcester

Bruce Watson

Survey work on the church of St Mary the Virgin in Sedgberrow (SP 02463853) during 1984-5 revealed that part of the church fabric is of pre-14th century date. Copies of a fully illustrated archive report have been deposited in Birmingham University and Worcester City Library (1) and a report is forthcoming in Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc. 10 (1986). The aim of this article is to briefly outline the results of the survey.

### Introduction

The rectangular parish church is of open plan consisting of chancel, nave, porch, vestry, and a D-shaped hexagonal west tower, capped by a regular octagonal spire. An entry in the Worcester Episcopal Register records the dedication of a church in Sedgeberrow on 16 September 1331 (Moger & Wragge 1913, 520; Marsh 1915, 218). Several architectural features of the present church - the north door, possibly the east window, and probably the piscina and reredos - are of broadly 14th century date (Pevsner 1968, 258). The date of these features confirms that this was the building referred to in the 1331 dedication.

However, there was obviously an earlier church in the village, as a priest was mentioned in the Domesday entry for Sedgeberrow (Thorn & Thorn 1982, 2.65), and nine references were made to a village church and its clergy in Bishop Giffard's register of 1268-1301 (Willis-Bund 1902). The only obvious pre-14th century feature is the (Norman?) font.

### Description of the early fabric

Examination of the church fabric is difficult because the outside is faced with a fairly uniform ashlar masonry and all of the interior is plastered, except for a small portion of the west wall of the nave adjoining the tower. As none of the interior walls of the tower is plastered, this was the obvious place to look for pre-14th century fabric.

The tower is entered from the nave by a Gothic arched door with a tall oval rebate. Examination of the masonry above the rebate revealed the remains of what appears to be an earlier oval door arch of rubble construction. This possible door arch is an integral part of the west wall of the nave, while the Gothic door has clearly been inserted into the wall. At this level, the walls of the 14th century hexagonal tower butt up against the west wall of the nave, showing that it pre-dates the tower (see Figure 10).

Higher up the west wall of the nave are two rectangular openings from the tower into the main body of the church. The lower opening (138cm high and 52cm wide) is on the first storey of the tower. This opening is an integral part of the west wall of the nave. The upper part of the west wall on this storey has been rebuilt to allow the insertion of the sets of 14th century squinches, which support the second floor of the tower. It is at this level that the shape of the tower changes from hexagonal to octagonal. Just above the base of the lower opening on the east side of the wall is a flat-topped stone bracket, the original purpose of which is unknown (see Figure 10).

The second storey of the tower is the belfry. In the east wall of the tower at floor level is the upper opening (91cm high and 61cm wide). This tiny opening is an integral part of the wall. The upper part of this storey merges into the stone spire.

### Discussion

The lower portion of the west wall of the nave is certainly of pre-14th century date. The obvious interpretation of this masonry is that it represents part of a pre-14th century church, which has survived by incorporation into the fabric of the present church. The only clue to the age of this masonry are its two architectural features, the oval arch and the lower opening. Though the upper opening is in the same style as the

lower one, it is part of the tower (believed to be of 14th century date).

Is it possible that these two architectural features are of Anglo-Saxon date? The oval arch, assuming that it is a door arch, has no good Anglo-Saxon stylistic parallels as most rubble-built Anglo-Saxon door arches tend to be circular, not oval (Taylor 1978, 801). The oval arch is unlikely to be of Norman date as Norman doorways tend to be constructed of ashlar and rebated (Taylor 1978, 758). Assuming that the lower opening is a window (it is too short for a door), it does not look like a typical Anglo-Saxon window as it is not splayed and is flat-headed, not round-headed like the majority of Anglo-Saxon windows (Taylor 1978, 844). The lower opening is similar in design to three Anglo-Saxon doorways in the choir of Deerhurst church. In conclusion, both these features are undateable and the plan of the pre-14th century church cannot be reconstructed from the small area of masonry identified in the west wall of the nave.

If the pre-14th century church fabric is of late Anglo-Saxon (AD 850-1000) date, something that is only a possibility and not a proven fact, it is unique in Worcestershire. Evidence of late Anglo-Saxon settlement has recently been discovered close to the church (Price & Wateon 1984).

#### Notes

- 1 Title of the archive report 'A possible Anglo-Saxon church in Sedgeberrow, Hereford and Worcs', by E A Price and B Watson (1985).

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Carlisle Cathedral

Mike McCarthy

Small-scale excavations were undertaken by Carlisle Archaeological Unit during 1985 on behalf of the Dean and Chapter, English Heritage, and Carlisle City Council.. Six small trenches were excavated, three against the south wall of the choir aisle and three at the west end. The excavations were intended to provide details on the depth and nature of the foundations for the Dean and Chapter and were limited in size in order to minimize damage to the archaeology.

Documentary sources provide reason to believe that the earliest ecclesiastical presence dates to early in the reign of Henry I, but the 'traditional' foundation date for the house of Augustinian canons is 1123. The diocese of Carlisle was founded in 1133, from which time the site served the dual function of Augustinian Priory and Cathedral. The precinct occupies an area in excess of 4.5 acres as a roughly rectangular plot on the west side of the medieval town. The only archaeological excavation recorded was in 1953, when the late F G Simpson dug a small trench believed to be against the outer face of the north wall of the nave near the modern vestry. These excavations remain unpublished but from rough notes made at the time by Robert Hogg, formerly Curator of Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery, and photographs, it is clear that very little was discovered which adds significantly to what we now know.

Excavations elsewhere in Carlisle have revealed the presence of a substantial Roman settlement as well as indications of Middle Saxon occupation. The latter includes some slight structural features at Blackfriars Street, to the south of the Cathedral as well as coins, some glass, and metalwork from several locations. Finds of Anglian sculpture from the area of the Cathedral were made in the 19th century. Bede and other writers refer to a monastery in Carlisle from 685, but it is thought that this may not have survived after the late 9th or early 10th century. The location of the monastery has not been established, but the archaeological evidence points to a Middle Saxon focus on the west side of the medieval town. The size, shape, and position of the Cathedral precinct mark out this site as a strong candidate for an important Saxon if not also Roman centre of activity.

The excavations revealed deposits tentatively identified as Roman, but the features could not be defined and no attempt was made to investigate them further.

No positive evidence regarding the post-Roman pre-12th century sequence was recognized, though a possible 9th century coin (a styca) is noteworthy. This apparently negative evidence is not significant given the small size of the excavations. It can be shown, however, that the north wall of the nave, currently attributed to the early or mid-12th century, cut through a burial. This grave is the first archaeological hint of a pre-1123/50ish ecclesiastical presence on the site. A radiocarbon date is awaited on some of the bones.

The 12th century foundations in both the north and south walls of the nave incorporated counterpitched reused sandstone blocks and large fragments of opus signinum. A similar foundation is also apparent in one of the photographs taken of the 1953 excavations. The origin of this foundation material is not certain but is likely to be either an important Roman building or an important Saxon structure in the vicinity. One of the piers of the nave arcade was also examined. The piers rest on a massive sleeper wall 2.4-2.6m wide and over 1.6m deep and may rest on undisturbed bed rock or wooden piles. The floor of the Norman nave seems to consist of a thick bed of mortar into which a floor, possibly composed of stone slabs, was set.

As expected, the foundations of the 13th century choir aisle were less substantial than the Norman nave, but it is not clear whether this is related to the nature of the underlying Roman deposits. Archaeological levels probably to be linked to ruin, destruction, and rebuilding following the siege of 1644-5 as well as the programme of restoration by Christian in

the 1850's, were recognized at the west end. Several burials were located, most of which were left in situ. One burial to the south of the nave was inside a coffin composed of stone slabs cut and fitted with great care. No objects were found in the coffin, which was re-sealed. Other finds included voussoirs with red painted lines, probably from the nave arcade, coins, pottery, and lead from windows and the roof.

Further excavations at the west end will take place if proposals materialize for an underground Treasury. Other limited excavations within the precinct as part of a programme of restoration are possible in the next few years.

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Haverfordwest priory, Dyfed

Sian E. Rees

The ruins of the Augustinian priory of Haverfordwest (SM 957152) lie on the west bank of the River Cleddau, on the south side of the town. The site of the priory, granted to the Augustinian Canons about 1200 (precise date unknown) by the Tancarville family of Haverford, seems always to have been extramural; it occupied a subsidiary suburban settlement at Parva Haverford, about half a mile south of the main town. The site is low-lying and would appear always to have been marshy and prone to flooding. Documentation for the priory is unfortunately sparse but its history seems to have been relatively uneventful. It may be compared with the similarly urban Augustinian house at Carmarthen. At the Dissolution in 1536 the net income of the house was £133 11s 1d.

The site was never formally used after the Dissolution for anything other than a quarry for building stone. The decay of the stonework seems to have begun quite quickly and the site continued to be plundered until early this century. In 1922 and 1924 two short seasons of excavation were carried out by Clapham and Rahbula (Archaeol Cambrensis 1922, 327-34, and 1924, 333-9) with the purpose of establishing the size and extent of the ruins. The site was taken into care of the Secretary of State for Wales in 1982 and consolidation work of the standing masonry commenced in the August of that year. Excavations on behalf of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments have been undertaken in 1983, 1984, and 1985 as a part of a programme of works along with the masonry consolidation. The excavations have so far concentrated on the east end of the church and crossing, the transepts, chapter house, slype, and cloister (see Figure 11).

When work first started on the site, the standing remains were slight and much grown over. The transept walls and part of the west and south walls of the nave were evident standing to almost full height and a small section of the inner wall of the west range and another small section of the south wall of the east range was standing, but depressions in the ground indicated the positions of the cloister and the survival of footings of the walls of all three ranges had already been demonstrated by Clapham and Rahbula. This, coupled with the fact of the abandonment of the complete site since the Dissolution, suggested that below ground survival of the entire priory complex might well be quite good. The requirements of the programme of consolidation that the entire standing masonry be exposed, and the demands of presentation work, dictated that excavation should commence in the church. In 1983, the north transept and chancel were bisected and the south-east quadrant of the cloister was excavated; in the 1984 season, we excavated

the south side of the chancel and bisected the south transept and completed the excavation of the south-east quadrant of the cloister. Excavation of the slype and chapter house was started. During the 1985 season, the excavation of the chancel and the east sides of the transepts and the slype was continued and some excavation was undertaken in the garden of the adjoining property outside the west and north wall of the nave, as this garden was due to be developed (see Figure 11).

The church is a normal cruciform structure positioned on the north of the priory complex. It is 45.7m long, 26.8m across the transept, and all four arms have a width of 4m. The church walls are consistently 1.6m wide; the exterior face of the east wall of the chancel had corner buttresses and a central mural buttress, while the north and south walls were found to have three mural buttresses each. The build of the church would appear to be early 13th century and as yet there is no evidence to suggest any drastic alterations of length or width at any stage in its use. Eighteenth century illustrations of priory ruins indicate that the church had a central tower and that the north wall of the chancel was standing certainly until the early 19th century.

Before the recent series of excavations, nothing survived above ground of the remains of the east end of the church. The excavations have now revealed the chancel walls which were found to have been robbed to below the latest surviving priory floor levels, save for a small section around the north-east corner, and the western half of the north wall. The strategy for the excavation was to excavate to reveal the latest surviving floor levels but not to remove these levels, at any rate in the first instance.

The altar was found to have been much robbed but enough survived to show that it was inserted into floor make-up, was 3 x 2m and set directly against the east wall, and surrounded at least on the north and south by a more shallowly founded step which probably would have continued around the now much-damaged west side also. A small area of tiling on the north west of the altar may belong to this raised surround. This rather patched area of tiling included two complete examples of a relief tile of a hitherto unknown pattern.

The remainder of the chancel floor was very disturbed by a number of pits, the latest and most devastating of which may have been excavated by Rahbula in 1924 to test for surviving floor levels. This trench had cut through a grave against the south wall and a double grave immediately to its north. These graves were excavated. The southernmost grave was set directly against the south wall. The skeleton was complete and the regular placing of coffin nails and a stain, probably from the wooden side of the coffin, revealed the shape and size of the original coffin. However, laid around the side of one body were assorted human bones, other irregularly placed nails, and a spur, indicating that an earlier grave had been disturbed for the later interment.

A few cms further north lay a double grave. The east end (the feet of the two bodies) had been disturbed by the large trench described above. The two skeletons were otherwise complete and were surrounded by a large number of regularly spaced coffin nails, many of which showed the impressions of wood; the two bodies were buried as two separate interments in the one grave.

The chancel was found to have three regularly-spaced steps which raised the floor level toward the altar. The easternmost step had been disturbed



by a series of late pits which had themselves doubtless cut through the graves. In the fill of one of these pits was found a small cross-shaped reliquary box of silver.

The floor to the west of the easternmost step was relatively undisturbed, though, of course, a series of graves lay between the steps. The southernmost lying immediately adjacent to the robbed south wall, had been disturbed by the robbing and was excavated. It was found to overlie directly an earlier grave which was left unexcavated. There was no reason to believe that the other graves were disturbed and they were not excavated. Sections of floor mortar with tile impressions survived in places between the graves. The middle step had been broken through by an irregular grave which was assumed to be post-medieval and was excavated. The skeleton was lying on its side, with its head irregularly positioned towards the east, and the absence of coffin nails suggested that it had not been placed in a coffin.

The floor west of the middle step had more substantial areas of floor mortar and surviving tiles in situ, laid diagonally. When the excavation of this area is complete we will know if there are any late graves here and we will understand better the apparently post-medieval disturbance of three stone settings, deep set, near the westernmost step.

West of the westernmost step, the floor mortar with some tiles surviving in situ is intact on the south, while a series of at least three well-defined graves lies towards the centre. An area of disturbance has removed any sign (so far revealed) of graves to the north and it may be that this large disturbance will relate to the use of this area at the Dissolution for lead smelting. Adjacent to the north wall, a deep pit has cut through a tile- and stone-lined pit, semi-circular in section. This lining had quantities of lead adhering to its surface and it is thought probable that the area of the crossing was used during the Dissolution in the preparing of the lead from the roof for transportation away from the site. The southern of the two choir-stall bases had in the rubble fill a large lead ingot with the Rose and Crown stamp on either end.

The excavation of the crossing is as yet at an early stage, though the stone foundations of the choir stalls have been revealed and small sections of tiled flooring survive; the crossing would appear to have been substantially disturbed. The preliminary excavation work further west has revealed the upper courses of the pulpitum and a heavily splayed doorway within it.

The transepts have been bisected and the east half of each excavated. The south half of the north transept floor is substantially intact with much of the tiled floor still in situ. Further north, the transept has been substantially disturbed by two deep trenches, the southern of which was revetted by a dry stone walling. Whatever the original purpose of the trench may have been, it was later used for dumping and within the fill were the skeletons of a horse and a pig with some sheep and dog bones. Preliminary analysis of these skeletons by Miss Barbara Noddle suggests that their deposition may date from the late 19th century. The trenches have removed any flooring in situ but enough remains on the intact south half to suggest that the transept was remodelled at a later stage to incorporate a chapel, raised stepped floor, and an altar built in to block an earlier niche in the east wall. The rather extraordinary curved, plastered surface in the corner between the east wall of the north transept and the north wall of the chancel would appear to be a late or post monastic alteration.

Similarly, the south transept was found to have been remodelled at some later period to provide a chapel, stepped interior floor, and altar. The arrangements here are better preserved and the tiled floor is substantially intact. The remnants of arches within the masonry of the standing south wall of the transept suggest a piscina and sedilia in this position (unlike in the north transept), while the broken end of the east wall on the south-east corner of the transept has a groove in it which suggests that in this position in the east wall there was, as there is in the north transept, a niche or aumbry with grooves for shelving. The south-west corner of the south transept has collapsed at a higher level and, unfortunately, the method by which the night stair led up from the dormer is lost; only the base of the night stair, in the thickness of the west wall, survives.

The nave itself has not yet been excavated but small-scale excavations outside the north wall and west end in advance of the development of the garden of the adjoining property revealed that the corner buttress on the north-west corner contained within it a circular newel stair, the base of which survives. Elsewhere the trenches revealed the old monastic ground surface at some depth below present ground level but no sign of the return of the chapel or aisle found by Clapham to run westwards from the north transept.

The slype, 10m long, 2.5m wide, originally had entrances at the west and the east to allow passage through. The flooring appears to have gone in its entirety, though some large slabs at the base of the rubble fill may indicate that the flooring was originally stone. At some late date, the west and east openings were blocked and plastered over (the plaster is very similar to that covering the alteration in the south east corner of the north transept) and a doorway was inserted into the north wall, giving access direct into the south transept. This doorway has been blocked by a stone pillar inserted probably in the early years of this century, to support an overhanging section of wall above. The rubble of the slype has yielded a quantity of plain medieval window glass and window lead. Interestingly it was in the rubble of the slype and chapter house fill that a number of iron tools were found, a collection which may be interpreted most satisfactorily as tools for the dismantling of masonry.

The excavation of the chapter house was begun in 1984. The excavation is not yet complete but it seems as though the east wall has been robbed out entirely while the other three walls survive to a height of 1.5 to 2m. Inside the walling, on all four sides, the benching survives intact. Both walls and benches are plastered with plain white plaster, though in the rubble fill of the chapter house coloured plaster, including one piece with gold-leaf decoration, has been found. The floor, not yet fully excavated, has a diagonally laid buff and green tiled surface, a continuation of the same tiling which is less well preserved in the cloister. Towards the east end of the chapter house is what appears to be a grave plinth, as yet totally unexcavated. Within the rubble around the plinth were found fragments of a limestone effigy of a knight in chainmail. His head, pillow, and about half his body survives showing details of belt and sword. Also within the rubble was found an extraordinary corbel, with seven faces carved upon the front so as to look out from the wall in which the corbel was built. The frontward facing face is an idealized portrait with fine beard and moustache. The three heads on either side appear to degenerate in refinement so that the furthest two are swarthy, thick-lipped, wart-ridden faces. On the top of the stone are the laying-out lines. A large section of vaulting, which

would have fitted the top of the corbel, was also found in the rubble nearby. Many other smaller sections of vaulting ribs were found which give a good idea of the original appearance of the chapter house ceiling.

The west wall of the chapter house has a doorway with a window on either side, leading into the cloister. The south-east quadrant of the cloister has been excavated down to the latest tile floor. The tile pavement, a continuation of the buff and green diagonally laid tiles of the chapter house, is almost complete in this quadrant at least, though there is an area of missing tiles on the south, and on the south-east the pavement has been crudely patched with stone slabs.

Within the pavement against the chapter house, is a grave slab apparently undisturbed, which has evidently been inserted, as the tiles are roughly patched on the east to fit it in. Further doorways from the cloister give access to the vaulted undercroft of the dormer on the south-east and the frater block on the south. All three doors have ornate steps.

On the inside of the pavement, a low wall with buttresses bridging over a stone-lined drain held the pillars for the pent roof. One of these pillar bases survives, in the section line on the south. Interestingly, other pieces of an earlier form of pillar were reused as rubble in the core of the wall and buttresses. The cloisters were evidently remodelled and this may indeed date to the mid 15th century remodelling which was apparently planned and endowed.

To the south of the chancel, excavations have revealed the slight traces of a retaining wall running parallel to the south wall of the chancel, then turning to run south, parallel with the east wall of the south transept. This has only been traced for a short distance but it may indicate the presence of a pathway around the outside of the church, possibly around a cemetery on its south and east.

Apart from disturbances associated with the Dissolution period and later periods, evidence of actual post-medieval structures or use of the building for anything other than a stone quarry is rare. On the north of the site, against the east wall of the north transept and north chancel wall, nestled a small, badly built structure, the foundations of which rest on priory roof collapse. The hearth in one corner and coal and slag found on the floor suggest a small-scale, lowly use, possibly as a smithy, probably in the 18th century. The cellars of houses adjoining the nave on its north-west side, probably 17th century in date, were also revealed by excavation.

The excavation of a deep rubbish pit on the north side of the north transept, outside the church, suggests that quantities of the natural clay were redeposited at some stage during the life of the priory. This may have been cut from the adjoining higher ground to the west of the site and placed in areas on the perhaps marshy site to level up. Whether this redeposition was carried out uniformly over all the site or was concentrated in dips in the ground to level up smaller areas is as yet unknown.

The features belonging to the Dissolution are particularly interesting on this site and it is hoped that excavation may reveal details of the method of dismantling a priory immediately after the Dissolution. The richness and quantity of the decorated stonework revealed below ground level and the quantities of surviving tile floors point promisingly to eventual understanding

and presentation of the structural completeness of the priory plan; also the probably waterlogged character of lower strata and the hopefully undisturbed riverside point towards the site's potential in providing details of environmental data, as well as furthering understanding of the drainage of the site, the use of the waterfront, and possibly the waterworks connected with the priory mill.

I am most grateful to Mr Peter Crane and Ms Louise Lane for producing the plan.

February 1986

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BOOKS

Betty Willsher, Understanding Scottish graveyards (Council for British Archeology Scotland)

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